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**CORRUPTION OFFENCES EDUCATION LITERACY IN  
PREVENTING THE LOSS OF NATIONAL TREASURES:  
A REVIEW OF CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS**

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**Abstract:**

This paper's primary objective is to deconstruct the concerns and challenges that are related with the culture of corruption or viewed as the underlying cause of corruption problems in our country. In light of this circumstance, corruption offences education literacy plays a crucial role in educating the community against corruption. The topics discussed in this article include (i) Integrity, (ii) Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), (iii) Community Role, and (iv) Youth Awareness Efforts. The results of the study present eight (8) mandatory measures to combat corruption, namely 1. Understanding the Characteristics of Corrupt Acts and Gift Giving, 2. Eliminating the Corruption Culture and Abuse of Power as a Standard of Living in the Community, 3. Shaping Public Perception against Corruption in Politics, 4. Educating the Public about the Consequences of Corruption on the National Administrative System, 5. Developing Institutions and Strategies to Combat Corruption, 6. Stressing the Importance of Fighting Corruption Through Experiential Learning, 7. Diverse Methods of Combating Corruption in the Past and Present, and 8. Corruption Law Enforcement and Punishment. The goal of the future study should be to demonstrate that corruption will not be eradicated in the near future whereby education must emphasise learning via the experience of the younger generation in order to instil the nature of integrity, strong spirit, and ethical values, as well as high discipline, so that individuals can build a strong sense of self and fight all sorts of corruption, thus should be prominent in society so as to abolish the culture of corruption in Malaysia.

**Keywords:**

Educational Literacy, Corruption Offences, Integrity, Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC)

**Backgrounds**

Since the dawn of civilisation, corruption has been a social symptom in practically every community. It is an unethical practice that transcends nation, race, ethnicity and custom. In the twenty-first century, political corruption has been a major concern in practically every nation, including Malaysia. A slogan “corruption is the enemy of the country” is an expression that is often heard in this country (Hamzah, Ahamad @ Rahamad, & Md Syed, 2020). However, corruption is on the rise in Malaysia with more and more political corruption involving members of political parties. These acts of political corruption are not rare in this country, as the problem has existed since Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra’s reign until now (Azrae, Latif & Mohamed, 2018). Politicians who are still active or who have retired acknowledge this. Former Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dr. Mahathir Mohammad since 1984 described ‘money politics’ phenomena and expressed his sadness especially with the situation of the 1993 UMNO leadership election campaign which became increasingly dirty, seeking support through money, empty promises, and using threats and corruption accusations against each other (Maidin, 2008).

In Malaysia, corruption offences are penalised harshly (Sinar Harian, 2020a). Unfortunately, corrupt practices are still rampant, as if the severe sentence fails to deter them from continuing to conduct the horrific crime (Sinar Harian, 2020a). The results of a study by Transparency International Malaysia show that seven out of ten Malaysians are involved in corruption (Sinar Harian, 2020b). This is regarded crucial and worrisome because the country’s younger generation is also exposed to a culture of corruption that has become commonplace in the eyes of some (Abdul Hamid, Esa, Ationg, Othman, Sharif Adam, Mohd Tamring, & Hajimin, 2021). Based on MACC arrest records from 2015 to 2020, 52.6% or 2,975 individuals were under the age of 40 (Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission, 2021). With that, young people must be exposed to the dangers of corruption at an early age in order to generate trustworthy and honourable individuals. If corruption in our country is not addressed promptly, it will become so widespread that it will control all corners of our society. This will have an adverse effect on our nation.

Numerous repercussions will occur in our nation if this corruption is not swiftly eradicated. In fact, Malaysia adopts a Parliamentary Democratic System of Government based on the Constitutional Monarchy System, with His Majesty the *Yang Di Pertuan Agong* reigning as Head of State (Ibrahim, Ationg, Esa, Abang Muis, Othman, Yusoff & Mokhtar, 2021). Under the Parliamentary Democracy System, the Malaysian National Administration is made up of three (3) primary branches: Legislative, Judicial and Administrative or Executive. Since before independence, these three branches of government have also fought against corrupt practices. In 2021, Malaysia is placed 62<sup>nd</sup> out of 182 nations on the annual corruption perception index, down from 57 the previous year (Astro Awani, 2022). Yet there are other reasons or origins of the corruption problem in our society, making corruption offences education and literacy a crucial factor in the fight against corruption.

This study examines the concerns and challenges associated with the culture of corrupt practices by focusing on (i) Integrity, (ii) Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission, (iii) The Role of the Community and (iv) Efforts to Promote Youth Awareness.

**Integrity:** Corruption is a question of integrity, and integrity is a question of an individual's attitude and actions. This paper emphasises that those in positions of authority, community members, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that support the objective of developing a society and nation free of corruption, malpractice, and abuse of authority must all share this responsibility (Yusoff, Sri Murniati, & Jenny, 2014).

**Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission:** We must praise and applaud the authorities in this country, such as the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), for their devotion and hard work in bringing corrupt individuals to justice. The authorities' earnestness and devotion are visible in all facets of law enforcement, such as arrest and prosecution, as well as teaching the public about corruption actions. In fact, we fully support the MACC's aim to build a database of corrupt criminals for its website. According to the MACC, the fundamental goal of this initiative is to demonstrate preventive measures and provide unambiguous evidence that a war on corruption has been declared (Bernama, 2020). The MACC database is a valuable public awareness tool that assists individuals and businesses in conducting research and evaluations before recruiting, appointing, or promoting their employees. Furthermore, it is expected that this database will serve as a teaching tool to prevent others from committing corrupt acts, as well as a factor that gives repentance to those who have been convicted of corruption, because information about them and the offences they have committed will be displayed and accessible to the public for three years from the date it is first displayed on the MACC website. This is a wonderful idea that should be promoted and applauded since we believe it can raise awareness and terror among members of society, particularly those who are just getting involved in corruption activity. We hope that the authorities will continue to take extra initiatives to combat corruption in our country, particularly in the prevention of corruption.

**The Role of the community:** In the meanwhile, what are the duties of community members? Members of society who hate corruption cannot remain silent indefinitely. Allowing unscrupulous and dishonest people to continue bringing harm to all existing institutions and organisations, hence rejecting people's rights. Never be afraid or intimidated to denounce any acts of corruption or dishonesty that take place in our midst. Our neutrality on corruption culture and practices, has encouraged corrupt perpetrators to act with greater audacity and become tyrannical. Naturally, every member of society should take action to prevent and combat corruption and power abuse that is taking place right in front of our eyes. Members of the public should be brave enough to disclose instances of corruption in light of the Whistleblower Protection Act of 2010 (Metro, 2020).

**Increasing Youth Awareness:** Youths, notably students at HEIs, who will be the country's future successors, must also play a role (Yusoff, Sri Murniati, & Jenny, 2014). These organisations must ensure that their integrity serves as a protective barrier for their members. Instil in all of us the attitude of despising corruption and opposing all sorts of wrongdoing or misuse of power. When they enter the labour force and engage with society in real life, they will be able to become members of society, employees, and leaders who value integrity and we finally be able to construct a society free of corruption and malpractice (Mohamed, Chuah &

Mohd Ali, 2010). In this context, HEIs should constantly undertake a variety of awareness programmes to raise the level of students' understanding and hatred of corruption. This is same goes to NGOs that work to promote integrity and oppose corruption in the country may play a more aggressive role at the same time (Esa, Othman, Abu Bakar & Mokhtar, 2021). To tackle corruption at the grassroots level, they must work closely with authorities and community members. NGOs can promote anti-corruption education in addition to acting as a system of checks and balances. Hopefully, the efforts of anti-corruption organisations such as Malaysia Corruption Watch (MCW) would result in the nation and its residents being free of corruption (Bernama, 2020).

### Literature Review

Corruption generally comes from the Arabic word which reads al-Risywah (Sanusi & Syed Ismail, 2016). In the Qur'an, it is one of the actions that might be regarded as a crime, false, and forbidden in Islam (Sanusi & Syed Ismail, 2016). According to Yusuf al-Qardhawi (2007), corruption comprises the fraudulent consumption of the property of others. Bribery also refers to paying a superintendent or officer money in order for the superintendent or officer to win the law by defeating the opponent, or to advance or delay affairs. According to Syed Hussain Al-Attas (1995), corruption is also the abuse of trust for personal gain. Corruption can also be characterised as a breach of public or private trust (Al-Attas, 2015). Syed Hussain Al-Attas has identified numerous characteristics of corruption. Among them are trust betrayal, fraud conducted against government entities, private institutions, with purposeful disdain for the public interest in favour of one's own, and committed in secret, unless those in authority and subordinates deem it unnecessary to keep it secret.

Admittedly, no country is spared from the problem of corruption. Corruption is usually committed out of compulsion or desperation, but then it becomes addictive and can lead to unintended negative consequences, such as the destruction of a nation and its culture (Othman, Yusoff, Mohd Shah, Esa, Ationg, Ibrahim & Raymond Majumah, 2021a). Nevertheless, the country's development and success are dependent on every management, administration, and citizen's attitude and morals to fulfil their jobs with a sense of responsibility and trust. Meanwhile, the legal definition of corruption is an act of corruption that involves acts that violate current laws, exploitation of governmental property that harms the country, and enriching oneself and relatives (Jain, 2001). At the same time, the punishment in Islam law, corruption is morally unacceptable and a major sin. In this regard, from the perspective of Islam, corruption is a practise that is both criticised and condemned in terms of religion since it has a negative impact on society and the country's economic prosperity (Qaradhawi, 2007).

In a Qur'anic passage, the prohibition on corrupt actions is also stated. This is demonstrated by evidence from Qur'an verses that clearly illustrate the prohibition in Islam, as well as the prohibition of corruption in the Qur'an and hadith. This is because corruption is detrimental to social justice and economic equity, as well as harmful to society and is capable of bringing a nation to its' knees. In addition, according to Al-Marhubi, (2000) bribery is not limited to giving money, gifts, or the like to a person with the intention of obtaining a simple return or gift for own benefit or that of the group, but also includes aspects of motives, strategies, and insight, as well as legislation. As a result, corruption takes place when a person engages in corruption because of his or her objectives or methods. In fact, they are willing to do anything, including risking their lives or their dignity in order to obtain money or prizes.

Corruption leads to the loss of national assets, unsustainable development, environmental damage, unfair economic distribution, and a rise in poverty. From 2001 to 2010, almost six trillion dollars were misappropriated in underdeveloped nations, to the disadvantage of common citizens (Berita Harian, 2014). It is estimated that one trillion dollars of money laundering occurs annually in poor and underdeveloped countries, and that 38 to 64 billion dollars of tax revenue in developing countries is not collected annually due to corruption (Berita Harian, 2014). A trillion-dollar leakage is responsible for 3.6 million deaths each year because taxpayer funding that should have been spent on health care, food, and infrastructure has been squandered.

According to 2012 statistics, African Sub-Saharan Africa makes up half of the 61 million children that drop out of primary education (Berita Harian, 2014). If corruption is successfully eradicated in Sub-Saharan Africa, 10 million children will have access to education each year, 500,000 teachers will be hired, and more than 11 million HIV/AIDS patients will receive antiretroviral medications (Berita Harian, 2014). Corruption occurs not only in developed countries and rich countries, but also in international organisations, and even on a bigger scale to the point that it affects the lives of people all over the world (Berita Harian, 2014). Corruption scandals do not spare the private sector. Internationally recognised banks were fined \$21 billion in 2012 for fraud, tax evasion, interest rate manipulation, and high-risk investments, among other things (Berita Harian, 2014).

In 2008, Siemens Company falsified the company's records to justify corruption by allocating fifty million dollars to the Annual Bribery Budget classification (Berita Harian, 2014). Siemens was fined \$800 million in accordance with the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, United States. In 2010, six United States based oil and gas corporations were penalised \$236 million under the same act (Berita Harian, 2014). Walmart was subject to the Foreign Corruption Act for 25 years; the company finally admitted to consistently paying bribes in Mexico between 2003 to 2008 (Berita Harian, 2014). Rolls-Royce said openly that it had used bribes to penetrate the Chinese market (Berita Harian, 2014). This proves that international institutions are not exempted to controversies of various kinds. Following the disclosure of an oil-for-food programme controversy involving individuals and companies from various nations, including the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Russia, and Switzerland, the United Nations' good name has been tarnished (Berita Harian, 2014).

Initiated in 2000, the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) programme intends to alleviate the condition of more than one billion people living on less than a dollar a day; corruption has caused the cost of clean water supply and sanitation programmes to increase by 48 billion dollars (Berita Harian, 2014). The state has direct control over economic resources and activities under the communist system of governance (Berita Harian, 2014). Information is heavily regulated, the media is controlled by the government, and the general public lacks freedom of speech and expression. The roots of corruption can sprout in such a governance system. In the meanwhile, according to Justin Wee, (2012) a culture of corruption can also destroy a country's administration and governance. This is what occurred in the Philippines, which chronicles the downfall of the Marcos dictatorship due to uncontrolled corruption (Justin Wee, 2012).

Furthermore, this will immediately raise public scepticism, particularly that of domestic and international investors, harming the country's image in the eyes of the world. All of this will

hinder efforts to attract domestic and foreign investment and boost the country's economic activities. According to Rock & Bonnett, (2004) the occurrence of this corruption is one of the practices carried out by the public sector, which has the ability to commit this corruption out of desire. Even in his study, he stated that corruption is often characterised as a disease of public servants driven by greed. Usually, corruption is adopted as one of the shortcuts for someone who wants to live a luxury life or, in other words get rich quickly. Hence to his opinion, those who practice this culture typically do not consider the negative consequences, focusing instead on the rewards for themselves.

According to Jain, (2001), corruption will cripple an organisation's function. As a result, no one will be able to forecast a person's conduct or the conclusion of a future plan in the presence of corruption. The advancement of a nation depends on the ingenuity and expertise of its citizens. Corruption will only diminish the public's confidence in our nation's ingenuity. In addition, the government becomes weakened since every occurrence of corruption result in a loss of money or a deviation from the correct course of action especially those coming from politicians (Othman, Ibrahim, Esa, Ationg, Mokhtar, Mohd Tamring, & Sharif Adam, 2021f). For instance, if someone is careless about something that has been determined, the bribe has substituted the tax money that should have been collected, and just a small number of bribe givers receive the benefits. This symptom of corruption has the greatest impact on the government of the county, causing it to be disarray.

In addition, the issue of corruption which is currently the subject of heated debate has led to the establishment of institutions and strategies aimed at avoiding corrupt behaviours (Ibrahim, Ationg, Esa, Othman, Mokhtar & Abang Muis, 2021b). Among them are the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), the Enforcement Agency Integrity Commission (EAIC), and the National Anti-Corruption Plan (NAC) (Abdul Khalid, Saad, Awang & Tambi, 2021). Each of these institutions and strategies has a function and role in achieving the shared goal of preventing corrupt activities. In order to combat corrupt activities, all members of society must play a role and carry out their respective responsibilities. The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) defines bribery as the act of accepting or giving bribes as a reward or enticement for an individual to do or refrain from committing an act relevant to that individual's official mandate (Akhbar, 2018).

Money, awards, bonuses, votes, services, wage positions, and discounts are examples of bribery. Hence, Act 694 (Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) Act 2009) classifies "bribes" as money, donations, loans, gifts, valuable collateral, price or interest in property, i.e. any kinds of property, movable or immovable, monetary advantage or any other similar benefit (Akhbar, 2018). The four major offences that frequently occur are the highest position, rank, employment, contract of employment or service, and any agreement to provide employment or offer services on the type of which it has been inferred. Among them are soliciting or receiving bribes, providing bribes, making false claims, and abusing one's position of authority. In this context, bribery refers to the offering or receiving of bribes, commissions, services or presents. Meanwhile, the legal definition of corruption is merely mentioned as a definition of bribery or an act that breaches the law (MACC, 2020).

According to the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2009 (MACC Act 2009) (Act 694), there are four major corruption offences (Official Portal of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission, 2009) namely soliciting or accepting bribes (Sections 16 & 17 (a) of

the MACC Act 2009), offering or giving bribes (Section 17 (b) of the MACC Act 2009), submitting false claims (Section 18 of the MACC Act 2009) and using office or position to bribe public body officers (Section 23, MACC Act 2009) (Akhbar, 2018). In 2019, the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) conducted a survey on the subject of corruption and abuse of power in the country, and the results of the survey revealed that economic crime in Malaysia is at alarming level (Berita Harian, 2019a). In a separate occasion, the MACC revealed that many civil workers under the age of 40 were involved in corruption in Malaysia (Berita Harian, 2019b). This situation indicates that the deterioration of integrity among public workers which supposedly increase the leadership component and serve as an example for society.

In addition, the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has shown that there is rampant corruption along the Malaysia-Thailand border, which is thought to be carried out by the authorities (Sinar Harian, 2019). According to the Federal Expenditure Estimate Report 2022, the percentage of public knowledge about corruption in 2020 was as high as 100% (Federal Expenditure Estimate, 2022). This indicates that the government and institutions' attempt to communicate information about corruption to the general public were successful. However, the proportion of corruption offences in Malaysia continues to rise. According to MACC arrest statistics from 2015 to 2020, 52.6% of all arrestees were under the age of 40 (Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission, 2021). Thus, the problem of corruption is the greatest threat to the welfare of Malaysia and must be addressed. All citizens must be competent at self-care in order to avoid falling victim to the crime of corruption, which destroy their own future, their families' and the country.

The development of a modern nation coincides with the development of information technology occurring across the nation, particularly in Malaysia. Malaysia is able to evolve into a modern nation given the availability of sophisticated information technology infrastructure. Subsequently, both the government and the institutions involved have altered their techniques and efforts to combat corruption offences. This distinction is readily apparent when modern information technology facilities are deployed to combat corruption offences. Moreover, human way of thinking has evolved to the point where today's society must be technologically literate due to the widespread usage of advanced technology in everyday life. For instance, during the period of our ancestors, nearly everything had to be completed manually or without advanced information technology facilities because there were no technological resources available.

This is evidenced by the fact that in the past, corruption was dealt with by enforcing laws and imposing fines, as well as instilling religious knowledge and moral ideals in children from an early age. In contrast, today, when advanced information technology infrastructures exist, the mainstream media play a crucial role in combating corruption. Electronic media and print media are the two types of mass media available. Furthermore, one of the approaches to deal with corruption offences nowadays is to establish institutions to avoid corruption. Without cutting-edge technology resources, tasks such as spreading information and receiving complaints are tough. Therefore, the government's methods and efforts to combat corruption are also influenced by the technology resources available.

In the 23<sup>rd</sup> Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) released by Transparency International (TI) in 2020, Malaysia fell from 51<sup>st</sup> place in 2019 to 57<sup>th</sup> place in 2020, a drop of 6 places. This

information is critical for the country to understand its position because the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) is a tool for measuring the level of corruption in a country and is one of the yardsticks used to determine the level of corruption in 180 countries worldwide (Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission, 2021). This index mainly focuses on the perception of a country's level of corruption, with the position dependent solely on the score attained rather than the country's actual reality. However, this score is a reference for foreign investors looking to invest in Malaysia and a reflection of whether a country takes social and political issues seriously. Concerning issues pertaining to corruption in politics, Daud, (2019) highlighted the reasons of political corruption in Malaysia, the elements that cause politicians to engage in corruption crimes, and suitable solutions to the problem of political corruption in Malaysia.

Political corruption can be characterised in this context as a societal perception that is widely accepted by society in a country. In reality, the percentage of corruption charges involving public employees is rather modest. The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) detained 31.25 percent of civil officials in November 2021, compared to 68.75 percent of corruption accusations involving the public sector (Berita Harian, 2019b). Government corruption cases are seen more poorly by society because the presence of civil servants in corruption cases weakens trust in the public sector as a whole (Mohd Tap, 2012). Disputes in procurement by government departments and agencies are the most common source of government fund leakage (Akhbar, 2018). As a result, society will be more focused on corruption charges committed by civil servants working under official government agencies, because the economic downturn will indirectly affect all households in the country, and people's love and patriotism will drive them to be dissatisfied with corrupt practises among civil servants.

Every government action influencing the outcome and future of the nation's economy will be scrutinised in the end. As a result, it undermines public trust in the government because of the monopoly of power, corruption in government procurement occurs online through the MACC's official website, where individuals use their position and influence to affect the purchase process. Furthermore, broad discretionary authority, insufficient accountability, and a lack of transparency in the procurement process created the possibility of corruption (Azrae, Latif & Mohamed, 2018). Government procurement corruption has a negative impact on the nation's budget. Corrupt practises are also harmful to the environment. Inadequate project implementation, for example, in a region where operational standards (SOP) to protect the environment are not followed. According to university students, corruption in Malaysian politics is at a very high level in comparison to other major sectors (Othman *et al.*, 2021). This could be due to corruption scandals involving well-known Malaysian politicians, which have been widely published on the international stage, undermining the country's dignity (Ationg, Esa, Ibrahim, Gansau, Totu & Othman, 2021d).

## Methodology

The research methodology in this writing uses a qualitative approach based on social science disciplines that require careful observation of aspects that focus more on processes and events. Information from various sources such as primary and secondary sources by using secondary data content analysis methods related to history, law, historiography, sociology and ethnography and partnered with descriptive analytical discussion (Creswell, 2014; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). This paper applies secondary sources, such as research results published in



journals, scholarly writing, online news sources, and public forums, to employ a qualitative methodology.

The findings of the results increase the awareness and understanding of a multilevel society on the importance to deconstruct the concerns and challenges that are related with the culture of corruption or viewed as the underlying cause of corruption problems in our country. This discussion examines the results of secondary research by researching issues that increase the awareness and understanding of a multilevel society on the importance of education must emphasise learning via the experience of the younger generation in order to instil the nature of integrity, strong spirit, and ethical values, as well as high discipline, so that individuals can build a strong sense of self and fight all sorts of corruption. This group should be prominent in society so as to abolish the culture of corruption in Malaysia.

The results of the study present eight (8) mandatory measures to combat corruption, namely 1. Understanding the Characteristics of Corrupt Acts and Gift Giving, 2. Eliminating the Corruption Culture and Abuse of Power as a Standard of Living in the Community, 3. Shaping Public Perception Against Corruption in Politics, 4. Educating the Public about the Consequences of Corruption on the National Administrative System, 5. Developing Institutions and Strategies to Combat Corruption, 6. Stressing the Importance of Fighting Corruption Through Experiential Learning, 7. Diverse Methods of Combating Corruption in the Past and Present, and 8. Corruption Law Enforcement and Punishment.

## Discussion

When we talk about integrity in the civil service, among the bad aspects or negative elements that should not be taken lightly or underestimated are the symptoms of corruption, malpractice, abuse of power, and criminal misconduct such as breach of trust. Corruption, misappropriation, and abuse of authority must be tackled swiftly and vigorously with a planned, unified, systematic, and all-encompassing strategy. To eradicate the signs of corruption, one of the obstacles that must be overcome is to raise public knowledge of corruption and malpractice. All parties, especially all levels of government and non-government organisation leadership, should take an active role in informing the public about the available capabilities, jurisdiction, or area of influence (Esa, Ationg, Ibrahim, Othman, Abang Muis, Zulhaimi & Muda, 2021d). With the implementation of JKP at all levels of Federal and State government administration, the mechanism for improving the quality of public services is already in place. The concern is whether it will work successfully or not. Again, it is contingent on the efforts and perseverance of the leaders of the organisations in question.

Referring to the hope of a “Nation without Corruption” as the fourth challenge of Vision 2020, which is to develop a society full of morals and ethics, whose citizens are rooted in religious, spiritual values and driven by the greatest level of ethics (Chuah, 2008). Can it be accomplished if corruption is not eradicated? Corruption is not a strange issue in our nation. Nearly every day, the media reports instances of corruption, malpractice, and abuse of authority in numerous sectors of our country. Although many corrupt individuals, both givers and receivers can be apprehended and brought to prison, social issues and diseases continue to occur and have not been able to be eradicated still. Therefore, neither the authorities nor the citizens of the community should be disheartened by this circumstance nor give up, rather, they should be resilient and committed to battling corruption. This seemingly endless activity of corruption begins with the desire and insanity of a man’s worldly things, such that the person forgets the

obligations he or she bears and all the impact that results from receiving a white envelope contains money.

Today, however, bribe-takers and givers can avoid human judgement in the world by evading worldly penalty through worldly law. This escalating corruption not only casts a negative image as a thief state, but corruption also has a variety of negative consequences that do not manifest immediately after a kleptocratic individual signs a contract (Harun & Hassim, 2017). However, the impact has gradually paid off without the community's knowledge. Obviously, it is simple to ask the government to enforce the law more strictly in order to eradicate corruption. Nevertheless, how does the Malaysian government acquire the ability to enforce the law more aggressively when its own people turn a blind eye and do not report corruption incidents that occur in front of their eyes? Since there are numerous regulations that safeguard the privacy of witnesses and bribe reporters. Consequently, corruption education literacy is a necessary measure for eradicating these undesirable habits.

### ***Understanding the Characteristics of Corruption and Gift Giving***

To further define the meaning of the characteristics of corruption, according to the MACC definition, corruption is defined as the accepting and offering of bribes. Bribes can be physical or non-physical and can be given or received in any way (Hamzah, Ahamad @ Rahamad & Md Syed, 2020). For instance, physical corruption must be in the form of money. However, it is more difficult to discover corruption in non-physical manifestations, such as support and votes, than in tangible forms. This non-physical kind of corruption is more visible to Malaysians and occurs frequently during election season (Hamzah, Ahamad @ Rahamad & Md Syed, 2020). Many politicians conduct numerous campaigns to attract and convince voters to support the political party they represent.

There are politicians who provide "pocket money" or "gifts" to voters in exchange for their support of their political party. Such activities are frequently conducted in rural areas. This is because money wins the hearts of the rural folk more easily. Although it is the responsibility of Malaysians to carry out their responsibilities in electing the people's representatives and the government through a democratic vote that should reflect the Malaysian community's sincerity and honesty. However, according to the Pahang Mufti, Datuk Seri Abdul Rahman Osman (2018), corruption always occurs prior to the day of an event. It is not considered corruption if the money is offered after the voters have cast their ballots. The provided allowance might be viewed as a gift to the community. Thus, the majority of politicians and political party organisations typically grant this opportunity to voters the night before the election.

Before pointing fingers at various individuals on suspicions of delivering and receiving bribes, it is necessary to analyse and comprehend the nature of the gift. The 2005 edition of the *Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka* Dictionary defines a gift as both a gift and reward. Yet, to what extent does the gift retain its original purpose of a gift. Generally, gifts can be bribes if given to the wrong individuals. The National Security Council (NSC) has issued MKN No. 5/2020: Providing and Receiving Gifts, which states that public officials are barred from giving and receiving gifts from parties with official connections (Mohd Adnan & Ismail, 2013). The giving and receiving of these gifts are subject not only to the individual civil servant, but also to any member of the family, whether giving or receiving directly or indirectly (in visible form or not) from or to any party.

The acceptance or provision of gifts connected to a public servant's official duties and obligations is termed bribery. However, Service Circular No. 3 (1998) stated that the tradition of receiving and giving gifts as a means of showing thanks, love, and friendship is part of the culture of Malaysian society (Mohd Adnan & Ismail, 2013). This cultural characteristic of Malaysian society makes it difficult to distinguish between gifts and bribery. According to the stated guidelines, civil servants may receive gifts with the agreement of the department head in two circumstances. That is, if an officer questions whether the form, amount, or value of the gifts the person received is appropriate for the gift's intended purpose. The second possibility is when an officer finds it difficult to refuse a valuable gift or souvenir that is prohibited by this rule. Following that, the relevant officer must provide a written report to the head of department including a detailed explanation of the gift's estimated value and the circumstances under which it was received.

The form or value of a present that is unrelated to a public servant's official duties is considered an unrelated gift. Whether or not the value of the present corresponds with the reason it was given. The value of the gift should be weighed against its current market value and the intention for which it was given. Acceptance of a gift may be deemed inconsistent with the gift's intended purpose if the current value of the gift received exceeds  $\frac{1}{4}$  monthly emolument or RM500, and the relevant civil servant is required to report the receipt of this gift to the head of department for approval. Alternatively, if the gift's reception is thought appropriate (Mohd Adnan & Ismail, 2013). The value of the present is less than  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the recipient's monthly salary or RM500, and the genuine intent of the gift is determined by the specific situation and events (Mohd Adnan & Ismail, 2013). For instance, gifts are given by co-workers on the occasion of retirement and marriage.

In addition, gifts received by a public official from members of his or her own family are legal. For difficult-to-decline gifts, this refers to instances in which while a civil servant is executing official duties, the officer cannot refuse the gift offered because if it is rejected, the dignity of the party who gave the gift will be degraded. For instance, at international official ceremonies where the party gives a gift to the receiver without their knowledge. Also, rewards from the community for the villagers' handiwork. With that, the recipient must accept the gift but only under certain circumstances. Coming back to the main question, can a gift become a bribe? If a gift is offered with an honest heart and without any ulterior motives that could diminish its value, it has a pure value. Under the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2009 (MACC Act 2009), a gift can be considered a bribe. The portion of the MACC Act 2009 that defines the act of giving and receiving bribes, section 16 (a) states that any person who "corruptly requests, accepts, or agrees to accept for himself or herself or another person" commits the offence.

### ***Eradicating the Culture of Corruption and Eliminating Power Abuse as A Way of Life in Society***

Corruption is prevalent in society for a variety of reasons. One of them is the easily influenced human nature. This is evident when individuals with financial or family economic issues are unstable (Mat Noor, 2005). Individuals who fail to accept their financial issues will engage in corrupt actions as a shortcut. By accepting a huge fund offer from another party, the financial troubles will be quickly resolved. As a result, the problem of society financial instability is caused by the uncontrolled use of money (Mat Noor, 2005). This is true when people live in a way of life that encourages them to spend money on non-essential purchases and to spend their

money on entertainment. This has ultimately resulted in waste of money and financial difficulties for certain parties. Furthermore, the culture of corruption that exists in society is a source of psychological issues (Al-Attas, 2015).

Ethical withering can occur in three ways in the context of psychological disorders. First, the use of language or expression that is deemed 'good' by society. For instance, the word "giving or accepting a bribe is wrong" rather than "giving or receiving gift or reward" is positive. However, the word 'bribe' has a negative or immoral connotation, whereas the word 'gift' implies a sincere offering of assistance. This can be seen in Spain and Mexico, where police officers frequently solicit for gifts (Mohamed, Chuah & Mohd Ali, 2010). The term "*mordida*" refers to the little bite. Therefore, this demonstrates that certain nations do not consider giving or receiving gifts to be corrupt. The second way ethical withering can occur is when a person incorrectly evaluates a circumstance (Mohamed, Chuah & Mohd Ali, 2010). This can be determined based on whether or not the individual is aware.

Corruption-related decisions are accepted by society, particularly when they are motivated by personal interests. Some individuals believe that their tiny actions will yield large outcomes or advantages. For example, the action of a person who paid a bribe of RM1,000 for a contract worth RM1 million is very little. Psychological Numbing and Routinisation may lead to inaccurate judgments. Psychological numbness occurs when a person's continuous exposure to corrupt behaviour makes them insensitive to the behaviour. Over time, the sense of moral anguish resulting from the crime of corruption will diminish. Routinisation, on the other hand refers to the act of justifying an action based on past experience. The combination of psychological numbing and routinisation a person experiences will lessen their negative attitude toward corrupt acts, and they will finally view them as nothing more than every occurrence.

In the context of psychological difficulties, the third path is immoral attitudes and reasoning which can lead to corruption (Al-Attas, 2015). This is shown by the fact that both processes occur within the individual's conscious mind. They provide justification for unethical conduct. For example, an employee who is aware of committing a corruption offence in the firm believes it will not be a problem since the company and its employees are covered by insurance or the company has a large adequate cash reserve to absorb tiny losses. The availability of insurance and finances can protect a community from being found guilty of corruption. Similarly, when an individual's perspective feels that corruption is not an extreme crime in comparison to rape and murder, the justifying attitude of corruption might develop. Thus, corruption continues to exist and is committed by persons with such thoughts. Corruption cases committed by a number of troubled individuals and afterwards transferred to different government systems are also indicative of the corruption culture in society (Mohd Tap, 2012).

Nevertheless, the troubled individuals were not punished under the current legislation. This is due to the existence of the value of incompetence or 'good' nature in the context of individuals who have worked for a long time in the government system, causing them to be hesitant or fearful to deliver sufficient punishment to individuals who have committed the crime of corruption. Finally, whether committed consciously or unconsciously, psychological issue factors contribute to a culture of corruption in society. Additionally, the culture of corruption in society can be eradicated by requiring all parties to adopt a new mindset. Typically, a person's way of thinking is established throughout their formative years at school or at home.

Where a person seeks to add information without being influenced by the existing beliefs and lessons. Therefore, planning to transform the mentality of all parties namely youth is a new strategy that is anticipated to aid and assist the success of the plan (Ationg, Othman, Esa, Mohd Tamring, Hajimin, & Hamid, 2021c).

### ***Shaping Public Perceptions Against Political Corruption***

In Malaysia, corruption has never ceased to be a topic of community discussion, and the occurrence of this crime continues to rise. This increase in corruption is not merely an observation but is supported by IPR by Transparency International where Malaysia continues to record a decline by falling from 51<sup>st</sup> in 2019 to 57<sup>th</sup> in 2020 (*Bernama*, 2021). Even high-profile corruption cases frequently result in guilty verdicts, which is one of the factors contributing to the deterioration of people's confidence in attempts to combat corruption in Malaysia (*Bernama*, 2021). Leaders embroiled in corruption allegations have a place among their supporters and can even win elections, hold their posts, and remain popular (Raymond Majumah, Ationg, Esa, Abang Muis, Othman, Mokhtar, & Muda, 2021). This situation causes society to always have a bad view of corruption and to identify it with politics in a close and inseparable manner.

This statement was also supported by the Deputy Director General of the National Centre for Governance, Integrity and Anti-Corruption (GIACC), Datuk Dr. Anis Yusal Bin Yusoff, who stated that similar to the population of people convicted of corruption-related crimes, relatively few politicians are convicted. It is possible that negative impressions of politicians come from the fact that political parties require funding to fund political and voting operations. Political party fundraising refers to supplementary financial activities for political parties. Typically, political parties will raise funds through party membership fees. Because it is insufficient, party funding operations that are usually accomplished through charity dinners, contributions, and charity sales are conducted (Mohd Yusof, 2015). However, as the cost of living has surged, so has the expense of political parties, and rivalry has increased to seize seats and win elections.

Eventually, money politics came into being. Proposals regarding the need for the development of a regulatory organisation for monies provided and received by any individual or political party, as discussed during programme interviews. This is done so that the government and the public may monitor if these persons or parties receive the project after receiving funding from particular firms again when there is no "conflict of interest" between the donor and the recipient. If the government such as the Election Commission (EC), political parties, and others do not strictly oversee the use of money in politics, it can have a negative impact on the country. Many leaders and politicians enter politics today not with the aim of fighting for the future of the people, but as a shortcut to profit, improve living standards, and increase their popularity (Mahabob, 2020). This is what motivates certain individuals or groups to abuse their power and exploit it for their own ends.

For instance, if the ruler of country A does not receive finances or support from a specific corporation, that company will be subjected to actions such as being unable to trade and so on. This is a national concern that demands political maturity. As a result, the election of leaders to lead the party and the country would be affected. Leaders who are of calibre but do not have a lot of money will lose to leaders who lack leadership qualities but have a lot of money. The MACC 2017 study on the perceptions of students in higher education institutions regarding corruption revealed that students are also insensitive to corruption with 16 percent stating they

are willing to accept bribes and 18.2 percent stating they are willing to give bribes to avoid action (Bernama, 2021). Considering this, it is not unexpected that there are still individuals and political parties in our nation who have won elections and been elected to leadership positions despite their involvement in corruption scandals. Therefore, the people must continually monitor the agenda of this deceitful political game and select candidates based on charismatic leadership, distinguished service record, and a clean personal history.

### ***Educating the Public to be Aware of Corruption's Implications on the National Administrative System***

Every year, as we all know, World Anti-Corruption Day is observed but do we as Malaysians truly grasp that corruption is not only unlawful, but also detrimental to both individuals and the nation as a whole (Akhbar, 2018). It is evident that corruption will have negative consequences. Therefore, one of the organisational consequences of corruption in our country will be the crippling of an organisation's function. This is said because no one will question one's behaviour in the context of corrupt activity. In actuality, such unethical practices will diminish public confidence in our nation's ingenuity. In the meanwhile, it will cause a country's administration to be in disarray. It will eventually lead to problems such as economic downturn, disregard for community interests, etc. This culture of corruption ultimately destroy the administration and governance of a country. In addition, the dignity of the country will be tarnished. This is because corruption describes biased practices and injustice in a society where many others are actually persecuted because of these bad practices (Marinsah, Abang Muis, Esa, Othman, Ramlie, Mokhtar & Yusoff, 2021).

Indirectly, the management's reputation is also harmed. In addition, a person who engages in corruption will erode one's own morals. This is due to the fact that this corrupt behaviour will further erode the morals and noble character of a person who has been corrupted by a specific quantity of money or goods. The money they receive at that moment will be the source of the culprit and recipient generations' own flesh and blood. In addition, the government will be weakened since every time corruption happens, the government loses revenue or deviates from its duties. For instance, if one is negligent about something that has been determined, the bribe has substituted the tax money that should have been collected, and just a small number of bribes enjoy the benefits. If this corruption is not eradicated, the government of our nation will be in turmoil. This is because it creates additional issues, such as economic downturn, disregard for community interests and others.

A culture of corruption can also ruin a country's administration and governance, as was the case in the Philippines when unrestrained corruption led to the downfall of President Marcos' administration (Akhbar, 2018). Finally, if there is corruption and malpractice, the focus of investment and development is not balanced and equitable, and as a result, more people will pay the repercussions. The focus of development and investment is limited to particular sectors. In reality, this imbalance occurs not because of the sector's greater demand and revenues, but because of corruption or money laundering. As a result of lopsided economic growth and the absence of corruption opportunities in other industries, it cannot be grown.

### ***Developing Institutions and Strategies to Combat Corruption***

A bribe is defined as something obtained without exchange and then blamed on the culprit. Any money used to win support from people who can help carry out non-halal actions is considered corruption. Something offered with the goal of invalidating or rendering a right

ineffective. Furthermore, bribery implies the illegal taking of property. Our country's anti-corruption operations are gaining traction, including the establishment of entities with a variety of anti-corruption goals. However, a few people are still unaware of the existence of such institutions. The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) is one of our country's anti-corruption organisations. This organisation was established to take the position of the Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA). The MACC was established in response to the community's need for a more independent, transparent, and professional anti-corruption body, which is also one of the MACC's guiding principles. These modifications are also designed to increase the efficacy, efficiency, independence, and transparency of Malaysian anti-corruption efforts.

Furthermore, the MACC was created to address the negative reputation of anti-corruption authorities, which were previously viewed as not being independent or transparent. Section 7 of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) (2009) defines the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) as having seven (7) primary functions (MACC Website, 2022). The MACC's official website provides easy access to information on the organization's functions. Furthermore, to combat the spread of corruption, the MACC has a three-pronged strategy based on Section 7 of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2009 (Act 694) that includes enforcement, prevention, and community education. The MACC is divided into four divisions: prevention, operations, management, and professionalism, as well as the office of the chief commissioner. The establishment of the MACC has helped to numerous triumphs in combating corruption. One of the MACC's achievements was removing syndicates that controlled government projects valued up to RM3.8 billion.

In addition, the Enforcement Agency Integrity Commission was formed (EAIC). The Enforcement Agency Integrity Commission is a Federal Statutory Body established by an Act of Parliament under Section 3 of the Enforcement Agency Integrity Commission Act 2009 [Act 700], which was gazetted on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2009 and took effect on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 (MACC Website, 2022). The purpose of this Act is to replace the Independent Police Complaints and Misconduct Commission Act of 2005. The commission's other goals include instilling and enhancing integrity among law enforcement personnel and agencies, as well as increasing public trust in them. One of the Commission's eight (8) key functions is to hear public charges of misbehaviour against enforcement officers or enforcement agencies in general. In addition, investigating and holding hearings on complaints received. In this way, enforcement actions may constantly be tracked, and appropriate action taken in the event of wrongdoing.

With the assistance of the EAIC, the public can make complaints of misconduct against parties implicated in corruption offences so that investigations can be conducted against the parties to prevent this from happening again. Despite the government's formation of the EAIC, a few people are still unaware of its existence, and as a result, public charges of misbehaviour are not examined because required processes are not followed. As a result, the EAIC's function should be communicated to the public so that the public knows where to direct complaints of misbehaviour. As a result, by disclosing the behaviour of corrupt individuals, this can indirectly contribute to the battle against corruption. The National Anti-Corruption Plan (NACP) for 2019 to 2023 is then presented (MACC Website, 2022). The idea for this technique was developed during the 14<sup>th</sup> General Election (GE). *Pakatan Harapan* (a political party) at the time emphasised efforts to ensure Malaysia's reputation for honesty rather than corruption.

The Malaysian government's National Anti-Corruption Plan (NACP) is a key document describing comprehensive and integrated anti-corruption efforts. This is the first plan to combine concerns about governance, integrity, and anti-corruption into a unified framework. Judicial Accountability and Credibility, Prosecution and Law Enforcement Agencies, and Business Integrity are the core purposes of the NACP. Through the NACP strategy, the NACP is also responsible for coordinating anti-corruption actions among political actors, corporate entities, law enforcement agencies, and others. Finally, with the development of these institutions, the government and those responsible for combating corruption will be able to improve their efforts with the help of these organisations. These organisations' assistance is incredibly important and helpful in Malaysia's battle against corruption.

### ***Emphasising the Importance of Experiential Learning in Fighting Corruption***

Despite the fact that numerous parties have offered various tactics and measures to combat this sign of corruption, it remains extremely difficult to remove. Malaysia, which has institutions to prevent and implement corruption-related legislation, anti-corruption programmes, and a National Anti-Corruption Plan for 2019 to 2023 is still unable to reduce the IPR or restore public confidence in the prevention of corruption according to experts (Abdul Khalid, Saad, Awang & Tambi, 2021). Apparently, the obligation to combat corruption does not rest solely on the shoulders of the authorities or the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) rather in order to reduce and combat corruption, every level of society must pledge not to give or accept bribes. Corruption Offences Education Literacy is one of the most significant solutions for 'experiential learning' focused disorders (Esa, Ationg, Ibrahim, Othman, Abang Muis, Zulhaimi, & Muda, 2021a). This is because Malaysians have trained their minds to comprehend something in only one context.

This needs to be changed because the way of forming the mind has already changed in developed countries such as European countries and these capitals need to be emulated so that our thinking is in line with developed countries. For example, a group of students in the age group of 6 to 7 years old went on a study tour where the students' teachers took them to a public area. Here, the teacher highlights to the students that all these students are individuals, but when they assemble in groups, they become civilians. Since these public areas belong to the public, the public should be accountable for their maintenance. This is comparable to what is learned in schools, where students are educated using the process of "experiential learning" from an early age. Learning by doing or 'experiential learning' is crucial because the individual may do things practically and gain experience by doing so (Othman, Jupiter, Awang & Yusoff, 2017). The approach is supposed to increase the learning process and enable people to grasp the learning process rather than just the material provided in class. Integrity management methods of educating children from a young age in order for them to grasp values are linked to storytelling for kindergarten kids' capital formation.

The question is whether the country intends to cultivate a noble personality in those who recognise the worth of something. This desire will not be achieved by simply comprehending various definitions such as integrity, accountability, and so on unless the concept is planted in the heart. The application of values must also be given careful consideration, beginning in primary school and continuing through higher education institutions such as universities, in order to infuse and strengthen understanding through unity and visibility as one nation (Othman, Esa, Ationg, & Muda, 2021i). Through this education, anti-corruption activities can be promoted at a young age by defining corrupt behaviour as dishonest and to be avoided. The



syllabuses of related subjects such as Civic Education, Moral Education, and others must also be revised to include anti-corruption elements to raise awareness at the school level so that students are inculcated with an understanding of the evils and consequences of corruption from an early age (Esa, Ationg, Ibrahim, Othman, Abang Muis, Zulhaimi, & Muda, 2021b, Bernama, 2021). Therefore, education is so crucial, and teachers must play a significant part in reaching this objective.

### ***Differences in How Corruption was Dealt in the Past and Today***

Authorities have undertaken a variety of methods and measures to fight this issue. Despite the authorities' many methods and efforts to remove corruption, the crime has not yet been completely eliminated. The question is, what is the difference between the methods and efforts used to combat the crime of corruption in the past and the present? In the past, corruption was combated through strengthening the rule of law and punishment, among other methods. In this context, governments must demonstrate their commitment in combating corruption by taking action against violators regardless of their status. Moreover, the citizens are still believing on their worldviews that there are parties who accept bribes without being brought to justice (Othman, Ationg, Esa, Hajimin, & Abang Muis, 2021). People are therefore dissatisfied with the government's honesty in addressing this issue. The government's determination to prosecute or drag them to court serves a reminder that they do not accept bribes.

Corruption practitioners, for instance, are hesitant to commit corruption offences because of fear of punishment. To avoid the occurrence of biased punishment, the punishment imposed must be proportional to the offence committed against all parties involved especially those in high positions. The harsh punishment is designed to make corrupt practitioners aware that their actions are immoral and detrimental to their self-image. Thus, the government's stern response in punishing everyone involved with no exceptions serves as a reminder and warning to prohibit corrupt officials from accepting bribes. In addition, the way to combat the crime of corruption in the past, the application of religious and moral principles should begin at a young age (Othman, Mohd Shah, Yusoff, Esa, Ationg, Ramlie & Abdul Rahman, 2021c). One of the responsibilities of parents is to instil religious beliefs and moral principles in their young children. The application of religion and moral values must begin early in a person's life so that they are aware of what is good and what is evil (Abang Muis, Marinsah, Ramlie, Othman, Ationg, Mohd Shah, Yusoff, 2021).

Children are taught valuable concepts to help them comprehend the significance of liberating themselves and the nation from this threat of corruption. Furthermore, we must reinforce our faith and our identity in order to avoid becoming victims of corruption. The most powerful barrier in eradicating the symptoms of corruption is high faith and personality; when everyone opposes corruption, the practice of corruption can be abolished. Consequently, the incorporation of religious and moral concepts into one's personality is vitally crucial (Othman, Mohd Shah, Yusoff, Abu Bakar, Zulhaimi, Abang Muis, & Muda, 2021). Next, we will discuss the role of the media in the modern fight against corruption. There are two distinct types of mass media namely electronic media and print media. In this setting, modern society is expanding in parallel with modernisation, where advanced information technology facilities are available to facilitate their affairs. As society spends increasingly more time on the internet, information on the evils and penalties of corrupt behaviours may be easily distributed to the entire population via electronic media.

In addition, there are a variety of modern media that can be utilised to distribute information regarding corruption offences. For instance, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Tik Tok can be used to distribute information regarding corruption offences (Abdul Khalid, Saad, Awang & Tambi, 2021). Newspapers can also be utilised to distribute information about corruption offences, in addition to electronic media. Even while modern civilisation is expanding in line with the modernisation of the country, not all societies possess technological expertise. Therefore, senior citizens and those without access to the internet can acquire information about corruption crimes via print media. Therefore, printed media provides access to information about corruption crimes for senior individuals and others without access to the internet. On this basis, it is seen more beneficial to educate people from all walks of life about the dangers of committing corruption offences to oneself, one's family, one's community and one's country.

Furthermore, the government must establish additional anti-corruption institutions to combat corruption today. In this context, the formation of anti-corruption institutions will assist in strengthening the efforts of individuals responsible for combating corruption offences as early as varsities education that made compulsory as one of syllabus (Esa, Ationg, Othman, Mohd Shah, Yusoff, Ramlie & Abang Muis, 2021d). This anti-corruption institution was established to assist the community in dealing with and reporting corruption-related offences. In addition, these institutions can be easily contacted for additional information by visiting their own websites. Compared to the past, people must manually obtain information due to the lack of technology tools such as smartphones. The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission is an example of an institution that has been established to combat corruption (MACC). It is obvious that the development of anti-corruption agencies is crucial for ensuring that efforts to combat corruption offences are continuously monitored to avoid their spread. The gap between the past and present approaches of combating corruption is attributable to the effects of time's progression.

In this context, the lack of advanced information technology infrastructure in our country in the past has resulted in an emphasis on the authorities' and individuals' obligations and roles, as well as manual attempts to combat crime. Today, however, with the availability of improved information technology facilities, there are a variety of techniques and initiatives that can be adopted to more effective in combating the crime of corruption. This is said so because the changing of the times has impacted the way in which humans live, particularly the way in which they think. If the country wishes to address this problem from its roots, the society's perspective on corruption must first be changed especially coming from younger generation (Othman, Yusoff, Jupiter & Mokhtar, 2021e). The principle of "prevention is better than cure" may be more helpful in preventing the spread of these corruption offences.

### ***Law Enforcement and Corruption Penalties***

A law is a rule of conduct or process that has been established by custom, agreement, or authority. A law is also a set of governing regulations or principles that are enforced by the political authorities, implemented by the judicial system and educated to the nation (Othman, Yusoff, Awang & Jupiter, 2016k). Several Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Acts have been enacted as a result of the prevalence of a variety of corruption-related offences. Among them, Soliciting or Accepting Bribes [Section 16 & 17 (a) MACC Act 2009], Giving Bribes [Section 17 (b) MACC Act 2009], Submitting False Claims [Section 18 MACC Act 2009] and Abuse of Power [Section 23 MACC Act 2009] (MACC Website, 2022). The offence of

Soliciting or Accepting Bribes [Section 16 & 17 (a) MACC Act 2009] is committed when a person or agency solicits or takes a bribe in exchange for performing or not performing a certain action. In addition, a person commits the “offence of giving a bribe” if they offer or give a bribe to a public official in exchange for doing or not doing something relating to the public officer’s affairs.

Moreover, the offence of Submitting a False Claim [Section 18 MACC Act 2009] is committed by anybody who submits a claim document, such as a receipt or invoice, that contains false material information with the intent to defraud the principal (the office). As for the Offence of Abuse of Power [Section 23 MACC Act 2009], an Officer of a Public Body or a member of the government administration who uses his or her position to make decisions or act regarding a matter in which he or she, the relatives or the associates have an interest is guilty of the offence. In general, corruption charges are punishable by up to twenty years in jail and a fine of at least five times the value of the bribe or RM10,000, whichever is greater. Suppose, for instance, that party A gets a bribe of RM5,000. So, the punishment is imprisonment and RM25,000 fine (RM5,000 x 5). In the meantime, party B was paid a bribe of RM1,000. Consequently, the sentence is imprisonment and a RM10,000 fine. This is due to the fact that RM1,000 multiplied by 5 is RM5,000. As a result, the minimum value of the corruption fine is determined to be RM10,000.

However, bribes can also take the form of gifts, bonuses, votes, services, positions, salary, discounts, and loans, among other things (Al-Attas, 2009). Although legal action and punishment have been taken, the MACC’s statistical graph of corruption arrests from 2016 to 2021 indicates that the civil service sector, which is comprised of top management, management and professional, support personnel, as well as the public sector, which is comprised of private, public, and other sectors, have volatile values between 2016 to 2021. This is due to the community’s continued lack of interest in the activity of taking bribes. They continue to believe that the crime of corruption may not be as harsh as the punishment imposed for crime such as rape or murder. Between 2016 to 2021, the year with the highest number of corruption cases was year 2019 despite the fact that the acts were created in 2009 (Abdul Khalid, Saad, Awang & Tambi, 2021).

This calls into doubt the integrity of Acts and laws that have proven ineffective to all parties to the extent that they continue to accept and receive bribes today. Corruption Punishment: How effective has it been in the past and in the present? As circumstances permit, the penalties for corruption offenders should be adjusted. Hence, a result of technical advancements, corrupt actions can now be carried out in a variety of new and interesting ways. The Anti-Corruption Act 1997 (Malaysia) (Act 575) outlines the offences and penalties for receiving bribes (bribery) (Akhbar, 2018). For example, through part III, section 10 of Act 575 states that any person who corruptly solicits, receives, or agrees to receive for oneself or for another person; or corruptly giving, promising, or offering to any person either for his or her own benefit or for the benefit of another person is guilty of corruption. If found guilty, the perpetrator faces a sentence of not less than fourteen days and not more than twenty years in prison, as well as a fine of not less than five times the amount or value of the bribe that is the subject of the offence, or ten thousand Malaysian Ringgit, whichever is higher.

The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2009 (Act 694) is an act that established the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission in January 2009 to combat corruption and any

activities related to corruption in the country (Akhbar, 2018). Through this act, it is evident that the law has been drafted and expanded to accommodate the diverse sorts of organisations in Malaysia. According to Act 694, part IV of section 23, any person who commits a corruption offence under sections 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, and 23 may be imprisoned for a term not exceeding twenty years and fined not less than the value multiplied by the amount of value of the bribe which is the subject of the offence if it can be assessed, in the form of cash or ten thousand *ringgit*, whichever is greater. According Sinar Harian (2021) the Chairman of the Enforcement Agency Integrity Commission (EAIC), Tan Sri Mohd Sidek Hassan, Malaysia's Anti-Corruption law is sufficient but there are still shortcomings in its execution.

Weaknesses in execution are most likely attributable to the character and culture of Malaysian society, which honours persons who occupy high positions and are obliged to the individual in order to hide corruption offences perpetrated by the individual from society and enforcement authorities. However, through the work of Sanusi M. R. (2021) Malaysia's position on the international Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for 2020 dropped from 51<sup>st</sup> in 2019 to 57<sup>th</sup> in 2020 (Sinar Harian, 2021). The incident demonstrates that law enforcement and the Malaysian community's efforts to combat corruption are now producing results. In fact the success demonstrates that the terms imposed on corruption offenders are effective in preventing and discouraging others from committing corruption. This is obvious from the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission's data on corruptions arrests which show that 939 total cases were successfully arrested by the end of 2016. After five years, the number of corruption cases arrested has increased by 59 cases bringing the total 998 by the end of 2020, demonstrating the effectiveness of law enforcement in carrying out and enforcing corruption-related legislation.

Despite this, Malaysia lags behind other countries in terms of anti-corruption legislation and penalties, as well as agencies. Sweden, unlike Malaysia, does not have an anti-corruption agency or commission. Their corruption cases, on the other hand are better managed than in Malaysia. Why does something like this happen? Since the pandemic in early 2020, the MACC has noticed an upsurge in large-scale corruption cases involving crime syndicates, cartels, and civil servants. The economic collapse during the pandemic put many people in terrible condition. Situations like this illustrate that some Malaysians still believe they can get away with corruption because of the law enforcement system's weaknesses and the punishment itself and this situation hinders people from other countries to visit and even work in Malaysia (Yusoff, Othman, Mohd Suki, Awang, Jupiter & Razak, 2017). The punishment imposed on corruption offenders were also relatively lenient, as several evaded punishments because they had been granted bail in court. If a person has money and property, the person is fine. The person can avoid getting the punishment that should have been dished out. This could produce frustration among the public, who may believe that the government is doing nothing to prosecute corruption perpetrators, particularly high-profile corruption offenders.

### **Recommendation And Conclusions**

According to Quran, corruption is a violation of the law and the religion. Both bribery and bribing are frequently misunderstood, despite having distinct meanings and connotations. Therefore, we must exercise caution when giving and receiving gifts while fulfilling a specified obligation without expecting anything in return. According to Imam Shafi'e, offering a gift with the expectation of receiving something in return is prohibited under Islamic law, as it is similar to buying and selling which involves components of deception (Sanusi & Syed Ismail, 2016). Gifts accepted in exchange for official tasks that must be executed with the trust granted

are corrupt deeds. This act of corruption has oppressed various parties especially young generation and damaged the country's image, which was once referred to as a kleptocracy due to numerous high-profile corruption cases involving numerous national leaders and politicians (Yusoff, Othman, Mohd Shah, Esa, Zulhazmi, Ibrahim & Ationg, 2021). This has caused foreign investors and the international community to look down on the image of Malaysia.

This issue not only tarnishes the country's image, but it also puts the country's security and well-being in jeopardy. Negative public perceptions of political corruption are the result of a decline in Malaysia's CPI in 2020, the existence of high-profile corruption cases that were not prosecuted in court, money politics in political party funding, a lack of control and strict monitoring over the funding of political parties, the selfish attitude of some individuals or political parties, and the attitude of the people who are willing to accept bribes. Therefore, the public must recognise that corruption is a cancer that can destroy the economic and politics of the nation especially multi-ethnic society such Malaysia (Lukin, Esa, Abang Muis, Ationg, Mohd Tamring, Othman & Mokhtar, 2021). It is time for the people to take action, and it is essential to select a leader who is competent, capable, and able to lead specific sections in each field. In addition, corruption occurs not just in the public sector but also in the commercial sector and among others. For those with weak personalities, the desire for a lavish lifestyle, extravagance, greed, and the desire to get rich quickly are the root causes of corruption.

This is also one of the underlying causes of the corruption problem in our country. A person's mental problems are also one of the most important contributing reasons to corrupt behaviours. This situation occurs when an individual encounters great stress, causing the person to become brazen and compelled to commit corruption. In addition, this corruption has extremely negative consequences for our nation. This is due to the fact that the repercussions of corruption for diverse parties would vary. The leakage and eventual failure of a government organisation's delivery system will result from the corruption-dominated operation and management of a crucial government agency. Decisions and judgments are no longer based on established policy and planning interest, but rather on the profit interests of individuals who have profited by abusing their power and position for their own financial interests and positions. Therefore, offenders of corruption should be subjected to appropriate penalties. If troubled individuals are not punished, our confidence as citizens in the progress of the nation through cooperation with those in authority is likewise diminished. This is because the responsible persons only know how to relax and have fun until their responsibility of developing the country is given over to the people of Malaysia. As a result, it is inevitable that the country's progress will remain stagnant.

In general, we are aware that Malaysia is in a condition of instability, and that many issues remain unresolved. Therefore, it is essential for a representative of the people with a strong dedication to be a champion in accomplishing national goals to possess leadership abilities in order to steer not just the people but also the nation forward (Othman, Yusoff, Awang & Jupiter, 2016h). It is hoped that if all parties cooperate by reporting corruption violations to the MACC, this corrupt activity will cease. In 2010, the Whistle Blowers Protection Act was also enacted. The Act is an act of legislation designed to encourage the disclosure of information regarding any crime of corruption or other misbehaviour. The Whistle Blowers Protection Act of 2010 (Act 711) also protects whistle blowers from any unfavourable actions resulting from the disclosures made. Therefore, it is expected of all parties to reduce the number of corruption

cases in Malaysia, so that our country is highly regarded abroad. There is no doubt that there are still many difficulties to eliminating corruption's symptoms.

In the near future, all parties must take the initiative to fix this situation. Changes must be made to an organisation's system so that its administration becomes more efficient and the habit of giving and accepting bribes among employees is easier to avoid. This is because the familiarity of personnel with the position and the outdated method utilised by organisation facilitated the conduct of corrupt crimes. There were flaws in the system at the time, despite the fact that significant technological advancements had already occurred. For example, many organisations still choose to maintain vital company data in a physical file (hard copy) which makes data fabrication and deletion easier for dishonest individuals. Regardless of age, position, or setting, parts of corruption education and awareness should always be made available to the general public (Othman, Esa, Abu Bakar & Mokhtar, 2021j). This is due to the fact that the diseases of corruption can spread to people from all walks of life. No matter who or where they are, people must be regularly reminded of the consequences of corruption and the potential repercussions if they commit a crime of corruption.

The roots of this prevention must be planted at the grassroots level, among youngsters, and at the core level, among aspiring leaders (Ationg, Esa, Othman, Mohd Shah, Yusoff, Ramlie & Mokhtar, 2021b). Therefore, if every level of society is continually informed about the dangers of corruption, this will lead to the emergence of a society that is considerate, always sensitive and mindful of one another. In short, regardless of the existence of information technology facilities or the absence of information technology facilities, all of the government and authorities' approaches and efforts to combat crime offer an alternative. Corruption will not be eradicated at the grassroots level as long as the entire society does not work together to combat corruption. In this context, the government has also taken steps to build anti-corruption structures and strategies. Therefore, we must collaborate to achieve the country's primary purpose, which is to be free of corrupt activities for our own self-interest and the good of the nation. By participating in activities to combat corruption offences rooting from the youth in particular, it is hoped that many more individuals would enter the field to ensure that this corrupt practice is hated and rejected by the entire society and give positive impression from international standing (Othman, Yusoff, Mohd Shah, Mokhtar, Abang Muis, Marinsah & Marzuki, 2021d). Finally, if efforts to eradicate corruption at the grassroots level have been unsuccessful, let us combat corruption by preventing it from become more widespread as the phrase says, "Prevention is Better Than Cure".

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