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**CORRUPTION UNDERMINES MALAYSIA'S STABILITY:  
CONTRASTINGLY CHARITY FOSTERS SOCIETAL  
COHESION AND NATIONAL INTEGRITY**

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**Abstract:**

This paper examines corruption across various contemporary issues, highlighting its role in destabilizing Malaysia as a nation and drawing a comparative analysis with the practice of charity. This analysis seeks to broaden societal perspectives and promote charitable acts, ultimately deterring criminal behavior through a deeper understanding of its religious implications. A qualitative research approach, based on positivist philosophy, is employed to investigate corruption as a cultural phenomenon. This method combines data from various sources to allow for an inductive or qualitative data analysis, with a focus on deriving general meanings. The study relies on qualitative academic journal research, offering descriptive analytical discussions as a primary source, including a range of scholarly journal articles. Additionally, published data and articles from official government and non-government websites provide relevant information on corruption issues. The findings of this study reveal that corruption and charity are ideologically distinct, especially from legal and Islamic perspectives. This discussion explores the extent to which corruption is understood as a criminal offense violating legal norms within Malaysian society.

**Keywords:**

Corruption, Charity, Integrity, Ethics, Societal Cohesion

## Introduction

As of November 12, 2024, the most recent data on Malaysia's corruption statistics is from the 2023 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) released by Transparency International in January 2024. In this report, Malaysia improved its score to 50 out of 100, up from 47 in the previous year, and advanced its ranking from 61st to 57th out of 180 countries. This improvement was attributed to the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission's (MACC) investigations, arrests, and convictions in high-profile cases over the past two years. The MACC has expressed its commitment to continue efforts in eradicating corruption, aiming to position Malaysia within the top 25 of the CPI rankings by 2033 (Malay Mail, 2024). Corruption and charity are distinct concepts across multiple dimensions, including social, legal, religious, and organizational perspectives. Charity is frequently misunderstood as bribery, while it is an issue often highlighted by Islamic scholars to foster an accurate understanding within society. Charity involves selfless giving, where assistance is provided with the sincere intent to seek Allah's blessings and approval. Conversely, individuals play a critical role in combating corruption, particularly within organizations and professional settings. The government must rigorously enforce laws to prevent the unchecked spread of corruption. Simultaneously, religious scholars bear the responsibility to educate the public about corruption by associating it with the concept of charity, thereby conveying that such acts violate Islamic law and raising awareness to deter these behaviors.

This paper emphasizes the importance of various stakeholders in promoting the understanding of charity as an essential aspect of moral consciousness, ensuring society recognizes that corruption is not only legally reprehensible but also religiously impermissible. Fundamentally, the discourse in this paper focuses on how corruption yields no real benefit and, instead, erodes individual integrity and moral principles.

## Corruption as a Cause of National Instability

Corruption destabilizes nations by diverting public resources, undermining the rule of law, and eroding public trust in government. When officials engage in bribery, embezzlement, or nepotism, essential funds meant for healthcare, education, and infrastructure are misused, limiting public access to these services and increasing socio-economic inequalities. This self-serving conduct weakens government structures, as policies are shaped to serve private interests rather than the public good, diminishing policy effectiveness and trust in institutions. As confidence in governance wanes, social unrest and political instability often increase. Additionally, corruption discourages both domestic and foreign investment, as businesses face inflated costs and unpredictable regulatory environments. This lack of investment hampers economic growth, reduces job opportunities, and perpetuates poverty, creating a cycle of instability. Ultimately, corruption weakens a nation's legal, political, and economic foundations, threatening its long-term stability and prosperity.

Corruption is a primary contributor to national instability, as it creates significant challenges that adversely affect economic growth, security, and societal well-being (Azrae, Megat Latif & Mohamed, 2018). A key factor undermining national stability, corruption erodes healthy political, legal, and economic systems, often leading to a public trust crisis toward government institutions (Abdullah Julkifli, Mail & Abu Bakar, 2022). Corruption negatively impacts society by diverting resources, such as funds and contracts, from public interests to personal gain, leading to a reduction in essential public services like healthcare, education, and infrastructure, which ultimately harms the most vulnerable segments of society (Mohd Yusop,

2014). Each year, the corruption issue grows more concerning, prompting the Malaysian government to expand efforts to curb it; however, certain individuals continue to evade accountability, perpetuating these unethical practices.

Furthermore, corruption undermines the rule of law by enabling individuals or organizations to bypass legal procedures to serve their interests (Othman, Mokhtar & Esa, 2022). This behavior cultivates a culture of impunity and erodes public confidence in government and its institutions. Ultimately, corruption leads to social inequality, allowing the wealthy and powerful to exploit systems to their advantage, while marginalized groups remain disadvantaged. Corruption stems from multiple factors, including greed, lack of accountability, weak institutions, and cultural norms (Ab Rahman et al., 2022). In some cases, individuals are motivated by personal gains, such as wealth, power, or status, exploiting their positions to manipulate others.

Cultural norms that condone or encourage corruption further complicate efforts to address it. Combating corruption requires a multi-dimensional approach. First, strengthening institutions and legal frameworks to ensure accountability and transparency is crucial (Ab Rahman et al., 2022). This includes measures like establishing independent anti-corruption agencies, enhancing governmental transparency, and improving the judicial system. Second, a focus on education and awareness is essential to shift cultural norms and attitudes toward corruption (Hashim & Rasdi, 2021), involving the promotion of ethical values and integrity, as well as educating the public on corruption's harmful effects. Finally, political will is vital in holding individuals accountable for corrupt actions, regardless of their status or rank (Mohd Zain & Yusoff, 2019). As Malaysians, it is essential to understand the societal impacts of corruption and work collectively to support governmental efforts in eradicating this pervasive issue. Such efforts are integral to restoring and stabilizing the national economy. Through this unity, Malaysians can foster a peaceful and just society with efficient and systematic governance. Additionally, as Malaysia's political, economic, and legal systems become more transparent, public trust and support for the government will strengthen, ensuring fairness and justice in governance.

### **Charity from an Islamic Perspective**

This discussion is intentionally presented to convey beneficial knowledge to society. Within the subtopic of charity from an Islamic perspective, emphasis is placed on examining how charity contributes to personal moral development and fosters exemplary values within communities. According to Firdaus (2022), practicing charity cultivates a generous character in individuals, as those who frequently give do so sincerely, without expecting anything in return. In essence, charity not only strengthens one's relationship with Allah SWT but also benefits social structures, enhances personal happiness, promotes education, and supports the national economy.

In Islam, charity encompasses both obligatory and voluntary acts of giving. The obligatory form, known as zakat, requires Muslims to donate a fixed portion of their wealth to assist specific groups, including the poor and needy. Voluntary charity, or sadaqah, involves additional acts of kindness and generosity beyond the obligatory. In Malaysia, the administration of zakat is governed by state Islamic religious councils, ensuring compliance with Islamic principles and local regulations. These councils oversee the collection and distribution of zakat funds, aiming to support social welfare and reduce poverty within the

community. Charity, defined as a form of giving offered with pure intentions, is done solely to seek Allah's blessings and approval (Firdaus, 2022). This practice, encouraged by Islamic teachings, aims to perfect human life both in this world and in the hereafter. Charity is accessible to all, without barriers such as age, ethnicity, culture, religion, or appearance (IKIM, 2005). Furthermore, charitable acts are not limited to financial or material contributions but can also include offering one's time, prayers, a simple smile, and other small acts of kindness (Abdullah, 2023). Thus, economic hardship or the lack of employment should not prevent individuals from participating in charitable practices, as there are many forms through which charity can be expressed.

One of the key virtues of charity is its demonstration of piety and faith in Allah SWT, instilling a sense of financial security among individuals who give part of their wealth to those in need. The notion of "those in need" is contrasted with the issue of corruption, highlighting the importance of understanding who should be given and in what circumstances, as prescribed by the Quran and Hadith. Additionally, charity brings numerous benefits, including blessed sustenance, longevity, relief from hardship, and Allah's love for the giver (Rusli et al., 2018). Islamic teachings note that specific times, such as the month of Ramadan, carry special significance, with acts of charity during this blessed month promising multiplied rewards (Abdullah, 2023).

Religion has long served as a guiding force for acts of kindness, instilling in individuals a sense of moral responsibility toward those in need (Mujib, 2022). Across various faith traditions, charity is deeply embedded to demonstrate devotion, foster communal bonds, and pursue spiritual growth. Islamic scholars frequently emphasize the importance of understanding charity's principles, sharing these teachings through religious activities like forums, sermons, and discussions at Islamic centers. However, a question remains—does society truly grasp its essence, or is this knowledge merely stored without practical application? If understood correctly, the rise in corruption cases would not continue to escalate. Charity and corruption are closely related, yet this discussion further explores charity's role in fostering societal awareness, aiming to encourage charitable acts as a preventive measure against crime through a deeper understanding of Islamic principles.

### **Corruption in Various Contemporary Issues**

Corruption is often associated with terms such as "kickbacks" or "bribery," both of which carry a negative connotation that tarnishes the image of a society (Kamus Dewan Edisi Keempat, 2005). The higher the corruption rate in a country, the lower the external perception of its people's capability, particularly in economic domains (Mohd Adnan & Ismail, 2013). Moreover, mass media frequently highlights cases involving high-profile government officials implicated in corruption, underscoring the extent to which this problem has permeated society. What exactly is corruption? The term "corruption" in Malay encompasses bribery and inducement (Kamus Dewan Edisi Keempat, 2005). In his book *Corruption: Its Nature, Causes, and Functions*, Syed Hussein Al-Attas defines corruption as the misuse of entrusted power for personal gain (Al-Attas, 2002). The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) further defines corruption as the acceptance or provision of inducements as rewards or incentives for an individual to perform or omit actions within their official duties (SPRM, 2023). Under Malaysian law, Sections 3 and 4 of the Anti-Corruption Act 1961 (Amendment 1971) interpret corruption as: "the acceptance or provision of any inducement as a reward, wage, or encouragement for a person to perform or refrain from performing any act related to their

principal's interests" (SPRM, 2019). In addition, "inducement," as defined by Section 2 of the Anti-Corruption Act 1997, includes "money, donations, loans, gifts, valuable securities, property, or interests in property, whether movable or immovable, or any similar benefits" (SPRM, 2019).

In recent years, Malaysia has faced several high-profile corruption cases impacting its political and economic landscape. The 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) scandal remains prominent, with former Prime Minister Najib Razak's prison sentence reduced in February 2024, though he continues to face multiple trials related to the fund. Additionally, in December 2023, the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) seized the Ilham Tower, a 60-story building in Kuala Lumpur, as part of an investigation into former Finance Minister Daim Zainuddin and his family. These cases underscore ongoing challenges in combating corruption within Malaysia's political and financial sectors. Corruption is essentially an abuse of power, a shortcut taken by individuals seeking rapid wealth accumulation. Typically, those engaging in corrupt practices disregard the detrimental consequences and focus solely on personal gain. Practitioners of corruption prioritize materialistic values, neglecting their responsibilities as public servants who should demonstrate integrity and trustworthiness. Instead, they lack accountability and moral values, leading them to engage in corrupt behavior (Nek Mustafa & Abdulah, 2023). Insufficient oversight by senior officials further enables this behavior, as individuals exploit opportunities to commit misconduct, abuse authority, and engage in corruption (Ab Rahman et al., 2022). Social and economic development unaccompanied by spiritual growth also facilitates corruption (Ab Rahman et al., 2023). For instance, if corruption becomes normalized within the public sector, it can gradually erode the government institution from within. As responsible individuals, society must remain vigilant in determining ethical ways to conduct daily life.

Additionally, corruption represents unlawful behavior when used to secure favors or benefits for personal gain through extortion. Discussing corruption is crucial, as it disrupts an organization's function and renders outcomes unpredictable. This social phenomenon has numerous causes, necessitating effective measures for prevention. Corruption in Malaysia is a multifaceted social phenomenon influenced by various factors, including political patronage, lack of transparency, and inadequate enforcement of anti-corruption laws. These elements create an environment where corrupt practices can thrive, undermining public trust and hindering economic development. To effectively combat corruption, Malaysia has implemented several measures such as (a) Strengthening Legal Frameworks: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) Act 2009 empowers the MACC to investigate and prosecute corruption cases, enhancing legal mechanisms against corrupt activities; (b) Promoting Transparency and Accountability: Initiatives like the National Anti-Corruption Plan (NACP) aim to increase transparency in government operations and hold public officials accountable for their actions. (c) Public Awareness and Education: Educational campaigns and public service announcements are conducted to inform citizens about the detrimental effects of corruption and encourage reporting of corrupt activities. These combined efforts are essential in addressing the root causes of corruption and fostering a culture of integrity within Malaysian society.



## Literature Review

### *Corruption Undermines National Stability by Eroding Trust in Institutions, Weakening Governance, and Hindering Economic Development*

Corruption has become endemic within society, with law enforcement agencies identified as among the public entities most susceptible to corrupt practices (Hassan, 2021). A literature review identifies ten major factors influencing corruption in police agencies, including rationalization, leadership, oversight, complaints, bureaucracy, training, external pressures, opportunities, rewards, and accountability (Hassan, 2021). These findings impact police agencies, anti-corruption bodies, and policymakers, providing insights for improving policies, anti-corruption action plans, and control strategies. The review also outlines future research directions, particularly in the design of studies exploring the underlying factors of corruption.

Corruption has increasingly become a critical issue, frequently discussed in the media. Its negative impacts are far-reaching, with corruption in both public and private sectors posing a serious problem for the government and a threat to national stability. For example, corruption in land administration disrupts public trust in land offices (Harun & Hassim, 2017). While the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2009 (ASPRM 2009) aims to address corruption, weaknesses persist, particularly in land administration, failing to fully safeguard the interests and rights of all parties involved (Harun & Hassim, 2017).

Corruption is rampant in Malaysia today, permeating both public and private sectors. Despite government efforts to address corruption, the issue remains pervasive. Reports from the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) show a 6.38% increase in corruption cases, with 909 cases reported in 2022 compared to 851 cases in 2021 (Ab Rahman et al., 2023). This indicates the need for ongoing research to combat corruption, which continues to contradict Islamic teachings. Factors contributing to this issue include low integrity, financial pressures, and ignorance of religious principles (Ab Rahman et al., 2023). Corruption's impact further erodes public trust, widens socio-economic gaps, and increases poverty rates in Malaysia. Addressing this issue requires an educational emphasis on moral values and ethics to instill honesty and integrity within society, thereby gradually reducing corruption over time.

Corruption among public officials, particularly within government enforcement agencies, frequently receives extensive media coverage due to its implications for public welfare. The Royal Malaysian Police (PDRM), the Malaysian Immigration Department (JIM), and the Royal Malaysian Customs Department (JKDM) are often implicated in corruption cases, with reports highlighting arrests, prosecutions, and convictions involving both junior and senior officers across these agencies (Azrae, Megat Latif & Mohamed, 2018). These cases reveal that corruption is a pervasive problem within enforcement agencies, with monthly reports on incidents ranging from minor bribes to multi-million-dollar scandals.

Identifying the internal factors influencing corruption, especially among public officials, is crucial. This study highlights these internal factors, which include a disregard for religious values, self-centeredness, the desire for a lifestyle beyond one's means, and greed (Daud, 2019). The study also examines the influence of Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) on the intention to engage in corruption, identifying eight principles: Taqwa, Ihsan, Masuliyah, al-Qist, Amal Saleh, al-Birr, Ma'ruf, and Itqan (Daud, Heng & Hassan, 2019). Embracing and practicing these principles fosters public servants who act to gain Allah's approval, adhere to entrusted

responsibilities, demonstrate commitment, and maintain high work standards, with the awareness that Allah observes every action. Consequently, this ethical framework can control intentions to engage in corruption and ultimately reduce corrupt behaviors (Daud, 2019).

Money laundering is another growing threat to global financial systems, with criminals employing various tactics to launder illicit funds and evade detection. One rising concern in Malaysia is the misuse of “mule accounts” (Hashim & Rahman, 2020). Cases involving mule accounts have surged across Malaysia, especially during the economic downturn induced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Raising public awareness, evaluating frontline banking staff practices in account openings, and identifying regulatory measures are vital to combat this aspect of money laundering. While compliance with account opening procedures is generally observed, many victims are unaware of the legal implications of sharing banking information with third parties (Hashim & Rahman, 2020). An analysis of reported cases reveals that some victims knowingly opened accounts for syndicates, while others were deceived by recruitment agents on social media. Therefore, collaboration among authorities, including Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM), PDRM, MACC, the Ministry of Education Malaysia (KPM), and the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (SKMM), is essential to address this issue effectively (Hashim & Rahman, 2020).

Promoting sound corporate governance is crucial to attracting foreign investment and preventing corruption. Like other developing nations, the ASEAN countries face two main challenges: increasing Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and controlling corruption (Hassan, 2021). In practice, advanced economies, especially in Europe and the United States, incorporate modern corporate governance as a critical fraud prevention tool. However, in the Malaysian context, the quality of whistleblowing policies remains an open question. The establishment of a comprehensive whistleblowing policy across ASEAN, with both internal and external programs, is essential to strengthening corporate governance in the region (Md. Salleh, Yusoff & Basnan, 2019).

### ***Charity Is a Fundamental Aspect of Faith, Encompassing Both Obligatory and Voluntary Acts of Giving***

Islam teaches its followers to develop empathy and compassion for the struggles of others, cultivating gratitude for Allah’s blessings, fostering social awareness, and creating a community that values mutual support. Today, people often become preoccupied with worldly pursuits, losing sensitivity to their surroundings, especially toward those in need. In response, charity is strongly recommended as a sunnah practice in Islam, encouraging individuals to nurture compassion within themselves. Acts of charity are highly encouraged in Islam to demonstrate care for others. Those who give charity are promised rewards from Allah, while recipients find ease in their lives. Quranic interpretations and Hadith emphasize that charity extends beyond monetary aid or material goods; it encompasses a wide range of actions reflecting social conduct and kindness, whether through wealth, effort, or thoughtfulness (Nur Afifah, Soleman & Mulyadi, 2022).

Charity can be defined as a voluntary and spontaneous offering given by a Muslim to others, unrestricted by time or amount, motivated solely by the desire to seek Allah’s pleasure and gain His blessings. In this sense, charity, like zakat, serves to purify one’s wealth, particularly for those who give zakat, as it spiritually cleanses and protects their wealth from harm (Nor Paizin, 2014). According to the Quran, the groups entitled to receive zakat (sadaqah) include

(1) the poor, (2) the needy, (3) zakat administrators, (4) those whose hearts are to be reconciled, (5) captives seeking freedom, (6) debtors, (7) individuals striving in Allah's cause, and (8) travelers in need (Firdaus, 2022).

Islamic scholars affirm that charity is a sunnah act (Mohd Dasar & Sujimon, 2020). Essentially, charity can be given to anyone, at any time and place, though it is particularly encouraged during the month of Ramadan (Rusli et al., 2018). Key assets for charitable giving include business profits and essential daily provisions. A Hadith states, "When the child of Adam dies, their deeds cease except for three things: a continuing charity, knowledge shared with others, and children (both sons and daughters) who pray for them" (HR. Muslim) (Abdullah, 2023). If an individual intends to donate an item belonging to another or held in joint ownership, the donation is invalid without the other owner's consent, as charity must stem from sincerity and voluntary intent. According to Hanafi scholars, charity given from impermissible wealth, such as from prohibited sources, invalidates the charitable act (Firdaus, 2022). In Islam, charity has a broad definition that extends beyond material contributions to encompass all acts of goodness, both physical and non-physical. Charity holds substantial social value, as sincere givers earn both spiritual rewards and social respect (Mujib, 2022).

Zakat, an obligatory practice and the third pillar of Islam is equally vital alongside the command to perform prayer (Nor Paizin, 2014). Beyond zakat, Muslims are encouraged to offer voluntary charity to earn Allah's rewards and blessings. Numerous Quranic verses highlight the virtues of zakat and charity, offering benefits in both this life and the hereafter (Nor Paizin, 2014). The rewards for those who perform zakat and charity are not confined to the Quran; they are also extensively detailed in various Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), providing motivation for Muslims to engage in charitable acts.

Moreover, charity extends beyond wealth or material goods; physical actions can also serve as charity. Understanding the proper ways to give charity and encouraging others in the Muslim community to do so highlights praiseworthy traits in Islam. Charity is a central act in Islam, deeply valued by Allah, who loves those who habitually give and help others. In this sense, charity invites Allah's love and exemplifies one's faith and devotion to Allah SWT, who guarantees sustenance for all His creatures (Mujib, 2022). A true understanding of charity leads individuals to trust in Allah's provisions and devote their resources to ways that please Him. Thus, charity encompasses not only giving wealth but also encompasses all acts of goodness, whether physical or non-physical (Abdullah, 2023).

### ***Corruption As a Pervasive Issue in Malaysia, Manifesting Across Various Sectors and Significantly Impacting National Stability***

Despite numerous measures and initiatives by the government to combat corruption, reports indicate that such activities continue to rise without signs of decline. According to the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), the number of arrests surged by 205% between 2014 and 2021, with cases increasing from 552 to 1,125, resulting in a loss of nearly RM 1.8 trillion for Malaysia due to corrupt activities (Ab Rahman et al., 2022). Corruption among both public and private sectors frequently becomes a topic of debate not only in Malaysia but also internationally.



A crucial step before implementing effective solutions is identifying the root causes of corruption. It is essential to analyze the contributing factors and challenges Malaysia faces in addressing corruption. Internal factors driving individuals to engage in corruption include opportunity, personal weaknesses, and a lack of integrity (Daud, 2019). External factors include low wages, financial stress, work pressure, and ineffective national policies (Daud, 2019). The use of technology to evade detection, interference and lack of cooperation from politicians, and a lack of public support and confidence pose significant challenges for the government and anti-corruption agencies in tackling corruption in Malaysia (Ab Rahman et al., 2022).

Political figures implicated in corrupt practices have become deeply embedded in Malaysia's political landscape, affecting public trust, particularly among younger generations (Musa, 2002). The youth, highly attentive to current national issues, have their distinct expectations and access to diverse information sources beyond mainstream media. Advancements in communication technologies, including the internet and mobile phones, have facilitated the unrestricted dissemination of information (Mohd Basori & Awang Besar, 2020). The internet, as a global information source, transcends borders and fields, establishing itself as a "new media" among Malaysians, especially the youth (Dunsmore & Lagos, 2008). Cyber platforms, including blogs, websites, forums, YouTube, emails, Facebook, and Twitter, expand the space for public discourse, enhancing social, political, and democratic participation and mobilization (Mat Jali et al., 2012). Hence, in evaluating criteria for selecting candidates and political parties, the youth's perception of current political issues and their support for the government are pivotal. They tend to favor candidates who exhibit honesty and integrity and often align with political parties advocating for human rights, transparency, justice, and anti-corruption. The 12th General Election in Malaysia marked a political shift, with the ruling Barisan Nasional losing control in five states and failing to secure a two-thirds majority in the Federal Parliament due to factors such as the prevalence of corruption within the former government (Mohd Zain & Yusoff, 2019).

Corruption within a country is influenced by institutional factors, financial liberalization, and trade openness. It is undeniable that corrupt practices contravene Malaysia's Shariah law, which upholds Islam as the nation's official religion. Corruption related to illegal financial flows is linked to institutional factors, financial liberalization, and trade openness, which significantly impact illicit financial flows. This highlights the importance of the government's role in controlling institutional quality in terms of political stability, corruption rates, and legal frameworks to curb illegal financial transactions. Moreover, controlling financial liberalization policies through capital controls is essential to address the rising issue of illicit financial flows (Abdul Karim, Nizam & Sarmidi, 2013). According to Sanusi & Syed Ismail (2016), the Quran and Sunnah provide guidance on combating corruption through an Islamic approach. Given the prevalence of corruption in Muslim-majority countries, adopting strategies modeled on the Prophet Muhammad, his companions, and the early generations' approaches to combating corruption could be beneficial (Sanusi & Syed Ismail, 2016).

In conclusion, implementing Islamic work ethics in any organization requires collaboration across various parties, particularly from organizational leaders. Leaders play a crucial role in uniting all members to work voluntarily toward achieving organizational goals. Although numerous studies have examined Islamic work ethics, research on leaders' roles in implementing these ethics remains scarce, particularly in understanding how leaders can

facilitate Islamic work ethics in Malaysia. Previous studies indicate that corporate leaders play six critical roles in implementing Islamic work ethics, including training, communication, decision-making, monitoring, reward systems, and fostering a supportive environment (Daud, Heng & Hassan, 2019). These six roles serve as catalysts in nurturing the application of Islamic work ethics and can provide a framework for other corporate leaders in Malaysia as they strive to implement these ethics effectively within their organizations (Basir et al., 2016).

### Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach, well-suited to the complexity of the issue under investigation, which requires detailed observation and analysis. The data obtained is descriptive and primarily gathered through document analysis (Flick, 2014). Sources of information include both printed and digital written materials, such as magazines, books, forums, news reports, official websites, and other relevant sources. In addition, media sources, particularly news reports, are also utilized. This approach involves qualitative data collection from a comprehensive literature review, aiding the researcher in obtaining accurate information (Babbie, 2017). These references provide a solid foundation for the study, allowing the findings to be presented in an organized and intellectually robust manner for readers' understanding. The study is structured chronologically, covering a general discussion of the issue, an examination of challenges, and recommendations for addressing the issue, providing a coherent narrative and direction for further analysis.

### Discussion

#### ***Corruption Creates A Cycle Of Instability, Impeding Sustainable Development And National Progress.***

Corruption is a longstanding offense that has persisted throughout human civilization. Historical examples of corruption involving leaders include President Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines, Shah Reza of Iran, Ceaușescu of Romania, and President Richard Nixon of the United States, each facing consequences for their abuse of power (Abdullah Julkifli, Mail & Abu Bakar, 2022). Similarly, Malaysia has experienced high-profile corruption cases such as the 1MDB, SRC International, and Sabah Water scandals, which rank among the nation's largest corruption cases (Abdullah Julkifli, Mail & Abu Bakar, 2022). The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has implemented various measures to combat corruption, including advisory services and public education (SPRM, 2021).

Malaysia is now facing a severe integrity crisis due to rampant corruption, which extends beyond public officials and infiltrates broader society (Daud, 2019). This widespread corruption damages the nation's reputation globally, diminishes foreign investor confidence, hinders economic growth, and contributes to inflation (Othman, Mokhtar & Esa, 2022). Reports indicate that corruption incidents have surged following the movement control orders in Malaysia from 2020 to 2021, highlighting individual behavior as a significant factor driving corrupt practices (Daud, 2019). To curb this issue, society must collectively embrace values of honesty and trustworthiness across all levels, fostering a culture of anti-corruption rooted in integrity and discipline.

A critical factor contributing to corruption is the normalization of corrupt practices within communities, particularly in law enforcement, where unethical leadership choices have fostered a culture of self-interest over public duty (Mohd Yusop, 2014). This culture can only

be dismantled through public cooperation and collective action against corruption, such as citizens reporting instances of corruption to the police and utilizing social media to expose unethical behaviors in their environment.

Additionally, money laundering represents a global issue with significant implications for national security. Advances in technology have enabled criminals to further proliferate money laundering activities, which have infiltrated Malaysia. Major forms of financial crime in Malaysia include fraud under the Penal Code, illegal investment schemes under the Financial Services Act, and violations of the Capital Markets and Services Act (Hashim & Rahman, 2020). Money mules are also prevalent, where individuals permit criminals to use their bank accounts for illegal transactions, often without fully understanding the illicit nature of these activities (Hashim & Rahman, 2020). In summary, the roots of corruption can be traced to individuals' disregard for moral and religious values, desire for a lifestyle beyond their means, inherent greed, and personal motivations that drive corrupt behavior.

Whistleblowing has emerged as a key governance tool in combating corruption, with several international standards and regional frameworks, such as the Australian Standard (2003), EU Resolution 2060, and the G20's 2010 Guidelines for Whistleblower Legislation, influencing policy within ASEAN as well (Md. Salleh, Yusoff & Basnan, 2019). While effective corporate governance through whistleblowing policies is emphasized in ASEAN documentation, the uptake within ASEAN countries has been limited. National assessments reveal that Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Singapore continue to face challenges in publicly disclosing corruption-related information (Md. Salleh, Yusoff & Basnan, 2019).

Corruption remains a deeply embedded issue in human society. Addressing it requires a comprehensive approach from the government, incorporating moral values across all aspects of public life to raise awareness about the gravity of corruption, particularly among public officials. Contributing factors include individual attitudes, low salaries, greed, and weak institutional enforcement. Authorities must impose proportionate punishments to deter corrupt practices, aiming to reduce corruption among public officials significantly (Azrae, Megat Latif & Mohamed, 2018).

### ***Charitable Practices Integral To Fostering A Compassionate and Just Society***

In Islam, many verses in the Quran emphasize that the benefits of charity extend beyond worldly life and are multiplied in the hereafter. Every act of charity does not deplete wealth or diminish one's riches as some may believe. Rather, charity fosters prosperity and wealth, provided it is offered with sincere intentions to seek Allah's approval. It is essential to note that specific groups are prioritized as recipients of charity, including the poor, zakat administrators, new converts, those in debt, and those striving in Allah's path, such as religious educators or Islamic schools (Mujib, 2022). This demonstrates that charity is highly encouraged in Islam as an expression of gratitude for Allah's blessings, including health and sustenance.

Muslims are advised to practice charity sincerely, without compulsion, and to give according to their means, without focusing on specific amounts (Firdaus, 2022). Charity, alongside zakat and waqf, teaches believers to spend their wealth in a manner pleasing to Allah. In Islam, wealth is seen as a temporary trust from Allah, to be managed wisely for the benefit of oneself, family, and community (Mujib, 2022). Wealth must be shared and distributed as Allah has

prescribed, ensuring that people focus on fulfilling life's essentials without succumbing to greed, thereby attracting Allah's blessings (Mujib, 2022).

Allah SWT promises rewards for those who consistently practice charity. Charitable individuals are often recognized as generous and righteous. However, today, genuine generosity is rare, especially among the youth, who prioritize worldly pursuits over the afterlife (Mohd Dasar & Sujimon, 2020). Some may practice charity merely as a means of public display, a behavior termed *riya* in Islam. Additionally, young people may feel that their youth exempts them from the need for such virtuous acts.

Islam promotes charitable acts throughout the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), with the concept of charity mentioned repeatedly in the Quran in chapters like Al-Baqarah, An-Nisa, At-Taubah, and Al-Mujadalah. Charity refers to providing material or non-material assistance to those in need. The term *sadaqah* originates from a word meaning sincerity or truth, indicating that true believers have sincere faith (Nur Afifah, Soleman & Mulyadi, 2022). In Islamic terminology, *sadaqah* shares a similar meaning with *infaq*, referring to material aid, while *sadaqah* encompasses a broader scope, including non-material contributions. The concept of charity is not confined to material wealth but also includes physical acts, both yielding equal spiritual rewards (Nor Paizin, 2014). Islam encourages frequent charity as it offers intercessions for the soul in the hereafter (Abdullah, 2023).

Many Islamic scholars have debated the concept of charity, with varying interpretations and rulings. However, a consensus exists regarding the role of charity as a symbol of devotion and faith in Allah SWT, which individuals should maintain throughout their lives (Abdullah, 2023). Deep understanding of charity extends beyond giving; it is viewed as a key provision for success in the hereafter. Additionally, scholars believe charity atones for minor sins when performed sincerely, with faith that Allah will provide greater rewards in return. Charitable acts include both material and non-material contributions, such as praying for others, smiling, reciting *tasbih*, *takbir*, *istighfar*, and assisting others (Abdullah, 2023). This demonstrates Allah's fairness, as charity is accessible to all, regardless of financial capacity.

Hadiths from the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and scholars agree that charity is a *sunnah* practice, meaning it brings rewards when performed but incurs no sin if omitted. Numerous Quranic verses and Hadiths elaborate on the benefits of charity, indicating that it eases life's affairs in this world and in the hereafter, helping believers to enter paradise (Nur Afifah, Soleman & Mulyadi, 2022). Charity also mitigates arrogance and strengthens social bonds within the Muslim community. Therefore, charity is highly encouraged, whether through wealth, effort, or kind acts.

Charity has the potential to alleviate poverty. From an economic perspective, charitable impact should be sustainable, not temporary. For this reason, a form of charity known as *rotational charity* exists, providing financial support for those in need (Mujib, 2022). Governments can also engage in charitable efforts to alleviate poverty. In *rotational charity*, beneficiaries receive aid and repay it when able, distinguishing it from loans by adhering to Islamic conditions.

The Quran, Hadiths, and various narrations highlight numerous benefits of charity, such as purification from sin, elevated status with Allah, ease in worldly affairs, increased sustenance, a shield in the hereafter, and protection from traits like greed and arrogance (Nor Paizan, 2014).

These rewards encourage charitable behavior, as such acts are continuously rewarded by Allah SWT.

Additionally, charity is linked to the pursuit of happiness. Psychological analyses indicate that those who give charity often experience happiness, knowing their actions alleviate the suffering of others (Rusli et al., 2018). This emotional response stems from a sense of responsibility, as individuals who have experienced similar hardships empathize with those they help, fostering gratitude and satisfaction.

Charity also serves as a safeguard against calamities. Intentional charity, coupled with sincere prayers, can protect individuals from harm. As stated in a Hadith by the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), "Give charity without delay, for it stands in the way of calamity" (Mohd Dasar & Sujimon, 2020). Charity promotes well-being, longevity, and lawful wealth accumulation. The concept aligns with *hibah*, *ariyyah*, and *zakat*, differing only in purpose. Importantly, charity must stem from lawful means, as only pure intentions and resources attract Allah's pleasure. Thus, charity is accessible to all individuals, transcending wealth to include acts like helping others, teaching peers, and participating in mosque activities (Abdullah, 2023). Charity is doubly rewarding when performed during Ramadan. Clearly, charity offers numerous blessings and insights according to the Quran, Hadiths, and other narrations, embodying the piety and faith of devout Muslims seeking eternal success.

In conclusion, charity can be practiced anytime, anywhere. For instance, charity can be given in a mosque after prayers, by treating someone to a meal, or in various other situations. However, certain periods, such as Ramadan, provide amplified rewards for charitable acts (Masduki, Purwana & Sariningsih, 2022). Ramadan opens doors for forgiveness, and Allah SWT grants immense rewards through charity. As Hadith states, "The upper hand is better than the lower hand. The upper hand is the one that gives, while the lower hand is the one that receives." Muslims understand that three deeds continue to benefit even after death: disseminating knowledge, continuous charity, and prayer. However, certain actions can nullify charity's rewards, such as using unlawful wealth for charity or giving charity while in debt. Instead, individuals should prioritize repaying debts to avoid forfeiting the charity's rewards. This discussion reveals that charity yields multiple life benefits, with those who engage in ongoing charity receiving abundant rewards.

### ***Corruption Is A Pervasive Issue That Affects Multiple Facets Of Society, Hindering Growth, Distorting Justice, And Eroding Public Trust***

When discussing corruption, it is often linked to the concept of integrity, which implies honesty, transparency, and ethical wholeness. This concept is central to Malaysia's National Integrity Plan (2006), which emphasizes the superior qualities of individuals committed to honesty and moral behavior (Wook, Md. Yusof & Haron, 2022). An employee with low integrity is more prone to corruption, even if they possess high qualifications and skills. The presence of opportunities may lead such individuals to accept bribes from companies or contractors, approving contracts and tenders without adhering to standard organizational procedures. This indicates that anyone can face challenges; however, to see someone's true character, grant them power. Power can lead individuals to lose themselves and forget the responsibilities they should uphold. Those lacking integrity exhibit weak physical and mental strength, easily influenced by officials seeking to exploit their vulnerabilities (Musa, 2002).



Today, corruption can be defined as an illegal act punishable by law. According to Islam, corruption violates Allah's commands and is strictly prohibited for Muslims (Ab Rahman et al., 2022). Generally, corruption involves offering or receiving incentives in exchange for favorable treatment. Characteristics of corruption include unethical actions, such as accepting gifts or money to influence decisions or actions improperly. Corruption is prevalent in both public and private sectors, particularly in procurement, infrastructure projects, and development (Ab Rahman et al., 2022).

Combating corruption requires strict enforcement of laws and penalties. The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) serves as an enforcement agency monitoring corruption-related misconduct. However, due to limited personnel and resources, public assistance is essential to aid MACC's efforts. The Judiciary must ensure that corruption cases are handled swiftly and fairly, preventing perpetrators from manipulating the legal process. Swift and unbiased sentencing for convicted individuals will deter others from engaging in such unethical practices, underscoring the need for comprehensive legal action to eradicate corruption (Sanusi & Syed Ismail, 2016).

Additionally, corruption can be tackled by establishing Integrity Units within every agency, public or private, as implemented by the government in 2008. These units detect and prevent corrupt practices while promoting employee integrity and maintaining a harmonious work environment. Through these units, complaints and information can be investigated promptly, with whistleblower protection ensuring anonymity (Basir et al., 2016).

Islamic teachings guide Muslims toward a life of integrity and well-being, emphasizing the welfare of humanity. Islamic law aims to protect people's wealth from illegitimate transfers. Islamic scholars agree that corruption is prohibited, as it contradicts *Maqasid al-Shariah* (objectives of Islamic law). In Islamic jurisprudence, corruption is viewed as bribery, an act where individuals seek unentitled wealth through illicit means, such as bribing a judge or lawyer to secure an undeserved legal outcome (Al-Attas, 2002).

Addressing corruption requires reforming administrative systems and laws to align with Islamic principles. The MACC, for instance, should operate independently from political influence to avoid conflicts of interest in handling cases involving politicians. By doing so, MACC would more effectively combat corruption, regardless of rank or position. Additionally, the law must fully adhere to Islamic principles to ensure that the public treats corruption as a serious offense. MACC should uphold justice in all corruption matters, recognizing that corruption is a grave offense explicitly forbidden by Islamic law (Abdul Karim, Nizam & Sarmidi, 2013).

The time has come for a meticulous and holistic approach to curb this problem before it becomes endemic. Education should serve as the "vaccine" against the spread of corruption, fostering integrity from an early age. In line with national aspirations for outcome-based education, corruption can be addressed at its roots. Higher education institutions play a pivotal role in instilling ethical values in students, helping to "immunize" them against corrupt practices through robust curriculum design, implementation, monitoring, and assessment (A. Rahim, 2010).

As responsible citizens, we must uphold ethical values, particularly adults, as our behavior influences the younger generation. Community and environment greatly impact individual behavior, and poor conduct often reflects the surrounding influence. If adults embody positive ethics, it sets a precedent for youth. Therefore, fostering a positive social environment is essential. If criminal activities arise within a community, collaborative efforts are required to address them effectively. Awareness campaigns can also educate communities on positive ethics, strengthening public resilience against negative behaviors (Mohd Zain & Yusoff, 2019).

Public education on corruption is also essential, as bribery involves giving incentives to individuals in authority for favors or projects. High-value gifts beyond one's means intended to secure assistance are also considered corruption. This understanding must be instilled, especially among the youth, as they are future leaders. When people can distinguish between acceptable and corrupt actions, society can effectively eliminate corruption at its core (Che Ya, 2015). Both bribe-givers and recipients should face severe penalties as a deterrent. If everyone fulfills their responsibilities, particularly law enforcers, this issue can be swiftly resolved, fostering a society built on integrity and trust, enhancing Malaysia's image globally.

### **Suggestions and Direction**

#### ***Corruption Erodes Trust, Weakens Governance, and Destabilizes National Institutions.***

The implications of corruption are profound, especially when it involves national leaders and politicians responsible for governing the country. The far-reaching consequences include damaging the nation's reputation and deterring foreign investment. If unchecked, corruption will exacerbate socio-economic inequality and hinder economic growth (Othman, Mokhtar & Esa, 2022). Thus, public awareness at all societal levels is crucial in supporting efforts to combat corruption. In summary, Malaysians must rigorously address this issue, reducing its prevalence and fostering a peaceful, fair, and harmonious society.

Corruption has existed throughout human history and has become ingrained in certain segments of Malaysian society, seemingly normalized. To address this pervasive issue, government and community seriousness is essential. High-profile cases, such as the 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) and SRC International Sdn. Bhd. scandals, illustrate how corruption impacts political, social, and economic stability (Abdullah Julkifli, Mail & Abu Bakar, 2022). The public must not turn a blind eye to corruption, which has severe consequences for the nation's overall well-being.

To combat corruption, the government must ensure the National Anti-Corruption Plan (NACP) 2019-2023 is effectively implemented. The NACP reflects the people's desire for a corruption-free nation that values transparency, accountability, and integrity (Berita Harian, 2019). This plan, although similar in function to the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), operates through different agencies and departments, united in their commitment to maintaining clean governance through 115 initiatives targeting politicians, corporations, law enforcement, and public procurement (Jabatan Perdana Menteri, 2019). If seriously pursued, the NACP can foster a harmonious ecosystem supporting integrity and rejecting corruption. Priority areas include public sector administration, political governance, legal and judicial systems, enforcement, public procurement, and corporate governance (Jabatan Perdana Menteri, 2019). In addition to the NACP, the Ministry of Rural Development has launched the Organizational Anti-Corruption Plan (OACP) 2020-2024 to address corruption, governance,

and integrity issues within Malaysia's government system (Kementerian Pembangunan Luar Bandar, 2020). The OACP serves as an educational resource, reminding public servants of the consequences of corruption. Together, these plans aim to enhance Malaysia's image as a corruption-free nation and foster integrity among its citizens.

The MACC should conduct preliminary research to develop governance modules that comprehensively address corruption at its roots. These modules can be incorporated into educational institutions to cultivate an anti-corruption generation equipped with the confidence and resilience to combat this issue. Furthermore, the public is encouraged to report corruption-related complaints to MACC or relevant agencies. By engaging in such reports, the public assists the government in its fight against corruption. MACC's independence is supported by five autonomous bodies representing the Malaysian people, ensuring corruption is tackled with integrity, transparency, and credibility (Azrae, Megat Latif & Mohamed, 2018).

### ***Reflecting The Core Islamic Values of Empathy, Generosity, and Communal Responsibility***

Understanding the concept of charity from an Islamic perspective is essential for practicing it in a meaningful way. Knowledge of the benefits of charity can inspire more people to give sincerely, without boredom or reluctance (Abdullah, 2023). When Muslims recognize that charity is an expression of devotion to Allah SWT, they do not fear poverty. Each act of charity brings blessings, prolongs life, alleviates hardships, and invites Allah's love (Rusli et al., 2018). Therefore, Muslims must increase their charitable acts, as this practice encompasses all aspects of life. Importantly, charity should be given sincerely, without compulsion (Mohd Dasar & Sujimon, 2020).

An individual's actions reflect their character. In Islam, developing virtuous traits is crucial to pleasing Allah SWT, and charity reinforces generosity and sincerity. However, many young people lack awareness of charity due to worldly distractions or insufficient exposure. Charity does not have to be material; it can also involve physical acts, easing both academic and life matters, with reliance on Allah SWT. Institutions must cultivate charitable practices among youth, promoting a generation that values compassion and gratitude toward Allah SWT.

Charity in Islam refers to giving with a pure intention, solely for Allah's sake. In this context, charity can serve as a substitute when certain religious obligations cannot be fulfilled. For instance, if someone lacks funds, they can still give charity through kind acts, as helping others is also a form of charity. Prioritized groups include family members in need, as emphasized by the Prophet Muhammad (SAW): "The greatest reward is for the dinar you spend on your family" (Mujib, 2022). Additional recipients include the poor, indebted, and those striving in Allah's path. Beyond devotion to Allah SWT, charity reinforces humanitarian values. Hence, it is recommended that society practices charity regularly, fostering an enduring habit of kindness.

Despite varying interpretations and evolving practices, the Quran and Hadith remain the primary sources guiding charity in Islam (Abdullah, 2023). This study aims to deepen understanding of charity by exploring Quranic verses, Hadith, and scholarly insights. A clear understanding of charity's definitions and Quranic support can help society grasp its virtues, Islamic obligations, and benefits (Abdullah, 2023). Programs promoting charity in economic, social, and educational sectors can also encourage public participation.

Charity, like zakat, is a means of drawing closer to Allah SWT, though charity is voluntary while zakat is obligatory (Nor Paizin, 2014). Both practices offer similar rewards, underscoring their significance within the community. The virtues of charity, advocated by scholars and supported by Quranic and Hadith references, provide reassurance and broader knowledge.

Islam encourages diverse forms of charity, with scholars agreeing that charity or zakat can be given at any time. However, Ramadan holds special importance for charitable acts (Rusli et al., 2018). The emphasis lies in charity's role in shaping societal attitudes, as reflected in the Hadith that describes three deeds that continue to benefit after death: *sadaqah jariyah* (ongoing charity), knowledge shared, and the prayers of a righteous child (Rusli et al., 2018). Islamic teachings affirm that happiness increases through acts of kindness, motivating individuals to enhance their character. Therefore, the government should establish more charity facilities to encourage public generosity.

In conclusion, charity is integral to Islamic teachings. It can be practiced at any time and is highly recommended in Islam due to the rewards Allah SWT promises to givers (Mujib, 2022). Charity brings Allah's forgiveness, blesses and purifies wealth, and deters sinful behavior (Nur Afifah, Soleman & Mulyadi, 2022). While charity is often associated with financial support for the needy, its scope is broader, encompassing acts of kindness and time. This practice also educates society on gratitude toward Allah SWT. Every act of charity, when performed sincerely, is accepted by Allah SWT, strengthening the relationship with Him and opening doors to blessings.

### ***A Holistic Approach to Reforms, Accountability, Technology, and Public Engagement Significantly Reduce Corruption's Impact Across Contemporary Issues***

Focusing on the prevalent cases of corruption, it is essential to recognize that high-ranking political officials, who hold key positions in national administration, must be the primary focus in the fight against corruption, as they bear the responsibility of shaping the nation's future. The establishment of the "Rasuah Busters" team aims to mobilize all Malaysians to stand united against corruption, ensuring a brighter future for Malaysia (Astro Awani, 2021). Rasuah Busters acts as a vigilant force, pressuring corrupt governments and political leaders to relinquish power. They have put forth six demands for the government and political leaders, including full implementation and support for the National Anti-Corruption Plan (NACP), the enactment of a Political Funding Act, and ensuring the independence and transparency of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) and the Attorney General's Chambers to purge Malaysian politics of corruption (Astro Awani, 2021). A fundamental success factor in this endeavor lies in the example set by political leaders through moderate living and consistency between words and actions (Sanusi & Syed Ismail, 2016).

Ensuring transparency, honesty, and accountability within the public sector is also crucial in combating corruption, particularly among public officials. They should adhere to a comprehensive Islamic work ethic, fulfilling assigned responsibilities with integrity, a strong commitment to their duties, and a firm belief that Allah observes all actions (Daud, Heng & Hassan, 2019). Additionally, while MACC is widely viewed as the primary anti-corruption agency, it alone cannot combat corruption effectively. The criminal justice system should be approached holistically, encompassing enforcement, prosecution, and judiciary elements to ensure effective corruption control (Ab Rahman et al., 2022). These three components must work cohesively to address corruption thoroughly. Holistic measures, such as public education

on the detrimental effects of corruption, are vital for instilling a zero-tolerance culture, especially among the youth. Although young, they represent the future leaders of the nation. If all citizens can identify corrupt actions, Malaysia can eliminate corruption at its roots (Che Ya, 2015).

Corruption acts as a societal disease with profound destructive effects on institutional integrity. Addressing such a pervasive issue requires comprehensive and effective prevention strategies. Proposing and implementing anti-corruption initiatives is challenging, as each method varies in effectiveness and may require improvements. Effective prevention methods can emerge if the government and anti-corruption agencies prioritize the root causes of corruption in Malaysia.

Efforts to build a corruption-free society should not rest solely on the shoulders of authorities but should involve all sectors of society. International cooperation is also essential, as corruption often extends beyond national borders. MACC has adopted a three-pronged strategy to combat corruption holistically through the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Act of 2009, striving to cultivate a society free from corruption (Sinar Harian Online, 2019). Furthermore, the quality of human resources within MACC warrants attention. Only highly educated individuals with strong integrity should be appointed to serve within the Commission, ensuring a qualified workforce to combat corruption effectively.

## Conclusion

### *Corruption as a Cause of National Instability*

In the pursuit of a fair and just society, it is imperative to combat corruption through decisive and sustained actions. Various methods can be adapted in Malaysia to curb the spread of corruption. Perpetrators and beneficiaries of corruption should be subject to appropriate punishment, serving as a warning to others. With the establishment of institutions such as the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) and through initiatives like the Organizational Anti-Corruption Plan (OACP) and the National Anti-Corruption Plan (NACP), citizens can report corruption cases to the relevant authorities, thus contributing to reducing the prevalence of corruption within public service (Jabatan Perdana Menteri, 2019; Kementerian Pembangunan Luar Bandar, 2020). When citizens actively collaborate with organized bodies to curb corruption, public trust in government institutions increases, attracting international respect and economic engagement, while fostering a corruption-free environment for national stability.

Corruption is detrimental to both the nation and its people, capable of eroding governmental systems and causing injustice and instability (Azrae, Megat Latif & Mohamed, 2018). It compromises the government's ability to provide essential services such as healthcare, education, and welfare. Additionally, corruption hampers economic growth through inefficient use of financial resources, negatively impacting infrastructure development and social programs, and ultimately stalling national progress (Hashim & Rahman, 2020). Furthermore, corruption erodes public trust in government, weakening governance and potentially leading to the failure of governmental functions (Awang Besar et al., 2012). While corruption poses grave threats to national integrity, appropriate approaches—strengthening institutions, raising public awareness, and political commitment—can significantly reduce its impact.



***Charity Serves to Purify One's Wealth and Soul, Fostering Economic Equity Within the Community***

Viewed from a broader perspective, charity can contribute to a nation's economic welfare (Masduki, Purwana & Sariningsih, 2022). Moreover, charity nurtures a sense of happiness, as it purifies the heart and soul, fostering gratitude to Allah SWT, moderation, and compassion among people (Nur Afifah, Soleman & Mulyadi, 2022). Islamic charity must align with Quranic principles, guiding Muslims to distinguish between permissible and impermissible forms of charity. Understanding this helps communities recognize the benefits of charity and deters them from corrupt practices, which carry severe consequences in the hereafter.

In brief, society must play an active role in addressing corruption, especially within organizations and workplaces. The government must enforce laws to prevent the widespread occurrence of corruption, while religious scholars can promote charity as a counter to corruption, educating society that corrupt practices violate Islamic law. Thus, understanding charity and corruption within an Islamic framework can deter individuals from unethical actions. Charity fosters countless benefits, such as increased happiness and a sense of fulfillment (Rusli et al., 2018). Through a clear understanding of charity, guided by scholars, individuals are encouraged to use their resources in ways that align with divine approval.

Charity also brings numerous societal benefits, such as earning a higher spiritual rank, ease in matters, increased provision, protection on the Day of Judgment, and safeguarding from harm (Nor Paizin, 2014). Additionally, charity cultivates positive values like generosity and gratitude, enhancing one's character and spiritual connection to Allah SWT. In essence, charity reflects piety, faith, and love for Allah SWT.

Islamic perspectives on charity are rooted in the Quran, Hadith, and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, promising divine rewards. Although voluntary, charity offers immense blessings (Rusli et al., 2018). Charity can be practiced at any time, by anyone, and encompasses a wide range of actions. Non-material acts of kindness, such as praying for others, expressing gratitude, visiting the mosque, smiling at others, helping neighbors, and tidying one's home, all qualify as charity, leaving no excuse to avoid charity throughout life.

***Enhancing Transparency, Enforcing Stricter Regulations, and Engaging the Public in Oversight Efforts to Foster a Fairer, More Accountable Society***

It is the responsibility of institutions like the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) to continually develop new initiatives to combat corruption effectively. *Ta'zir* punishment is one initiative that can be employed. Although *ta'zir* grants flexibility to judges and leaders, it must be implemented transparently to avoid any harm to society (Sanusi & Syed Ismail, 2016). Additionally, education and awareness regarding corruption should be promoted among the public, regardless of age, status, or environment, as corruption can infiltrate all societal levels. Prevention efforts should start from the grassroots, reaching leaders at the highest levels. When corruption's dangers are continuously communicated, a vigilant, corruption-averse society will emerge, reducing the prevalence of corruption. Research has identified multiple factors driving corruption, including individual and familial influences, societal roles, leadership deficiencies, and ineffective laws (Ab Rahman et al., 2022).

Numerous perspectives on corruption illustrate its meaning and various forms. As corruption is undeniably wrong, this clarity ensures that society is well-informed, helping individuals recognize corrupt actions in daily affairs. Effective anti-corruption strategies require comprehensive consideration of both legal and enforcement dimensions, adapted to meet societal changes (Che Ya, 2015). Rapid technological advancement complicates corruption detection, underscoring the need for updated enforcement methods.

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