

## Understanding of the Causes of Bribery by Students with Various Types of Attitude to Bribery

S.T. Dzhaneryan, D.I. Gvozdeva and I.N. Astafyeva  
Southern Federal University, The Academy of Psychology and Pedagogy,  
13 M. Nagibina Av., Rostov-on-Don, Russian Federation

---

**Abstract:** This study presents the results of the research of a conative component (causes and psychological features of a bribe giver and a bribe-taker represented by a subject) in a sense attitude to bribery of students. Sense attitude to bribery (bribe) is defined as a sustainable and being perceived as a means to achieve a goal psychological attitude of a subject when a bribe is presented in his/her mind as occupying the place of a purpose or a means in the realization by the subject of his/her particular needs and values. It is shown that in the representation of students and depending on the type of their attitude to the bribery different causes of bribery are distinguished, including the psychological features of a bribe giver and taker.

**Key words:** Bribery, sense attitude, connotative component of an attitude, causes of bribery, psychological features of a bribe-giver and taker, students

---

### INTRODUCTION

One of the most common forms of corruption is bribery which is interpreted as a “corruption situation when there is a voluntary offering, promising, giving, receiving, readiness to take a certain amount of money in order to influence the actions of an official in own favor” (Golubovskiy and Sinyukova, 2015). The definition of bribery in the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (Article. 290, 291) summarizes in a receiving by a bribe taker (a bribed official) and a giving by a briber (a person performing bribery) a bribe with the possible participation of a mediator. Bribe is received by an official the tangibles (goods, money, services, other property benefit) for an act or failure to act in the interests of the briber which that person could or should make in virtue of his/her official position (2) (Article 290 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation). Bribery is widely represented in such a form of corruption as grassroots (individual) corruption which includes “acts of corruption committed, as a rule, by officials on the lower and middle levels of the job ladder” (Golubovskiy and Sinyukova, 2015). This type of corruption is directly related to the shadow economy, regarded from the point of view of a bribe giver and a bribe taker as a mutually beneficial is the most characteristic for the modern Russia showing an upward trend, covers the daily life of the population, mainly in the areas of safety of traffic, health and education

(Vannovskaya, 2013; Borisova, 2014). Two trends can be identified in the opinion of the researchers about the involvement of participants of the educational process in bribery. On the one hand, “absolute lawlessness of students (customers) and “virtually unlimited power of a teacher (seller)” (Shirin, 2015). On the other hand, students mostly manifest such corruption crimes as bribery and mediation in bribery” (Fomenko, 2015).

Awareness of the modern civil society about the systemic nature of corruption and insufficiency to reduce it of one-time but widely broadcasted in the media anti-corruption measures is supported by development of the legislative base and special economic measures, demonstration of the historical, socio-economic, national, etc. prerequisites for corruption (Kurdyumov *et al.*, 2016; Reshetnikov, 2008; Holmes, 2012; Kopsteva, 2014; Wedel, 2012), the rationale of widespread programs for its eradication (Garmaev *et al.*, 2015; Zamaletdino *et al.*, 2016; Nomokonov, 2000; Dementieva, 2011). In other words, specialists from different spheres of public life and science sectors were consolidated in solving the problem of corruption. The logical consequence of this consolidation is also actualization of psychological research. The role of psychological mechanisms (Kurdyumov *et al.*, 2016; Vasyakin *et al.*, 2016) and personal characteristics (Golubovskiy and Sinyukova, 2015; Fomenko, 2015; Vannovskaya, 2013) both in functioning and in elimination of corrupt behavior are

underlined; the concept of “psychological corruption” is introduced (Reshetnikov, 2008). The necessity of creating a new psychological research direction, the use of the existing categorical-conceptual personality psychology apparatus to establish the psychological nature of corrupt behavior (Vannovskaya, 2013) are substantiated. This process covers different educational stages of the created programs on anti-corruption education of youth from primary school up to high school education. Researchers call to enhance such programs primarily addressed to the students who “differ by their laziness, low level of knowledge, a false sense of permissiveness and lack of anti-corruption education” (Fomenko, 2015). At the same time there is awareness of the danger of such a program conversion “in the course of informing about the possibilities of corrupt behavior” (Kuznetsov, 2015). It is emphasized the need to give coverage to the reasons which lead to formation of a taker and a briber (Khil’ko, 2015).

In our view, the goals of psychological analysis of corruption and anti-corruption education are met with studies of the psychological attitude of a subject to bribery as a form of corruption. Psychological attitudes which relate to the developed type of mental attitudes, represent an integrated system of individual, selective, conscious personality relations with the various aspects of reality arising from the entire history of human development, expressing his/her personal experience and internally determining his/her actions and experiences. They are characterized by conscientiousness, arbitrariness, integrity (the system), are more individualized and connotative, associated with personal meaning are specified in the interests, estimates, beliefs and conscious human motives.

The literature on the problems of corruption has repeatedly noted the presence of a usual tolerant attitude towards this phenomenon in the majority of the population. The data on increase in tolerance to corruption among young people in the course of training in high school (Khil’ko, 2015; Dzhanyan, 2010) and on perception by the most prosperous of them of bribery as an attribute of a market society (Vannovskaya, 2013) are presented. Thus, students who denounce corruption and believe that it needs to confront against, “do not realize that corruption begins with their own actions; they support corruption not knowing about that” (Khil’ko, 2015). Representations of people about the causes of corruption are ambiguous: the external cause is involved for an explanation of his/her own corrupt behavior and the behavior of relatives (a forced response to external

circumstances) and internal reason to explain the similar behavior of other people (due to their personal characteristics) (Vasyakin *et al.*, 2016).

We define attitude to bribery as meaningful or sustainable perceived mental attitude to the last as a means to achieve a goal of in which bribery (bribe) is presented in a subject's mind as taking place of a purpose or means in realization by the subject of his/her particular needs and values (Dzhanyan, 2010). The content of this attitude should be considered in the unity of the contents of each its component: cognitive (the interpretation and function of a bribe), emotional and evaluative (experience of the respondents about bribes; assess the impact of bribery on the subjects of different sizes, the measures on its elimination), conative (causes and psychological features of a briber and a bribetaker in a subject's representation). The urgency of studying the causes of bribery in the representation of young people is justified by convincing data to form student's attitude toward bribery, inconsistency and ambiguity of these attitudes, on the disparities in the designation by young people of the reasons of bribery. We also note the need in this kind of research to improve the programs of anti-corruption education of students.

The purpose and objectives of the study. Empirical research conducted by us was aimed at studying the causes and psychological features of a bribe-giver and a bribe-taker reflected in the content of the connotative component of a sense attitude to bribery in students and its tasks were to establish a particular type of attitude to bribery and according to this, determination of the causes and psychological features of a bribe-giver and a bribe-taker. Subject of research was the psychological features of a bribe-giver and a bribe-taker in their representation by students; object of study was the attitude to bribery of 105 university students (the city of Rostov-on-Don).

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Survey (researchers questionnaire allowing to evaluate the content of each component related to a bribe), content analysis of open questions of questionnaire, testing (differential emotions scale of K. Izard; techniques: “the ratio level for “value” and accessibility” in various spheres of life (E.B. Fantalova), “Personal Differential” (PD), statistical methods (factor analysis by principal component analysis, Shapiro-Wilk, Friedman, Wilcoxon criteria and multiple linear regression analysis (R;  $p < 0.05$ )).

The respondent's answers to the open questions of the questionnaire were analyzed using content analysis

that has resulted in allocation of categories (relative frequency of their occurrence) reflecting the content of indicators of interest to us. Content-sense interpretations of bribes included the type of a business economic transaction ("giving money for the provision of any service", "in terms of money carrying a benefit for both sides", etc.); kind of a wrongful act (crime); universal means (necessary and desirable) to meet the individual needs of a subject (human needs); kind of immoral behavior (demoralization of society). The functions of a bribe involve a resulting function as ensuring a subjectively useful result (desired result), elimination as removal of the possibility of administrative and criminal liability (to avoid punishment), resource and time and resource-personal functions as ensuring saving of time and personal resources ("to get anything faster and out of turn", "power save"); total-instrumental function of a bribe in solving everyday problems (a means of satisfying any need). The instrumental function of a bribe in dealing with career issues was assigned to its separate function; This function of a bribe was explicitly stated by most respondents.

There were identified such factors for giving bribe: standing practice of bribery, illegal actions; professional career and personal characteristics of subjects, specific coping strategies of subjects. Factors of standing practice of bribery identified individually for a bribe-giver and a bribe-taker were coercivity to bribery what is present objectively in different situations and in different spheres of life, except for the legal sphere and career ("extortion", "pressure", "tradition"). The unlawful nature factors are related to the motivation of avoiding responsibility ("to circumvent the law", "in order to have been allowed to breach"); professional and career factors with the building of a career ("the desire to go to the right college", "employability"); personal features were specified in terms of specific features of human makeup (stupidity, laziness, lack of confidence, impatience, incompetence, etc.). Temporary strategies of subjects for organizing time ("a desire to speed up a process", "fast way of solving problems") and resource strategies for saving personal resources ("unwillingness to expend energy to solve the problem") were assigned to specific coping strategies.

There were considered the following reasons (factors) for receiving bribes: standing practice of bribery (the same as for a briber) as well as subjective reasons related to the nature of the material motives ("easy money") and self-assertion motives as well as personal characteristics of bribe-takers ("greed", "proactiveness").

The general, special and individual consequences of a bribe have been seen as effects of its influence on the state, social groups and an individual. According to the respondents, the consequences for the state are affected

on the state budget ("losses," "pricing"), the activities of the authorities ("lack of process control"), ideology ("deteriorating ideology", "permissiveness", "crumbling a credibility to the state"). For social groups, as well as for an individual, the consequences of bribery have ambiguous impact on career processes ("declining a quality of an activity", "opening a business", "improving a position"), interpersonal relationships ("transformation of interpersonal relations in the trade and money ones"), group values ("education of young people in alleged influence of a bribe"). The consequences of bribes for an individual are detailed in meeting a variety of needs; the specifics of his/her career strategies, the dynamics of material well-being in change of the individual and personal features of people.

Psychological features of both sides of bribery were diagnosed on the basis of respondent's attribution of certain values (Fantalova's method) and personal factors "estimation, power, activity" (PD procedure) to a briber and a bribe-taker. The analysis of the values was carried out from the perspective of axiological types prevailing in personal development as the adaptation processes (materially comfortable life, health), socialization (work, family life of happiness, friends, love), individualization (active life, liberty, confidence, knowledge, creativity) (Janitskiy, 2012). The priority value attributed to a briber or a bribe-taker was determined using a multiple linear regression analysis as a measure of its directional impact on the individual factor scoring for each respondent which is the subject of a particular type of attitude to bribery.

Conditions for the appearance, function, the sign of a fundamental emotion and their complexes were taken into account in the analysis of emotional distress against bribery (Izard, 1980).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

As a result of factor analysis of indicators which designate the definitions and functions of a bribe 5-factors solution was obtained explaining 71.39% of the variance. Subsequent analysis of the leading definitions and functions of a bribe according to estimations of respondents that received high weights ( $>0.5$ ) in each of the factors has allowed the types of psychological attitudes of students to a bribe to identify:

- The means of saving time and minimizing the responsibility of a briber
- Means to obtain results which are meaningful to an individual (a briber)
- Type of business economic transactions
- Universally immoral way to realize needs
- Means for solving career issues

Empirical criteria to establish the types of an attitude to bribery according to estimations of respondents were content of the leading functions (1, 2 and 5 types) or bribery interpretations (3 and 4 types).

**Main part:** In general, the students have predominant ideas of a bribe as a business transaction as a wrongful act and an universal means of satisfying needs. According to respondents, bribery functionally appears for a universal tool in solving everyday problems. This is confirmed by the following data: the number of respondents >50% cases convinced in distributing bribes in career-professional sphere is 85.5%; in education 86.5%; in the public sphere 62.5%; in the sphere of interests 24%; in the family sphere 7.7%. Respondents unanimously pointed out the negative consequences of a bribe for the state budget, the activities of state power and ideology of the state and include the upgrading of criminal punishment to the main measures of bribery eradication. However, 12.5% of the respondents deny the very possibility of its eradication. Based on these results, bribery is perceived by the respondents as a kind of illegal economic business transactions, contributing to meet the needs of different subjects and the attitude towards it is utilitarian, as a means in which a bribe is comprehended as a universal instrument for the realization of needs. Immorality of bribery is not relevant for the respondents.

Regardless of the type of attitude, the respondents show an aversion to the fact of bribe what, in our view, reflects their desire to move away not only from a bribe but also from a participation in the study. Illustrative is the unanimity of respondents in referring the established practice of rent-seeking to the leading cause of bribery. In the further analysis of a particular type of attitude to bribery we will focus on the content of the connotative component reflecting the opinion of students about the causes of bribery and psychological features of the participants.

**The first type of attitude (17.2% of respondents):** A tool to save time and minimize the liability of the briber a bribe is treated by the respondents simultaneously as a kind of economic business transactions, a wrongful act and a universal means of satisfying the individual needs of

subjects. Functionally, a bribe eliminates the responsibility and saves time resources, mainly of a briber. The situation of a bribe causing respondent's surprise (unexpectedness) is actually emotionally neutral but its positive impact on a subject (saving time and personal resources) compared to its negative impact (personal features, material well-being) is rated higher by respondents.

They attributed to reasons for bribery the briber's motives of time saving and motives of material nature of a bribe-taker. In the representations of respondents, a briber and a bribe-taker have similar by their extent indicators according to such factors as Rank, Force, Activity but differ in the content of the priority values: for a bribe giver it is the importance of the socialization value "friends" and for a bribe-taker is the availability of the individualization value "freedom" (Table 1 and 2).

**For the second type of attitude (13.3% of respondents):**

A means of obtaining results which are meaningful to the individual (a briber) the emphasis is on its resulting function, even though the bribe is treated as an unlawful act. The situation of bribe for the respondents is of interest, surprise, contempt, shame, grief. The combination of these emotions suggests a certain ambivalence of emotions: the simultaneous presence of involvement, inclination and superiority (interest, surprise, contempt) in this situation, on the one hand and the experiences of sadness, uncertainty in security, on the other hand.

Consequences of a bribe have a negative impact on interpersonal relationships, lead to different but in general not various in the frequency of expression of positive (career strategy, time savings, realization of the different needs) and the negative (material well-being, personal features) effects of impact on subjects.

The causes of bribery marked by respondents include the motivation related to the illegal actions of a briber as well as personality traits and motivations of the material nature of a bribe-taker. In the view of respondents a briber and a bribe-taker have similar in their extent indicators for factors power and activity and differ by extent of the factor assessment and by content of priority values. Compared to a briber, a bribe-taker is less attractive to the

Table 1: Intensity of (average) personal factors (PD test) for a briber and a bribe-taker

Type of relationship	Rate		Force		Activity	
	Briber	Bribe-taker	Briber	Bribe-taker	Briber	Bribe-taker
1	-3.61	-3.28	6.05	7.38	5.56	3.72
2	-1.0*	-7.35*	2.64	7.35	6.71	3.43
3	-1.04**	-5.28**	1.97****	9.03****	6.139	6.143
4	-5.51	-5.45	5.81	7.03	6.09	7.25
5	-2.38***	-8.08***	1.93	5.92	4.61	4.31

\*Different ( $p < 0.05$ ) indicators for corresponding personal factors

Table 2: Top values of a briber and a bribe taker in the representation of respondents

Type of relationship	Values of a briber (meaningful)	Values of a bribe-taker	
		Meaningful	Available
1	Friends	-	Freedom
2	Friends	-	Material well-being
3	Active life	Material well-being	-
4	Material well-being	-	Material well-being
5	Freedom	Health	-

respondents is characterized by available priority value of “material support of life” while a briber has a significant socialization value “friends” (Table 1 and 2).

**For the third type of attitudes (27.6% of respondents):**

Type of a business economic transaction a bribe is treated as a type of business transaction performing totally tool and resource and personal functions. The situation of bribe triggers such emotions complex of the respondents as interest and surprise that is the evidence in favor of its positive emotional acceptance. Consequences of a bribe have a negative impact on interpersonal relationships. Intensity of its positive and negative effects did not differ for a subject. Its positive impact on a subject appears in the specificity of a career strategy, increasing the level of material well-being, organization (saving) of time, successful satisfaction of the various needs. Deformation of personal features of a subject dominates among the negative effects. The reasons of bribery attributed by the respondents are the motivation associated with illegal actions, career strategy, personal features, saving time and personal resources of a briber and also the motivation of the material nature of a bribe-taker.

In the representation of respondents, a briber and a bribe-taker are similar in extent indicators for the factor Activity differing in extent of the factors Assessment, Power and in content of priority values. A bribe-taker, in comparison with a briber is less attractive but is more independent and confident. Priority value of a bribe-taker is value of adaptation of “material well-being” and of a briber the value of individualization “active life” (Table 1 and 2).

**In the fourth type of attitude (29.5% of respondents):**

Universally immoral way to realize the requirements a bribe is seen as a kind of immoral behavior with its inherent totally instrumental function. The situation of bribe arouses in respondents a surprise, fear, interest, reflecting the emotional involvement in a dangerous situation. According to respondents, bribery negatively affects interpersonal communication, group values and career processes in social groups. Intensities of the negative and positive effects of the impact of bribery on a subject do not differ. The respondents include to the

positive effects the ability to avoid responsibility in the commission of unlawful acts, saving time and personal resources and formation of specific personality traits and to the negative effects only formation of certain features.

Factors referred to causes of bribery are the motivation associated with the illegal actions and career strategy of a briber as well as the motivation of the material nature of a bribe-taker. In the representation of respondents, a briber and a bribe-taker are similar in extent of indicators by the factors assessment, strength, activity and differ in content of priority values: for a bribe giver it is the importance of the adaptation value “material well-being” and for a bribe-taker the availability of the same value (Table 1 and 2).

**The fifth type of relationship (12.4% of respondents):**

Means for solution of the career issues a bribe is seen as an instrument of career strategy of a subject and performs a resource and personal function and elimination function. A situation of bribe giving arouses an interest and surprise of respondents, being evaluated by them likely positive. According to respondents, a bribery affects the group career processes. Its influence on a subject leads to both positive (personality traits, career strategy, saving the time and personal resources, the possibility of realizing different needs) and negative (personal features, material well-being, the inevitability of punishment) effects. Factors of a bribe are the motivation related with career policy and illegal actions of a briber as well as the motivation of the material nature of a bribe-taker.

In the representation of respondents a briber and a bribe-taker have indicators similar in extent for Power and activity factors, differing in extent of the factor assessment and in content of priority values. Compared to a briber, a bribe-taker is less attractive to the respondents is characterized by the dominance of a significant adaptation value “health” and a briber by the value of socialization “friends” (Table 1, 2).

**Resume:** According to students, universal cause of bribery is its forced situation as an objective fact of social reality. In addition, according to the ideas of students, the content of its reasons are different for both parties. Psychological features of a bribe-giver and a bribe taker differ by the parameters of “significance-availability” values, the rank of value type and by expression of the personal factor “assessment”.

## CONCLUSION

The study results indicate that regardless of the type of attitude the respondents are unanimous in that the leading cause of bribery for each of its parties is forced

position. In addition, the reasons for bribery of a bribe taker are more uniform and reduced to the motivation of a material nature, while the similar reasons by a briber substantively varied and depend on the type of attitude. Due to their type of attitude to bribery, respondents differentiate the values attributed to a briber and a bribe-taker by the parameters "significance-availability" and the rank of value type. If a situation of a bribe is emotionally accepted by a respondent (3 and 5 types of attitudes), then the value of a bribe giver and a bribe taker vary by rank: value type of a briber rather individualizing and a briber taker is adaptable. In other words, the contents of the priority values in comparison of a briber with a bribe taker reflects a higher level of personal development of the first. If the situation of a bribe causes ambivalent emotional assessments (2 and 4 types) or neutral for a respondent (1st type of attitude), then the values of the bribe giver and the bribe taker are different in the parameter "significance-availability": for the bribe-giver, they are characterized by significance but for the bribe taker by availability.

Despite the unpleasantness for a respondent of both parties of a bribe, a bribe-taker is much less attractive to the respondents compared to a briber yet. However, if respondents are convinced of the necessity and legitimacy of bribery, take it as an existing fact of social reality having a positive effect on a subject (1st type of attitude), or if the respondents are convinced of the immorality of bribery (4th type of attitude), both its parties are unattractive for them equally.

## REFERENCES

- Borisova, E.A., 2014. An analysis of the mechanisms of the social control of corruption in the higher education system. *Russ. Edu. Soc.*, 56: 227-39.
- Dementieva, I.N., 2011. Current work on corruption in Russia. *Econ. Social Changes Facts Trends Forecast*, 6: 137-140.
- Dzhaneryan, S.T., 2010. Value Bases of Cognitive Component Content of Students' Attitude to Bribe. Polytechnic University, Hong Kong, China, pp: 87-89.
- Fomenko, I.V., 2015. Formation of Anti-Corruption Culture in the Teaching Environment. SGPI, Lucknow, India, pp: 143-148.
- Garmaev, Y.P., D.A. Stepanenko and C. Fengling, 2015. Prevention of corruption crimes in China and Russia: Problems and ways of solution. *Asian Social Sci.*, 11: 261-266.
- Golubovskiy, V.Y. and T.N. Sinyukova, 2015. Forms and types of corruption in Russian society. *Political Ling.*, 2: 240-245.
- Holmes, L., 2012. Corruption in Post-Soviet Russia. *Global Change Peace Secur.*, 24: 235-250.
- Izard, K., 1980. Human Emotions. Moscow State University, Moscow, Russia, Pages: 440.
- Janitskiy, M.S., 2012. Value Dimension of the Mass Consciousness. Kemerovo State University, Novosibirsk, Russia, Pages: 237.
- Khil'ko, O.V., 2015. Hidden Causes of Corruption in the Educational Environment. SGPI, Lucknow, India, pp: 148-153.
- Kopsteva, N.P., 2014. Cultural grounds of corruption in Russia. *J. Siberian Fed. Univ. Ser. Humanities*, 7: 1820-1836.
- Kurdyumov, A.B., S.B. Gnezdilov and V.V. Kiselev, 2016. Corrupt psychology in Turkey and Russia and prospects for the formation of anti-corruption behavior. *Hum. Capital*, 2: 7-9.
- Kuznetsov, N.V., 2015. Anti-Corruption Education of Students: Problems and Solutions. SGPI, Lucknow, India, pp: 56-65.
- Nomokonov, V.A., 2000. On strategies for combating corruption in Russia. *Demokratizatsiya*, 8: 123-144.
- Reshetnikov, M., 2008. Corrupt Psychology. East European Psychoanalytic Institute, Saint Petersburg, Russia, Pages: 136.
- Shirin, S.S., 2015. Corruption in higher education in Russia-first decade of the 21st century. *Int. Edu. Stud.*, 8: 160-168.
- Vannovskaya, O., 2013. Psychology of corrupt behavior and resistance to corruption of public servants. *Czech J. Social Sci. Bus. Econ.*, 2: 57-66.
- Vasyakin, B.S., N.A. Deberdeeva and E.L. Pozharskaya, 2016. Some psychological aspects of fighting against corruption. *Successes Mod. Sci. Edu.*, 2: 61-63.
- Wedel, J.R., 2012. Rethinking corruption in an age of ambiguity. *Annu. Rev. Law Social Sci.*, 8: 453-498.
- Zamaletdino, R.R., N.P. Yudina, E.I. Lavrentyeva and L.I. Savva *et al.*, 2016. Practical recommendations on the improvement of the effectiveness of anti-corruption policy in universities. *Intl. Rev. Manage. Marketing*, 6: 390-396.