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(IJLGC)**[www.ijlgc.com](http://www.ijlgc.com)**AN UNFINISHED ODYSSEY: THE MATURATION  
CHALLENGES OF THE ANTI-CORRUPTION REVOLUTION  
ACROSS SOCIETAL, POLITICAL, AND RELIGIOUS  
DIMENSIONS**

Muhammad Safuan Yusoff<sup>1\*</sup>, Irma Wani Othman<sup>2\*</sup>, Hidayah Iwani Mohd Kamal<sup>3</sup>, Mohd Sohaimi Esa<sup>4</sup>, Saifulazry Mokhtar<sup>5\*</sup>, Siti Norbayah Samion<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Labuan Faculty of International Finance, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Malaysia  
Email: safuan\_y@yahoo.com

<sup>2</sup> Centre for the Promotion of Knowledge and Language Learning, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Malaysia  
Email: irma@ums.edu.my

<sup>3</sup> The Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn, United Kingdom  
Email: hidayahiwanik@gmail.com

<sup>4</sup> Centre for the Promotion of Knowledge and Language Learning, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Malaysia  
Email: msohaimi@ums.edu.my

<sup>5</sup> Centre for the Promotion of Knowledge and Language Learning, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Malaysia  
Email: saifulazry.mokhtar@ums.edu.my

<sup>6</sup> SMKA Tun Juhar, Sandakan, Sabah, Malaysia  
Email: g-82263383@moe-dl.edu.my

\* Corresponding Author

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**Abstract:**

Corruption stands as a paramount legal transgression, demanding swift action from the state to address this pervasive phenomenon. The maturity of the anti-corruption revolution in a nation is essential for the establishment of an advanced, stable, and clean state. It is evident that a corruption-free state promises significant returns and numerous benefits, contributing substantially to the nation. Therefore, the objective of this study is to discuss the challenges and issues arising in combating corruption within the country, along with the strategic approaches necessary to achieve this goal. The challenges faced by the nation in combating corruption encompass several key issues: (1) corruption in society, (2) corruption in politics, and (3) corruption in religion. This study employs a qualitative research methodology, relying on secondary sources such as journals and articles. Secondary sources include written materials like books, articles, journals, current newspapers, and magazines. The research adopts a descriptive qualitative approach, focusing on elucidating the meanings derived from the articles and journals studied. The immaturity of the anti-corruption revolution becomes apparent when corruption issues persistently dominate contemporary discussions, signaling a concerning level of corruption within the country. Addressing the discussed issue of corruption

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in society, it is evident that corruption is frequently occurring and challenging to curb when integrity values are lacking in individuals. Furthermore, the issue of corruption in politics, particularly political corruption, is a cause for significant concern, as it often involves financial politics, posing a severe threat to the nation. Moreover, this study delves into the issue of corruption from a religious perspective, acknowledging the freedom of individuals in the country to practice their respective religions. Religion serves as a guide in shaping an individual's character. The study offers several recommendations to combat the issue of corruption, emphasizing the rigorous enforcement of laws and extensive investigations to raise awareness of the dangers and seriousness of corruption. Additionally, the reinforcement of religious and moral concepts is crucial to shape an individual's character. Therefore, the phenomenon of corruption must be curbed and eradicated to cultivate a safer and more advanced nation. This, in turn, will foster harmony as all stakeholders play pivotal roles in addressing this issue. It is hoped that this study can serve as a reference in combating corruption, ensuring that both society and individuals, regardless of rank or position, are free from the scourge of corruption.

**Keywords:**

Anti-Corruption, Society, Politics, Religion

**Introduction**

Corruption emerges as a paramount legal transgression, compelling expeditious intervention by the state to address its pervasive influence. The evolution of an anti-corruption revolution within a nation is imperative for the establishment of an advanced, stable, and virtuous state. A corruption-free state not only ensures significant returns but also contributes substantially to the nation's prosperity. Hence, this study aims to scrutinize the challenges and issues inherent in combating corruption within the country (Othman, I. W., Mokhtar, S., & Esa, M. S. (2022a). The multifaceted challenges faced by the nation encompass corruption in society, politics, and religion. This examination will delve into strategic approaches essential for overcoming these challenges and achieving the goal of a corruption-free society.

***Issue 1: Corruption In Society***

In recent times, our nation has been shaken by the occurrence of corruption among its leaders, making headlines even beyond our borders (Abdullah Julkifli, Mail & Abu Bakar, 2022). The implications of this corruption phenomenon tarnish the image of our country and its citizens. Corruption in society refers to the act of giving or receiving bribes or gifts unlawfully to gain benefits or privileges that should otherwise be unattainable (Musa, 2022). This practice is considered a form of corruption involving violations of ethics and morals, contradicting the laws of most countries. Corruption in society has detrimental and negative effects. It corrupts the justice system and obstructs the fair decision-making process. Individuals in positions of power or influence may make unfair decisions or favor individuals or parties offering bribes, leading to the inefficient use of financial resources (Ismail & Abu Bakar, 2004). Funds and resources intended for building and advancing society are misused for personal or specific group interests. This can result in economic instability and injustice in development. Furthermore, corruption damages public trust in institutions and the government.

When corruption becomes prevalent, society loses trust in its systems and leaders (Syed Sopi, 2022). This can hinder development and lead to political instability. To combat corruption in society, education, and awareness of the adverse effects of corruption need to be heightened. Despite the frequent discussions regarding the disruption of national sovereignty due to issues of ethnicity, our society faces no problems living harmoniously with individuals of different races, religions, and cultures, especially in this era of globalization. Most among us understand and apply values of respect and tolerance towards one another. The real polemic threatening national sovereignty is the phenomenon of corrupt practices. Clearly visible on television screens and social media, this issue occurs at every level, with public officials engaging in corruption (Azrae, Megat Latif & Mohamed, 2018). This is because they misuse funds that should be enjoyed or provide benefits to the public. As the Malay proverb goes, however clever a squirrel may jump, it eventually falls to the ground. Therefore, society needs a better understanding of the values of integrity and the importance of honesty in communal living. The corruption phenomenon has tarnished the nation's image, as foreigners perceive our society as requiring bribes or corruption to fulfill entrusted duties. Integrated actions and strong commitment from all parties are crucial to overcoming corruption in society. By doing so, we can create a fair, competitive, and morally upright society.

### ***Issue 2: Corruption In Politics***

In line with the currents of globalization that are currently shaping the world, the wheels of development and progress are turning swiftly in our country. Unfortunately, and regrettably, there are still dark sketches etched in the civilization and culture of our society. The phenomenon of corruption, displayed daily in newspapers and on television screens, is like a cancer within society, undoubtedly eroding the integrity of our nation and the civilization of humanity. This phenomenon carries serious implications for the state's systems and structures, further damaging the integrity and trust of the public in government institutions (Othman, Yusoff, Mohd Shah, Esa, Ationg, Ibrahim and Raymond Majumah, 2021a). According to the World Freedom Report issued by the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) in 2021, Malaysia ranks 107th in the International Corruption Perception Index (Ab Rahman et al., 2022). The Malaysian Socioeconomic Study (SKM) in 2020 also indicates that corruption is a major problem in Malaysia, with almost half of the respondents believing that corruption is the biggest issue facing the country (Ab Rahman et al., 2022). This signifies that much more needs to be done to combat the issue of corruption in this country. Based on this report, it is evident that the anti-corruption revolution in Malaysia is not mature enough to stem the ongoing prevalence of this phenomenon.

Corruption in politics has long been a pervasive issue and a significant contributor to the corruption problems in the country, affecting the foundations of democracy and eroding the trust of the public not only within our nation but also in other countries. This involvement includes the practice of giving or receiving bribes, gifts, or favors aimed at influencing decisions. In this context, political corruption often refers to the abuse of power, position, or resources of political figures or public officials for personal gain. Usually, this involves sacrificing common interests and undermines the principles of democracy, as it compromises transparency, accountability, and fair representation when money or gifts are used to influence political decisions (Mohd Yusop, 2014). The freedom of the people to choose their representatives is compromised. Elected leaders may not represent the will of the people but rather their self-interest or the interests of those offering bribes. Funds and resources intended

for infrastructure development, public services, and the welfare of the people are often diverted to individuals or groups offering bribes (Ismail & Abu Bakar, 2004).

We must bravely acknowledge the reality of widespread corruption practices that pose a significant threat. A misguided response to issues related to the public will determine whether corrupt practices are genuinely curtailed or merely treated superficially. Being responsive and prompt in making corrections is crucial not only to curb mismanagement but also to enhance the confidence and trust of the public in the government. In the wake of corruption, nations sink into the quagmire of regression, and poverty continues to spread (Ab Rahman et al., 2022). Without a sincere effort to combat it, corruption will be accepted as a norm and seep into the culture before destroying a nation. Considering this, as a nation striving for more advanced and prosperous development, corruption in Malaysia must be earnestly and effectively addressed. Through awareness, education, and consistent actions, we can build a more integrous and dignified nation.

### ***Issue 3: Corruption In Religion***

In this progressively developing nation, there is no doubt that the crime of corruption has proliferated, evident in newspapers and news about abuses of power. According to the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), corruption refers to the acceptance or giving of bribes as a reward or incentive for an individual to perform or refrain from performing an act related to official duties (MACC, 2021). From the perspective of Islam, corruption means wealth obtained to settle human interests with the aim of gaining easy profit or preventing harm that should be resolved without compensation (Ab Rahman et al., 2023). Among the forms of bribery or corruption are categorized as money, gifts, services, bonuses, or positions (Hamzah, Rahamad@Ahamad, & Md Syed, 2020). Acts of corruption and the like are strongly prohibited, especially in Islam, as emphasized in the words of Allah, which mean: "And do not consume one another's wealth unjustly or send it [in bribery] to the rulers in order that [they might aid] you [to] consume a portion of the wealth of the people in sin, while you know [it is unlawful]" (Aji, 2017).

This crime is highly forbidden in religion because it can harm many parties, and corruption involves several other prohibited elements in the eyes of religion. These include fraud, usurping the rights of others, and corruption can also take the form of revenge from one party to another (Shadabi, 2013). Such immoral acts are also discouraged in religion, proving that corruption is a highly undesirable behavior that brings much harm to many parties. One evident consequence of persistent corruption is the loss of honesty in the execution of duties and the erosion of trust in anyone carrying out those tasks. From incidents like these, society within the country will fracture as the value of honesty in every individual slowly fades. The community will also become less industrious in achieving goals because the notion of using corruption to attain objectives becomes ingrained in the minds of the present generation. This is highly perilous, as if left unchecked, it will bring harm to society, especially future generations. The moral values instilled today will be easily forgotten in the future if the practice of corruption continues. Therefore, all parties must play a role in building an anti-corruption state so that this immoral conduct is not perpetuated and does not become a norm for the people in the country. By creating a corruption-free nation, harmony and security will be more accessible to the entire population and government.

## Literature Review

Corruption, identified as a paramount legal transgression, underscores the imperative for swift state intervention in addressing this pervasive phenomenon. Existing literature highlights the pivotal role of an advanced, stable, and corruption-free state in yielding substantial returns and numerous benefits for the nation. Consequently, this study adopts a literature review approach to explore the challenges and issues inherent in the nation's efforts to combat corruption. The comprehensive analysis encompasses the multifaceted dimensions of corruption in society, politics, and religion. By examining strategic approaches from existing scholars, this study aims to contribute insights towards achieving the goal of a corruption-free society.

### *Issue 1: Corruption In Society*

The phenomenon of corruption has become a hot topic of discussion recently, and legal measures must be implemented to eradicate this problem. Based on research information obtained from Abdul Rahman et al. (2014) and data from Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index in 2013, Malaysia ranked 53rd out of 177 evaluated countries. From 2009 to 2011, Malaysia's position and index declined. In 2009, Malaysia's index was 4.5, decreasing further to 4.3 in 2011. However, in 2012, the index increased to 4.9, reaching a score of 5.0 last year (2013). Why did these fluctuations occur? Examining the corruption trends in Malaysia, analyzing the relevant anti-corruption laws, and evaluating the enforcement of these laws reveal that the enforcement of the MACC Act 2009 has positively influenced the number of corruption investigations, arrests, and convictions in Malaysia (MACC, 2019).

Furthermore, anti-corruption education must be carried out by authorities, as effective anti-corruption education can shape a society that detests corrupt practices. Education is a long-term investment crucial for the nation. Anti-corruption campaigns should be continuous and reach all levels of society. The programs should be creative to remain relevant to the times and aligned with technological advancements. In general, the MACC employs two approaches in educating the public: face-to-face programs and media dissemination (Mohd Noor, 2021). Over time, the MACC consistently explores new areas to educate the public about corruption. Simultaneously, traditional MACC activities, such as lectures, seminars, and forums, are continued. The diversity of educational programs ensures broader access to anti-corruption messages and enhances the effectiveness of each program. Based on this rationale, the MACC uses an approach through arts and culture activities to instill a culture of anti-corruption (Hibrahim, 2021). The MACC has collaborated with the National Department for Culture and Arts in organizing the Corruption-Free Dikir Barat Competition (Mohd Noor, 2021). This approach encourages the community to convey anti-corruption messages. Recordings of the competition uploaded to YouTube received very positive responses. Educating the public about anti-corruption requires consistent and comprehensive efforts, akin to those invested in preserving cultural heritage traditions. Small but consistent efforts can yield remarkable results. High commitment from all parties is the key to ensuring that society remains competitive and enjoys a prosperous life.

Additionally, responsible parties must play a firm role in "building a society that abhors corruption," introducing harsher penalties for corrupt offenders, and enforcing efficient laws and policies. The agenda to eradicate corruption should start with shaping minds and emotions to detest corruption itself. In the context of Malaysia and the Malay community, if society views corruption as impure as forbidden meat, like pork, which is ingrained in Malay culture, then corruption will be avoided (Hassan, 2021). The meticulousness with which Malays ensure

that their food does not contain any pork elements and their emotional reactions to any disrespect to this sensitivity demonstrate the profound impact of early and continuous education on shaping individuals' minds and emotions against immoral and unethical practices such as corruption. Therefore, it is time for all parties, especially the government, to ensure the effectiveness of educating every citizen about the evils and dangers of corruption to the nation. Any change must begin with the mind (Hassan, 2021). Anti-corruption education in the educational curriculum, campaigns against corruption, viewing corruption as impure, and shaming corrupt individuals should be the mainstream agenda, implemented continuously (Hassan, 2021). The Corruption Busters campaign, initiated by the civil society movement, is an effort that requires comprehensive support from all parties (Astro Awani, 202). The government should incorporate a specialized corruption education curriculum at every level, from preschool, primary, secondary, to higher education, transcending ethnic and religious boundaries (Ibrahim, Ationg, Esa, Abang Muis, Othman, Yusoff & Mokhtar, 2021). Religious education should emphasize the wrongs of corruption and power abuse to instill a deep-seated aversion to corruption in the minds of each student. The curriculum and content, including sermons on corruption in mosques, suraus, and study centers, need to be thoroughly incorporated and made a mandatory and profound part of the education system.

Moreover, according to Husin (2021), in his study, the societal perception of evaluating success based on materialistic possessions has made corruption a thorn in society. This situation arises because everyone uses material possessions as a benchmark for determining an individual's life success. In summary, such views have provided an opportunity for everyone to engage in corruption, believing that they can buy big cars and houses as symbols of success. The second cause is the failure of society to trivialize corrupt practices (Mohd Ishar et al., 2021). The failure to see corrupt acts as shameful is due to society's hypocritical attitude in daily life. As a result, all corrupt acts are not seen as disgraceful, even though corruption has become a part of our society. The indifferent attitude of this society towards the issue of corruption happening around them also contributes to corrupt behavior (Mohd Ishar et al., 2021). They may consider such actions as something ordinary in today's life that requires money. The lack of concern from this society will harm the country in the future. Another significant cause is the transparency issue in our government's administration system (Ali Embi & Abdul Aziz, 2007). Society perceives corruption as rampant because the government lacks a transparent system, especially in aspects of tendering, contracts, and other projects that lead many public servants to exploit these weaknesses to gain profits through bribery.

Furthermore, emphasizing the importance of cultivating a society that abhors corrupt practices is crucial. Corruption is not a new issue for us. For so long, the country has faced a visible social problem that continues to prevail seemingly endlessly. Many times, we have been exposed to instances of corruption and misconduct involving various segments of society, from civil servants and private employees to corporate figures and individuals. The primary driver that often traps society in the misuse of power is the dream of living a luxurious and wealthy life (Hameed, 2016).

### ***Issue 2: Corruption In Politics***

The anti-corruption revolution has not matured sufficiently, as evidenced by the persistence of corruption issues in politics, a matter frequently drawing public attention in every country. This has been affirmed by various studies conducted on this issue. According to Mohd Yusop (2014), political corruption, perpetrated by political leaders and politicians, is the most

prevalent form of corruption in this country. The impact of political corruption is significant on both society and the nation, as this group determines the country's future (Esa, Ationg, Othman, Raymond Majumah, Abu Bakar, Mohd Shah & Yusoff, 2021a). However, questions arise, such as why do politicians engage in corruption? Is there a connection between political corruption cases and the activities within the political parties they represent? In identifying the factors leading politicians to engage in political corruption, it is imperative to analyze these corruption cases to understand their relationship with political activities, specifically in political financing and party funding processes (Abas Azmi & Zainudin, 2021). The involvement of politicians in political corruption is driven by the need to obtain funds to finance their political activities. They misuse their power for personal and alliance benefits and to maintain their existing power. All these factors contribute to the lack of integrity among politicians. To address this issue, it is recommended to establish specific guidelines for the political financing and funding processes and the introduction of a political integrity model to educate politicians about the importance of integrity and transparency in politics (Othman, Radzi & Esa, 2022b)

The phenomenon of corruption in politics underscores the importance of fostering a culture of integrity and avoiding corruption. This is particularly crucial when corruption in our country is at an alarming scale. Every day, news about corruption, abuse of power, and misuse of authority is prominently featured in the mass media. This phenomenon, also referred to as 'bribery,' 'coffee money,' or 'rib-breaking,' can be likened to a dangerous virus rapidly spreading in our societal atmosphere (Hamzah, Rahamad@Ahamad, & Md Syed, 2020). Corruption, as defined by the official portal of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), refers to the acceptance or giving of bribes as a reward or incentive to an individual for performing or not performing an action related to official duties (MACC, 2021). According to the MACC Act 2009 (Act 694), corruption includes acts of soliciting or receiving bribes, offering, or giving bribes, submitting false claims, and using one's position or office to obtain bribes from public officials (MACC, 2019). Based on the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) 2021, a research report issued by Transparency International (TI), Malaysia's ranking continues to decline, reaching 62 out of 180 countries compared to 57th place in 2020 (Ab Rahman et al., 2022). The focus of this index is on respondents' perceptions based on their experiences in dealing with a country's public sector. A higher CPI score indicates a cleaner country in terms of corruption, while a lower score implies a higher prevalence of corruption. The top ten countries in the CPI are Denmark with a score of 88, followed by Finland (88), New Zealand (88), Norway (85), Singapore (85), Sweden (85), Switzerland (84), the Netherlands (82), Luxembourg (81), and Germany (80), while the three lowest-ranking countries are South Sudan (11), Syria (13), and Somalia (13) (Hamzah, Rahamad@Ahamad, & Md Syed, 2020). Various factors contribute to this immoral phenomenon, including a greedy attitude to acquire wealth or a comfortable life through easy and quick means, financial pressure due to high living costs, workplace stress, and unsustainable lifestyle practices (Hameed, 2016).

Furthermore, according to Abas Azmi & Zainudin (2021), money in politics is the recipe for corruption in Malaysia, observing how money in politics contributes to corruption in the country. Various types of corruption are identified in this country, including political donations, bribery, and political money. The main cause of political corruption is seen in the weak regulations governing political finance in Malaysia, which are exploited to generate corruption and foster sensitive and controversial corrupt activities. Additionally, other factors include the existence of space and opportunities for corrupt actions due to leadership weaknesses in

organizations, low levels of integrity, and a lack of concern for society (Azmi, 2022). Those entrusted with positions and power unjustly abuse the responsibilities given for personal gain. Whether as leaders or employees within an organization, or even as national leaders, they must fulfill their responsibilities to the best of their abilities without being influenced by negative elements. Despite being tempted by luxury, rank, and power, individuals must adhere to the work ethics outlined in carrying out their duties. It should be remembered that any immoral act or wrongdoing will eventually have consequences. Corruption, abuse of power, and misuse of authority can have various negative impacts not only on the individuals involved but also on organizations, society, and the nation. The reputation of individuals receiving bribes will be tarnished, and their families will also be viewed negatively and marginalized by society (Azmi, 2022). The image of departments or organizations involved in corruption will be tarnished, causing the public to lose respect or trust in the quality of services provided. The impact of corruption on the country also affects economic growth because the country's revenue will decrease, creating a significant income gap between high and low-income groups and undermining foreign investors' confidence in the country (Mat Tahir, Ahmad & Abdul Wahab, 2008). Moreover, the security and stability of the country are also affected by corruption, as this situation poses risks that can lead to an increase in crime and threats from external elements (Alatas, 2015).

Additionally, the analysis of factors contributing to corruption and challenges in addressing it in Malaysia also focuses on corruption issues among both public and private sector employees, a topic frequently debated in foreign countries as well as in Malaysia. According to the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) report, the statistics on the number of arrests from 2014 to 2021 have experienced a sudden increase of 205 percent, equivalent to an increase from 552 cases to 1125 cases (Ab Rahman et al., 2022). Various measures and initiatives have been taken by the government to combat corruption but reports on these activities continue to rise without any signs of decline. The primary emphasis before developing the best approach is to identify the causes of corrupt behavior. Thus, analyzing the factors contributing to corrupt activities and the challenges faced by Malaysia in addressing them is a crucial national agenda. Internal factors leading to corruption include the existence of opportunities, personal weaknesses, and a lack of integrity (Daud, 2019). External factors are attributed to low wages, financial pressure, work pressure, and ineffective state policies (Daud, Heng & Hassan, 2019a). The use of technology by perpetrators to evade detection, political interference, and lack of cooperation from politicians, as well as insufficient support and confidence from the public, are challenges faced by the government and anti-corruption agencies in addressing corruption in Malaysia (Ab Rahman et al., 2022).

Furthermore, every problem must have a solution, and the issue of corruption, frequently discussed in society, must also have a solution to curb its spread in our country. The Malaysian government has made continuous efforts and provided a detailed set of strategies and institutions aimed at combating corruption and promoting integrity in society. The nation's anti-corruption efforts received a significant boost in 2003 when the new government under Abdullah Ahmad Badawi declared the control of corruption as its top priority, followed by several other steps (Siddiquee, 2011). However, the government's attempts and strategies in Malaysia seem to be unsuccessful, as evidenced by current data suggesting that corruption is deeply rooted in society despite government campaigns and initiatives.



Although corruption in Malaysia is not a new phenomenon, it has worsened in recent years, as reflected in the steadily declining Corruption Perception Index and several large-scale corruption scandals that have become major global headlines. In recent times, corruption has become so endemic and widespread that Malaysia has gained dubious recognition as a kleptocracy, despite ongoing anti-corruption campaigns (Siddiquee & Zafarullah, 2022). Malaysia's anti-corruption experience and the factors explaining it highlight that anti-corruption efforts remain narrowly focused, overlooking critical aspects of Malaysia's political-economic relationships, shadow networks, and the political economy that underpins major corruption. Most high-level corruption is deeply rooted in politics, and a significant portion of powerful political figures remains untouched by anti-corruption initiatives. Consequently, despite institutional overhauls, key institutions continue to lack effective freedom and power (Siddiquee & Zafarullah, 2022). Such constraints, reinforced by political manipulation and selective law enforcement, have compromised the effectiveness of anti-corruption initiatives (Siddiquee & Zafarullah, 2022). In conclusion, the question remains: what drives individuals to engage in corrupt activities? The Corruption Perception Index (CPI) for Malaysia shows undesirable results, indicating that corruption is a serious issue. To address corruption, a social construction perspective is employed. Thus, the factors contributing to corruption in the Malaysian context must be viewed from the standpoint of why individuals engage in corruption, including existing power dynamics and opportunities.

### ***Issue 3: Corruption In Religion***

Corruption in both the public and private sectors has emerged as a major problem for the government. Corruption is a serious phenomenon that has been widely discussed, especially in the mass media, in recent times. Therefore, questions often arise regarding whether the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2009 (MACC Act 2009) can provide a solution to this criminal issue or if the strength of religion within individuals can assist in addressing this problem. It cannot be denied that religion can influence human behavior and actions. Combating corruption is crucial as it is universally rejected by all religions (Musa, 2015). In the context of corruption, the influence of religion may be significant, and religious leaders are increasingly vocal in condemning corruption. Given that honesty and justice are universal values in many religions, leaders from various religious backgrounds agree and unite in opposing corrupt practices. To better understand the relationship between religion and corruption, Beets (2007) conducted a study using information related to religion and the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) by Transparency International. The study listed countries based on the level of corruption perception among public officials and politicians. A total of 133 countries were included in the 2003 CPI and compared based on various factors related to 1) the dominant religion practiced in each country, 2) corruption perception, 3) the importance of religion to the people of each country, 4) religious freedom, and 5) per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The study's results indicated that when countries were grouped according to the dominant religion, these groups significantly differed concerning corruption perception, religious values, religious freedom, and per capita GDP (Beets, 2007). The cross-national connection to corruption consistently refers to the religious beliefs in a country, which tends to determine the level of corruption in that nation. However, the level of religiosity is more important than a specific religion, as empirical evidence shows that religiosity, rather than a combination of religions, affects the level of corruption (Gokcekus & Ekici, 2020).

Furthermore, a comprehensive and consistent application of Islamic Work Ethics in daily tasks can shape good spiritual values in public servants, such as responsibility, dedication, and

trustworthiness (Daud, Heng & Hassan, 2019b). Embracing these values can motivate individuals to do good and refrain from evil, thus weakening one's intention to engage in corruption. In addition to individual efforts, various national policies and plans have been formulated and implemented to instill the concepts of trust and integrity in creating a public administration free from corrupt practices. For example, the Ummah Transformation Plan, which has five main pillars: faqihan, amiinan, rahiiman, 'ilman, and salaaman. Examining the concepts of UMI and the Ummah Transformation Plan reveals a close relationship between the concepts of Mas'uliyah and amiinan or Amanah (Musa, 2015). The concepts of Mas'uliyah (accountability) and amanah (trustworthiness) are two crucial pillars to ensure that civil servants maintain integrity and remain free from corruption. General discussions about amiinan (trustworthiness), mas'uliyah, and integrity, followed by the position of corruption in Islamic law and Malaysian law, often attract attention for analysis and study to identify the effectiveness of existing policies that can guide policymakers and implementers throughout Malaysia. Corruption is a societal issue, and its prevalence in our society cannot be denied. Therefore, it is essential for our society to change behavior and embrace pure values based on religion to combat corrupt practices (Aji, 2017).

### **Methodology**

The data collection method used is in the form of qualitative research, which is employed to gather descriptive data focusing on aspects such as perceptions, beliefs, meanings, values, and knowledge of the subjects (Flick, 2014). Secondary research is the primary source in this study as it is often used as an initial step in research to understand the context, theory, and findings of previous research (Creswell, 2014). Each obtained data will be collected and summarized in the research write-up according to each issue. Furthermore, data analysis from secondary sources, including academic journal articles, official websites, online news, and relevant books, is used to gather data involving corruption issues in the country, covering various aspects and challenges faced by the nation in combating the corruption phenomenon. The study focuses on three main issues: (1) corruption in society, (2) corruption in politics, and (3) corruption in religion, which are highlighted and analyzed by researchers through factors that are the main impact of corruption issues, elements that drive corruption, the effects of corruption issues on individuals and the nation, and efforts to combat corruption.

### **Discussion**

The deficiency in the anti-corruption revolution becomes conspicuous through ongoing discussions highlighting the persistent prevalence of corruption, signifying a worrisome extent within the nation. Examining the issue of corruption in society reveals its frequent occurrence, proving challenging to mitigate without a foundation of integrity values in individuals. Turning attention to political corruption, particularly in financial politics, raises significant concerns as it poses a severe threat to the nation. Additionally, this discussion addresses corruption from a religious standpoint, recognizing individuals' freedom to practice their respective religions. Religion, as a guiding force, plays a crucial role in shaping individuals' character.

#### ***Issue 1: Corruption In Society***

In contemporary times, corruption involves the acceptance or giving of bribes as rewards or incentives for an individual to perform or refrain from performing an act related to official duties, encompassing elements such as money, gifts, bonuses, votes, services, positions, wages, and discounts (MACC, 2019). The examination of corruption trends and the implementation of anti-corruption laws in Malaysia have raised several issues discussed from the perspective

of societal governance. One frequently discussed issue is the power imbalance between government institutions responsible for eradicating corruption (Abdul Rahman et al., 2014). Concerns have been raised that some institutions may lack the authority or sufficient resources to effectively address corruption cases, thereby impacting their ability to investigate, prosecute, and punish corrupt individuals (Hassan, 2021). Witness protection is a key factor in combating corruption (MACC, 2019). Many corruption cases require testimony from involved individuals, yet the lack of protection for these witnesses poses a significant barrier to the justice process. Fear of retaliation or threats to personal safety may deter witnesses from testifying, hindering efforts to eradicate corruption. The Malaysian government continues to enhance anti-corruption efforts and improve legal systems and law enforcement actions to address these issues. Measures such as establishing independent anti-corruption agencies, enhancing international cooperation, and public awareness campaigns have been implemented to combat corruption and ensure justice in the system.

Moreover, fostering a society that abhors corruption translates into "Building an Anti-Corruption Society." This issue can be analyzed from both government and societal perspectives. The government must ensure transparency and accountability in its administrative management systems. This includes policies regulating the use of public funds, public data disclosure, and the fair and strict application of laws against corrupt practices (Hassan, 2021). By increasing transparency and accountability, society can understand how public funds are used through more effective monitoring. Education is key to building a society that abhors corruption (Hassan, 2021). Anti-corruption education should be incorporated into the education curriculum from primary school to higher education levels. Additionally, public awareness programs that educate on the dangers of corruption, its consequences, and actions to combat it should be intensified. To detest corruption, the public must see that corrupt individuals are rigorously punished. The justice system must function efficiently and have zero tolerance for corruption (Hameed, 2016). The government must collaborate with international institutions and other countries to share information, experiences, and best practices in preventing and eradicating corruption. This includes cooperation in investigating corrupt assets hidden abroad and enforcing laws against corrupt individuals across borders (Abdul Rahman et al., 2014). Collaboration between the government, intergovernmental agencies, and non-governmental organizations can aid in information exchange, law enforcement coordination, and the recovery of assets obtained through corruption (Abdul Rahman et al., 2014). Thus, in building a society that despises corruption, the government must act as a leader and demonstrate a strong commitment to combating corruption.

Establishing a culture of "Say No to Corruption" should be ingrained in every layer of society, regardless of age. Although religious teachings prohibit corruption, its prevalence continues to rise (Zaini & Abu Bakar, 2019). In this regard, parents play a crucial role in educating their children from an early age and serving as the best examples. Even if the term corruption is not explicitly used, children should be taught that receiving rewards for wrongful actions is unethical and, legally, incorrect. Modern parents often assume that children do not pay attention to their actions. In reality, they observe and evaluate all our actions. Hence, the role of parents is crucial in shaping the character of children by teaching them what is right and wrong, including the practice of corruption, given that contemporary corruption is seen as a swelling and spreading cancer in society (Ismail & Abu Bakar, 2004).

Furthermore, the discussion on "Factors of Corruption in Society and the State" emphasizes the slogan that corruption is a multifaceted problem in society and the state. One of the main factors of corruption is the lack of integrity and ethics in governance (Musa, Saad & Nor, 2018). When leaders and government officials engage in corrupt activities, they undermine public trust in government institutions and create injustice in the social and economic system. Large social and economic disparities can exacerbate the problem of corruption. When society faces economic difficulties or does not experience social justice, individuals may be tempted to engage in corrupt activities to gain profit or improve their lives. If society views corruption as commonplace, it becomes challenging to create significant change in addressing this problem. Therefore, it is essential to change society's perception of corruption and promote a culture that rejects corruption (Hassan, 2021), thus the practise of patriotism as citizen appreciation element: maintaining the integration of unity and togetherness is crucial (Othman, Hamid & Esa, 2022c) In conclusion, by increasing public understanding of the adverse effects of corruption on societal and national development and the importance of integrity in daily life, behavioral changes and rejection of corruption can be encouraged.

Moreover, the perspective of societal governance through the slogan "Educate Society to Hate Corruption" raises several issues for discussion (Adam, Mokhtar, Othman & Hamid, 2022) One of the key issues relevant for discussion is the practice of corruption in the general community. Those involved in corrupt practices are often comprised of those less fortunate. Public education on greed and corruption is a crucial aspect of addressing this problem. Education must start early, both within families and in schools (Hameed, 2016). Society needs to be informed about the values of integrity, ethics, transparency, and accountability (Hameed, 2016). Additionally, public awareness campaigns and active community involvement are crucial to garnering widespread support for combating corruption. Moreover, law enforcement agencies and the justice system must work independently and fairly to ensure stringent action against corrupt individuals (Hassan, 2021). Political leaders must set a good example and be committed to combating corruption in all its forms. The establishment of robust anti-corruption norms in society will help reduce the acceptance and tolerance of corrupt behavior. In addressing issues of racial discrimination, active participation and cooperation between the government, civil society, educational institutions, and the private sector are crucial to tackling this issue.

Furthermore, the discussion on "Opportunities to Improve Corruption in Society" sends a message that leaders in society must set a good example in combating the culture of corruption (Yusubboevich, 2021). Leaders need to practice principles of transparency, accountability, and integrity in their actions and policies (Yusubboevich, 2021). It is crucial to have a robust and effective legal framework to combat corruption. Stringent anti-corruption laws, including severe penalties for corrupt individuals, can be a crucial tool in fighting corrupt behavior (Hassan, 2021). Additionally, the justice system needs to be strengthened so that corruption cases can be handled fairly and swiftly. An effective oversight mechanism is needed to supervise government activities and other public sectors. Oversight mechanisms such as independent audits and specialized supervisory bodies can help prevent and detect corrupt acts (Abdul Rahman et al., 2014). Moreover, the use of strong anti-corruption policies and practices, such as asset declaration, a code of conduct, and anti-corruption training, is also needed (Abdul Rahman et al., 2014). Global initiatives like the United Nations Convention against Corruption are crucial in helping countries strengthen their systems against corruption (Yusubboevich, 2021).

Finally, through the involvement of the artistic community in society, they can play a role in efforts to combat corruption through their creative expressions. Art can be a tool to effectively convey anti-corruption messages to the public (Mohd Noor, 2021). The artistic community can use their art as a means to raise awareness, evoke emotions, and reinforce values of integrity and justice (Hibrahim, 2021). This community can also play a role in empowering society in the context of preventing and exposing the dangers of corruption. They can organize workshops, training, and educational programs focused on increasing public awareness of the need to report this culture of corruption. Art can also be used as a tool to help the public identify signs of corruption and develop critical skills to combat it. The importance of collaboration between artists and the government in addressing the issue of corruption should also be discussed (Hibrahim, 2021). The government can provide financial support, infrastructure, and platforms to facilitate the role of the artistic community in eradicating corruption. Opportunities should be given to artists to engage in dialogues with the government to build mutually beneficial partnerships and provide creative input for anti-corruption policies and strategies (Mohd Noor, 2021). Society needs to recognize the importance of the role of art in eradicating corruption and appreciate artwork that conveys anti-corruption messages. Recognition of artists and their work will encourage the public to be more actively involved in the anti-corruption movement. In the dynamic structure of culture, the community art approach adds a new dimension to efforts to combat corruption.

### ***Issue 2: Corruption In Politics***

In navigating this wave of modernization, the issue of political corruption among politicians in Malaysia is a prominent topic in nearly every country globally. Corruption can be viewed as a reward seeking recompense for a specific favor, driven by motives aimed at personal gain, self-interest, or high ambitions to seize power, or in other words, greed without consideration for the consequences of such actions (Syed Sopi, 2022). However, politicians are undoubtedly aware that the outcomes of such actions not only affect themselves but also have a significantly detrimental impact on the community and the nation, as this group determines the country's future. Corruption culture can be likened to a cancer that can bring down a nation (Syed Sopi, 2022).

Meanwhile, issues involving corruption and abuse of power highlight that even a country associated with being a model democracy globally is not exempt from frequently discussed issues. For instance, former U.S. President Bill Clinton was embroiled in the White-Water scandal (Mohd Yusop, 2014). Likewise, Malaysia is not immune to the scourge of corruption, especially in political circles involving corporate and government entities. Presently, corruption seems to have become a trend, with politics inevitably associated with corruption. This phenomenon is acknowledged by Malaysian politicians, both active and retired (Hamzah, Rahamad@Ahamad, & Md Syed, 2020). Many contemporary leaders and politicians engage in politics not with the intention of advocating for the people's welfare but rather treat politics as an alternative means to gain benefits and elevate their living standards through shortcuts (Abdullah Julkifli, Mail & Abu Bakar, 2022). The issue of political funding, once glorified by former Malaysian Prime Minister Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, involving political actors from various Malaysian political parties, has garnered the attention of the entire Malaysian population in the past (Musa, 2022).

In line with this, based on past studies regarding the analysis of corruption phenomena and challenges in addressing them, it is stated that despite numerous government efforts to curb

corruption in Malaysia, there are still issues every year, especially those involving politicians that undermine public confidence in the country's leaders. This leads to questions about the root causes of this phenomenon and where the starting point is for this political corruption (Othman, Shafie & Abdul Hamid, 2014). Many argue that the failure to address corruption is due to the government's power, which shields individuals beyond the authority of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) and the Attorney General's Department (Othman, Shafie & Abdul Hamid, 2014). In this regard, the lack of integrity in a leader will undoubtedly drive them to engage in these immoral acts subtly and silently. According to Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, integrity means honesty and sincerity, perfection, or completeness (Kamus Dewan, 2005). An individual with low integrity is prone to engaging in corruption, even with high qualifications, competence, and skills (Husin, 2021).

Corruption and political funding are intertwined when funds are distributed to the public by politicians during the election season, accompanied by various sweet promises to gain sympathy for personal victory, leading to personal benefits and gains (Ationg, Esa, Othman and Mokhtar, 2021). . This has revealed the prevalent political landscape in the country. This would not happen if the public understood that political money and vote buying are forms of corruption that need to be addressed promptly. One of the causes of the failure to recognize that political money is a form of corruption is the habitual normalization of this practice in elections, justified by the rhetoric of "providing assistance" (Mohd Isharet al., 2021). Corruption has long been considered a necessity rather than an offense. It has been proven that in several areas in Malaysia, people choose political leaders based on who is willing to offer more money or incentives (Abas Azmi & Zainudin, 2021).

Although generally, during elections, political parties require significant funds to finance their election campaigns, such as candidate expenses, posters, and campaign operation centers, usually, all these costs are financed through membership fees or from the election candidates themselves. However, the competition to win the election raises costs significantly. Thus, the emergence of political money forces politicians to accept illicit funds from wealthy individuals seeking reciprocity in terms of power approval, among other things (Siddiquee & Zafarullah, 2022). This will be a cause of well-qualified leaders with limited political funds losing to leaders with fewer leadership characteristics but more funding (Abas Azmi & Zainudin, 2021).

Furthermore, government efforts through the MACC are often disrupted when there is interference from the government in the effort to combat corruption. This interference is usually observed in the decision-making process during discussions. According to NACP findings, examples of political interference include cases like the 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) and FELDA scandals (Abdullah Julkifli, Mail & Abu Bakar, 2022). This has become the biggest obstacle to the MACC and the Attorney General's Department in fulfilling their responsibilities, resulting in delayed justice and impeding the prevention of corruption.

The main factor in the occurrence of corruption among politicians is the existence of opportunities driven by greed (Mohd Yusop, 2014). Every individual has wants and needs in life. However, when wants exceed needs, and individuals desire more than what they have, it inevitably leads to immoral actions through the cultivation of corrupt practices. In such a scenario, a conducive situation is crucial to committing corruption. For example, if the first party demands something significant from the second party and they are aware of it, it opens the opportunity for the second party to receive rewards to ensure that the first party gets what

they want. This opportunity becomes more apparent when both parties collaborate to achieve their respective goals (Siddiquee & Zafarullah, 2022).

Lastly, among the contributors seen as factors to the increase of corruption culture among politicians is the rationalization attitude of politicians who prefer to seek solutions to problems rather than understanding the actual issues (Othman, Shafie & Abdul Hamid, 2014). The formulation of national policies has also been identified as a contributor to the culture of corruption (Ismail & Abu Bakar, 2004). Some countries have laws regulating corruption crimes but lack emphasis on the effectiveness of their implementation, including Malaysia. This is because the punishment imposed on corruption offenders is not commensurate with the offense committed. The government's failure to curb corruption activities is since the anti-corruption act itself is not enforced, as most actions are taken against those receiving bribes, while those giving bribes escape without any action (Abdul Rahman et al., 2014). Datuk Zahar expressed his opinion that the MACC should be an independent body not controlled by politicians and placed directly under the Yang di-Pertuan Agong (Ab Rahman et al., 2022). This is because bribers usually come from politicians who have connections in political bodies that can help them escape any punishment and action (Siddiquee & Zafarullah, 2022).

### ***Issue 3: Corruption In Religion***

Corruption is no longer an unfamiliar term, especially in our society and prevalent in social media discussions, often associated with the administration of our country. Unbelievably, the reality is that the current state administrators are not entirely free from the taint of corruption. Religious values indeed play a crucial role in preventing the culture of corruption since this act is strictly prohibited in most religious teachings, particularly in Islam (Zaini & Abu Bakar, 2019). From a religious perspective, combating corruption is feasible, as it ensures a reduction in this criminal activity since everyone gains a deeper understanding of their rights without the occurrence of injustice.

Honesty is a virtuous value in Islam that is mandated in every action. From a societal perspective, the honest execution of tasks is crucial and effective in eradicating the culture of corruption. Research has shown that higher religious values, such as honesty, can lead to truthfulness (Zaini & Abu Bakar, 2019). In addition to the value of honesty in work, implementing Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) is a step that can be taken, especially by civil servants and the public, to create a nation free from corruption (Daud, Heng & Hassan, 2019b). This is because Islamic work ethics can influence a person's intention to engage in corruption or breach of trust in tasks entrusted to them. These ethics encompass values that shape spirituality and good manners among civil servants, weakening their inclination to give or accept bribes (Daud, Heng & Hassan, 2019b). With such methods, it is undeniable that everyone can contribute to building a corruption-free nation.

Moreover, various factors can influence individuals to engage in corruption. Negative attitudes such as self-interest, greed, and most notably, a tendency to disregard and underestimate religious obligations entrusted to everyone play a significant and influential role in fostering corruption. Therefore, practicing Islamic work ethics can eliminate attitudes and intentions that drive society to participate in the culture of corruption. There are eight values in IWE, including Taqwa, Amal Saleh, al-Birr, al-Qist, Ihsan, Mas'uliyah, Ma'aruf, and Itqan, which can be instilled among employees to guide them toward more honest work and consistent dedication

to every task (Daud, Heng & Hassan, 2019b). Thus, it is evident that adopting Islamic work ethics is one of the most effective methods in cultivating an anti-corruption society.

In this developing nation, corruption is a problem that must be avoided, as it has profoundly negative impacts not only on the country but also on its people and government. Therefore, everyone must play a role in addressing this issue to facilitate an anti-corruption revolution. One way to build a corruption-free nation, especially among the public and civil servants, is by practicing the concept of Mas'uliyah, which emphasizes responsibility and trustworthiness in individuals (Musa, 2015). These concepts are highly demanded in Islamic teachings, and by implementing them, society and civil servants will be more honest in carrying out their duties, thereby preventing corruption within their respective job positions.

Furthermore, it cannot be denied that corruption has long been practiced in our society, ingrained in our daily lives, and often underestimated despite being strictly prohibited not only in religious teachings but also in civil and Sharia law (Aji, 2017). Even though there are slight differences in the interpretation of corruption in both laws, there are several similarities, especially in the punishments imposed on wrongdoers. From a societal perspective, this habitual crime of corruption should be avoided, and measures should be taken to prevent this practice from becoming normalized (Mohd Isharet al., 2021). One way to achieve this is by building oneself first by incorporating pure values.

Moreover, without realizing it, giving and receiving bribes can have extremely negative effects on both society and the country. However, with high religious values within each individual, the culture of corruption can undoubtedly be overcome. This proves that in every religion, regardless of its type, the practice of corruption is prohibited, and no one can claim that corruption is an acceptable practice, whether giving or receiving it (Gokcekus & Ekici, 2020). The increasing awareness of adherence to religious values in a country corresponds to a decrease in the rate of corruption in that country (Shadabi, 2013). Therefore, it is evident that religious aspects are crucial in strengthening the anti-corruption revolution in our country. With this, future generations will not be tainted by these immoral practices.

### **Future Direction**

The prevention of the culture of corruption is an effort to prevent, detect, and eradicate corruption in various forms. Based on the slogan "Educate the Public to Hate Corruption," there are several objectives and suggestions that can be discussed to educate the public in the effort to combat corruption. The first is public awareness; authorities should promote public awareness of the negative effects of corruption and the importance of combating corrupt practices. This can be done through educational campaigns targeting various community groups, from school levels to community organizations (Hameed, 2016; (Othman, Ahmad & Esa, 2022d). Explanation of the definition of corruption is indeed a basic matter that needs to be clarified to all layers of society for clear understanding. This is because there are still people who are confused about the true meaning of corruption, sometimes considering such gifts as mere presents without any wrongdoing. Any form of gift that has value to someone with the expectation of receiving something in return under any circumstances is considered corruption (Husin, 2020). This culture needs to be explained and reminded to every member of society, especially the younger generation in the country. Although they are still very young, they are the generation that will inherit the leadership of this country. If every citizen can assess whether an action is considered corruption or not, only then can the culture or practice of corruption in



this country be eradicated to the root. In this regard, a suggestion that can be implemented is to incorporate "Anti-Corruption Education" into the curriculum in this country from primary school education.

Furthermore, the implementation of religious and moral concepts is another alternative to curb the increasing phenomenon of corruption in our country (Gokcekus & Ekici, 2020). This alternative should be implemented, especially in the country's education sector, particularly for school and university students. Efforts to instill such religious and moral concepts need to be done early in a person's life to make it easier to control (Yusoff, 2019). All good concepts need to be explained to students so that they understand the need to free themselves and the country from the threat of this corrupt culture. Therefore, education for young people can block the spread of this embarrassing social epidemic easily and effectively.

Another effort that can be made by the government to raise awareness among the people in this country can be achieved through various effective advertising campaigns. The launched campaigns must use mass media and print media holistically, from newspapers, television, radio to the internet, to ensure that all segments of society receive the campaign. The use of all images or actions presented through these advertisements must be able to leave an impact or make people think twice before accepting bribery (Hibrahim, 2021). Therefore, a simple yet effective campaign becomes a good platform in the battle against corrupt practices. Consequently, the public must reject all forms and elements of corruption by providing support and assistance to relevant enforcement agencies and ensuring that individuals charged or convicted of corruption and abuse of power offenses no longer hold any positions related to the interests of society and the country, including political appointments.

Furthermore, to create a negative perception among the public towards the culture of corruption in the abuse of power and misconduct in the public sector, specific targets can be set from the perspective of the administration of a government organization. Improving Governance in an organization needs to adopt the principles of good and transparent governance without any elements of absolute power in all matters, where employees must blindly follow all instructions (Husin, 2020). Every decision made must go through an open decision-making process through the correct channels based on the approval of all parties involved in a particular matter (Wook, Md. Yusof & Haron, 2022). Timely and accurate information delivery and clear accountability mechanisms need to be emphasized to reduce the risk of corrupt practices (Daud, 2019). Transparency and accountability are crucial foundations in fostering public trust in authorities by ensuring that the public sector operates honestly, transparently, and responsibly (Daud, Heng & Hassan, 2019).

In addition, providing adequate incentives and salaries to public servants and private sector employees can reduce their involvement in bribery or corrupt activities (Ismail, Ab Rahman & Zain, 2009). A fair and transparent incentive system will motivate individuals to uphold integrity and provide quality services. Moreover, one of the methods that can be taken in the effort to combat this corruption crime is to emphasize "Whistleblowing" or "information disclosure" by highlighting "Whistleblower Protection," which is also the best suggestion to address the fear of individuals who are afraid to report corruption activities in their environment (Md. Salleh, Yusoff & Basnan, 2019). Better protection should be given to whistleblowers who report corruption activities. A safe and confidential mechanism should be provided to protect the identity of the informer and prevent them from facing threats or intimidation from the

corrupt recipient. This will encourage more individuals to come forward and bravely report corruption cases in their workplace. Religious values are crucial in implementing this suggestion because the higher the understanding of an individual towards religion, the higher the likelihood of them making information disclosures. Society needs to be more encouraged to acknowledge and report corruption crimes happening around them so that this action is more easily recognized and leaves an impact on the authorities, thereby reducing the rate of corruption crimes in our country.

In this developing nation, corruption is not uncommon, especially among the people and the government. The anti-corruption revolution has not yet achieved the goal of forming a peaceful and harmonious country. To build an anti-corruption country is not easy because we need to look from various perspectives. From a religious perspective, corruption is a prohibited act because it violates the principles of justice and honesty (Aji, 2017). In daily life, corruption is not something that can be taken lightly, especially in the religious aspect. This act will harm one party, usually in a large group like the people, and another party will benefit from the suffering of others. Because of this, corruption is highly forbidden in religion because it does not adhere to the principle of justice emphasized in every religion (Musa, 2015). Combating this immoral act from our country requires various challenges to be faced, such as the community and politicians who often underestimate corruption even though this act is prohibited in most religions. Efforts that can be made to address this immoral problem include collaboration between government bodies and the State Islamic Religious Department of each state to implement Religious Ceremonies that focus on the "Consequences of Corruption in the Hereafter," which can open the eyes and minds of the community to the immorality of corruption from an Islamic perspective. Additionally, another effort can be made by implementing the Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) to shape a more honest and trustworthy workforce in any task they undertake. The implementation of the eight values in this Islamic Work Ethics, including Taqwa, Amal Saleh, Al-Birr, Al-Qist, Ihsan, Mas'uliyah, Ma'aruf, and Itqan, can indeed build a more ethical workforce before it is too late and affects the future generations (Daud, Heng & Hassan, 2019b).

Corruption is a phenomenon synonymous with our society today and is widely discussed in the mass media. August 31, 1957, is a sacred date for our homeland as it gained independence and freedom from colonization. Until today, the polemic that is often discussed, threatening the sovereignty of the country is none other than corruption. The issue of corruption is a global issue that has plagued the world, and our country is not immune. The anti-corruption efforts that have been implemented have not produced the desired results. This is because corruption is like a cancer that is difficult to cure if it has reached an advanced stage. To eliminate this culture, all parties, especially the younger generation, must be involved. The role of the younger generation is crucial as they are the future leaders who will steer the country's direction. Therefore, educational institutions play a significant role in shaping the attitudes and mindset of the younger generation. Corruption prevention efforts should start from an early age, and schools are the most suitable platform for instilling anti-corruption values.

In conclusion, the prevention of the culture of corruption requires a comprehensive and integrated effort from various parties. It is not enough to rely solely on law enforcement or punishment for those involved in corrupt practices. Instead, a multifaceted approach involving education, religious and moral values, awareness campaigns, incentives, and transparent governance is necessary to address the root causes of corruption and create a society that values

integrity and honesty. The younger generation needs to be actively involved in this effort, as they are the future leaders who will shape the destiny of the nation. Through a collective and sustained effort, it is possible to build a society that rejects corruption and upholds the principles of justice, transparency, and accountability.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, corruption poses a serious threat to our society. It undermines moral values, hinders economic development, widens social disparities, and impedes the progress of democracy. Addressing the issue of corruption requires collaborative efforts from the community, government, educational institutions, and relevant authorities. The necessity of education, awareness, and strengthening the justice system is paramount in eradicating corruption comprehensively, fostering an integral, just, and competitive society. In dealing with corruption in Malaysia, various aspects need attention. The punitive aspect, as a pillar of the solution to this problem, needs constant examination and improvement to align with the evolving societal context. In this modern era, the rapid development of technology makes it increasingly challenging for law enforcement to detect corrupt activities. Therefore, responsible bodies, especially the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission, need to be proactive and continually think of new initiatives to stay ahead in curbing corruption.

Education and awareness regarding the phenomenon of corruption should be consistently conveyed to the general public, irrespective of age, status, or environment (Hassan, 2021). For instance, parents can play a role in instilling moral values and understanding of the evils of corruption in children from a young age, as the proverb goes, 'bend the bamboo while it is still a shoot,' emphasizing the formation of positive habits from early childhood. This is crucial because the corruption phenomenon can permeate every layer of society. Everyone, regardless of their position or location, needs constant reminders about the dangers of corruption and the consequences they may face if involved in corrupt activities. If every layer of society is consistently warned about the dangers of corruption, it will lead to the emergence of a caring and vigilant community, ultimately preventing the spread of corruption among the people in this country. Curbing the corruption phenomenon requires proactive efforts from all layers of society and responsible parties through the implementation of laws in Malaysia and honesty in carrying out duties. Honesty and trust are emphasized in society to ensure the well-being of the nation and its people. The practice of corruption can be curtailed when society embraces anti-corruption values, as awareness of the importance of having a strong identity, discipline in work, and integrity to aid in socioeconomic recovery in Malaysia grows. Individuals must adhere to correct values and comply with established laws and regulations to ensure harmony and justice in society.

Religious values are the mainstay and a crucial aspect of building a mature anti-corruption revolution in the country. Corruption is highly condemned as a practice that violates ethical and moral principles in all religions. In every religion, principles such as honesty, trustworthiness, and justice are highly demanded, especially in Islam (Musa, 2015). Each religion also asserts that corruption is a vile act that must be prevented and avoided, from the perspective of Islam, it is forbidden and a major sin, necessitating repentance for individuals involved, whether giving or receiving, or related to it. If it involves the oppression of individuals, repentance is insufficient without seeking forgiveness or compensating them. Therefore, the practice of corruption must be prevented immediately, as it will lead to the development of an immoral civilization where justice cannot be upheld in the future. The notion

of the rich becoming richer and the poor becoming poorer will indeed become a reality in the future if this immoral behavior continues and becomes a habit in society. Furthermore, the involvement of religious scholars in raising awareness in individuals about the evils of corruption is also crucial in this effort. In realizing all these efforts, every party in the country must participate in the implementation of regulations that can eradicate this corrupt practice. Religious values are also crucial to be taught and instilled according to everyone's religion so that everyone does not easily fall into self-centered practices (Aji, 2017). Thus, it is proven that religion is crucial in building a corruption-free country and, consequently, a prosperous and peaceful society.

Additionally, as we are aware, corruption practices, whether at the low or high levels of national development, can lead to disruptions in the social, economic, and political systems of a society and country. The abuse of power among political leaders and senior government officials often involves money politics (Musa, 2022). Moreover, if this involves a significant amount of money, it can lead to the collapse of the nation and the destruction of the state's administration system and culture (Siddiquee & Zafarullah, 2022). Although there are still challenges and obstacles in combating corruption issues in Malaysia, the appropriate steps taken by authorities and Malaysian society demonstrate a commitment to achieving success in addressing this issue. With strong understanding and commitment, Malaysia can become a corruption-free country, providing justice and prosperity to its citizens. Therefore, as individuals and as Malaysians, let us collectively show support and play an active role in combating the problem of corruption. Every party must work together to foster genuine awareness and actions to ensure the stability and security of the country. With determination and a strong spirit, we believe we can develop a better and purer country, making our nation an icon to the world, free from corruption.

In conclusion, corruption has been a topic of public discourse for centuries. It is evident that corruption is a significant matter that needs to be addressed for the benefit of the country and individuals. A corruption-free country promises advancements in economic progress (Mohd Adnan & Ismail, 2013). To achieve this goal, besides economic strength, the people must be united, have confidence and foresight, possess strong moral and ethical values, distribute economic benefits fairly, be liberal and compromising, compassionate, progressive, and prosperous, and have complete control over a competitive, dynamic, active, and robust economy (Othman, Pullong & Maidin, 2022e). However, the existence of issues and challenges in achieving these goals hinders the efforts of authorities in addressing corruption slowly. Among the main issues and challenges that need to be addressed are the erosion of integrity values in society, employees seeking quick wealth, and the ethical weaknesses of leaders and superiors. Delving deeper, when there is an erosion of integrity values, disruptions occur in work processes, especially in high-risk areas such as development projects, acquisitions, or purchases, and enforcement, among others (Mohd Adnan & Ismail, 2013). This will lead to a decline in economic growth because only those involved in corrupt activities will benefit from it. Indeed, this is a major challenge that needs to be addressed through the strengthening of ethics and integrity within an organization. Therefore, the phenomenon of corruption must be curtailed promptly for the good of the country and us. Moreover, all parties must play their respective roles in successfully combating corruption so that our country can be recognized as a clean, advanced, and stable nation in the future.

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