Islamic perspective on corruption

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Abstrak

Tujua- Korupsi merupakan masalah serius yang tidak hanya menghambat kemajuan negara, tetapi juga menimbulkan ketidakadilan sosial. Dalam perspektif Islam, korupsi dipandang sebagai dosa besar karena bertentangan dengan prinsip keadilan, amanah, dan kejujuran. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pandangan Islam terhadap praktik korupsi, serta menelaah peran pemimpin dan tokoh agama dalam upaya pemberantasan korupsi dan pembangunan kesadaran etis serta spiritual di tengah masyarakat. Metodologi Penelitian / Desain / Pendekatan-Penelitian ini menggunakan metode studi literatur dengan pendekatan kualitatif melalui penelaahan sumber-sumber Al-Qur'an, Hadis, literatur fikih, serta pandangan para ulama yang relevan dengan tema korupsi. Temuan-Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa korupsi dalam perspektif Islam didefinisikan sebagai perbuatan yang bersifat merusak dan bertentangan dengan nilai-nilai moral, dengan berbagai bentuk praktik korupsi yang telah diidentifikasi. Faktor penyebab terjadinya korupsi antara lain praktik suap, gaya hidup materialistis, serta faktor eksternal seperti sistem politik. Sanksi yang diterapkan meliputi hukuman *ta'zir*, pengembalian hak-hak korban, sanksi sosial, serta ancaman hukuman di akhirat. Upaya pemberantasan korupsi mencakup pendidikan antikorupsi berbasis nilai-nilai moral Islam, penegakan hukum yang adil, serta peran aktif tokoh agama dan masyarakat dalam menyebarkan nilai-nilai antikorupsi. Orisinalitas /Nilai-Penanaman nilai kejujuran dan pendidikan antikorupsi sejak usia dini merupakan hal yang sangat penting untuk membentuk generasi yang berintegritas serta mewujudkan masa depan Indonesia yang bebas dari praktik korupsi

Kata kunci: *Korupsi dalam islam, Definis korupsi, Memberantas Korupsi*

Abstract

Purpose-Corruption is a serious problem that not only hinders the progress of the country but also causes social injustice. From the perspective of Islam, corruption is considered a major sin that violates the principles of justice, trustworthiness, and honesty. This study aims to examine the perspective of Islam on corruption, as well as the role of leaders and religious figures in eradicating corruption and building ethical and spiritual awareness among the people. Research Methodology / Design / Approach- The method used is a literature study and a qualitative approach by examining sources of the Qur'an, Hadith, fiqh literature, and the opinions of scholars. Findings-The results of the study show that corruption in Islam is defined as an act that is destructive and contrary to moral values, with various types of corruption identified. The causes of corruption include bribery, materialistic lifestyles, and external factors such as the political system. The punishments applied are in the form of ta'zir punishment, return of victim rights, social sanctions, and threats of punishment in the afterlife. Efforts to eradicate corruption include anti-corruption education based on Islamic morals, fair law enforcement, and the active role of religious leaders and communities in spreading anti-corruption values. Originality / Value- instilling the values of honesty and anti-corruption education from an early age is very important to create a generation with integrity and realize a future for Indonesia that is free from corrupt practices.

Keywords: *Corruption in Islam, Definition of Corruption, Eradicating Corruption*

Introduction

The phenomenon of corruption is a serious problem that not only wastes state funds but also hinders development progress and creates social injustice. Despite the implementation of various regulations and law enforcement agencies, corrupt practices persist and are increasingly developing with increasingly sophisticated methods, demonstrating that corruption must be viewed not only as a legal issue but also as a fundamental moral issue (Takdir, 2022). From a moral perspective, corruption is seen as behavior that contradicts the values of honesty and responsibility, is susceptible to bribery, and is carried out primarily by individuals in positions of power and high positions, and is detrimental to the wider community. Previous research has shown that internalizing moral values through religious education can be an effective strategy to reduce corrupt behavior, as education based on religious ethics and morality can strengthen the character of individuals with integrity (Takdir, 2022).

From a religious perspective, corruption is categorized as an act that contradicts the moral and ethical principles taught in various religious traditions. Every religion emphasizes the importance of living an honest, just, and responsible life; these values serve as the moral foundation for individuals in their personal and professional lives. A religious approach to addressing corruption provides a profound perspective on morality and social ethics, where the teachings of honesty and integrity are considered key to preventing corrupt behavior (Nurhanudin et al., 2025).

The role of religious leaders and religious institutions is crucial in raising public awareness of the dangers of corruption through sermons, education, and social activities. Religious education that integrates anti-corruption values from an early age has the potential to shape a generation with a strong moral commitment to transparency, trustworthiness, and justice. Emphasizing these values in both formal and informal educational settings helps strengthen character and reduce the likelihood of future corrupt behavior (Nurhanudin et al., 2025).

Furthermore, religious communities can actively contribute to anti-corruption social programs and advocacy by collaborating with government and non-governmental organizations to create an environment that supports transparency and accountability. This cross-sectoral approach is expected to increase public trust in public institutions and foster a culture of integrity in national life. Thus, instilling religious-based moral values is a strategic approach to comprehensive and sustainable corruption eradication efforts.

Method

This research uses a qualitative approach using a literature review method to analyze Islamic perspectives on corruption and their relevance in the context of contemporary corruption eradication. Data were obtained from reputable scientific journal articles discussing Islamic ethics, trustworthiness *(amanah)*, justice, and the abuse of power and wealth from a normative and social perspective. The study focused on academic publications that examine Islamic moral values such as honesty (şidq), trustworthiness (amanah), and justice as ethical foundations for governing power and preventing corrupt behavior (Beekun & Badawi, 2005;).

The analysis was conducted by thematically examining research findings linking religious teachings, particularly Islam, to ethical behavior and anti-corruption tendencies. The studies reviewed demonstrate that religious values play a significant role in shaping individual integrity and suppressing abuse of power, particularly when these values are internalized through education and social systems (Gokcekus, 2020). The literature findings are then interpreted using an Islamic ethical framework, which strictly prohibits all forms of dishonesty, betrayal of trust, and exploitation of power for personal gain.

To ensure data validity, this study employed source triangulation, comparing the results of studies from various international journals addressing the relationship between religion, ethics, and corruption. This approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding and

reduces interpretive bias, ensuring that the conclusions drawn have a strong and consistent academic foundation. Through this method, the research is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the contribution of Islamic teachings to building ethical awareness and offer a relevant normative framework for efforts to eradicate corruption in modern society.

Findings and discussion

Understanding Corruption from an Islamic Perspective

Etymologically, the term corruption comes from the Latin corruptus, meaning "damaged," "rotten," or "destroyed." This term then spread to various European languages, such as corruption in English and French, and korruptie in Dutch, before finally being absorbed into Indonesian as "korupsi" (Ansari Yamamah, 2009; Purwanto, 2017). In a general sense, corruption is understood as an act that contradicts the values of justice, truth, and honesty, and reflects the abuse of power for personal or group interests.

In sociological and political studies, Alatas (1987) argues that corruption takes various forms and is not a single entity. First, transactional corruption, a form of corruption involving a reciprocal agreement between interested parties for mutual benefit, such as between businesspeople and government officials. Second, extortional corruption, which occurs when an individual is forced to pay a bribe to avoid harm to themselves, their family, or others. Third, defensive corruption, which is corruption committed by those who have been victims of extortion, as a form of self-protection from greater threats. This classification demonstrates that corruption is a complex phenomenon involving power relations, vested interests, and weak moral integrity. From an Islamic perspective, corruption is viewed as an act that directly contradicts the basic principles of sharia, particularly the values of amanah (trust), 'adl (justice), and sidq (honesty). Although the term "corruption" is not explicitly mentioned in the Quran, the substance of its actions is reflected in the prohibitions against ghulul (embezzlement), risywah (bribery), and abuse of power. These practices are considered a betrayal of the public trust and a violation of the social rights of the community (Beekun & Badawi, 2005). Thus, corruption in Islam is viewed not only as a legal crime but also as a moral and spiritual violation with worldly and hereafter consequences.

Furthermore, Islam places honesty and responsibility as the ethical foundations for managing wealth and power. Any form of abuse of authority that harms the public interest is seen as undermining social order and justice. Therefore, eradicating corruption from an Islamic perspective is not sufficient if it is carried out through legal mechanisms alone, but must also be accompanied by strengthening moral values and religious awareness that instills integrity as part of faith and social responsibility (Beets, 2007).

Causes of Corruption from an Islamic Perspective

In classical Islamic literature, the practice of corruption is often associated with the concept of risywah (bribery) and abuse of power. In his work "al-Umm," Imam al-Shafi'i described various forms of bribery, namely gifts intended to distort the truth, justify a wrong, or obtain an unjust legal decision. Bribery is also understood as a gift given to a person in power or position to win a case, expedite, or delay a matter for personal gain. This definition demonstrates that corruption has been understood from the beginning as a serious violation of justice and the public trust.

This view is reinforced by Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who emphasized that bribery and corruption can occur in various aspects of life, not only limited to the formal legal realm but also in social, economic, and political activities. The practice of giving gifts or money to those in power to influence decisions is a form of moral deviation that undermines social order and justice. In line with this, contemporary studies show that consumerist and materialistic lifestyles contribute significantly to the rise in corrupt practices, as the drive to maintain luxury often leads to abuse of power (Beekun & Badawi, 2005).

Economic factors, such as low wages, are often cited as causes of corruption, but numerous studies indicate that these factors are not the sole cause. Many corrupt actors come from well-off economic backgrounds, so corruption is more accurately understood as the result of an interaction between structural factors, culture, and weak moral integrity. In this context, a high-cost political system and a culture of consumerism contribute to creating fertile ground for corrupt practices, as power is viewed as a means of accumulating wealth (Beets, 2007).

Punishment or Sanctions in Corruption from an Islamic Perspective

From an Islamic perspective, corruption is viewed as a reprehensible act that destroys social order, creates injustice, and betrays trust. The Quran expressly prohibits the unlawful appropriation of another's property, as stated in Surah al-Baqarah, verse 188, which serves as the normative basis for the prohibition against corruption and all forms of abuse of power. Corruption is also viewed as a form of injustice (ẓulm), which is strongly condemned in Islamic teachings due to its detrimental impact on many parties.

Sanctions against perpetrators of corruption in Islam are generally categorized as ta'zir punishments, namely, punishments whose type and severity are determined by the ruler or judge based on the severity of the crime and the public interest. These punishments can include imprisonment, fines, revocation of office, or other forms of punishment aimed at providing a deterrent effect and preventing similar acts from recurring. In addition to ta'zir punishments, Islam also emphasizes the obligation to return the proceeds of corruption to the injured party as a form of moral and social accountability (Kamali, 2008).

In addition to legal sanctions, Islam also emphasizes the importance of social sanctions, such as prohibitions on holding public office or other strategic positions. These sanctions are intended to maintain the integrity of public institutions and restore public trust. Furthermore, Islamic teachings emphasize the consequences of hereafter for those who commit corruption. The Quran, including Surah al-Mutaffifin, provides a stern warning against those who cheat and harm others in matters of wealth, demonstrating that corruption has repercussions not only in this world but also in the afterlife.

How to Address Corruption

Efforts to eradicate corruption require a multidimensional approach that encompasses legal, moral, and educational aspects. From a positive legal perspective, regulations such as the Corruption Eradication Law provide a legal framework for prosecuting perpetrators of corruption. However, a repressive approach alone is insufficient without being accompanied by preventive efforts through values education and strengthening moral integrity.

Anti-corruption education based on Islamic religious values is seen as an effective preventive strategy because it instills honesty, trustworthiness, and responsibility as part of devotion to God. Studies of Islamic ethics show that internalizing moral values through education can shape individual character that is more resilient to the temptation of abuse of power (Beekun & Badawi, 2005). Therefore, early anti-corruption education, whether within the family, school, or community, is a key element in building a culture of integrity.

In addition to education, strengthening legal institutions and the independence of law enforcement are also key requirements for eradicating corruption. Fair, transparent, and non-discriminatory law enforcement can increase public trust in the rule of law. In this regard, protection for whistleblowers is also crucial. Witness and victim protection regulations provide legal guarantees for the public to actively participate in reporting corrupt practices without fear, which is part of the principle of the rule of law and the protection of human rights (Yanto et al., 2023).

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Conclusion

Corruption, from an Islamic perspective, is understood as a reprehensible act that undermines social order, betrays trust, and contradicts the principles of justice and honesty that are the foundation of Islamic teachings. Corrupt practices are not only driven by economic factors, but also by a materialistic lifestyle, weak moral integrity, and a political and bureaucratic system that drives high costs. The thoughts of classical and contemporary scholars demonstrate that corruption takes various forms, such as bribery (risywah), abuse of power, and betrayal of trust, all of which are prohibited in Islam because they cause harm to the wider community.

In terms of sanctions, Islam classifies corruption as an act subject to ta'zir punishment, with the type and level of punishment determined based on the degree of culpability and the public interest. In addition to legal sanctions, Islam also emphasizes the importance of restitution of corrupted assets, the application of social sanctions, and awareness of the afterlife consequences as a form of moral and spiritual accountability. This approach demonstrates that the eradication of corruption in Islam is comprehensive, encompassing legal, moral, and faith dimensions.

Efforts to eradicate corruption cannot rely solely on law enforcement but must be complemented by preventive strategies through anti-corruption education based on religious values. Instilling the values of honesty, trustworthiness, and responsibility from an early age whether within the family, educational institutions, or society is key to building a culture of integrity. Furthermore, strengthening regulations, the independence of law enforcement, and protecting those who report corruption are essential prerequisites for creating a just and trusted legal system. By integrating Islamic teachings, moral education, and a strong legal system, it is hoped that a society with integrity and free from corruption, both in national and social life, can be realized.

List of abbreviations
Not applicable

Acknowledgment
Not applicable

Declaration
The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

Ethics approval and consent to participate
Not applicable

Consent for publication
Not applicable

Availability of data and materials
Not applicable

Competing interests
All authors declare that there are no relevant conflicts of interest related to this research.

Author contributions
JJ responsible for the conception and design of the study, MA collection data, manuscript writing, II and MP analysis, and interpretation. All author also reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript

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