Social Media and Public Participation in Exposing Corruption in Bandar Lampung

ABSTRACT

Corruption remains a major concern within the society of Bandar Lampung, making it essential to examine the role of social media in promoting transparency and public accountability. This study explores how social media serves as a platform for citizens to report corruption cases, disseminate information, and foster collective awareness of its social impacts. In addition, the study highlights several challenges, such as unequal access to technology, resistance or negative responses from certain authorities, and information fragmentation that may hinder constructive public dialogue. Using a literature review approach, this research analyzes a range of relevant sources to evaluate both the effectiveness and the limitations of social media in combating corruption. The findings are expected to provide strategic recommendations for optimizing social media as a social and political instrument that enables stronger collaboration between society and government, thereby supporting the creation of a cleaner, more transparent, and sustainable governance system.

Keyword: social media, corruption, transparency, public accountability

INTRODUCTION

Corruption is a serious challenge facing Indonesia in its efforts to achieve sustainable development and good governance. According to a 2023 report by Transparency International, Indonesia ranks 110th out of 180 countries in its Corruption Perceptions Index, with a score of 34/100, indicating that corrupt practices remain deeply entrenched. Corruption not only causes economic losses but also erodes government legitimacy and weakens public trust in state institutions (Rose-Ackerman, 2017). Locally, Bandar Lampung, the capital of Lampung Province, faced significant corruption cases between 2018 and 2023,

involving both regional officials and private actors, directly impacting the quality of public services and development (ICW, 2023).

The definition of corruption as stipulated in Article 2 of Law No. 31 of 1999, defines corruption as an unlawful act to enrich oneself or another person or corporation, resulting in financial losses to the state. Despite strict regulations, corrupt practices persist due to weak oversight, a culture of permissiveness, and low government transparency (Johnston, 2019). Therefore, alternative approaches are needed to encourage public participation in monitoring and exposing corruption.

The development of social media presents new opportunities in the realm of transparency and accountability. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok are no longer simply entertainment platforms but have become important arenas for public discourse, advocacy, and the mobilization of social movements (Castells, 2015). Social media facilitates real-time public participation, enabling the reporting, documentation, and dissemination of information on alleged corruption more quickly than conventional channels (Khan, 2018). In the Indonesian context, the use of social media has proven effective in organizing social movements, such as through hashtag campaigns, online petitions, and publicizing corruption cases that mobilize public opinion (Lim, 2020).

Previous studies have highlighted the role of social media in promoting transparency and digital democracy, for example in the context of elections (Tapsell, 2018), anti-corruption social movements in Asia (Bertot et al., 2010), and public oversight of government (Howard & Hussain, 2013). However, specific studies on how social media plays a role in exposing corruption cases at the city level, particularly in Bandar Lampung, are still limited. This is where this research's novelty lies: examining the role of social media contextually in exposing corruption practices in urban areas with their own social and political complexities.

Social media plays a significant role in exposing corruption practices in Bandar Lampung through three main functions: disseminating public information, mobilizing social movements, and strengthening public participation in government oversight.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the role of social media in exposing corruption cases in Bandar Lampung and to identify the mechanisms of public participation formed through digital spaces in promoting local government accountability.

Based on this description, the research problem can be formulated as follows: What is the role of social media in exposing corruption in Bandar Lampung?

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design, as the primary objective is to deeply understand the role of social media in exposing corruption in Bandar Lampung (Yin, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). This qualitative approach was chosen to explore the meanings, perspectives, and experiences of social actors directly and indirectly involved in corruption issues through digital spaces. Bandar Lampung was chosen as the research location due to its socio-political complexity and the number of corruption cases that garnered public attention during the 2018–2023 period.

The research subjects consisted of local journalists covering corruption issues, NGO activists or anti-corruption community activists, academics or regional political observers, and social media users who actively voice and discuss corruption cases. Data were collected through three main techniques. First, in-depth interviews with key informants to gain insight into their experiences and perspectives on the role of social media in eradicating corruption. Second, online observations were conducted by observing public interactions, discussions, and

campaigns on platforms such as Twitter/X, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, particularly those related to corruption issues in Bandar Lampung. Third, a documentary study included reports from anti-corruption agencies, online media articles, social media posts, and legal documents related to corruption cases in the region (Silverman, 2020).

The data obtained were analyzed using the thematic analysis method as developed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The analysis process included data transcription and familiarization, open coding, grouping codes into broad categories, and identifying key themes relevant to the research focus. These themes were then interpreted to answer the research questions and test the research hypotheses regarding the function of social media as a means of disseminating information, mobilizing social movements, and strengthening public participation in government oversight.

To maintain validity and reliability, this study employed source triangulation techniques, namely comparing information from journalists, activists, academics, and the public, as well as method triangulation through a combination of interviews, observation, and documentation. In addition, member checking was conducted by requesting confirmation of interview results from informants, as well as peer debriefing with fellow researchers or academics to test the objectivity of the analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This study also paid attention to research ethics, including maintaining the confidentiality of informants' identities, requesting informed consent before interviews, and using public data from social media while still paying attention to user privacy aspects.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Broadly speaking, corruption is an act committed to enrich oneself for the benefit of individuals or groups. This enrichment is carried out by exploiting a position, typically in the private sector or government. Corruption is ubiquitous

and not limited to these areas. Therefore, to research and develop solutions, we must be able to distinguish between corruption and crime. Criminal acts in the Criminal Code can be broken down into two types: subjective and objective elements. The "subjective" element refers to elements attached to or related to the actor, encompassing all content within their heart, while the "objective" element refers to elements related to the conditions under which the actor's actions must be carried out. The elements of a criminal act of corruption are divided into:

1) Every person

This is evident from Article 1 paragraph 3 of the Law on the Eradication of Criminal Acts of Corruption, which stipulates that every person, whether an individual or a company, is subject to criminal law in a criminal act of corruption.
2) Unlawfully

According to this definition, if all elements mentioned in the crime clause are met, then the behavior is illegal. Therefore, if all these elements are met, there is no need to further investigate whether the actions taken are considered inappropriate by society.

3) Enriching oneself, another person, or a corporation

The word "enrich" literally means to make richer. Meanwhile, "rich" means "having a lot of possessions (money, etc.)." It can be concluded that becoming rich means making someone who is not rich richer, or making someone who is already rich richer.

4) Detriment to state profits or the national economy

The existence of a criminal act of corruption is sufficient to fulfill the established elements of behavior without causing consequences. Social media is an online medium, where users can easily participate, share, and create content, including blogs, social networks, wikis, forums, and virtual worlds. Blogs, social networks, and wikis are the most common forms of social media used by people worldwide.

Another opinion states that social media is an online medium that supports social interaction and uses web-based technology to transform communication into interactive dialogue. Social media is defined as a new set of communication and collaboration tools that enable various types of interactions previously unavailable to the general public.

Social media is often understood as a group of new forms of online media that share almost all of the following characteristics: participation, which encourages contributions and feedback from everyone; openness, which overcomes barriers to accessing and utilizing media content; conversations, which facilitate two-way communication; communities, which share common interests; and connectedness, which utilizes links to other sites, resources, and people. Essentially, there are six forms of social media that contain notes and thoughts that innovate and change lives: social networks, blogs, wikis, podcasts, forums, content communities, and microblogging.

Corruption in Bandar Lampung

Corruption remains a serious problem in Indonesia, including at the regional level, such as Bandar Lampung. As the capital of Lampung Province, the city holds a strategic position in governance, budget distribution, and public services. This strategic position also makes it vulnerable to corruption, particularly in the management of regional budgets and development projects. According to Transparency International's 2023 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), Indonesia only scored 34 out of 100, indicating relatively high levels of corruption (Transparency International, 2023). This situation is also reflected in Bandar Lampung, where numerous corruption cases continue to surface.

Socioeconomic factors play a significant role in shaping corrupt behavior. High unemployment and poverty rates in Lampung contribute to weak integrity and open opportunities for corruption, both within the bureaucracy and the private sector (Todaro & Smith, 2020). Furthermore, limited access to quality education leads some residents to lack critical awareness of the corruption

occurring around them. Permissive social norms regarding bribery, gratuities, and extortion also reinforce a culture of corruption (Johnston, 2019). Thus, socioeconomic conditions are inextricably linked to the tendency for corruption in Bandar Lampung.

Institutionally, a weak oversight and accountability system is a major factor contributing to the prevalence of corruption in Bandar Lampung. A report by the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) recorded more than 30 major corruption cases in the city over the past five years, including budget misuse, bribery, and procurement of goods and services (KPK, 2023). These cases involve various levels of public officials, from civil servants to regional heads, negatively impacting public trust in the local government.

The impact of corruption is not only economic, but also social and political. Economically, corruption results in the leakage of funds that should be allocated for infrastructure development and improving public welfare (Rose-Ackerman & Palifka, 2016). Socially, corruption undermines norms of justice and widens disparities between social groups. Politically, the proliferation of corruption cases in Bandar Lampung has tarnished the bureaucracy's image and weakened the local government's legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2015).

Nevertheless, public awareness of the dangers of corruption is growing, particularly with the advent of social media, which allows the public to be more active in monitoring and reporting corrupt practices. Social media has become an alternative platform that can promote transparency, participation, and public accountability. This phenomenon aligns with the view of Bertot, Jaeger, and Grimes (2010), who emphasized that information technology and social media can be effective tools in building an anti-corruption culture. In Bandar Lampung, several corruption cases have even garnered public attention through online campaigns, hashtags, and publications by citizen journalists.

Therefore, understanding the state of corruption in Bandar Lampung requires more than just looking at the legal or regulatory aspects; it also requires examining the socio-economic, institutional, and public participation dimensions

in oversight. Corruption in this city is a multidimensional problem that requires an integrative approach. The combination of strengthening oversight institutions, anti-corruption education, and utilizing social media as a platform for public participation can be an effective strategy in suppressing corrupt practices and improving governance at the regional level.

Prominent Corruption Cases

One of the most prominent corruption cases in Bandar Lampung occurred in 2021 at the Public Works Agency. The former head of the agency was arrested by the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) for his involvement in the misuse of infrastructure project funds. The state lost an estimated Rp 10 billion, which should have been allocated for road and bridge construction to improve public accessibility (KPK, 2021). This case reflects weak internal and external oversight in the budgeting and implementation of public projects. This aligns with Transparency International's (2023) findings that the infrastructure sector is one of the most corruption-prone areas due to its large budgets and complex procurement mechanisms.

Another case occurred at the Bandar Lampung Education Agency in 2021, involving corrupt practices in the procurement of school books and stationery. The method used was price mark-ups, resulting in a loss of approximately Rp 5 billion in the regional budget (ICW, 2022). This case highlights a classic problem in the governance of goods and services procurement in the education sector, where weak oversight allows for irregularities. In line with the study by Suryadarma et al. (2020), corruption in the education sector not only harms state finances but also hinders improvements in the quality of education and public access to adequate learning resources.

Equally significant is the 2020 case of bribery at the Bandar Lampung Health Office. Several officials were found to have accepted bribes from contractors managing health projects, totaling up to IDR 2 billion (KPK, 2020). This practice demonstrates a patronage relationship between the bureaucracy

and the private sector, ultimately sacrificing the public interest. Rose-Ackerman and Palifka (2016) emphasized that this type of bribery is not only an ethical issue but also indicates weak regulations and transparent reporting mechanisms in the public service sector, particularly in health.

These cases demonstrate that corruption in Bandar Lampung is not limited to one sector but permeates various strategic areas that impact people's lives. Infrastructure, education, and health are basic service sectors that should be priorities for regional development. However, they have instead become arenas for budget misuse by public officials. This is in line with the findings of the World Bank (2019) which states that corruption in the public sector has the potential to worsen the quality of services, , increasing inequality, and slowing economic growth.

Furthermore, corruption cases in Bandar Lampung demonstrate a systemic pattern, with weak oversight and accountability being key contributing factors. According to Mungiu-Pippidi (2015), corruption often persists due to networks of power and mutually protective political interests. Therefore, eradicating corruption cannot rely solely on law enforcement; it also requires public participation, budget transparency, and reform of the bureaucratic system. In Bandar Lampung, public engagement through social media has begun to play a significant role in highlighting and monitoring corruption cases.

Thus, an analysis of corruption cases in Bandar Lampung demonstrates that corruption is a multidimensional problem. Institutional, socio-economic, and bureaucratic cultural factors interact to perpetuate corrupt practices. The solutions offered cannot be partial but must be integrative through strengthened oversight, community involvement, anti-corruption education, and the use of information technology. Only with these comprehensive measures can the potential for corruption be reduced and public trust in local government be restored.

The Impact of Corruption on Regional Development

Corruption has a multidimensional impact on regional development, both financially and socially. In Bandar Lampung, losses due to misuse of public funds have hampered the implementation of infrastructure projects and public services that should support public welfare. Road and bridge construction projects, for example, are often stalled due to corrupt practices, worsening transportation conditions and incurring high social costs for the community (Rose-Ackerman & Palifka, 2016). The inability of local governments to ensure budget transparency results in low development effectiveness.

Furthermore, corruption creates stark social inequities. Lower-class communities, who should be the primary beneficiaries of government programs, are actually the most disadvantaged. When public services such as education, health, and transportation are disrupted by corruption, the burden falls heavily on vulnerable groups. This condition breeds political apathy, where the public loses trust in the government and tends not to participate in the democratic process (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2015). Thus, corruption not only destroys the economy but also undermines social trust and political legitimacy.

In the context of prevention community involvement is a crucial factor that must be prioritized. Studies on anti-corruption education emphasize the need for active public involvement in preventing, monitoring, and reporting corrupt practices (Suryanto, 2020). This can be achieved through formal education, public campaigns, and the establishment of a transparent reporting system. With strong public participation, the public can act as a strategic partner with the government in ensuring clean and accountable governance.

Social media is now an effective instrument for increasing public participation in monitoring corrupt practices. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram enable the public to quickly share information, report suspected cases, and discuss public issues (Bertot et al., 2012). The rapid spread of information on social media can exert social pressure on law enforcement officials to promptly investigate corruption cases. For example, the publication of

videos or photos of alleged corruption can attract mainstream media attention and encourage legal proceedings.

Beyond serving as a means of publicity, social media also serves as an interactive medium between the public and the government. Citizens can ask questions, convey complaints, or seek clarification directly from public officials. The responses provided by government institutions through social media reflect transparency and accountability, which can strengthen public trust (Gao & Lee, 2017). However, effective public participation through social media can only be achieved if digital literacy is improved. Without the ability to properly sort out information, the potential for disinformation can undermine the anti-corruption movement.

Ultimately, the role of social media in eradicating corruption encompasses two main dimensions. First, the tangible impact of exposing corruption cases that can force public officials to resign or face legal action. Second, the intangible impact, such as increased public understanding of good governance and the growth of political accountability through healthy public discourse (Transparency International, 2022). Therefore, the use of social media combined with anti-corruption education and strengthening the legal system can strengthen eradication efforts.

CONCLUSION

Law enforcement efforts to eradicate corruption in Indonesia have shown some positive achievements, particularly in the public sector through the arrests of high-ranking officials involved in corruption. However, its effectiveness in reducing corruption overall still faces many challenges, such as political immunity, inconsistency in law enforcement, and weak oversight in the private sector. The performance of law enforcement agencies is also often affected by political interference and a weak legal culture, resulting in many corruption cases

not being fully resolved. Therefore, deeper institutional reforms, increased capacity of law enforcement officers, and the implementation of a stricter oversight system are needed to create a more effective law enforcement system.

The media plays a crucial role in increasing accountability and transparency in the public and private sectors, which are essential components in combating corruption. Through social media, the public can discuss legal issues and share opinions. Despite the influence of political parties and investors, media coverage of corruption promotes good governance. Two guidelines link public opinion about Indonesia's legal system and social media. On the one hand, social media helps the public voice their concerns and desires regarding the legal system. Conversely, social media's ability to disseminate knowledge can also change public perceptions of legal institutions.

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