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EVOLUTION AND CONTROL OF UNETHICAL PRACTICES IN SALES

A study of institutionalized bribery
in developing country markets

Irfan Ameer



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Subject: Marketing

Doctoral programme: Doctoral Programme of Turku School of Economics

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The originality of this publication has been checked in accordance with the University of Turku quality assurance system using the Turnitin OriginalityCheck service.

ISBN 978-951-29-7842-7 (PRINT)
ISBN 978-951-29-7843-4 (PDF)
ISSN 2343-3159 (Painettu/Print)
ISSN 2343-3167 (Verkkajulkaisu/Online)
Painosalama Oy, Turku, Finland 2019

Dedicated to my loving wife Hurria Irfan

UNIVERSITY OF TURKU

Turku School of Economics

Department of Marketing and International Business

Marketing and International Business

IRFAN AMEER: Evolution and control of unethical practices in sales: a study of institutionalized bribery in developing country markets

Doctoral Dissertation, 229 pp.

Doctoral Programme of Turku School of Economics

November 2019

ABSTRACT

Bribery as an unethical sales practice is institutionalized in developing countries causing serious challenges for the smooth operations of multinational companies (MNCs). Therefore, their control is the primary concern for MNCs. Sales ethics and bribery in international business (IB) research largely focus on intra-organizational perspective. This perspective neglects the broader social context to understand and control bribery. Alternatively, institutional work in organization study is rich in investigating the social and dynamic nature of practices. However, this work ignores the invisible aspects of informal institutions, such as bribery. Against this background, the purpose of this research is to investigate the social and emergent nature of unethical practices in sales along with their control in developing country markets. The research builds on multiple theoretical perspectives: practice-based view (PBV); neo-institutional theory; and industrial network theory. The study employs a qualitative approach and the empirical data has been collected from the pharmaceutical industry in Pakistan since bribery practices in sales are widely prevailing in this market. This study achieves its goal via four articles. Research starts from a systematic review of existing knowledge in sales ethics. The review in article 1 reveals the need to study unethical behavior from a social practice perspective. As a result, article 1 introduces a PBV and its applications in sales ethics. The second article empirically examines the evolution process of bribery in sales. Findings show that bribery practices socially evolve in a sequential and partly overlapping process of four identifiable stages: early development; chain reaction; legitimization; and revision. The third and the fourth article included in this study emphasize on controlling bribery. The third article is conceptual that introduces a practice-based strategic framework for MNCs to control bribery in developing countries. Finally, the fourth article empirically investigates the nature of invisible pressure of institutionalized bribery and related practices of MNCs to respond. Findings related to the pressure indicate that MNCs closely monitor bribery practices of market actors to make sense of invisible pressure. Results further discover a range of MNCs practices to respond towards such pressure along with practices' types, focus, objectives and intended actors. Overall this dissertation shifts the focus of sales ethics and bribery in IB research from the dominated intra-organizational view to PBV that helps to understand the social and dynamic nature of corrupt practices

and their control. Study open new avenues for institutional work to understand the nature of invisible pressure arising from informal institutions and related organizational responses. Study further offers important implications for organizations and policymakers to understand and control practically significant bribery phenomenon in sales.

KEYWORDS: Unethical sales practices; sales ethics; bribery; corruption; practice approach; international business; neo-institutional theory; institutionalization; developing countries

TURUN YLIOPISTO

Turun kauppakorkeakoulu

Markkinoinnin ja kansainvälisen liiketoiminnan laitos

Markkinoinnin ja kansainvälisen liiketoiminnan

IRFAN AMEER: Evolution and control of unethical practices in sales: a study of institutionalized bribery in developing country markets

Väitöskirja: 229s.

Turun kauppakorkeakoulun tohtoriohjelma

Marraskuu 2019

TIIVISTELMÄ

Myynnin yhteydessä tapahtuva lahjonta on usein laajasti institutionalisoitunut epäeettinen käytäntö, joka aiheuttaa vakavia haasteita monikansallisten yritysten toiminnalle kehitysmaiden markkinoilla. Myynnin etiikan ja kansainvälisen liiketoiminnan lahjontaa koskevat tutkimustraditiot korostavat organisaation sisäistä näkökulmaa lahjonnan kontrolloimiseen ja jättävät samalla laajemman sosiaalisen kontekstin huomioimatta. Organisaatiotutkimuksen institutionaalinen näkökulma puolestaan tutkii epäeettisten myyntikäytäntöjen sosiaalista ja dynaamista luonnetta, mutta keskittyy pääosin virallisiin instituutioihin. Epäviralliset ja näkymättömät instituutiot, kuten lahjonta, ovat saaneet vain vähän tutkijoiden huomiota osakseen. Näin ollen tämän väitöskirjan tarkoituksena on tutkia epäeettisten myyntikäytäntöjen sosiaalista luonnetta ja niiden kehittymistä ja kontrollointia kehitysmaiden markkinoilla. Tutkimusnäkökulma perustuu sosiaaliseen konstruktivismiin ja väitöskirjan teoreettinen viitekehys rakentuu kolmen teoreettisen näkökulman varaan: käytäntöpohjaiseen näkökulmaan, uusinstitutionaaliseen näkökulmaan ja teollisten verkostojen teoriaan. Tutkimuksen empiirisenä kontekstina on Pakistanin lääketeollisuudessa vallitsevat lahjontakäytännöt, joita tutkitaan laadullisilla menetelmillä. Väitöskirjatutkimus koostuu neljästä artikkelista. Ensimmäisessä artikkelissa tehdään systemaattinen kirjallisuuskatsaus myynnin etiikan tutkimukseen ja osoitetaan tarve tutkia epäeettistä käyttäytymistä sosiaalisena ja dynaamisena ilmiönä. Artikkelit esittelee käytäntöpohjaisen näkökulman nykytutkimuksen laajentamiseksi. Väitöskirjan toinen artikkeli tarkastelee lahjontakäytäntöjen kehittymistä pitkittäisten sosiaalisten tapahtumasarjojen pohjalta, ja tulokset paljastavat neljä vaihetta lahjontakäytäntöjen muodostumisessa: aikainen kehitys, ketjureaktio, laillistuminen ja uudistuminen. Artikkelit lisää ymmärrystä lahjontakäytäntöjen sosiaalisesta ja dynaamisesta luonteesta. Tutkimuksen kolmas ja neljäs artikkeli keskittyvät lahjontakäytäntöjen kontrollointiin. Kolmas artikkeli on käsitteellinen ja rakentaa käytäntöpohjaisen viitekehäyksen monikansallisille yrityksille institutionalisoituneen lahjonnan kontrolloimiseksi kehitysmaiden markkinoilla. Viimeinen, neljäs artikkeli perustuu jälleen empiiriseen materiaaliin ja keskittyy tarkastelemaan institutionalisoituneiden lahjontakäytäntöjen luomaa painetta yrityksille sekä monikansallisten yritysten reagointimalleja tähän paineeseen. Tulokset osoittavat, että monikansalliset yritykset

seuraavat tarkasti markkinatoimijoiden lahjontakäytäntöjä ja että niillä on käytössään useita eri strategioita ja niihin kytkeytyviä toimintatapoja, joilla ne pyrkivät vastaamaan syvälle juurtuneeseen lahjontaan. Väitöskirja laajentaa myyntietiikan ja kansainvälisen liiketoiminnan lahjontatutkimusta hallitsevista organisaation sisäisistä näkökulmista kohti käytäntöpohjaista näkökulmaa. Tämä näkökulma auttaa korruptiokäytäntöjen monimutkaisen sosiaalisen ja dynaamisen luonteen ymmärtämisessä sekä lahjonnan kontrolloimisessa ja avaa uusia väyliä institutionaaliselle tutkimukselle epävirallisten instituutioiden ymmärtämiseksi ja hallitsemiseksi. Käytäntönäkö-kulmasta tuotetut tulokset tarjoavat myös organisaatioille ja päättäjille konkreettisia keinoja vastata lahjonnan monisyiseen ongelmaan.

ASIASANAT: Epäeettiset myyntikäytännöt; myynnin etiikka; lahjonta; korruptio; käytäntönäkökulma; kansainvälinen liiketoiminta; uusinstitutionaalinen teoria; instituutiottomineen; kehittyvät maat

Acknowledgements

Behind the journey of this dissertation, various individuals and institutions are directly or indirectly involved. This journey was not possible without them and therefore, I acknowledge all of them. Undoubtedly, my main supervisor Professor Aino Halinen and my co-supervisor Adjunct Professor Harri Terho deserve special appreciation. This accomplishment is the outcome of their persistent guidance and encouragement on the academic as well as non-academic issues related to my research. Both of them provided me all possible opportunities to freely work on my raw ideas, and to develop those ideas into a meaning full piece of work. Their supervisory skills and professional competency will always remain a great source of inspiration for me. Their critical but constructive feedback enhanced the quality of my doctoral research. I am honored for having such a great mentors. Thank you Aino and Harri! Whatever I have learnt during my doctoral degree, it was mainly because of you.

I am also thankful to the dissertation pre-examiners Professor Asta Salmi and Professor Johanna Kujala as well as to the opponent Professor Pervez Ghauri. I am indebted to them for their comments that further enhanced the quality of this dissertation. I also express my gratitude to my colleagues, seniors and juniors for their positive role at various stages of my doctoral degree.

I wish to appreciate all my family members. I offer special tribute to my wife Hurria Irfan for managing all family matters related to our three children. Being my wife, your continuous encouragement and sacrifices are unforgettable in difficult times during this journey. You and our children always filled me with a sense of happiness and prevented me from demoralization. I also miss my father at this memorable occasion, who unfortunately left us alone in 2016. I am also heavily indebted to my mother, brothers, sister, and family friends for their prayers and support.

Special thanks to Turku School of Economics, University of Turku, European Institute for Advanced Studies in Management, Finnish Doctoral School in Business, and Institute of Economics at Polish Academy of Sciences. Taking courses at these prestigious institutions enhanced my learning skills, knowledge and international exposure. I am grateful to the teaching and administrative staff at these institutions.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the Department of Marketing and NetEthics research project for salaried position to conduct this study. Likewise, I cannot forget various research foundations for their support which facilitated me to complete the doctoral degree without any financial constraints. I offer my special thanks to the below mentioned foundations.

- Foundation for Economic Education
- Kone Foundation
- Marcus Wallenberg Foundation
- Turku University Foundation
- Hansbang Foundation

November, 2019

Irfan Ameer

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PART 1: INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

1 Introduction

Don't be tempted—if you know you will have to pay a bribe, it's not worth it. Find some other way (Transparency International 2013)

1.1 Motivation to study unethical practices in sales

Multinational companies (MNCs) operating in developing country markets face numerous legal and ethical risks (Koehler 2011; Mackey et al. 2015; Pieth et al. 2007). Among these, the risk of the involvement of MNCs in unethical sales practices has become prominent in recent years (Jing & Graham 2008; Koehler 2012; Brown 2013). In June 2013, Chinese police initiated a criminal investigation against a global healthcare giant—GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) (Wall Street 2013). GSK sales leadership in China was accused of illegally utilizing US\$490 million through travel operators and other intermediaries to induce bribes to health care professionals and other influencing actors to boost their drug sales (Transparency International 2013; Wall Street 2013). Within a quarter, GSK sales in the Chinese market slumped to 61% and most of the large state-owned hospitals closed their doors for their sales force (Hirschler 2013). At the global level, GSK was also prosecuted over charges of criminal negligence in the Chinese market under the UK Bribery Act and US Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (Reuters 2014). GSK faced severe criticism worldwide and its share price slumped sharply. GSK's example is not a single incident; several other health care MNCs (e.g., Abbott, Johnson and Johnson etc.) have been penalized for their unethical sales practices and substantial fines have been imposed on them in recent years (David-Barrett et al. 2017; Peltier-Rivest 2017; Transparency International 2018).

One of the key reasons for the involvement of MNCs is the fact that unethical practices in sales have been deeply institutionalized in developing country markets (Millington 2005; Yadong 2011; Zaheer 1995; Zhuang et al. 2012), which implies that a large majority of market actors in developing country markets consider such practices as appropriate within their socially constructed system of values, norms, and beliefs (Jing & Graham 2008; Sanyal 2005; Suchman 1995). According to the

country-level scores of the Corruption Perception Index (Transparency International 2017), most developing countries lie in the danger zone. Since MNCs and their subsidiaries rely on local market actors in developing countries, they are liable for the corrupt actions of such actors that may have been taken on the former's behalf. However, it is a challenging task for MNCs to monitor and control the unethical sales practices of such actors (David-Barrett et al. 2017). Therefore, in developing countries, there is a high risk of the direct or indirect involvement of drug MNCs in bribery.

The prevailing institutionalized bribery practices cause severe challenges for MNCs operating in these settings (Bersselaar & Decker 2011). MNCs as newcomers in a developing country market face extreme compliance pressure from most market actors (Dacin 1997; DiMaggio & Powel 1983; Zucker 1983). In context of pharmaceutical sales, customers may ask and expect bribes from MNCs as well as from the competitors of MNCs—for instance, local firms who are willing to supply bribes to increase their sales and corrupt or dysfunctional regulators that facilitating the local firms and their customers in fulfilling their own unethical bribery interests. Obviously, these actors are not bound to follow the anti-bribery codes and policies of drug MNCs, but they widely follow the prevailing bribery norms in their society (Scott 2001). Consequently, the pressure of institutionalized bribery practices imposed by market actors might encourage drug MNCs to become involved in unethical sales practices.

Realizing this situation, MNCs operating in corruption prone developing markets have typically addressed this issue by introducing anti-bribery programs (Peltier-Rivest 2017). Such programs comprise codes and policies related to gifts or bribes, training of sales force, and charitable donations; reporting and governance procedures for payment authorization; due diligence requirements for partners or third parties; and accounting procedures for a proper record of all transactions (David-Barrett et al. 2017). Also, MNCs utilize third-party certifications to show their commitments against unethical gifts and bribes in sales. Obviously, MNCs are seriously committed to moving beyond the minimum legal requirements to global ethical requirements. Consequently, MNCs spend a large proportion of their budgets on developing, promoting, and implementing their strong codes and values to deal with unethical sales practices in developing country markets (see, for example, GSK 2016; Novartis 2016; Pfizer 2014).

Despite the notable investments and serious anti-bribery efforts and commitments, the involvement of MNCs continues to emerge, often related to unethical gifts and bribes that are frequently appearing in headlines on print and electronic media (see Roland 2013; Shobert & DeNoble 2013; Thomas & Schmidt 2012; Daily Mail 2014; Transparency International 2018). Bribery, as an unethical sales practice is deeply rooted in the pharmaceutical sales environment of developing

countries as an integral part of the industry's practice. Its proliferation is a serious global threat, not only for the growth of MNCs but also for the health and welfare of societies in developing countries. Therefore, this dissertation seeks to investigate the social and dynamic nature of unethical practices in sales along with their control in context of developing country markets. Figure 1 demonstrates the context of this study.



Figure 1. Context of the study

1.2 Research gaps in three business domains

The academic literature is scattered across three separate but interrelated business domains that can help to investigate the complex unethical practice phenomenon in sales: sales ethics literature; bribery in international business literature; and institutional work in organization study. An overview of the relevant literature in three domains provides current understanding on the unethical practices in sales and identifies shortcomings in the extant research, as illustrated in Figure 2.

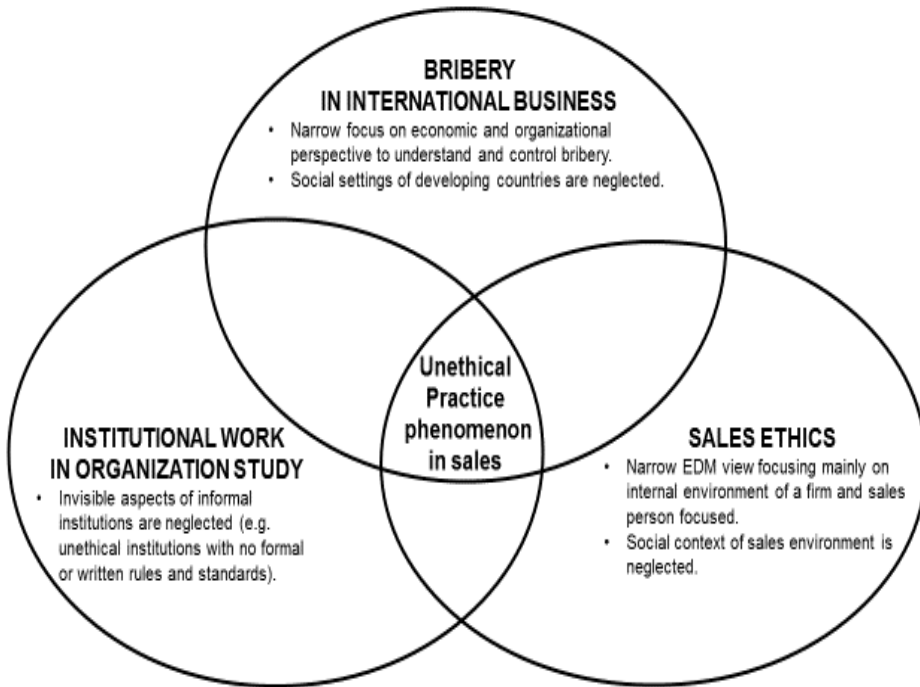


Figure 2. Research gaps focused in three domains

Sales ethics literature forms the basis and functions as a starting point for the study of unethical practices in sales. The traditional ethical decision-making (EDM) view is dominant in this literature. The EDM view mainly emphasizes the individual and organizational factors that affect the behavior and ethical decision-making of salespersons (Ferrell & Ferrell 2009; McClaren 2013; 2015; Ingram et al. 2007). Although extensive, this view has two significant shortcomings. First, the EDM view relies heavily on the behavior of sales individuals and neglects other actors involved in the sales process. Second, the focus of the EDM view is within the organization. Consequently, this view overlooks the social context of the sales task environment. After all, sales is a complex process that is mostly performed outside the organization and requires human-driven interaction with and among various individuals or firms in a broader sales environment (Dixon & Tanner 2012; Hartmann, Wieland & Vargo 2018; Plouffe et al. 2016). Therefore, focusing on the social context and considering all relevant actors both within and outside the organization are vital to understanding and controlling unethical behavior in sales. A narrow focus on the internal environment of a sales organization cannot guarantee the control of unethical practices in sales. In particular, in the case of developing countries where external actors—customers and competitors—are actively engaged in such unethical sales

practices. For example, the GSK example indicates several external actors (e.g., doctors, influencing officials, travel agents, and other intermediaries) were directly or indirectly involved in supplying or facilitating the bribery process. Consequently, the EDM view has a limited capacity to deal with the social and dynamic nature of unethical practices in sales and their control in a broader environment.

Since the focus of this study is on bribery as an unethical sales practice in the context of developing countries, bribery literature in the domain of international business (IB) further helps in shaping this study. The research in this field predominantly provides economic and organizational perspectives on bribery (Cuervo-Cazurra 2016; Misangyi, Weaver & Elms 2008). Although both these approaches cover the regulative, normative, and cognitive aspects in describing and combating bribery (Cuervo-Cazurra 2016; David-Barrett et al. 2017), these dominating approaches have their limitations. First, the regulative structures of developing countries are mostly dysfunctional or corrupt (Ali & Isse 2003; Rodriguez et al. 2006). Thus, the economic approach cannot adequately address the prevailing corrupt systems in developing countries. Second, the organizational approach acknowledges the regulative, normative, and cognitive aspects of describing and combating bribery. Nevertheless, this approach is limited in its sole focus on the organizational context (Misangyi et al. 2008). This is relevant particularly in the context of developing countries, where market actors consider bribery practices as desirable and appropriate within their social systems of beliefs and norms, thereby making the organizational approach too narrow. As an alternative, IB researchers have drawn attention to the social and emergent nature of bribery in larger social settings of developing countries (Cuervo-Cazurra 2016; Dávid-Barrett 2018; Misangyi, Weaver & Elms 2008; Barkemeyer et al. 2018; Ramakrishna et al. 2017; 2018). For instance, researchers have suggested focusing on the institutional environment of developing countries that influences the individual and organizational behavior (Cuervo-Cazurra 2016; Misangyi, Weaver & Elms 2008).

As an alternative, institutional work in organization study can address the inability of sales ethics and bribery in IB literature to deal with bribery in sales in broader social settings. This literature emphasizes that institutions pressurize individuals and organizations to comply with their shared values, customs, norms, and traditions (Oliver 1991; 1992; Surachakulwattana & Phillips 2017). Institutional work offers a rich theoretical perspective to investigate the social and dynamic nature of bribery practices in sales and their control in developing countries (see Ashforth & Gibbs 1990; Di Maggio & Powell 1983; Oliver 1991; Pedersen et al. 2014; Scott 2001). However, empirical work in this domain gives the impression that the role of the agency is primarily shaped by the pressure of formal and relatively visible macro level institutional forces. In contrast, invisible aspects of the pressure caused by

informal institutions, such as bribery and related organizational responses, are largely neglected.

1.3 Purpose of the study

Reviewing the extant research highlighting the importance of examining broader social contexts where unethical practices in sales socially evolve, and also realizing the academic and practical significance of controlling such practices, the purpose of this dissertation is *to investigate unethical practices as emerging and social phenomena in sales along with their control in developing country markets*. To generate more focused knowledge, the purpose is divided into three research questions, which are presented in Table 1. Collectively, all research questions serve the primary purpose of this research and have been addressed via four articles included in this dissertation.

Table 1. Research purpose, questions, and their relationship to the articles

Purpose	Research questions	Article No.	Purpose of the article	Business domains focused
<i>To investigate unethical practices as emerging and social phenomena in sales along with their control in developing country markets.</i>	RQ1 How have unethical practices been addressed in sales research from a social perspective, and what new avenues can be suggested?	Article 1	To provide an overview of unethical behavior in sales along with the theories employed. To propose a practice based view (PBV) to study unethical sales behavior.	Sales ethics
	RQ2 How unethical practices evolve in the social context of sales?	Article 2	To investigate the evolution of bribery in sales.	
	RQ3 How MNCs can control bribery practices in developing country markets?	Article 3	To propose a framework for MNCs to control bribery in developing countries.	Bribery in IB
		Article 4	To investigate the nature of pressure arising from institutionalized bribery practices in developing countries and measures taken by MNCs to respond to such pressure.	Bribery in IB Institutional work in organization study

The first two RQs aim to understand the social and dynamic nature of unethical practices in sales and mainly contribute towards sales ethics research. To gain initial insights, it is essential to know how unethical practices have been addressed in sales research from a social perspective and how this perspective could be further enhanced (RQ1). Conceiving unethical behavior as a social practice, article 1 provides an overview of key unethical practices in sales along with the theories employed to investigate such practices. Based on a systematic literature review, article 1 proposes a practice-based view (PBV) as a starting point that also helps to answer the remaining two RQs.

Next, the social nature emphasizes that unethical practices in sales are dynamic and evolving. Consequently, RQ2 aims to understand how unethical practices evolve in the social context of sales. Considering bribery as an unethical practice in sales, article 2 addresses RQ2 by empirically investigating the evolutionary process of bribery in sales.

Finally, the context of developing countries where MNCs are struggling with prevailing bribery practices of market actors can effectively help to understand and subsequently control bribery practices in sales. RQ3 is positioned towards bribery in IB literature and institutional work in organization study. It investigates how MNCs can control bribery practices in developing countries? Article 3 addresses RQ3 by proposing a practice-based strategic framework for MNCs to control bribery practices in developing countries. Finally, article 4 further empirically investigates the nature of the pressure arising from the institutionalized bribery practices in pharmaceutical sales environment of developing countries and the measures taken by MNCs to respond to such pressure.

1.4 Research approach

This study is based on the social constructivist world view of reality (Berger & Luckmann 1966; Bruner 1986). The social constructivist view implies that unethical practice is a subjective phenomenon that is socially produced by various actors in sales (Gergen 1994). The focus of this dissertation is on bribery as an unethical practice in sales. For the purpose of this study, bribery is defined as ethically questionable monetary benefits—for example, gifts, favors, or preferential treatment—given, promised or received to take any undue advantage, such as boosting sales (Bernardi et al. 2009).

To fill the gaps in three business domains, this study investigates bribery in sales from three theoretical perspectives—namely, the practice-based view (PBV), the neo-institutional theory, and the industrial network theory (INT). The PBV (Feldman & Orlikowski 2011; Nicolini & Monteiro 2017) has been mainly employed as an overall theoretical approach to investigate bribery in sales. Aligned with PBV,

bribery in sales is conceived as a social practice that is repeatedly produced and reproduced by various actors in a complex sales environment. Based on Schatzki's (2005, p.11) definition, this study describes an unethical practice as “embodied, materially mediated arrays of human activity centrally organized around shared practical understanding.” As a practice, bribery in sales could be considered as a part of everyday interaction as well as simultaneously a reflection of broader societal norms (Reckwitz 2002). In this study, PBV serves as a new theoretical lens to study unethical sales practices, such as bribery.

Along with PBV, the neo-institutional theory (Di Maggio & Powell 1983) offers a rich theoretical perspective to understand the social and dynamic nature of institutionalized bribery practices in sales and their control in developing country markets. The neo-institutional theory assumes that institutions are humanly devised norms or principles in a society that shape human interaction and behavior (North 1990). Institutions denote collectivism, which implies the interdependence of individuals as part of a larger group or society (House et al. 2004; Mazar & Aggarwal 2011). Accordingly, bribery institutions can be described as shared values, customs, norms, and traditions among groups of individuals or organizations; these institutions can be either formal or informal (Scott 2001). Since bribery is a criminal offense in almost all countries, no formal written laws or normative standards exist. This implies that bribery institutions are informal where individuals have mutually accepted hidden or invisible values and norms to behave in an unethical manner. Informal bribery institutions can be better grasped with the PBV by focusing on individuals' everyday micro-level practices (Feldman & Orlikowski 2011; Nicolini & Monteiro 2017).

The INT is also a suitable match with the PBV in the investigation of bribery evolution or transformation in the business-to-business (B2B) sales context. The INT conceives the sales environment or industry as a web of interdependent relationships of business, non-business, public, or private actors (Ford & Håkansson 2006; Håkansson & Snehota 1995). Various actors interact with each other, share each other resources, and perform various activities. The concepts and frameworks of the INT that describe change and dynamics (see, e.g., Halinen, Salmi & Havila 1999; Halinen et al. 2013; Tidström & Hag-berg-Andersson 2012) have been used in this study as analytical tools to make sense of the social and evolving nature of bribery in sales.

1.5 Structure of the dissertation

This dissertation comprises two main parts—the introductory essay and the original articles included in the study. Further, each part includes various sub-sections titled as chapters or articles. The focus of each sub-section is illustrated in Figure 2.

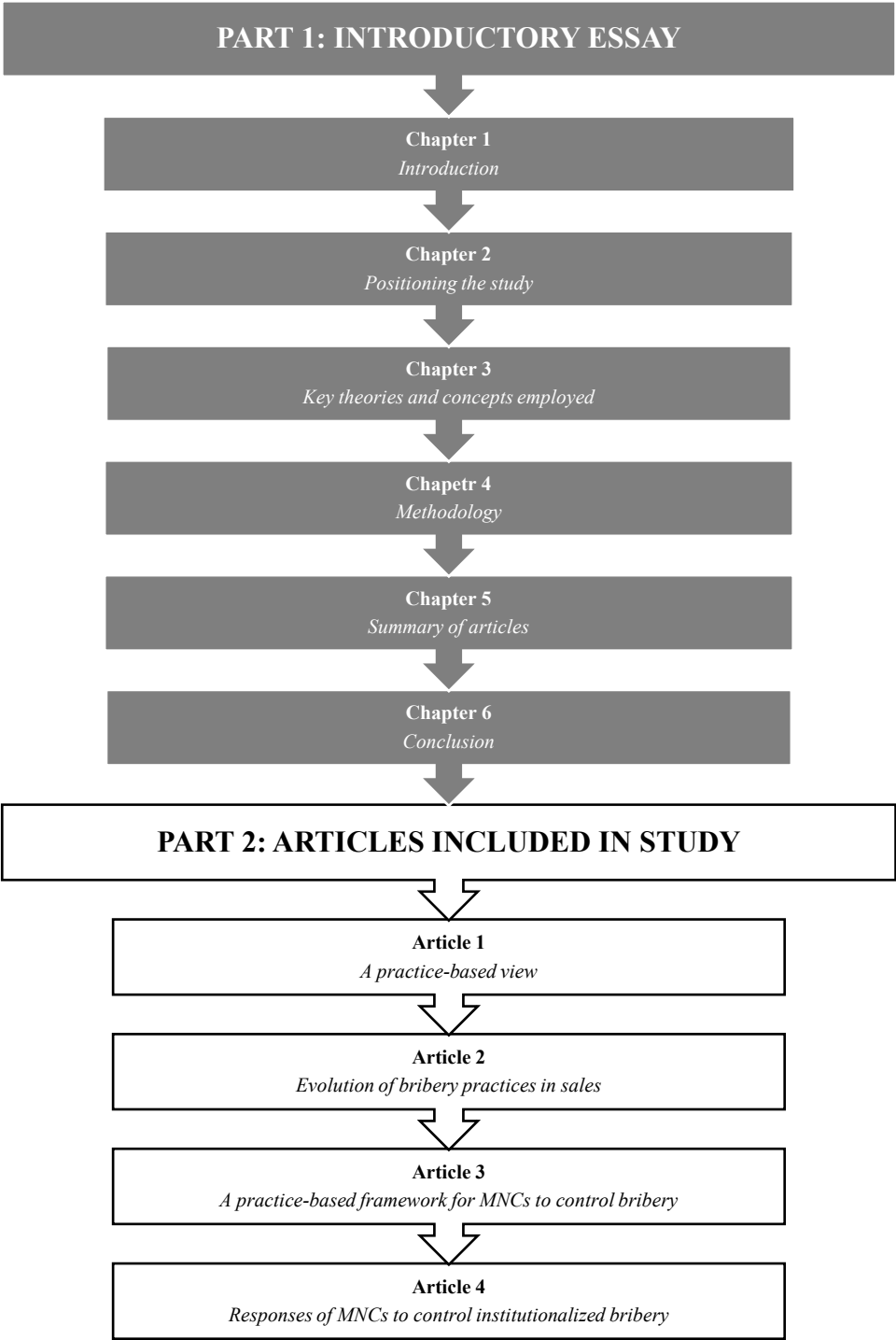


Figure 3. Structure of the dissertation

The **first part** includes an introductory essay that combines the new findings and insights generated through the four original publications included in the dissertation and creates a coherent understanding of the overall purpose of the thesis. The introductory essay consists of six chapters.

The *first chapter* provides the background, motivation, and importance of the phenomenon under study to show its practical significance. Next, research gaps are identified to highlight the theoretical relevance. Based on the discussion of practical and theoretical significance, the key purpose of the research and numerous research questions are proposed. At the end of the introduction, theoretical approaches are identified to address the purpose and research questions.

The *second chapter* positions the phenomena of unethical practices in sales within three business domains—namely, sales ethics, bribery in IB, and institutional work in organization study. This chapter provides an overview of empirical work in terms of what is known and what is not known in related domains.

Based on the positioning and shortcomings identified in the second chapter, the *third chapter* extends the earlier views by introducing three new theoretical perspectives—the PBV, the neo-institutional theory, and the INT—to investigate the phenomenon of unethical practice in sales. These perspectives are well suited to understand the social and dynamic nature of unethical practices and their control in sales. At the end of this chapter, the role of relevant theories and related concepts in original publications are discussed and linked as an overall theoretical framework of the study.

The *fourth chapter* provides information on the methodological details that are employed in this dissertation. This chapter justifies the choices of philosophical assumptions, systematic review method, qualitative methods, data collection, and analysis procedures that are applied in this dissertation. Also, the specific methodologies applied in articles 1, 2, and 4 are also discussed and differentiated.

The *fifth chapter* provides a summary of each article included in this dissertation. It includes information on the specific purpose, methodology, and key findings of each article, and shows how the articles and the key purpose and research questions of this dissertation are connected. At the end of this chapter, knowledge generated through the original publications are synthesized to address the purpose and research questions of this dissertation.

Based on the findings and their relationship with the purpose and research questions, the *final chapter* concludes with discussions on the introductory essay. The theoretical and practical implications of this dissertation are discussed, and the limitations, assessment evaluation, and suggestions for future research are presented.

The **second part** of this dissertation consists of four original publications that are provided for further reference to the readers. The papers are arranged according to the sequence of research questions posed in the introductory essay. Article 1

focuses on proposing a PBV as a novel theoretical lens to study unethical behavior in sales (RQ1). Article 2 emphasizes the evolution of bribery practices in sales (RQ2). Finally, articles 3 and 4 deal directly with bribery control in sales context of developing country markets (RQ3).

2 Positioning the study

As shown in the introduction chapter, extant research is scattered into three separate but interrelated business domains that can help to investigate unethical practices in sales: sales ethics, bribery in international business (IB), and institutional work in the organizational study. This chapter provides an overview of relevant literature in these domains with two main objectives in mind. First, different literature domains offer current understandings and help to investigate various social and dynamic dimensions of unethical practices in sales along with the measures taken to control such unethical practices. Second, a review of relevant literature better demonstrates the research gaps focused that will build the basis for contributions in the identified domains.

2.1 Literature on sales ethics

The focus of this dissertation is on unethical practices in sales. Thus, sales ethics research naturally serves as a starting point. Normative and positive ethics are widely known as dominant theoretical approaches in sales ethics research (McClaren 2000; Nill & Schibrowsky 2007). The early researchers tend to focus on normative ethics that mostly measures sales persons behaviors and practices in terms of right or wrong by using various moral theories and frameworks, such as moral reasoning (Kohlberg 1979), utility theory (Etzioni 1988), moral relativism (Reidenbach, Robin & Dawson 1991), and normative marketing framework (Laczniak & Murphy 2006). Ethical or unethical practices in sales highly depend on the context, form and intention (Noonan 1984; Huang & Rice 2012). A thin and blurred boundary line exists between the two (Fisher 2007; Shaw & Barry 2004). For instance, gifts and monetary benefits in sales are frequently offered for developing business relationships. At the same time, they are considered as ethically problematic (Steidlmeier 1999). A gift or monetary benefit becomes a bribe when it is given with the intention to influence or when it creates a conflict of interest (Fischer 2007).

Besides the normative ethics, sales ethics research is heavily based on understanding the ethical decision making (EDM) process originated from positive marketing ethics (McClaren 2000). The traditional and dominated EDM view mainly investigates a variety of individual factors of salespersons (e.g., age, gender,

experience, education, moral values, beliefs, etc.) and organizational factors (e.g., leadership, management, supervision, recruitment, rewards, punishment, training, code of ethics, etc.) (McClaren 2013; 2015). Together, individual and organizational factors influence EDM and the behavior of sales persons in terms of adopting ethical or unethical sales practices (Ferrell & Ferrell 2009; Ingram et al. 2007).

Based on individual and organizational factors, scholars have proposed EDM process models to better explain and consequently predict unethical behaviors and practices of salespersons (see, e.g., Ferrell et al. 2007; McClaren 2000; Wotruba 1990). Studies have also employed the concepts of the culture or ethical climate of sales firms (see, e.g., Briggs et al. 2012; Ferrell et al. 2007; Jaramillo et al. 2013; Weeks et al. 2004). Overall, these studies effectively help to understand the internal environment of a single sales firm, highlighting the characteristics of mainly the salespersons and management-related strategies to control the unethical practices of salespersons.

Despite considerable progress in research, the EDM perspective focusing on a firm's ethical environment cannot guarantee to control unethical practices in sales. It cannot be ignored that sales, specifically in developing countries, is a complex social phenomenon that requires human-driven interaction among and with various individuals or firms in a broader sales environment (Dixon & Tanner 2012), particularly when other external actors, for example, customers or competitors are actively involved in it. Unethical sales practices like bribery mostly require the involvement of external actors. For example, the GSK example indicates that several external actors (e.g., doctors, influencing officials, travel agents, and other intermediaries) were involved in providing and facilitating bribes. In addition to this, the social and dynamic nature of unethical practices in sales indicate the need for a broader perspective beyond organizational boundaries.

Recent researchers have suggested the need to extend the study of unethical behavior in sales to broader social contexts that set social and normative standards of the sales environment at a macro level—for example, industry, sales profession, or trade union (Bush et al. 2017; Ferrell et al. 2007; McClaren 2015; McClaren et al. 2010; Williams & Plouffe 2007). Sales tasks are performed in increasingly complex social settings mostly outside the organization, where salespersons interact with various external actors (Geiger & Kelly 2014; Hartmann, Wieland & Vargo 2018; Plouffe et al. 2016). They are exposed to conflicting interests and pressures of various actors that eventually lead to potential misconduct (Bush et al. 2017; Dixon & Tanner 2012; Schmitz & Ganesan 2014). Dixon and Tanner (2012, p.12) argue that the nature of sales tasks is in flux and salespersons are exposed to varied interactions within the broader social context that cannot be handled by using the current management frameworks. Thus, new theoretical approaches are urgently

needed to understand unethical sales behavior in the dynamic and social sales task environment.

2.2 Literature on bribery in international business

IB researchers have extensively explored bribery and categorized the literature into four main areas: concept, causes, consequences, and control (see review of Cuervo-Cazurra 2016). Bribery control is dominated by two alternative approaches of research and practice (Misangyi et al. 2008). The *first approach* is based on the economic perspective on bribery. This approach mainly highlights the roles of efficiency pressures, rational self-interests, and clearly visible regulative structures to understand and prevent corrupt practices (see Cuervo-Cazurra 2008; Potter & Tavits 2011; Recanatini 2011; Sánchez & Goda 2018). The economic perspective indicates that preventive measures (e.g., minimizing incentives and strict monitoring) can be employed to control bribery effectively. Thus, this approach assumes that policies to curb bribery must focus on enhancing the magnitude of punishments and enforcement of strict rules and regulations (Mazar & Aggarwal 2011). However, this approach neglects the normative and cognitive aspects of bribery (Misangyi et al. 2008). It is evident that the regulatory structures of developing countries are mostly corrupt and dysfunctional (Ali & Isse 2003; Rodriguez et al. 2006). Thus, the economic perspective cannot adequately assist in improving the already corrupt systems in emerging economies.

The *second approach*—namely, the organizational perspective on bribery—has its origin in the literature of organizational behavior. This approach also has the capacity to investigate the normative and cognitive aspects of organizations to describe and prevent corrupt behavior within organizations. The focus of this account is mainly on the culture, structure, and cognition-related aspects of corrupt behavior (see, e.g., Dunfee & Donaldson 2002; Manacorda et al. 2014; Sampson 2015; Vaccaro 2012; Yanga 2014). In sum, this approach indicates that bribery can be controlled by bringing a positive cultural change in the ethical values, norms, and policies of an organization. Both formal (e.g., anti-bribery codes, rewards, and punishment policies and procedures) and informal (e.g., change in management and leadership behavior) values, norms, and policies are essential to minimize corrupt behavior. Consequently, positive cultural changes may lead the employees of the organization to recognize and commit to ethical behavior (Maignan & Ferrell 2004; Misangyi et al. 2008) and avoid or discourage corrupt behavior. Compared to the economic approach, the organizational approach may be more favorable since it acknowledges not only the regulative but also the normative and cognitive aspects of corrupt behavior. However, it is also limited due to its sole focus on the organizational context (Misangyi et al. 2008).

Alternatively, recent IB researchers have emphasized to focus on a broader perspective to understand and control corrupt behavior in the social settings of developing countries (see, e.g., Barkemeyer et al. 2018; Dávid-Barrett 2018; Ramakrishna et al. 2017; 2018; Misangyi et al. 2008; Zhu 2016). For example, Misangyi, Weaver and Elms (2008) suggest an extension of the study context from narrow organizational focus to larger institutional orders. Ramakrishna, Venkataraman, and Harvey (2017; 2018) conceive corrupt environment as an opportunity for the organizations to grow; they argue that collective organizational actions (e.g., appealing and mobilizing religious, civic, or trade communities) can help to promote its stance against bribery. Moreover, the ethical anti-bribery behavior of a firm is more evident and noticeable in corrupt environments; consequently, in order to survive, it is easier for a firm to distinguish itself from others and build its ethical reputation in a corrupt environment (Ramakrishna et al. 2018). Dávid-Barrett (2018) suggests collective actions of communities or clubs comprising governments and other organizations to control bribery in IB. Moreover, the activities of MNCs should also be studied in a broader environment since such activities may socially form or spread corrupt practices among other actors in the host country environment (Zhu 2016).

To sum up, recent IB research suggests an extension of the study context from a narrow economic or organizational perspective to a broader social and dynamic perspective—for example, focusing on the actions and activities of various actors in a corrupt environment or forming larger institutional orders in developing countries that influence the ethical or unethical behaviors of individuals and organizations (Cuervo-Cazurra 2016; Dávid-Barrett 2018; Mazar & Aggarwal 2011; Misangyi et al. 2008).

2.3 Literature on institutional work in organizational study

Institutional work in the organizational study has the capacity to investigate the social and dynamic nature of bribery and its control in the sales context of developing countries. This literature is mainly based on the neo-institutional theory (Di Maggio & Powell 1983). Institutions denote collectivism, which implies the interdependence of individuals as part of a larger group or society (House et al. 2004; Mazar & Aggarwal 2011). Although few bribery researchers have studied institutional pressure for bribes in developing countries, their focus is mainly on the causes or consequences of institutional pressure for bribes rather than the control or prevention of bribery. For example, the pressure of institutionalized bribery is negatively linked with the entry and investment choices of MNCs in developing country markets (Rodriguez, Uhlenbruck & Eden 2005; Uhlenbruck et al. 2006; Yadong 2011).

Institutional work explains two main ways through which organizations can respond to institutional pressure: either they can comply (Di Maggio & Powell 1983; Meyer & Rowan 1983) or they can resist by adopting specific strategies for their existence (Ashforth & Gibbs 1990; Oliver 1991; Pedersen et al. 2014; Suchman 1995). The extant research tends to focus mainly on pressures arising from relatively formal and visible macro institutions, mostly in a developed country setting—for example, pressure to comply with a new environmental bill from regulatory authorities (Clemens et al. 2008; Clemens & Douglas 2005; McKay 2001), pressure to follow accounting regulations from regulators and accounting bodies (see Canning & O'Dwyer 2013; Jamali 2010), pressure to report CSR performance from regulators (see Pedersen et al. 2013), or pressure to comply with waste management procedures from regulators and environmental agencies (see Rothenberg 2007).

Overall, previous empirical work reveals that the role of agency is primarily shaped by formal and relatively visible macro-level institutional forces. The focus of this stream of research is mainly on the pressure caused by the formation or transformation of formal institutions as well as their impacts on organizational responses. This stream of research moves mostly in order from the macro to the micro level, such as from institutional fields to institutions to subsequent actions of individual actors (Bechky 2011). In contrast, the hidden nature of pressure caused by informal institutions and, consequently, organizational responses toward such pressure is largely neglected.

Informal institutions are different from formal institutions since the former are invisible in nature, particularly in the case of unethical or illegal institutions. Bribery institutions have no formal or written laws or normative standards (e.g., CSR certification or government regulations) but they have mutually accepted hidden values and norms to behave in an unethical manner. They can be better understood through the constitutive role of micro-level everyday practices of actors (Feldman & Orlikowski 2011; Nicolini & Monteiro 2017; Schilke 2018). Thus, there is a burning need to explore the constitutive role of micro-level unethical practices that may form or maintain unethical institutional pressure and, consequently, organizational practices to respond to such pressure.

3 Towards a social and dynamic understanding of unethical practices in sales

An overview of the relevant literature in chapter 2 provides a complementary understanding on the unethical practices e.g. bribery in sales and identifies the research gaps to focus in each domain. Recognizing that extant research emphasizes a broader social perspective, this chapter focuses on key theories and related concepts to investigate unethical practices in sales from a social and dynamic perspective. More specifically, this section first introduces the PBV as an overall theoretical lens to study unethical practices in sales from a social and dynamic perspective. Combined with PBV, the INT- related concepts on change and dynamics have been discussed as analytical tools to study the evolution process of bribery in sales as an unethical practice. The neo-institution theory also fulfills the commitments of PBV to understand and control bribery practices in sales. Therefore, related institutional frameworks—for example, institutional pillars and organizational responses to institutional pressure—are presented to understand the nature of pressure arising from institutionalized bribery and related organizational responses to deal with such pressure. Finally, this chapter shows integrated theoretical framework of this study.

3.1 A practice-based view on unethical practices in sales

This study conceives unethical behavior in sales as a social practice that is repeatedly produced by various actors in a sales task environment. Several actors and contextual elements either directly or indirectly affect this complex, pervasive or intertwined social phenomenon (Park 2003; Zhou et al. 2013). Unethical practices in sales could be considered as part of everyday interaction and, simultaneously, a reflection of broader societal norms (Reckwitz 2002; Millington et al. 2005; Scott 2001; Zhuang et al. 2012). An individual is a carrier of practices and consequently knows, understands, behaves, and desires accordingly (Reckwitz 2002). Hence, the actions of an individual are not his/her own but are elements of a practice in which he/she

participates. Therefore, what is manifest as a practice performed by a single actor might be the product of an established or shared practice in sales environment at the industry level or even the country level (Rodriguez et al. 2005; Suchman 1995; Yadong 2011).

Focusing on the social and dynamic nature of unethical practices in sales provides a novel view for this study. This view is based on the practice approach in organization study literature (Feldman & Orlikowski 2011; Gherardi 2012; Nicolini & Monteiro 2017; Nicolini et al. 2003), which has its origins in practice theory (Reckwitz 2002; Schatzki 2001). The premise of the practice-based view (PBV) is that social life is produced through routinized everyday activities that shape practices (Feldman & Orlikowski 2011; Fine & Hallett 2014). Individuals are carriers and performers of practice and their routinized activities form the basic unit of analysis (Gherardi 2012). Practice is much more than the words or actions of individuals. Indeed, they are bundles or regimes of human activity that shape social orders (Nicolini & Monteiro 2017; Schatzki 2002). Practices are performed in a particular social milieu. They are learned and adopted, and their adaptability is debated and decided (Czarniawska 2013).

Moral contemplations play an essential role in shaping any social practice. Through social practices, individuals adopt isomorphic values, norms, and standards in organizational as well as social life (Erden et al. 2014; MacIntyre 1984; Schatzki 2002; 2005). Due to the enactment of practices through everyday activities (Feldman & Orlikowski 2011; Gherardi 2009), the PBV provides a unique perspective for the investigation of unethical sales practice in its own social setting.

Practices can be studied through three foci or viewpoints—*empirical*, *theoretical*, and *philosophical* (Feldman & Orlikowski 2011; Orlikowski 2010). Although all three foci are essential elements of any practice-based study, practice researchers may draw more attention toward one over the other(s) depending on the nature of the study (Orlikowski 2010; Schatzki et al. 2001).

Empirical foci are concerned with what actors do in their social or organizational life (Jarzabkowski et al. 2016; Orlikowski 2010). In the sales context, better knowledge regarding unethical actions and activities of the various actors in sales (e.g., sales force, management, customers, or competitors) can effectively help to better understand unethical practices in sales and subsequently help management to control potential misconduct (Bloom et al. 2012; 2013; Bromiley & Rau 2014; Maritz & Du Toit 2018).

Theoretical foci deal with how the actions and activities of various actors are linked (Orlikowski 2010). This viewpoint is more concerned with providing a theoretical explanation of the practice. For example, configuring the activities of various actors may reveal a pattern or structure that may help to understand the production of a new unethical practice or a change in an existing unethical practice

in sales. Thus, the theoretical foci scientifically reveal how various actors socially produce such practices and how the practices can be formed, maintained, or changed collectively (see, e.g. Nicolini & Monteiro 2017; Reckwitz 2002).

Lastly, the *philosophical foci* devote more attention to the constitutive role of practices for the social production of reality (Feldman & Orlikowski 2011; Nicolini & Monteiro 2017). It explains that “the social world is a field of embodied, materially interwoven practices centrally organized around shared practical understandings” (Schatzki 2001, p.3). In the sales context, philosophical foci can reveal how unethical practices in sales at the micro level can create macro-level social orders.

Application of PBV has been gaining recent attention in organization study. For instance, strategy as practice (SAP) literature—academics are employing PBV to explore the strategy making process as social and dynamic accomplishment rather than a static outcome (Jarzabkowski et al. 2016). Likewise, institutional work—academics are applying practice lens to theorize the formation, maintenance and change in institutions (Feldman & Orlikowski 2011). Nicolini and Monteiro (2017) argue that PBV is a unique approach to study practices that follow a set of ontological and methodological commitments to grasp any social practice. Depending on the research objectives, any theory can be effectively employed that fulfills the commitments of this approach (Feldman & Orlikowski 2011; Gherardi 2012). Thus, combined with the PBV, this study uses the INT and the neo-institutional theory, which can logically enable an understanding of the social and dynamic nature of bribery as an unethical practice in sales along with its control.

3.2 Industrial network theory on the evolution of bribery in sales

The INT (Håkansson & Snehota 1995; Håkansson & Johansson 1992) is suitable for analyzing the evolution or transformation of bribery practices in the B2B sales context. The INT describes industrial markets as webs of interdependent business relationships (Håkansson & Johansson 1992). Hence, an exchange is imminent, which depends on activity links, resource ties, and actor bonds (Ford & Håkansson 2006). Indeed, a single activity performed by one actor is related to the entire network and embedded in a wide variety of other activities (Håkansson 1992). Such activities are performed at all levels, ranging from individual to collective or mass levels. However, actors have only limited control, not only on their own activities and resources but also on other actors or their respective activities (Lenney & Easton 2009). The concept of activity governance can be used to understand which actor has a leading role in performing, coordinating, or controlling activities (Zott & Amit 2010, p. 220). To illustrate this in the context of bribery in sales, the activity

governance concept can be used to understand which actor has the power to deliver resources for bribes or the power to demand bribes from other actors.

The INT and its related concepts can serve as analytical tools to describe the contextual setting in which bribery practices evolve—for example, buyers, sellers, or other relevant actors in the network. The logic for the spread of social practices like bribery can be explained through interactive relationships (Halinen, Salmi & Havila 1999). Bribery practices are abstract and invisible in nature. In an industrial setting, they are performed by individual buyers and sellers not only on their initiative but also on behalf of their firms. They are embraced and transferred through interactions. Further, the norm of reciprocity may pressurize the buyer and seller to advocate and justify an unethical practice requested by the other party (Lindfelt & Törnroos 2006; Tangpong et al. 2016).

To illustrate a conceptual understanding on how bribery in sales can evolve through interactive business relationships and how it can be adopted as an established practice in the entire industrial network, the framework of Halinen, Salmi & Havila (1999) explains the nature, forces, and mechanisms of change in business networks. The authors are of the view that interactive business relationships function as generators, recipients, or transmitters of change. Their framework can explain change in bribery practices that may proliferate within an entire network. Actors in a network consistently develop relationships with each other. Consequently, they may react to any minor or major change. For example, a new bribery activity initiated by a single actor may affect other actors in several different ways—other actors may *reflect*, *absorb*, *adapt*, *transmit*, and *transform* the change (Easton & Lundgren 1992, p.89). Halinen, Salmi, and Havila (1999) elaborate that changes emerge through business relationships and may either be confined (remain in a single dyad) or connected (received and acted upon by other actors in a network). Thus, connected change can spread to other relationships, subsequently causing a change at the network level.

The forces of change underlying the evolution of bribery in sales can be explained with the concepts of *inertia* and *critical events* (Halinen, Salmi & Havila 1999). Inertia denotes the tendency to bring stability in a network, thereby allowing only incremental change. On the other hand, critical events indicate a radical change in dyads and networks. Consequently, they are often beyond the control of actors. Thus, critical events are recognized as a significant change force in INT research and are considered as novel means to understand the evolutionary process (see Halinen et al. 2013; Hsin-Hui & Zolkiewski 2012; Nyström 2009; Tidström & Hagberg-Andersson 2012).

Interestingly, critical events may also cause an entire sequence of other minor or major critical events as well as activities, consequently shaping a network over time (Halinen, Salmi & Havila 1999). Similarly, critical events also have the capacity to

develop trajectories—for example, one event logically leads to another event(s) and so on (Halinen et al. 2013; Hedaa & Törnroos 2008). Critical events may lead to a slowing down or quickening of the process and function as turning points in an evolutionary process of bribery in a network (Makkonen et al. 2012). These events can be the outcomes of human actions or non-human changes caused by nature (Hedaa & Törnroos 2008). Moreover, critical events can emerge from any level of a network—for example, individual, departmental, organizational levels as well as from the broader industrial, national, or even international environment (Tidström & Hagberg-Andersson 2012). Similarly, the factors of inertia may also develop at the micro, meso or macro levels of the economy (Halinen et al. 2013).

3.3 The neo-institutional theory on understanding and controlling bribery

The neo-institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell 1983) offers a rich theoretical perspective for understanding the social and dynamic nature of bribery in sales and its control. This theory assumes that institutions are norms or principles devised by humans in a society that shape human interaction and behavior (North, 1990). Institutions can be either formal or informal (Scot 2001). Accordingly, bribery institutions can be described as shared values, customs, norms, and traditions towards bribery by groups of individuals and/or organizations. Thus, institutions denote collectivism, which implies the interdependence of individuals as part of a larger group or society (House et al. 2004; Mazar & Aggarwal 2011).

Traditional research on institutions moves from the macro level to the micro level—for example, organizational fields to institutions to the actions of actors (Bechky 2011). Recent institutional work reveals a fundamental shift from a macro-level to a micro-level perspective (Fine & Hallett 2014; Schilke 2018; Thornton, Ocasio & Lounsbury 2012). The focus of this research remains on formal institutions, as identified in chapter 2. Informal institutions (e.g., bribery institutions) are invisible in nature and are constituted by the everyday routine practices of actors. Therefore, they can be better grasped through a micro-level PBV (Feldman & Orlikowski 2011; Nicolini & Monteiro 2017).

Being the key contribution in institutional work, this study mainly draws attention to two institutional frameworks. First, the framework of institutional pillars proposed by Scott (2001) can help to understand the pressure of institutionalized bribery practices in developing countries. Second, Oliver's (1991) framework helps in understanding how organizations can respond to the pressure of institutionalized bribery.

3.3.1 Institutional pillars to study bribery practices in sales

Scott (2001) argues that institutionalized practices are supported by three main pillars—regulative, normative, and cognitive. These pillars establish the legitimacy of bribery practices in sales and pressurize actors to change their behavior accordingly (Khan et al. 2015). Based on the work of Scott (2001), Table 2 highlights how institutionalized bribery practices of market actors in the sales environment of developing countries might be supported by institutional pillars.

Table 2. Institutionalized bribery practices supported by three pillars

	Regulative	Normative	Cognitive
<i>Basis of Legitimacy</i>	Demand or supply bribe is legally not sanctioned	Morally and ethically right to demand or supply bribe.	Demand or supply bribe is culturally supported.
<i>Mechanisms</i>	Weak laws, rules and their enforcement encourage to demand or supply bribes.	Socially obligatory and normative habits and standards to demand or supply bribe.	Shared and mimetic values, beliefs, and understanding that demand or supply bribe is appropriate
<i>Indicators</i>	No written rules, laws, and sanctions to demand or supply bribes.	Informal and hidden accreditation to demand and supply bribes.	Common beliefs and shared logic to demand or supply bribes.
<i>Effect</i>	Low level of fear for punishment to demand or supply bribes.	Low level of guilt to demand or supply bribes.	High certainty that demand or supply bribes are appropriate.

The regulatory pillar deals with the rules, regulations, laws, sanctions, and punishments imposed by formal regulatory authorities. For example, government regulations and punishments related to unethical gifts and bribes in sales can pressurize actors (e.g., firms, their customers etc.) to behave in an ethical way. Bribery is a criminal offense in all countries. Thus, MNCs might not face any formal regulatory pressure to pay or to receive the bribes. However, regulatory institutions in developing country markets are mostly weak or dysfunctional due to poor enforcement of laws and punishment. This might provide opportunities for other actors to interpret and manipulate regulations in their favor (Marquis et al. 2007). For instance, local firms might not compete with MNCs on the basis of their products or services but they can supply bribes to their customers without any fear of punishment from the regulatory authorities.

Bribery practices are illegal and social in nature. Thus, the informal and hidden rules of societal actors, supported by normative and cognitive pillars, play a leading role in this regard. The normative pillar denotes the social values, norms, beliefs, actions, and/or expectations considered morally appropriate in a society (Scott 2001). This pillar sets normative rules and standards that help actors to identify their rights and privileges along with their respective responsibilities (Khan et al. 2015). For example, unofficial means of business, such as bribes and kickbacks to boost sales, are illegal but socially acceptable and widely followed norms in most of the developing country markets (Transparency International 2017; Zaheer 1995).

The cognitive pillar highlights taken-for-granted shared social beliefs, attitudes, identities, and cultural meanings that institutional actors attach to practices (Scott 2001). It explains how and why the actions of actors converge into acceptable practices (Khan et al. 2015). Actors interpret shared beliefs and social implications. Consequently, actors decide what is an acceptable or a legitimized practice (Kostova & Zaheer 1999; Suddaby & Greenwood 2005). This pillar has a mimetic impact on actors' belief systems and they imitate successful actors because the structure of the latter is beneficial. In B2B sales context, when bribes are widely followed in sales, most of the firms and customers will follow bribery suppliers and demanders as their role model to maintain their foothold in the market.

Together, these three pillars provide behavioral reasoning skills to institutional actors (Scott 2001). Consequently, if one or more pillars strongly support bribery practices in sales, they can be legitimized. In this situation, individuals and organizations tend to experience extreme pressure of institutionalized bribery from a vast majority of actors (Oliver 1991; 1992; Surachaikulwattana & Phillips 2017). After all, individuals and organizations are embedded in a broader institutional environment (Granovetter 1985). They are subject to both formal and informal pressures arising from their institutional settings (DiMaggio & Powell 1983; Porac & Rosa 1996). Actors around MNCs in sales context of developing countries are not bound to follow strict anti-bribery laws, norms, and values of MNCs. Indeed, they follow the prevailing bribery norms and values of their own societal institutions (Scott 2001) and expect that as newcomers, MNCs should also comply with their existing bribery norms.

Acknowledging that some responsible actors, including MNC's, always exit in developing country markets, but their position is weak in the institutional environment. Hence, they typically face enormous pressures to comply with the unethical desires of large majority of actors supporting bribery in sales (Lawrance 2010). For example, in B2B sales context customers may ask or expect for bribes followed by the competitors who are willing to supply bribes to customers, and supported by the other institutional actors such as weak regulatory authorities or corrupt bureaucracy. It can be concluded that ethical anti-bribery practices of few

actors cannot overcome institutionalized bribery practices unless they are also widely followed for their legitimacy (Toldert & Zucker 1983).

3.3.2 Responses of MNCs towards the pressure of institutionalized bribery

Oliver's (1991) framework identifies five strategic responses of organizations to institutional pressure: *acquiesce*, *compromise*, *avoid*, *defy*, *manipulate*. Her framework is general and systematically covers all possible organizational responses to the pressure of institutionalized bribery practices. Table 3 presents the pressure of institutionalized bribery practices and, consequently, the responses of MNCs to such pressure, along with illustrative examples from industrial sales context in a developing country market.

Table 3. Strategic responses to institutional pressures (Oliver 1991, p.152)

Strategic responses	Tactics	Oliver's Examples	Examples of practices for this study
<i>Acquiesce</i>	Habit Imitate Comply	Follow invisible, taken-for-granted norms. Mimic institutional models. Obey rules and accept norms.	Local firms and some irresponsible MNCs might comply with local invisible bribery norms on sales.
<i>Compromise</i>	Balance Pacify Bargain	Balance the expectations of multiple constituents. Place and accommodate institutional elements. Negotiate with institutional actors.	MNCs can negotiate with their customers by offering small gifts that cannot be termed as bribery, as defined by their firm, to maintain their foothold in the market.
<i>Avoid</i>	Conceal Buffer Escape	Disguise nonconformity. Loose institutional attachments. Change goals, activities, or domains.	MNCs can focus on only ethical actors for their survival.
<i>Defy</i>	Dismiss Challenge Attack	Ignore explicit norms and values. Contest rules and requirements. Assault the sources of institutional pressures.	MNCs can defy some actors that are not absolutely necessary for their survival. MNCs can take legal action.
<i>Manipulate</i>	Co-opt Influence Control	Import influential constituents. Shape values and criteria. Dominate constituents and processes.	MNCs can attempt to change the anti-bribery regulations, norms, values, and beliefs of the actors in their favor.

Acquiesce, compromise, avoid, and defy are relatively short-term responses but are still relevant from the perspective of MNCs. On the other hand, *manipulation* is the strongest response, not only from the perspective of MNCs but also from the institutional perspective. Thus manipulation represents an organizational attempt to actively and productively participate in the institutional process (Clemens & Douglas, 2005). Consequently, manipulation can bring change in existing bribery institutions, for example, through deinstitutionalization (Ahmadjian & Robinson 2001; Hoffman 1999; Lawrence & Suddaby 2006; Oliver 1992) or disruption (Zietsma & Lawrence 2010) of existing bribery institutions in developing country markets. Similarly, MNCs can also lead other institutional actors in the process of creation and maintenance (see Berger & Luckman 1991; Zietsma & Lawrence 2010) of ethical anti-bribery institutions that can support their self-interests.

Further, MNCs can manipulate the situation in their favor through its actions aimed to secure or maintain access to valuable resources of actors (Sonpar, Pazzaglia & Kornijenko 2009). In such a situation, the objectives of MNCs will be purely instrumental—for example, long-term growth, survival, or profit maximization (Navarro 1988) by gaining socio-political legitimacy (Hemphill 2004) of its own anti-bribery practices as well as using their comparative or competitive advantages (Hillman & Keim 2001; Porter & Kramer 2002; Waddock & Boyle 1995) over other institutional actors in developing countries.

In the short run, the manipulative responses of MNCs cannot bring an immediate change or economic return. However, it may help MNCs to maximize the chances of their political recovery (Beddewela & Fairbrass 2016; Scherer, Palazzo & Matten 2009), which may lead them to reconstruct associated rules, rights, and boundaries (Lawrence 2010). For this purpose, MNCs might target to turn regulatory pillars (Scott 2001) in their favor—for example, by seeking government protection or intervention through anti-bribery state laws and their strict implementation. Similarly, MNCs also must develop legitimacy building strategies for their anti-bribery practices targeted toward other institutional actors, which is not possible without influencing the cognitive and normative pillars in their favor (Beddewela & Fairbrass 2016).

3.4 Theoretical framework of the study

Integrating the knowledge gained from key theories and concepts discussed in this section, figure 4 depicts the theoretical framework of this study.

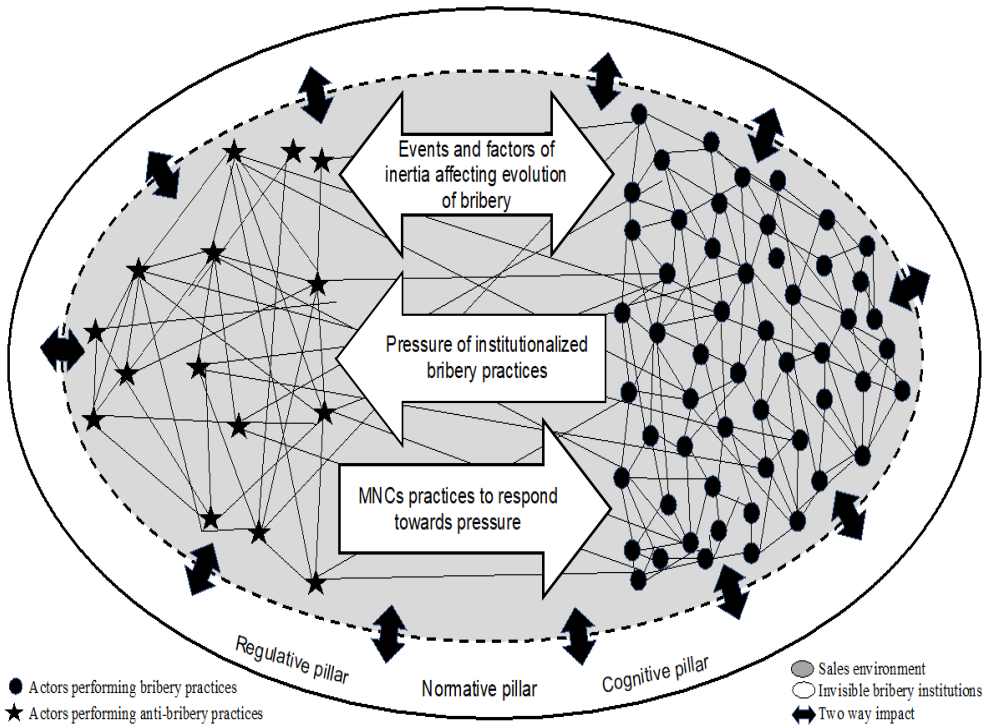


Figure 4. Integrated theoretical framework of the study

This study mainly investigates bribery as an unethical practice in sales. Bribery is conceived as a social practice that is dynamic and constitutive in nature and it is enacted through routinized activities of various actors involved in sales. The PBV can serve as an overall theoretical lens to view bribery practices in the sales. This view emphasizes the routinized actions or activities (practices) of actors as the basic unit of analysis (Nicolini & Monteiro 2017). Feldman and Orlikowski (2011) describe three ways to study practices: What actors do? How their doing is linked? How their doings socially form, maintain, or change any practice? In line with three viewpoints to study practices, the high intensity of the black dots in figure 4 indicates that most of the actors are involved in bribery practices in sales. Actors and their practices are linked to each other (see figure 4).

The key concepts of the INT discussed in this chapter provide analytical tools to explore the evolution process of bribery practices in sales. It can be expected that bribery practices evolve in a social and dynamic process where various actors are connected to each other through a web of interdependent relationships, as depicted in figure 4. Actors perform various activities, for example, demand or supply bribes and share each other's resources. Interaction in business relationships is the key

mechanism for the evolution and spread of bribery practices in sales. Importantly, the concepts of events or factors of inertia in this study have been conceptualized as outcomes of activities or practices of any relevant actor arising from the micro level and moving to the macro level of the sales environment that may affect the evolutionary process of bribery in sales (see the double-edged white arrow in figure 4). For example, identifying critical events or their logical sequence may help to understand sudden positive or negative changes in the evolutionary process of bribery. On the other hand, factors of inertia may stabilize or maintain the evolutionary process of bribery in sales.

With regard to bribery control, the neo-institutional theory and its related frameworks (Scott 2001; Oliver 1991) discussed in this chapter can help to investigate both the pressure of institutionalized bribery practices (see black arrow in Figure 4) imposed by actors and, subsequently, organizational practices to respond to such pressure (see white arrow in figure 4). Institutional pillars (Scott 2001) assume that central and dominant actors are largely involved in bribery practices supported by three pillars of informal bribery institutions (see the outer white circle in figure 4) and, consequently, pressurize MNCs and other responsible actors performing ethical or anti-bribery practices (denoted by stars in figure 4). The double-edged black arrows in figure 4 demonstrate the interplay between the practices and institutions. This implies that micro level practices of the actors form, maintain or change institutions, and vice versa.

MNCs strategically respond to such pressure through a wide range of organized practices (Nicolini & Monteiro 2016) with the objectives of their short and long-term survival in a setting where bribery is institutionalized. Oliver's (1991) five strategic responses to institutional pressure—acquiesce, compromise, avoid, defy, or manipulate—can be employed to study a wide range of practices of MNCs to respond to the pressure. A few ethical but weak actors always exist in developing countries—for example, responsible MNCs, NGOs, customers—as denoted by stars in Figure 4. However, their ethical anti-bribery practices cannot be legitimized unless they are not widely followed by a large majority of actors (Toldert & Zucker 1983).

4 Methodology

This section describes the choices and justifications of the methodology employed in the dissertation. This study is a compilation of four publications. Table 4 provides an overview of methods employed in each article. Various aspects of the methodologies have been discussed in the remaining sections of this chapter.

Table 4. Overview of the methodology employed in each article

Articles and their objectives	Philosophical assumptions	Type	Research approach	Data used
Article 1: To provide an overview of unethical behavior in sales along with theories employed. To propose a PBV to study unethical sales behavior.	Social constructivist	Review	Systematic review	164 peer-reviewed articles published in business journals.
Article 2: To investigate the evolution process of bribery in sales.	Social constructivist	Empirical	Qualitative and narrative	29 semi-structured interviews supplemented by observations, field notes, firms' documents, and websites.
Article 3: To propose a practice-based strategic framework for MNCs to control bribery in developing country markets.	Social constructivist	Conceptual	N.A	Organizational documents and information from websites.
Article 4: To investigate the nature of the pressure of institutionalized bribery practices of market actors in developing countries followed by MNCs' practices to respond towards such pressure.	Social constructivist	Empirical	Qualitative	24 semi-structured interviews along with observations and field notes.

4.1 Philosophical assumptions

Although the philosophical assumptions of research remain hidden, they influence the research practice at every stage and must, therefore, be addressed (Slife & Williams 1995). These assumptions are mainly related to the nature of reality (ontology) along with the grounds and means to collect the knowledge (epistemology) (Cunliffe 2011; Morgan & Smircich 1980). The philosophical assumptions can help to explain why the qualitative, quantitative, or mixed method approach has been employed (Creswell 2013; Lincoln et al. 2011). Also, such philosophical assumptions reflect a specific stance of the researcher, commonly known as world view or paradigm, which implies the basic sets of beliefs that guide actions (Guba 1990, p.17; Lincoln & Guba 2000). Traditionally, both sales ethics (see McClaren 2013, 2015) and bribery in IB (see Cuervo-Cazurra 2016) domains are heavily dominated by the positivist world view of reality and ontologically conceive unethical or corrupt practices as objective phenomena. Alternatively, institutional work is rich in investigating practices as subjective phenomena (Nicolini & Monteiro 2017).

This dissertation acknowledges the interactive and evolving nature of social reality, where multiple shared norms and rules of various actors socially form, maintain, and change unethical practices in sales. Thus, the ontological and epistemological assumptions of this study are aligned with the social constructivist world view (Berger & Luckmann 1966; Bruner 1986, 1991; Gergen 1994). This view implies that individuals construct social reality in interaction through the use of their language as well as their social practices (see Czarniawska 2004; 2011; Hackley 2003). Thus, social constructivism is closer to the subjective ontological account where reality is based on individuals' experiences and perceptions, which consistently change over time and place (Bruner 1987; 1990; Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008; Schatzki 2002).

4.2 Rationale for a systematic review in article 1

Every research begins with reviewing the relevant literature. Therefore, this study was started with a review exercise to understand the existing knowledge, particularly in terms of what we know, what we do not know, and how we can know (Aguinis & Glavas 2012). Non-systematic review methods are often subject to biases—for example, selection, synthesis, and analysis biases (Fink 2010). On the other hand, systematic review methods are well suited to provide a credible overview of the existing body of literature (Booth et al. 2012).

Sales ethics research was a natural starting point for this dissertation. Hence, article 1 of this study performs systematic review to gain a fundamental understanding of how extant research has addressed unethical behavior in sales,

along with the theoretical approaches employed. This initial understanding was necessary before starting the empirical examination (Denyer & Tranfield 2009; Mulrow 1994) of the bribery phenomenon in a knowledgeable manner. The systematic review in article 1 also effectively helped in identifying the research gaps to focus on along with relevant theories, concepts, and choice of methods (Booth et al. 2012) for the entire dissertation.

4.2.1 Data collection for systematic review

The criteria for the data collection proposed by Booth, Papaioannou, and Sutton (2012) was employed for the systematic review in this publication (see Figure 5).

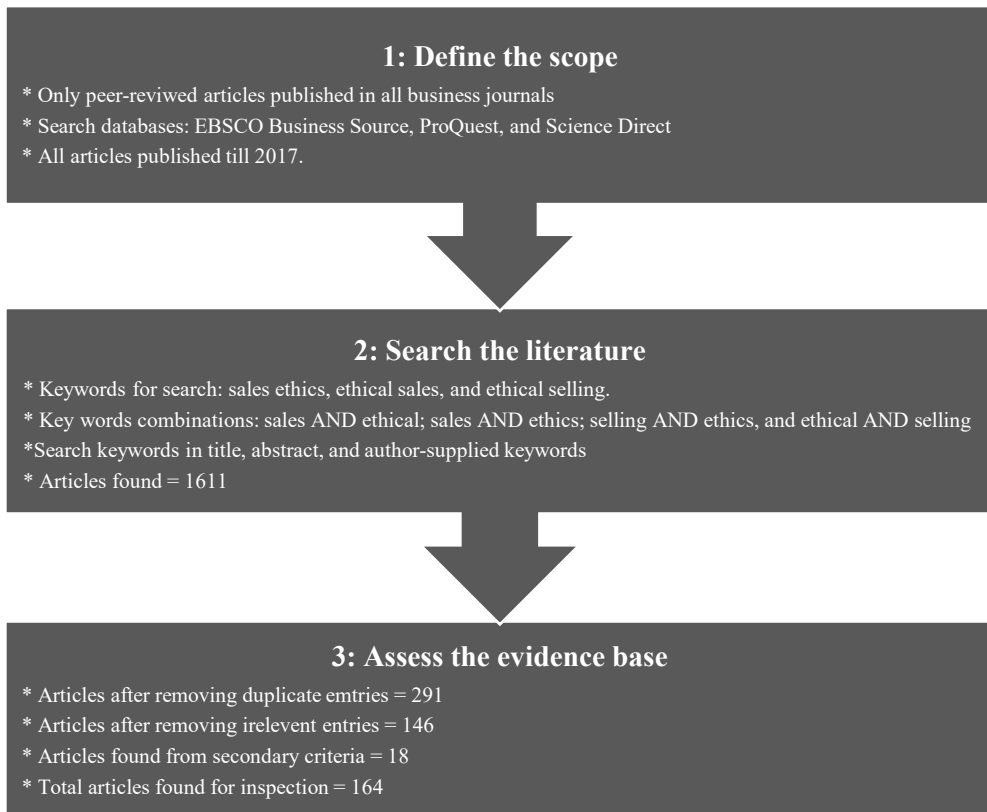


Figure 5. Criteria employed to collect data for systematic review

While defining the scope of research (step 1), it was decided that only peer-reviewed articles from journals would be searched. According to the advice of Vaaland, Heide, and Grønhaug (2008), books and conference papers were not

included because scholarly journals provide a recent and reliable overview of published results. Since articles related to unethical practices in sales are published in all business journals, a broad search was performed covering all business journals by using three reliable databases recommended by other scholars (e.g., McClaren 2013). All articles published up to 2017 were searched. In step 2, relevant keywords (see Figure 5) were searched. Relatively general keywords were deliberately selected in order to ensure the inclusion of a maximum number of articles and minimize the missing number of relevant studies (Tari 2011). This exercise produced 1611 articles from various databases.

To assess the evidence (step 3), duplicate entries were eliminated from the three employed databases. Next, irrelevant articles were eliminated by reading the title and abstract of each article. For example, several papers were irrelevant based on the fact that their focus was on irrelevant business or non-business fields—for example, accounting, advertising, public relations, or law (see, e.g., Brennan & Baines 2006; Kim 2014). It was ensured that each article entirely or at least partially covered unethical behaviors and practices of any actor related to sales. Acknowledging the potential limitations of systematic search, a secondary search criterion (see Tari 2011) was also employed. For this purpose, reference lists of review articles on EDM in sales (see McClaren 2000, 2013) were useful to find additional articles. In sum, 164 articles were selected for the final analysis.

4.2.2 Data analysis and reporting

The secondary data (164 articles) that the systematic review yielded was analyzed to provide an overview of how the sales ethics domain has addressed unethical sales behavior, particularly from a social and practical perspective. Each article was systematically categorized (Bush & Grant 1994; Williams & Plouffe 2007) based on publication characteristics, the manner in which each article described the unethical behaviors of key actors in a sales ethics domain along with the theoretical foundation of each study.

First, a quantitative overview was provided—for example, conceptual/empirical type, time of publication, publication outlet, method employed, and geographical origin. Second, data related to the unethical sales behaviors of various actors was analyzed. At this stage, articles were systematically inspected and treated using the content analysis method (Vaaland, Heide & Grønhaug 2008). The analysis was conducted with an explorative, inductive, and iterative process without a priori framework. The analysis was mainly based on four key questions: What type of unethical behavior is it? Whose unethical behavior is in question? Toward whom is the unethical behavior directed? What is the theoretical foundation of the study that describes such unethical behavior? EDM theories are dominant theoretical

approaches, both in sales ethics and marketing ethics (McClaren 2000; Nill & Schibrowsky 2007), but special attention was paid to other potential theories that were employed.

Finally, the systematic analysis revealed that sales ethics research was not fully addressing unethical sales behavior from a social and practice perspective. As a background literature, reviewing the practice-based literature in organization study (e.g. Feldman and Orlikowski 2011; Nicolini & Monteiro 2017) and social sciences (Reckwitz 2002; Schatzki 2002), a PBV was proposed to understand the unethical behavior in sales. In addition, further literature related to the social network theory, the INT, and the neo-institutional theory were also applied to demonstrate how future practice-based studies can employ these theories in three emerging sales contexts.

4.3 Rationale of qualitative research design for empirical articles

A qualitative research design was employed in empirical articles 2 and 4 of this dissertation. This decision was based on the fact that the qualitative approach was well positioned to address the complex and dynamic phenomenon (Doz 2011; Liedtka 1992) of bribery in sales, to understand the interactive relationships (Eisenhardt 1989; Bruner 1987) of various actors in sales, to explore the contextual knowledge (Marschan-Piekkari et al. 2004; Milliken 2001) of the institutionalized bribery environment, and to establish a holistic and subjective understanding (Bansal & Corley 2011; Bruner 1991; Miles & Huberman, 1994) of bribery in sales.

Similarly, the research purpose and questions of this study also clearly portray the qualitative nature, where the aim is not to develop or test any hypothesis but to explore subjective experiences and perceptions (see Hackley 2003; Denzin & Lincoln 2003) of actors about unethical practices in sales. Thus, the key objective is to provide a better understanding of the social and dynamic nature of unethical practices in sales and, subsequently, their control in their own social context.

The qualitative approach employed in articles 2 and 4 also recognizes that knowledge about the social world depends upon the interpretation and perception of individuals who socially construct it (Flyvbjerg 2007). This approach can provide a rich understanding of bribery in sales as well as its emergence and transformation in the natural social context (Denzin & Lincoln 2003; Geertz 1973). Similarly, the nature of social phenomena itself is under investigation, since context and environment are essential in this study (Liedtka 1992), in which various sales actors are both participating in and experiencing unethical practices.

By following the methodological assumptions of qualitative and interpretive research traditions, the research process was iterative and emergent (Creswell 2013; Hackley 2003). The experience during the literature review, data collection, and

analysis shaped and reshaped the research design and redefined the study objectives accordingly (see Figure 6).

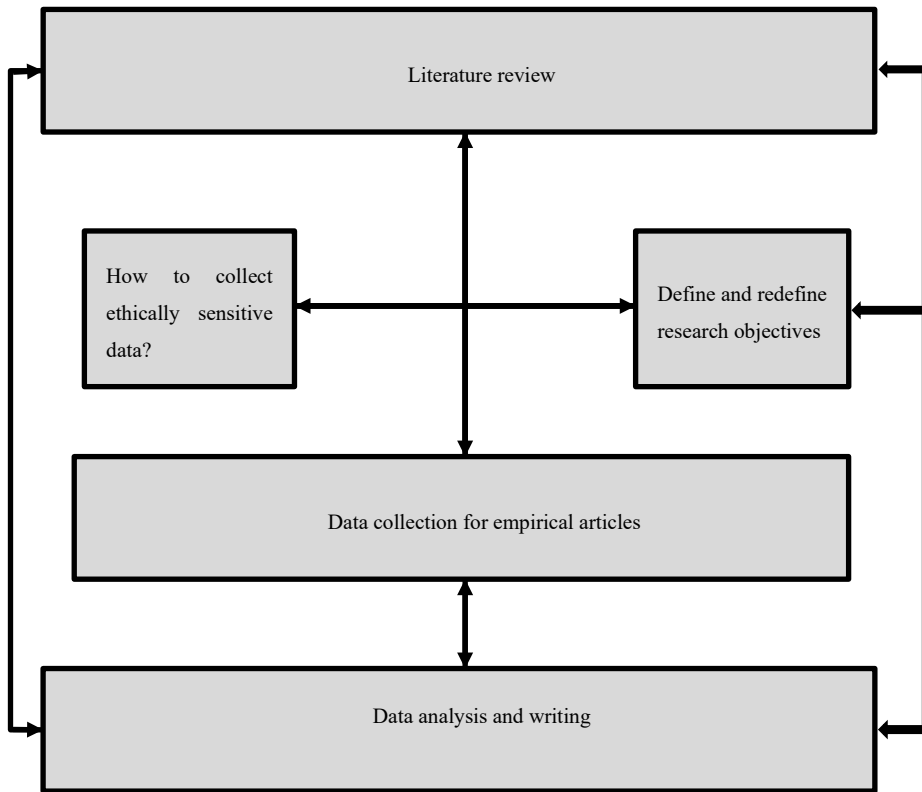


Figure 6. The research process during empirical work

4.3.1 Empirical context of the study

The B2B sales environment of the pharmaceutical industry in Pakistan was selected as an empirical context to study bribery practices. Being a native speaker, the author’s knowledge of local languages and relevant professional experience along with links in the industry of the country were decisive factors for the selection of the study context. The unethical practices in the pharmaceutical sales are wide spread in developing countries (Civaner 2012; Consumer International 2007). Moreover, a high corruption perception index (Transparency International 2017) score of the country also supported the possible existence of bribery practices. The extant research and industry reports indicate that bribery practices in sales were deeply institutionalized in the drug industry of the country (Consumer International 2007; David-Barrett et al. 2017). Similarly, MNCs continue to struggle with unethical

bribery practices in sales perpetuated by local market actors (Bersselaar & Decker 2011; Civaner 2012).

The pharmaceutical sales environment in Pakistan is highly competitive (Euromonitor International 2018). According to the statistics of the Pakistan Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association (PPFMA 2017), over 750 drug firms operate in the country. Compared to other industries, the drug industry in the country maintains an extensive and relatively open pharmaceutical market in which all kinds of actors operate, including small and large, local and multinational drug manufacturers, public and private pharmacies, distributors, public health officials, and NGOs (PPFMA 2017). The sales and marketing staff of drug firms is mainly responsible for maintaining relationships with health care professionals, retail distributors, and wholesalers to improve drug sales in their respective regions. Moreover, the staff of drug firms also deals with relevant public health officials, such as drug inspectors. The health infrastructure in the country is weak. Therefore, health NGOs also run general public health campaigns (e.g., polio and Hepatitis B vaccination campaigns). Drug firms are not allowed to interact with end users (e.g., patients) to promote and advertise their products. Patients (as end users) are supposed to purchase medicines on the advice of health care professionals or retail pharmacy staff.

4.3.2 Data collection

Interviews enable to capture the richness and complexity of unethical practices in sales and the context in which they take place (Liedtka 1992). Thus, interview was the primary data collection method for empirical articles. A purposeful sampling method (Creswell 2013; Hackley 2003) was employed for the selection of informants to participate in this study. The author selected four of his Facebook friends who were employed in sales departments of two drug MNCs operating in Pakistan. With their permission, the author searched their friends' lists and found several sales and marketing professionals along with other relevant professionals in the drug industry—for example, health care professionals, pharmacists, public health officials, health NGOs officials. Messages were sent to them explaining the nature of the study and requesting them to participate. This technique effectively helped to obtain positive responses from several informants.

Realizing the ethically sensitive nature of the study, trustworthy relationships were developed with the informants (Silverman 2010) through informal discussions over Facebook and Skype before the interviews. A total of 46 semi-structured interviews were conducted (see Table 5).

Table 5. Profiles of informants

No	Title of informant	Current firm	Expertise (years)	Interview (Minutes)	Place (City)
	Staff of drug firms:				
1	Sales promotion officer	Small local	3	95	Multan
2	Area sales manager	Small local	26	112	R.Y. Khan
3	Regional sales head	Small local	15	62	Hyderabad
4	Managing director	Small local	42	72	Bahawalpur
5	Sales and marketing head	Medium local	18	84	Multan
6	Marketing head	Medium local	14	72	Lahore
7	Regional sales head	Large local	21	90	Bahawalpur
8	Product manager	Large local	13	55	Karachi
9	Area sales manager	Large local	7	82	Bannu
10	Product manager	Large local	7	47	Karachi
11	Area sales manager	MNC subsidy	12	56	Peshawar
12	Product manager	MNC subsidy	5	78	Lahore
13	Business unit head	MNC subsidy	31	105	Karachi
14	Product specialist	MNC subsidy	3	80	Multan
15	Sales executive	MNC subsidy	23	132	Sukkur
16	Business unit head	MNC subsidy	34	42	Lahore
17	Medical representative	MNC subsidy	15	95	Lahore
18	Social responsibility executive	MNC subsidy	07	50	Karachi
19	Zonal sales manager	MNC subsidy	11	90	Lahore
20	Assistant manager marketing	MNC subsidy	06	85	Lahore
21	Zonal sales manager	MNC subsidy	14	72	Lahore
22	Regional sales head	MNC subsidy	21	90	Multan
23	Corporate compliance manager	MNC subsidy	13	40	Karachi
24	Product manager	MNC subsidy	7	82	Islamabad
25	External affairs manager	MNC subsidy	7	45	Karachi
26	Group product manager	MNC subsidy	13	90	Lahore
27	Business unit head	MNC subsidy	31	105	Karachi
28	Marketing manager	MNC subsidy	18	80	Islamabad
29	Senior product manager	MNC subsidy	26	115	Karachi
30	CSR coordinator	MNC subsidy	09	96	Lahore
31	Medical representative	MNC subsidy	03	85	Faisalabad
32	Campaign coordinator	MNC subsidy	05	110	Lahore
33	General manager marketing	MNC subsidy	38	85	Islamabad
34	Group product manager	MNC subsidy	16	90	Karachi
	Health professionals:				
35	Medical superintendent	Public hospital	31	92	Karachi
36	District health officer	Public hospital	16	75	Lahore
37	Ward in charge	Private hospital	12	62	Multan
38	Clinic owner	Private clinic	45	72	Lahore
	NGO staff:				
39	Program manager	Health NGO	26	115	Karachi
40	Coordination manager	Health NGO	15	96	Lahore
	Distribution staff:				
41	Pharmacy head	Retail pharmacy	24	85	Islamabad
42	Pharmacy staff	Retail pharmacy	11	68	Multan
	Pharmacy staff	Wholesale distributor	28	110	Lahore
44	Pharmacy head	Public hosp. pharmacy	32	68	Multan
	Public health department staff:				
45	Drug Inspector	Health department	16	76	Multan
46	Deputy health director	Health department	22	122	Lahore

Depending on nature and progress in each empirical article, interviews were conducted in three phases during the period of 2014–2016. For example, in the first

stage, 18 interviews were conducted with sales and marketing staff of local and multinational drug firms. Subsequently, when evolutionary stages of bribery in sales initially emerged from the data for article 2, it was realized that the views of other relevant actors—for example, doctors, distribution staff, and NGOs—were also necessary since they were also actively involved in sales. Similarly, empirical article 4 adopts the perspective of MNCs. Consequently, local drug firm informants were excluded from the data and further interviews were conducted with the staff of drug MNCs.

To capture a wide variety of experiences of the informants and their perspectives on bribery practices in sales, maximum variation (Creswell & Poth 2017) in the sample was ensured while selecting the informants for interviews. Sample includes informants with 1.5 to 45 years of experience in various positions at different firms and in different cities. Mostly sales and marketing staff were interviewed but also health professionals, distributors and NGO staff. It was ensured that all of them closely observe bribery practices in sales and truly represent the bribery-prone context. For instance, healthcare professionals and NGO staff were working in close collaboration with sales and marketing staff of drug firms. Some other relevant actors were also included—for example, CSR, compliance staff, and public health officials were closely coordinating with other sales related actors to control bribery in sales.

4.3.3 Interview structure

Generally, interviews have three primary forms: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured (Creswell 2013). However, interview styles and structures vary considerably depending on the nature of any study (Denzin 1989; Rosenthal 2004; Coffey & Atkinson 1996). The episodic interview technique (see Flick 2000; 2009) was determined to be more relevant for this study since it can capture the narratives of informants (e.g., their short stories) as well as non-narrative data (e.g., question-answer response in an interview). This technique implies that individuals live in storied lives and that these stories are a powerful way to express their emotions, feelings, and experiences (Polkinghorne 2005; Bruner 1986; 1990). These stories are not a product of individuals but they are a facet of their relationships and a part of their culture, which is reflected in the different social roles of individuals (Czarniawska 2002; Gergen 1994). The episodic interview technique assumes that informants' experiences of a specific domain are stored and remembered at a later time (Czarniawska 2011; Flick 2002). Similarly, the author encouraged informants during the interviews to tell their stories to express their emotions, feelings, and experiences (Polkinghorne 2005; Bruner 1990) about bribery practices in pharmaceutical sales.

The interview guide (see Appendix 1) was followed, which comprised questions related to a topical domain (Flick 2009). For this study, the topical domain was unethical practices in sales, e.g. unethical gifts or bribes at the industry level, along with their emergence and control or handling. The interviews were conducted in the local languages—Urdu, Punjabi, and Saraiki—mostly at quiet restaurants and public places, except for seven interviews that were performed at the informants' workplace on their request. All conversations were recorded, except for three where the informant expressed some reservations.

Social desirability bias is a major challenge for sensitive data collection, such as data related to drug use, religion, and crimes (Silverman 2010). In this case informants may give socially desirable positive responses rather than reflecting their own feelings or experiences (Liedtka 1992). Acknowledging that informants hesitate to discuss ethically sensitive topics (Liedtka 1992; Randall & Fernandes 1991), the author devoted special attention to the nature and structure of the interview for this study. The social networking effectively helped the author to build trust with informants and encouraged them to speak freely. Most of the informants showed annoyance with the prevailing bribery practices and were happily willing to share their experiences regarding bribery practices in sales at the industry level.

Interviews began with introductory and background questions to create a friendly atmosphere (Creswell 2017). Gradually, the informants felt comfortable enough to tell their stories. Interviews were structured in a way that purpose was not to judge how informants perform bribery practices in sales but how they experience bribery practices of other actors in pharmaceutical sales. At this point, informants were encouraged to talk about gifts and bribery in their industry freely, thereby allowing them to define what they perceived as ethical or unethical. They were asked about their general experiences in the industry. Questions mainly revolved around the nature of the unethical practices in sales, the role of different actors in their emergence, the impacts on them or their firms, and the measures for the control of such practices taken by them, their firms or other actors.

During the interviews, the author consistently shifted in four different directions: *inward*, *outward*, *forward*, and *backward* (Clandinin & Connelly 2000; Flick 2000). *Inward* denotes the questions related to the internal state of the informants—for example, their feelings, hopes, and moral dispositions toward unethical practices in sales. *Outward* refers to questions related to existential conditions—for example, the unethical sales environment of the drug industry along with the role of various actors and their influence over the environment. Finally, *forward* and *backward* denote to the questions structured around the present, future or the past in relation to unethical practices in drug sales. Here, the objective was to understand the evolutionary process and how unethical practices progressed along with various activities through which unethical practices in sales can potentially be controlled in the drug industry.

4.3.4 Other sources of data

Additional sources of data were also used to complement the interview data (Creswell 2017; Flick 2007). First, the author spent two entire days on a field visit along with a regional sales manager of an MNC to observe (c.f. Czarniawska 2011) sales operations and interactions among various actors—for example, doctors, pharmacists, government officials, and NGOs. Second, field notes were consistently maintained during and after the interviews, particularly facial expressions, emotions, and feelings of informants related to unethical sales practices. Third, relevant secondary data was also collected, which was available online on the websites of drug companies and regulatory authorities in Pakistan's health care industry as well as from the drug industry's reports, newspapers, and magazines. Finally, informants also provided company documents—for example, the organizational code of ethics related to drug promotion, interaction with health care professionals, ethics training material, drug sales presentations, and printed sales promotion material/ brochures.

4.3.5 Data analysis

In this study, data analysis was an ongoing, time-consuming, and thought-provoking process. The data analysis process started soon after the first round of interviews. Interviews were recorded and were listened to and discussed informally with informants as well as with colleagues and senior academics. The recorded interviews were transcribed along with the relevant complementary data, such as field notes and other secondary data. Transcripts were analyzed based on three general procedures and guidelines of qualitative data: coding (reducing data into segments and assign their names), developing themes/patterns (combining codes into broader categories) and comparing categories (Creswell & Poth 2017; Miles & Huberman 1994).

The transcribed data was read and reviewed several times to identify the codes, divided them into broader categories, and subsequently compared. The author employed an abductive and open-ended strategy to analyze the data (Andreewsky & Bourcier 2000; Taylor et al. 2002). Therefore, data analysis was a creative and iterative process of theory matching or systematic combining (Bryman & Bell 2015; Dubois & Gadde 2002). This exercise was performed mainly to find new matching frameworks or to extend the theories used before new observations found in the data (Andreewsky & Bourcier 2000). For instance, various theories and related concepts—such as, EDM theories, stakeholder theory, or CSR theory—were reviewed and matched during the data analysis process in article 4. From among the available options, it was revealed that the concepts of the neo-institutional theory (e.g., institutional pillars or organizational responses to institutional pressure) were more suitable to guide the analysis in a meaningful manner further.

The coding generation was based on key actors and their unethical practices along with organizational practices to control the unethical practices of market actors in the contextual setting of the sales environment of the drug industry. Aligned with the purpose of articles, initial codes were assigned to relevant texts (Creswell 2013). For example, the unethical activities of each actor involved were coded accordingly.

Based on regularities and similarities, initial codes and relevant text related to codes were converted into groups followed by high-order categories (Saunders & Lewis 2012; Warren & Karner 2010) to develop themes and patterns in the data. For instance, initial codes and texts related to the unethical practices of customers, competitors, or regulators were further codified based on their links with key events and factor of inertia in order to create groups. Then, groups that provided information on the evolutionary process (see article 2) were combined into higher order categories—for example, four evolutionary stages of bribery.

In the final stage, the author compared the identified categories. First, the text of each category was scrutinized to ensure consistency, particularly of links with employed theoretical and analytical tools (c.f. David-Barrett et al. 2017). Second, a cross-comparison of each category was performed in order to ensure that each category was distinctive as well as consistent. Also, the author compared these categories with extant research to identify similarities and differences, which in turn offered new understanding.

5 Summary of articles

5.1 Summary of article 1

Ameer, Irfan – Halinen, Aino (2019) Moving beyond ethical decision making: a practice-based view to study unethical sales behavior. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*. 39(2), 103-122.

Recent sales ethics researchers suggest to extend the study of unethical sales behavior from a narrow organizational context to broader social contexts—for example, sales profession, industry, or trade union. Similarly, scholars emphasize the need to extend the theoretical foundation of sales ethics research toward the social context of a complex sales task environment. After all, salespersons work in increasingly complex social settings where they interact with and are exposed to various actors and are consequently affected by such actors, not only in their own organization but also outside of it in the broader sales task environment. Acknowledging these recent calls, the main objective of this review paper is to propose a PBV to study unethical sales behavior. To introduce a PBV, the article proceeds in three phases: conducting a systematic literature review, proposing a PBV, and demonstrating the potential application of the PBV for future sales ethics research.

In phase 1, a systematic review is conducted to show how unethical sales behavior has been addressed in extant research, particularly from a social practice perspective. Based on an inductive analysis of 164 peer-reviewed articles found through 3 databases, an overview of the key actors in a sales environment, their unethical behaviors and activities, and the theoretical foundation of extant research is provided.

The findings of the systematic review identifies a wide range of unethical behaviors and activities of various actors in sales. These actors are treated either as agents or targets of unethical behavior and activities. The unethical behaviors of salespersons are the center of attention for a majority of the studies. Overall, past research is scattered and—apart from a few exceptions—most of the studies investigate several types of unethical behavior at a time and examine these behaviors

from a single actor's perspective, consequently neglecting other influential actors in the social setting.

The findings related to the theoretical foundation of sales ethics research further indicate that despite some efforts to introduce alternative theories (e.g., relational, social, economic, and other theories), the EDM perspective still clearly dominates with the objectives of predicting and controlling unethical behavior of salespersons. For example, several studies highlight the social aspects but their focus remains on measuring the impact of social context (e.g., social networks, socialization, collective norms, and social learning) on a salesperson's EDM and, subsequently, predicting their ethical behavior. Overall, the review implies that various essential questions related to the complex broader social context of sales have not been addressed in earlier studies. For example, studies that investigate the interaction between various sales actors or social dynamics related to unethical behavior are scarce.

In the second phase of the study, providing an overview of sales ethics research, and borrowing a practical lens from organization studies, a PBV is introduced to study unethical behavior in sales. According to this view, the social context of sales is described as a constellation of sales actors who interact with each other and, consequently, form, maintain, and change unethical practices in sales. The proposed PBV offers an important alternative as well as a complementary view to the dominating EDM view.

Lastly, the paper provides an agenda for future practice-based sales ethics research by demonstrating how various theories combined with the PBV can be applied to produce new knowledge for sales ethics research. For this purpose, the study employs three relatively new marketing and organization theories for sales ethics as conceptual tools and three currently emerging sales contexts as examples of application domains.

This paper mainly contributes to answering RQ 1. First, it provides an initial and general understanding of the social and dynamic nature of unethical behavior in sales from a practice perspective. Second, it suggests a PBV as a new and unique method to address sales ethics along with avenues for future research.

5.2 Summary of article 2

Ameer, Irfan – Halinen, Aino. Evolution of bribery in sales environment of developing countries: a practice-based network view. The earlier version of this paper was presented at 25th *Association for Practical and Professional Ethics (APPE)* Conference, Virginia, USA in 2016. Article received best paper award.

Considering the first review publication as a starting point, the next logical step is to empirically investigate the social and dynamic nature of any specific unethical sales practice in order to provide a more focused knowledge. Realizing the practical significance, the second article directly focuses on bribery as an unethical sales practice. As indicated in the first article, the extant research in sales ethics has neglected the social context of sales environment, particularly the environment in which unethical sales practices socially emerge and transform. Thus, the objective of the second article is to empirically investigate the evolution process of bribery practices in sales.

In developing countries, bribery is common in pharmaceutical sales. Therefore, the B2B sales environment of the pharmaceutical industry in Pakistan has been selected as an empirical context of the study. The study employs a qualitative and narrative approach. The data is collected through 29 interviews of relevant sales actors involved in the industry along with secondary data sources. The short stories of the informants' personal experiences about the bribery practices in drug sales are collected and analyzed to create a macro-story describing the evolution process of bribery practices in the sales environment of the pharmaceutical industry in the country. The PBV combined with relevant INT concepts—for example, the mechanisms, nature, and forces of change in business networks have been used as an analytical framework for this article.

The findings reveal that bribery practices evolve socially in a sequential process of four identifiable stages: the early development, chain reaction, legitimization, and revision stages (see Figure 7).

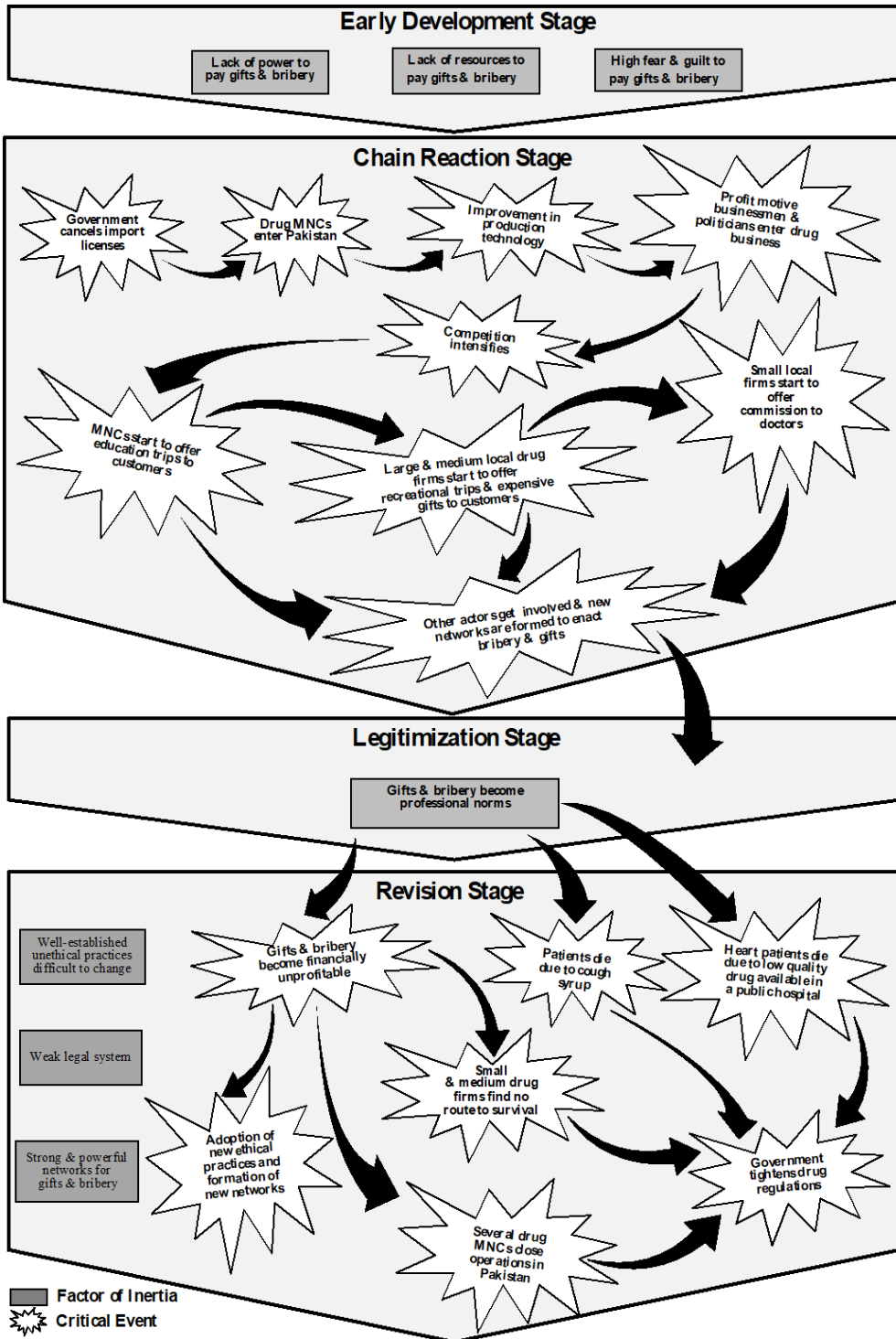


Figure 7. Evolutionary stages and their logical sequence

These stages partially overlap since the transition from one stage to the next stage is not clear cut. This implies that stages are not mentioned in terms of an absolute real time but are based on socially constructed event/inertia time. The stars and their size in Figure 7 denote events that prove critical to the evolution process, either individually or in combination (shown through arrows) with other events arising from the micro level to the macro level. Critical events indicate turning points in the development of bribery, either denoting the emergence of new bribery practices or the spread of these practices to new actors in the network. The gray boxes indicate factors causing inertia in the evolution process of bribery practices in sales. The identification of critical events and factors of inertia help to describe the evolutionary path of bribery practices over time in the social context of the sales environment in the drug industry.

This article is primarily related to RQ2 and provides a more focused understanding of the social and dynamic nature of unethical bribery practices in a wider sales environment.

5.3 Summary of article 3

Ameer, Irfan. A practice-based strategic framework for MNCs to control prevailing bribery practices in developing countries. The earlier version of this paper was presented at the 28th *European Business Ethics Network (EBEN)* Conference, Istanbul, Turkey in 2015.

Considering the social and dynamic nature of bribery practices in sales (RQ1 and RQ2), the next logical step (RQ3) is how such practices can be controlled. Realizing that bribery practices have been widespread in developing country markets and that extant research is neglecting social and dynamic nature of bribery in IB, the objective of the third paper is to propose a framework for MNCs to control prevailing bribery practices of market actors in developing countries.

This conceptual paper first provides an overview of extant research on bribery in IB, particularly earlier bribery control mechanisms and their limitations to control bribery practices in developing country markets. Second, the PBV and its related applications in strategy as practice (SAP) literature have been described as a logical choice. In line with SAP literature as a theoretical bases, strategic understanding and controlling of bribery is a social and emergent process consists of three interdependent elements: practices (what), praxis (how), and practitioners (who) (Feldman & Orlikowski 2011; Gherardi 2012; Orlikowski 2010; Whittington, 2006). Based on what, who and how to study any practice, this paper proposes a practice-based strategic framework for MNCs to control prevailing bribery practices of market actors in developing countries (see Figure 8).

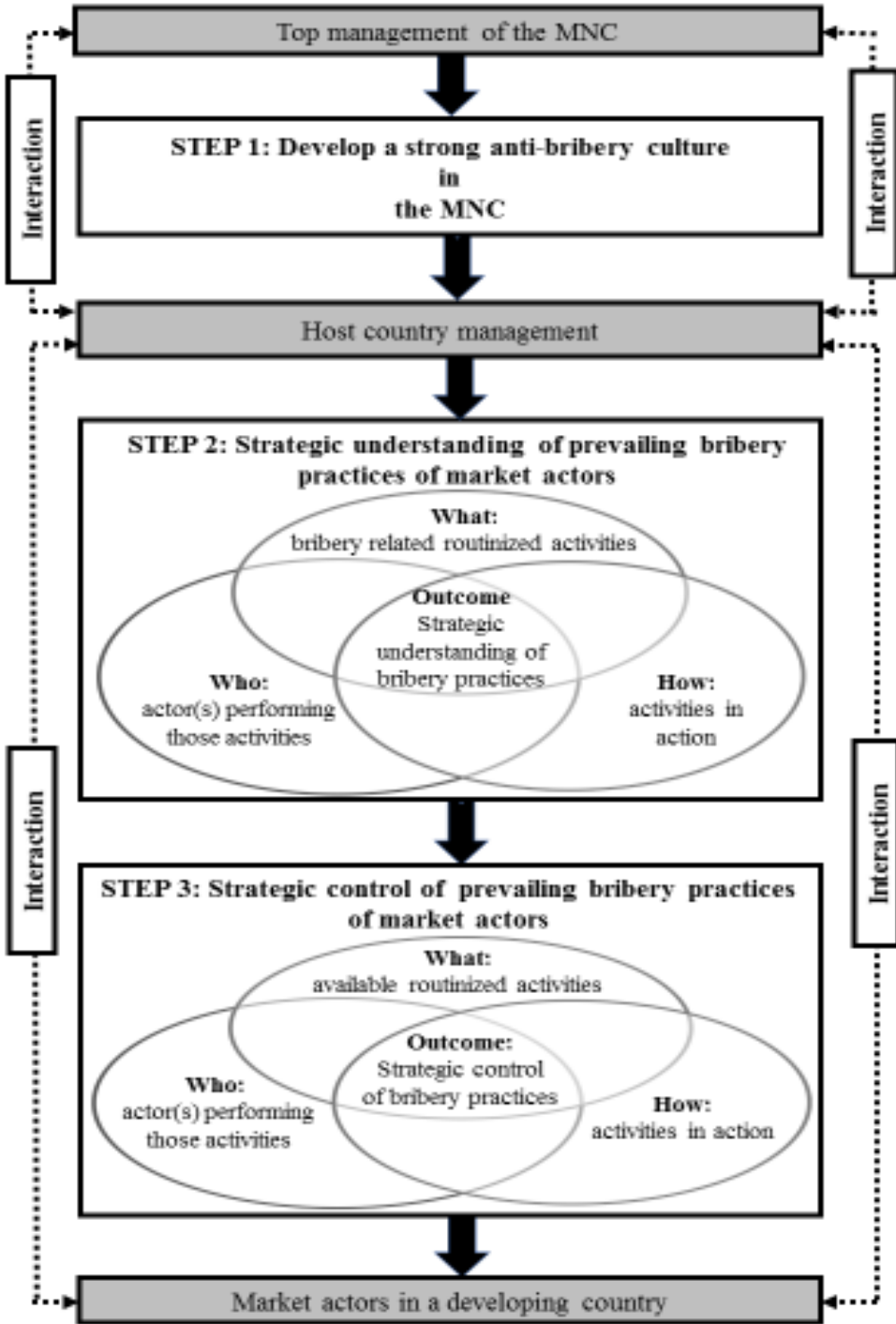


Figure 8. A practice-based strategic framework for MNCs to control prevailing bribery practices in developing countries

This management framework follows three main steps, as illustrated in Figure 8. All these steps revolve around three main groups of actors: top management, host country management, and host country market actors. Host country management is the central actor group, which interact with all the actors not only to receive but also to forward feedback. Therefore, interaction connects each actor and step.

In step 1, MNCs should first develop a strong anti-bribery culture within their boundaries. This implies that formal as well as informal norms, values, and procedures related to dealing with bribery should be clearly communicated and implemented by the top management of MNCs to the host country management. The top management of MNCs has a leading role in this step, and their attitude and behavior toward anti-bribery values and norms must be communicated to the host country management. These formal and informal anti-bribery norms and values shape the influential anti-bribery culture of MNCs. Consequently, this anti-bribery culture provides guidelines to the host country management to behave ethically.

Although step 1 is essential for MNCs, market actors in developing countries—such as, customers or competitors—are not bound to follow the strong anti-bribery norms and values of the MNCs. These actors follow the prevailing bribery norms and values of their own society. Aligned with three key questions (what, who and how), the outcome of step 2 offers a strategic understanding of prevailing bribery practices of market actors. This bribery monitoring information is essential for the survival of MNCs since it can help them to respond accordingly in an effective manner.

In the final step, the host country management should try to control bribery practices of market actors strategically by consistently looking and changing what, who and how of their strategizing process. The host country management of MNCs must adopt a broader approach in terms of the MNC's practices, outcomes, or impacts. For example, the key outcome for MNCs is the strategic control of bribery. However, other outcomes and their impacts must also be monitored that may directly or indirectly affect strategic control — for instance, identification of new practices or strategic choices and area or actor-level outcomes to control bribery.

This conceptual article is mainly linked to the third research question since the proposed management framework offers a concrete and a systematic step-by-step process through which MNCs can strategically control bribery in developing country markets.

5.4 Summary of article 4

Ameer, Irfan – Terho, Harri – Halinen, Aino. MNCs' strategic responses to the pressure of institutionalized bribery practices in developing country markets: a micro level practice perspective. The earlier version of this paper was presented at

the 31st *European Business Ethics Network (EBEN)* Conference, Vienna, Austria in 2018.

The insights gained from article 3 provide the basis for article 4. This article empirically investigates the nature of invisible pressure caused by the institutionalized bribery practices of market actors in developing countries and, consequently, the responses of MNCs through their organized practices to deal with such pressure. This article employs an institutional perspective that is rich in investigating the pressure and organizational responses to deal with such pressure. Informal or invisible institutions—for example, bribery institutions—can be better approached through a micro-level practice perspective. Thus, the analytical framework of this study is built on the PBV combined with the neo-institutional theory. The empirical context of this qualitative field study is the same as explained in article 2. Data is collected via 24 semi-structured interviews of the employees of seven drug MNC subsidiaries operating in Pakistan.

The study reveals important findings related to the nature of pressure caused by institutionalized bribery practices faced by drug MNCs and, subsequently, the responses of drug MNCs through their organized practices related to such pressure (see Figure 9). The findings related to institutionalized pressure indicate that the practices performed by three types of actors (e.g., anti-bribery regulators, bribery suppliers, and bribery demanders) cause pressure for MNCs. These practices are strongly supported by normative and cognitive pillars, although MNCs do not experience any direct regulative pressure for bribes. However, weak regulations and their implementation through corrupt regulatory authorities are the leading causes that provide potential opportunities for those who demand and supply bribes in the market. In the absence of weak regulations and their implementation, local firms mostly supply unethical gifts and bribes to their customers (e.g., doctors and pharmacists) to achieve their sales targets. Also, customers as bribery demanders are also fully exposed to unethical gifts and bribes offered by local drug firms; consequently, they are also expecting or asking for the same unethical favors from drug MNCs. This situation clearly indicates that unethical gifts and bribes become industry standards and professional legitimized means to do business. The findings further reveal that MNCs closely monitor the unethical activities of actors, for example, those who demand and supply bribes. This information is mainly related to who is offering what, and to whom, and how it will affect the respective drug MNC. Such information helps the management to sense the hidden pressure of institutionalized bribery practices. This is necessary for their survival in the market since it enables them to respond accordingly.

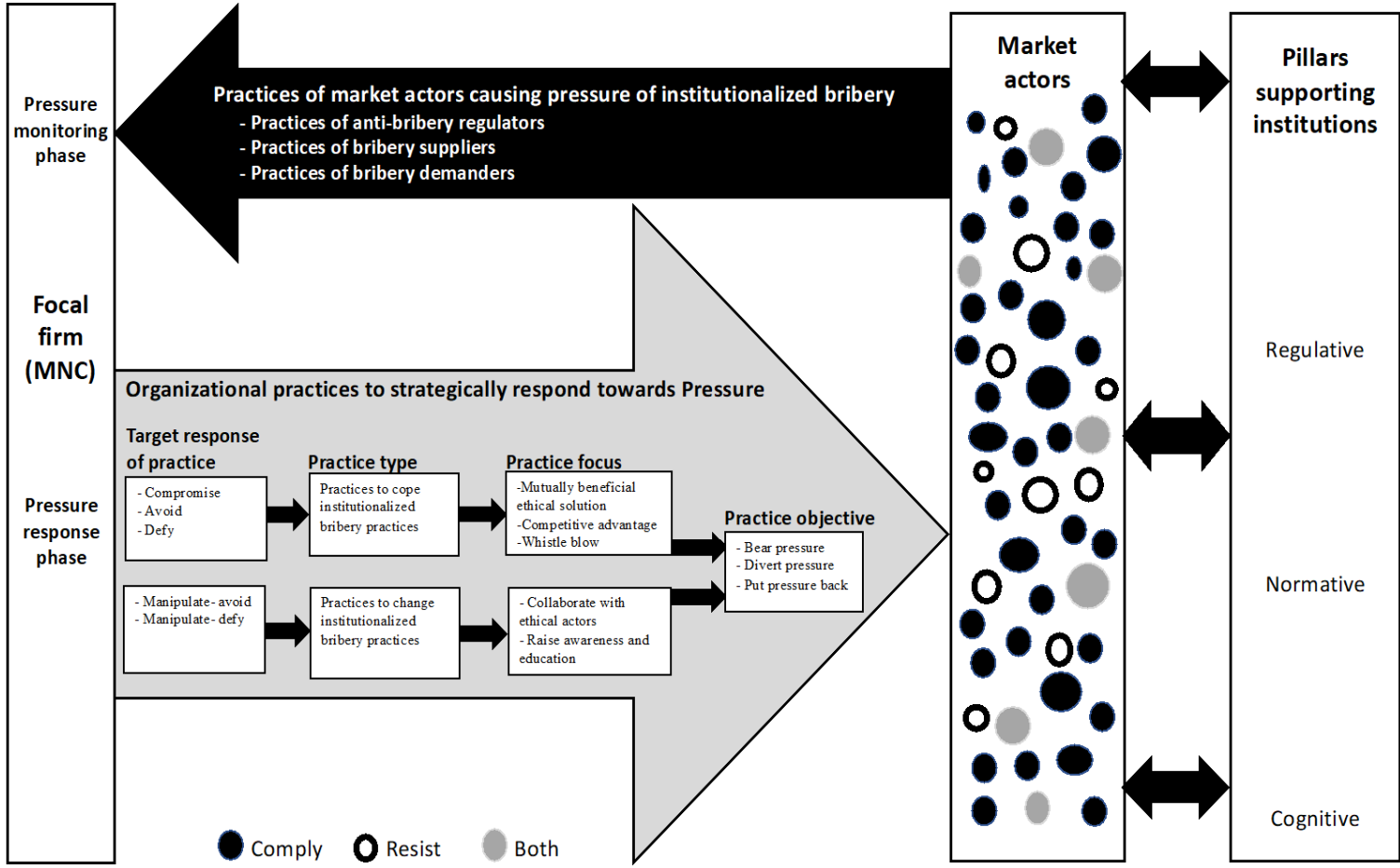


Figure 9. Summary of finding

The findings related to the practices of MNCs to respond to such pressure highlight a wide range of practices that can be broadly categorized into two types: practices to cope with institutionalized bribery practices and practices to bring change in institutionalized bribery practices. The coping practices are relatively short-term (temporary solutions) which are mainly used by drug MNCs to reduce the pressures arising from those who demand and supply bribes. A clear indication of compromise, avoid, and defy (Oliver 1991) are evident in these practices. The focus of these practices is mainly toward finding mutually beneficial ethical solutions, gaining competitive advantage, and whistleblowing for wrong acts. On the other hand, various practices of MNCs are relatively long-term and aim to change the institutionalized bribery practices of market actors at a mass institutional level. A clear indication of manipulation's combinations (Oliver 1991) could be found: manipulative-avoidance and manipulative-defiance. For example, collaboration with ethical actors to improve regulatory and social systems or promoting education and awareness campaigns to discourage prevailing institutionalized bribery practices. Three main objectives found underlying a wide range of practices of MNCs: bear the pressure for bribes, divert the pressure for bribes, and put the pressure back on market actors. MNCs short-term (coping with institutionalized bribery) and long-term (changing the institutionalized bribery) practices suggest that time is an important factor in finding present temporary solution or future solution for their survival.

By investigating the nature of pressure arising from institutionalized bribery and MNCs' practices to respond to such pressure, this article is linked to RQ3 related to the control of bribery.

5.5 Synthesis of articles for overall understanding

Unethical practices in sales are socially acceptable and widespread in developing country markets, thereby causing severe challenges for MNCs operating in these environments. Thus, understanding the social and dynamic nature of unethical practices in sales along with measures to control these practices are relevant questions that must be addressed by both academics and practitioners. Acknowledging this, the purpose of this dissertation was **to investigate unethical practices as emerging and social phenomena in sales along with their control in developing country markets**. To generate more focused knowledge, the purpose of this dissertation was divided into three research questions addressed via four articles. Table 6 summarizes the key objectives and findings of each article, along with their relationship to the three posed research questions in this dissertation.

Table 6. Summary of key findings/ results of each article

Research questions	Article No.	Key objectives of article	Key findings/ results of article
RQ1 How have unethical practices in sales been addressed from a social perspective and what new avenues can be suggested?	Article 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide an overview of unethical behavior in sales as a social practice. • To propose a PBV to study unethical behavior in sales. 	The review shows that the EDM view is dominant and mainly focusing on sales person-driven unethical behavior. Essential questions related to the interaction among various actors or social dynamics of unethical behavior are not addressed. Consequently, the article proposes a PBV as an alternative but also a complementary approach to studying unethical behavior. The article also suggests an agenda for future practice-based research.
RQ2 How unethical practices evolve in the social context of sales?	Article 2	To investigate the evolution process of bribery practices in sales.	Bribery practices socially evolve in a sequential and partially overlapping process of four identifiable stages: early development, chain reaction, legitimization, and revision. The article also identifies key critical events and factors of inertia causing change or maintaining stability in prevailing bribery practices.
RQ3 How MNCs can control bribery practices in developing country markets?	Article 3	To design a framework for MNCs to control bribery in developing country markets	The article introduces a practice-based strategic framework for MNCs to control prevailing bribery in developing country markets. The process framework follows three interrelated steps: develop a strong anti-bribery culture in the MNC; strategic understanding of prevailing bribery practices of market actors; and strategic control of prevailing bribery practices of market actors.
	Article 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To investigate the nature of the pressure arising from institutionalized bribery. • To investigate MNCs' responses toward such pressure. 	Findings related to pressure show that MNCs were closely monitoring the practices of three types of market actors that cause pressure for MNCs: anti-bribery regulators, bribery demanders, and bribery suppliers. The MNCs mainly conducted two types of organizational practices to respond towards the pressure: practices to cope with institutionalized bribery and practices to change institutionalized bribery. The first type of practices were relatively short-term and focusing on compromise, avoidance, or defiance of pressure. The second type of organizational practices were aimed at the long-term survival of MNCs. A clear indication of the manipulation combinations were found, namely, manipulate-avoid or manipulate-defy.

The first research question was *how have unethical practices in sales been addressed from a social perspective and what new avenues can be suggested?* Article 1 addresses this question by providing an overview of unethical behavior in

sales followed by the theoretical approaches employed to deal with unethical behavior. The findings of the systematic review in article 1 indicate that a wide range of unethical behaviors and activities of various actors prevail in the sales environment, which should be treated as practices emerging through routinized activities and interaction of various actors in sales. The EDM view was highly dominated and salesperson-driven unethical behavior was the center of attention in sales ethics literature. The findings further highlighted that unethical behavior in sales was not fully addressed from a social practice perspective. In particular, important questions related to the interaction between various sales actors or social dynamics of unethical behavior were largely neglected. Consequently, article 1 proposes a PBV to study unethical behavior in sales. This view suggests that unethical sales behavior must be viewed as a practice that is socially situated in sales and must be treated as emerging through routinized activities and interactions with various actors in the sales task environment. The proposed PBV can serve as an alternative as well as a complementary approach to the EDM view. Based on PBV, along with three new theories, article 1 also suggests an agenda for future practice-based research in the sales ethics domain.

One way to understand the social and dynamic nature of unethical practices is to focus on their emergence or transformation in sales. Consequently, the second research question of this dissertation was *how unethical practices evolve in the social context of sales?* Article 2 addresses this question by investigating the evolution process of bribery practices in sales. The findings of article 2 indicate that bribery practices socially evolve in the process of four identifiable stages: early development, chain reaction, legitimization and revision. Article 2 provides the empirical evidence of the formation, maintenance, and change in bribery practices at the industry level. In comparison with the traditional EDM view in sales ethics, which mainly focuses on the sales organization's ethical environment and its control mechanisms, the findings of article 2 emphasize an understanding of the surrounding environment, where a vast majority of market actors might socially consider such practices to be desirable and appropriate. Together, the first two research questions provide an understanding of the social and dynamic nature of unethical practices in sales.

Realizing that MNCs are struggling to control bribery practices of market actors in developing countries, the third research question posed by this dissertation was *how MNCs can control bribery practices in developing country markets?* This question has been addressed in articles 3 and 4. A review of bribery literature in IB shows that this domain has a narrow focus on the organizational context and has consequently restricted bribery researchers to examine larger social orders of developing countries influencing the individual and organizational behaviors at a mass level (Cuervo-Cazurra 2016; Misangyi, Weaver & Elms 2008).

Acknowledging the collective and normative nature of bribery practices, article 3 addresses this research question by proposing a practice-based strategic framework for MNCs to control prevailing bribery practices in developing country markets. This framework emphasizes that MNCs need to develop a strong anti-bribery culture (step 1) followed by a strategic understanding of the prevailing bribery practices of market actors (step 2) in developing countries. These two steps can help MNCs to control bribery (step 3) strategically.

Further, article 4 provides empirical evidence by identifying the practices of market actors that cause invisible pressure of institutionalized bribery and, subsequently, identifies various organizational practices to respond to such pressure. Findings related to pressure identify the micro-level practices of three types of market actors causing pressure of institutionalized bribery for MNCs: anti-bribery regulators, bribery demanders, bribery suppliers. Consequently, MNCs closely monitor bribery practices of these market actors to respond accordingly. In relation to organizational responses to bribery pressure, the findings of article 4 show that MNCs mainly perform two types of organizational practices to respond toward the pressure: practices to cope with institutionalized bribery and practices to change institutionalized bribery. The first type of practices were relatively short-term and focused on compromise, avoid, or defy the pressure—for example, coping practices to avoid or defy pressure from certain actors temporarily. On the other hand, the second type of organizational practices were aimed for the long-term survival of MNCs. Such corporate practices were targeted to change the prevailing bribery norms through a combination of manipulation—manipulate-avoid or manipulate-defy. For example, MNCs collaborate with ethical actors that share the same anti-bribery norms to avoid or defy bribery at a mass level to influence institutional pillars in their favor—for example, by discouraging the prevailing bribery norms or introducing new ethical anti-bribery norms.

6 Conclusion

6.1 Theoretical implications

The conceptual and empirical advances of this dissertation provide new knowledge to understand the social and dynamic nature of unethical practices in sales and, subsequently, their control in developing country markets. This new knowledge has been produced by introducing and applying a PBV combined with the neo-institutional theory and the INT to offer fresh insights for two business domains, namely sales ethics, and bribery in IB. Table 7 provides an overview of this dissertation’s contribution to these two business domains.

Table 7. Overview of the dissertation’s contribution to two business domains

Key contribution	Produce new knowledge to understand the social and dynamic nature of unethical practices in sales and their control in developing country markets.			
Means of key contribution	Introduction and application of the PBV along with the neo-institutional theory and the INT			
Key outcome of each article	Article 1: Proposes a PBV to study unethical behavior in sales.	Article 2: Describes the evolutionary process of bribery practices in sales.	Article 3: Proposes a practice-based strategic framework for MNCs to control institutionalized bribery practices of market actors in developing countries.	Article 4: Identifies the practices causing invisible pressure of institutionalized bribery for MNCs and, consequently, organizational practices to respond to such pressure.
Research domain	Sales ethics		Bribery in international business	
Research gaps in domains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The social context of the sales environment is neglected. • Narrow EDM view focusing on an organization’s internal environment and salespersons. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social settings of developing countries are neglected. • Narrow economic or organizational perspective to understand and control bribery. 	
Key implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend the study context from a single organization to a broader sales environment. • Shift the focus from the dominating EDM view to PBV as an alternative as well as a complementary approach to study unethical behavior in sales. • Cover the social, evolving, and interactive aspects of unethical practices in sales. • Shift the focus from salespersons to all relevant actors in sales. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend the study context from a single organization to an institutional environment. • Shift the focus from the dominating economic or organizational views to PBV as an alternative as well as a complementary approach to study bribery. • View bribery and its control from the social and dynamic perspective. • Focus on the nature of invisible pressure of institutionalized bribery and organizational responses toward such pressure. 	

6.1.1 Implications for sales ethics literature

In relation to sales ethics literature, articles 1 and 2 produce new knowledge of the social, evolving and interactive nature of unethical practices in sales by introducing and applying a PBV as a novel theoretical lens to extend the sales ethics domain. In doing so, article 1 breaks new grounds by proposing a PBV to study unethical behavior in sales. The proposed view in article 1 conceives unethical behavior as a practice that is socially situated in sales. Supported by Geiger and Kelly (2014), to acknowledge sales as a practice and den Nieuwenboer et al. (2017) to conceive unethical practice in sales as an outcome of social production, article 1 suggests a practice turn to sales ethics literature. The results of article 1 show that sales ethics literature has largely neglected the social dynamic and interactive nature of unethical practices in sales. To address the omissions in extant research, the proposed view in article 1 emphasizes the dynamic constitution of social reality, relations between agency and social orders, and the enactment of practices through routinized human activities (c.f. Feldman & Orlikowski 2011).

Focusing on three viewpoints to study practices—empirical, theoretical, and philosophical (c.f. Feldman & Orlikowski 2011; Jarzabkowski et al. 2016; Orlikowski 2010), PBV is a new and unique method that is well positioned to extend the theoretical foundations of sales ethics research to a broader social context of the sales environment (c.f. Bush et al. 2017; Ferrell et al. 2007; McClaren 2013). Unlike the highly dominating EDM view that emphasizes how salespersons make ethical decisions, the PBV is much broader focuses on how various relevant sales actors act and how their actions are linked to socially form, maintain, or change unethical practices in sales. Consequently, the proposed view can serve as an important alternative to the traditional EDM view since the PBV asks an entirely new type of questions. Article 1 also suggests a rich agenda with the help of three relatively new theories (the neo-institutional, business network, and social network theories) that can be employed along with the PBV to advance future practice-based research in sales ethics.

Also, the proposed PBV in article 1 can also be employed as a complementary approach to the EDM view. However, the PBV emphasizes to turn the study of EDM into the study of EDM practices (Jarzabkowski et al. 2016; Nicolini & Monteiro 2017). For example, better knowledge regarding the social and evolving nature of unethical practices in sales can guide sales organizations to deal with such practices, thereby offering new and effective means suggested by the EDM view (e.g., code of ethics, recruitment, training, rewards, and punishment procedures) to control them, even beyond organizational boundaries.

To further understand the social, evolving, and interactive nature of unethical practices in sales, article 2 is the first empirical investigation that applies the PBV combined with the concepts of the INT as analytical tools to make sense of the

evolutionary process of bribery in sales. Several INT concepts have been introduced in this domain (Easton & Lundgren 1992; Ford & Håkansson 2006; Halinen, Salmi & Havila 1999; Zott & Amit 2006) that help to understand the social context of the sales task environment. For example, article 2 identifies critical events and factors of inertia causing change or maintaining stability in bribery practices.

In comparison with the EDM view that focuses on the individual factors of salespersons and organizational factors to ensure ethical behavior (c.f. Ferrell & Ferrell 2009; McClaren 2013; 2015), article 2 extends the impacts of different sales and non-sales actors along with their unethical activities, factor of inertia, and events from micro to macro level layers of the broader environment over a period of time. Linking them into a sequence reveals that bribery practices socially evolve in the process of four identifiable stages. The identified evolutionary stages can guide sales organizations to change their management strategies, for example, ethics training of their sales force on this issue or using their power to collaborate with other actors to fight against bribery practices in sales.

6.1.2 Implications for bribery literature in IB

Articles 3 and 4 mainly contribute to bribery literature in IB by offering new insights to strategically understand the social and dynamic nature of bribery practices in sales and their control in context of developing countries. Supported by recent IB research (c.f. Cuervo-Cazurra 2016; Misangyi et al. 2008) to view bribery as a social and dynamic phenomenon, articles 3 and 4 implicate a fundamental shift from a narrow intra-organizational focus to a broader social or market perspective. Based on PBV and related SAP literature (Jarzabkowski et al. 2016; Whittington 2006), article 3 proposes management framework through which MNCs can strategically understand and control prevailing bribery practices of market actors in developing countries. Similarly, article 4 employs micro level practice perspective combined with neo-institutional theory that provides a better understanding of the nature of invisible pressure caused by institutionalized bribery practices of market actors followed by organizational practices to respond to such pressure.

Literature on the PBV (Feldman & Orlikowski 2011; Nicolini & Monteiro 2017) and its applications in strategy as practice (Jarzabkowski et al. 2016; Whittington 2006) as well as institutional work in organization study, such as organizational responses to institutional pressure (Oliver 1991; Scott 2001) has been introduced to this domain for the first time through articles 3 and 4. This literature is well positioned to address bribery in IB from a narrow economic or organizational perspective to a broader social perspective emphasized by recent researchers (Barkemeyer et al. 2018; Cuervo-Cazurra 2016; Dávid-Barrett 2018; Misangyi et al. 2008; Ramakrishna et al. 2017; 2018).

Aligned with the constitutive role of practices (Feldman & Orlikowski 2011; Nicolini & Monteiro 2017), articles 3 and 4 emphasize that micro-level practices shape or reshape larger social orders, such as informal and invisible bribery institutions. In comparison, IB researchers conceive bribery as an outcome of larger institutional orders that shape and reshape the corrupt behaviors of individuals and organizations (Dávid-Barrett 2018; Misangyi et al. 2008).

Articles 3 and 4 introduce an alternative approach to study bribery and its control in IB from social practice and institutional perspectives. In contrast, the dominating economic or organizational perspectives (Cuervo-Cazurra 2008; Vaccaro 2012; Yanga 2014) have a narrow focus mainly on the anti-bribery mechanisms of organizations (Vaccaro 2012; Yanga 2014) or regulatory control (Misangyi et al. 2008) to understand and control bribery. The earlier dominated views offer limited means to understand the social and dynamic nature of corrupt behavior and its control in developing countries. Alternatively, articles 3 and 4 emphasize how actors perform bribery practices in sales and how their practices affect organizations. Subsequently, this knowledge can guide organizations to respond via their organized practices to control bribery strategically. For example, article 4 provides empirical evidence to support that understanding the nature of invisible pressure caused by micro-level practices of market actors help MNCs to select a particular practice to respond strategically. Aligned with SAP literature (Bloom et al. 2012; 2013; Golsorkhi et al. 2010; Jarzabkowski 2008; Jarzabkowski et al. 2016), articles 3 and 4 further show that organizational responses and strategies to control bribery are also dynamic accomplishments rather than static outcomes conceived by earlier bribery researchers.

Findings of article 4 suggest that MNCs seem to be well aware of the pressure arising from institutionalized bribery practices of various market actors. Consequently, MNCs have organizational practices to deal with pressure for both short-term (coping with institutionalized bribery practices) and long-term (changing the institutionalized bribery practices) survival. This suggests that the time span of different organizational practices is vital. IB literature on bribery often considers time as the missing factor when the decisions are made. As shown in article 4 MNCs with long-term (future) focus tend to make more ethically sound decisions than MNCs with short-term temporary (present) focus.

6.1.3 Implications for institutional work in organization study

By offering new insights to understand the nature of the invisible pressure of institutionalized bribery and subsequently organizational practices to respond to such pressure, article 4 also highlights three additional implications for institutional

work in organization study, in particular, those related to informal and invisible institutions that are somewhat abstract due to hidden norms and values.

First, findings of the article 4 confirm that pressure from informal or unethical institutions can be concretely approached by focusing on the constitutive role of the micro-level practices of actors (Feldman & Orlikowski 2011; Nicolini & Monteiro 2017; Schilke 2018) that shape or reshape such institutions. For example, the findings of article 4 indicate that pressure was not visible but MNCs were sensing the pressure by closely monitoring the activities of those who demand and supply bribes. It was mostly market actors who were either directly or indirectly providing clues to show their unethical intentions and MNCs were sensing the hints of the pressure exerted by micro level practices of market actors. In contrast, traditional institutional research gives the impression that formal and macro-level institutional forces with clearly visible written laws or normative standards—for example, environmental, CSR, or accounting regulations (c.f. Bechky 2011; Canning & O'Dwyer 2013; Jamali 2010)—shape or re-shape the micro-level practices of actors.

Second, organizational responses (c.f. Oliver 1991) are relatively general in nature; consequently, they offer little insights for the management to choose appropriate practices to respond with, particularly in the case of invisible pressure arising from informal institutions. Article 4 identifies organizational practices that operationalize the strategies along with their type, focus, objective, and target actor. Therefore, article 4 provides an in-depth understanding of responses to unethical practices of market actors, along with the logic hidden behind these responses.

Finally, the findings of article 4 show interesting results related to Oliver's (1991) responses to institutional pressure. The results of article 4 indicate that manipulation cannot be employed in isolation but rather it is connected with a less active response—for instance, either to avoid or defy the pressure. Consequently, the strongest organizational response could be a combination of manipulation and defiance. This also raises the question of whether manipulation itself can be used alone, without the combinations of less active responses.

6.2 Practical implications

The research purpose and questions of this dissertation clearly indicate that the phenomenon of bribery under investigation has significant practical implications, not only for organizations—particularly MNCs operating in developing countries—but also for other actors, such as regulators, NGOs, customers, and society as a whole. This dissertation provides actionable knowledge for understanding unethical bribery practices in sales along with new potential means to change or influence the misconduct.

Further, the findings of article 2 show that the management must be aware that unethical gifts or bribes in sales do not pay off in the long-run since organizations—even large MNCs—may lose control of their promotional expenses. Once they enter into the competition of offering unethical gifts and bribes to customers, there may be no end to this competition. As an established practice in the industry, customers' demands for bribes gradually increase over a period of time. In this situation, even high quality products and services may lose their value, since the competition is based on meeting unethical demands for bribes. Therefore, the management must carefully indulge in giving even small unethical gifts and financial benefits to promote their sales or customer relationships.

Articles 1, 3 and 4 implicate that in order to survive in the markets of developing countries, management must closely monitor the unethical activities of various actors, not only within their own organization but more importantly in the surrounding environment of the organization, for example, the activities of customers and competitors. Moreover, article 2 suggests that management must also be well aware about the emergence of micro and macro level events that may quicken or slow the process of unethical activities of market actors along with the impacts of these activities on their organizations. This implies that management must view the sales environment more comprehensively by understanding the formation and reinforcement of prevailing unethical practices in sales. Consequently, the knowledge of such practices, their emergence, actors involved, interactions, and events that affect them can enable organizations to minimize their adverse impacts and employ effective organizational means to control them accordingly, for example, by consistently evaluating and changing their supervision. For instance, management might change training, codes of ethics, rewards, and disciplinary action procedures according to prevailing market conditions.

As a short-term temporary solution to prevailing institutionalized bribery in sales, article 4 suggests that organizations can introduce day-to-day practices that target to avoid or defy the pressure caused by market actors to demand or supply bribes. For example, organizations must involve ethical actors in sales and marketing operations while dealing with actors who ask for bribes or take disciplinary actions against actors engaged in bribery. Article 4 also suggests that long-term survival in developing country markets requires sustainable solutions. This is only possible by discouraging the prevailing unethical norms and introducing new ethical norms at a mass level. For instance, organizations can educate social actors and make them aware that unethical gifts and bribes are considered as inappropriate not only from a legal or societal standpoint but also from a religious perspective. Moreover, the results of articles 2 and 4 show that organizations must recognize that they are not powerful enough to control bribery practices alone. Therefore, they must mobilize other supporting actors (e.g., NGOs, pressure groups, or professional associations

that share the same ethical interests) in sales to change prevailing practices collectively at a mass level.

Regulators, particularly policymakers in the pharmaceutical industry in developing countries, must realize that laws and rules are not sufficient, but their effective implementation is equally important to control such practices. Regulators must also keep a close eye on key actors, their activities, and events; consequently, this knowledge will enable them to change regulations and their implementations accordingly. Also, regulators must also collaborate with other actors to minimize the negative impacts of bribery practices. For example, close collaboration between regulatory authorities and responsible organizations can help to identify and punish the actors involved in malpractices. All actors in the health industry must not ignore the fact that they are collectively responsible for improving the health and quality of life of their citizens. Therefore, the policies and actions of these actors must benefit patients as end users of medicines.

6.3 Directions for future research

This dissertation guides future sales ethics and bribery in IB researchers to pose entirely new types of questions. Answering to these questions can further extend the current understanding of corrupt or unethical practices and their control. Aligned with the PBV employed in this dissertation, three questions are important in a general sense to provide directions to future practice-based studies in both domains of research:

1. What are the corrupt or unethical actions or activities that actors perform?
2. How are such actions or activities linked or interconnected?
3. How are the links and connections of various actions or activities socially constituted to form, maintain, or change an unethical or corrupt practice?

To further illustrate future research areas, article 1 provides a rich agenda by using three relatively new theories combined with the practice lens to advance future practice-based sales ethics research (see Table 5 in article 1). Admittedly, the practice lens can be applied to study any unethical practices of actors involved in sales (see Table 2 in article 1) to produce new knowledge. However, this view is particularly powerful to study unethical or corrupt behavior in dynamic and complex settings, for example, relational or global business environments (see Table 5 in article 1). These contexts are equally valid for bribery in IB literature. Consequently, bribery researchers may also seek guidelines by following the agenda proposed in article 1 to advance future practice-based bribery research in IB.

The focus of this dissertation was on the bribery practices of market actors in sales environment of developing countries. Alternatively, future researchers should

also investigate corrupt practices of MNCs along with their impacts on the practices of host country market actors. For example, the recent empirical work of Zhu (2016) confirms that the activities of MNCs are positively linked to the proliferation of bribery in China as well as the creation of more potential opportunities for the corrupt behavior of other actors. Future researchers might reveal the corrupt behavior of MNCs affecting stakeholders' interests along with the organizational actions to improve stakeholders' trust and confidence. For example, investigating MNCs' actions that provide appropriate justifications of their wrongdoing, accepting the punishment, or making internal and external rehabilitative changes to regain stakeholders' trust (c.f. Pfarrer et al. 2008) may unearth valuable theoretical and practical insights.

Another future avenue for research in this field could be to combine other potential theories with the PBV to understand and control unethical practices in sales from a variety of theoretical perspectives. Among various options, the CSR theory (Carroll 1979; 2004) or the stakeholder theory (Freeman 1984) is also a suitable match with the PBV. For example, recent work on stakeholder theory emphasizes that relationships are consistently changing and, thus, the context and dynamics of stakeholders' relationships are more relevant to resolve the conflicting issues of stakeholders (c.f. Kujala et al. 2012; Roloff 2008; Santana et al. 2009; Zhao et al. 2014). Thus, the PBV and the stakeholder theory can be used to make sense of the corrupt practices of various stakeholders involved and their links with each other to form, change, or resolve conflicts.

Combining prevailing dominated views in sales ethics (e.g., EDM view) or bribery in IB (e.g., organizational view) with PBV also offers an excellent opportunity for future research. This implies that future researchers in both domains must focus on the social and dynamic nature of the strategizing process (Bromiley & Rau 2014; Feldman & Orlikowski 2011; Jarzabkowski et al. 2016). In this process, EDM practices or management control practices are shaped and reshaped within organizations (e.g., routinized actions, activities, and standard operating procedures) as well as part of practices that occur outside firms along with their impacts on organizations (Bloom et al. 2012, 2013; Whittington 2006). For example, future researchers could explore how EDM or management control strategies are shaped or reshaped by unethical or corrupt practices of market actors over a period of time as well as how, when, and why EDM practices or management control practices should be changed to control prevailing unethical practices of market actors.

Further, with regard to extending the institutional work in the organization study, article 4 offers initial insights on how to respond to informal or invisible institutions. However, further research is still required, particularly organizational practices to manipulate the pressure for mass-level societal impacts in developing countries. One option for future researchers could be to combine CSR and institutional work. MNCs

are considered powerful societal actors since they also bring non-financial resources—for example, knowledge, ethical values, standards, and cultures to the developing country markets (Adelstein 2010). Thus, the collaborative or socio-political role (Barkemeyer et al. 2018; Beddewela & Fairbrass 2016; Marquis et al. 2007; Rodriguez et al. 2006) of MNCs can be investigated to change unethical institutionalized norms in developing countries. For instance, how and to what extent CSR practices of MNCs might change in actors' values and beliefs of unethical practices in developing countries? How can MNCs, along with other actors, introduce new ethical practices or deinstitutionalize unethical practices? Alternatively, what is the impact of such CSR practices of MNCs on institutional orders over a period of time?

This dissertation also highlights a burning need for a paradigm shift from quantitative to qualitative research designs for future research. Both sales ethics and bribery in IB literature heavily incline towards quantitative methods (see recent reviews of Ameer & Halinen 2019; Cuervo-Cazurra 2016; McClaren 2013; 2015). However, this dissertation indicates that relating unethical practices quantitatively to statistical tools, and variable-based reasoning is inherently misguided and illusionary (c.f. March & Sutton 1997). Dependent and independent variables are not entirely distinguishable in practice-based studies; thus, the PBV focuses on the interdependence and entanglement of practices (Jarzabkowski et al. 2016). Indeed, this dissertation emphasizes the mutual dependence of three main elements of any practice: what, how, and why (Jarzabkowski et al. 2007; Schatzki et al. 2001). Consequently, future researchers should also apply various other qualitative approaches to unearth different dimensions of corrupt practices from a variety of methodological perspectives. For example, researchers have effectively employed ethnography (Nicolini et al. 2003; den Nieuwenboer et al. 2017), phenomenology (van Manen 1990; Wertz et al. 2011), action research (Gherardi 2012), or discourse (Silverman 2010) to study practices.

6.4 Limitations

Apart from the theoretical and practical implications, the dissertation has at least four main limitations. First, the distinction between gifts and bribes is not clear cut, since there is a thin line and blurred boundary between them (Fischer 2007; Noonan 1984). This distinction depends on the context, form, and intention, all of which collectively decide whether an exchange is a gift or a bribe (Noonan 1984; Huang and Rice 2012). This makes the investigation of the core phenomenon difficult. Empirically, this study resolves this limitation by considering gifts and bribes a general category and by letting the informants to decide what they consider as ethical or unethical.

Second, informants generally hesitate to share ethically sensitive information (Geertz 1973)—for example, the bribery phenomenon under investigation in this study—particularly in an organizational setting. Even if they share such information, issue of social desirability bias may arise and the reliability of such information could be questionable (Liedtka 1992). Therefore, the interview data collection for this dissertation was a challenging task. Recognizing this limitation, informal and trustworthy relationships with informants were developed through communication over online social networks before the interviews. Moreover, special attention was devoted to the interview protocol. Interviews were conducted in an informal manner, mostly outside the organizations, and in a friendly environment. Questions were mainly structured in a way that informants disclosed their views and experiences regarding unethical practices in the industry (e.g., practices of market actors) rather than their own unethical practices. Most of the informants were already disturbed by the prevailing unethical practices in sales and, consequently, they openly shared their experiences. Once a friendly atmosphere was created, the informants became more comfortable disclosing their own or their organization's practices along with other actors' practices in the industry.

Third, the social and evolving bribery phenomenon under investigation heavily relies on time and a specific cultural context. Various aspects of this dissertation's findings were related to the specific context of Pakistani culture and the country's pharmaceutical sales context during specific time period, such as social time of critical events in article 2, short term copying practices for present or long term practices for future time in article 4. Therefore, future researchers should investigate corrupt sales practices in other developed or developing countries, industries, which may lead to different and interesting findings. Similarly, cross-cultural comparisons can also provide a rich understanding of collective moral values and norms that shape unethical sales practices in various cultures. Likewise, pure longitudinal studies focusing on real time may offer fresh insights on emergence and control of practices at different time spans.

Finally, this dissertation is mainly written from the perspective of selling organizations. Consequently, the perspectives of other important actors in sales were beyond the scope here. This study leaves this to future research. For example, understanding the social and dynamic nature of bribery and its control from the perspectives of society or customers could provide valuable insights.

6.5 Evaluation of the dissertation

Ensuring the quality and trustworthiness of a qualitative study is a challenging task. This evaluation exercise is not performed at the end of the research; instead, it is an ongoing process that is initiated right from the beginning of the project (Creswell &

Poth 2017). Therefore, following clear evaluation criteria at every stage of the project significantly improves the quality and trustworthiness of the research (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008). Hence, quality and trustworthiness were continuously ensured at every stage of this study. This study mainly follows the evaluation criterion for trustworthiness suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985)—namely, *credibility*, *transferability*, and *dependability*. Based on these three assessment parameters, this dissertation at least ensures an acceptable quality level and trustworthiness. This section justifies how this dissertation benchmarks three evaluation standards.

Credibility denotes the confidence in the truthfulness of the research results or findings (Lincoln & Guba 1985; Patton 2002). This criterion emphasizes internal validity or authenticity in terms of the degree to which findings represent the data collected (Storbacka, Polsa & Sääksjärvi 2011). Two main issues must be addressed to enhance the credibility of qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba 1985).

First, adequate familiarity with the studied phenomenon as well as the data may enhance researcher's claims (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008). In this regard, the relevant industry experience of the author in Pakistan, along with the author's knowledge of local languages and cultures, effectively helped in this research project. Similarly, the author's continuous engagement with informants for several years enhanced the credibility of this research (Lincoln & Guba 1985), particularly when such engagement or interaction was relatively long-term and ongoing—not only during interviews but also before and after interviews through online social networks. Also, the author also reviewed the relevant literature before and after the interviews to make sense of the phenomenon and the collected data. Likewise, the author analyzed the empirical data without any qualitative software, which helped in strong familiarization with the data.

Second, data triangulation (Creswell 2013) and analyst triangulation (Patton 1999; 2002) both were performed in this research. For example, data triangulation in article 2 was ensured to compliment interview data with multiple sources of data, including websites of drug firms, drug marketing or training material, industry magazines or newspapers, and observations. With regard to analyst triangulation, multiple experts reviewed the articles included in this dissertation—for example, co-authors of the articles, feedback from five international conferences along with reviewers of a journal, and participants of workshops or departmental seminars.

Transferability is mainly concerned with the external validity of qualitative research (Storbacka et al. 2011; Creswell & Poth 2017). It represents the extent to which the results of research in a specific context might apply to other relevant settings (Flint et al. 2002; Patton 2002). Transferability must not be treated as replication of results; however, it is closely related to find any similarities in comparable contexts (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008). Consequently, a detailed

description of the phenomenon can help to evaluate the extent to which the results of a study could be transferable to other contexts or actors (Creswell 2013; Lincoln & Guba 1985).

Overall, the findings of this dissertation are generalizable and applicable to developing countries. Logically, market actors in developing countries are influenced by unethical broader norms and values of their society. Consequently, they are expected to engage in a wide variety of institutionalized bribery practices in sales supported by the institutional environment in their country. As a result, MNCs operating in these settings experience pressure and, subsequently, they employ their organized practices to respond to such pressure.

Similarly, the results of this dissertation are also comparable to other industrial contexts in developing countries. In the past, MNCs in other industries—for example, Shell or Siemens—have also been criticized by academics and practitioners since they conformed to the pressure of institutionalized bribery by paying direct or indirect bribes to obtain sales contracts in developing countries. Such theoretical concepts were largely found in the data collected from almost all the informants of this study. Admittedly, the findings of this dissertation are also transferable when they are compared in the light of previous studies. For example, the literature on institutional pressure and organizational responses (Oliver 1991; Scott 2001) demonstrates similar patterns.

Dependability refers to the degree to which the findings of research are unique and provide stable or consistent explanations (Storbacka et al. 2011; Flint et al. 2002). For example, the informants in this study shared several experiences of a wide range of prevailing bribery practices of various actors in the drug sales along with the pressure of such institutionalized practices and their effects on drug MNCs. Similarly, empirical data further demonstrated consistent stories of informants sensing the pressure from the practices of market actors; drug MNCs displayed resistance by conducting various anti-bribery practices to counter the pressure. Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) argue that dependability can also be ascertained by providing sufficient details to readers that the research process is logical as well as traceable and documented. In this context, the empirical data of this dissertation is transcribed and analyzed systematically. All essential details of the research methodology employed here have been provided in the introductory essay as well as in each article included in this dissertation.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Specimen of the interview guide

Interview guide

Irfan Ameer
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Date of interview

Introductory questions

- 1- Name
- 2- Designation
- 3- Professional experience in current and previous firms/ roles
- 4- Educational background
- 5- Current city

Topical domain: Evolution and control of unethical practices (e.g. bribery) in sales at industry level.

- 1- What kind of ethical challenges do you face in the pharmaceutical sales profession?

- 2- What are the key unethical practices (unethical gifts or bribes) you see in the pharmaceutical sales?
- 3- Can you recall any noteworthy experiences related to such practices? (how, when, where, and why it happened? who was involved or not involved?)
- 4- Why do you consider such practices (unethical gifts and bribes) as ethical or unethical?
- 5- How these practices affect you (in your job) and your firm?
- 6- Do you and your firm feel pressure due to these prevailing practices?
- 7- In your view, how did these unethical practices begin?
- 8- Who is/was responsible for these unethical practices?
- 9- How can these practices be controlled in your own view?
- 10- How your firm is controlling such practices?
- 11- What was the situation with regard to such practices at the beginning of your career?
- 12- Have these practices changed? How?
- 13- What is the situation about these practices now?
- 14- How do you view the future of these practices?



**UNIVERSITY
OF TURKU**

ISBN 978-951-29-7842-7 (PRINT)
ISBN 978-951-29-7843-4 (PDF)
ISSN 2343-3159 (Painettu/Print)
ISSN 2343-3167 (Verkojulkaisu/Online)