

Fraud Hexagon and Corruption: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract. The development of fraud theory has evolved significantly over time, starting from the fraud triangle and extending to the fraud hexagon. This research aims to analyze research development related to fraud hexagon and corruption both in private and public sector. Corruption refers to unethical or illegal practices by individuals, businesses, or government officials that involve the abuse of power for personal gain. Nowadays, the number of corruption cases continue to increase over the last three years. This study use the data from both reputable national journal minimum sinta 3 and reputable international journal minimum Q2 which consists of 10 articles from year 2021 to year 2024 about fraud hexagon theory and corruption. 80% articles analyze fraud hexagon in public sector, meanwhile 20% focus on private sector. Based on the analysis from the articles, we found the various different findings. Most of the articles found that some elements of fraud hexagon effect corruption and the rest of the elements show the opposite. Due to these various of findings and limited previous research, the authors are motivated to develop this study. This study contributes to enrich knowledge about how elements of fraud hexagon effects the corruption.

Keywords: fraud, corruption, public sector, private sector.

1 Introduction

Based on data released by the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) on January 22, 2024, the number of corruption crime cases over the past three years has continued to increase [1]. The latest data in 2023 shows that there were 161 cases, where the largest percentage of 32.92% (53 cases) occurred in regional/municipal government agencies, followed by the second largest percentage of 32.3% (52 cases) occurring in ministry/ vertical institution agencies. Here is recapitulation of corruption cases based on agencies during 2014-2023:

Table 1. Recapitulation of Corruption Cases Based on Agencies

No	Institution	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
1	Legislative assembly	2	3	15	9	4	7	0	1	1	0	42

No	Institution	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
2	Ministry/vertical institution	26	21	39	31	47	44	12	19	26	52	317
3	State/local government-owned enterprise	0	5	11	13	5	17	16	8	12	34	121
4	Comission	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
5	Provincial government	11	18	13	15	29	11	11	8	16	22	154
6	District government	19	10	21	53	114	66	50	72	65	53	523
Total		58	57	99	121	199	145	91	108	120	161	1.159

Source: *kpk.go.id*

The Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE) classifies corruption as a form of fraud. According to ACFE, fraud is classified into three forms of action, namely asset misappropriation, fraudulent financial reporting, and corruption. Based on data released by ACFE titled Asia-Pacific Occupational Fraud 2022: A Report to The Nations, Indonesia is ranked 4th as the country with the highest number of frauds in 2022. The biggest fraud is corruption cases (64%), then misuse of state & company assets/wealth (28.9%), and fraudulent financial statements (6.7%) [2].

There are many factors encourage someone to commit fraud. This is described in fraud theory which continue to develop over time, starting from the fraud triangle theory found by Donald R. Cressey in 1953 [9]. This theory developed into the fraud diamond theory initiated by Wolfe and Hermanson in 2004 [11]. Then, Crowe Horwarth developed fraud theory into fraud pentagon theory in 2011 [3]. Lastly, fraud theory has evolved into the fraud hexagon theory developed by Georgios L. Vousinas in 2019. According to the fraud hexagon theory, there are six elements that cause or motivate someone to commit fraud including stimulus (pressure), opportunity, rationalization, capability, ego (arrogance), and collusion [4].

2 Literature Review

2.1. Agency Theory

According to Jensen and Meckling (1976), agency theory explains the contractual relationship between principals and agents, where one party acts as the principal and other party acts as the agent [5]. In this theory, the agent has more information than the principal, leading to information asymmetry, which can cause the agent to commit fraudulent acts. In this study, the public and the government act as agents. The government is supposed to do things for the benefit of society. However, because the government has access to more information about

APBN resources than the public has access to the APBN, there is information asymmetry that can lead to government fraud or corruption.

2.2. Klitgaard Theory/Monopoly Theory

Robert Klitgaard is the creator of monopoly theory, also known as the Klitgaard theory. According to the monopoly theory, corruption is formulated as follows $C = M + D - A$. Klitgaard says that officials' monopoly on the power they have to make policies without good accountability will trigger the desire for corruption. Accountability is closely related to the governance of an organization or company, which indicates that the authorities are responsible for policy and decision-making [6].

2.3. Corruption

The World Bank (2000) states that corruption is the abuse of public power for personal gain [7]. Meanwhile, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) states that corruption is an act of inappropriate and unlawful behavior committed by employees in the public and private sectors with the aim of obtaining wealth for themselves or their close ones. Law No. 31 of 1999, as amended by Law No. 20 of 2001, regulates efforts to eradicate corruption in Indonesia. According to the law, corruption consists of seven types of acts namely extortion, bribery, fraudulent acts, embezzlement, gratification, and conflict of interest in procurement [8].

2.4. Fraud Hexagon Theory

Fraud hexagon theory is the development of fraud triangle, fraud diamond, and fraud pentagon. Fraud hexagon consists of six components, namely stimulus (pressure), capability, collusion, opportunity, rationalization, and ego. The six components in the fraud hexagon theory are the result of the development of the fraud triangle theory, fraud diamond, and fraud pentagon by adding a collusion component.

2.4.1. Stimulus (Pressure)

Cressey in Theodorus M (2018) concluded that pressure is a person's financial problem that cannot be told to others or called perceived nonshareable financial need. Cressey also explained that there are certain non-financial problems that can be solved by stealing money or other assets, so by violating the trust associated with his position, Cressey concluded that pressure is a person's financial problem that cannot be shared with others [9].

2.4.2. Opportunity

Opportunity is a condition that allows fraud to occur. This can occur as a result of weak internal controls, lack of supervision, or abuse of authority. Cressey in Theodorus M (2018) [9] argues that there are two components to the perception of opportunity, namely:

- a. General information, namely the knowledge that a position containing trust or trust, can be violated without consequences.
- b. Technical skill, is the expertise or skill needed to commit fraud [9].

2.4.3. Rationalization

Rationalization is the search for the truth of the fraud committed by the perpetrator. In order to preserve his reputation as a reliable individual, a fraudster will justify his illegal actions [10].

2.4.4. Capability

Capability is the ability of fraudsters to commit fraud without being known by the company's controllers. It is difficult for anyone without the necessary personal skills or competencies to commit fraud [11].

2.4.5. Arrogance

Arrogance is a superiority complex that leads to greed in those who think they are exempt from internal discipline. This occurs when one side believes they are in a better position than the other [12].

2.4.6. Collusion

Collusion is an arrangement that deceives a party, usually two or more persons, in order for one party to carry out further acts for undesirable goals, including depriving a third party of his rights [4].

3 Research Method

The method used in this research is the "charting the field" method developed by Hesford et al. (2007) [13]. The method "charting the field" is a method of searching for articles to be grouped based on certain predetermined criteria. In the context of this study, researchers conducted a search for articles that discuss the fraud hexagon in reputable national and international journals. The first step to do is identify the search terms and keywords that would be used in a particular database. Snyder (2019) recommends that searching phrase should be derived from words and concepts that directly relevant to the research topic [14]. The researcher use keywords "fraud hexagon" and "corruption" through search engine Google Scholar, Publish or Perish, Science Direct, and also use some Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools such as Perplexity, Consensus, Mendeley Cite, Sci-Hub, Research Rabbit, Scispace, Humata, etc.

The following criteria will be used to choose research findings or articles: 1) Articles can be tracked online and are empirical research published in accredited national and international journals. The selected time frame begins in 2020, 2) The article provides evidence of relationship between fraud hexagon theory and corruption both in private and public sector 3) The theories presented in articles are supported by consistent evidence. Testing hypotheses defined ex ante for quantitative evidence or demonstrating ex ante and/or ex post the explanatory utility of a particular theory for qualitative evidence are two ways to demonstrate the consistency of the evidence with the theory. Evidence can be found in field studies, laboratory research, postal surveys, field-based surveys, and both quantitative and qualitative data from archives.

3.1. List of Article and Journal

After doing all steps of searching the articles related to fraud hexagon theory and corruption, here is the result of 10 article chosen to be analyze by the researcher:

Table 2. List of Articles Chosen Based on Some Criteria Completed with The Journal Rank, Name of Authors, and Year of Publication

No	Journal	Journal Rank	Article Title	Author, Year of publication
1	ABAC Journal	Scopus – Q1	The Likelihood of Fraud From The Fraud Hexagon Perspective: Evidence from Indonesia	Alfarago, Dio et al, 2023 [15]
2	Economies	Scopus - Q2	Fraudulent Financial Reporting in Ministerial and Governmental Institutions in Indonesia: An Analysis Using Hexagon Theory	Sukmadilaga, Citra et al, 2022 [16]
3	Economies	Scopus - Q2	Hexagon Fraud: Detection of Fraudulent Financial Reporting in State-Owned Enterprises Indonesia	Achmad, Tarmizi et al, 2022 [17]
4	Journal of Accounting and Investment	Sinta 2	The Story of Rising Corruption Post-Village Government Reform - A View of Three Theories: Fraud, Managerial Hegemony, and Culture	Sofyani, Hafiez et al, 2023 [18]
5	Integritas: Jurnal Antikorupsi	Sinta 2	Fraud Hexagon and Corporate Governance Analysis on The Potential Fraud in Financial Statements	Rizkiawan, M & Subagio, 2022 [19]
6	Asia Pacific Fraud Journal	Sinta 3	The Association Between Fraud Hexagon and Government's Fraudulent Financial Report	Aviantara, Ryan, 2020 [20]
7	Owner: Riset & Jurnal Akuntansi	Sinta 3	Determinants of Corruption with Fraud Hexagon in the Perspective of West Java Health Department	Dinata & Asih, 2024 [21]
8	Jurnal Aplikasi Akuntansi (JAA)	Sinta 3	Identification of Fraud Hexagon Theory and Village Community Participation in Mitigating Fraud Risk in Village Fund Management	Rismayani, Gista et al, 2024 [22]

No	Journal	Journal Rank	Article Title	Author, Year of publication
9	Jurnal Akuntansi Universitas Jember	Sinta 3	Influence of Fraud Hexagon on Fraudulent Financial Statement	Maulina and Meini, 2023 [23]
10	Jurnal Akuntansi	Sinta 3	Detecting Fraudulent Financial Reporting in State-Owned Company: Hexagon Theory Approach	Yadiati, Winwin et al, 2023 [24]

From those 10 articles, most of them (80%) are research about fraud hexagon in public sector, including government and state-owned enterprises. Meanwhile the rest counted 20% are research in private sector, which is manufacturing firms listed on Indonesian Stock Exchange.

Both of articles in public and private sector mostly use fraudulent financial reporting or financial statement fraud as the dependent variable. As we have described before, fraudulent financial reporting is one of the form of corruption.

3.2. Analysis of The Article

From 10 chosen articles, researcher analyze some criteria from the articles, such as the population and sample, research method, variable and variable measurements, and the results of the articles. Here is the resume:

Table 3. List of Sample, Variable Measurement, and Results of The Articles

No	Article Title	Sample	Variable Measurements	Results
1	The Likelihood of Fraud From The Fraud Hexagon Perspective: Evidence from Indonesia	76 eligible manufacturing companies listed on IDX	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial statement fraud (Y): The beneish's M-score - Stimulus (X): financial stability - Capability (X): director change - Collusion (X): project with governments - Opportunity (X): related party transactions - Rationalization (X): auditor change - Ego (X): number of CEO's picture 	<p>The likelihood of fraud is significantly impacted by financial stability, as indicated by asset growth. However, the amount of photos of the CEO, linked party transactions, government projects, changing directors, and auditors did not contribute to the likelihood of fraud</p>
2	Fraudulent Financial Reporting in Ministerial and Governmental Institutions in Indonesia: An Analysis Using Hexagon Theory	32 ministerial and government institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Fraudulent financial reporting (Y): leverage index - Stimulus/pressure (X): budget realisation/ budget proposal - Opportunity (X): availability of whistleblowing system - Rationalisation (X): audit opinion 	<p>Fraudulent financial reporting is greatly impacted by three of the six components: opportunity, arrogance, and collusion. The beneficial effects validate the hexagon theory's hypothesis.</p>

No	Article Title	Sample	Variable Measurements	Results
3	Hexagon Fraud: Detection of Fraudulent Financial Reporting in State-Owned Enterprises Indonesia	25 state-owned enterprises listed on IDX from 2016-2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capability (X): leader change - Arrogance (X): minister or head's educational background - Collusion (X): availability of e-procurement system in official website. - Fraudulent financial reporting (Y): beneish model - Financial stability (X): change in total assets for two years - External pressure (X): total liabilities/total assets - Ineffective monitoring (X): number of independent commissioners/ total number of commissioners - Auditor in change (X): a change of auditors - Director in change (X): a change in the Board of Directors - Arrogance (X): number of CEO photos attached to the annual financial statements - Collusion (X): total board of independent commissioners who have concurrent position 	<p>However, the impact of pressure, rationalization, and capacity on fraudulent financial reporting in ministerial and governmental institutions could not be demonstrated by this study.</p> <p>Fraudulent financial reporting is positively impacted by both external pressures and financial stability. However, ineffective monitoring, changes of auditor, changes in director, arrogance, and collusion have no effect on fraudulent financial reporting.</p>
4	The Story of Rising Corruption Post-Village Government Reform - A View of Three Theories: Fraud, Managerial Hegemony, and Culture	4 villages in the Yogyakarta Special Region Province and 1 in Kalimantan Province, Indonesia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corruption in The Village Government (Y) Fraud (X) Managerial Hegemony (X) Culture (X) 	<p>In addition to selfish objectives, corruption took place to finance the incumbent's campaign for the head village election. The creation of "ghost" or "fictitious" villages and the theft of village and village-owned enterprise funds are two examples of corruption. Poor governance practices, including accountability, transparency, and legitimate administration; the</p>

No	Article Title	Sample	Variable Measurements	Results
5	Fraud Hexagon and Corporate Governance Analysis on The Potential Fraud in Financial Statements	21 State-owned enterprises listed and affiliated entities on IDX from 2016 - 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -likelihood of fraud in financial accounts (Y): The Beneish M-Score - Pressure (X): financial stability (total asset t-total asset t-1/total asset 1) - Capability (X): number of change of directors - Collusion (X): sales transactions to related parties - Opportunity (X): Total number of independent commissioners - Rationalisation (X): change of auditor - Arrogance (X): political connection - Corporate governance (X): compliance with the guidelines for public company governance 	<p>overreach of actors (village heads) in holding and managing village funds; and a lack of participation mechanisms were among the factors that the results also identified as contributing to graft corruption scandals.</p> <p>The likelihood of financial statement fraud is greatly influenced by opportunity, rationalization, pressure and capability, and collusion. However, the financial statement fraud is not significant impacted by corporate governance and arrogance.</p>
6	The Association Between Fraud Hexagon and Government's Fraudulent Financial Report	26 state-owned enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fraudulent financial report (Y): Dechow F-score - Stimulus (X): financial stability - Capability (X): director change - Collusion (X): audit fee and e-procurement - Opportunity (X): change in audit committee and whistleblowing system - Rationalization (X): government ownership - Ego (X): CEO education and CEO military 	<p>Fraudulent financial reporting is affected by a number of factors, including government ownership, financial stability, director changes, audit fees, e-procurement, audit committee changes, and whistleblowing systems. Fraudulent financial reporting was not impacted by the ego element of the CEO's education or military experience. Fraudulent financial reporting is simultaneously</p>

No	Article Title	Sample	Variable Measurements	Results
7	Determinants of Corruption with Fraud Hexagon in the Perspective of West Java Health Office	76 employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corruption (Y): abuse of authority, budget abuse, bribery, and gratuities - Pressure (X): pressure from the work environment, pressure from family, and compensation received - Collusion (X): collusion with friends, office mates, superiors, inspectorate generals, and corrupt government employees - Capability (X): ability to utilize position with the authority possessed and the ability to see the weaknesses of the organization - Opportunity (X): supervisory activities, strict rules, and separation of duties - Rationalization (X): temporary fraud and the culture of the work environment - Arrogance (X): arrogant traits and self-esteem 	<p>impacted by the S.C.C.O.R.E. model or the fraud hexagon.</p> <p>Corruption is positively and significantly impacted by rationalization, while ego has a significantly negative impact. However, corruption is unaffected by the other factors such as pressure, collusion, capability, and opportunity.</p>

No	Article Title	Sample	Variable Measurements	Results
8	Identification of Fraud Hexagon Theory and Village Community Participation in Mitigating Fraud Risk in Village Fund Management	6 villages in Cibalong District, Garut, West Java	Fraud risk in village fund management (Y) Pressure (X) Opportunity (X) Rationalization (X) Competence (X) Arrogance (X) Collusion (X) Moderating variable: community participation	Pressure, rationalization, and possible collusion—elements of the fraud hexagon model—have no significant effect on the likelihood of fraud in the administration of village funds. Furthermore, the results demonstrate that community involvement has no significant impact on reducing the possibility of fraud in the administration of village funds.
9	Influence of Fraud Hexagon on Fraudulent Financial Statement	81 manufacturing companies	- Fraudulent financial statement (Y): F-score - Financial stability (X) : asset change - External pressure (X): Leverage - Financial targe (X)t: ROA - SOE (X): Government-affiliated companies - Ineffective monitoring (X): number of independent commisioners/ number of total commisioners - FNoCP (X): number of CEO's photo in annual report	External pressure, state owned enterprises, and frequent number of CEO's picture has a positive effect on fraudulent financial statement, while financial stability, financial target, and ineffective monitoring does not have effect on fraudulent financial statement

No	Article Title	Sample	Variable Measurements	Results
10	Detecting Fraudulent Financial Reporting in State-Owned Company: Hexagon Theory Approach	17 Stated-owned companies listed on IDX	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fraudulent financial reporting (Y): F-score - Financial stability (X): Asset change - External pressure (X): leverage - Nature of industry (X): Receivable - Change in auditor (X): change in auditor during the period - Change of directors (X): change in directors during the period - Number of CEO's picture (X): the number of CEO photos included at annual report - Corporation with government project (X): company cooperation with government project during the period 	The detection of fraudulent financial statements of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) is positively impacted by the following factors: financial stability (stimulus), external pressure (stimulus), industry nature (opportunity), auditor change (capability), director change (rationalization), number of CEO images (arrogance), and collaboration with government projects (collusion). Partially financial stability, external pressure, nature of industry, change of directors, and cooperation with government projects have a positive effect in detecting fraudulent financial statements of SOEs. The detection of fraudulent financial statements in BUMN for the 2012–2019 period is unaffected by the number of CEO photos and auditors change.

4 Discussion

The Fraud Hexagon model introduced by Georgios L. Vousinas in 2019, is a comprehensive framework that expands upon previous fraud theories to better understand the factors contributing to fraudulent activities [4]. This model is particularly relevant for both private and public sector accounting researchers as it provides insights into the dynamics of fraud within organizations, including companies, state-owned enterprise, and government entities.

The Fraud Hexagon consists of six elements that interact to influence the likelihood of fraud namely stimulus (pressure), capability, collusion, opportunity, rationalization, and ego (arrogance) [3]. This study aims to summary and analyze about implementation of the fraud

hexagon theory to corruption in both the private and public sectors based on previous empirical researches.

As shown in the table, the fraud hexagon theory has a significant impact on the occurrence of corruption cases, especially in the form of fraudulent financial statements. All of articles show the empirical evidence that some elements of fraud hexagon affect corruption and some remaining elements do not.

Stimulus (pressure) usually proxied by financial stability measured by asset growth, creates a pressure on management to maintain or enhance the company's financial performance. When companies experience rapid growth, there is a tendency for management to manipulate financial statements to present a favorable image to investors and stakeholders. This pressure can lead to unethical behavior, as management may feel compelled to show consistent asset growth, even if it requires misrepresentation of financial data.

Opportunities, as indicated by the availability of a whistleblowing system, may motivate companies to prevent financial statement fraud by their staff. The purpose of a whistleblowing system is to reduce fraud. It may motivate organizations to stop their staff from filing fraudulent financial reports [19]. Governmental and ministerial organizations that have not put in place whistleblowing systems measures run the risk of filing fraudulent financial reports [15].

Rationalization refers to the justification of unethical behavior by individuals involved in fraud. In the context of financial statements, it allows fraud actors to justify their actions, making it easier for them to engage in corrupt practices without feeling guilty. When companies frequently change auditors, it can be interpreted as an attempt to erase traces of previous fraudulent activities. This change can hide evidence of past misconduct, thereby facilitating ongoing corruption. The new auditors may not have access to the historical context of the financial statements, making it easier for management to manipulate figures without detection

Arrogance proxied by head's educational background affect corruption affects the corruption for some reasons: 1) Leaders or head's organization with high level of education background tend to feel superior. This arrogance can lead them to believe that they are above the law or that the internal control systems do not apply to them, increasing the likelihood of engaging in corrupt practices. 2) Leaders with higher educational backgrounds may possess the intelligence and skills to navigate and manipulate organizational systems for personal gain. This capability, combined with their arrogance, can create an environment where they feel empowered to commit fraud without fear of detection. 3) Leaders with high educational background believing that their educational qualifications and status exempt them from scrutiny. This attitude can undermine the effectiveness of oversight mechanisms, making it easier for corruption to flourish within their institutions.

The hexagon theory identifies collusion as a key element of fraud. When e-procurement systems are absent or poorly managed, they create opportunities for conspiracies among business actors to inflate prices or reduce the quality of goods and services. This undermines public trust and market competition, leading to increased corruption.

Meanwhile, one remaining elements of fraud hexagon namely capability does not effect corruption for several reasons: 1) The study indicates that changes in directors are a common occurrence in companies, often due to the expiration of tenure. This normalcy means that such changes do not inherently signal a capability issue or a potential for corruption. 2) The study

notes that directors should ideally be changed every three to five years. This timeframe is designed to ensure fresh perspectives and prevent stagnation in leadership. As such, the regularity of these changes is not indicative of corruption but rather a strategy for maintaining effective governance.

5 Conclusion

Fraud hexagon and corruption will always be related and interesting to be researched. There are many studies related to this concept, both in the public and the private sector. Six elements of fraud hexagon developed by Vousinas in 2019 [4] are very important in explaining the reason someone commits fraud.

The study shows that some elements of fraud hexagon affect corruption and some remaining elements do not. Most of the articles show that stimulus (pressure), opportunity, rationalization, arrogance, and collusion affect corruption, while capability element does not.

Some limitations in this study are the limited number of scopus and sinta-indexed articles found by researcher related to fraud hexagon and corruption topic thus making the analysis of this research less in depth. Secondly, the scope of the articles just limited in Indonesia, so the result of the study is less globally generalizable.

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