

Human Resource Management In Corruption Prevention: A Systematic Review

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ABSTRACT

Background Problems: Corruption remains a serious and widespread issue worldwide. It hinders economic development, erodes public trust, and weakens organizational and institutional integrity. The 2023 Corruption Perception Index highlights major disparities between countries, with Denmark ranked as the least corrupt and Somalia as the most corrupt. These differences emphasize the need for effective anti-corruption strategies, particularly in nations with fragile governance systems. Despite this urgency, HRM is often underutilized as a tool in addressing corruption. **Novelty:** This study offers a fresh perspective by framing HRM not just as an administrative support system, but as a central player in building ethical behavior and reducing corruption risks. It departs from the dominant legal and institutional focus in existing literature by emphasizing internal, human-centric approaches such as organizational culture and values. **Research Methods:** The study employs a systematic literature review method. It identifies, analyzes, and synthesizes academic research that explores how HRM practices—such as ethics training, awareness programs, and value-based leadership can contribute to corruption prevention. **Finding/Results:** The review shows that HRM practices, when integrated with ethics-oriented initiatives, can help organizations develop internal mechanisms that promote accountability, ethical decision-making, and a strong culture of integrity. **Conclusion:** Incorporating anti-corruption principles into HRM policies is a sustainable and strategic approach. Ethical HR practices not only strengthen organizational culture but also contribute to national anti-corruption goals and broader social welfare.

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1. Introduction

Corruption is a problem in many countries, affecting the economy, society, and politics, eroding public trust in government institutions, and weakening the foundations of democracy (Ansori et al., 2024). Corruption and abuse of power undermine public trust, impede sustainable development, and cause significant social and economic harm. The negative impacts include social losses, erosion of public trust, and tremendous obstacles to sustainable development. The government's involvement in economic and social activities entails a significant responsibility in preventing corruption and abuse of power. Despite efforts to enhance transparency and accountability in the public sector, corruption and abuse of power remain substantial challenges (Azzahra et al., 2024).

Based on the corruption perceptions index (2023), the CPI assesses the cleanest countries from corruption in the world. The assessment indicator is given a score (scale of 0), meaning the country is very corrupt, to (a scale of 100), meaning the country is very clean.

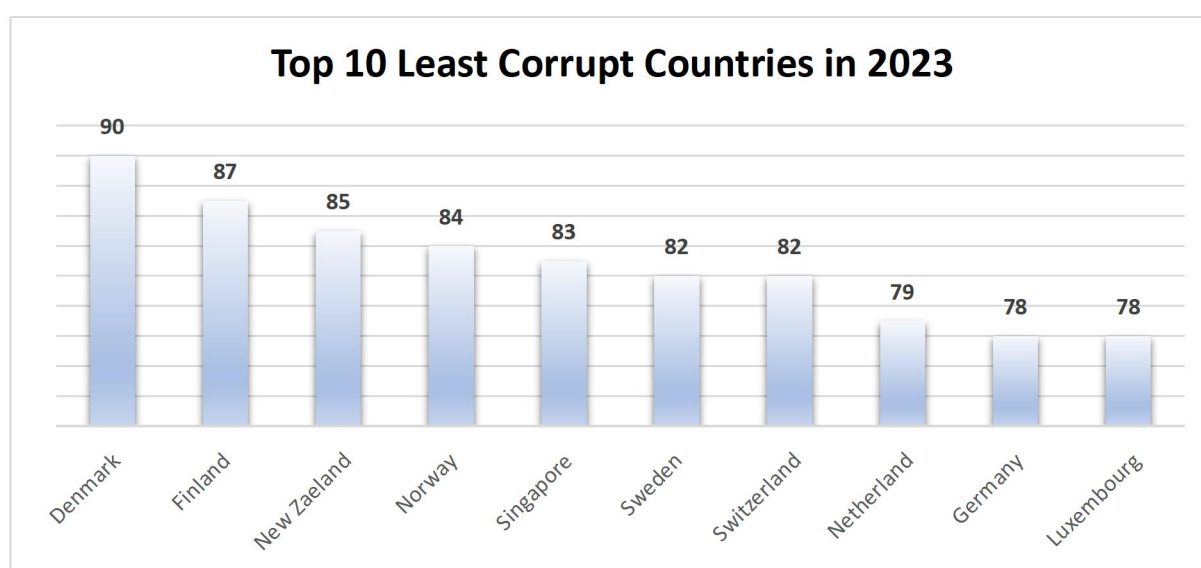


Figure 1. Top 10 Least Corrupt Countries in 2023

Source: Author data processing based on CPI, 2023

Based on 2023 CPI data, Denmark ranks as the least corrupt country with a score of 90, followed by Finland (87) and New Zealand (85). Norway (84), Singapore (83), Sweden (82), Switzerland (82), the Netherlands (79), Germany (78), and Luxembourg (78) complete the top 10 for 2023. In contrast, countries facing conflict, limited freedoms, and weak democratic institutions tend to receive the lowest scores. In 2023, Somalia (11), Venezuela (13), Syria (13), and South Sudan (13) ranked lowest on the index. Yemen (16), Nicaragua (17), North Korea (17), Haiti (17), Equatorial Guinea (17), Turkmenistan (18), and Libya (18) follow closely. The 2023 Asia-Pacific CPI shows minimal progress in corruption eradication. For the fifth year in a row, the region's average score has stagnated at 45 out of 100.

The eradication of corruption is crucial to ensure the best management of societal phenomena. The rampant practice of corruption is accompanied by significant losses, production losses, violations of citizens' rights, and imbalances in the distribution of resources. Studying and implementing best practices are key components of anti-corruption policies. This includes the analysis of the success of programs and anti-corruption strategies from other countries, as well as the implementation of international standards in this field. Government bodies can determine effective methods to detect, prevent, and respond to corruption (Nonik et al., 2024). Eradication of Corruption is responsible for implementing programs on anti-corruption education, socialization, and campaigns targeting the public. Research (Khairullaevich, 2024) The study explains the role of

leadership development in eradicating corruption. Leaders must fight for openness and transparency in carrying out their duties, which plays a role in preventing corruption. Leadership also encompasses educating and training employees on ethics and anti-corruption principles. Leaders must be accountable for any manifestation of corruption within their units and take action to eliminate it. Effective leadership involves open communication and feedback, which helps eliminate misunderstandings and enhance trust within the team.

Research Triatmanto & Bawono (2023) explains about human resource management to prevent corruption, The government must implement policies that prioritize improving education and training quality, enhancing labour market flexibility, and promoting lifelong learning to address the issue of human resource scarcity. Human resources are crucial to a country's economic growth and development. Despite the challenges in developing and retaining a skilled workforce, policymakers must prioritize investments in education and training and establish policies that address the root causes of human resource shortages.

Corruption remains a complex and multifaceted challenge across diverse socio-political contexts. While substantial research has examined its economic and legal dimensions, the role of human resource management (HRM) in addressing corruption has received comparatively limited scholarly attention, particularly in developing countries. HRM is frequently positioned as an administrative function rather than as a strategic mechanism to foster ethical conduct and organizational integrity. This conceptual limitation creates a significant research gap, as organizations face mounting demands to establish robust governance structures that align personnel management with anti-corruption objectives.

The urgency to address this gap is underscored by the systemic nature of corruption, which not only erodes public trust but also undermines institutional legitimacy and sustainable development. In environments characterized by weak rule of law and limited enforcement capacity, HRM interventions—such as ethical recruitment, targeted training, and performance-based accountability—could serve as critical levers to embed anti-corruption norms into organizational cultures. Yet, empirical studies that systematically assess the effectiveness of such HRM practices in preventing corruption remain sparse.

This study is thus guided by the following research question: *How can human resource management policies and practices be strategically designed and implemented to prevent and mitigate corruption within organizations, particularly in contexts marked by institutional fragility?* Addressing this question will not only contribute to the theoretical refinement of HRM's role but also provide practical insights for policymakers and organizational leaders. This study aims to identify how human resource management policies and practices can be used as a tool to prevent and eradicate corruption in a country's organizations.

2. Literature Review

Corruption can be classified into two main categories: moralistic and functionalist approaches. The moralistic view sees corruption in black-and-white terms—as clearly right or wrong. Corruption is the act of stealing and cheating. The functionalist perspective views corruption as context-dependent, existing in shades of grey. According to this view, corruption is influenced by the specific circumstances of each case (Pramono & Aruzzi, 2023).

Corruption deviates from legal norms and public obligations to gain personal benefits. Corruption is the deviant behaviour from official duties of public roles for financial gain or status associated with personal interests or the violation of rules prohibiting the use of certain types of influence related to personal interests. Corruption occurs when individuals in positions of power or authority are induced, by illegal means such as monetary or non-monetary incentives, to take actions that benefit those providing the incentives, thereby harming the interests of society and its welfare. Corruption encompasses various types of behaviour, such as bribery (using rewards to manipulate a trusted individual's judgment), nepotism (granting patronage based on ascriptive relationships rather

than merit), and abuse of power. Misuse of public resources for personal gain. From an economic or market perspective, which views corruption as a maximizing unit, the size of a person's income depends on market conditions and their ability to find the maximum profit point on the demand curve of society (Dirwan, 2019).

Recent literature has underscored the multidimensional nature of corruption, emphasizing that it is not merely a legal violation but also a sociocultural and organizational phenomenon. Studies by Jigjiddorj et al. (2021) and Hu & Zhu, (2016) have highlighted the critical role of organizational culture and ethical climate in shaping employees' attitudes toward corrupt practices. Meanwhile, Otto (2024) and Soehari & Budiningsih (2017) emphasize that managerial leadership and commitment to integrity are pivotal in curbing corruption at the firm level. These studies collectively indicate that beyond formal controls, informal mechanisms such as ethical leadership, value-based recruitment, and ongoing ethics training significantly influence corruption outcomes.

However, a notable gap persists in the integration of human resource management (HRM) as a systematic framework for corruption prevention, particularly in emerging economies. Much of the current research focuses either on macro-level governance reforms or micro-level behavioral ethics, leaving a conceptual void in understanding how HRM systems—encompassing recruitment, training, performance evaluation, and reward systems—can operationalize anti-corruption objectives. This study builds upon prior work by proposing a conceptual model in which HRM functions are positioned as critical enablers of organizational integrity. By integrating insights from leadership, organizational culture, and HR practices, this framework aims to offer a holistic perspective on how internal organizational mechanisms can complement external governance measures in preventing corruption.

3. Method

This study employed a systematic literature review (SLR) approach to synthesize and critically analyze existing research on the role of human resource management (HRM) in preventing corruption. Following the guidelines by Kitchenham and Charters (Okoli, 2015) and PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses), the review was structured to ensure transparency, reproducibility, and methodological rigor.

Data Sources and Search Strategy:

The literature search was conducted using the Google Scholar database, covering the period from 2015 to 2024. Keywords such as “corruption prevention,” “human resource management,” “anti-corruption HR practices,” and “organizational ethics” were used. Boolean operators (AND, OR) were applied to combine search terms.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria:

Articles were included if they (1) were peer-reviewed journal articles, (2) explicitly addressed the link between HRM practices and corruption prevention, and (3) provided empirical or conceptual insights relevant to organizational settings. Articles were excluded if they (1) focused solely on macro-level governance without organizational analysis, (2) were editorials or opinion pieces, or (3) lacked sufficient methodological detail.

Selection and Analysis Process:

From an initial pool of 146 articles, duplicate and irrelevant records were removed, resulting in a final sample of 27 articles for in-depth review. A PRISMA flow diagram was used to illustrate the selection process. Thematic analysis was applied to identify key themes, including ethical recruitment, leadership development, performance management, and organizational culture. This process allowed the extraction of patterns and insights relevant to the study's research question.

4. Result and Discussion

Corruption diminishes a country's credibility, not only domestically but also internationally. The prevalence of corruption in a country leads to a high economic cost and subsequently affects national competitiveness. Manipulation carried out by management to benefit a group or company is detrimental to the principal (Umar, 2011).

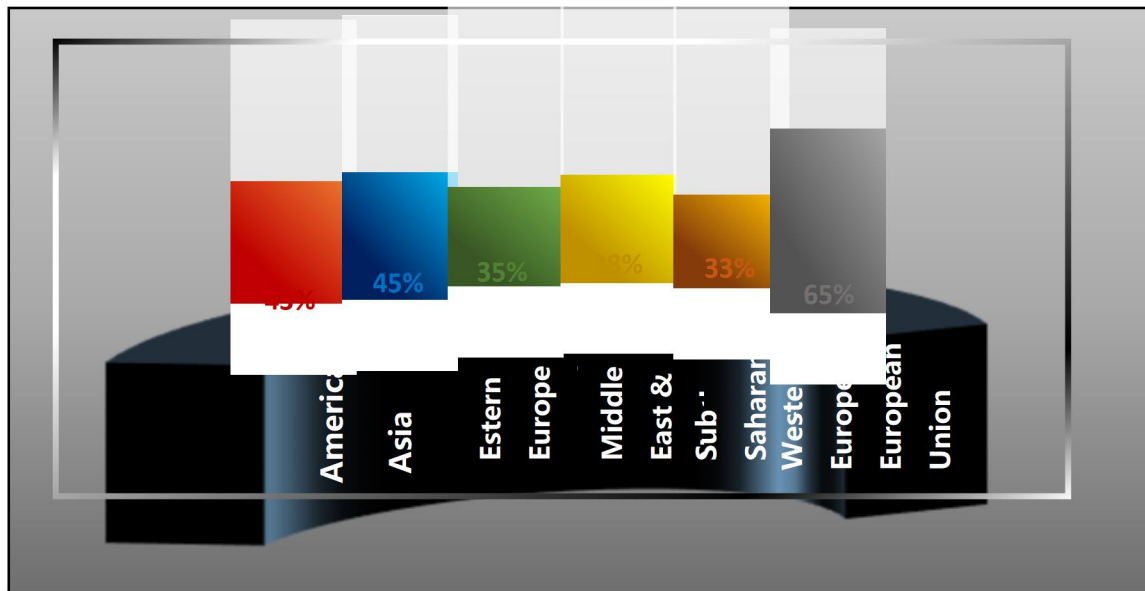


Figure 2. Average Regional Score

Source: Author data processing based on CPI, 2023

Based on the 2023 CPI data, first in the Americas region, the score is 43 out of 100, meaning that the region's score is still below 50; countries in the region still show great challenges in eradicating corruption. Second, in the Asia Pacific region, the 2023 CPI results show that there has been progress in eradicating corruption; for years in the Asia Pacific region, the score has remained stagnant at 45 out of 100. Third, in Eastern Europe & Central Asia, the 2023 CPI shows an average score of 35 out of 100; the region gets the second-lowest score in the world. Fourth, the Middle East & North Africa shows a position in the 2023 CPI with a score of 38; this score is high due to the level of political corruption that weakens efforts to eradicate corruption throughout the region. Fifth in sub-Saharan Africa, the score is 33; the region gets the lowest score; anti-corruption efforts are needed at all levels and by various stakeholders in the justice network. Sixth in Western Europe & the European Union showed an average score of 65 out of 100; the region is the highest-scoring region in the 2023 CPI.

Corruption is not limited to the government; it also occurs in companies. Companies have competitive pressures that influence the likelihood of corruption. Intense competition drives companies to seek any possible advantage that will help them surpass their competitors. The role of organizational culture in facilitating or preventing corrupt behaviour. In its commonly cited definition, cultural organization refers to the fundamental assumptions and patterns a group has discovered, developed, or learned to address its external adaptation and internal integration challenges. These patterns have been proven effective enough to be considered valid and are therefore taught to new members as the correct way to understand, think, and feel about these issues (Castro et al., 2018).

Human capital refers to a country's knowledge, skills, and health of human resources. The development of human resources is crucial as it relates to workforce productivity, innovation, and economic growth. Corruption, unemployment, and human resources are interconnected in essential

ways. Long-term success depends on an educated and productive workforce that inhibits corruption. Therefore, eradicating corruption is crucial not only for the Indonesian economy but also for society's welfare (Triatmanto & Bawono, 2023). The attitude of managers towards corruption prevention is the primary determining factor. A manager with a positive attitude towards corruption prevention would positively evaluate efforts in corruption prevention and identify associated opportunities. Identified important factors can, for example, aid in developing specialized training and workshops on corruption prevention. The self-efficacy of managers can be strengthened by providing detailed information on the implementation and enforcement of corruption prevention measures, inviting managers to report their success in implementing these measures in their companies, and promoting information exchange. Experiences among managers regarding the steps they have implemented in their companies (Werner et al., 2019).

Research (Soehari & Budiningsih, 2017). Leadership must be considered in preventing and eradicating corruption. The aspects of leadership that need to be considered are as follows:

- a) A trustworthy leader who has reliable expertise and is responsible.
- b) A leader who can express his ideas clearly but has self-control.
- c) A leader who focuses on internal control but does not interfere too much in the operation of the monitoring system.
- d) A leader who knows things that need to be anticipated, but this anticipation must be accompanied by good actions from the corporate government.

Strengthening the boundaries of behavioural norms and promoting the construction of institutional frameworks oriented towards an anti-corruption culture. Developing a recruitment, training, and performance evaluation system for an anti-corruption culture. Within the recruitment system, "incorruptibility" is utilized as the primary requirement for recruitment criteria, and candidates must be assessed to see if they adhere to the incorruptibility values orientation at various levels throughout the recruitment process. Socialization is highly emphasized Within the training system, with regular training sessions to promote anti-corruption measures among all personnel and provide timely evaluations, feedback, and assessments of training outcomes. Within the performance evaluation system, utilize "incorruptibility" as a fundamental indicator, integrate internal and external evaluations, revoke performance evaluation qualifications for those who fail to pass indicator assessments, and combine assessment results with relevant state laws (Hu & Zhu, 2016).

Implementing ethics is crucial in preventing acts of corruption. Ethics are related to internal principles that are part of a company's culture and influence decisions about social responsibility toward the external environment. Ethical dilemmas arise in situations when an individual's or organization's actions can cause harm or benefit others. This ethical principle encompasses a commitment to responsibly manage finances, avoid fraud and misinterpretation in your operations, treat employees and customers with respect and dignity, and contribute back to the community in which you operate (Muhammad & Mustafa, 2017).

A number of good practices are emerging to detect and prevent corruption in human resources (Maxwell, 2008).

- a) Utilizing both temporary and permanent staff in such a way as to relocate permanent staff from the development program to emergency field positions to establish an administrative system, conduct monitoring, supervise temporary staff, and close the program.
- b) Create an emergency staff database that includes all individuals who have worked in emergencies in the past, complete with references and human resource evaluations.
- c) Conduct background checks on prospective staff members; do not rely solely on the candidates' names provided as references. During a state of emergency, ensure there is a limit to how long the examination can be postponed.
- d) Combating nepotism through special examinations and emphasis on greater staff diversity, including ethnic, regional, and national/international staff balance.

- e) Ensuring staff members are highly trained on core policies and procedures.
- f) Specifically, assign compliance officers or appoint financial and procurement managers to be sent to large-scale emergency operations during scale-up.

Due to the detrimental effects of corruption on economic growth and human development, the government must implement policies to eradicate corruption. This will positively impact the community's standard of living as it will result in high-quality education, efficient healthcare facilities, and effective resource management. Policymakers can eradicate corruption by focusing on its causes rather than its effects. This must be done by addressing the issue of poverty, as petty corruption is driven by poverty, targeting labour-intensive growth, enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of education and health spending as well as social programs, and improving equality in accessing education (Emara, 2020).

5. Conclusion and Suggestion

Corruption deviates from legal norms and public obligations to obtain personal gain. According to the CPI data in 2023, Western Europe and the European Union had an average score of 65 out of 100. This region has the highest score in the CPI 2023. The area with the lowest score is sub-Saharan Africa, which obtained a score of 33, making it the region with the lowest score. Preventing corruption by developing human resources is crucial for workforce productivity, innovation, and economic growth. Studying and implementing best practices are key components of anti-corruption policies. A manager with a positive attitude towards corruption prevention would positively evaluate efforts to prevent corruption and identify related opportunities. Identified important factors can, for example, aid in developing specialized training and workshops on corruption prevention.

This study concludes that human resource management (HRM) plays a pivotal role in preventing and mitigating corruption within organizations. By systematically reviewing recent literature, the research highlights that ethical recruitment, leadership development, transparent performance management, and continuous ethics training are among the most effective HRM practices in reducing corruption risks. These practices are not only instrumental in shaping organizational culture but also serve as internal governance mechanisms that complement external regulatory frameworks.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the growing body of knowledge that positions HRM as a strategic driver of organizational integrity, rather than merely an administrative support function. Practically, the findings suggest that policymakers and organizational leaders must integrate anti-corruption objectives into HRM policies, thereby strengthening ethical awareness at all levels of the organization.

However, this study is limited by its reliance on secondary data and conceptual frameworks derived from prior research. Future studies should employ empirical methods, such as surveys, case studies, or experimental designs, to test the causal impact of specific HRM interventions on corruption outcomes. Additionally, comparative studies across different cultural and institutional contexts would offer valuable insights into the contextual contingencies that shape the effectiveness of HRM-led anti-corruption initiatives.

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