

Ethical Issues Confronting Indonesia: An In-Depth Analysis of the Hambalang Corruption Case and its Impact on Anticorruption Measures and Governance



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ABSTRACT: This study conducts a nuanced examination of ethical challenges confronting Indonesia, centering on the Hambalang corruption case. Through an indepth analysis, the study scrutinizes the intricate ethical dimensions of the scandal and investigates its broader ramifications on anti-corruption measures and governance in the nation. The research aspires to offer nuanced insights into the complex interplay between ethics, governance, and corruption, aiming to contribute to the ongoing discourse on ethical governance and anti-corruption strategies in Indonesia.

KEYWORDS: Anti-Corruption Measures, Code of Ethics, Public Ethics, Governance, Integrity, Hambalang Corruption Case.

INTRODUCTION

Public ethics and corruption have a close relationship in the context of government and good governance. Public ethics involves the application of moral values in decision making and behavior in the public sector. However, corruption frequently destroys this ethical foundation, undermining public trust and weakening the integrity of government institutions. The relationship between corruption, ethics, and governance is fundamental in understanding the complex dynamics that affect the integrity of government institutions. First of all, ethics acts as a moral basis that should guide behavior in the world of public service. When ethics are respected and implemented well, it creates an environment where integrity and transparency are upheld. Conversely, when ethics are ignored, gaps open for corrupt practices. Corruption, in this context, is a violation of ethical norms that should guide actions in government. Then, corruption has a significant impact on governance or administration. Corruption creates distortions in decision-making mechanisms and resource allocation. The actions defined as corruption vary from country to country and from situation to situation. Therefore, anticorruption measures may vary from situation to situation (Vian, 2020). Corrupt institutions tend to be ineffective and unaccountable, harming the interests of society. Therefore, corruption undermines the foundations of good governance and can hinder economic and social development. Conversely, efforts to improve good governance can help prevent corruption. Good governance involves the establishment of strong institutional structures, transparency in decision making, and active community participation. By applying the principles of good governance, opportunities for corruption can be reduced, and government institutions can function according to their purpose of serving the public interest. Thus, corruption, ethics and governance are interrelated in a complex dynamic. Respect for ethical values can help build good governance, while violations of ethics tend to undermine governance and open the door to detrimental corrupt practices. A deep understanding of this relationship is important for designing effective policies and strategies in eradicating corruption and building a government system with integrity.

Cases such as the Hambalang scandal in Indonesia show how ethical violations in public services can harm the public interest and create an environment that facilitates corrupt practices. Corruption as a systemic phenomenon is a serious challenge to governance in a number of countries, including Indonesia. Indonesia's 2023 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) is 34/100, ranking it 115th out of 180 countries surveyed. With this result, Indonesia could only increase its CPI score by 2 points from a score of 32 over the last decade since 2012 (Transparency International Indonesia, 2023). This condition shows that the response to corruption practices is still slow and worsens due to stakeholders' lack of factual support. According to data from the Corruption Eradication Commission (CEC), the agency filed 1,351 cases of corruption between 2004 and 2022. When viewed by region, corruption cases most often occur in central government areas (Transparency International Indonesia, 2023). The Hambalang

Ethical Issues Confronting Indonesia: An In-Depth Analysis of the Hambalang Corruption Case and its Impact on Anticorruption Measures and Governance

corruption case is clear evidence of the challenges of corruption that continue to occur in government of Indonesia. The scandal, which occurred in the early 2010s, involved a network of fraudulent activities surrounding a sports complex construction project. The implications of the Hambalang case are not only limited to financial issues, but also highlight the complex relationship between ethical governance, public trust, and the effectiveness of anticorruption efforts in Indonesia.

The Hambalang Sports Complex project actually started on 10 December, 2010 to 31 December, 2012. The Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs believes that there is a need for national-level training and educational centers, as well as sports schools. However, in its development the Hambalang Sports Complex project encountered several problems, starting from not getting development recommendations, until significant budget increase, with costs soaring to IDR 2.5 Trillion. The Audit Board of Indonesia is already suspicious of this sports complex project, as the construction of the approximately 32-hectare site had stalled. The peak was when the audit board carried out an inspection starting on the February 27th, 2012, among other things, was the discovery of indications of state losses with a total value of at least IDR 243.66 billion. Then, the CEC finally did it inquiries and investigations. In 2012, the CEC named three suspects: Deddy Kusdinar (the Commitment-Making Officer at the Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs), IEM (Member of Parliament), and on December 7 2012, the CEC appointed Andi Alfian Mallarangeng as a suspect in the alleged Hambalang case (Verdict of the Special Criminal Court, 2014).

The main purpose of this study is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the Hambalang corruption case, exploring its intricate aspects and assessing its broader implications for governance in Indonesia. By dissecting the chronological events, root causes, and aftermath of the scandal, the purpose of the study is to provide nuanced insights into the ethical dimensions and systemic vulnerabilities that allowed such corruption to occur. Furthermore, this research seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of existing anti-corruption measures in mitigating the impact of cases like Hambalang and to contribute practical recommendations for enhancing the nation's approach to ethical governance. The significance of this study lies in its potential to inform policy makers, scholars, and practitioners about the specific challenges posed by corruption within the Indonesian context. By unraveling the complexities of the Hambalang case, this research can offer valuable perspectives on how ethical violations impact public trust, institutional integrity, and the overall efficacy of anti-corruption strategies. Additionally, the study aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on ethical governance, fostering a deeper understanding of the systemic improvements necessary to bolster Indonesia's resilience against corruption.

At the core of this study is a pivotal ethical question: How do ethical violations in the public sector affect the effectiveness of anti-corruption efforts and governance in Indonesia, as exemplified by the Hambalang corruption scandal? This overarching question encapsulates the essence of our exploration, guiding the research to critically examine the ethical dimensions of the Hambalang case and discern their broader implications. By addressing this fundamental issue, this study aims to illuminate the complex interplay between ethics, corruption, and governance, providing a basis for informed discussions and strategic interventions to strengthen the ethical framework of Indonesia's public sector.

Through a meticulous examination of the Hambalang corruption case, this research aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on ethical governance in Indonesia. By unraveling the complexities of the scandal, the study seeks to offer valuable insights into the specific challenges posed by corruption and ethical violations. In doing so, the research aims to equip policymakers, scholars, and practitioners with a deeper understanding of the systemic improvements needed to foster a culture of integrity and transparency within the nation's public sector. The research significance extends to its potential to inform evidence-based policy decisions and strategic interventions to fortify Indonesia's resilience against corruption. By critically examining the ethical dimensions and systemic vulnerabilities highlighted by the Hambalang case, the study aims to contribute practical recommendations for enhancing the nation's approach to ethical governance and anti-corruption strategies. In doing so, it aspires to be a catalyst for positive change, fostering a more transparent, accountable, and ethically sound public sector in Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Foundations of Ethical Governance

Ethics can be understood as a set of morals, rules or values that determine whether an action is wrong or unaccepted by a social group. Manners are similarly defined as methods, customs, or forms of good communication between people in a civilized society. (Emina, 2020; Grdzlishvili & Sulamanidze, 2021). Ethical governance is the practice and orientation that provides the most widespread guidelines for ethical behavior and practices and can be defined as values and mechanisms that benefit citizens and society (Raharjanto, 2021). Ethics no longer solely originates from traditional culture but continues to evolve within the cultural traditions and ways of life in a country. The norms of the state not only reflect the capacity of the law but also encourage

Ethical Issues Confronting Indonesia: An In-Depth Analysis of the Hambalang Corruption Case and its Impact on Anticorruption Measures and Governance

the morals and behavior of all citizens. Therefore, strategic leadership has a strong impact on employee engagement and work experience (Bhana & Sachin Suknunan, 2022).

Ethics has been embedded in almost every axis of state power, including in the executive, legislative and judicial powers (Said, 2021). As a concept, ethical universalism brings together the ideas of 1) equity, which promotes equal outcomes to those who have made equal contributions; 2) reciprocity, which calls for justice to be collectively restored; and 3) impartiality, which entails adherence to rules and the rejection of favoritism. The control of corruption—or in other words, a state's capacity to operate free from private interest in order to pursue the greatest possible social welfare—is ethical universalism applied to the distribution of public goods and the allocation of public resources (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2020). The codification of ethical standards generally follows the Weberian philosophy of state and local government, where formal codes of conduct are clearly established by state and local authorities, vertical bureaucratic hierarchies are maintained, and clear general specifications are provided. It generally establishes ethical standards for authorities, creates a well-defined formal framework, focuses on implementing of anti-corruption policies, and ensures the implementation of official prohibitions. It also establishes a moral regulatory system of public administration and law. The system of supervision is closely linked with oversight mechanisms and governance boundaries (Denisov & Nemtsova, 2021).

The Linkage between Ethics, Governance, and Corruption

Ethical conflicts and debates about policy content and outcomes are evident at all levels (Huberts, 2018). Ethics, as praxis, has the same meaning as morals or morality, which encompass notions of what should or should not be done and what is considered appropriate. Someone who thinks about the problem of corruption of course would argue that the strict and consistent enforcement of corruption laws can uphold moral values and norms (Ari & Dharmawan, 2018). Marsuki (2019) in the article entitled "Office Ethics and State Civil Apparatus in Principles of Good Governance" examines how ethics aligns with the good governance paradigm. Ethical governance in the public sector necessitates that officials prioritize citizen inclusion and oriented towards the aspirations and interests of the people in every step of governmental policy and action (Stia & Gazali Barru, 2019). Therefore, values such as transparency, openness, and accountability must be upheld in ethical interactions between the government and its citizens (Santoso & Dewi, 2019). Good governance must be able to provide comprehensive services to the citizens (Sulardi & Erliyana, 2021). Good governance is composed of theoretical views ranging from a factual or real dimension to a critical or ideal dimension. However, its implementation faces numerous challenges, such as conflicting legal norms, which undermine legal certainty; the risk of uncontrolled execution of governmental power; the complexity of modern societal demands; and corruption and maladministration (Marwan et al., 2022).

To achieve social justice in a country, good governance puts the legal protection of citizens at the top of the list (Lestantri et al., 2021). Leader and leadership play crucial role in ensuring the successful implementation of good governance (Susiatiningsih et al., 2021). For example, Bekele and Ago (2020) identified a framework of indicators for good governance principles (transparency, accountability, participation, corruption, the rule of law and public service delivery) and explored their application in local governance in Ethiopia. Therefore, another study developed a set of indicators to evaluate the success of the program: equity, inclusiveness, transparency, capacity, accountability, leadership, legitimacy and performance. (Pomeranz & Stedman, 2020). Berkel et al. (2022) applied governance principles (such as legitimacy and transparency as indicators of local governance quality. In Indonesia, several studies have also been conducted within the rural local administration context (Aziiz, 2019; Mufti Rahajeng, 2021; Sofyani et al., 2020). Aziiz (2019) identified governance principles in the management of rural funds and concluded that the principles had been moderately applied, such as accountability, transparency, and participation. Thus, Mufti Rahajeng (2021) examined factors affecting rural fund accountability and found that staff competency, the use of information technology, and the internal control system were key determinants. Lastly, Sofyani et al., (2020) examined the implementation of governance principles (responsiveness, transparency, professionalism, vision strategies, and the rule of law) impacted the performance of rural-owned enterprises. No prior studies have validated the governance principles for the rural local administration in Indonesia from a societal perspective. Furthermore, Szumowski (2019) contends that there is no empirical evidence that public administration units function according to the principle of good governance based on citizens' perceptions. The implementation of a governance principle drives the governance outcome in an organization, such as corruption reduction (Zaitul et al., 2023).

Good governance is increasingly important in a global business environment involving ever more frequent transactions across diverse institutional contexts (Schembera et al., 2023). Corruption constitutes a grand societal challenge with numerous negative socio-economic consequences (Castro et al., 2020). Policy and corruption regularly negotiate and renegotiate to set the tune of public services, which ultimately affects the state of governance. This study argues that the government of a nation is being driven by different factors that ultimately impact corruption. Governance mechanism directly addresses the corruption

Ethical Issues Confronting Indonesia: An In-Depth Analysis of the Hambalang Corruption Case and its Impact on Anticorruption Measures and Governance

attempts as an antidote, and thus, corruption and governance are interlinked and connected in a cycle (Al-Faryan & Shil, 2023). In countries with poor governance and high levels of corruption, entrepreneurs often view corruption as a main impediment to the likelihood of being an innovator. However, research on the institutional impact of corruption has yielded mixed results, with some studies supporting the “sand the wheel” effect of corruption (Lee et al., 2020). In well-governed countries, it is less likely to suffer from corruption if the government implements various anticorruption measures. Conversely, if a country is poorly governed, it is more likely to be affected by widespread corruption as the government lacks the political will for implementing the anticorruption measures legally (Lustrilanang et al., 2023).

METHOD

The methodology employed in this study adopts a qualitative approach. Qualitative research methodology involves the systematic inquiry and understanding of social phenomena and human issues through interpretive research methods. This study conducted a comprehensive literature review utilizing journals, books, and relevant regulatory sources. The qualitative approach further involved meta-synthesizing theories, concepts, and perspectives pertaining to corruption cases as well as the interplay between ethical considerations and governance issues in context of corruption.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Violation of the Code of Ethics in the Hambalang Project

Theoretically, perceptions of the prevalence of corruption and nepotism among senior officials can significantly influence ethical decision-making, especially when individuals face ethical dilemmas. In such situations, individuals may engage in cognitive processes that lead them to rationalize unethical decisions in order to avoid guilt (Mapuasari & Mahmudah, 2018). One of the issues that violates the professional code of ethics in the Hambalang sports complex construction project was the budget mark-up. Contractors often engage in budget mark-ups to avoid losses caused by rising material prices. However, in the Hambalang case, deliberate budget mark-ups were conducted by several parties with the intent of maximizing personal financial gain. Such practices are at the core of corrupt acts (Kurdi, 2018).

The Hambalang project, aimed at building a national-level training and education center in Bogor began in October 2009 under the Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs. This project was built on 32 hectares of land and valued at IDR 2.5 trillion. This project stopped in 2012 due to widespread fund misappropriation involving numerous public officials (Sagita, 2018). The Hambalang project was administered by a State-Owned Enterprise, an entity where the government holds majority ownership. Several procedural violations were highlighted in the Supreme Court decision concerning the Hambalang project, namely as follows:

1. The Head of the National Land Affairs Agency issued a decision letter in January 2010 granting the right to use 312,448 m² of land in the village of Hambalang to the Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs. In fact, the required release of rights from the previous rights holder was allegedly falsified.
2. Under the direction of the National Land Affairs Agency’s Secretary, the Head of Letters and Archives Division submitted a decree granting land use rights to the Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs to IM without a power of attorney from the Ministry, which violated Head of the National Land Affairs Agency Decree 2005 in conjunction with the Head of the National Land Affairs Agency Decree 1 2010.
3. The Head of the Bogor Regency signed the site plan even though the Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs had not conducted an environmental impact assessment of the Hambalang sports complex project violating Law No. 32 of 2009 on Environmental Protection and Management, and Bogor Regent Regulation No. 30 of 2009 on Guidelines On The Approval of Master Plan, Site Plan, and Situational Drawing.
4. The Head of the Integrated Licensing Agency of Bogor regency issued a building permit even though the required environmental impact assessment of the Hambalang sports case project had not been completed, violating the Bogor Regency Regulation No. 12 of 2009 on Buildings.
5. The Director of Planning and Environment at the Ministry of Public Works provided technical input referred to the Minister of Finance Regulation No. 56 of 2010, without delegation from the Minister of Public Works, violating the Minister of Public Works Regulation No. 45 of 2007.
6. Minister of Finance and Director General of Budget after going through a review process gradually agree to provide an extension of the deadline for the revision of the Work Plan and Budget of Ministry/Institution in 2010, and based on incorrect data and information, namely Secretary of the Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs submitted a request for revision of the

Ethical Issues Confronting Indonesia: An In-Depth Analysis of the Hambalang Corruption Case and its Impact on Anticorruption Measures and Governance

2010 Work Plan and Budget of Ministry/Institution on November 16 2010, thus allegedly violating the Minister of Finance Regulation No. 69 of 2010 and 180 of 2010.

7. Secretary of the Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs signed a letter requesting approval for a multi-year contract without obtaining delegation from the Minister of Youth and Sports Affairs, violating Minister of Finance Regulation No. 56 of 2010.
8. Secretary of the Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs was allegedly allowed to exercise the authority of the Minister of Youth and Sports Affairs without proper oversight as intended by the Government Regulation No. 60 of 2008.
9. The Minister of Finance approved the multi-year contract and the Director General of Budget completed the multi-year contract approval process after going through a gradual review process together, even though there were allegations of violating the Minister of Finance Regulation No. 56 of 2010. Not all building units to be built must be technically implemented in more than one budget year, the application for approval of the multi-year contract was not submitted by the minister. And the 2010 revised Work Plan and Budget of Ministry/Institution of the Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs which shows more than one budget year of activities had not been signed by the Director General of Budget.
10. The Director General of Budget the Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs' multiyear Work Plan and Budget of Ministry/Institution in 2011 before the project itself was approved, violating the Minister of Finance Regulation No. 104 of 2010.
11. Secretary of the Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs determined the winner of the construction auction based on the contract value above IDR 50 billion without delegation from the Minister of Youth and Sports Affairs, violating the Presidential Decree 80 of 2003.
12. Minister of Youth and Sports Affairs allegedly allowed the secretary to exercise ministerial authority and did not carry out control and supervision but was regulated by the partner who was planned to win, violating the Presidential Decree No. 80 of 2003.
13. The prequalification and technical evaluation processes for the Hambalang sports complex construction were not conducted by the procurement committee but were instead influenced by the partner who was planned to win, violating the Presidential Decree No. 80 of 2008.
14. The tender process for the Hambalang sports center project was manipulated to win Adhi-Wika (AW) Joint Operation. This was done by announcing the auction with incorrect information and to asses Basic Capabilities (BC) of AW Joint Operation by combining the value of two jobs while for other participants using BC assesment with the highest project value ever used, thus benefiting AW Joint Operation, violating the Government Decree No. 29 of 2000 and the Presidential Decree No. 80 of 2003.
15. AW Joint Operation subcontracted the primary construction work to another company, violating the Presidential Decree No. 80 of 2003.

According to the Presidential Decree No. 54 of 2010, procurement of goods and services refers to the process of purchasing goods and services (Adistana et al., 2022). In the case of building sports center facilities, several violations of the basic principles and ethics of the auction committee were identified, including:

1. In the sports center construction project, the party who won the tender, PT Adhi Karya, subcontracted the work to another company. Hambalang Tempo Search also found that Dutasari was responsible for recruiting personnel for project security. Dutasari's work was also subcontracted to other companies, including PT Kurnia Mutu which supplied pipes copper for air conditioners and PT Bestindo Aquatek Sejahtera which provided a domestic waste processing system.
2. The tender selection process seemed haphazard. Despite issues that should have disqualified PT Adhi Karya from winning the tender, they still passed and won the tender.
3. The implementation of the construction process was poorly monitored. The Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs left significant control in the hands of the Minister of Youth and Sports Affairs, allowing them to act independently in running the project. This lack of oversight highlights the involvement of inadequately qualified human resources, resulting in ineffective internal controls and poor project executions.

In addition to the aforementioned issues, many of the obstacles that emerged from the Hambalang project activities made them unsuitable for their intended purposes. Amid the financial collapse of the sports complex project, three key actors emerged: Andi Mallarangeng as the Minister of the Youth and Sports Affairs, then Wafid Muharam as the Secretary of the Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs and also AW Joint Operation the consortium that won the project tender. Andi Mallarangeng played as the actor who made all existing policies implemented by the Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs, while Wafid Muharam was assigned to carry out all technical activities related to the Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs policies. Meanwhile, AW Joint

Ethical Issues Confronting Indonesia: An In-Depth Analysis of the Hambalang Corruption Case and its Impact on Anticorruption Measures and Governance

Operation was projected from the outset to be the primary contractor for the construction of Hambalang sports complex project, having a dominant role from the planning stages through the project execution (Saputro & Pribadi, 2022). The Hambalang project itself has been stalled since 2011 and the CEC actually has given permission to resume the Hambalang project in 2020. However, the government's efforts that year were still primarily focused on handling the Covid-19 pandemic. This causes the use of the facilities constructed in the Hambalang project by the government remains delayed (Sindarto, 2021).

The Impact of the Hambalang Case on Anti-Corruption Measures and Governance

Effective law enforcement assistance and international cooperation are needed to effectively prevent and eliminate corruption crimes, including the recovery of assets obtained through corruption crimes (Fasini, 2018). Anti-corruption efforts should be directly linked to the role assigned to governance and non-economic outcomes. This means that there is an opportunity to identify and analyze whether and how non-financial control systems can influence the anti-corruption behavior of people inside and outside the organizations (Ruggiero & Mussari, 2022). The role of honest, professional and impartial law enforcement agencies is essential to combating corruption (Diyana Pratama, 2023).

In corruption cases, saving state finances should be a top priority, alongside punishing the perpetrator. Extraordinary actions are needed to face extraordinary cases like the Hambalang corruption case (Sindarto, 2021). The approach used in the appropriate state financial rescue is the restorative justice approach which emphasizes the state financial rescue in accordance with the concept of progressive corruption eradication. From the perspective of restorative justice to restore the state losses if the convict is unable to return all state losses incurred even though all of the suspect's assets have been auctioned, rather than imposing a prison sentence, it would be wiser if the state empowered the suspect who was forced to work in accordance with his professional field. If this is implemented, the suspect's work results can be used to cover state losses from corruption losses that cannot be paid (Rida Ista Sitepu & Yusona Piadi, 2019).

In the Hambalang case, the problems and irregularities that occurred in the construction project corruption case in the form of work results that did not comply with the contract, both in terms of quality and quantity, which in the end the deviation was determined as an unlawful act by the judge (Kombong et al., 2021). Corruption eradication efforts continue to be carried out by the CEC, especially in the government procurement of goods/services sector, namely by utilizing information technology, for example designing electronic procurement of goods/services, especially electronic procurement of goods/services that allows for effective purchases of goods, thereby reducing the potential for manipulation and tender processes (Mahardhika, 2021). Another effort is to implement the principles of accountability and efficient resource management, and realize it with good and impartial actions and provisions and guarantee economic interactions and social relations between related parties in a fair, transparent, professional, and accountable manner that is suspected of having the potential for corruption (Bakri et al., 2020). The cultural practice of corruption that has been considered commonplace can be minimized if the community is more proactive, especially by reporting any suspected fraudulent practices in the procurement of public goods and services in their area, so that the report can make it easier for law enforcement officers to take action against the perpetrators (Ferdinand et al., 2020).

The relationship between government indicators such as corruption, rule of law and among other factors, such as good governance and economic success, these results are very important. For example, there is a stronger relationship between government quality and income, leading to the assumption that richer countries have better governance and less corruption. Meanwhile, a framework is needed to distinguish between different types of corruption, to identify priorities for national anti-corruption institutions and mechanisms (Dadatashzadeh et al., 2019). Project governance itself provides a set of instruments that can be used for any purpose. What is important is the intention to design, implement and operate within the governance framework. A comprehensive conceptual framework developed by Owusu et al., (2019), which includes six categories of anti-corruption measures: investigative, managerial, regulatory, compliance, promotional and reactive measures. Investigative measures relate to proactive anti-corruption activities aimed at facilitating a functioning reporting and recording system and an effective investigation and/or audit process in construction projects. Managerial measures relate to proactive administrative activities that are often specific to the project and organization and are intended to effectively manage the internal and organizational structures associated with corruption. Regulatory measures relate to legal measures, decisions and laws and institutional regulations that have been established to curb corruption in construction projects (Owusu et al., 2019). Compliance measures relate to anti-corruption activities that ensure compliance with established anti-corruption norms, regulations, demands, requests, and principles (Owusu et al., 2019). Anti-corruption measures related to contract compliance effectively address corruption in construction projects, as shown in Mahpour & Mortaheb (2018). Mahpour and Mortaheb examined the role of a financial incentive plan (anti-corruption measure) to reduce illegal dumping in the Iranian residential construction industry. They designed a financial incentive plan based on guidelines obtained from survey respondents' comments, content analysis, and

Ethical Issues Confronting Indonesia: An In-Depth Analysis of the Hambalang Corruption Case and its Impact on Anticorruption Measures and Governance

covering the gaps of previously known incentive plans. The plan incentivized stakeholders to change their behavior and save money by reducing purchased materials, wasted materials, landfills, and illegally dumped waste. The savings were then shared in an 'alliance-type' situation among stakeholders. Mahpour and Mortaheb then conducted a quasi-experiment, in which the plan was implemented in a construction project and compared to the situation in the same project without the incentive plan. The results of the experiment showed that the financial incentive plan reduced costs associated with illegal dumping by 50% (Lehtinen et al., 2022). Promotional measures include activities designed to publicize or disseminate other anti-corruption measures and educate construction project organizations and stakeholders about corruption. Reactive measures relate to anti-corruption activities that seek to punish organizations and individuals found guilty of engaging in or committing corruption in construction projects (Owusu et al., 2019). The findings suggest that compliance, managerial, investigative, reactive, and regulatory measures can be effective. The effectiveness of various anti-corruption measures in promoting transparency in project activities and empowering stakeholders can be explained through two main mechanisms. (Lehtinen et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the intricate interplay of ethics, governance, and the ongoing corruption challenges underscore the inherent complexity of public administration. The preceding discussion has highlighted the critical role that ethics plays in shaping governance structures, contributing to the formation of a conscientious and accountable society. As the collective embodiment of morals and societal values, ethics serves as a guiding force that steers governance toward integrity, transparency, and responsiveness. Ethical governance emerges as a dynamic and proactive approach, not merely limited to enforcing rules but extending to developing a culture that prioritizes ethical considerations in decision-making and action. This nuanced framework plays a pivotal role in fostering public trust and strengthening positive relationships between government institutions and citizens.

Furthermore, ethical governance stands as a formidable barrier to the pervasiveness of corruption. By intertwining ethical principles into the governance framework, societies can create a resilient system that deters unethical practices while upholding the principles of accountability and transparency. The adaptability of ethical governance ensures its responsiveness to the evolving needs and challenges of society, providing continuous opportunities for improvement and refinement. As we reflect on these concepts, it is essential to acknowledge that real-world challenges, exemplified by cases like the Hambalang corruption scandal, require a constant commitment to uphold ethical governance. Many violations in the procedures of these stalled project cases were found to be inconsistent with proper procedures. There were budget markups in cases where projects were started until stalled. Such budget markups were deliberately carried out by some parties to gain maximum benefits for personal gain. These actions can be classified as bribery offenses, as they undermine the core principles of transparency and accountability.

In the ongoing effort to achieve quality control, policymakers, administrators, and the wider community must collaborate in creating an environment that not only recognizes the importance of ethical considerations but also actively promotes and integrates them into the core of governance practices. The realization of ethical governance also requires the active involvement of strong anti-corruption governance mechanisms. Only through this joint effort, which integrates both ethical and anti-corruption frameworks, can society aspire to build a resilient, accountable, and ethical governance structure that truly serves the interests of citizens and contributes to societal betterment.

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Ethical Issues Confronting Indonesia: An In-Depth Analysis of the Hambalang Corruption Case and its Impact on Anticorruption Measures and Governance

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Ethical Issues Confronting Indonesia: An In-Depth Analysis of the Hambalang Corruption Case and its Impact on Anticorruption Measures and Governance

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