

## Corruption in the education sector in Indonesia: Reality, causes, and solutions

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**Abstract:** Corruption within Indonesia's education sector ranks among the most frequently identified and prosecuted cases by the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK). Education itself is a vital sector for human resource development; therefore, corruption within it poses a direct threat to the development process. This concern forms the foundation for this study, which aims to analyze the current realities, causes, and solutions to address corruption in Indonesia's education sector. The findings of this article may serve as strategies to mitigate and prevent potential corruption within this critical sector. This study employs a literature review with a qualitative approach, drawing primarily on data from books, journals, institutional reports, accredited websites, and other relevant documents. Data analysis was conducted after compiling and reviewing various literature sources, from which insights and conclusions were derived. The results reveal a pervasive corruption problem in the education sector, supported by diverse data points. The causes of corruption are multifaceted, encompassing personal motives, societal and cultural influences, weak law enforcement and oversight, government negligence, and inadequate institutional management. Consequently, the proposed solutions are categorized into three dimensions: individual/personal, environmental/cultural, and institutional.

**Keywords:** Corruption; Development; Education; Government.

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### Introduction

Corruption serves as a significant impediment to a nation's progress, particularly when it permeates sectors critical to human resource development, such as education. The education sector faces numerous challenges, with corruption being a central issue. Corruption within education is not solely a problem in Indonesia; it also represents an endemic issue across various countries.

Europe, often regarded as a model for an ideal education system, is not immune to corruption within the education sector. Sabic-El-Rayess and Heyneman (2020) found that corruption occurs not only in developing countries, but also within European schools, as evidenced by various empirical findings. This observation is further supported by Wysmulek (2024), who noted that in 2010, Azerbaijan exhibited exceptionally high levels of bribery within the education sector.

The education sector in Indonesia is often regarded as "fertile ground" for corruption, a statement grounded in the numerous corruption cases within the country's educational system. This designation arises, in part, from the unique status of education in Indonesia, which is enshrined in constitutional mandates. Article 31, Paragraph (4) of the Fourth Amendment to the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia requires the state to allocate 20% of the National Budget (APBN) and Regional Budget (APBD) specifically for education. Thus, strict government oversight and management are imperative.

However, data presented by Transparency International in its Corruption Perception Index 2023 Report raises serious concerns. Indonesia ranks among the 180 countries identified as corrupt, with a Corruption Perception Index (CPI) score of only 34 points—shared with Ecuador, Malawi, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Turkey—placing Indonesia among relatively corrupt nations.

The increasingly dire state of corruption in Indonesia has been affirmed by the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK). In its 2024 report, the KPK meticulously mapped the corruption cases it has addressed, casting a stark light on the depths of this issue. According to the report, corruption offenses were most prevalent within the Central Government, Java, and Sumatra. In 2023 alone, the Central Government recorded 59 cases, Java 41 cases, and Sumatra 10 cases, bringing the total number of corruption cases that year to 161. This figure stands in striking contrast to neighboring regions like Singapore and Malaysia, which reported only 3 and 7 cases, respectively, from 2004 to 2023.

Delving deeper into the data from 2004 to 2023, the KPK revealed that corruption cases in the Central Government reached 482, followed by West Java with 142 cases, North Sumatra with 84 cases, and both Riau and Jakarta Special Region with 70 cases each. By sector, the landscape is equally troubling: law enforcement and bureaucracy suffered 181 cases, education 21, food and fisheries 41, health and social services 52, national defense and security 1, state revenue (taxes and customs) 31, infrastructure 223, natural resources and energy 43, state finances (national and regional budgets, banking) 242, with other sectors accounting for an additional 103 cases.

Compared to the cases of corruption handled by the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) in 2022, as compiled and updated in KPK's 2024 report, there is a clear distribution of cases across regions. The report shows that in 2022, 20 corruption cases occurred within the Central Government, 48 in Java, 19 in Sumatra, 11 in Kalimantan, 9 in Papua, 8 in Sulawesi, and 5 in Maluku, totaling 120 cases. In 2021, the regional breakdown was as follows: 22 cases in the Central Government, 23 in Java, 43 in Sumatra (marking the highest between 2004-2024), 8 in Sulawesi, 4 in Maluku, 5 in Kalimantan, and 3 in Bali, totaling 108 cases. In 2020, the Central Government remained the most affected area with 29 cases, followed by 19 cases in Java, 29 in Sumatra, 7 in Sulawesi, 6 in Kalimantan, and 1 in Papua, totaling 91 cases. This trend reveals an increase in corruption cases handled by the KPK from 2020 to 2023. Although data for 2024 is still being updated, as of September 11, 2024, 117 cases have already been recorded. These findings further corroborate Transparency International's research.

Additionally, the Indonesia Corruption Watch (ICW) (2024) highlighted in its 2023 Corruption Trends Monitoring Report that Indonesia's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) has shown no substantial improvement. In 2023, Indonesia's CPI score remained stagnant at 34, mirroring the score from 2014. Historical data reveals that Indonesia's CPI score was 34 in 2014, and subsequently increased to 36 in 2015, 37 in 2016 and 2017, 38 in 2018, and then peaked at 40 in 2019, marking the highest CPI score within the 2014-2023 period. However, the score dropped to 37 in 2020, rose again to 38 in 2021, and declined sharply to 34 in 2022 and 2023. This stagnation suggests that anti-corruption efforts have yet to reach their full effectiveness.

The substantial budget allocated to the education sector can act as a magnet for corrupt actors. This concern was highlighted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) in its reflection on Indonesia's National Education Day, addressing corruption within the nation's education sector. It is essential to recognize that education is a pivotal sector and foundation for building modern civilization and advancing a country's development. Corruption within the system of education has far-reaching, adverse effects on national progress, particularly in Indonesia. It is unsurprising, then, that the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (2024) issued a warning regarding the severe ramifications of corruption in this sector. Such corruption leads to deteriorating education quality, declining performance standards, and rising dropout rates, which, in turn, can exacerbate poverty, unemployment, and inequality. All of this indicates that corruption, especially within the education sector, not only constitutes a violation of civil rights and human rights but also triggers a domino effect across other sectors, ultimately impeding a nation's progress socially, legally, economically, culturally, and beyond.

The data and information presented above serve as an introduction to addressing the researcher's concerns regarding corruption in Indonesia, particularly within the education sector. This study aims to examine the current reality of corruption in Indonesia's educational domain and gather insights into the underlying factors driving this corruption. The ultimate goal is to contribute solutions to address corruption cases within education. This focus stems from the

recognition that the education sector is especially vulnerable to corruption; therefore, this research is conducted to illustrate the extent of corruption in Indonesia's education sector, identify its root causes, and propose viable solutions to mitigate this issue.

The information presented above provides a concrete depiction of the corruption phenomenon and serves as the primary motivation for this research. This study aims to conduct an in-depth exploration of the actual conditions surrounding corruption within Indonesia's education sector. Furthermore, the research will investigate various factors contributing to the occurrence of such corruption. Finally, based on the findings, solutions are proposed to address the issue of corruption in Indonesia's education sector. The ultimate goal of this endeavor is to eradicate, or at the very least, reduce corruption in education, thereby fostering high-quality education and national progress.

### **Methods**

This study employs a qualitative approach, defined as an investigative process aimed at interpreting a social phenomenon through distinguishing, comparing, duplicating, cataloguing, and classifying research objects (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Qualitative research entails analytical procedures that do not rely on statistical analysis or other forms of quantification (Moleong, 2017). To support this approach, the researchers primarily utilized library research, which positions relevant literature as the central basis of the study. The library research method facilitates data collection by examining and synthesizing theories from various sources pertinent to the research topic (Adlini et al., 2022). Relevant literature plays a critical role in the research design. According to Creswell (2019), a literature review provides a framework and benchmark, reinforcing the study's significance and allowing for comparisons with prior findings. By using the qualitative approach of library research, the researchers aim to understand and map the phenomenon of corruption in Indonesia's education sector by investigating data and information from existing reports, studies, and other materials relevant to the topic.

In the data collection process, researchers gathered information from various sources, including literature, official reports, scholarly articles, and credible news websites. Most of the collected data were presented and synthesized to obtain comprehensive information, and subsequently interpreted to develop a deeper understanding that would support conclusions (Adlini et al., 2022). Researchers did not restrict the scope of data search; in general, search engines served as the primary channel for data collection due to their accessibility and extensive availability. Search engines, databases, and the vast information accessible via the Internet provide invaluable tools for initiating literature reviews (Lune & Berg, 2017). Nevertheless, researchers must ensure the validity of the acquired data. As data was collected, researchers continuously reviewed and compared the gathered information and engaged in discussions with other researchers to ensure objective interpretation and analysis (Lune & Berg, 2017). With this approach, the study focused on three main objectives: first, to examine the realities of corruption within Indonesia's education sector; second, to identify the underlying factors driving corruption in this sector; and third, to propose solutions to address this corruption.

### **Results and Discussion**

Corruption can affect any sector. Various findings and data presented earlier indicate that the education sector is especially vulnerable to corruption. The causes vary, ranging from a culture of corruption deeply ingrained within educational institutions to the insufficient role of the government and other policymakers in overseeing and auditing educational administrations. To prevent corruption in education, several approaches can be implemented, such as addressing corruption at the individual level, fostering an anti-corruption culture and environment, and reinforcing anti-corruption commitments within state institutions. Therefore, it is essential to examine the current state of corruption in Indonesia's education sector and its underlying causes in order to develop effective strategies to combat it.

## Reality of Corruption in Indonesia's Education Sector

The education sector in Indonesia holds a strategically significant position within the state framework, as emphasized in the Fourth Amendment to the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. Article 31, Paragraph (4) mandates the government, as the executor of state functions, to allocate a minimum of 20% of both the national (APBN) and regional (APBD) budgets specifically for education. The allocation of education funds is further regulated in Article 49 of Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System. Government expenditure on education constitutes a foundational investment in human development, necessitating budgetary allocations to establish educational infrastructure and invest in the growth of human capital (Mongan, 2019).

According to the Ministry of Finance (Kemenkeu) report (2024), the national budget allocation for education has reached Rp 665.1 trillion. This budget is distributed as follows: first, Rp 241.5 trillion is allocated to Central Government Expenditure (BPP); second, Rp 346.6 trillion is designated for Transfers to Regions (TKD); and third, Rp 77.0 trillion is allocated for financing. The 2024 budget represents a 20.5% increase since 2020. Specifically, the total budget for education was Rp 473.7 trillion in 2020, increasing to Rp 479.6 trillion in 2021, Rp 480.3 trillion in 2022, and reaching Rp 552.1 trillion in 2023.

Given this substantial and continually growing budget for education, robust oversight, accountability, and transparency in its management are crucial. The legal framework for monitoring state finances is explicitly articulated in Law No. 17 of 2003 on State Finance, which covers numerous aspects related to the use of national funds. Article 34, Paragraphs (1) to (3) of this law stipulates that ministers, heads of institutions, governors, regents/mayors, and heads of organizational units within ministries/agencies or regional government work units found guilty of budgetary misconduct may face criminal penalties and be liable for restitution, as outlined in Article 35, Paragraph (1).

This concern is echoed by the Indonesia Corruption Watch (ICW) and civil society coalitions monitoring education, such as Pemantau Pendidikan Indonesia (JPPI), Suara Orang Tua Peduli (SOP), Koloni 8113, and Yayasan Nusantara Sejati, as summarized in the Brief Report of the Public Hearing (RDPU) on Education Financing by Commission X of the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR RI) (Areas: Education and Culture, Youth and Sports, Tourism and Creative Economy, and National Library) (2024). The report outlined several recommendations for the DPR RI, including: first, the evaluation and reform of education budget allocation through comprehensive audits, coordination, prioritization from basic to higher education, and a focus on ensuring a minimum of 20% of the budget being used for access and quality improvements; second, improving the oversight system by the DPR RI and regional legislatures (DPRD); and third, enhancing the management and procurement of educational funding to ensure that it is participatory, transparent, and accountable. Given the high vulnerability in managing educational funds, ICW and its coalition partners have reasonably urged the DPR RI to strengthen the oversight system.

According to the 2023 Corruption Trends Monitoring Report by the Indonesian Corruption Watch (ICW), corruption in Indonesia have shown a significant and consistent upward trend from 2019 to 2023, with data collected through December 31, 2023. Peak corruption occurred in 2023, when ICW identified 791 corruption cases involving 1,695 suspects, with estimated losses reaching Rp 28.4 trillion. This included potential bribery and gratuities amounting to Rp 422 billion, extortion or illegal fees of Rp 10 billion, and disguised money laundering assets at an estimated Rp 256 billion. Notably, the education sector consistently ranked among the top five sectors targeted for corruption by law enforcement agencies (LEAs). In 2023 alone, LEAs recorded 59 corruption cases in the education sector involving 130 suspects, with an estimated total loss of Rp 187 billion, including Rp 65.9 million in bribes and Rp 788.4 million in illicit fees.

ICW categorized these cases into two primary subcategories: (1) corruption in educational assistance programs, including misuse in School Operational Assistance (BOS), Special Allocation Funds (DAK), Operational Assistance for Education (BOP), grants/social assistance, student aid, and the Indonesia Smart Program (PIP); and (2) misappropriation of funds towards educational

facilities and infrastructure, such as construction of school buildings or classrooms, teacher salaries or incentives, and similar expenditures. 54% of all corruption cases identified within the education sector pertained to misuse in school assistance programs, while the remaining 46% involved corruption in educational facilities and infrastructure.

The ICW report (2024) further revealed widespread misuse of educational assistance funds through inappropriate allocation and fictitious or manipulated financial accountability reports, which resulted in potential state losses estimated at Rp 132 billion. When analyzed by role, the suspects included 37 individuals from school-level educational staff or equivalent institutions, 20 individuals from higher education/university administrations, and 2 individuals from school-level teaching staff or equivalent institutions. This data highlights a recurring pattern of corruption centered on school aid funds and infrastructure projects, with a clear dominance of misuse in educational assistance programs and budgeted resources for facilities, in addition to fictitious reporting and other corrupt practices. These findings underscore a significant oversight gap, which has fostered internal corruption within educational institutions due to lax monitoring mechanisms.

Compounding this issue, the Indonesian public is increasingly permissive towards corruption. The Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS), as detailed in its 2023 Indonesian Anti-Corruption Behavior Index (IPAK) report, conducted research on anti-corruption attitudes among Indonesians, revealing a rising tolerance towards corruption. The 2023 index score stood at 3.92 on a scale of 0 to 5, where a score closer to five indicates stronger anti-corruption behavior. This score was a slight decrease from 3.93 in 2022. Contrary to the expectation that higher educational attainment correlates with stronger anti-corruption attitudes, the 2023 IPAK report showed a decline in anti-corruption behavior among individuals with a high school education (SLTA) and above, by 0.3 and 0.2 points, respectively, compared to previous years. Meanwhile, anti-corruption behavior among individuals with education levels below SLTA remained consistent at 3.88, suggesting a normalization of corruption among those with higher educational backgrounds.

In a study conducted by the Indonesian Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) in 2024, involving 82,282 respondents—comprising 30,426 students, 21,125 parents, and 27,185 teachers or lecturers—the survey employed various methodologies. Specifically, 32.5% of respondents were surveyed online through WhatsApp blast messages (verified accounts), 57.4% participated via Computer Assisted Web Interview (CAWI), and 10.1% were surveyed using Computer Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI). The findings revealed an overall increase in the integrity score by 3.3 points, reaching 73.70 in 2024 compared to 70.40 in 2022, based on a scale of 1-100. Despite this improvement, the National Education Integrity Index remains within the "corrective level" range (68.78–73.72).

Integrity scores by educational level were as follows: 78.75 for elementary schools (SD/MI), 76.26 for middle schools (SMP/MTs), 75.16 for high schools/vocational schools (SMA/SMK/MA), and 70.93 for higher education institutions. Overall, the National Education Integrity Index rose by 3.3 points, from 70.40 in 2022 to 73.70 in 2023, on a 1-100 scale, though it remains in the corrective level (scores 68.78 – 73.72).

The KPK's integrity measurement used three dimensions: character, ecosystem, and governance. In the character dimension, with the highest index score of 75.66, findings indicate that integrity behaviors among students are still partial and not yet fully integrated into school practices. The ecosystem dimension, with the lowest score of 71.92, suggests a lack of conducive support for enforcing integrity values, with noted gaps in teacher role modeling, punctuality, academic dishonesty, and shadow education. The governance dimension, with a score of 72.60, reflects the normalization of corrupt behaviors within the system, such as gratification, illegal fees, collusion in goods/services procurement, nepotism in student admissions, fictitious financial reports, and unaccountable management of BOS funds.

Given the national index score of 73.70, the integrity quality in education is assessed at being at an adaptive (medium) level, indicating a need to improve integrity across all dimensions. The findings reveal that integrity within the education sector is still uneven among students and staff alike. Despite the character dimension achieving the highest score, significant integrity issues persist, especially regarding honesty, and are even more pronounced in dimensions with lower

scores. Without prompt reforms, the role of education in shaping the nation's character may falter, fostering corrupt tendencies that could become entrenched and carried into professional life. This reality underscores why Indonesia's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) has stagnated at a low score of 34 in 2023.

In the KPK study, the measurements across the three dimensions of character, ecosystem, and governance encompasses eight assessment variables: honesty, teacher/lecturer plagiarism, indiscipline, gratuities, administrative nepotism, procurement of goods and services, financial reporting, and management of School Operational Assistance (BOS) funds. These eight variables will be discussed in further detail in the following sections. The findings revealed that 31.27% of elementary to high school students and 45.58% of university students engaged in cheating, reflecting a significant issue related to the measured aspect of honesty.

The primary reasons cited were as follows: first, "although they knew it was wrong"; second, "forced to cheat for good grades" (15.42% of students, 17.11% of university students); third, "often tempted to join others in cheating" (23.49% of students, 31.68% of university students); and fourth, "pressured to provide answers" (24.82% of students, 32.88% of university students). Notably, 74.45% of students and 67.60% of university students reported that they are still "willing to refuse a friend's request to cheat." The findings indicate that, although dishonesty persists as a challenging issue, a portion of students actively refrain from dishonest behavior. On closer examination, the data suggest that cheating has become ingrained within the institutional culture of education, irrespective of the underlying motivations.

The issue of plagiarism, particularly among academics, requires urgent attention. Plagiarism has become an open secret and is often employed for specific purposes, such as advancing careers and other personal gains. Remains in KPK (2024) study reveals a concerning prevalence of plagiarism across various research activities. These practices are primarily observed in three distinct forms. First, in the preparation of Classroom Action Research (PTK), scholarly works, and journal articles, plagiarism was identified at a rate of 65.31% in Basic and Secondary Education (Dasmen) and 63.49% in Higher Education (Dikti). Second, the practice of assigning junior lecturers to conduct research and publish articles on behalf of others was noted, affecting 33.53% in Dasmen and 40.32% in Dikti. Third, fraudulent practices in obtaining certifications, such as language proficiency, seminar participation, and other credentials to advance academic careers, were observed at rates of 28.19% in Dasmen and 66.67% in Dikti. These findings underscore significant challenges to academic integrity within both educational domains.

The third evaluative aspect of the KPK study concerns discipline. Interestingly, instances of indiscipline are more prevalent among university students (13.95%) than among primary and secondary school students (9.65%). Conversely, in task submission, school students display higher rates (14.06%) compared to university students (7.19%). This trend of indiscipline is not limited to students alone, but is also evident among educators. Specifically: first, teachers in primary and secondary education (65.43%) and lecturers in higher education (82.63%) reported absences without valid reasons; second, educators frequently left classes before the session ended, with rates of 66.58% for primary and secondary education and 80.95% for higher education; and third, a significant proportion of educators arrived late to class without valid justification, with 68.18% of primary and secondary teachers and 81.44% of university lecturers. These survey results reveal that disciplined conduct is not fully embedded within the behaviors of these individuals and is inconsistently upheld. Such findings raise concerns regarding the accountability of educators, who not only breach professional discipline, but also fail to serve as role models for their students. This calls into question the efficacy of Indonesia's National Education System Law in achieving its educational objectives and cultivating individuals of strong character.

Furthermore, regarding gratuities, the KPK (2024) study reveals alarming trends in both basic-secondary education and higher education. In basic-secondary settings, 45.94% of educators reportedly accept gifts from students in exchange for "special attention," a figure that rises to 73.02% in higher education. Another form of gratuity is evident in the practice of shadow education, where teachers conduct supplementary lessons for fees, occurring in 49.35% of schools. Additionally, institutions often provide monetary gifts or tokens to supervisors or assessors,

particularly during religious holidays, inspections, or accreditation processes. This practice is observed in 37.61% of basic-secondary institutions and 26.15% of higher education settings, whether solicited directly or indirectly. Under Article 12B of Law No. 20 of 2001 amending Law No. 31 of 1999 on the Eradication of Corruption, gratuities are defined broadly to include monetary gifts, goods, discounts, commissions, interest-free loans, travel tickets, lodging facilities, leisure trips, free medical treatment, and other benefits. In this context, gratuities are mechanisms through which the giver seeks to influence the recipient for personal or institutional gain. These findings underscore a significant ethical and legal challenge within Indonesia's education sector.

The KPK report (2024) revealed a surprising finding regarding the prevalence of bribery. Specifically, bribery potential was observed at 10.29% in schools and 29.70% in universities. The method of bribery involved educational staff, such as teachers and lecturers, offering gifts to officials within the Department of Education or other authorities to secure desired placements. Simultaneously, students also engaged in bribery, typically in the form of gift-giving. Notably, 45.94% of school students and 69.31% of university students gave gifts to their teachers or lecturers, aiming to influence grades in specific subjects or to ease their path to graduation.

Furthermore, the KPK (2024) identified the prevalence of unauthorized levies, commonly referred to as extortion (*pungli*). According to Law No. 20 of 2001 on the Eradication of Corruption, *pungli* is defined as an act committed by a public official or state administrator aimed at unlawfully benefiting themselves or others through the abuse of authority. This includes compelling individuals to give something, make payments, accept deductions, or perform tasks for the official's personal benefit. Beyond this legal framework, *pungli* is pervasive and can occur in various contexts and towards anyone. It encompasses all forms of unauthorized collections that lack legal basis or legitimacy (Salipu, 2023).

The KPK (2024) uncovered various forms of unauthorized levies (*pungli*), which are frequently associated with specific practices in the education sector. These include extortion targeting teachers and lecturers during the certification process or for career advancement and promotion. Other instances involve *pungli* during new student admissions, where payments are made to ensure the acceptance of applicants who do not meet the necessary qualifications. Additionally, nepotism is often linked to *pungli*, particularly in processes related to student admissions, as well as the promotion and placement of teachers and lecturers. This phenomenon, colloquially referred to as "insiders" (*orang dalam*), is evidenced by survey findings that indicate nepotism-related cases in 38.77% of schools (primary and secondary) and 64.02% of higher education institutions. These cases often involve the preferential admission of students connected to school or campus officials, local government figures, or national authorities. Furthermore, the study reveals that 52.52% of teachers in schools and 74.07% in universities benefit from preferential treatment when they have close relationships with educational leaders or local officials. These advantages often manifest in promotions, job placements, or transfers to other schools, particularly in public institutions. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that *pungli* serves as a key strategy to expedite processes or manipulate systems to achieve desired outcomes, such as securing admissions, avoiding transfers, or advancing careers. The research also underscores the entrenched role of "insiders" as actors perpetuating a culture of nepotism in educational institutions. Consequently, *pungli*, bribery, nepotism, and the involvement of insiders constitute four critical elements in the cycle of corruption within the education sector.

Another area with high potential for corruption is the procurement of goods and services, commonly marred by a lack of transparency. According to Article 6 of Presidential Regulation (Perpres) No. 16 of 2018, the procurement of goods and services must adhere to the principles of efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, openness, competition, fairness/non-discrimination, and accountability. Transparency entails not only providing information on governance, but also ensuring public access to this information (Julita & Abdullah, 2020). Unfortunately, this is not fully implemented within educational institutions. In the 2024 KPK report, it was found that 27.73% of primary and secondary education institutions and 44.62% of higher education institutions lacked transparency in budgeting for goods and services procurement. Furthermore, 63.33% of procurement decisions in primary and secondary schools and 79.89% in universities were influenced by personal relationships with institutional leaders.

According to the 2024 KPK report, financial reporting in educational institutions frequently involves data falsification and manipulation, indicative of corrupt practices. The prevalence of fictitious financial reports was recorded at 33.09% in schools and 40% in higher education institutions. This issue typically manifests as discrepancies between the actual usage of funds and the reported usage of funds, with educational units often omitting their true budget utilization.

Additionally, the management of School Operational Assistance funds (BOS) is notably susceptible to misuse and misappropriation. Evidence from KPK's research reveals that 97.94% of sampled schools were BOS fund recipients, yet 13.39% of these schools admitted that their use of BOS funds did not align with the designated purposes. Misuse of BOS funds in primary and secondary educational institutions includes: (1) extortion, deductions, or levies reported in 8.74% of schools; (2) nepotism in procurement processes affecting 20.52% of schools; (3) inflated costs of fund utilization in 30.83% of schools; and (4) other forms of misuse in 39.91% of schools.

The 2022 State Budget Draft (RAPBN), as reported by Katadata (2021), shows that the government allocated Rp 53.91 trillion to BOS funding, marking an increase since 2016. The actual disbursement of BOS funds in 2020 was estimated at Rp 51.59 trillion. In 2024, as of September 13, the Ministry of Finance has successfully disbursed Rp 52.76 trillion of the BOS funds, or 98.50% of the budgeted amount.

While the percentage of schools misusing BOS funds remains small, as noted above, this data warrants further scrutiny of schools as it indicates that some are not utilizing BOS funds as mandated. It is essential to examine the alignment between the budget and its intended use in BOS-recipient schools, particularly those not included in data assessments. Optimizing BOS fund usage in recipient schools would likely lead to improvements in educational quality.

Research conducted by Syafari, Kotta, and Robo (2021) examined a case of BOS fund mismanagement in the education sector in South Halmahera, North Maluku. Their findings revealed that the principal of SMPN 42 South Halmahera had been misappropriating BOS funds from 2014 to 2016, ultimately facing legal consequences in 2017. Misconduct included diverting funds from intended school activities for personal use and a lack of transparency in financial management.

The data highlighted above represents a reality captured by research teams in NGOs and government institutions such as ICW and the KPK. However, the actual state of corruption in the field may be far worse, eluding researchers and the media. These findings illustrate that corruption within the education sector is widespread, affecting not only students, but also educators, school staff, and policymakers within the sector. Acts of dishonesty and legal violations, such as bribery, illegal fees, and outright corruption, are pervasive throughout Indonesia, as indicated by existing data. Corruption has thus become a chronic issue within the educational sphere, even permeating academic environments that should ideally be upholding strong ethical standards against corrupt behavior. This raises the question of what factors drive corrupt practices in the education sector. Addressing this question is crucial to guiding future efforts in mitigating corruption within education.

### **Causes of Corruption in Indonesia's Education Sector**

This section outlines the factors contributing to corruption within Indonesia's education sector, which is crucial for identifying its root causes. One of the primary factors is the individual or personal motive to engage in corrupt acts. The individual plays a central role in corrupt behavior, as those engaging in corruption are typically driven by specific interests to achieve their goals, regardless of the underlying motivation. Essentially, the individual is the actor of corruption, acting on behalf of themselves or their group. In his study, Salama (2014) notes that the experience of committing corruption, particularly among the two informants he examined, is highly personal and varies from one individual to another. This suggests that motives for corruption are diverse, influenced by personal goals, circumstances, and available opportunities.

Salama (2014) explored the psychological motives behind corruption in two informants. The first informant was a 37-year-old graduate and former member of the Surakarta Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) who served a prison sentence for a corruption case involving Surakarta's 1999-2004 regional budget (APBD). The second informant was a 30-year-old law



graduate and former member of the Central Java DPRD, and also a former convict in a corruption case related to the misuse of regional funding allocations. Based on collected data, the motives driving both individuals to commit corruption were: first, solidarity; second, a systemic structure that enabled corruption; third, financial gain; and fourth, securing employment. Of particular interest is the role of solidarity among corrupt actors, often termed "collective corruption."

Individual attitudes and personality traits play a significant role in shaping corrupt behavior. For instance, the KPK (2024) conducted research on the background of individuals who engaged in cheating. Their findings revealed a high incidence of dishonest behavior among students, largely due to inadequate learning processes, particularly when faced with exams. Several driving factors for cheating were identified, including: first, "only studying when there is an exam," reported by 34.86% of school students and 52.48% of university students; and second, "forgetting to study due to excessive play," reported by 36.92% of school students and 44.19% of university students. Additionally, the study examined lying behaviors among students and found that 11.66% of school students and 11.77% of university students admitted to lying "to cover up mistakes." Another noteworthy finding concerns behavior within the home, with 7.35% of school students reporting that they "have withheld change after being sent by parents to buy something." This data highlights how individual behaviors, such as indiscipline and dishonesty, can significantly influence corrupt tendencies, even when motivated by various conditions and objectives. These seemingly minor actions not only reflect personal behavior, but also relate to a broader context of corruption culture. A lack of accountability, coupled with a desire to shortcut ethical processes through actions like bribery and gratuities, illustrates the corruption embedded in societal norms, as such actions are frequently used by certain individuals to manipulate existing procedures.

Secondly, culture and environment serve as external drivers of corrupt behavior. Corruption arises not solely from personal motivations, but also from environmental influences. In a study involving 123 respondents, Azhar (2016) identified several perceived causes of corruption: 34.96% of respondents cited insufficient salaries, 45.53% pointed to environmental factors, 89% indicated that the current system enables corruption, 89.43% attributed it to pure greed, and 87% stated that corruption occurs primarily for personal gain. These findings suggest that the social environment creates opportunities for individuals to engage in corrupt practices.

In reviewing the KPK Integrity Index data on corruption in Indonesia's education sector, various indicators—such as academic honesty, permissive attitudes towards corruption, and rationalization of gratuities—illustrate that a culture of corruption persists within certain groups. This suggests that individual motivation alone is not the only factor driving corruption.

The third factor, law enforcement, is also crucial in understanding the causes of corruption, not only in education but across all sectors. From the data presented throughout this analysis, statistics revealing corrupt behavior, even minor instances, indicate weaknesses in several areas including law enforcement, value systems, and social norms. Before addressing weak law enforcement, it is essential to examine the role of law enforcement personnel and the structural integrity of these institutions. According to Adnani (2020), structural weaknesses within law enforcement agencies are a significant contributor to inadequate law enforcement. These weaknesses encompass both human resource quality and commitment to law enforcement. Structural improvements in these agencies, such as developing adequate personnel, infrastructure, and capacity-building training, are necessary to ensure that law enforcement personnel possess the skills and knowledge required to handle various cases (Nelson, 2023).

Despite ongoing efforts to improve law enforcement personnel, instances of legal infractions among these individuals frequently arise. One notable case implicated the KPK's own staff in corruption. As reported by the BBC (2024), 78 KPK employees were heavily sanctioned for their involvement in a bribery scandal within KPK's detention facilities. In 2021, the National Criminal Information Center of the Indonesian National Police (Pusiknas Bareskrim Polri) reported that Polri (through Bareskrim and regional police forces) handled 459 internal corruption cases, with East Java Police reporting the highest number at 50 cases. Additionally, a recent judiciary scandal revealed that former Supreme Court official Zarof Ricar and three judges were allegedly involved in bribery and conspiracy, with cash totaling Rp 1 trillion and 51 kg of gold seized as evidence.

Despite the positions held by these individuals—indicative of high competency and qualifications—the existence of corruption within law enforcement institutions raises concerns regarding the enforcement of ethics and law within these bodies. When legal institutions themselves are ensnared in corruption, it is unsurprising that public perception of law enforcement's effectiveness deteriorates. These findings underscore the need for law enforcement institutions to develop personnel who, beyond cognitive abilities and technical skills, possess a firm commitment to ethical and responsible legal conduct. This process is known as structural institutional reinforcement.

A case study by Rachmanta and Ikhsan (2014) on the education department and public schools in Semarang found that regulations were poorly enforced. Penalties for corrupt officials were inconsistent with the severity of their infractions. This lack of enforcement led education department staff, school administrators, and teachers to disregard regulations without fear of repercussions. The lack of stringent and serious law enforcement diminishes deterrence, allowing corrupt officials to repeat offenses and encouraging others to engage in similar behaviors due to inadequate consequences. Inconsistent and inconsequential law enforcement not only tarnishes the reputation of the judicial system, but also allows corrupt actors to persist and perpetuate corruption (Nelson, 2023).

As a public service institution, the education sector is expected to be led by individuals who are both competent and deeply committed to ethics and moral responsibility. The identifiable causal relationship between corruption within this sector and the failure to deliver quality services suggests that malpractice within the education system is, at least in part, driven by a lack of sector-specific policies (Milovanovitch, 2013). Thus, effective laws and law enforcement must be supported by appropriate policies, both from the government and within educational institutions, to ensure they are implemented fairly and proportionately, and uphold principles of justice. Poor educational services not only highlight deficiencies in institutional management, but also indicate a level of incompetence that may foster fraudulent practices, misconduct, or corruption.

The fourth factor causing corruption in the education sector is government negligence. In the Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), "negligence" is defined as a failure to fulfill obligations, lack of attention, or oversight. This concept is particularly relevant when discussing the government's role in supporting anti-corruption efforts, as its involvement is essential. Without a robust anti-corruption commitment within government institutions, corruption cases are likely to increase. According to data from Good Stats (2023) citing a report from the KPK, the agency handled 1,351 corruption cases between 2004 and 2022, with the highest number recorded in 2018 at 200 cases. The same source, quoting data from ICW, indicated that 579 corruption cases were prosecuted in Indonesia in 2022—an 8.63% increase from the previous year's 533 cases.

Breaking down this data further, the Attorney General's Office (Kejagung) handled the highest number of corruption cases in 2022, dealing with 405 cases and identifying 909 suspects in the previous year. The National Police (Polri) dealt with 138 cases involving 307 suspects, while the KPK managed only 36 cases involving 150 suspects. While this data does not explicitly indicate government negligence, it raises questions about the government's dedication to treating corruption as an "extraordinary" threat. A more proactive government approach could potentially expedite anti-corruption efforts and mitigate corruption significantly, which would be reflected by a reduction in such cases over time.

The Central Bureau of Statistics report (2023) indicated a decline in public awareness regarding anti-corruption initiatives, both direct and indirect, with the percentage dropping from 61.16% in 2022 to 57.17% in 2023. This decrease in public awareness of anti-corruption efforts is attributed to insufficient outreach and a lack of accessible information on anti-corruption activities.

Anti-corruption initiatives typically involve outreach, campaigns, socialization efforts, and other activities. A reduction in such initiatives—which are usually carried out by institutions like the KPK, various ministries, the police, and anti-corruption community organizations—has limited the access to information and education on corruption prevention. Recognizing this gap underscores the risk that the absence of authority figures disseminating anti-corruption practices may foster a culture of corruption. With an increasingly permissive public attitude towards

corruption and limited state engagement in promoting anti-corruption efforts, there is potential for corrupt practices to be gradually legitimized by societal behavior.

Given this, several institutions are mandated to deliver anti-corruption education, including the KPK, as stated in Article 7 of Law No. 19 of 2019, which is the Second Amendment to Law No. 30 of 2002 concerning the KPK. Anti-corruption education is also required in higher education institutions, as mandated by Ministry of Research and Technology Regulation No. 33 of 2019. Additionally, political parties are tasked with civic education responsibilities, as stipulated in Law No. 2 of 2011, which outlines their duty to teach the Four Pillars of Nationality (Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, Unity in Diversity, and the Unitary State of Indonesia), the rights and duties of Indonesian citizens, and ethical and political culture, as well as to train party members. Implicitly, political education provided by parties includes anti-corruption elements linked to constitutional values and citizen responsibilities. Thus, anti-corruption education is a collective mandate not only for the KPK, but also for educational and political institutions.

Education, as part of public services, also suffers from governmental oversight issues. As discussed earlier, illegal fees and gratuities in educational institutions, as well as bribery for school admissions, reflect governmental negligence and weak law enforcement, perpetuating corrupt practices within educational institutions that are intended to uphold integrity.

The fifth factor contributing to corruption in the education sector is weak oversight practices. This issue is closely related to governmental negligence, which, while covered under the previous point, is examined separately here due to its specific implications. Formal oversight is typically conducted by the government, through either stringent regulations or empowered institutions like the KPK or the police. However, given Indonesia's democratic principles, governance should not be detached from public participation in oversight. Public involvement is crucial in monitoring governance, especially in the education sector, which is deeply integrated with the community. Active public oversight plays a critical role in curbing corruption. Moreover, digital media has enhanced public scrutiny, with many corruption cases coming to light through viral exposure by the public. For instance, the case of Mario Dandy Satriyo began as an assault incident and evolved into a money-laundering investigation that implicated his father, former tax official Rafael Alun Trisambodo, who was eventually sentenced to 14 years in prison and fined Rp 500 million. This high-profile case, fueled by public outrage over ostentatious displays of wealth, led to extensive asset audits. The active engagement of Indonesian citizens reflects a democratic spirit and highlights public commitment to eradicating corruption. In educational institutions, effective oversight is essential. A study by Rachmanta and Ikhsan (2014) on public high schools in Semarang found significant weaknesses in internal control systems. Examples include inadequate attendance monitoring for teachers and students and unclear delegation of authority by school leaders, which increases the risk of circumventing ineffective controls. Ineffective control systems weaken oversight, creating opportunities for corrupt behavior. For instance, inadequate supervision may encourage data manipulation in attendance systems. Leaders must take firm control over institutional management to reduce the likelihood of corruption. Weak oversight systems open doors for corruption, as seen in the mismanagement of BOS funds. As previously discussed, BOS funds are often targeted for misuse, and a strong commitment from management is essential to conduct regular audits of transactions as part of oversight. Syafari, Kotta, and Robo (2021) found that weak controls in managing BOS funds in North Maluku schools allowed for their misappropriation. Poor management systems lead to institutional decline, weaken organizational structure, and provide opportunities for corruption, especially given the substantial budget allocations to education and BOS funds, which attract corrupt actors seeking exploitable gaps such as fictitious expenses and data manipulation. Without rigorous oversight, the large education budget funded by the state encourages widespread corrupt behavior (Fatkhuri, 2019).

The sixth factor contributing to corruption in the education sector is poor institutional management. Management relates to resource administration. According to the Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), "management" is defined as the effective use of resources to achieve specific goals. In educational institutions, effective management is essential to achieve program objectives. A key component is financial management. Adillah (2016) argues that proper financial management is necessary to achieve effective and efficient goals in schools and educational

institutions. Proper financial management not only helps achieve educational objectives, but also reflects sound financial governance, especially when accurately documented. Suriadi (2022) outlines the process of financial management as follows: (1) budget planning; (2) budget disbursement; (3) budget utilization; (4) expenditure recording; (5) verification; (6) control, (7) funds storage; (8) accountability; and (9) reporting of activities and accounts. These chronological steps underscore the need for cohesive management.

In the context of educational management, poor financial practices indicate unhealthy administrative processes, potentially leading to corruption, particularly in financial management. For instance, BOS funds are designated to improve regional education quality. However, BOS fund management issues have been widely observed, including insufficient fund absorption and misuse of funds beyond their intended purpose.

Referring to the findings of Syafari, Kotta, and Robo (2021) in their study on corruption in North Maluku's education sector, several notable issues indicated corruption in the management of BOS funds: first, the absence of a designated BOS fund management team; second, a lack of transparency in BOS fund management; and third, weak control systems in managing BOS funds. These findings highlight that the absence of proper management, limited access to information, and weak control mechanisms can create opportunities for corruption. This aligns with the fifth causative factor previously mentioned, which is oversight deficiencies.

In relation to distribution within educational management, it is also necessary to address issues of disproportional governance. Fair distribution does not inherently guarantee that individuals will abstain from corrupt practices, even though opportunities for corruption may be reduced. Corruption is driven by personal character and diverse motives, so the presence of fairness alone does not ensure that one will refrain from corrupt behavior. This is evident among high-profile corrupt officials, whose financial needs are ostensibly met yet continue to engage in corruption, driven by a sense of inadequacy that compels them to act corruptly once again. Rachmanta and Ikhsan (2014) reveal that even when distributive justice is deemed fair, it does not necessarily prevent fraudulent behavior. They delve deeper into the government payroll system, highlighting that it fails to adequately consider the primary duties and compensation allocated to education department staff, school leaders, and teachers. As a result, these individuals often feel that the scope of their responsibilities is disproportionately burdensome compared to the compensation they receive. This issue is also evident among students, where schools have yet to implement an assessment system that students perceive as equitable, necessitating adjustments to ensure they feel that their grades reflect fair evaluation. This perspective reflects a sense that the rewards received are insufficient. Such perceived inequities open opportunities for corruption under the pretext of fulfilling rights. These situations require careful mapping and effective management, particularly in making professional, balanced decisions to ensure that optimal human resource management is aligned with intended outcomes. This underscores the necessity of sound management practices within educational institutions.

Another significant finding relates to the impact of poor institutional management. In Wismulek's (2024) study, the relationship between educational system factors and corruption in schools—both in terms of perception and practices, such as bribery—is explored. The study reveals that factors within the educational system, such as government expenditure on education, staff compensation, and teacher workload (student-teacher ratio), are closely associated with school-level corruption. Empirical evidence supports this, showing that the institutional environment in education affects perceived school quality, social inequality, and malpractice within education. This implies that school quality is influenced by factors such as government involvement in educational management and the internal management of schools.

In terms of educational governance, it is noteworthy how welfare within the education sector is linked to effective educational management. This connection helps explain why many educators and educational staff seek alternative financial sources beyond their institutional salaries. Wismulek (2024) identifies several consequences of the lack of recognition for educational professionals, including: first, prompting teachers and educational staff to seek additional income sources (aligned with problem-solving approaches to corruption); second, making education less appealing as a profession, thereby reducing job selectivity and retention of experienced teachers;

third, fostering a need for emotional compensation for the value of their work, often expressed in increased expectations for gifts or bribes from parents; fourth, lowering motivation and engagement at work, which increases the likelihood of committing violations (consistent with models of collective corruption driven by emotions); and fifth, intensifying parents' perceived need to supplement teachers' income. This situation is frequently observed in some private and public schools, particularly affecting non-permanent, contract-based teachers. If we consider these issues in light of effective educational management, they should be viewed as obstacles requiring a curative approach. To avoid worse outcomes in the future, a comprehensive framework must be developed to address these challenges. All of this underscores the importance of sound management practices.

### **Solutions to Corruption in Indonesia's Education Sector**

This section outlines the contributing factors to corruption in Indonesia's education sector, offering a comprehensive examination of root causes identified in previous research. Key contributing factors include: (1) individual motives and personal incentives; (2) a corrupt environment and culture; (3) weak law enforcement; (4) governmental negligence; (5) ineffective oversight practices; and (6) poor management of educational institutions. These factors can be organized into three dimensions: individual/personal, environmental/cultural, and institutional. Notably, these dimensions are interconnected and mutually reinforcing.

Addressing the first factor requires a focus on individual motivations within the personal dimension. Corrupt actions often originate from personal motives such as efficiency, profit, need, or desire for status. Therefore, combating this issue involves curbing individuals' inclination to engage in corruption. For instance, cases of corruption involving BOS funds frequently stem from personal profit motives that are exploited within a framework of weak oversight and data manipulation. Systemic corruption typically cannot be executed by an individual alone; rather, it is collective, rooted in shared interests and facilitated by institutional weaknesses. To combat this, individuals must manage their personal desires, particularly by curbing greed, limiting opportunities for corruption, recognizing essential needs, and restraining ego-driven desires for recognition. As Jack Bologne's GONE Theory (2023) suggests, the four primary factors that contribute to corrupt behavior are greed, opportunity, need, and existence. Thus, reducing personal inclinations toward greed and the desire for status, while minimizing opportunities for corruption, is essential in mitigating corruption on an individual level.

Within the environmental and cultural dimension, solutions require active public participation. In a democratic society, public involvement is integral to the management of state affairs, particularly in oversight functions. Education, as a public service, benefits from community engagement to ensure effective governance at the local level. However, fostering public participation in overseeing the education sector necessitates a robust commitment to anti-corruption principles. Without such a commitment, individuals and communities may become apathetic towards corruption. Anti-corruption awareness, therefore, becomes crucial. When corruption is perceived as a societal threat, resistance to it becomes a form of civic duty. However, if corruption is normalized, it risks embedding itself as a lawful behavior. A permissive attitude toward corruption within society must be addressed, as each instance of tolerance towards corrupt behavior potentially reinforces it as a societal norm.

Moreover, public oversight requires democratic spaces that enable citizens to participate in governance, particularly in education management. This aligns with Article 28 of the Fourth Amendment of Indonesia's 1945 Constitution. Access to these democratic spaces also depends on transparency, as enshrined in Law No. 14 of 2008 on Public Information Transparency and Government Regulation No. 61 of 2010 on its implementation. Article 1 of the Public Information Transparency Law clearly states that public information, whether produced, stored, managed, or received by a public agency, must be accessible for public interest. Article 2 further mandates that, except for classified information, public information should be open and accessible to information users. Thus, collaborative anti-corruption efforts between the government and the public are essential in addressing corruption in education.

A society attuned to the dangers of corruption must adopt this awareness as a cultural norm, ultimately fostering a broader societal culture of integrity. This is not only a moral imperative but also a warning to policymakers. Therefore, to preserve anti-corruption values within society, the government must play an active role in promoting an anti-corruption ecosystem. This could include awareness campaigns, education on anti-corruption values, and collaborative initiatives to support transparent governance, especially in education. The collaboration between society and government exemplifies a robust democracy. Accordingly, addressing corruption within the environmental and cultural context should focus on institutional resolutions that reinforce governance and uphold public integrity. Pellegrini (2011) concludes from his research that the positive effects of democracy on environmental protection, as observed in much of the previous literature, largely stem from the correlation between higher levels of democracy and lower levels of corruption. In other words, the greater the quality of democracy implemented within a society, the stronger the environmental protection, which inversely correlates with corruption levels. Essentially, democracy facilitates a reduction in the corruption index. This can be carried out by broad public oversight mechanisms, where society actively participates in monitoring state processes, including budget oversight.

In contrast to the handling of corruption at the societal level, effective and efficient strategies for addressing this issue at the institutional level must be prioritized. If institutions fail to establish strong governance structures, they risk becoming fertile ground for corruption within state agencies. Srinita (2016) categorizes these strategies into three main types: preventive, detective, and repressive. Preventive strategies are aimed at minimizing or, if possible, eliminating potential corruption, which can be achieved through several approaches, including: first, reinforcing the commitment of the legislature to combat corruption; second, strengthening the Supreme Court and its subordinate judicial bodies; third, establishing and consistently implementing codes of ethics across all institutions; fourth, developing and adhering to codes of ethics within political parties, professional organizations, and business associations that reflect anti-corruption commitments; fifth, conducting ongoing research and mapping the root causes of corruption to inform decision-making and policy formulation; sixth, recruiting and enhancing the management of human resources with integrity; seventh, improving the welfare of employees; and eighth, creating strategic planning and comprehensive performance accountability reporting.

This institutional commitment is also related to inter-agency oversight responsibilities, particularly for the legislative body, which functions as an oversight agent of state administration. Strengthening legislative institutions is essential; if the internal integrity of these bodies is compromised, the effectiveness of oversight will be severely undermined. According to data from the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) (2023), from 2004 to July 2023, a total of 344 corruption cases involving the national and regional legislatures were successfully prosecuted by the KPK, ranking third behind corruption in the private sector (399 cases) and among high-ranking officials (349 cases). Therefore, from an institutional perspective, the commitment to oversight and corruption management must be assessed from both internal and external dimensions of governance.

Another important aspect to consider from an institutional perspective, particularly concerning the government, is human welfare. The state's development of social welfare is expected to help mitigate corruption. For society, development and equitable distribution of welfare, along with enhanced access to education, can serve as a long-term solution for the government in addressing poverty, which is often vulnerable to crime, including corruption. It is important to remember that one of the motivations driving individuals to engage in corrupt practices is their needs. This justification, especially in times of desperation, becomes a legitimization for committing crimes. If such behavior is tolerated, it may evolve into a cultural norm. This phenomenon can be observed in cases of illicit parking fees levied by certain officials.

Education also plays a critical role in producing quality human resources, which indirectly fosters national character and cultivates awareness regarding morality and ethics. Specifically, improving the welfare of teachers and educational staff is a strategic effort in addressing corruption within educational institutions. The issue of teachers' substandard welfare is widespread, particularly in developing countries like Indonesia, and rarely receives adequate

attention. In fact, the allocation of 20% of the state budget (APBN) and regional budgets (APBD) has not resolved this issue. It is concerning to imagine how teachers, especially those with families or those caught in the sandwich generation, must meet their living expenses with inadequate financial compensation, unable to rely solely on their salaries as educators. Such circumstances incentivize corrupt behavior among educators and educational personnel.

This scenario resonates with the experiences of researchers who have served as educators in temporary or honorary positions, where salaries far below the minimum wage are a constant burden. They often seek additional sources of income as a solution. This necessity is frequently exploited by some educators and educational staff who engage in unlawful activities to meet their financial needs, particularly when they have family responsibilities or dependents.

In the context of internal institutional management, it has been argued that effective institutional governance plays a significant role in fulfilling core duties, which necessitates efficient and capable management. Poisson (2010) posits that corruption can be mitigated if the standards and procedures governing the management of financial, human, and material resources are transparent and widely understood by all stakeholder groups. Thus, within the institutional context, officials should focus on: (1) simplifying and standardizing the distribution and allocation of corruption-prone resources; (2) upholding the principle of equity; (3) issuing clear standards and ensuring their broad publicity; and (4) designing effective mechanisms to enforce these standards. To support this, an awareness of proper management must be underpinned by adequate operational standards or Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Poisson (2010) highlights several critical aspects of developing SOPs, including: (1) heightened attention from decision-makers to the development of management capacities among all operators within the system; (2) provision of practical tools, such as manuals, to facilitate procedural compliance; and (3) increased computerization and automation of information and management systems to reduce personal intervention, thereby promoting systematic and orderly operations.

Poisson (2010) further identifies several key strategies for combating corruption in the education sector, including strengthening institutional and individual capacities in areas such as accounting, financial management, educational output tracking, information production, dissemination, and interpretation, as well as establishing oversight mechanisms, verification, auditing, public procurement procedures, and the use of new management technologies. This emphasizes the need to optimize institutional management and empower human resources within it, including the utilization of legal instruments and state resources. This responsibility extends not only to the KPK as the primary anti-corruption body but also to other high-level oversight agencies. Government institutions should focus on: (1) enhancing the quality of management control and oversight systems; (2) improving the management of state assets; (3) increasing the quality of services and accountability to the public; and (4) conducting national anti-corruption campaigns. Political parties, as ideological and political training institutions, also play a crucial role in fostering members with a strong moral and ideological foundation. All institutions are bound by ethical codes and laws. Reinforcing these codes, alongside legal consequences, could help minimize the potential for corruption within their human resources.

Transparency International Indonesia (2023) proposes several recommendations to strengthen anti-corruption institutions, particularly the KPK, by bolstering six dimensions: (1) independence and status; (2) human resources and budget; (3) accountability and integrity; (4) detection, investigation, and prosecution; (5) prevention, education, and outreach; and (6) inter-agency cooperation. For instance, within the independence and status dimension, Transparency International Indonesia suggests that the president and parliament reinforce the KPK's authority by strengthening the KPK Law, which was previously amended. This aims to restore the KPK's role as an independent state institution with appropriate authority, free from political interference and staffed by anti-corruption personnel with the requisite autonomy.

To ensure public involvement in oversight, access to information must be widely available. In the education system, independent monitors from outside the system can provide effective, impartial oversight, identifying and preventing corruption while avoiding conflicts of interest. Civil society organizations, the media, and external oversight bodies play an active role in monitoring budget management, procurement, and other educational processes. These independent

entities are responsible for conducting financial audits, gathering data and information from various sources, and presenting their findings to coordinate with law enforcement agencies for follow-up. Frisnoiry, Waniza, Manullang, and Andini (2024) outline several priorities for enhancing anti-corruption efforts in the education sector: (1) transparency and accountability; (2) law enforcement and sanctions; (3) education and public awareness; (4) independent monitoring; (5) improved teacher salaries and welfare; and (6) implementation of technological systems.

Mapping corruption-prone sectors provides a scientific basis for law enforcement and decision-making bodies, offering a promising preventive approach alongside legal action. According to Sustainable Indonesia (2022), this can be achieved by identifying high-risk areas for corruption, preparing sound organizational governance, detecting and addressing corruption risks early, and ensuring continuous monitoring and evaluation. Such mapping enhances effective and controlled management. By identifying corruption gaps, early action can be taken to prevent further corrupt practices.

Additionally, a detective strategy is essential for identifying corruption issues in the education sector, and it requires active engagement from all stakeholders with anti-corruption awareness. While anti-corruption agencies are legally bound to address corruption, community involvement is also crucial. In this detective strategy, several approaches are necessary, including: (1) improving systems to support follow-up on public complaints as part of state process oversight; (2) enforcing mandatory, comprehensive financial transaction reporting; (3) requiring public officials to disclose personal assets, such as through the Public Officials' Wealth Report (LHKPN); (4) participating in international anti-corruption and anti-money laundering movements; (5) initiating the use of national identification numbers for tracking to mitigate corruption risks; and (6) enhancing the capacity and independence of government oversight units in detecting corruption. The detective mechanism should be led by individuals with a strong anti-corruption commitment and free from conflicts of interest. As ICW (2021) asserts, law enforcement institutions should publicly account for their investigation budgets and case details, aligning with the Public Information Disclosure Act.

Information transparency is often considered a fundamental principle of democracy. In practice, transparency must be upheld by all state institutions, especially in budget use, as a commitment to democracy and public information access. Accountability promotes reliable transparency, which is why transparency and accountability are not only moral and ethical codes for education sector personnel but also legally binding obligations. This principle forms the foundation for anti-corruption efforts in Indonesia's education sector, realized through publicly accessible financial reporting on educational budget use. This approach fosters collective awareness of the importance of monitoring and oversight in fund management. Schools should provide a hotline or reporting channel as a form of public oversight, allowing the community to report any suspicious behavior related to corruption.

Educational institutions should also conduct audits, supported by agencies such as the Audit Board of Indonesia (BPK). Following these audits, the results should be publicly accessible as a transparency measure, ensuring accountability. To maintain continuity and balance in institutional management, educational institutions in Indonesia must implement effective internal controls, supervision, and internal audits. Measures such as separation of duties, authorization, and verification in budgetary and decision-making processes are essential for reducing corruption opportunities. Moreover, every involved member should openly report on their actions in an accountable manner.

Repressive measures are considered the most stringent way to deter potential offenders. In addition to imprisonment, corruption penalties often involve fines, which are seen as severe by many offenders. However, despite the belief that strict penalties will eradicate corruption, a closer examination of current enforcement suggests this is insufficient. Many corruption sentences are less than five years, with fines that are minimal compared to state losses. Effective repressive strategies should include: (1) forming or strengthening an anti-corruption commission, represented by the KPK, with full independence and coordination among all relevant authorities; (2) pursuing comprehensive investigations, prosecutions, and harsh penalties for major offenders; (3) prioritizing specific types of corruption; (4) implementing reverse burden of proof



principles, ensuring defendants can adequately defend themselves; (5) regularly reviewing the handling of corruption cases within the criminal justice system; (6) enforcing integrated oversight of corruption cases; (7) publishing corruption case details and analyses; and (8) regulating the working relationship between anti-corruption investigators, general investigators, and prosecutors. These measures aim to enforce strict, responsible, and effective penalties.

Technology has become indispensable in modern times, and implementing technological systems in the education sector is essential for preventing corruption. Many institutions have improved efficiency and accuracy through technology. The use of technology in education management enhances transparency, strengthens oversight and monitoring through digital systems, facilitates reporting and complaints related to corruption suspicions, minimizes direct interactions between potentially corrupt actors, and creates more efficient, digitalized administration and educational services. With its high capacity, technology can address tasks that are challenging to manage manually, thereby reducing human error, which can otherwise create opportunities for corruption, as seen in financial audits. Technological solutions also ensure optimal budget utilization.

Addressing illicit fees in schools requires closing loopholes for illegal charges. A study by Tita, Syafari, and Rumkel (2019) on preventing illegal fees in schools identified the following strategies: (1) encouraging schools to creatively seek funding sources other than parental contributions; (2) maximizing the school committee's role in overseeing budget requests to ensure transparency; and (3) promoting a work culture focused on professionalism, discipline, competence, and ethical decision-making. Schools should actively pursue legal and ethical financial sources, such as partnerships and investments. To demonstrate a commitment to information transparency and democratization, school administrations should collaborate with the community and school committees to oversee school performance, particularly in budget management.

### Conclusion

Corruption in the education sector is alarmingly prevalent, ranking among the top five sectors investigated by the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) to date. We are confronted with a multifaceted corruption issue that operates on various levels, ranging from individual motivations and impulses to cultural and environmental factors within society, as well as more institutionalized problems. Corruption has manifested itself not only in formal criminal acts as defined by the Corruption Eradication Law but has also become an ingrained aspect of both society and state institutions. This reality is evident in our daily lives, reflecting behaviors that sustain a culture of corruption. Reports from both the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) and the Indonesia Corruption Watch (ICW) indicate that Indonesian society is increasingly permissive toward corruption. Such realities, drawn from various reports, reveal that corruption has become entrenched within the cultural fabric of society.

Consequently, the issue of corruption, particularly in the education sector, must be addressed promptly. This response must target three primary dimensions: individual/personal, environmental/cultural, and institutional. Comprehensive reforms are necessary and should focus on individuals, communities, and state administrators, as corruption has permeated multiple sectors. An anti-corruption culture must be reinstated at all levels. Gradually but surely, fostering an anti-corruption ethos will create a healthier environment for national identity and governance. The key lies in how this collective commitment will be realized and effectively implemented.

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