

On the Corruption of Communication: A Theory of Deception

Bambang Sukma Wijaya

Correspondence: Bambang Sukma Wijaya, Universitas Bakrie, HR Rasuna Said Kav. C-22, Kuningan, Jakarta, Indonesia.

Received: March 12, 2022

Accepted: August 1, 2022

Online Published: August 2, 2022

doi:10.11114/smc.v10i2.5500

URL: <https://doi.org/10.11114/smc.v10i2.5500>

Abstract

This article elaborates on the issue of communication corruption, namely communicative actions or events that reduce the audience's right to receive messages entirely and correctly, according to normative (objective) and contemplative (subjective) facts. The literature study and reflectivity methods point out at least four main aspects of communication corruption theory: message, media, context, and behavior. This study also proposes a formula to measure and assess the extent to which communication is corrupt, considering communication needs and desires, authority and opportunity, communicative power, audience rights, conscience, and moral responsibility. Three forms of communication are very vulnerable to communication corruption: persuasion, imaging (both in the effort of impression building and impression laundering), and deception. Future studies can use this study as a theoretical and methodological reference. Practically, the findings and propositions of this research are helpful as reflections and guidelines for anticipating and minimizing communication corruption practices in daily and professional activities.

Keywords: communication corruption, corrupt communication, corruptive communication, communication corruptness, communication corruptibility

1. Introduction

Previously, corruption issues in the communication perspective are primarily studied concerning the anti-corruption campaign. This phenomenon included communication strategies that effectively convey the anti-corruption messages (Marquette, 2014) or studies of corrupt behavior, which is repeated as the implications of a communications failure in the anti-corruption campaign (Prabowo, 2014) and how youth perceive it (Sihombing, 2018). Another study focused on the role of communication technology in reducing corruption in the government or the bureaucracy as well as in preventing corrupt behavior of public employees (Eddy & Akpan, 2008; Shim & Eom, 2009; Bertot, Jaeger & Grimes, 2010), and the role of media in combating corruption (Camaj, 2013). The phenomena that appeared indicate that corruption exists in the actions and events of communications (Schleifer, 2009; Clemons, 2010). At least, the corruptive behavior characteristics may occur on or similar to the behavior of certain communications.

We can trace, for instance, the event of political communications in Indonesia's presidential election campaign in 2014 (and continued to the 2019's due to the similar candidacy). Although the successful election resulted in Indonesia being one of the most democratic countries with the largest population (Kawilarang et al., 2014), the presidential election in 2014 also made 'bad' history. Four flaws of the election include black campaigns, unfair competition between TV stations owned by politicians, money politics, and the empty slogan "ready to win, ready to lose" from both sides of the candidates and their supporters because the losing party still failed to move on (Buletin Bawaslu, 2014). Most of the violations and the records were associated with the event and misleading communication actions, which usurp the rights of the public to receive the message correctly.

A similar phenomenon of political communication corruption also occurred in the United States, where the 2016 presidential election was strewn with hoaxes, fake news, and misinformation (Rogers & Bromwich, 2016). The New York Times reporter Leonhardt & Thompson (2017) even mentions that Trump, the president-elect, spends much time telling untruths and creating situations where the actual reality becomes irrelevant. In the recent presidential election of the Philippines, the president-elect of the Marcos family of dictators managed to wash their impressions by glossing over past glories and obscuring the facts of corrupt and dictatorial regimes (Head, 2022).

In the corporate sphere, communication corruption is also not spared. The Boeing 737 Max case related to the Lion Air Flight 610 and Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302 plane crashes riddled with scandals of corrupt communications due to fraudulent and deceptive behavior (Fickling, 2021; Volkov, 2021). This fraud resulted in Boeing being fined for paying over \$2.5 billion (Department of Justice, 2021). US Attorney Erin Nealy Cox for the Northern District of Texas said:

The misleading statements, half-truths, and omissions communicated by Boeing employees to the FAA impeded the government's ability to ensure the flying public's safety. This case sends a clear message: The Department of Justice will hold manufacturers like Boeing accountable for defrauding regulators – especially in industries where the stakes are this high (Department of Justice, 2021, para. 4).

Phenomena that indicate deceptive behavior and communication corruption also appear in marketing and advertising communications practices. For instance, the Government of Canada (2022) records various cases of inappropriate conduct in marketing. Examples of these are allegations of hidden fees, the creation of false positive consumer reviews, and numerous false or misleading price claims. Others are false or misleading claims about disclosing personal information on Facebook and Messenger, performance claims that are not based on adequate and proper testing, and running a trial offer scam scheme that traps consumers into monthly subscriptions. In social media, influencer marketing is also inseparable from communication corruption, as Putri's research (2021) on beauty influencers on Instagram showed fraudulent behavior in attracting many followers.

In personal branding, Nasution's research (2020) proves communication corruption practices among students in polishing portfolios on social media to attract potential employers and clients. The study of Wijaya, Lucyanda, and Amir (2021) confirms the fact of communication corruption by academics during the Covid-19 pandemic in branding themselves to support careers as lecturers, practitioners, speakers, and entrepreneurs.

Cheating, deception, and using religious sentiments and congregational emotions are other common forms of communication corruption. In the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election, religious and ethnic identity politics were used to overthrow and even criminalize one candidate from a religious and ethnic minority (Baiduri, 2017). Another example is the commodification of religion in selling products that lead to consumer fraud (Fadli & Alexander, 2022)—or converting a protest movement in the name of 'defense of religion' into an economic and commercial movement which turns out to be just a cover to hypnotize and deceive religious consumers (Argenti, 2019; Hartomo, 2021).

Corrupt communication is also every day in crisis and disaster situations. Regarding the 2003 Iraq war, for example, Vox reported on the lies of Bush and his advisers. They claimed that intelligence agencies knew to be false, both about WMD and about Saddam Hussein's non-existent ties to al-Qaeda (Matthews, 2016). However, that information nevertheless served as the basis for the decision to invade Iraq and caused a humanitarian catastrophe. Likewise, in the Ukraine war, fake news abounds through social media and online, as reported by Deutsche Welle (DW), ranging from nuclear weapons to accusations of Neo-Nazis (Trobridge, 2022). Misleading information was also widely circulated during the Covid-19 pandemic, so the term 'infodemic' is widely used to refer to "false or misleading information in the digital and physical environment during disease outbreaks." (WHO, n.d., para. 1).

Therefore, events and actions of improper communication are not unlike the corruptive activities that deprive the public's rights and harm the state or at least injure humanity. If the communication has manipulation, then so does the corruption. If the communication is a lie, corruption always involves deception or dishonesty. If the communication is a forgery and stealing the message's meaning, corruption has plenty of fraud and theft. Thus, the phenomenon of corruption also exists in communication.

Corruption is inseparable from power. Myint (2000) stated corruption as the use of public office for personal gain, or in other words, the use of official position, rank, or status by office workers for their interest. Klitgaard et al. (2000, in Hopkins, 2001) stated corruption as "misuse of office for personal gain," while Nye (1967 in the Seumas 2005) mentioned corruption as the abuse of power by public officials for personal gain as well. However, corruption does not necessarily involve public officials. An ordinary citizen who lies when testifying in a court can be categorized as corrupt (Neumas, 2005). Likewise, when police fabricate evidence for false arrests or false crime scenes, though the police are public officials otherwise, it does not account for their gain.

Hence, corruption can be divided into public and personal or private corruption. Spence et al. (2011) categorize corruption as individual corruption, organizational/ institutional corruption, and industrial corruption. In addition, Heinzpeter Znoj, in his article titled "Deep Corruption in Indonesia: Discourses, Practices, Histories," called the term "systemic corruption" to the type of corruption in Indonesia. Znoj defines systemic corruption as 'a disciplining and rewarding practice that confirms the bureaucratic hierarchies' (Nuijten & Anders, 2007, p. 53). In this article, corruption is defined as actions to reduce or eliminate some parts of the public's right to utilize the authority, power, and opportunity given for personal or group interests (Gardiner, 1993; Jain, 2001). Public rights may include the right to truth, welfare rights, voting rights, political rights, economic rights, the right to justice, and the rights of others both in the context of citizenship and humanity.

Although most of the literature about corruption mainly contains the view that corruption is a violation of the law, in reality, corruption is not always associated with problems or breaches of the law. This view is due to corruption being fundamentally more to the issue of morality (Jain, 2001; Mishra, 2006). Also, corruption is not always associated with economic motives. For example, an academic who commits acts of plagiarism against the work of others does not

motivate the financial reasons but rather enhances the academic status due to academic world is more robust the 'status' motives rather than the motives for seeking wealth (Neumas, 2005).

Thus, there are many forms of corruption and economic corruption (Clinard, 1990; Hodgson & Jiang, 2007) and the law, including criminal, judicial, political, and academic corruption, among others. Similarly, economic motives are not the only motive for corruption; there are other motives to gain status, power, drug addiction or gambling, sexual satisfaction, and more (Mishra, 2006). Myint (2000) mentioned a few examples of such corruptions: bribery, extortion, fraud, embezzlement, nepotism, cronyism, plunder of public assets and property for personal use, and 'selling' the influence.

This article focuses on one form of corruption rarely touched on in the literature and public discourse: corruption in communication and various motives. The terms communication corruption (Wijaya, 2007b; 2013b), corruptive communication (Wijaya, 2012), and the corruption of communication have been used by Schleifer (2009) to explain why the quality of information changes through emails, text messages, and other personal contacts. Also, Clemons (2010) describes the unhealthy process of communications inside the White House related to the communication team works and analyzes the corruptive behaviors in communication events. Specifically, this article aims to: 1) construct a theory of communication corruption by considering various relevant aspects, 2) formulate a formula for measuring the level of communication corruption, and 3) discuss typical forms of communication that are prone to corruption.

2. Method

As a conceptual paper, this article systematically outlines various points of view. According to Jaakkola (2020), the conceptual paper "typically draws on multiple concepts, literature streams, and theories that play differing roles" (p. 19). This article uses a theory synthesis approach with a tendency to "achieve conceptual integration across multiple theories or literature streams [...] offer a new or enhanced view of a concept or phenomenon by linking previously unconnected or incompatible pieces in a novel way" (Jaakkola, 2020, p. 21). This article connects the concepts of corruption and communication to open new horizons in viewing the phenomena of cheating, deceit, thievery, forgery, abuse, dishonesty and insincerity, subterfuge and trickery, and other inappropriate communication actions similar to corruption. Therefore, using literature studies and reflectivity methods, this article starts by identifying and discussing communication motives and needs as triggers of communication corruption and continues to dimensions and aspects related to communication corruption with empirical examples. Next is the proposed formula for measuring and assessing the level of communication corruption, which can also evaluate the potential for communication corruption. Three forms of communication prone to corruption are examined with several cases and points of view. The discussion ends with conclusions/comments on the thoughts and propositions and their implications for further relevant research. In separate pieces, this concept has gone through initial review and construction sketches by Wijaya (2007a; 2007b; 2012; 2013a; 2013b). Also, it has been referenced by several relevant research (Wijaya, Lucyanda & Amir, 2021; Putri, 2021; Nasution, 2020). This article synthesizes them through further study with a more in-depth review.

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1 *Communication Needs and the Corruption of Communication*

As a process, communication is continuous, dynamic, and complex, the ongoing creation and interpretation of the meaning. During the process, the substance is used according to the needs of communicators. According to Adler and Proctor II (2016), the need for communication can be either physical needs related to the health of both body or soul or identity needs relating to the definition and disclosure to form an identity or images in the minds of others about who we are. Social conditions relate to relationships with others, such as pleasure, affection, friendship, recognition, an escape from stress, relaxation, and control. In addition, the need for communication can also be driven by practical goals or instrumental goals to communicate practical purposes, such as making other people act and behave the way we want.

Starting from the various needs that motivate and purpose of the communication, the management of meaning becomes vital to be associated with ethical factors, including looking at the possibility of the indication element of corruption in it, because sometimes a person has "to use all sorts of ways" to meet these needs. An incumbent, for example, in the running as the next candidate, will behave corruptively by manipulating data on achievements and his track record. He claims something that is not his achievement and then presents it to the public to influence voters.

Another example is a commercial product that uses testimonials from a public figure. Public-figure has never been or is new to the product but claimed to have been using the product a long time in the testimonials. It is also an action that can be indicated as corruption, for robbing and harassing the public's right to get the truth of the message by using the economic power through the media payment. One of the actions that are also the most frequently performed is the corruption of/ in journalism and media (Spence et al., 2011), which are in the form of news that has been boarded "sponsored links" with a party or a political candidate. Hence, it is very partisan if the report has to fulfill trustworthy journalism standards that are objective, balanced, and factual.

Meanwhile, corruption in communication can occur in various domains, not only in the professional sphere but also in interpersonal communication. A man who wants to meet his social needs, to get affectionate with some ladies, would like to change his attitude, appearance, and information to form an impression and a particular perception of him as the woman would desire. This action by Goffman (1959) is called impression management in the presentation of self. Impression management is to create a positive image of the person to influence the perception of others (Goffman, 1959; Seiler & Beall, 2012).

Many companies also do impression management to build their reputation and credibility in public. In an effort, such imaging, no doubt the actions of corruption can occur. A company that wants to make a positive image through corporate social responsibility (CSR), for example, conducts a fake event in a particular setting and then writes in the annual report that has been done in CSR activities. CSR activities were partially improvised but claimed and perceived as if they had been done entirely by the company. On the other hand, CSR activities are vital for the community. However, the community feels only a moment not significantly to improve their lives.

From the above description, corruptive communication behavior is most likely to occur in persuasive and imaging communications. They are conducted either by an individual or an institution. Nevertheless, it is also possible to do it together in an industrial community, such as between the media industry and the advertising industry or corporation, media industry, and a political entity. In connection with persuasion as one of the communicative behaviors that are vulnerable to ethical violations, Larson (2010) highlighted several reasons as follows:

In persuasion, one person, or a group of people, attempts to influence others by altering their beliefs, attitudes, values, and actions. Effectiveness requires conscious choices among ends sought and rhetorical means used to achieve the ends. Influence involves a potential judge –any or all receivers, the persuader, or an independent observer (Larson, 2010, p. 43).

Corruptive behavior in communication appears in deception or manipulation of the truth for encoding/decoding the communication messages. However, it can also be a truth that is exaggerated or inflated, meaning in the case of CSR above. Another corruptive behavior is using public facilities as medium and campaign messages for personal or group interests.

In addition, bribing a person or certain parties to do some testimonials in impression management and impression laundering (Wijaya, 2013a), i.e., cleaning impression and a wrong perception of the person or institution through intensive communications, can also be categorized as corruptive communication actions. Wijaya (2013b) describes the various dimensions of the corruption of communications as the essential elements in the communication process that can be seen as vulnerable to indicate the occurrence of corruption. These are the dimensions of message, media, context, and behavior.

3.1.1 The Corruption of Message

The message is central in the process of communication. Without the message element, an activity cannot be called communication, and the message can be verbal or nonverbal. Of course, the message is not the only ride of meaning because meaning can also ride on the channel or medium through the news, allowing us to understand McLuhan's thesis that the medium is the message (McLuhan, 2006).

In the encoding process, to achieve the objectives and fulfill the specific communication needs, communicators can use the authority and opportunity to perform improper or unethical actions such as manipulating data, information, or facts that covert into the meaning of a message. Other activities may include converting and constructing the substance from a reference that is not true or unreal (fictitious) to convey a false message. This act often happens in disinformation, a form of message corruption. Disinformation can be regarded as incorrect information that is intentionally distributed secretly (sometimes wrapped in the paper of rumors) to shape public opinion or obscure the truth (Merriam-Webster, 2012). Also, it is a kind of propaganda that a government organization issues to face the rival powers or media (Oxford Dictionary, 2012). Disinformation is different from misinformation, i.e., unintentional false information.

Furthermore, message elements that are deliberately reduced or even falsified, for example, in the text hijacking, symbols or icons' meaning disguised to fool the audience. Another example is a convoy of senses deliberately leading in the wrong direction to create a particular impression of an object. In this case, the language of the text and symbols encoded into the message's meaning is the primary vehicle affecting communication's corruptibility. The farther the language/symbols are used to value the truth and decency, the more corrupted the process and the results of such communication.

In communicative action theory, Habermas (1987) stated that the ethical framework of communication lies in language-related demands. The principles are, first, the statements made are trustworthy when it exists in the proposition, second, language acts are considered appropriate by the context of the applicable normative, and third, the intention expressed by the speaker is the content of what he was thinking. Thus, the type of communication built becomes a medium of mutual understanding without manipulation, conditioning, and deception.

3.1.2 The Corruption Related to Media

Corruption in the media can occur at the level of institutional and industrial. At the institutional level, corruption usually involves corrupt individuals, such as journalists and marketing personnel, to the owner of the media. However, corruption can also be derived from institutions where people come together for a common goal. In journalism or media institutions, corruption usually occurs as a conflict of interest because of special interests such as political participation of sure (Spence et al., 2011).

Although it seems objective and impartial, it is very subjective and tendentious. For example, in setting the news agenda, the media strategically directs news objectivity to the viewpoint that benefits groups. The most obvious example is reporting the success of a region that leads to the perception of a positive image of the incumbent candidate without public recognition. Another example is the formation of public opinion through the news to discredit political opponents subtly through the coverage of an event that can negatively affect an image. This affair deprives the public of distinguishing between propaganda or campaigns and the news.

The corruption of communication in the business world is often through subliminal and native advertising. News or coverage of certain events performed by journalists is advertising a product, and the media is paid to make news (Arnold, 2009). In this case, the collusion between journalism and advertising or public relations can be called "media corruption" (Spence et al., 2011, p. 121). Media "sells" the public trust towards the media through the news that is perceived as objective and free from the intervention of any party's interests. The media is even indicted for "fraud" on audiences. Hence, in the advertising ethics of any world, a subliminal ad is not justified.

A branded story created to cause widespread publicity and word-of-mouth effect does not rob the public's right to distinguish between news and advertising. Because the "ending of the story" will usually reveal that the "story" is just a part of the campaign strategy of advertising a product. It is somewhat different if it is the agenda-setting of a product in the form of a creative brand publicity strategy without involving the media in the production process of the message.

Activities of this kind cannot be categorized as subliminal ads. Subliminal ad locks the right of the public to distinguish between news and advertising, hiding the absolute truth of the facts until the infinite time limit. From the media economy perspective, the phenomenon occurs to the implications of media industrialization, which has been running for decades.

No wonder the media at the industry level also performs corruptive behavior, which involves a particular industry supporting a practice that damages one or more roles and formal institutional objectives. Two potential causes of corruption in journalism and media are media concentration and conglomeration (Spence, 2011, p. 144). Media ownership is concentrated concerning the monopoly of news' standpoint, while conglomerate relating to conflicts of interest in reporting the companies which take shelter under one corporation with the media, especially if companies do immoral or illegal practices against the interests of the public. In contrast, the press stands for voicing public interest as one of the pillars of media functions.

3.1.3 The Corruption of Communication Context

The context of communication can be interpreted as a comprehensive circumstance or situation in which the contact occurs (Seiler & Beall, 2011: 24). Transmission cannot occur in a vacuous space. There is always a condition that sets both formal and informal settings. This context can influence us in what-to-say and how-to-say strategies. Context also determines what type of communication will be used. In this case, the context plays an essential role in managing the meaning because the setup can influence public perceptions in decoding the message's importance.

Corruption in context can occur when the communicator harnesses its power and the opportunity for specific imaging purposes. For example, when a candidate of the incumbent political leaders conducts a covert campaign by setting news about the achievements in the area, which leads to building the perception that he has been successful and experienced thus, he deserves to be re-elected. In this case, the incumbent utilizes his position and authority (which, of course, may not belong to political opponents), using public facilities such as public funds to pay for media (on behalf of the interests of the government) which boils down to the imaging itself or political group. Therefore, it can be indicated as corrupt communication.

Another example of communication corruption in corporate communications activities is when a PR Officer or Corporate Communication Manager wards off negative issues from the news media. He arranges media to cover companies that do not reflect the facts and pays certain people to do good testimonials. It plays the public opinion to deflect public perception of the main issue related to the public interest. The corruption of communication context can also occur when companies take advantage of the joyous moments of the public that are not relevant to the product or the capability of a company and then accidentally link so that a broad audience perceives that the moment is the company initiative.

In governmental communications, especially in Indonesia, it is expected that there is always a particular arrangement at the venue to create the impression of regularity in any event attended by the government officials. In the new order era,

dialogues or direct interactions between officials and people are often a farce because both "people" and their answers/questions that came out of their mouths had been scripted beforehand. In other words, all are fake, only to create a positive impression on the more comprehensive public eye, mainly if the media cover it. This imaging communication can be categorized as corrupt communication because the fact is manipulated such that the public's right to the truth of the message is so neglected.

3.1.4 The Corruption related to Communicative Behavior

Corrupt behavior in the more common behavioral dimensions is associated with immoral and even illegal actions of an individual and institution, for example, behavior of plagiarism and bribery. As set forth at the beginning of this paper, corruption is not solely motivated by economic factors but can also be inspired by social status and other personal characteristics. An academician, for example, who commits plagiarism in his paper-making process to get academic standing can undoubtedly be categorized as corrupt behavior.

Also, including the author's name without the contribution or the role of authorship in a scientific article published is an act of public deception that is part of the corrupt communication activity. Quoting a written or oral statement or using images of other people's work without acknowledgment can also be communication corruption. Likewise, the student who commits plagiarism in the preparation of outcomes, or even paying/bribing someone to complete the work on their behalf (in a similar case, ghostwriting), can be categorized as corrupt communication behavior.

Moreover, bribery's behavior is to give certain benefits to a person or a party to submit false testimony, either through the media or directly, is communication corruption. This phenomenon often occurs in the interest of the management of a positive image (impression management), soliciting (persuasiveness), and cleansing negative images and perceptions (impression laundering) which attached to those who bribe.

Bribery can occur in political communication, marketing (advertising testimonials), legal (false testimony in court), corporate, and even personal. For example, to gain the trust back from a lover, a friend, or a colleague, someone can bribe others to give a false confession or testimony to skim or cleanse the negative perception already attached to him, so the impact on the restoration of faith. This action also may be indicated as corrupt communication behavior.

It is conducted for impression management by creating a positive image of the person to influence the perception of others, or impression laundering by cleaning impression and lousy perception of the person or institution through intensive and strategic communication. Therefore, the overall dimensions of corrupt communication are in managing to mean. Below are some aspects that can be identified as communication corruption and relevant examples that can be used as references for future studies.

Table 1. Aspects and examples of the corruption of communication

Dimension	Key Aspects	Scope	Examples
Message	Verbal	Written, oral, or spoken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • data or information that is manipulated, • the meaning that is being converted to be different in translation for a specific intention, • the fictitious reference in the argument, • message elements that are deliberately reduced or even falsified, • disinformation, misinformation, hidden information • fake news and content, • hoaxes, • subliminal ads, • covert ads, and others.
	Visual (nonverbal)	Still images, motion pictures, audio-visual, gestures, body language, symbols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fake picture elements, • polished visuals, • deceptive footage, • scenes set to be claimed as facts, • unrelated images with narrative text that are intentionally associated with constructing meaning or creating a particular impression, • the idea is displayed without mentioning the source or creator,

Media	Personal	Media owner, key person, social media user	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> deceptive gestures and facial expressions, and others. conflict of interests of media owner or critical persons of media (CEO, commissioner, top management, and others.), social media feature abuse for personal branding
	Professional	Journalist, editor, producer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> hidden agenda setting, collusion between journalists and the marketing division of media in the newsroom, corruption in the news gatekeeping process, and others.
	Institutional	Media as an institution, Media corporation, Media conglomeration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> media biases, media abuse, media conspiracy, Media infidelity, advertisers or funders frame and construct media reality and others.
	Industrial	Media association, Media professional community, regulator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> policy manipulation, conspiracy in the interpretation of public information, The false representation of the public interest and others.
Context	Manipulation of context	The fake and deceptive context for the creation of a positive impression, for the negative impression laundering, and the purpose of persuasion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fact twisting, exposing non-actual conditions for branding, fake audiences, fake events and ceremonials, fake situation, deceptive settings, deceptive discourse and rumors, deceptive influencer or opinion leader, false or fake reason to do or make a decision (i.e., the possession of nuclear weapons as an excuse for the USA to invade Iraq in 2003, negative rumors were deliberately created by the military to slaughter Indonesian Communist Party members in Indonesia in 1965. Another example is different political choices as an excuse not to pray for the bodies of fellow Muslims in the Jakarta gubernatorial election in 2017, different political choices as a reason for labeling infidel to fellow Muslims, made-up reasons for being late, and many others).
	Misuse of authority related to the resources of context	Context resources for the campaign, context resources for the portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the use of facilities and public funds for personal campaigns of officials claiming individual achievements over teamwork deliberately foiled the government's program to create a wrong perception of the government
	Politicization and commodification of context	Politicize and commodify the issues related to religion, ethnicity, race, and community groups through communication strategies such as	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the use of identities and symbols of religion, nationality, race, and certain groups in the campaign, politicizing and mobilizing the issue of blasphemy to form a wrong perception of political opponents in the gubernatorial election of Jakarta

		branding, political campaign, and others.	
Behavior	Ethical	Unethical behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plagiarism, • bribery, • fake endorsement, • authorship for sale, • Ghost authorship, and others.
	Legal	Illegal behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • false testimony, • copyright infringement, • slander, • Defamation and other corrupt behaviors.

Source: Author's sketches

3.2 The Corruptibility of Communication

Then, how to know how big the corruption in communications has been made have, or how enormous the potential for communication corruption is? Wijaya (2007a; 2013b) proposes a formula for the Corruptibility of Communication as follows:

$$Cc = N + P^O - Ar (Cs + R)$$

Where:

Cc = Communication corruption

N = communication Needs (physical, identity, social, instrumental goals)

P = Power

O = Opportunity

Ar = Audience rights

Cs = Conscience

R = moral Responsibility

Corruption in communication (Cc) occurs for the needs (N), interests, desires, politics, or specific purpose of communication. It is supported by the communicator's power (P) and authority in regulating the message's meaning. This power is driven or influenced by the Opportunity (O) size –the more significant opportunities exist, the greater the control. Then, it reduces the audience's right (Ar) to receive the message wholly and correctly fit the facts, whether the points of normative and contemplative ones refer to the rule of truth based on Conscience (Cs) and the moral Responsibility (R). Therefore, the greater N, P, and O are the more corruptive in a high level of communication. Contrary, the greater the value of Ar, Cs, and R is, the lower the level of corruption in communications.

For example, a media owner with the communicative need to construct a particular identity about him to form a good image certainly has the power to set the desired meaning of the message on the media (Milne, 2012). The size of the opportunity supports it in the absence of government regulations governing media use for the personal benefit of the media owners. The communication corruptibility level of the media owner is such high potential. Moreover, suppose the moral responsibility and conscience are small in realizing the possibility of his efforts to reduce the public's right to receive the truth and integrity of the message. In that case, the level of corruptive communication is even higher.

In the academic world, the opportunity to corrupt will be wide open when an academician has the authority and power of intellectuals to regulate the message's meaning, primarily supported by limited supervision. The academician can commit corrupt acts of communication to meet the needs of identity (for imaging), instrumental (for an academic position), and social recognition of the achievements and reputation. The corruptibility of communication will increase if the moral responsibility and awareness of small conscience do not undermine the public's right to receive the truth and integrity of the message it conveys through a communication event, for example, in the writing of scientific papers or lectures.

Thus, corruption of communications is an action or event in the communication process that reduces the audience's right to receive messages completely and correctly according to facts, both normative and contemplative truths, by utilizing the power or authority possessed. The 'normative fact' referred to in the definition is the objective fact, visible or can be measured and proven. Whereas the 'contemplative fact' is the subjective fact of the communicator, which 'the naked eye may not necessarily prove,' the communicator can feel it based on the internal dialogue of consciousness honestly and transparently.

In communication corruption, a communicator always uses power or authority, political leader, business, professional, personal and management, or any other ability to meet needs or realize the purpose of communication. In addition, the

communicator always takes forced or unilateral rights of the public, the audience, the communicant, or the message recipient to receive complete and accurate information. 'On the whole and true' here means in the corruption of communications, it could be the message was deliberately not in a whole or truth was eliminated partially or entirely. It can also mean the way the message is not correct, for example, in media or public facilities for personal or group interests.

Spence et al. (2011) stated that the problem is that people could not rule out in an ethical perspective if the standard of truth is inclined relative to different contexts and different means of the concept of truth. For example, the concept of truth in persuasive advertising differs from that in informative news (journalism). This difference is where the role of creative communication becomes the key. When an advertisement conveys the product message, creators must use minimal time and space because all the room and time through the media will be costly, so the creators must deliver the message as effective, efficient, and attractive. Without losing the substance of the message's truth, the message delivery process is designed and executed creatively to attract attention and catch the audiences' inappropriate communication strategy for the brand or product.

Creators sometimes use absurd approaches generally known and recognized by the target audience, but the substance of the message in its advertising claims must remain steadfast. For example, for a soft drink that claims to be refreshing, advertisements use a creative approach as if after drinking, the person will land into a pool of water that nourishes the body. Of course, the ground suddenly turned into a pool is something absurd. Generally, the adult audience who watches the ads can understand because the substance of the message is not "changing the ground into the pool" but a "refreshing drink."

A good advertisement has a creative approach processed by the consumer (audience) insights. The example advertisement above may be based on the consumer audience insights that interpret freshness as "jumping into the pool when the situation is hot." Even the creator created an idea based on the meaning of "freshness from consumer audiences' spectacles."

Of course, no corruptive communication actions and all the substance of the message fit the fact of the product, although the creative communication approach is absurd. Unless the product is not a refreshing drink, or for example, using testimonials as an innovative communication approach, the paid models give false testimony or incorrect. The advertisement may be categorized as corrupt communication because the substantive truth of the message is inadvertently omitted.

In contrast to the concept of truth in the news (journalism), the facts and the substance of the news messages and how to publish/ broadcast must not be fictitious. It shall be free from the element of persuasion, especially absurdity. First, the news is not intended to persuade or establish a particular perception of a product's appropriate benefits. Second, publishing information in the media space is not paid, so the opportunity to deliver a complete and comprehensive message is quite possible, even a necessity. That is why the principle of covering both sides in the news must exist to ensure objectivity and free the information from persuasion bias. If the report is designed and presented to shape a particular perception, persuade the audience to do something, or represent specific interests, the news has 'stolen' the concept of truth in advertising. Of course, it is not valid, and the idea of truth should place in the proper context.

Similarly, the concept of integrity which the messages that are intact in advertising are the messages whose meaning represents benefits or the facts of the product and do not try to deceive the consumer audience. Yes, not to be delivered in full, because the real meaning of "intact" is not synonymous with "full"). Meanwhile, the message is intact in the news (journalism); it is a comprehensive message that fits the facts on the ground, is balanced, not biased, and unambiguous.

In advertising, the concept of integrity and truth is more focused on the substance of the message. In the news, the idea of integrity and truth focuses on the message's essence and situation. Situation or context here means completeness, objectivity, balance, unbiased, and interest-free.

Ultimately, the message's integrity and truth standards should reach the audience or the recipient. Communicators must have empathy and practice audience-centered communication. Glasses of the communicator's conscience in designing and implementing communication activities should direct to the audience's benefits, not merely the world of the communicator's interests. Thus, it will lead to effective communication, which is also sincere, noble, transparent, and free from corruption.

3.3 Deception and the Corruption of Communication

Intentionally or unintentionally, knowingly or unknowingly, communication corruption mainly occurs in persuasion and imaging efforts. It is because persuading and convincing others to believe and do what we want requires effort and technique that is not easy. In the three persuasive aspects of Aristotle's rhetorical model (ethos-pathos-logos), for example, communication corruption related to ethos in establishing credibility through fake profiles and portfolio data, which is currently very prevalent in cyberspace and real life with the help of information technology and imaging. Putri's research

(2021) mentions how influencers polish themselves to give the impression of being credible in beauty. Likewise, research by Nasution (2020) found the efforts of several students and academics (Wijaya, Lucyanda & Amir, 2021) to polish their portfolios and CVs to give the impression of 'experience' and quality in the eyes of prospective employers and clients.

Communication corruption related to logos can occur when a person or an institution bases its argument on false or fictitious evidence to convince the audience or the public. What Boeing did by 'hiding' the facts or, at the very least, indicating fraudulent and deceptive behavior (Fickling, 2021; Volkov, 2021) regarding the 737 Max fraud that forced Boeing to pay over \$2.5 billion (Department of Justice, 2021), for example, was a corrupt logos strategy. Likewise, Trump political act has been accused of committing fraud and manipulating the truth (Leonhardt & Thompson, 2017). The cigarette industry scandal in the Insider film is also a form of corruption in the communication of business entities in aspects of logos and ethos by hiding the facts so that it is problematic regarding moral, professional, public, and personal values (van Es, 2003).

Also, victim-playing techniques distorting the facts to attract public sympathy are a form of pathos communication corruption. In the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election, sympathizers of one candidate used religious sentiments and politicized ethnic identity to bring down another candidate, which led to the criminalization (Nailufar & Patnistik, 2016). This movement then streamed to the institutionalization of the political economy of religion through brand 212 (Ridwan & Jauhary, 2018). Religion is the most effective pathos weapon in persuasion (Knoll & Bolin, 2019) because religion is very close and attached to emotional sentiment (Emmons, 2005). Not surprisingly, many cases of using religious sentiments to influence consumers in selling commercial products and services lead to fraud (Syahrul, 2020).

Thus, specific areas of communication that require the leading role of persuasion are very vulnerable to communication corruption. They include advertising and marketing communications, sales communications, political communications, religious communications (in various spectrums and interests), behavioral campaigns, and even interpersonal relationships and love communication approaches.

In addition to persuasion, image communication can also contribute to communication corruption. According to Davis (1986), image making is "a distinctive and specific cultural achievement but can be derived logically from simple and archaic perceptual and cognitive processes" (p. 193). It is related to representation (and communication) which refers to "somatic and extra somatic modes of acquiring, preserving, and manipulating knowledge" (p. 193). This type of communication/ representation is closely related to Baudrillard's critique of hyperreality (2012) and Goffman's concept of impression management (1959). In hyperreality, the process of simulation and imaging goes through stages: the reflection of actual reality, covering and changing the nature of profound reality, covering the absence of deep reality, having nothing to do with any reality -- then there is a simulacrum (the signified acts as a signifier that refers to a false reality which is the signifier itself) (Baudrillard, 2012). Killing facts and realities and replacing them with simulation results that seem real is a concrete form of communication corruption.

In Goffman's dramaturgical process of impression management efforts, the backstage plays an essential role in hiding or cutting the facts and data so that what appears on the front stage is a form of corrupted impression communication. Likewise, suppose backstage there is an impressive design through the construction and use of false or fictitious facts and data. This strategy makes impressions generated by the image on the front stage is a form of corruption in the context of communication.

Arriane's research (2018) found the role of the middle stage in parliamentary impression management complementing Goffman's front-back stage thesis. This middle stage is the stage that mediates the front and back stages, where lobbying and political communication take place intensively, and guerrillas before presenting impressions and messages on the front stage. Thus, communication corruption can also occur in the middle stage of impression management and image communication. In corporate communication, corruption in the middle stage can occur in the context of media relations, both in impression management and impression laundering (Wijaya, 2013a).

Cases of deceptive impression laundering are also common in electoral politics, as happened in the Philippines with the election of a president from the corrupt dictator Marcos clan (Head, 2022; Johnson, & Simonette, 2022). Similar to Indonesia, the washing of impressions by the corrupt Suharto family in political campaign with the romanticization strategy of the New Order dictatorial era through the guerrilla slogan 'Piye kabare, enak zamanku toh?' ['How are you? Better in my time, right?'] (Riana & Persada, 2021). Also, the mainstay political party of the new order regime, Golkar, which rebranded itself as the 'new Golkar' since the 1999 election, has proven to be in second place (Yuniarto, 2021; Tomsa, 2006). It makes Golkar glorious in the New Order and shrewd in the Reformation Era (Lubis, 2018). Rebranding is commonly used in impression laundering techniques because they optimize angelic communication through the process of atonement, replacement, establishment, and acknowledgment (Wijaya, 2013a). This action, although sometimes legal, tends to be deceptive.

Thus, communication corruption occurs through a deceptive communication process. Communication corruption is an event and action that reduces the audience's right to receive the message entirely and correctly (Wijaya, 2007a; 2013b). It means hiding and changing some or all of the facts and data to mislead or result in misleading information. Docan-Morgan (2019) says that deceptive communication is "the exchange of information that the communicator knows to be inaccurate and misleading" (p. vi). What sets it apart from other forms of communication is that "at least one communicator in the interaction—regardless of context—manipulates words, behaviors, texts, objects, or appearances so that others will form a false impression" (p. vi). Deception occurs when "an identifiable actor's prior intention to mislead results in attitudinal or behavioral outcomes that correspond with the prior intention" (Chadwick & Stanyer, 2022, p. 2). As a communicative activity, deception is "a deliberate act perpetrated by a sender to engender in a receiver belief Contrary to what the sender believes is true to put the receiver at a disadvantage." (Burgoon & Buller, 1994, pp. 155-156).

Deception and lies are phenomena that develop along with human civilization. Therefore, "white lies, cover-ups, bluffing, euphemisms, masks, pretenses, tall-tales, put-ons, hoaxes, and other forms of falsehoods, fabrications, and simulations coexisted with truthfulness and honesty in human communication for centuries" (Knapp & Comadena, 1979, p. 270). However, the study of deception and lying experienced significant growth in the late 1960s, especially in the US (McGlone & Knapp, 2019), which was marked by the proliferation of books and journal articles from various perspectives ranging from communication (e.g., Knapp et al., 2016) to religion (e.g., Denery, 2015). Various terms appear related to these trends and phenomena, for instance, post-truth (Keyes, 2004), the era of unprecedented bullshit production (Penny, 2005), greenwashing (Karliner, 2001), truthiness or truth that is not based on facts and is only known intuitively. (Stephen Colbert, 2005 in McGlone & Knapp, 2019), world of disinformation (Jackson and Jamieson, 2007), the post-fact era (Manjoo, 2008), and communication corruption (Wijaya, 2007b; Clemons, 2010).

Lies and deception cannot be separated from the concept of communication corruption because lies and deception tend to reduce or negate the audience's right to receive information and messages entirely and correctly. For example, in Reinold's (2021) research on deceptive communication in doping, deception techniques include playing down the extent of the doping problem, omitting narrative details, and pretending to lack doping-relevant knowledge. Other research reveals that when people witnessed either one exaggerated lie, one or four minimal lies, or no lies, they trusted and liked the confederate more than when witnessing four exaggerated lies (Tyler, Feldman, & Reichert, 2006). Using the conversational maxims approach, Franke, Dulcinati & Pouscoulous (2020) also found that participants "exploit the implicatures to deceive, but not as consistently as literal meaning (lies) and not equally across the board of triggers." (p. 603). This finding shows a correlation between deception through linguistic games and communication corruption by reducing conversational maxims. In the online dating sphere, Lo, Hsieh & Chiu (2013) prove that people still use a higher degree of deception in self-presentation of dates with beautiful photos to increase their chances of getting a date with those dates. Evenly, users are suspicious of the authenticity of photos of pretty or handsome dates.

Deception can also occur in all dimensions of communication corruption, be it media (e.g., Kanwal et al., 2010; Marwick & Lewis, 2017), message (e.g., McDonald, 2022; Burgoon, 2015; Wardle, 2017), context (e.g., Fichera, 2020; de Freytas-Tamura, 2017; Wakefield, 2022) and behavior (e.g., Lo, Hsieh & Chiu, 2013; Tyler, Feldman, & Reichert, 2006; Government of Canada, 2022). Like communication corruption, deception is used chiefly for persuasion and imaging purposes because "deceptive communication is a persuasive general strategy that aims at influencing the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of others through deliberate message distortion" (Miller, 1983, p. 99).

4. Conclusion

This article has outlined the link between corruption and communication, corrupt events and acts in communication, and the characteristics of corruption that manifest in events, programs, strategies, and communicative actions. Motivated by communication needs, whether physical, identity, social, and practical or instrumental goals, communication corruption can occur in various dimensions, including messages, media, context, and behavior. Both verbal and nonverbal messages are often corrupted through misinformation, disinformation, hidden information, fake news and content, hoaxes, fabricated data, polished visuals, manipulated video footage, and other fraudulent messages.

Media corruption, from individual to industrial level, from misuse of (social) media features to media agenda conspiracy, is a common phenomenon. Corruption in the communication context can take the form of falsification and manipulation of events, impression laundering, false triggering situations, misconduct and inappropriate branding, and abuse of authority and power for image purposes, from personal to organizational and state levels. Corrupt behavior in communication manifests in unethical and illegal actions, such as bribing for testimony, deceiving to persuade or influence opinions and actions, cheating in creating works, and other communicative behaviors that are manipulative and fraudulent.

The communication corruptibility formula can help assess and measure the level and potential of communication corruption. This formula assumes that the higher the value of moral responsibility and conscience, the less possibility of

communication corruption. Also, the smaller the degree (abuse) of authority, opportunity, and communicative power, the lower the level of communication corruption. Therefore, strengthening moral responsibility and reflection of conscience, limiting authority, opportunities, and communicative power can minimize the potential for communication corruption.

Communication corruption is closely related to persuasive, imaging, and deceptive communication. These three areas and communication strategies provide fertile ground for the growth of the seeds of communication corruption. Preventing communication corruption can start with being vigilant and closely monitoring these three areas. Moreover, although it may have implications for legal consequences, issues of morality cause corruptive behaviors in communication; therefore, corrupt communication is against the ethics of communication. However, not all violations of communication ethics are corruptive communication behavior.

To distinguish them, it is worth highlighting that communication's corrupt behavior constantly harms the audience or recipients because some or all their rights to receive the truth have been robbed by the communicator, both individually and institutionally. Corruptive communication also uses existing opportunities by leveraging the power or authority possessed by the communicator, politically, economically, socially, professionally, and others.

5. Future Research Directions

This article opens a broader study of communication corruption in various communication fields. Therefore, future research can touch on one or several aspects of communication corruption as described in this paper. Some examples shown in table-1 can be an inspiration and a reference for researching communication corruption, which is very rich in issues. Researchers can also use the communication corruptibility formula in a quantitative approach to see how high the level of communication corruptness occurs in a case.

Acknowledgment

We appreciate and thank the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia (Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset dan Teknologi Republik Indonesia), LLDIKTI Wilayah III, and LPP Universitas Bakrie which have fully supported this study through grant no. 069/ES/PG.02.00.PT/2022 sub no. 453/LL3/AK.04/2022 sub no. 241/SPK/LPP-UB/VI/2022.

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