

Strengthening whistleblower protection through legal reform and Islamic ethics in combating corruption in public institutions

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ABSTRAK

Introduction

Whistleblowers serve as pivotal actors in exposing corruption within governmental and institutional systems. While Indonesia has formal legal instruments aimed at protecting whistleblowers, practical challenges persist, and public perception continues to discourage reporting. Despite Islamic ethical teachings that support moral intervention, cultural and institutional obstacles remain unaddressed. This study investigates whistleblower protection in Indonesia from both legal and Islamic economic perspectives.

Objectives

The study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of whistleblower protection regulations in Indonesia, identify legal and institutional gaps, and explore how Islamic ethical principles can support and enhance existing mechanisms to promote ethical reporting and institutional accountability.

Method

Using a qualitative research approach, this study applies a structured literature review of statutory laws, academic publications, institutional documents, and comparative international frameworks. It integrates positive legal analysis with normative Islamic economic thought to assess the institutional and cultural readiness of Indonesia to protect and empower whistleblowers in corruption-related cases.

Results

The study reveals that while legal frameworks such as Law No. 31 of 2014 offer formal protection, enforcement is weak, jurisdictional overlaps exist, and regional implementation is inconsistent. Institutions like the LPSK and KPK lack adequate coordination and resources, particularly outside Jakarta. Public stigma against whistleblowers remains high. Comparative analysis shows that countries with clear reporting

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procedures and strong enforcement offer better protection. Islamic ethical principles such as justice (*adl*), accountability (*mas'uliyah*), and public welfare (*maslahah*) can serve as normative frameworks to strengthen public trust and ethical motivation for whistleblowing.

Implications

The findings suggest that whistleblower protection in Indonesia requires a multidimensional reform strategy involving legal precision, institutional capacity building, and cultural transformation. Incorporating Islamic values into education, legal discourse, and institutional governance may promote greater societal acceptance and operational effectiveness of whistleblower mechanisms.

Originality/Novelty

This study offers a unique contribution by synthesizing legal analysis with Islamic ethical principles to propose a hybrid framework for whistleblower protection. It highlights the necessity of culturally grounded legal reform in Muslim-majority contexts and provides actionable recommendations for legal, institutional, and educational policy development.

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INTRODUCTION

Corruption remains a persistent and systemic issue in Indonesia, presenting one of the greatest threats to the integrity of governance and public trust in institutions. Various studies confirm that corruption undermines democratic institutions, hampers economic development, and contributes to social inequality. In response, the Indonesian government has undertaken numerous measures to combat corruption, ranging from regulatory reforms to the establishment of specialized agencies such as the Corruption Eradication Commission (*Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi* abbreviated KPK in Bahasa Indonesia). Yet, despite these institutional arrangements, corruption continues to thrive, often undetected until exposed by insiders. In this context, whistleblowers have become critical agents of accountability, acting as catalysts for uncovering concealed corruption. Their insider knowledge allows law enforcement bodies to pursue investigations that would otherwise be hindered by limited access to internal information (Kusumastuti et al., 2023; Rahmi et al., 2024; Wahyuni et al., 2024).

From an Islamic economic perspective, corruption is not merely a legal violation but a fundamental moral and ethical failure. Islamic teachings underscore principles such as justice (*adl*), accountability (*mas'uliyah*), and transparency (*shafafiyyah*), all of which are foundational to ethical governance. Whistleblowing, understood through the lens of *al-Amr bil Ma'ruf wal Nahi an al-Munkar* (commanding good and forbidding wrong), becomes not just a legal mechanism but a moral obligation. Consequently, efforts to enhance legal protections for whistleblowers in Indonesia can be informed by

both positive law and Islamic ethical principles ([Abdullah et al., 2024](#); [El-Bassiouny et al., 2023](#)). Furthermore, the integration of Islamic values into public governance has been shown to increase public trust and institutional effectiveness, reinforcing the broader cultural and spiritual imperative of combating corruption ([Alazzabi et al., 2020](#)).

The primary problem addressed in this research is the inadequacy of legal protections for whistleblowers in Indonesia, which discourages individuals from reporting corruption. Whistleblowers face retaliation ranging from professional repercussions to threats against personal safety. While laws such as Law No. 31 of 2014 on the Protection of Witnesses and Victims provide a formal structure, the implementation remains inconsistent and ineffective. Factors contributing to this ineffectiveness include limited public awareness, insufficient institutional support, and the absence of a strong culture of transparency and ethical behavior ([Ariyanti & Ramadhan, 2023](#)).

Broadly, global practices provide useful insights into building a supportive environment for whistleblowers. In countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom, legal frameworks include protections against retaliation, anonymity guarantees, and even financial incentives. These frameworks reflect a recognition of the personal and professional risks faced by whistleblowers and underscore the importance of comprehensive support systems. Indonesia's challenge lies not in the absence of legal foundations but in the failure to operationalize them meaningfully across institutions and regions ([Aryana, 2019](#)).

More specifically, several Indonesian studies have proposed targeted reforms to bridge the gap between regulation and practice. These include enhancing the capacity of the Witness and Victim Protection Agency (*Lembaga Perlindungan Saksi dan Korban* abbreviated LPSK in Bahasa Indonesia), establishing whistleblower protection units in regional jurisdictions, and creating independent reporting channels that ensure anonymity. The alignment of such mechanisms with Islamic values of justice and communal responsibility would not only enhance their effectiveness but also deepen their cultural resonance ([Gunawan & Meliana, 2024](#); [Hasbi, 2023](#)). For instance, [El-Bassiouny et al. \(2023\)](#) advocate for a framework that incorporates both legal protections and religious imperatives, fostering a moral ecosystem that supports ethical reporting.

Furthermore, empirical studies suggest that Islamic education plays a critical role in shaping individual attitudes toward corruption. Programs that emphasize anti-corruption values rooted in religious teachings have shown promise in increasing moral awareness and civic engagement ([Fakhriza et al., 2024](#); [Munawar & Nugraha, 2024](#)). The role of religious education in shaping ethical decision-making strengthens the argument for integrating Islamic economic principles into anti-corruption policy and practice. This approach resonates with the wider objectives of *maqasid al-sharia*, particularly the protection of wealth (*hifz al-mal*) and the promotion of justice (*adl*) ([Abu-Rajab et al., 2024](#)).

The existing body of literature offers a rich foundation for understanding both the legal and ethical dimensions of whistleblower protection. Comparative studies have

highlighted gaps in Indonesia's current system, particularly the absence of enforceable protections at the regional level and the insufficient coordination between law enforcement agencies and the LPSK. There is also a lack of standardized procedures for handling whistleblower complaints, leading to inconsistent responses and inadequate safeguards. While the literature extensively explores international best practices, it falls short in integrating Islamic ethical frameworks into a coherent national strategy. This constitutes a significant gap, particularly in a country where Islamic values strongly influence social norms and institutional legitimacy (Nedy, 2023; Podungge & Ratnawati, 2023).

This study seeks to fill that gap by providing a comprehensive evaluation of whistleblower protection in Indonesia through the dual lenses of positive law and Islamic economic thought. It aims to assess the effectiveness of existing legal protections, identify systemic barriers to implementation, and propose actionable reforms rooted in both national legal frameworks and Islamic ethics. The study introduces an innovative analytical model that integrates legal analysis with moral imperatives derived from Islamic teachings. This approach not only enriches the existing discourse but also offers culturally grounded recommendations that can enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of anti-corruption efforts in Indonesia. By doing so, this research contributes to the broader goal of fostering a transparent, accountable, and morally resilient governance system.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Legal and Ethical Frameworks for Whistleblowing in Indonesia

Research on whistleblower protection in Indonesia consistently highlights a disjunction between formal legal frameworks and their practical implementation (Hajdú & Rahman, 2021; Latan et al., 2023; Nurhidayat & Kusumasari, 2018, 2019). The enactment of Law No. 31 of 2014 on the Protection of Witnesses and Victims offers legal provisions for safeguarding whistleblowers. However, the law lacks effective enforcement and clarity regarding procedural mechanisms, particularly at regional levels where institutional support remains weak (Nedy, 2023). Studies indicate that although the Witness and Victim Protection Agency (LPSK) is authorized to offer protection, its geographic and administrative limitations restrict its ability to respond to threats promptly. Moreover, legal ambiguities contribute to inconsistencies in the handling of whistleblower cases (Hasbi, 2023).

Institutionally, the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) also holds a role in ensuring whistleblower protection. Nevertheless, overlapping responsibilities with other law enforcement bodies lead to coordination issues and bureaucratic inertia. Literature suggests that reforming these institutions to facilitate better cooperation and clearer jurisdiction is essential for bolstering whistleblower support (Gunawan & Meliana, 2024).

Islamic Ethical Perspectives on Whistleblowing

Islamic scholars have positioned whistleblowing within the moral framework of *Hisbah*, which upholds the duty of promoting good and forbidding wrongdoing. This framework

legitimizes whistleblowing as a religious and ethical imperative (Fauziyah & Hasyim, 2024; Qudus & Fahm, 2018). As argued by El-Bassiouny et al. (2023), Islamic values such as honesty (*sidiq*), accountability (*mas'uliyah*), and justice (*adl*) provide a theological rationale for reporting unethical conduct, even when it occurs within state or religious institutions.

Islamic economic thought also supports institutional accountability through the principle of *maslahah* (public welfare). Within this framework, whistleblowing is conceptualized as a tool for preserving societal justice and the equitable distribution of resources, particularly in public institutions where corruption threatens collective well-being (Tuan Mansor et al., 2022; Zainudin & Wan Zahari, 2018).

Furthermore, Islamic financial institutions have gradually incorporated whistleblowing mechanisms. These measures are driven by the need for Sharia-compliant operations, which mandate integrity and ethical compliance in financial transactions. Authorities such as the Sharia Supervisory Board (SSB) oversee these procedures, suggesting that whistleblowing frameworks can be effectively embedded into Islamic institutional governance (Cheliatsidou et al., 2023).

Comparative Legal Approaches in Muslim-Majority Countries

Studies comparing whistleblower protection laws across Muslim-majority nations reveal a complex interplay between Sharia principles and positive legal systems. In countries like Jordan and Oman, whistleblowing is often undermined by societal stigma despite Islamic teachings promoting accountability (Al-Haidar, 2018; Alshoubaki & Harris, 2022). Abdullah et al. (2024) argue that without legal protections grounded in both civil and religious law, whistleblowers in such contexts face dual threats—legal repercussions and social ostracism.

Notably, the UAE and Malaysia have made legislative progress by institutionalizing whistleblower protection, albeit with varying levels of alignment to Islamic jurisprudence (Al-Tawil, 2024; Che Abu Bakar & Mohamad Mangsor, 2022). These developments suggest a growing recognition of the need for harmonizing legal mechanisms with Islamic ethical imperatives, particularly through the lens of *maqasid al-shariah* (the higher objectives of Islamic law), which include the preservation of life, wealth, and dignity.

Structural Approaches in Islamic Economic Thought

Islamic economic frameworks such as *siyāsah shari'yyah* (Islamic legal-political governance) emphasize state responsibility in upholding justice and preventing malfeasance (Din et al., 2023; Dunuraen, 2015; Rauf, 2015). Hidayat et al. (2024) advocate for the use of structural legal aid to empower communities against corruption, linking legal empowerment to the broader objectives of *maqasid al-shariah*. Likewise, Al Munawar (2025) highlights the relevance of punitive and rehabilitative legal sanctions, suggesting that Islamic jurisprudence provides a comprehensive approach to deter and correct corrupt behavior.



Moreover, Islamic finance literature shows how mechanisms like zakat (almsgiving) and waqf (endowment) are designed to ensure resource redistribution and transparency, thereby reducing opportunities for corruption. These economic tools, if misused, can undermine public trust, hence necessitating robust whistleblowing frameworks that are both legally and religiously justified (Wahyudi et al., 2021).

Educational and Cultural Dimensions

Scholars emphasize the importance of public education in creating an ethical culture supportive of whistleblowing (Dorasamy, 2012; Farooqi et al., 2017; Kelly & Jones, 2013). Suyadi et al. (2021) and Munawar & Nugraha (2024) argue for embedding anti-corruption values in Islamic education, from primary to higher education. Educational curricula grounded in Islamic ethics foster a long-term cultural shift, positioning whistleblowing not as deviant but as an honorable civic and religious duty.

Furthermore, community-based awareness programs have been shown to mitigate stigma and foster collective responsibility. Nordin et al. (2021) suggest that religious leaders and civil society organizations can play a critical role in reshaping public perceptions and encouraging morally courageous acts of whistleblowing.

Synthesis and Hypothesis Justification

The literature reviewed provides compelling evidence that legal protection alone is insufficient to promote whistleblowing in corruption cases. Instead, a multi-dimensional approach—combining legal, institutional, ethical, and educational strategies—is required. Stronger, well-enforced legal protections that are informed by both Islamic jurisprudence and international best practices, when paired with institutional reforms and cultural reorientation, are likely to increase whistleblower reporting. This supports the hypothesis that a holistic strategy will enhance the effectiveness of anti-corruption efforts in Indonesia. The integration of Islamic ethical values with legal reforms presents a culturally resonant and normatively robust path forward for improving whistleblower protection. This hybrid approach not only aligns with the ethical convictions of the majority Muslim population in Indonesia but also fortifies the structural integrity of public institutions against corruption.

METHOD

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research approach using a structured literature review method (Booth, 2016; Fayette & Bond, 2018; Gentles et al., 2016). The qualitative nature of the research is grounded in the aim to interpret legal, ethical, and institutional dimensions of whistleblower protection within the Indonesian context, while also integrating relevant perspectives from Islamic economic thought. This design is suitable for examining complex social phenomena where contextual interpretation, rather than quantification, is essential (Rahmi et al., 2024).

A literature review strategy was selected to facilitate a comprehensive and critical analysis of existing laws, policies, institutional practices, religious discourses, and

comparative studies (Ongaro & Tantardini, 2024; Rogers et al., 2005; Tracey, 2012). Through an interpretive paradigm, this method allows for the synthesis of diverse textual sources to identify regulatory gaps, ethical frameworks, and policy implications, which are crucial for proposing effective and culturally attuned legal reforms.

Data Sources

The primary sources of data include statutes, government regulations, official reports, academic journal articles, institutional publications, and international legal instruments. Particular attention is paid to Law No. 31 of 2014 on the Protection of Witnesses and Victims, which forms the legal backbone of whistleblower protection in Indonesia. Supplementary sources include scholarly analyses of KPK practices, LPSK interventions, and regulatory gaps as documented in recent Indonesian legal literature (Gunawan & Meliana, 2024; Hasbi, 2023).

Additionally, this study incorporates Islamic jurisprudential texts and economic theory, particularly those that discuss concepts such as *hisbah*, *maqasid al-shariah*, *adl* (justice), and *mas'uliyah* (accountability). These religious sources provide a normative basis for integrating moral and legal dimensions into the discussion of whistleblower protection. Academic literature from both Western and Islamic traditions is critically reviewed to enable an inter-normative comparison.

Literature Selection and Review Process

The literature review was conducted in several stages. First, relevant keywords such as "whistleblower protection," "anti-corruption law," "Islamic ethics," and "legal reforms in Indonesia" were used to retrieve academic sources from databases like JSTOR, Scopus, Google Scholar, and national repositories. Sources published between 2015 and 2024 were prioritized to ensure both recency and relevance.

Second, a relevance-based filtering process was employed. Studies that directly addressed the legal treatment of whistleblowers, institutional mechanisms of enforcement, or religious-ethical imperatives were selected for full-text analysis. Third, sources were categorized based on thematic clusters, including: (a) regulatory frameworks; (b) Islamic ethical discourse; (c) comparative international practices; and (d) sociocultural dynamics. These clusters were then synthesized to derive patterns, contradictions, and emergent insights.

Analytical Framework

The analysis followed a dual-track interpretive model: one track focused on positive legal texts and institutional practices in Indonesia; the other drew from Islamic economic and ethical literature. This hybrid framework allows for both descriptive and normative evaluation. Descriptive analysis captures the strengths and limitations of current legal and policy measures. Normative analysis evaluates these measures against Islamic moral imperatives and the broader objectives of public governance.

Legal analysis involved examining statutory provisions, judicial interpretations, and institutional mandates. These were assessed for clarity, enforceability, and compatibility with international standards. For example, the role of the LPSK was

examined in light of its statutory authority and logistical capacity to protect whistleblowers across diverse Indonesian provinces (Nedy, 2023).

The Islamic analysis drew on principles such as *al-Amr bil Ma'ruf wal Nahi an al-Munkar* (commanding right and forbidding wrong), *istislah* (public interest), and *maslahah* (welfare). The integration of these principles helps ground legal reforms in a culturally and religiously resonant framework. Comparative insights from other Muslim-majority countries, such as Malaysia, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia, were used to benchmark Indonesia's policy performance (Abdullah et al., 2024; Al Munawar, 2025).

Limitations and Ethical Considerations

While the literature review offers a rich analytical base, it is inherently limited by the availability and scope of published materials. The absence of first-hand interviews or field data constrains empirical generalizability. However, the focus on legal and normative evaluation compensates for this limitation by offering a theoretically rigorous and context-sensitive framework.

In terms of ethics, all sources were cited and analyzed with integrity. There was no manipulation of data or misrepresentation of viewpoints. Islamic sources were interpreted through recognized jurisprudential frameworks to maintain doctrinal accuracy. The methodology also remains sensitive to the socio-cultural complexities of whistleblower stigma, ensuring that the analysis respects community norms while advocating reform.

RESULTS

Role of Whistleblowers in Uncovering Corruption

Whistleblowers play a critical role in exposing corruption, particularly within institutions where internal monitoring mechanisms may fail. Their access to privileged, often concealed information enables the detection of irregularities that are otherwise inaccessible to external auditors or law enforcement agencies (Wahyuni et al., 2024). Empirical evidence from Indonesia underscores this point. For instance, the exposure of corruption in the Ministry of Youth and Sports was initiated by an internal report from an employee who noticed procurement irregularities. Similarly, in the Bank Century case, whistleblower disclosures of suspicious fund flows triggered broader investigations. These examples illustrate that whistleblowers often serve as the initial source of credible information, prompting institutional accountability mechanisms to act.

Despite their importance, whistleblowers frequently face retaliatory actions, including threats, demotions, or legal harassment. The lack of institutional guarantees against such reprisals discourages individuals from reporting wrongdoing. Scholars have emphasized the need for institutional culture shifts and protective frameworks to empower whistleblowers (Andreadakis, 2019; Clark, 2023; Hariz et al., 2024; Nicholls et al., 2021; Smaili, 2023; Wulfekühler & Andrason, 2023). Moreover, from an Islamic perspective, the act of whistleblowing aligns with the ethical principle of *al-amr bil ma'ruf wa al-nahi 'an al-munkar* (Abd Samad et al., 2015; Abd Samad & Khalid, 2015; Ruslan et al., 2022; Solihu & Ambali, 2011), underscoring a moral obligation to uphold

justice. The confluence of ethical duty and legal necessity highlights the multifaceted importance of whistleblowers in corruption detection and prevention.

Consequently, strengthening whistleblower protection is not only a policy imperative but also a strategic necessity for fostering transparency and deterring systemic corruption. Their role must be institutionalized within broader anti-corruption frameworks to ensure their actions are both valued and safeguarded.

Regulations Governing Whistleblower Protection Around the World

Globally, legal systems have increasingly recognized the need for robust whistleblower protection laws to encourage the reporting of corruption and misconduct. Countries such as the United States, South Africa, Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom have adopted comprehensive legal frameworks designed to shield whistleblowers from retaliation. The U.S. Whistleblower Protection Act of 1989 and the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act of 2010 exemplify this trend by offering not only legal safeguards but also monetary incentives for individuals who disclose significant violations, particularly those relating to the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act ([Baloria et al., 2017](#); [Peffer et al., 2015](#); [Ramirez, 2019](#); [West & Bowman, 2020](#)).

In South Africa, the Protected Disclosures Act No. 26 of 2000 protects whistleblowers from "occupational detriment," a term encompassing any adverse work-related outcomes ([Botha, 2021](#)). Canada's Section 425.1 of the Criminal Code ensures immunity from punitive employer actions such as dismissal or demotion ([Di Carlo & Goodman-Vincent, 2025](#)). Australia's Protected Disclosures Act 1994 exempts whistleblowers from criminal and civil liabilities while preserving their anonymity ([October, 2015](#); [Savage, 2016](#)). Similarly, the UK's Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 prevents dismissal and victimization based on whistleblowing ([D. Lewis, 2015](#); [D. B. Lewis, 2017](#); [Quayle, 2021](#)).

These international frameworks underscore the importance of combining legal protections with mechanisms that ensure enforcement and foster trust. What distinguishes these systems is their commitment to procedural clarity, institutional accountability, and the promotion of ethical behavior as part of a broader governance strategy. These models provide valuable benchmarks for Indonesia in crafting more effective and enforceable whistleblower protection policies.

Regulations Governing Whistleblower Protection in Indonesia

Indonesia's legal framework for whistleblower protection is articulated primarily through Law No. 31 of 2014, which amends Law No. 13 of 2006 concerning the Protection of Witnesses and Victims. Article 5, paragraph (1) of this law asserts that whistleblowers—categorized as witnesses, victims, or reporting parties—shall not face criminal or civil liability for their testimonies, except in cases of proven bad faith. In theory, this provision offers a foundational layer of protection. However, its practical application remains inconsistent and inadequate ([Hasbi, 2023](#)).

Additionally, the Witness and Victim Protection Agency (LPSK) is authorized to offer psychological and physical protection to whistleblowers. The agency operates in conjunction with the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK), which is also mandated

to secure the identity and safety of informants in corruption cases. However, overlapping responsibilities, budgetary constraints, and jurisdictional ambiguities hamper the efficacy of these institutions. Notably, in remote or regional jurisdictions, the absence of local LPSK branches hinders timely protection efforts ([Asliani & Koto, 2022](#)).

Moreover, although existing regulations provide a structural basis for protection, they fall short in addressing issues of implementation, trust, and institutional responsiveness. Many whistleblowers report facing retribution or counter-litigation despite seeking protection under the law. These shortcomings suggest the need for a comprehensive overhaul that includes clearer procedural guidelines, broader jurisdictional coverage, and enhanced institutional capacity. Integrating Islamic legal principles, such as *maslahah* (public benefit), could further strengthen the ethical foundation of these protections.

Challenges in Implementing Legal Protection for Whistleblowers

The practical implementation of legal protection for whistleblowers in Indonesia faces several structural and cultural barriers. One key challenge is the inadequacy of existing laws, which often lack specificity and procedural clarity. While statutes such as Law No. 31 of 2014 provide a legal basis for protection, they do not establish detailed protocols for enforcement, leaving room for institutional discretion and inconsistency ([Sumual et al., 2020](#)).

Another significant barrier is the lack of coordination among law enforcement agencies. The LPSK, KPK, and police often operate in silos, resulting in fragmented efforts to protect whistleblowers. This lack of inter-agency synergy undermines the reliability of protective measures and may deter individuals from seeking institutional recourse. Furthermore, institutional capacity is limited—both in terms of human resources and operational reach—particularly in regions far from Jakarta, where whistleblowers remain vulnerable due to inadequate on-the-ground support ([Nedy, 2023](#)).

Culturally, there is a pervasive fear of retaliation and social stigma associated with whistleblowing. Public awareness of whistleblower rights is low, and societal narratives often frame whistleblowers as disloyal or subversive. This cultural climate discourages ethical reporting and fosters impunity. As Putri et al. (2022) note, without public education and societal reform, legal mechanisms alone will not suffice to promote whistleblower activity. Addressing these challenges requires systemic reform, including legal precision, institutional integration, resource enhancement, and a cultural shift that valorizes rather than stigmatizes ethical dissent.

Whistleblower Cases Related to Corruption in Indonesia

Empirical cases in Indonesia provide insight into the real-world complexities of whistleblower protection. One illustrative example is the corruption case involving the Ministry of Youth and Sports, where procurement fraud was exposed due to internal whistleblowing. The report led to an official investigation by the KPK and highlighted the potential of whistleblowers in initiating accountability mechanisms ([Wahyuni et al., 2024](#)).

In another significant case, irregularities in the Bank Century bailout were brought to light through whistleblower testimony, drawing national attention to financial mismanagement at the highest levels. However, despite their contributions, whistleblowers in these and similar cases often experience adverse consequences, including demotion, harassment, and even prosecution.

A study conducted on the Bengkulu High Prosecutor's Office revealed that there was no specific legal infrastructure to protect whistleblowers at the regional level (Nedy, 2023). Instead, the institution merely acted as a conduit, forwarding cases to the LPSK in Jakarta. The logistical and procedural delays inherent in this system expose whistleblowers to substantial risk during the interim period. These examples underline the disparity between formal protections and operational realities. They also affirm the urgent need to decentralize protection frameworks and integrate local institutions into a national protective network, ensuring timely and effective responses to whistleblower reports.

Strategies to Enhance Whistleblower Protection in Indonesia

Improving whistleblower protection in Indonesia requires a multi-pronged strategy involving legal reform, institutional strengthening, and public engagement. At the legislative level, there is an urgent need to revise and expand existing laws to include more precise definitions, reporting mechanisms, and protection procedures. Legal reforms should also address retaliation risks by mandating strict penalties for counter-litigation and harassment of whistleblowers (Gunawan & Meliana, 2024).

Institutionally, agencies like the LPSK and KPK must be better resourced and their mandates clarified to ensure cohesive action. The establishment of regional branches of protection agencies would help extend legal coverage beyond urban centers. Furthermore, these institutions should develop specialized units trained to handle whistleblower reports confidentially and professionally (Hasbi, 2023).

Public education and awareness campaigns are equally crucial. Societal attitudes that stigmatize whistleblowing must be transformed through school curricula, religious discourse, and media outreach. Islamic teachings that emphasize justice and moral courage can play a pivotal role in reshaping public perceptions. Lastly, community-based support networks and anonymous digital reporting platforms can provide safer avenues for whistleblowers, particularly in areas where institutional presence is limited. By integrating legal, institutional, and cultural reforms, Indonesia can build a more comprehensive and resilient whistleblower protection ecosystem.

Consequences of Inadequate Protection for Whistleblowers in Corruption Cases in Indonesia

The failure to provide adequate protection for whistleblowers has far-reaching consequences for Indonesia's anti-corruption efforts. At the individual level, whistleblowers may suffer from emotional distress, job loss, social ostracism, and physical threats. These personal risks create a chilling effect, deterring potential whistleblowers from coming forward. As a result, many instances of corruption go

unreported, perpetuating a cycle of impunity and institutional decay ([Asliani & Koto, 2022](#)).

From an institutional perspective, inadequate protection undermines the credibility of legal and regulatory bodies. When whistleblowers face retaliation or are ignored, public trust in law enforcement agencies erodes. This skepticism extends to broader governance structures, weakening the perceived legitimacy of anti-corruption policies. Over time, the persistence of unreported and unpunished corruption undermines public morale and civic engagement.

On a systemic level, the lack of whistleblower protection contributes to inefficient public spending, reduced investor confidence, and economic instability. As [Risal \(2022\)](#) argues, corruption that is left unchecked distorts market operations and exacerbates socioeconomic inequalities. Additionally, the international reputation of Indonesia as a nation committed to transparency and the rule of law is compromised. Thus, ensuring robust whistleblower protection is not merely a legal or institutional concern—it is a strategic imperative for national integrity, social justice, and sustainable development.

DISCUSSION

Reaffirming the Role of Whistleblowers in Corruption Disclosure

The findings of this study reaffirm the indispensable role that whistleblowers play in disclosing corruption. As seen in prominent Indonesian cases—such as those involving the Ministry of Youth and Sports and Bank Century—whistleblowers serve as vital entry points into otherwise opaque corruption schemes ([Aulia & Irwansyah, 2023](#); [Marpaung, 2023](#)). These examples confirm what earlier research has emphasized: the capacity of insiders to initiate accountability when institutional detection mechanisms fail ([Wahyuni et al., 2024](#)).

This centrality of whistleblowers in corruption prevention aligns with broader global studies ([Okafor et al., 2020](#); [Onyango, 2021a, 2021b](#); [Vian et al., 2022](#)). [El-Bassiouny et al. \(2023\)](#) argue that whistleblowers often operate as moral agents driven by ethical imperatives, not merely institutional mandates. Similarly, [Rahmi et al. \(2024\)](#) find that whistleblower systems can significantly reduce fraud in both public and private institutions when integrated into risk management frameworks. The alignment of these findings with the Indonesian context reinforces the urgency of improving protective and procedural frameworks that support whistleblowers as critical anti-corruption actors.

Inadequacies in the Legal Framework: Gaps Between Norm and Practice

Indonesia's existing legal architecture, while commendable in principle, suffers from implementation deficits. Law No. 31 of 2014 ostensibly offers protection to whistleblowers; however, regional application is inconsistent, and procedural ambiguities leave much room for discretionary misuse ([Hasbi, 2023](#)). The empirical observation that institutions such as the Bengkulu High Prosecutor's Office merely forward whistleblower cases to the LPSK in Jakarta without localized processing underscores the systemic lack of operational readiness ([Nedy, 2023](#)).

International legal systems provide a benchmark against which these deficiencies become stark. The U.S. Dodd-Frank Act, for instance, outlines precise reporting mechanisms, ensures anonymity, and incentivizes whistleblowing through monetary rewards (Aryana, 2019). Australia's and the UK's respective frameworks also offer detailed protections that include safeguards against dismissal and liability. Indonesia's regulatory landscape must evolve to incorporate not only these protective elements but also the enforcement culture that underpins their effectiveness.

Institutional Barriers and Fragmented Governance

This study also identifies the fragmentation of institutional mandates as a core obstacle. The overlapping jurisdictions of the KPK, LPSK, and police dilute the effectiveness of whistleblower protection. This finding echoes the concerns raised by Gunawan & Meliana (2024), who advocate for clearer coordination protocols and dedicated whistleblower protection units within each relevant institution.

The weakness of inter-agency cooperation is further compounded by the absence of regional branches for agencies like the LPSK. Without a decentralized infrastructure, whistleblowers in rural or under-resourced areas remain vulnerable. This aligns with the structural critique offered by Sumual et al. (2020), who contend that protection frameworks are often urban-centric, neglecting the country's geographical and institutional diversity.

Cultural Resistance and Public Perception

Beyond legal and institutional barriers, socio-cultural resistance plays a significant role in discouraging whistleblowing. Whistleblowers are often stigmatized, perceived as betrayers rather than reformers. This cultural phenomenon was identified in this study's results and finds resonance in the work of Putri et al. (2022), who assert that low public awareness and societal mistrust discourage potential whistleblowers from acting.

From an Islamic perspective, this cultural stigma is paradoxical. The Islamic ethical principle of *al-amr bil ma'ruf wa al-nahi 'an al-munkar* mandates moral intervention against injustice, including corruption. As El-Bassiouny et al. (2023) illustrate, whistleblowing should be viewed as fulfilling a communal moral obligation in Islamic societies. Therefore, aligning legal frameworks with religious teachings could help reframe public perception and reduce stigma.

Comparative Insights from Muslim-Majority Countries

Comparative data from other Muslim-majority countries reveals varying degrees of success in integrating whistleblower protections. Malaysia and the UAE have developed frameworks with some procedural robustness but often lack public trust and religious justification (Al-Tawil, 2024; Che Abu Bakar & Mohamad Mangsor, 2022). Saudi Arabia, while grounded in Islamic governance, exhibits a top-down approach that limits civil participation (Al-Haidar, 2018).

These examples support the conclusion that legal protections must be embedded within broader ethical and institutional cultures. Abdullah et al. (2024) emphasize the necessity of harmonizing religious values and legal safeguards to avoid the dual

jeopardy of legal retaliation and social ostracism. Indonesia, with its rich Islamic legal tradition and active civil society, is uniquely positioned to develop a contextually grounded hybrid model.

Toward a Normative–Islamic Legal Synthesis

One of the contributions of this study is the integration of Islamic economic and ethical principles into the discussion of whistleblower protection. Concepts such as *adl* (justice), *mas'uliyah* (accountability), and *maslahah* (public benefit) offer a normative framework for strengthening legal institutions. Islamic finance literature already incorporates whistleblowing as a component of Sharia-compliant governance, monitored by institutions like the Sharia Supervisory Board ([Cheliatsidou et al., 2023](#)).

Embedding these principles into national whistleblower frameworks would not only enhance cultural acceptance but also reinforce institutional legitimacy. Hidayat et al. ([2024](#)) argue that Islamic legal thought supports structural mechanisms for justice enforcement, including community-based legal aid and policy-oriented interpretations of *maqasid al-shariah*. Therefore, policy reform that marries positive law with Islamic ethics is both normatively justified and pragmatically advantageous.

Strategic Reforms: Legal, Institutional, and Educational

The findings point toward an actionable reform agenda. Legally, statutes must be revised to clarify procedures, establish stronger penalties against retaliation, and broaden jurisdictional coverage. Institutionally, agencies must be better coordinated and resourced, with regional branches and specialized units for whistleblower handling. Public education campaigns, rooted in both civic values and Islamic teachings, can help reshape the social narrative around whistleblowing ([Munawar & Nugraha, 2024](#)).

Furthermore, technological innovations such as secure digital reporting platforms and anonymous hotlines should be scaled. These tools have proven effective in jurisdictions where confidentiality is paramount ([Rahmi et al., 2024](#)). By embedding these strategies within both secular and religious frameworks, Indonesia can operationalize a holistic protection system.

Theoretical and Policy Implications

This study supports the hypothesis that stronger, well-enforced legal protections—coupled with institutional and cultural reforms—will enhance whistleblower activity and contribute significantly to corruption eradication. It contributes to the literature by presenting a hybrid framework that integrates normative Islamic ethics with legal-institutional analysis. It also offers practical insights for policy designers, Islamic finance institutions, and governance reformers seeking culturally grounded solutions to systemic corruption.

In sum, advancing whistleblower protection in Indonesia requires more than legal formality—it demands a reconfiguration of institutional practices, normative values, and public consciousness. By synergizing positive law with Islamic economic principles, the nation can foster an ecosystem where ethical dissent is protected, valued, and institutionalized.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the role and protection of whistleblowers in the context of corruption eradication in Indonesia, drawing upon legal, institutional, and Islamic ethical perspectives. The findings underscore the critical function whistleblowers serve in exposing corruption, often acting as the first line of defense against institutional misconduct. However, despite existing legal frameworks such as Law No. 31 of 2014, practical challenges persist, including weak institutional coordination, lack of procedural clarity, and limited regional infrastructure for protection.

International comparative analysis reveals that more mature whistleblower systems—like those in the U.S., U.K., and Australia—incorporate robust legal safeguards, enforceable penalties for retaliation, and clear reporting mechanisms. Indonesia's current model, while normatively supportive, lacks the enforcement mechanisms necessary to guarantee whistleblower safety and encourage reporting.

Cultural stigma also remains a formidable barrier, where whistleblowers are often perceived as traitors rather than as agents of integrity. This study highlights the potential of Islamic ethical principles—particularly *adl*, *mas'uliyah*, and *maslahah*—to reframe whistleblowing as a moral and communal obligation. Embedding these principles into public education, legal structures, and institutional narratives can enhance societal acceptance and ethical resilience.

In synthesizing legal and Islamic economic discourses, this research contributes a hybrid theoretical framework that expands the understanding of whistleblower protection beyond statutory norms. It calls for a multidimensional reform strategy involving legislative amendments, institutional reengineering, and socio-cultural transformation. These reforms are essential not only for safeguarding individual whistleblowers but also for fortifying the integrity of Indonesia's governance system.

Limitations of the Study

While this study provides a comprehensive review of whistleblower protection in Indonesia, its methodological scope is limited to qualitative, document-based analysis. The absence of empirical fieldwork, such as interviews with whistleblowers, legal practitioners, or institutional stakeholders, constrains the depth of practical insights into the lived experiences and institutional dynamics surrounding whistleblowing. Additionally, the study's reliance on secondary data restricts its ability to evaluate the effectiveness of recent legal reforms or the operational performance of institutions like the LPSK and KPK in real time.

Furthermore, while the integration of Islamic economic principles adds normative depth, this framework may require contextual adaptation across Indonesia's diverse religious and cultural landscape. The study's comparative references, though helpful, are drawn from a select group of countries and may not fully capture the complexity of legal pluralism in different Islamic jurisdictions. These limitations suggest the need for triangulated methodologies and broader comparative scopes in future inquiries.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should consider adopting a mixed-methods approach to capture both institutional and experiential dimensions of whistleblower protection. Qualitative interviews with whistleblowers, legal experts, and government officials would yield deeper insights into the practical implementation of protective laws and the emotional, social, and professional consequences of whistleblowing. Additionally, empirical evaluations of the performance of agencies such as the LPSK and KPK could inform evidence-based policy improvements.

Research that investigates the role of Islamic education and religious leadership in shaping public attitudes toward whistleblowing would also be valuable. Such studies could assess how ethical teachings are communicated and institutionalized within schools, mosques, and community forums. Moreover, cross-national studies involving other Muslim-majority countries could broaden the comparative lens, facilitating the identification of culturally resonant legal models. Finally, exploration into digital and anonymous reporting mechanisms may uncover scalable strategies for enhancing accessibility and security in whistleblower systems.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization	A.	Resources	A.
Data curation	A.	Software	A.
Formal analysis	A.	Supervision	A.
Funding acquisition	A.	Validation	A.
Investigation	A.	Visualization	A.
Methodology	A.	Writing – original draft	A.
Project administration	A.	Writing – review & editing	A.

Author has read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declared no conflicts of interest.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

During the preparation of this work, the author used ChatGPT, DeepL, Grammarly, and PaperPal to translate from Bahasa Indonesia into American English and improve the clarity of the language and readability of the article. After using these tools, the author reviewed and edited the content as needed and took full responsibility for the content of the published article.

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