PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS ON CIVIL SERVANTS COMMITTING IMMORAL BEHAVIOR

Dongye Zhang¹*, Shun Zhang²

Abstract
In recent years, the immoral behaviors of civil servants, such as corruption, have severely tarnished the image of the Chinese government. To curb these immoral behaviors, this paper analyzes the psychological mechanism of civil servants that commit immoral behavior. First, the significance of professional ethics construction for civil servants was highlighted, the evolution and mechanism of the psychology of immoral behavior were summarized. Next, 300 junior civil servants in Shenzhen, China were subjected to a questionnaire survey on their professional ethics. The survey data were analyzed from the aspects of career motivation, career value orientation, self-evaluation ability, and achievement demand. The results show that the civil servants generally acknowledge the importance of professional ethics, boast good awareness and analytical ability of their behavior, have strong desire for power and money, and find it wrong to blame subordinates. On this basis, several suggestions were presented to prevent immoral behaviors of civil servants in China. This paper is of great significance for the construction of professional ethics among civil servants.

Key words: Civil Servants, Professional Ethics, Corruption, Psychological Analysis.

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INTRODUCTION
Civil servants are public officials who coordinate the national economy and society, manage the state public resources and safeguard the legal rights and interests of citizens. They are the leaders of socialist modernization, whose professional ethics level and moral behavior norms play a crucial role in the society. The professional ethics level of civil servants is of great importance in the core morality of socialism (Payne & Landry, 2006). As the development of socialist modernization construction in China, civil servants are faced with various forms of temptation, which severely threatens the professional ethics of civil servants. As more and more immoral behaviors such as corruption of civil servants are revealed, their social image and professional ethics are under criticism (Dehghani, Mosalanejad, Dehghan-Nayeri, 2015). It is of great significance to fundamentally analyze and study the immoral behavior of civil servants from the psychological perspective so as to prevent the corruption and other immoral behaviors of civil servants.

Since the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, China has always upheld the principle of governing the country by law and strengthening the self-discipline of the Party and has attached great significance to the professional ethics construction of civil servants and gradually increased the punishment for immoral behaviors. The academic circles have also launched a new round of studies on the prevention and control for the corruption of civil servants; some scholars have summarized the cause for the immoral behavior of civil servants through the analysis of their immoral behaviors, namely economic factors, political factors, social development factors and historical factors; some scholars have analyzed the corruption behavior...
of senior officials in China and classified the psychology for their corruption behavior (Eisenacher, Rausch, Ainser et al., 2015). Fruitful achievements have been achieved in the research on the immoral behavior of civil servants in China, but the systematic analysis of the psychological mechanism of the immoral behavior of civil servants is still lacking.

Based on previous studies, this paper performs theoretical and practical analysis of the immoral behavior of civil servants from the psychological perspective so as to provide a reference for the professional ethics construction of civil servants. Theoretical research: the immoral behavior and psychology of civil servants are analyzed to derive the psychological evolution mechanism of the corruption behavior of civil servants; empirical research: 300 junior civil servants in a certain District in a Southern city are selected as the research object and the form of questionnaire is used for the statistics of the professional ethics of civil servants (Gavrilovici, 2004). Through theoretical analysis and practical investigation, the psychological mechanism of civil servants is deduced and measures for preventing the immoral behavior of civil servants are put forward.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE IMMORAL BEHAVIOR OF CIVIL SERVANTS

Significance of the professional ethics construction of civil servants

(1) The exemplary role of the professional ethics of civil servants

The professional ethics of civil servants is the reflection of government image and social morality. Good professional ethics of civil servants helps the government to establish credibility. At the same time, with good professional ethics, civil servants are more capable of handling matters impartially, fulfilling their duties and providing better services to the public.

(2) The professional ethics construction of civil servants is conducive to social stability and steady development

The immoral behavior such as corruption of civil servants has brought instability and disharmony to the society. The professional ethics of civil servants, as a core part of socialist moral construction, has a positive effect on the stable development of social economy and politics.

(3) The professional ethics construction of civil servants is decisive for their own development

The work of civil servants and government departments in China has gradually become more transparent and fairer, and the punishment for the corruption behavior of civil servants has also been strengthened. It is beneficial for the career development of civil servants to establish good professional ethics.

Psychological mechanism analysis of the immoral behavior of civil servants

Psychological distance theory

Figure 1 shows the influence and judgment of psychological distance on moral behaviors. It can be seen from the Figure that moral behaviors and psychological distance are related both in the positive and negative direction: for immoral behaviors, the psychological distance increases the severity of immoral behavior; for ethical behaviors, the increase of psychological distance indicates higher morality (Brimnes, 2012) (Murphy, 2010). Therefore, it is concluded that the moral behavior of civil servants is closely related to their psychological distance in work and life.

Figure 1. The relationship between psychological distance and moral behavior

Psychological basis of the immoral behavior of civil servants

The psychology believes that any behavior of human beings is caused by their psychological domination, so the root cause for the immoral behavior of civil servants’ psychological basis of is the root cause of behavior.

(1) World outlook

The world view is the commander of human behaviors, and the immoral behavior of civil servants is basically caused by distorted belief or wrong world outlook. Under the impact of
incorrect social outlook, civil servants will become psychologically unbalanced in individualism and collectivism, egoism and altruism, thus leading to the corruption behavior. The corrupted worldview is one of the psychological foundations of the immoral behavior of civil servants.

(2) Motivation and needs

Marxist thinking believes that human needs are fundamentally expressed as social needs. The process of achieving target automatic balancing and selecting the required goals in the process of satisfying one’s needs must be based on the principle of conforming to social requirements (Gray, 2013; Becerra & Becerra, 2015). As the demand progresses in level and degree, the social needs of civil servants gradually intensify the contradiction between demand and the current situation and their demands can only be satisfied by corruption; the emergence of demand contradiction also indicates the determination of the motivation for immoral behaviors, the psychology of civil servants to meet individual demands through immoral, illegal behaviors that violates their values is recognized by themselves.

(3) Will

Will is the quality for the determination and execution of targets in the psychological characteristics and it plays different roles in the formation of the immoral behavior of civil servants: 1. Before the immoral behavior, will is the immune system for civil servants to prevent themselves from damaging the interests of the country and the people; 2. When the will acts on the immoral behavior of civil servants, the stubborn will might cause greater losses to the country and the people; 3. After the immoral behavior, the corrected will can help civil servants reshape their professional ethics while the residual corruption will might increase the difficulty for the modification of the corruption behavior of civil servants (Marwa, 2009; Becker, 2008).

These elements of the psychological basis for the immoral behavior of civil servants are not isolated, but in an interactional relationship, which forms the psychological basis of the immoral behavior of civil servants.

Evolutionary mechanism of the immoral behavior of civil servants

There are certain psychological processes and mechanisms in the formation of the immoral behavior of civil servants, in which motivation struggle and psychological imbalance are two key psychological states. Before the immoral behavior, civil servants will have intense psychological struggle due to the professional ethics, laws and regulations. The psychological struggle of immoral behaviors often takes longer time than other general behaviors. After the psychological struggle, civil servants will have the sense of psychological imbalance due to the difference between the actual and expected level. If this psychological imbalance cannot be restrained, civil servants will form wrong psychological motivation in order to achieve their greediness and then have immoral behaviors. On the contrary, if civil servants can effectively regulate this psychological imbalance, they will regulate their behaviors and have correct motivation (Mbao, 2011).

The immoral behavior of civil servants is often accompanied by moral loss, guilt, fear, etc. However, as the time and number of the immoral behavior increases, civil servants will have self-correction and self-rationalization. On the one hand, civil servants misinterpret and justify their corruption behaviors; on the other hand, civil servants have reduced the negative impact of their immoral behaviors on society. Finally, civil servants will feel numb for their corruption behaviors and lose their professional ethics. The psychological evolution mechanism of the behavior of civil servants is shown in Table 2.
corruption of civil servants is divided into six types:

1. The power psychology is the blind pursuit of power for pleasure and it is reflected by the characteristics of arrogance.
2. The greedy psychology is the sick demands for money, sex, and power and these demands are not consistent with the conditions and ethics of civil servants. Greedy psychology is characterized by the difficulty to satisfy and unscrupulous means.
3. The hedonism psychology is the worship of the smashed material life, which is also the main reflection of individualism and money worship. The hedonism may be caused by frustration in work, loss of struggle attitude in life, or psychological imbalance and comparison.
4. The fluke psychology is the psychology of knowing the prohibition of laws and regulations but holding a speculative mentality to attempt to be successful without legal sanctions.
5. The unbalanced psychology is the psychological cognition imbalance caused by the difference in income distribution resulted from the difference in individual ability and social status in China’s socialist modernization construction. Unbalanced psychology mainly reflects the comparison and privilege psychology.
6. The compensation psychology is that some civil servants think that they have made great achievements in their positions, but their income and social status do not match their efforts so that they think it is reasonable to use their power for personal gains. The manifestation of compensation psychology is self-identification for the immoral behavior such as corruption.

Figure 3 shows the psychological classification of the immoral behavior by interviewing 50 senior officials of China. Among them, greedy and hedonism psychology are the main types of corruption, accounting for 83%.

**INVESTIGATION ON THE CURRENT SITUATION OF THE PROFESSIONAL ETHICS OF CIVIL SERVANTS**

300 junior civil servants in a certain District in a Southern city Shenzhen are selected to conduct a questionnaire survey to study the professional ethics level of junior civil servants in China in the current stage. The subjects are all undergraduate and above, with 187 males and 113 females. The questionnaire survey included career motivation, career value orientation, self-evaluation ability, and achievement demand level.

**Importance of professional ethics**

“Do you think that professional ethics is important to civil servants?” A: very important; B: certain significance, C: no practical significance; D: does not matter. (Question 1)

Table 1 shows the survey results of civil servants for Question 1. It can be seen from the results that civil servants have a high sense of identity in the significance of professional ethics. All civil servants involved in the survey consider that professional ethics is important.

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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>225</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>C</td>
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| Table 1. Questionnaire results question 1

**Career demand level**

"After becoming a civil servant, what is your career plan?” A: do not make mistake; B: work comfortably; C: follow the instruction of leaders; D: make achievements, be a good civil servant and achieve self-improvement as early as possible. (Question 2)

Table 2 shows the results of career demand for Question 2. It can be seen from the results that civil servants have higher requirements for their career planning. They are

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<td>B</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>170</td>
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| Table 2. Questionnaire results question 2

At this stage, civil servants have higher requirements for their career planning. They are...
not satisfied with the simple and comfortable work, but hope to obtain the opportunity for promotion through their efforts.

Psychology of power desire

“What level of civil servant do you think you can become?” A: general officer; B: chief; C: director; D: mayor or higher. (Question 3)

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<td>Number</td>
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<td>70</td>
<td>77</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
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It can be seen from the survey results that the desire for power of civil servants is generally higher. More than 80% of respondents hope to be promoted to the section chief or higher positions. 25.7% of respondents even want to be promoted to higher positions such as the mayor.

Behavioral awareness and self-analysis ability

“When you have a conflict with a colleague, what do you think?” A: doesn’t matter; B ignore the colleague; C: feel upset and unwilling to work; D: analyze myself to see if it is my fault. (Question 4)

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<tr>
<td>Number</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>205</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
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The civil servants in this survey have strong self-behavioral awareness and self-analysis ability, and 68.3% of civil servants can calmly deal with their disputes with colleagues and conduct self-psychological analysis.

Career motivation

“Why do you choose to become a civil servant?” A: gain power and become a senior official; B: stable in salary and comfortable in life; C: suitable for my personality; D: work for the people. (Question 6)

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<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
<td>20%</td>
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It can be seen from the survey results that civil servants pay more attention to power and money. More than 200 respondents believe that money and power pay the dominate role in their work, which put their professional ethnics into a dangerous situation.

Professional behavior awareness

“How to evaluate the situation when civil servants are rebuked by the service object, but still need to have a good attitude?” A: loss of self-esteem, I myself will never do this; B: cannot fight back the service object, but no need to maintain a good attitude; C: whatever response is ok, no comment; D: I think I will do the same. (Question 7)

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<td>76</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
<td>52.7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>14%</td>
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It can be seen from the questionnaire that civil servants have a low professional behavior awareness and only 14% of respondents believe that this attitude of handling disputes with the service object is correct.

Working style

“How to evaluate a leader who often blames subordinates?” A: able to understand this situation; B: not a good practice, might have
negative impact on the psychology of subordinates; C: agree, the leadership prestige can be established; D: resistant to this behavior. (Question 8)

Table 8. Questionnaire results question 8

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<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>145</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>48.4%</td>
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It can be seen from the survey results that civil servants now are resistant to this “parental” working style in the problem, and more than 75% of civil servants believe that this working style is unacceptable.

**OPINIONS ON THE PROFESSIONAL ETHICS CONSTRUCTION OF CIVIL SERVANTS**

Combined with the psychological mechanism of the corrupt behavior of civil servants and the practice investigation results of the professional ethics of civil servants, it is easy to find that the cause for the immoral behavior of civil servants is mainly related to their professional ethics and the social environment in which civil servants are located.

**Strengthening the professional ethics construction**

The emphasis should be paid to the investigation of personality and morality when recruiting civil servants in the professional ethics construction of civil servants and planned and organized professional ethics training should be conducted. The professional ethics education should be regarded as the key to the success of work. The guidance of the professional values and professional motivation of civil servants should be strengthened so as to stifle incorrect professional values such as individualism, money worship, and bureaucracy. The professional behavior norms and professional roles of young civil servants should be cultivated through work practice so that good professional ethics can be built under the supervision of the masses and the society. Under the impact of ideals and beliefs, aim consciousness and the sense of integrity in the core moral values of socialism, the moral guideline for integral administration of civil servants can be cultivated.

**Reforming institutional construction and the punishment for corruption**

The system of anti-corruption should be promoted so that the immoral behavior of civil servants can be eliminated and the current decision-making system should be improved. We should give full play to the function and responsibility of the National Committee, the Party Congress, the People’s Congress, and the Staff Representative Conference so as to effectively solve the problem of excessive concentration of power. The management system of the discipline inspection and supervision and auditing department should be reformed and the innovation is no longer directly led by the local party committee and government so as to effectively solve the problem of poor supervision. Control and supervision should be strengthened so that civil servants dare not commit corruption. The supervision by foreign bodies should be improved as soon as possible, including the supervision of people’s congresses, political parties, democratic parties, judicial organs, news media, and the masses for the ruling party and the government. More severe punishment for the corruption of civil servants should be performed to increase the illegal cost of civil servants for their corruption behavior and the punishment for the immoral behavior of civil servants should be conducted from the aspects of economic costs, administrative costs, life costs and moral costs.

**CONCLUSION**

The immoral behavior of civil servants has had a tremendous negative impact on the people and society and the root cause for the immoral behavior of civil servants is the corruption psychology. Whether induced by the insufficient professional ethics construction or the external social environment, the loss of psychological logic leads to the immoral behavior of civil servants. This paper analyzes the immoral behavior of civil servants from the perspective of psychology, and draws corresponding conclusions and targeted ideas for reform. The main contents and conclusions of this paper are as follows:

1. A detailed analysis of the psychological mechanism of the immoral behavior of civil servants is performed and the psychological evolution process of the corruption behavior of
civil servants is obtained.

(2) The professional ethics of junior civil servants in China is obtained through the empirical investigation and the psychological link that is likely to induce immoral behaviors is discovered.

(3) Combined with the theoretical analysis and empirical investigation, this paper puts forward constructive opinions on the prevention and control of the corruption of civil servants in China at the present stage.

REFERENCES


