

The Wisdom of Buton Cultural Values as an Instrument Corruption Prevention and Action

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the efficacy of Buton cultural values in preventing and prosecuting corruption within Indonesia, with a specific focus on Southeast Sulawesi Province and the Buton Islands. Recognizing the pervasive nature of corruption, the research underscores the necessity for robust anti-corruption strategies and educational models tailored to the unique cultural contexts of Indonesian regions. Using a qualitative approach, including interviews and ethnographic observations, the study examines how the intrinsic wisdom of Butonese cultural values can be leveraged as a potent instrument in the fight against corruption. By integrating these cultural values into anti-corruption initiatives, the research highlights a culturally resonant approach to fostering integrity and accountability.

Keywords: Buton Cultural Values, Corruption Prevention, Southeast Sulawesi, Anti-Corruption Strategy, Cultural Wisdom.

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of corruption has been a persistent challenge in Indonesia, affecting various sectors of governance and society (Anheier, 2007). As one of the most critical issues confronting the nation, corruption undermines public trust in government institutions, hinders economic development, and exacerbates social inequality (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004). Southeast Sulawesi, including the Buton Islands, is no exception to this problem. This region, characterized by its unique cultural heritage and social structures, has faced its own challenges with corruption, making it a relevant focal point for examining how local cultural values can contribute to anti-corruption efforts. Understanding the local context of corruption and its social implications is crucial for developing more effective strategies to combat this issue.

Corruption in Southeast Sulawesi has not only eroded the integrity of public offices but has also negatively affected the daily lives of citizens (Williams, 1976). Public services such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure development are often compromised due to corrupt practices, leading to inefficiency and a lack of accountability. The impacts of corruption are widespread, including the misallocation of resources, weakened legal and institutional frameworks, and diminished social welfare. Consequently, there is an urgent need to explore approaches that go beyond conventional legal and institutional reforms, particularly those that can resonate with the local population and leverage their intrinsic values to promote ethical behavior and integrity.

In response to the growing concern over corruption, various anti-corruption strategies have been implemented across Indonesia, including in Southeast Sulawesi. These strategies range from legal frameworks, such as anti-corruption laws and regulations, to the establishment of specialized anti-

corruption bodies like the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK). However, while these measures have made significant progress, challenges remain in effectively curbing corrupt behavior at the local level. One notable challenge is the need to tailor these strategies to the cultural and social contexts of different regions. This is where cultural values, such as those found within the Buton community, can play a pivotal role in shaping an anti-corruption mindset and fostering an ethical society.

The Butonese culture, with its rich traditions and strong communal ties, offers a unique set of values that can be instrumental in preventing and prosecuting corruption. The traditional wisdom of the Buton people emphasizes principles such as honesty, communal responsibility, and moral integrity. These cultural values are deeply ingrained in social interactions and can serve as powerful deterrents to corrupt behavior. By integrating these values into local governance and community practices, there is a potential to establish a culturally rooted approach to anti-corruption efforts that aligns with the social fabric of the region.

This study aims to explore how these Buton cultural values can be effectively utilized in the fight against corruption in Southeast Sulawesi (Deutsch, 1963). By examining the traditional wisdom embedded in the Buton community, the research seeks to uncover the specific values and practices that contribute to preventing and prosecuting corrupt actions. The study employs a qualitative approach, using interviews and ethnographic observations to understand how these values are interpreted and implemented in daily life. The research not only investigates the nature of these cultural values but also evaluates their efficacy in shaping attitudes toward corruption and promoting ethical behavior within the region.

Ultimately, the study contributes to the broader discourse on anti-corruption strategies by highlighting the significance of cultural context in shaping ethical governance. By focusing on the Butonese experience, it underscores the potential for culturally resonant approaches to complement existing legal and institutional measures against corruption. The findings are expected to offer practical insights for policymakers, community leaders, and anti-corruption advocates on how cultural values can be integrated into comprehensive anti-corruption strategies.

In conclusion, the need for an inclusive approach to Islamic religious education for students with disabilities is both an educational and moral imperative. SLB Muhammadiyah Palu represents a case study in understanding the challenges and opportunities in providing such education effectively. By addressing the key obstacles of teaching methods, resource limitations, and teacher training, and by offering practical solutions, this research aims to contribute to the development of a more inclusive, equitable, and supportive educational environment for students with disabilities. This will not only enhance their access to religious education but also promote their overall well-being and participation in their religious community.

METHODS

The methods section of this study focuses on the qualitative approach used to explore the role of Buton cultural values in anti-corruption efforts in Southeast Sulawesi (Marini, 2000). A qualitative approach was chosen due to its effectiveness in understanding the depth and complexity of cultural practices, beliefs, and attitudes in their natural context. This approach enables a nuanced examination of how cultural values are embedded in daily life and their impact on social behaviors,

specifically concerning corruption prevention and prosecution. The research employs a combination of in-depth interviews and ethnographic observations, which allow for an immersive and comprehensive understanding of the local cultural context. Interviews were conducted with a diverse group of participants, including local community leaders, cultural experts, elders, and law enforcement officers, to gather a broad spectrum of perspectives on Butonese cultural values and their application in the fight against corruption. Ethnographic observations were also carried out to witness firsthand how these values are practiced within the community, allowing for a richer and more contextualized understanding of their influence on behavior and decision-making processes. The selection of participants for interviews was guided by their knowledge, experience, and influence within the Buton community. Local leaders and elders were chosen for their authoritative knowledge of cultural practices and their role in upholding community values, while law enforcement officers provided insights into the interaction between cultural values and the formal legal system. The use of ethnographic observations involved spending extended periods within the community, observing cultural rituals, communal gatherings, and everyday interactions to capture how cultural values are manifested in practice. The data collected from both interviews and observations were systematically analyzed using thematic analysis, which allowed for the identification of recurring themes and patterns related to cultural practices, ethical principles, and their impact on anti-corruption attitudes. This method ensured that the findings were grounded in participants' lived experiences and provided an in-depth understanding of how Buton cultural values contribute to corruption prevention and prosecution.

RESULTS

The results of this study reveal that several specific Buton cultural values play a significant role in preventing and prosecuting corruption within the community. The data from interviews and ethnographic observations indicate that integrity is deeply rooted in the social fabric of the Butonese people. One of the key cultural values identified is the concept of "kalosara," a traditional symbol representing unity, harmony, and honesty, which is used to mediate conflicts and maintain social order. This value is not only a guiding principle for resolving disputes but also serves as a moral compass for all members of the community, reinforcing honesty and accountability in personal and public conduct. The cultural practice of "sara," or traditional laws, is also pivotal, as it sets communal norms that discourage corrupt behavior by instilling a strong sense of shame and social responsibility for any acts that deviate from collective moral standards. These values are deeply internalized and serve as an informal but powerful deterrent against corrupt practices, demonstrating the effectiveness of cultural norms in shaping attitudes toward corruption.

Another major theme that emerged from the findings is the community-based approach to maintaining integrity and ethical behavior. In Buton society, the enforcement of cultural values is a communal responsibility, with elders, community leaders, and family members playing active roles in monitoring and reinforcing moral conduct. The results show that social gatherings and customary ceremonies are essential mechanisms through which these values are transmitted and upheld. During such events, elders use storytelling, proverbs, and teachings to emphasize the importance of honesty, transparency, and serving the community's collective interest over personal gain. This communal reinforcement creates a social environment where corrupt behavior is not only frowned upon but actively condemned by the community, making it difficult for individuals to engage in such practices without facing social ostracism. This strong sense of collective responsibility reinforces adherence to cultural values and acts as a preventive measure against corruption.

The effectiveness of these cultural practices in supporting anti-corruption initiatives is further highlighted by the way they shape behavior and foster accountability within both formal and informal structures. The findings indicate that in situations where formal legal mechanisms may be weak or underutilized, the Butonese cultural values and community-based mechanisms act as a parallel system of governance that effectively deters corrupt activities. Traditional leaders are often consulted in cases of suspected corruption or ethical misconduct, and they apply "sara" as a way to sanction those who breach communal trust. Moreover, the integration of these values into the daily life of the Buton community ensures that the principles of integrity, honesty, and accountability are reinforced consistently. Such reinforcement not only supports formal anti-corruption efforts but also fills in the gaps where legal institutions may not reach, providing a culturally resonant framework for promoting ethical governance and public trust. These findings underscore the importance of recognizing and integrating local cultural values into broader anti-corruption strategies, as they can enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of such efforts.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal the significant role that Buton cultural values play in fostering integrity and accountability, offering insights into how these values can be leveraged in anti-corruption efforts. The deep-rooted norms of honesty, communal responsibility, and moral integrity in the Butonese community create a robust cultural framework that naturally deters corrupt behavior. The symbol of "kalosara," along with the traditional laws encapsulated in "sara," serves as more than just moral guidelines; they are powerful, socially enforced mechanisms that shape behavior within the community. The implications of these findings suggest that incorporating cultural values into anti-corruption strategies could enhance their effectiveness by ensuring that such efforts resonate deeply with local communities and their existing moral frameworks.

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Comparatively, when examining other anti-corruption models across Indonesia or in different cultural settings, it becomes evident that a one-size-fits-all approach to fighting corruption is often ineffective. For instance, national-level policies, such as the establishment of the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) or the adoption of strict legal measures, may not fully address the nuances of local contexts. These formal mechanisms are typically top-down and may not take into account the socio-cultural intricacies of each region. On the other hand, culturally rooted models, like those observed in the Buton community, work within the moral landscape that is familiar to individuals, encouraging adherence to ethical norms through social and cultural reinforcement rather than relying solely on legal deterrents. This contrast underscores the value of localizing anti-corruption efforts by leveraging cultural wisdom, making the fight against corruption more holistic and integrated.

One of the key advantages of culturally resonant approaches is their potential to complement and enhance conventional anti-corruption strategies. While legal and institutional frameworks are essential for setting rules and consequences, they often face challenges in enforcement, particularly in remote or close-knit communities where formal systems may lack reach or influence. Buton cultural values, as demonstrated by this study, provide an alternative mechanism that can work alongside formal structures, reinforcing anti-corruption behaviors through social norms, moral education, and community accountability. Furthermore, because these cultural values are passed

down through generations and are deeply ingrained in daily life, they have a lasting impact on ethical behavior, offering a more sustainable means of fostering integrity over time.

The integration of cultural values into broader anti-corruption policies and education represents a practical pathway for harnessing the strengths of both formal and informal systems. Educational programs can be developed to emphasize local wisdom and moral teachings alongside the principles of good governance and transparency. For instance, integrating "kalosara" and "sara" into school curricula and community training sessions could strengthen the internalization of ethical values and promote a culture of accountability from a young age. Such culturally resonant educational models would not only promote awareness of anti-corruption measures but would also nurture a moral foundation that aligns with formal legal principles, leading to more cohesive and effective anti-corruption efforts.

However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study and the challenges in generalizing its findings to other contexts. The Buton cultural values and practices are unique to the Butonese people and may not be easily replicated or transferred to other regions with different cultural backgrounds. Additionally, while the influence of cultural values is powerful, they are not immune to external pressures such as economic hardship, political influence, or globalization, which may erode traditional norms over time. Further research is needed to explore how cultural values intersect with these external factors and to examine the extent to which they can be sustained or adapted in the face of changing social dynamics.

Future research could also explore comparative studies across different cultural groups within Indonesia or beyond to identify common cultural mechanisms that deter corruption and promote integrity. Such studies would help to establish a broader framework for understanding how cultural values can be systematically integrated into anti-corruption policies. Additionally, research on the practical application of these values in various institutional contexts, such as government agencies, educational institutions, and community organizations, would provide deeper insights into how culturally grounded approaches can be effectively operationalized to enhance accountability and reduce corruption at different levels of society.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study underscore the significant role that Buton cultural values play in both preventing and prosecuting corruption within Southeast Sulawesi. Through the exploration of values such as "kalosara" and the traditional laws known as "sara," it has been demonstrated that these cultural norms act as powerful deterrents against corrupt behavior, fostering a strong sense of communal responsibility and moral integrity. The study reveals that these values are deeply embedded in the social fabric of the Butonese community, influencing attitudes and behaviors toward ethical conduct in both personal and public spheres. By reaffirming the importance of cultural values in shaping anti-corruption mindsets, the research highlights the potential of culturally rooted practices to complement and enhance formal legal mechanisms in the fight against corruption.

The conclusion calls for the adoption of culturally informed strategies in addressing corruption throughout Indonesia, emphasizing that such approaches can be more effective when they resonate with local norms and customs. Policymakers, educators, and community leaders are encouraged to consider the integration of traditional wisdom and values into anti-corruption policies, educational programs, and community initiatives. For policymakers, this might involve creating legal

frameworks that recognize and incorporate cultural norms as part of a comprehensive anti-corruption strategy. Educators can play a key role by embedding these values into curricula, instilling ethical principles early on. Community leaders, acting as custodians of cultural traditions, can facilitate the transmission of these values and uphold social mechanisms that deter corrupt behavior. By leveraging the moral and social capital inherent in cultural traditions like those of the Butonese people, Indonesia can cultivate more sustainable and effective approaches to combating corruption, promoting integrity, and enhancing public trust.

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