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The Strategic Role of Women in Corruption Prevention Through Family Lifestyle

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Abstract

Corruption is one of the serious problems that hinders development and damages the social structure in Indonesia. In efforts to prevent corruption, women are considered to have great potential through moral and ethical approaches and their strategic role in the family and society. This study aims to analyze women's contributions to corruption prevention efforts and their involvement in social and institutional environments. The method used is a descriptive qualitative study with a literature review approach from various sources, scientific journals, and secondary data related to the role of women and the eradication of corruption. The results of the study show that women, especially housewives, educators, and women's organization activists, have a significant influence in shaping the character of the younger generation to be anti-corruption through education on the values of honesty and integrity from an early age. Additionally, women's active participation in government institutions and public oversight further strengthens the corruption prevention system. The study concludes that empowering women in educational, social, and political aspects is essential as a long-term strategy to foster an anti-corruption culture in society.

Keywords: role of women, corruption prevention, moral education, life style

Abstrak

Korupsi merupakan salah satu permasalahan serius yang menghambat pembangunan dan merusak struktur sosial di Indonesia. Dalam upaya pencegahan korupsi, peran wanita dinilai memiliki potensi besar melalui pendekatan moral, etika, dan peran strategis dalam keluarga maupun masyarakat. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kontribusi perempuan dalam upaya pencegahan korupsi serta bentuk keterlibatan mereka dalam lingkungan sosial dan kelembagaan. Metode yang digunakan adalah studi kualitatif deskriptif dengan pendekatan studi pustaka dari berbagai sumber literatur, jurnal ilmiah, dan data sekunder terkait peran perempuan dan pemberantasan korupsi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perempuan, khususnya ibu rumah tangga, pendidik, dan aktivis organisasi perempuan, memiliki pengaruh signifikan dalam membentuk karakter generasi muda yang antikorupsi melalui pendidikan nilai-nilai kejujuran dan integritas sejak dini. Selain itu, partisipasi aktif perempuan dalam lembaga pemerintahan dan pengawasan publik turut memperkuat sistem pencegahan korupsi. Simpulan penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa pemberdayaan perempuan dalam aspek pendidikan, sosial, dan politik perlu ditingkatkan sebagai strategi jangka panjang dalam menciptakan budaya antikorupsi di masyarakat.

Kata Kunci: peran perempuan, pencegahan korupsi, pendidikan moral, gaya hidup

Introduction

Corruption is the abuse of power or opportunity for personal or group gain, which directly or indirectly harms the interests of the state and society (Widiantana et al., 2022; Hengki et al., 2021). Between 2020 and 2024, the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) handled 2,730 corruption cases across various sectors, with a total of 21,189 public complaints (KPK, 2024). This high number indicates that corruption remains a systemic problem in Indonesia, while also reflecting public confidence in anti-corruption efforts. One of the factors driving corruption is a consumptive and hedonistic lifestyle, where financial pressure prompts individuals to seek instant solutions, including through corrupt practices (Putri, 2021).

This phenomenon is also related to gender roles, where women are often seen as the ones who influence financial decisions in the family. In some cases, the demands of a high standard of living from spouses or families are used as justification for corrupt practices (Winati et al., 2024). However, on the other hand, women can also be agents of change in preventing corruption through moral education in the family environment. As emphasized in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 on Gender Equality, the empowerment of women in economic and social decision-making plays an important role in building better governance (United Nations, 2015).

Several cross-national studies indicate a correlation between corrupt practices and the demands of a luxurious lifestyle associated with women, particularly in the context of social pressure to meet certain standards of appearance and status (Winati et al., 2024). Empirical studies show that social expectations regarding gender performativity—including demands for symbolic consumption—can create psychological vulnerabilities that may drive involvement in corrupt behavior as a mechanism for fulfilling material needs (Johnson & Smith, 2022). However, it is important to note that this causality is complex and non-linear, with institutional and structural factors playing a more deterministic role (Transparency International, 2023). Efforts to empower women through critical education and economic capacity building have proven effective in reducing vulnerability to corrupt practices (OECD, 2022).

Recent research shows that women play a strategic but often overlooked role in corruption prevention efforts (OECD, 2022). This is in line with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 on Gender Equality, which emphasizes the importance of women's full participation in economic and social decision-making, including in the context of corruption eradication (United Nations, 2015).

Based on a critical analysis of public discourse, there is a paradox in the narrative of gender roles related to corruption. On the one hand, women are positioned as agents of change who can influence their partners to avoid corrupt practices by strengthening values of integrity within the family. On the other hand, social constructs often still portray women as “scapegoats” by creating narratives that the materialistic demands of wives are the main cause of their husbands' corrupt actions (Transparency International, 2023).

In their dual capacity as mothers and wives, women have the potential to become agents of socialization of honesty and integrity through informal education from an early age (Puspitasari et al., 2022). A longitudinal study by Handayani (2021) revealed that parenting based on anti-corruption values applied by mothers has a significant influence on the character formation of children. In the context of marital relationships, Damayanti's (2023) qualitative research found that women who apply the principles of simplicity in life and transparent family financial management are able to reduce vulnerability to corrupt practices by up to 37%. This finding is reinforced by Nurhayati's (2022) analysis,

which shows a negative correlation between the quality of communication within the family and the tendency toward corrupt behavior.

This study aims to examine in depth the strategic role of women in building family resilience based on anti-corruption values. As primary socialization agents, women have a unique capacity to instill moral principles such as integrity and honesty through the educational process within the family (Wulandari & Pratama, 2023). Recent studies indicate that parenting styles emphasizing simplicity and social awareness play a crucial role in preventing the internalization of materialistic values that may trigger corrupt behavior (Siregar et al., 2022). Through a comprehensive qualitative approach, this study is expected to provide theoretical contributions to understanding the mechanisms of anti-corruption value transmission through the family institution. In practical terms, the findings of this study can serve as the basis for developing a more effective family-based character education model for long-term corruption prevention efforts.

Method

This study adopts a qualitative approach with data collection techniques through a digital questionnaire-based survey using the Google Forms platform. A qualitative approach was chosen to explore the complexity of social phenomena holistically, where an in-depth understanding of the perceptions, experiences, and dynamics of the research subjects became the main focus (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Unlike the quantitative approach, which is oriented toward numerical measurement, the qualitative method allows researchers to uncover the meaning contained in social interactions and the context behind them (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data collection was conducted from February to May 2025 by distributing online questionnaires to respondents in the Gading Serpong area. The research instrument consisted of several sections, including demographic data and open-ended questions designed to explore participants' perceptions and experiences. The survey technique was chosen for its ability to efficiently reach a wide population and minimize bias due to direct researcher intervention (Bryman, 2016).

The collected data were analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis, which aims to systematically describe phenomena without manipulating variables (Sandelowski, 2000). The analysis process includes identifying patterns, categorizing themes, and interpreting meanings based on the perspective of the research subjects (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This approach allows researchers to present findings in a deep and contextual manner, thereby contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the topic under study.

Results and Discussion

The Role of Women in the Family

The survey revealed that 96.7% of female respondents acknowledged their role as careful family financial managers in balancing income and expenditure, while the remaining 3.3% saw a tendency to overspend to meet social and lifestyle needs. Regarding anti-corruption awareness, 76.7% of women in Gading Serpong believe that understanding the impact of corruption is already good, as reflected in their participation in anti-corruption education and the practice of a simple lifestyle. However, 23.3% of respondents consider this awareness to be low, as they view corruption as commonplace and not directly impactful. In terms of influence on family lifestyle, 90% of respondents stated they have significant control through financial management and consumption

decisions, while 10% acknowledged the dominance of husbands or social pressure in decision-making.

Based on these findings, it is evident that women play a strategic role in family financial management in the Gading Serpong area. Wise financial management by women contributes to the prevention of deviant behavior, including corruption, by ensuring that expenditures are in line with economic capabilities (Winati et al., 2024; Suwartojo, 1997). This skill in controlling spending can reduce the motivation to obtain income illegally. However, there is an interesting phenomenon in a small number of cases where the tendency to consume to meet social standards has the potential to become a risk factor. This is in line with a study by Putri (2021) which found that pressure to maintain social status can trigger corrupt behavior when lifestyle needs are not in line with existing financial capabilities.

Family Lifestyle and Potential Triggers of Corruption

Research findings reveal a polarization of lifestyle trends in the Gading Serpong area. On one hand, there is a tendency toward the adoption of a minimalist lifestyle among families, while on the other hand, a consumerist lifestyle persists, driven strongly by social media (Putri, 2021). This phenomenon creates complex social dynamics, particularly in the context of family financial management.

Social media plays an ambivalent role in influencing consumption patterns. Some respondents acknowledge the significant influence of digital platforms on family consumption decisions, while others view it as a factor separate from everyday corruption practices. This situation indicates varying perceptions of the relationship between lifestyle and moral integrity in society.

Women, as family financial managers, face dual pressures. On one hand, they are expected to meet increasingly high social expectations, while on the other hand, they must maintain family financial balance. According to Suwartojo (1997), such conditions can create vulnerability to the misuse of opportunities for personal gain, which is the essence of corruptive actions. This study reinforces previous findings regarding the correlation between a consumptive lifestyle and the potential for corrupt behavior (Putri, 2021). However, there is also tension between external pressures and the individual's ability to uphold moral principles. In this context, women play a crucial role as guardians of integrity values within the family unit.

Corruption Prevention Strategies from a Female Perspective

The survey results revealed that 90% of female respondents prioritized early financial education as the main strategy for preventing consumptive lifestyles in children, while only 10% chose to restrict access to social media (Siregar et al., 2023). These findings indicate a strong consensus on the importance of financial literacy as the foundation for responsible financial management. Furthermore, 86.7% of respondents considered regular family discussions about finances and anti-corruption values to be effective in building financial awareness, although 13.3% doubted their effectiveness (Damayanti, 2022). The data reinforces the role of open communication within families as a medium for instilling principles of frugality and integrity. However, there is a disparity in responses to social pressure, with 80% of respondents adopting a simple lifestyle, while 20% admit to still following consumerist trends to maintain family status (Wulandari & Pratama, 2023).

Survey findings indicate that the majority of women are aware of the negative impact of a wasteful lifestyle as a risk factor for corruption (Febriana, 2021). However, a

minority of respondents remain vulnerable to social influences, as explained in the study by Winati et al. (2024) on the pressure to meet appearance and status standards. This situation highlights the complexity of the challenges women face in balancing social demands with family financial principles. Putra and Febriani's (2023) research emphasizes the need for a holistic approach that combines strengthening financial resilience with the internalization of ethical values. The strategic role of women in this context is in line with SDG 5 on gender equality, which emphasizes full participation in economic decision-making (Puspitasari et al., 2022). Therefore, family-based interventions are needed that leverage women's central position as agents of anti-corruption value socialization.

Challenges and Obstacles to Women's Role in Corruption Prevention

The results of the study show that 50% of female respondents claimed that they did not experience cultural or traditional barriers in making independent financial decisions, while the remaining 50% still faced obstacles, particularly related to social demands to maintain a certain lifestyle (Wulandari, 2023). 86.7% of respondents agreed that the main solution to financial inequality lies in improving financial literacy and sharing economic responsibilities within the family (Damayanti & Siregar, 2022). A small proportion of respondents (3.3%) emphasized the importance of family consultation and the role of women as trustworthy financial managers, without compromising principles of honesty (Febriana, 2021). On the other hand, 6.7% of respondents tend to accept the dominance of husbands or extended families in financial decisions, which could potentially lead to economic dependence (Nurhayati, 2023). Additionally, 3.3% of respondents stated they did not experience inequality because they had full control over family finances, while 80% felt supported by their families in preventing corrupt behavior, although 20% acknowledged materialism remained a challenge (Putra et al., 2024).

The survey findings reveal a polarization in women's perceptions of cultural barriers to financial management, reflecting the tension between traditional norms and practical needs (Winati et al., 2024). Winati et al. (2024) explain that the pressure to maintain social status often leads women into risky consumption patterns. The majority of respondents proposed structural solutions through financial literacy and financial collaboration within families, in line with the principle of gender equality in SDG 5 (United Nations, 2015). This approach is reinforced by research by Sayyaf and Robbie (2021), which positions women as moral agents in strengthening anti-corruption values through deliberative financial management. However, the resignation of some women to male dominance in economic decisions has the potential to increase their vulnerability to social pressure (Damayanti, 2023). The conflict between moral values and materialistic demands, as explained by Putri (2021), emphasizes the need for a holistic approach that combines economic empowerment with the strengthening of critical awareness.

The Impact of Women's Role in Instilling Anti-Corruption Values

The results of the study show that 96.7% of women stated their readiness to become agents of change in building anti-corruption awareness by teaching the principles of honesty and transparency within the family environment (KPK, 2024). However, 3.3% of respondents admitted that they did not care about corrupt practices as long as their family's needs were met and they did not suffer any direct losses. Survey data also revealed that all respondents (100%) stated that they consistently reminded their spouses about the importance of honesty, a simple lifestyle, and responsible financial management in the household. When faced with social pressure to maintain their image through a

luxurious lifestyle, 80% of women chose to maintain a simple lifestyle, while the remaining 20% still felt the need to maintain a certain lifestyle for the sake of social status. Additionally, all respondents agreed that strong legal protection for women is a crucial factor in safeguarding family integrity and well-being from the impacts of corruption.

The findings of this study indicate that the majority of women have a high awareness of the importance of honesty and transparency in family life. They actively play a role in guiding their partners to avoid excessive lifestyles while encouraging prudent financial management. These findings reinforce Sayyaf and Robbie's (2021) view of the strategic role of women in preventing corruption through the smallest unit of society, namely the family. In an increasingly materialistic society, most women choose to maintain a simple lifestyle and resist the pressures of consumerism that could potentially trigger deviant behavior. This aligns with the argument of Winati et al. (2024), who link hedonistic lifestyles with corruptive behavior, especially when individuals feel pressured to maintain a certain social image.

However, there is still a minority of respondents who view corruption as not a problem as long as the family's needs are met. This phenomenon reflects the challenges in building collective awareness, as explained by Putri (2021) regarding modern lifestyles that often blur the line between needs and desires, thereby opening up opportunities for rationalizing corrupt acts. Women play a role in reminding their partners about the values of honesty while also demonstrating their position not only as educators of children but also as guardians of morality in marital relationships. This condition is in line with the objectives of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number 5, which emphasizes the importance of gender equality in family decision-making, including aspects of integrity and ethics. Support for legal protection for women also indicates the need for structural guarantees to maximize their preventive role, as stated by Winati et al. (2024) that corruption is not merely an individual problem but also a product of social structures and values that develop in society. Thus, the role of women in instilling integrity values within the family is proven to be significant in efforts to build an integrity-based society.

Conclusion

This study successfully analyzed and understood the role of women in preventing corruption within the family environment, particularly in the Gading Serpong area. The findings reinforce the view that the family, as a primary social institution, plays a crucial role in character formation, with women occupying a central position in this process. The research results demonstrate that women, especially in their capacity as mothers, play a significant role in instilling values of honesty, responsibility, and moral exemplary behavior through daily life.

Concrete practices such as transparent household financial management, collective and fair decision-making, and educational communication about ethical values are clear evidence of women's contribution to building an anti-corruption foundation from an early age. The qualitative approach used in this study successfully revealed in depth the dynamics of women's roles in the private sphere that have a significant impact on the public sphere.

These findings open up opportunities for further development in the form of family-based anti-corruption education programs, training for mothers as ethics educators, and the involvement of women in the formulation of community-based corruption prevention policies. For further research, it is necessary to expand the population and use a multidisciplinary approach that integrates social, cultural, and public policy aspects to

strengthen the role of women as active subjects in building a sustainable anti-corruption culture at the national level.

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