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Empirical Facts of Professionalism of Attorneys for Combating Corruption at the Indonesian State Attorney's Office

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to describe the empirical facts of professionalism in handling corruption cases by prosecutors at the Tual District Prosecutor's Office, Indonesia. The study uses a qualitative approach, and the data is collected through observation and interviews. The study is conducted in three stages: reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results of the study reveal four empirical facts possessed by prosecutors in handling corruption: integrity and commitment, responsibility in carrying out their duties, upholding justice, and moral courage. Integrity is shown by being independent in handling corruption cases and avoiding intervention from elites who have become suspects. Responsibility in carrying out duties is proven by restoring the good name of suspects who are not proven guilty at trial, which is included as a form of moral responsibility. Following the prosecutor's code of ethics when handling corruption cases and providing justice to the community regardless of their social status are examples of upholding justice. Finally, moral courage is shown by rejecting various forms of corruption, bribery, and gratification from elite circles.

Keywords: *Corruption, Crime, Empirical Facts, and Prosecutors.*

Introduction

In Indonesia, the corruption rate tends to increase every year. According to data from Transparency International (TI), Indonesia was the most corrupt country in the world out of 41 countries in 1995, the 10th most corrupt out of 54 countries in 1996, the 7th most corrupt out of 52 countries in 1997, the 6th most corrupt out of 86 countries in 1998, and the 5th most corrupt out of 90 countries in 1999. Corruption has hit all sectors in Indonesia, from government agencies to government institutions, banking institutions, law enforcement agencies, and religious institutions. Therefore, corruption prevention is in dire need of the direct support and involvement of key stakeholders in Indonesia (Hunter et al., 2020). In regards to this, criminal justice is deemed to

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provide welfare and legal justice for the community (Blakely & Blakely, 2018).

Corruption does not only occur at the central level of the nation but also at the regional level, i.e., the provincial, district, and sub-district levels. Simultaneously with the process of decentralizing authority and fiscal responsibility to the regions, the perpetrators and loci of corruption that were previously very centered in Jakarta are now spread throughout the regions up to the sub-districts. This is because the increasing authority of regional authorities has not been followed by a proportional increase in accountability. In addition, the law has become a commodity for capital owners, so its enforcement is getting weaker (Travis & Tranter, 2014). This is even though criminal law, when strictly enforced, can prevent crime, uphold the dignity of the law it self, and protect the interests of communities (Abdurrachman, 2021; Boister, 2003).

The increase in corruption in Indonesia is currently considered massive by observers and anti-corruption activists. Weak law enforcement, nepotism, lifestyle, culture, and socioeconomic disparities that still exist in today's society are the main causes of this increase. Law enforcers are often the masterminds behind these acts of corruption (Travis & Tranter, 2014). Meanwhile, criminal justice under investigation must be dealt with firmly to uphold justice and minimize the freedom of the alleged perpetrators of the crime (Tvedten & Picardo, 2018).

In responding to corruption, the government has made various efforts, from bureaucratic reform to strengthening laws, to ensnare perpetrators. However, the existing policies and laws have not been able to provide a deterrent effect to the perpetrators of corruption, even though, according to the basic principle of the rule of law, the decision to prosecute should not be subject to political will. As demonstrated by the Campbell case in 1924, public prosecutors must always act independently, especially from political leaders (Amirthalingam, 2018). Currently, Indonesia has a corruption handling agency called the Corruption Eradication Commission, which was established under Law No. 30 of 2002. However, this agency has not been able to eradicate corruption thoroughly because the prosecution of corruption is also under the authority of investigators and public prosecutors of the Indonesian Police and the Indonesian Attorney General's Office.

According to Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 16 of 2004 concerning the Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Indonesia, Chapter 2, Article 1,, "the Attorney General's Office is a government institution that exercises state power in the field of prosecution and other authorities based on the law". In this case, the prosecutor's office has independent authority to investigate legal cases by carrying out legal prosecutions (Mohammed Rashid, 2020). The law explains that the prosecutor's office is a *dominus litis* that acts as a legal prosecutor until there is a final decision from the court. The prosecutor's office is the only *executive ambtenaar* that has the right to make legal decisions for perpetrators of corruption. According to this law, the role of the prosecutor's office is considered stronger and more absolute in supporting its role in handling legal cases of corruption. Therefore, this authority must be carried out properly by the prosecutor as a law enforcement agency in resolving legal cases of corruption.

As a government institution, the prosecutor's office must be independent in making legal decisions against perpetrators of corruption. The prosecutor's office must be transparent in handling the law and focus on legal facts, as well as religious norms, decency, and morality to provide justice for the entire community. The role of the prosecutor's office in this regard is very important in creating a legal climate that is conducive and free from corruption, collusion, and nepotism. Prosecutors that receive intervention can consider extra-legal factors in addressing allegations of politicization with biased legal decisions (Mohammed Rashid, 2020; Lauren et al., 2017). The prosecutor's office is a legal symbol that must follow the Pancasila principles in providing justice so that the law applies to all perpetrators of criminal acts regardless of their status, race, ethnicity, or religion.

According to Mohammed Rashid's 2020 study, the prosecutor performs the role of the prosecutor institutionally by pursuing lawsuits at their discretion. The prosecutor has the authority to prosecute the law based on the existing legal facts because the task is a form of moral responsibility for the community. Prosecutors have an administrative-bureaucratic role in carrying out their duties as law enforcers. Prosecutors are a reflection of the law in Indonesia. Prosecutors must obey and comply with the prosecutor's code of ethics and applicable legal rules to be professional (Vaughan & Oakley, 2016). As law enforcers, the prosecutor's code of ethics is the same as that of other professions that must uphold noble values and justice in providing legal services to the community. Prosecutors who carry out their duties and functions professionally will produce strong laws for the advancement of a just nation and state. Prosecutors have a substantial role in determining the future of the law through their objective decisions for law enforcement (Johnson et al., 2020; Starr & Rehavi, 2013).

The professionalism of a prosecutor is very important because they are the main law enforcers and can bring the law to life. Prosecutors must be independent and work regardless of their social status in law enforcement. Prosecutors and lawyers must not lose their identity and professionalism in law enforcement (Travis & Tranter, 2014; Levine, 2015). This has been a challenge for prosecutors to be honest and professional, including for prosecutors in the corruption case within the Tual District Prosecutor's Office, who have handled corruption cases involving officials in the Maluku provincial government, education officials, and commitment-making officials. This article studies this dynamic to reveal empirical facts about the professionalism of prosecutors at the Tual District Prosecutor's Office in handling corruption cases.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Indicators of Independence and Professionalism for Prosecutors

Prosecutors are law enforcers who must have high professionalism in carrying out their roles and duties. According to Sumaryono (1995), the professionalism of a prosecutor can be measured by several criteria. The first criteria are integrity and commitment. In this case, in carrying out their duties, people who work in the legal field must carry out their role as law enforcers and must uphold

the applicable legal rules. Law enforcers with integrity will prioritize justice and honesty, so they do not act outside the applicable legal rules. Rader (2019) states that compliance with the law provides justice and protection for all ecosystems and natural resources. The second criterion is responsibility in carrying out the prosecutor's duties, which includes science responsibility, legal/law responsibility, and social responsibility. Following that, the third criterion is upholding justice. Law enforcement must be carried out fairly regardless of social status, so the prosecutor must provide justice according to the existing legal facts (Wantu et al., 2021). Prosecutors must disengage from personal and family interests. Prosecutors must be honest so that the law applies to all people regardless of rank and position because all citizens are equal before the law. Prosecutors play an important role in determining the punishment received by the perpetrator (Amirthalingam, 2018). Unfair law enforcement can destroy public trust in the law enforcement (Barthelemy et al., 2016). Finally, the fourth criterion is moral courage. Fundamentally, moral courage is shown through an attitude of integrity, honesty, and fairness in law enforcement and the courage to refuse all forms of bribery. In addition, prosecutors who have moral courage are willing to take risks and threats that are directed at them when handling corruption cases involving high-ranking officials in the government.

Prosecutor's Code of Ethics

The prosecutor is one of the law enforcers with the main task of carrying out legal prosecutions in accordance with the law. In particular, the professional ethics of the prosecutor is regulated based on the Prosecutor's Regulation No. PER067/A/JA/07/2007 concerning the Code of Conduct for Prosecutors. In Article 3 regarding carrying out professional duties, the Prosecutor is obliged to (1) comply with the applicable legal rules, statutory regulations, and official regulations; respect the principles of fast, simple, and low cost in accordance with the established procedures; (2) base on belief and valid evidence to achieve justice and truth, be independent, and free from direct or indirect influence and pressure/threats of public opinion. Furthermore, regarding the implementation of professional duties in Article 4, Prosecutors are prohibited from (1) using their position and/or power for personal and/or other parties' interests; (2) fabricating legal facts in the handling of cases; (3) using the capacity and authority to put physical and/or psychological pressure; (4) requesting and/or receiving gifts and/or benefits and allowing their families to request and/or receive gifts and/or benefits in connection with their position; (5) handling cases that have personal or family interests and having work, party, or financial relationships or having direct or indirect economic value; (6) performing discriminatory actions in any form; (7) forming public opinions that can harm the interests of law enforcement; and (8) providing information to the public unless it is limited to technical matters of the case (Saleh et al., 2020).

Corruption Trial Process

In a corruption trial, prosecution and investigation are carried out by different agencies under the Code of Criminal Procedure. The investigation process is carried out by the police, while the

prosecution is carried out by the prosecutor's office (Tvedten & Picardo, 2018). However, based on Article 30 paragraph (1) d of the Prosecutor's Law, the prosecutor's office has the duty and authority to conduct investigations into certain criminal acts based on the law. In the elucidation of Article 30 paragraph (1) d of the Prosecutor's Law, it is explained that the authority in this provision is the authority as regulated for example in Law Number 31 of 1999 concerning the Eradication of Criminal Acts of Corruption as amended by Law Number 20 of 2001. Thus, in eradicating corruption, the prosecutor can conduct an investigation. Article 30 paragraph (1) d of the Law on the Prosecutor's Office assigns the duty and authority to the Prosecutor's Office to conduct investigations into certain criminal acts based on the law. In Indonesia, certain criminal acts outside the Criminal Code are flourishing.

The police generally have the authority as the main investigator in accordance with criminal acts regulated in the Criminal Code. This is in line with Pryce et al. (2020) who believe that criminal justice is the domain of the police starting with an investigation. Prosecutors have the authority as investigators outside the Criminal Code. However, the police and the prosecutor's office, as partners in law enforcement, still cooperate with each other in handling corruption. This cooperative relationship is carried out with a focus on their respective authorities in uncovering cases handled by the police and prosecutors. The process of inter-institutional cooperation facilitates the process of resolving cases that usually involve many parties to government officials. In the Eradication of Corruption, Article 25 stipulates that investigations, prosecutions, and examinations in court for corruption cases shall be carried out based on the applicable criminal procedural law unless otherwise provided for in this law. Therefore, the prosecutor and the police have their respective duties and functions in accordance with the Code of Criminal Procedure in conducting investigations and prosecutions as a process of law enforcement corruption.

METHODOLOGY

This study is an empirical legal study that aims to reveal the reality by taking data based on the experience of respondents and seeing the law as a fact (Eisenberg, 2011). The approach used in this study is a qualitative approach. The data sources include primary and secondary data. Primary data is the main data obtained through observations and interviews with prosecutors at the Tual District Prosecutor's Office. Meanwhile, secondary data is data obtained from books related to the topic of this article. In terms of data collection, the data is obtained through observation (written, verbal, and visual recording), in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. Finally, this study includes three stages, namely (1) reduction by transcribing verbal data into writing, then identification according to the research focus, (2) presentation by making reports based on data classifications, and (3) conclusion drawing by verifying the data that has been reported to see the consistency of the existing data (Miles & A. Huberman, Michael., 2014).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of observations in 2019, there were a number of corruption cases handled by prosecutors at the Tual District Prosecutor's Office. Below is the list of the aforementioned cases.

Table 1 Corruption Case at the Tual District Prosecutor’s Office

Case	Suspect	Position	Corruption Value
Corruption in the construction funds for the Tayando Public High School New School Unit	Akib Hanubun, S.Pd. M.Pd.	Maluku Provincial Education Authority	Rp.345,059,532
Corruption of funds for the construction of the floor of the Regional House of Representatives' office yard	Muhammad Imam Badil Tamherwarin dan Hamdi Tamher	Commitment-Making Officers and contractors	Rp.224,248,500
Corruption of the Business Support System Development Program for Micro, Small, Medium Enterprises	Adolop Samuel Tapotubun	Head of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises	Rp.390,000,000
Misuse of funds for the election of the Village Head at the Community Empowerment Agency and Village Government of Tual City	Dra Hj Fatmawaty Kabalmay	Head of the Community Empowerment Agency and Village Government of Tual City	Rp.393,190,519

The case table above includes corruption cases handled by prosecutors in trials at the Tual District Prosecutor's Office. In handling the above cases, the prosecutors as law enforcers have shown professionalism through the case-handling stages. The evidence of the professionalism of the prosecutors is described in the following discussion.

The professionalism of Prosecutors in Investigating and Prosecuting Corruption Cases at the Investigation and Prosecution Level

There are four variables used to test the professionalism of prosecutors in handling corruption cases at the level of investigation and prosecution. Everything is inseparable from the prosecutor’s code of ethics, *Tri Krama Adhyaksa*, the Corruption Crime Act, and the Prosecutor’s Law, in this case regarding the results of interviews with the prosecutors who served in the Tual District Prosecutor’s Office. The four variables are as follows.

Integrity and Commitment

In carrying out their duties, someone who works in the field of law must be trustworthy and comply with existing laws. Law enforcers in this case must have integrity by being honest and brave in rejecting all forms of bribery and nepotism. Then, their commitment is shown by being serious about enforcing the law fairly, regardless of the social status, rank, and position of the perpetrators, especially the perpetrators of corruption. This is similar to the efforts shown by the Tual District Prosecutor's Office in maintaining integrity and commitment in investigating and prosecuting corruption cases by resisting various kinds of intervention from the elite. This finding is revealed in the interview with the Head of the Special Crimes Section at the Tual District Prosecutor's Office as quoted below.

Data 1

Interventions usually come from the elite who want to protect themselves and their relatives, so the prosecutors are very careful in this regard. Sometimes relatives from these elite circles are guilty, but the reports submitted to their relatives are that they have never committed corruption. Interventions like this usually go into the investigation stage because, at the prosecution stage, the space for elite intervention is quite limited. In essence, everything goes back to the conscience of the prosecutors in carrying out legal justice, and one of the keys is to strengthen the fear of God Almighty. As for the fabrication of legal facts, the prosecutors have never done anything to comply with the wishes of these elites.

Based on the statement above, it is clear that prosecutors always act independently in legal cases at hand. Although interventions always come to the prosecutors from elite groups, the prosecutors try not to be influenced by fabricating legal facts. This is in accordance with the findings in the field, where there are eight cases being processed until the prosecution stage. Of the eight cases, six of them have received *inkeracht* decisions and have ensnared people who have held strategic positions in Tual City, and the other two are still in the investigation stage with one of them ensnaring all heads of Ohoi-Owned Enterprises, Village Heads, and Village Treasurers throughout the Southeast Maluku district. In addition, another effort that the prosecutors have also taken in terms of maintaining integrity and commitment is to reject various cases that have interests with the prosecutors, such as family or colleagues who have direct or indirect political, party, or financial ties to them. This finding is revealed in the interview with the Head of the Investigation Sub-Section as quoted below.

Data 2

None of us have ever handled cases that have personal or family interests; professional, party, or financial relationships; or direct or indirect economic value because this is contrary to the prosecutor's code of conduct. In addition, the possibility of this happening is minimal considering that I am not originally from Tual, so I do not have any immediate family in Tual City.

The statement above proves that neither the prosecutor nor the prosecutor's staff in charge of dealing with corruption cases is Tual natives who have family or closest relatives there. In addition, they are also assigned to the prosecutor's housing where it is unlikely that they will be able to mingle with the community members. In addition, PERJA-067/a/ja/07/2007 concerning the Prosecutor's Code of Ethics Chapter III article 4 paragraph e contains a prohibition for prosecutors to handle cases tied to their families so that a prosecutor must resign in such a case. In addition, the Tual District Prosecutor's Office maintains integrity and commitment by conducting examinations both at the investigation and prosecution level to the maximum extent and basing their examination on the provisions applicable in the statutory system. This finding is revealed in the interview with the Head of the Investigation Sub-Section as quoted below.

Data 3

We conduct investigations for 20 to 30 days for cases in which the reports come from the police and then the results are presented to P21 to be studied and compiled for two weeks. Meanwhile, cases originating from the results of the prosecutor's investigation take 14 days before being submitted to P21.

Based on the data from the interview above, it is in accordance with the Circular Letter of the District Prosecutor's Office No. B-599/F.2/Fd. 1/03/2011 regarding the period of investigation into corruption article 19, which explains that the start of the investigation takes up to 30 days. With regards to the submission to P21, the data above is in accordance with article 110 paragraph 4 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, which states that the investigation is considered appropriate if the public prosecutor does not return the results of the investigation within 14 days or if the public prosecutor has given notification about it. to the investigator before the time limit expires. This is in line with the interview with the Head of the Special Crimes Section as quoted below.

Data 4

In the prosecution, when there is a corruption case involving several people, there is never any disparity in terms of prosecuting sentences against each of them because the prosecutors refer to article 55 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, which states that the perpetrator and those who participated with the perpetrator receive the same threat of punishment. Meanwhile, in a different corruption case with the same value and amount of state losses, a disparity in punishment occurs if there is good faith from one of the perpetrators to compensate for the state loss. This is because one of the purposes of prosecution is to recover state losses, so there will be a reduced sentence for the perpetrator who compensates for the loss.

Based on data 4 in the interview, the steps taken by the prosecutor for the first case are considered very good because they are in accordance with the principle of equality before the law. The disparity in the prosecution of corruption perpetrators will cause legal imbalances and can damage justice and legal certainty. Similarly, the second case with disparity due to compensation for state losses

can also be considered a good effort because the disparity of punishment in corruption cases does not only happen in Indonesia but also in several other countries. The authors agree with the prosecutor's statement that the main objective is to restore state losses as well as to respect the good faith of the perpetrators. By definition, a disparity is the application of unequal punishment to the same crime or to crimes of the same dangerous nature. The Corruption Law no. 31 of 1999 article 4 prohibits the absolute abolition of punishment and does not contain the prohibition of disparity in punishment.

Social, legal/law, and scientific responsibilities

The form of social, legal, and scientific responsibilities can not only be seen administratively but also through the ongoing legal process in the Tual District Prosecutor's Office. This is evidenced by the results of the interview with the Head of the Investigation Sub-Section below.

Data 5

If someone is proven guilty of corruption, the case will still be tried. Meanwhile, if there is no evidence, the news will be exposed to social media in order to inform the public so that the good image of the reported party can be restored.

Data 5 above is a form of moral responsibility and the prosecutor's social responsibility to the defendant whose good name, the good name of their agency, and the good name of their family have been tarnished by a case. This way, if the defendant is not proven guilty, they will regain the public's trust. Defendants in criminal cases must still be treated with respect to promote legal integration and restorative justice (Johnson et al., 2020). This is in line with Vaughan & Oakley (2016) who believe that a prosecutor or lawyer must respect the autonomy of each of their client. Restoration of the good name of the defendant who has become a suspect is an absolute right that must be given by the prosecutor. In addition, another thing that prosecutors also do in terms of realizing their legal responsibilities is to provide rights that should be accepted by the suspect/defendant. This is evidenced through the following interview with the Head of the Investigation Sub-Section.

Data 6

Suspects have the right not to be imprisoned during an investigation unless they escape or destroy evidence. Anyway, most of them are elites who have government positions, so until now, no one has tried to escape. In terms of detention, the suspect is only detained at the prosecution stage because the trial is held at the Corruption Court in Ambon City. This is due to financial limitations for airfare or sea transportation.

Based on the results of the interview above, the prosecutor's office has tried to fulfill the rights of the defendants because of detention in the investigation, according to article 21 paragraph 4 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, it can only be done based on 3 factors, namely: concern about

escaping, concern about destroying evidence, and repeating the act. However, because corruption cases usually involve elites who hold strategic positions in the Tual City government, the possibility of escaping can be considered minimal, while detentions carried out at the prosecution stage can be tolerated considering that the Corruption Court is not located in Tual City.

Upholding Justice

Justice is an absolute right that must be upheld by the prosecutor. Prosecutors must be honest in looking at legal facts and referring to existing legal rules. The role of the prosecutor in creating justice is to carry out prosecutions based on existing legal cases without any intimidation that could injure law enforcement in Indonesia. In practicing the values of justice and honesty, the Tual District Prosecutor's Office strives to avoid discriminatory actions of any nature to all clients who are handled or examined. Discrimination is a form of injustice in law enforcement on the grounds of social status, race, ethnicity, and religion so it is contrary to the law and Pancasila. Therefore, the prosecutor must be able to be fair to anyone to get justice. This is in accordance with the results of an interview with the Head of the Investigation Sub-Section regarding the role of the prosecutor in providing justice below.

Data 7

To obey their oath of office, prosecutors do not discriminate in their services in the corruption cases they handle so that the interests of the state are maintained. This is realized by taking into account the facts in the investigation stage with integrity, and in this case, there has never been any discrimination in the Tual District Prosecutor's Office against the perpetrators. This is because discrimination is against the principle of equality before law. If it is proven that there is a violation of their oath of office, the prosecutor will be reported to the supervisory agency and a trial will be conducted regarding the prosecutor's code of ethics at the prosecutor's commission of the Republic of Indonesia.

Data 7 above proves the integrity of the prosecutor in the Tual District Prosecutor's Office. The prosecutors always comply with the prosecutor's code of ethics in handling corruption cases. This is what makes prosecutors have to provide justice to the public in general regardless of their social status. In fact, prosecutors are seen as direct partners of society to combat and reduce crime (Pryce et al., 2020). Upholding justice is a form of professionalism of prosecutors in carrying out their duties and roles as law enforcers. Additionally, another effort made by the Tual District Prosecutor's Office is by honestly revealing that, when there is documentary evidence being destroyed by the suspect, the prosecutors try to continue to carry out investigations by looking for documentary evidence in other agencies that may also archive copies of the documents.

Moral Courage

The moral courage that has been practiced by the prosecutors in the Tual District Prosecutor's

Office is to reject various forms of corruption, bribery, and gratuities that come from elite circles. The law must also be enforced against the elite and the authorities as a form of justice (Yang, 2015). In addition, the prosecutors also rejected those things from those outside the elite circles who apparently also try to bribe for their freedom, such as with money, women, facilities, discounts, and projects. This finding is revealed in the interview with the Head of the Tual District Prosecutor's Office Special Crimes Section as quoted below.

Data 8

In corruption cases, both during investigation and prosecution, there are many elites who try to disrupt the legal process of suspects by offering gratifications and bribes that are not only in the form of money but also in the form of women, facilities, discounts, projects, etc. While those who offer are usually people from elite circles, people outside elite circles also often try to offer these things to be free from the law, but I never accept them. In fact, the prosecutors try to turn down these offers in a kind way. If a prosecutor has ever received a bribe or the like, then the prosecutor will be registered as a defendant in court, but until now our prosecutors are still carrying out their duties in the Tual District Prosecutor's Office.

Data 8 above proves that the legal process that has taken place so far in the Tual District Prosecutor's Office has faced many challenges in the form of gratification. According to article 12 B of Law no. 20 of 2001, gratification is a gift in a broad sense including the provision of money, goods, rebates (discounts), commissions, interest-free loans, travel tickets, lodging facilities, travel tours, free medical treatment, and other facilities. This includes gratuities received domestically and abroad with electronic transactions or without electronic transactions. Further, bribery is an act of giving and receiving money and extortion is the imposition of fees where fees should not be charged, which is illegal and falls into the realm of Corruption, Collusion, and Nepotism. The refusal of gratification by the prosecutor is a form of the prosecutor's professionalism in upholding justice for the community and showing moral courage as a law enforcer. A prosecutor must work with honesty without any material or financial basis in the existing law enforcement (Saito, 2021).

CONCLUSION

The process of proving the professionalism of prosecutors in the Tual District Prosecutor's Office in Indonesia is carried out by conducting direct observations and interviews with prosecutors who have handled corruption cases. The empirical facts of prosecutors' professionalism in the Tual District Prosecutor's Office are shown in four attitudes, namely (1) integrity and commitment, (2) responsibility in carrying out their duties, (3) upholding justice, and (4) moral courage. Integrity is shown by the prosecutors by being honest, not accepting bribes, and avoiding intervention. Responsibility in carrying out their duties morally is shown by restoring the good names of suspects who are not proven to have committed criminal acts in court. Upholding justice is proven in the fair handling of corruption cases regardless of the social status of the suspects so that there is no

element of legal discrimination. Finally, moral courage is shown by rejecting various forms of corruption, bribery, and gratification from elite circles with the aim of providing legal assistance for the freedom of the suspect.

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Dear Author,
Please check the reviewer comments, you MUST return the revised version before September 8, 2023. When you submit the revised version, please DO remember to provide a response to reviewers with details. THIS IS A MUST. THIS IS A MUST. THIS IS A MUST.
In addition, please strictly format your paper according to the template of the journal. Thank you very much. Please DO remember, when you submit the revised paper, there will be TWO files: formatted and revised paper, a file as response to reviewers.
Best regards,
Mincong

Reviewer 1: Revision required

my suggestions for improving each section of the paper:

Title:
The title is concise and informative. However, I would suggest adding the location to specify the context, for example:
"Competence of Business Players in Moderating Market Orientation, Technology and Business Networks Toward Product Innovation: A Study of MSMEs in Medan, Indonesia"

Abstract:

- The abstract provides a good summary of the study background, aims, methods, and key findings.
- Suggest adding 1-2 sentences at the end to highlight the novel contributions of the study.

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Reviewer 2: revision required

Thank you for the opportunity to review this interesting paper on product innovation in Indonesian MSMEs. The study addresses a relevant issue and makes a useful contribution. I have several suggestions to further strengthen the manuscript:

Introduction

The introduction would benefit from more background on key theories like the technology acceptance model that underlie your hypotheses:

- For example, you could elaborate on Davis' (1989) technology acceptance model and how it explains users' adoption of technology based on perceived usefulness and ease of use. This provides a strong theoretical basis for your hypothesis about how technology orientation influences product innovation.

Literature Review

- Expand the literature review by incorporating seminal studies on each construct - for example, Kohli and Jaworski's (1990) framework defining market orientation in terms of intelligence generation, dissemination, and responsiveness.
- Provide more conceptual definitions of key terms like market orientation early on, for example: "Market orientation refers to an organization's focus on understanding and meeting customer needs through intelligence generation and responsiveness (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990)."

Methods

- Provide more details on how you selected the specific MSMEs, such as: "We used stratified random sampling to select 150 MSMEs from each of the major industry sectors (food services, retail, etc) in Medan."

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