



The Gen Z Movement in the Face of the Anti-Corruption Crisis

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Abstrak

Tujuan: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis keterlibatan dan dampak Generasi Z (Gen Z) dalam gerakan antikorupsi di Indonesia. Fokus utamanya adalah memahami bagaimana Gen Z, sebagai generasi yang tumbuh di era digital dengan kesadaran sosial yang tinggi, berpartisipasi dalam upaya pemberantasan korupsi. **Metodologi / Desain / Pendekatan Penelitian:** Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dengan analisis literatur yang komprehensif dari berbagai sumber, seperti jurnal, artikel penelitian, liputan media, dan publikasi organisasi antikorupsi. Data dianalisis secara sistematis melalui tahapan pengumpulan, klasifikasi berdasarkan tema-tema kunci, dan sintesis untuk memahami peran serta kontribusi Gen Z dalam pemberantasan korupsi. **Temuan:** Gen Z menunjukkan peran yang aktif dan inovatif dalam gerakan antikorupsi dengan memanfaatkan teknologi digital dan media sosial untuk kampanye, mobilisasi massa, dan peningkatan kesadaran publik. Mereka menghadapi berbagai hambatan, seperti perlawanan dari sistem yang telah mapan dan keterbatasan dana, tetapi tetap gigih dalam perjuangan mereka. Gen Z juga berkolaborasi dengan berbagai pemangku kepentingan untuk memperkuat akuntabilitas dan transparansi, serta menekankan pentingnya pendidikan antikorupsi.

Orisinalitas / Nilai: Penelitian ini memberikan wawasan baru mengenai peran strategis Gen Z sebagai agen perubahan dalam pemberantasan korupsi di Indonesia. Dengan pendekatan mereka yang kreatif dan berbasis teknologi maju, Gen Z menawarkan perspektif baru dan potensi besar untuk membangun kampanye antikorupsi yang lebih efektif dan berkelanjutan, yang didukung oleh kolaborasi lintas generasi dan lintas sektor.

Kata kunci: Korupsi, Generasi Z (Gen Z), Gerakan Antikorupsi Indonesia, Partisipasi Pemuda

Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to analyze the involvement and impact of Generation Z (Gen Z) in the anti-corruption movement in Indonesia. The main focus is to understand how Gen Z, as a generation that grew up in the digital era with high social awareness, participates in efforts to combat corruption. **Research Methodology / Design / Approach:** The study uses a qualitative descriptive approach with a comprehensive literature analysis from various sources such as journals, research articles, media coverage, and publications of anti-corruption organizations. Data are systematically analyzed through collection, classification based on key themes, and synthesis to understand the role and contribution of Gen Z in eradicating corruption. **Findings:** Gen Z shows an active and innovative role in the anti-corruption movement by utilizing digital technology and social media for campaigns, mass organizing, and raising public awareness. They face various obstacles such as opposition from established systems and limited funds, but remain persistent in their struggle. Gen Z also collaborates with various stakeholders to strengthen accountability and transparency, and emphasizes the importance of anti-corruption education. **Originality / Value:** This study provides new insights into the strategic role of Gen Z as agents of change in eradicating corruption in Indonesia. With their creative and technologically advanced approaches, Gen Z offers fresh perspectives and great potential to build more effective and sustainable anti-corruption campaigns, supported by cross-generational and cross-sector collaboration.

Keywords: Corruption Generation Z (Gen Z) Anti-Corruption Movement Indonesia Youth Participation



Introduction

Indonesia is one of many countries whose social, economic, and political foundations have long been threatened by corruption. In addition to harming state finances, corruption hinders national progress, increases social inequality, and erodes public trust in government institutions. According to the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (KBBI), corruption is defined as the misuse or embezzlement of state, corporate, organizational, or foundation funds for personal or others' benefit (Febriyana, 2022). Corruption is a criminal act that harms state finances, the national economy, and public welfare. It also constitutes a violation of people's social and economic rights. Setiadi (2018) explains that the term *corruption* originates from the Latin words *corruption* or *corruptus*, meaning damage or decay. The word was later absorbed into English and French as *corruption* and into Dutch as *korruptie*.

With a Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) score that has shown little improvement in recent years, Indonesia continues to face serious obstacles in its efforts to eradicate corruption. In the midst of this difficult landscape, however, a promising development has emerged: the active participation of Generation Z (Gen Z) in anti-corruption movements. Gen Z refers to those born between the mid-1990s and the early 2010s. This generation has distinctive characteristics that set it apart from previous generations. Growing up in the digital era with nearly unlimited access to information, Gen Z tends to have a high level of socio-political awareness and a strong inclination to engage actively in issues they consider important. They lead and support anti-corruption movements through new and creative strategies. By utilizing their knowledge of social media and digital technology, Gen Z has launched innovative campaigns capable of reaching broad audiences. Through online petitions, protests coordinated via digital platforms, and other means, Gen Z has demonstrated its ability to mobilize the masses and raise public awareness of the dangers of corruption.

Nevertheless, the Gen Z movement still faces significant obstacles in its struggle against corruption. In addition to confronting deeply entrenched systems, they also encounter resistance from older, more established generations who may view their idealism as unrealistic or naïve. Even so, Gen Z's spirit and persistence in facing these challenges deserve recognition and further investigation. It is important not only to acknowledge Gen Z's contribution to anti-corruption campaigns, but also to design future strategies for combating corruption more effectively. By integrating the distinctive strengths and qualities of Gen Z with the knowledge and experience of previous generations, Indonesia can build a stronger and more sustainable anti-corruption movement. This study is expected to generate important insights that can contribute to the development of more effective and inclusive anti-corruption policies and initiatives

Method

This study examines how Generation Z contributes to anti-corruption efforts in Indonesia by using a qualitative method and a descriptive approach (Matang et al., 2023). Putri (2024) explains that Generation Z is a generation that is highly familiar with the digital world and responds very quickly to any information surrounding them. Generation Z is intelligent, technologically proficient, imaginative, and critical. This study employs a comprehensive literature analysis based on various sources, such as research articles, media reports, academic journals, and publications from anti-corruption organizations. The data analysis process was carried out systematically through three main stages, beginning with the collection and selection of relevant references, followed by data classification based on key themes such as Gen Z activism tactics, the use of social media, and the forms of their involvement in anti-corruption movements, and finally the interpretation and synthesis of the data to gain an in-depth understanding of the role and contribution of Generation Z in anti-corruption efforts. By comparing different perspectives from multiple sources, source triangulation ensured that the collected data were

validated. This study aims to provide an up-to-date view of Generation Z-led anti-corruption movements in Indonesia, focusing on the period from 2020 to 2024.

Findings and discussion

Definition and Explanation of Corruption

According to Setiadi (2018), the term *corruption* originates from the Latin word *corruptio*. Some also argue that it derives from the ancient Latin word *corrumpere*. This Latin term was later translated into *corruption* and *corrupt* in English, *corruption* in French, and *corruptie/korruptie* in Dutch. Literally, corruption refers to rottenness, depravity, dishonesty, bribery, immorality, impurity, and deviation from purity. Suhandi (2023) states that the Arabic-Indonesian dictionary includes the word *resuah*, derived from the Arabic word *risywah*, which is used in anti-corruption regulations in Malaysia. The phrase bribery or *risywah* refers to giving something to a judge in order to help someone win a case through unethical means. Another meaning that should be considered in the concept of corruption is anything rotten, such as accepting bribes or abusing power for personal gain. Misappropriation of funds, bribery, and other malicious acts are examples of corrupt activities. Anyone involved in corruption is referred to as a corruptor (Suhandi, 2023).

In legal dictionaries, corruption is defined as embezzlement and acts that harm state finances. David M. Chalmers, as cited by Baharudin Lopa, defines corruption in three different domains, namely bribery, economic manipulation, and public interest. The statement, "financial manipulations and deliction injurious to the economy are often labeled 'corrupt'," implies that financial manipulation and misconduct that damage the economy are often categorized as corrupt, meaning that corruption refers to something bad, rotten, and destructive (Suhandi, 2023). This suggests that acts of corruption involve immoral behavior and circumstances related to positions of authority or government officials. Moreover, abuse of authority in entrusted positions depends on several complex factors or situations that create opportunities for corruption to occur.

The Impact of Corrupt Behavior

Setiadi (2018) reveals that the term corruption has been used for a long time and has become a common phenomenon in society. Mainstream media expose most corruption cases, which are often closely linked to authority, bureaucracy, and government, making corruption frequently associated with political nuances. The concept of corruption differs from other forms of illegality, yet it is still regarded as an unlawful act. In addition to being associated with politics, corruption is also related to public policy, the economy, political foreign relations, social welfare, and national development.

In his writing, Anharu (2023) states that corruption is a multifaceted problem and one of the social diseases that often emerged before major civilizations collapsed. Not only adults are involved in corrupt behavior, but also children and adolescents, beginning with small acts such as cheating, giving answers during exams, and other corrupt behaviors that are commonly practiced. Anharu (2023) also explains that if such behavior becomes a repeated habit over time, a person will come to see it as normal. In reality, exposure to such behavior can affect a person's conduct in the future. Although corrupt behavior still exists in all organizations and institutions, this does not rule out the possibility that corrupt practices also occur in religious institutions.

According to Suhandi (2023), corruption, which is described as a toxic culture, will create a corrupt society and become a multidimensional problem that may ultimately lead to the collapse of the nation if it continues to spread. In order to realize a social and national life that upholds religious, national, and civic values, religion must play a proactive role in shaping anti-corruption behavior. Religious education also helps form individuals who are honest, pious, and responsible in all their actions.

Generation Z and Technological Life

China, the United States, and India are the top three countries in the world in terms of smartphone use, followed by Indonesia in fourth place. More than 100 million people in Indonesia currently use smartphones, and around 50% of the population use them regularly. The increasingly

expansive world has enabled openness, allowing global information systems to transcend national boundaries and easily connect smartphone user communities across different parts of the world. Given the increasingly affordable price of smartphones, parents do not hesitate to provide such facilities to their teenage children. This has led to unique and distinctive characteristics in Generation Z (Dr. Yuli Kristiyowati, 2021).

Generation Z refers to those born between approximately 1995 and 2010 (Zis, 2021). Hastini (2020) outlines several characteristics of Generation Z related to technology use. These include socializing online, using the internet quickly, and being efficient and creative in using technology, such as when playing games that require creative thinking. According to Christiani (2020), Generation Z accesses information very quickly and responds rapidly to the waves of information surrounding them as a result of digitalization. Generation Z is intelligent, technologically literate, creative, and critical. A prominent characteristic of Gen Z is that they tend to understand technological developments well because, since birth, they have been exposed to gadgets and immersed in the digital world. In addition to being a generation that loves technology, Gen Z is also considered to have a strong capacity for creativity, invention, and innovation (Sakitri, 2021). As a generation born between 2001 and 2010 and emerging after the millennial generation, they are often referred to as digital natives. In the lives of Gen Z, everything is accompanied by personal computers, smartphones, game consoles, and the internet. Rather than going outside to play, they tend to stay indoors and spend their leisure time playing online games (Zis, 2021).

The Role of Generation Z in Addressing the Anti-Corruption Crisis

The role of Generation Z in addressing the anti-corruption crisis is a social phenomenon that shows how young people are involved in campaigns against corruption across various sectors. This generation has distinctive characteristics in facing social and political challenges because they were raised amid abundant technology and information (Anwar, 2024). Young people are becoming increasingly aware of and mobilized by the anti-corruption crisis in Indonesia, marked by the rise in corruption cases and declining public trust in law enforcement. They see corruption as a threat to social justice and the future of the nation, as well as an economic problem that is frequently intertwined with corrupt practices. Gen Z has the potential to become an agent of change in combating corruption because of their deep awareness of technology and social engagement.

Generation Z has demonstrated an active role in anti-corruption efforts through various effective and innovative methods by utilizing social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok to disseminate anti-corruption information and content widely, quickly, and in an easily understandable way. Gen Z also participates in democratic movements through their involvement in various non-governmental organizations and campaigns that demand government transparency and accountability, enabling them to organize protests and petitions online. Awareness of the importance of education has also become one of their priorities, as they seek to deepen their understanding of politics and financial literacy in order to identify signs of corruption and understand its impact on society more comprehensively.

Generation Z adopts distinct and relevant approaches that enable them to play an important role in addressing anti-corruption challenges. Anwar (2024) argues that Generation Z has a high level of social awareness because they were raised in the digital era and prioritize attention to the negative impacts of corruption on society as a whole. Gen Z lives in an internationally connected world and is constantly exposed to information. When confronted with a problem, this generation tends to think proactively and take action. Their advanced technological abilities enable them to use social media as an important instrument for anti-corruption initiatives and criticism. They organize movements, encourage broad public engagement, and disseminate information through social media platforms. They motivate other young people to take part in stopping and reporting corruption cases by using social media to raise broader awareness of corrupt activities at both the local and national levels.

With the expansion of the digital world, Generation Z has been able to contribute inventive and creative approaches to fighting corruption. They provide platforms and applications that enhance public access to government data, monitor government financial transparency, and enable anonymous corruption reporting. These innovations reflect their commitment to bringing about

real change and their strong determination to fight corruption. The rise of Gen Z activism is also influenced by their awareness of social issues (Anwar, 2024). They frequently participate in campaigns, protests, and petition drives calling for anti-corruption measures and legal reform. They believe that, in order to successfully combat corruption, the existing legal and political structures must be strengthened. They do not hesitate to engage in direct action or appear in public to express their demands and mobilize change.

Gen Z also recognizes the value of education in combating corruption. Anwar (2024) explains that this generation actively participates in outreach and educational initiatives in communities, universities, and schools. Yoga (2022) argues that, in addition to encouraging society to take part in corruption prevention from an early age, education aims to increase understanding of the negative impacts of corruption and the value of integrity. Gen Z realizes that building a strong culture of ethics and openness is the first step toward creating change, and they collaborate with anti-corruption groups (Yoga, 2022). They work together with the government, civil society groups, and non-governmental organizations to enhance accountability and transparency. Their movement is strengthened by such partnerships, which provide them with access to various resources and support. More comprehensive solutions to the problem of corruption are also made possible through cooperation across generations and sectors.

The struggle of Gen Z against corruption is not without difficulties. The reforms they wish to see are often obstructed by resistance from those who benefit from a flawed system. A lack of funding and infrastructure often prevents them from implementing the projects they have developed. Although many organizations that seek to maintain their status or positions often threaten, intimidate, and launch cyberattacks against Gen Z, this does not weaken their fighting spirit. Beyond seeing corruption merely as an economic problem, Gen Z understands its broader consequences. In their view, social inequality, access to public services, education, and even environmental issues are all directly related to corruption. They observe that the most vulnerable populations, such as the poor and those living in remote areas, are more easily affected by corruption because they often have limited access to adequate education and accurate information.

The struggle against corruption carried out by Generation Z also has a global dimension in addition to a local one. They build connections with individuals and groups around the world that share the same goals and objectives. Their methods are improved, and productive exchanges of ideas become possible through cross-national collaboration. Gen Z learns the most relevant and successful anti-corruption tactics from other countries while also learning from global experience. This shows that corruption is a global problem that requires cooperation and solidarity across nations. Overall, Gen Z's involvement in fighting corruption offers new hope for a more open and just future. They advocate for deeper systemic reform rather than merely trying to eliminate corruption at the surface level. Gen Z has significant potential to rid the world of corrupt practices because of their technological competence, creativity, high social awareness, and sense of solidarity. It is crucial that their movement be supported by various parties that better understand the corruption crisis, such as previous generations, the government, and the broader public, in order to achieve substantial and positive impact for the nation. Generation Z has the potential to play an important role in eradicating corruption in the future if they are further encouraged and developed.

Conclusion

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that through creative and technologically advanced methods, Generation Z has contributed significantly to anti-corruption initiatives in Indonesia. Their expertise in using social media, their participation in democratic movements, and their emphasis on education and awareness-raising have provided a new perspective in anti-corruption campaigns. Gen Z has shown persistence in the struggle for accountability and transparency despite facing various obstacles, such as opposition from adversaries, funding constraints, and resistance from established systems. Gen Z has the potential to become an agent of change in combating corruption because of their collaboration with various stakeholders at the local and international levels, as well as their deep awareness of how corruption affects many

aspects of life. To achieve more significant and lasting systemic change in corruption eradication in Indonesia, the success of these efforts will depend heavily on support from the government, the wider public, and previous generations.

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

AR responsible for the conception and design of the study, MDH, DPR, HS, L collection data, manuscript writing, II and FH, DK analysis, and interpretation. All author also reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript

Funding

This research was fully funded by the personal funds of the researcher. No external parties were involved in the funding or had any influence on the research process or its outcomes.

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Received: 1 September 2024

Accepted: 10 January 2025

Published online: 1 June 2025

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