

Religiosity, Competence and Independence in Forming the Anti-Corruption Attitude

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Abstract: In recent years, the profession of auditor has taken a place in the public eye. The frequent exposure of corruption cases involving auditors make the public questioning the ethical behavior of the accountants. Several factors influencing the ethical behavior are religiosity, education, emotional quotient, environment, rewards and position. The samples of the study are 30 auditors working on the Public Accountant Office (KAP) in Malang and Surabaya. The technique used is purposive sampling by directly distributing questionnaires to the auditors while the data analysis technique is multiple linear regression and hypothesis testing using t-test and F-test. The result shows that the variable of religiosity represented by faith has influence on the anti-corruption attitude; the variables of competence and cognition represented by experience have significant influence on the anti-corruption attitude and the variable of independence represented by the duration of relationship with clients, pressure from clients and non-audit service has significant influence on the anti-corruption attitude. The religiosity, competence and independence of the auditors have significant influences on the anti-corruption attitude simultaneously. To get a stronger result generalization, the future researchers are suggested to broaden the geographical coverage of the sampling by taking the sample of auditors from KAP throughout Indonesia.

Key words: Religiosity, competence, independence, auditor, anti-corruption attitude

INTRODUCTION

It takes competent auditors to get the best result of audit. The auditor's knowledge, experiences and levels of education define the competences of auditors in comprehending issues concerning the field of auditing. Auditors should participate in the adequate technical training comprising technical aspect and general education (Christiawan, 2004; Paracini *et al.*, 2014; Mihret and Yismaw, 2007).

Regarding this, Salfudin (2004) defines that a competent person is the one who performs tasks easily, fastly, intuitively and almost with no mistakes. Moreover, argues that a competent person is someone who has extensive procedural knowledge and skill reflected in audit experiences. It has been claimed that experienced auditors have better understanding on financial statements. They are more capable in explaining logical reasons on mistakes in financial statements and in classifying mistakes based on audit objectives and fundamental structure of accounting system. These studies show that the knowledge and experiences form the auditor's competence. Regarding the responsibility in increasing the level of accuracy of a company's financial statements,

a public accountant should be competent and independent in auditing (Richard, 2006; Lee and Stone 1995; Barnes and Huan, 1993).

The independency of auditors brings honesty and good mentality in work (Flint, 1971). The independence attitude cannot be separated from the internalization of religious values embraced and applied in the organization by the auditors (Weaver and Angle, 2002). The role of religion in forming the auditor's behavior is highly supported by the situation and condition of the organization applying ethical code in auditing profession (Jacobs, 2005). Organization is the single actor having complete information and is applicable as the new perspective of behavioral theories.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

An individual's attitude will affect the action taken by someone while the action is in accordance with the ethics. Ethics essentially comprises a complex process of determination on action taken by someone in certain situation. Auditors with high work ethics will be motivated to work optimally in any condition. They will be more involved in the work rather than those with lower

work ethics (Lidigdo, 1999). Moreover, those who has high commitment on their organization will accept the organizational change better than those who not as long as the change brings benefit and has no potential of changing the basic values and goals of the organization (Weaver and Angle, 2002). This study is conducted to fill the discrepancy in the study regarding anti-corruption attitude influenced by religiosity, competence and independence. Most of the recent studies concern on the quality of audit. Therefore, this study offers different approach concerning on the influence of religiosity, competence and independence of auditors towards the anti-corruption attitude.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The amount of respondents that are capable being the subject of this research is 7 Public Accountant Offices (KAP) in Malang and Surabaya. The writer distributed questionnaires to 50 auditors. Of the 50 questionnaires, 33 respondents fulfill the criteria.

The influence of religiosity on the anti-corruption attitude: The t-value of 4.478 with significance level of 0.000. Regarding the significant values that is <0.05 , the religiosity variable significantly influences the anti-corruption attitude. According to the regression equation, the coefficient of religiosity variable is positive which means that the increase in respondent's perception on religiosity can influence the increase of anti-corruption attitude. Therefore, it can be concluded that H_1 is acceptable which means that the religiosity significantly increase the anti-corruption attitude during the work.

The influence of competence on the anti-corruption attitude: The t-value of 4.388 with significance level of 0.000. Regarding the significant values that is <0.05 , the competence variable significantly influences the anti-corruption attitude. According to the regression equation, the coefficient of competence variable is positive which means that the increase in respondent's perception on competency can influence the increase of anti-corruption attitude. Therefore, it can be concluded that H_2 is acceptable which means that the bigger competence significantly increase the anti corruption attitude during the work.

The influence of independence towards the anti corruption attitude: The calculation result in the t-value of 3.559 with significance level of 0.001. Regarding the significant values that is <0.05 , the independence variable significantly influences the anti-corruption attitude. According to the regression equation, the coefficient of

independence variable is positive which means that the increase in respondent's perception on independence can influence the increase of anti-corruption attitude. Therefore, it can be concluded that H_3 is acceptable which means that the bigger independence significantly increase the anti-corruption attitude during the work.

Determination coefficient: Based on the calculation of regression, the value of determination coefficient is 0.892 indicating tight relation between variable X and Y. Determination coefficient (R^2) is 0.795 which means that 79.5% of variation of all free variables (religiosity, competence and independence) can state the bound variable (anti-corruption attitude) while the rest 20.5% is stated by the other variables that are not proposed in this study.

Simultaneous test: The result of the overall models gains F-value of 37.531 with significance probability of 0.000. Therefore, the H_0 is rejected which means that the variable of religiosity, competence and independence simultaneously capable in explaining the chance of anti-corruption attitude variable.

Discussion: As the spearheads of the auditing implementation, auditors should be supported by adequate independence, skill, desire and experience and by sensitivity in ethics of auditing profession (Abdolmohammadi and Owhoso, 2000). Skill, desire and experience reflect the competence s possessed by the auditors. It is expected that the competences can contribute to the working output that is in accordance with the mission carried by the them. In order to objectively carry the duty, auditors should perform good attitude, ethics and morals (Buchan, 2005). American Institute of Certified Public Accountant (AICPA) signals the auditors to train their professional sensitivity in and moral consideration in every activities (Rosalina, 2007; Jeffrey *et al.*, 1996). Therefore, auditors who are sensitive on ethics issues are more professional (Sweeney and Robert, 1997).

The auditor's independence, competence and sensitivity of professional ethics based on religious values are important in the implementation of auditing function, since those variables support the consideration in the arrangement of audit report and are important in gaining clean and transparent result.

Religiosity is the ability of selecting the best choice in an open situation. Whenever a person performs an activity, he will refer to one of his values to determine a choice among available alternatives. Religiosity is also perceived as an effort of transforming values into empirical reality in a long process from the growing awareness of faith to the conversion.

Religiosity is intended to be the solution for people in obtaining more intense religious life. When a person becomes more religious, he becomes more aware on his life. For a religious person, the intensity cannot be separated from his success in being consistently open to the center of life. This is what is called religiosity as the core of the life quality (Ferriss, 2002), since it is the dimension existing in the sub-consciousness and personal pure vibration (Kozaryn, 2010). Religiosity is as important as the religious teaching (Ringdal, 1996). It is even more than having a faith in certain religion (Cox and Hammonds, 1989). It comprises all connections and consequences between human and the creator and between the human themselves in daily life.

The competence in auditing has positive influence on the anti-corruption attitude (Zairi and Peters, 2002). The better the competence of an auditor, the better the ethical behavior he has. An auditor has competence in detecting, comprehending and tracing the cause of problems. A competent auditor tends to have precision and good skill in finishing all the tasks. The competence represented by experiences and knowledge will contribute to the anti-corruption attitude. The better the knowledge of an auditor, the better behavior he has. An auditor will get more knowledge (perspective) on the field he working on and thus will comprehend various issues better. With extensive knowledge, an auditor will follow the more complex development easily. As the result, the level of success in auditing can be higher with better ethical behavior (Shihata, 1997).

It is not easy for an auditor to keep independence, objectivity and integrity. The experience and competence do not guarantee the improvement of ethical behavior. Alim *et al.* (2007) state that the cooperation with overlong and repeating auditing object can be a threat the auditor's independence. Moreover, the various facilities provided by the auditing object during the task can influence the auditor's objectivity and enable them to conduct collusion.

CONCLUSION

The religiosity supported by religious values offers positive and significant contribution to the anti-corruption attitude. The internalized religious values can be the guidelines for the auditor in performing his duty as the external auditor in the field of finance. The more religious an auditor is the more ethical behavior he expected to perform. The competence in performing auditing tasks has positive influence on the anti-corruption attitude. The more competent an auditor is the better his ethical behavior turn out to be. An

auditor has a skill in detecting, understanding and tracing the cause of a problem. A competent auditor tends to have good precision in finishing all of his tasks.

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