

## Analysis of PT. Pertamina Corruption Case in The Perspective of Public Administration Ethics

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### ARTICLE INFO

*Keywords:* Corruption, Public Administration Ethics, Transparency, Accountability, Good Corporate Governance

*Received :* 24 April

*Revised :* 24 May

*Accepted:* 28 June

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### ABSTRACT

This article analyzes cases of corruption involving PT. Pertamina from 2018 to 2023, focusing on aspects of public administration ethics. In the context of corruption that harms the state and society, this article aims to identify unethical practices in crude oil procurement and refinery product distribution that are not in accordance with the principles of public administration ethics. Through a case study and literature review approach, this research found that the weak implementation of the principles of transparency, accountability, and integrity at PT. Pertamina enabled collusion and abuse of authority. This case highlights the importance of governance reform, the implementation of Good Corporate Governance (GCG), and the need for ethics education for employees. This study recommends strengthening oversight and transparency systems to prevent future corruption practices and rebuild public trust in state-owned enterprises.

## **INTRODUCTION**

PT. Pertamina (Persero) is an Indonesian state-owned oil and gas company established on December 10, 1957. Since its inception, Pertamina has played an important role in the management of energy resources in Indonesia, particularly in the exploration, production and distribution of oil and gas. Along with Indonesia's economic growth, Pertamina has transformed into one of the largest integrated energy companies in Southeast Asia. As a major energy provider, Pertamina supports national economic activities and ensures a stable energy supply for the community. The company is also involved in social and sustainable development programs, such as renewable energy development and corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs that help improve community welfare. With various challenges faced, including fluctuations in global oil prices and demands to shift to clean energy, PT Pertamina continues to adapt and innovate. This has made it a key driving force in Indonesia's energy transition, with the aim of achieving energy security and environmental sustainability. Pertamina's existence is not only vital to the energy sector, but also to economic growth and the overall welfare of the Indonesian people. (Pertamina, 2025)

The phenomenon of corruption in Indonesia, especially in the public sector and State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), has become a serious problem that hampers development and public trust. Corruption in the public sector often occurs through the practice of bribery, embezzlement and abuse of authority, which harms the state budget and public services. In SOEs, corruption can result in inefficiency and waste of resources, reduce the competitiveness of the company, and negatively impact the national economy. (Dr. Amalia Syauket, S.H., M.Si, Dr. Dwi Seno Wijanarko, S.H., 2016)

Corruption cases involving PT Pertamina in the governance of crude oil and refinery products from 2018 to 2023, (Ardian Mulyadi, 2025) point to a number of serious alleged irregularities. One of the main issues was corrupt practices in crude oil procurement, where there were indications that some officials were involved in collusion to win contracts illegally. Then, it was found that the tender process was not transparent and tended to favor certain parties, potentially harming state finances.

In addition, refinery products are also in the spotlight, where there are allegations of manipulation in distribution and sales (TEMPO, 2025), allegedly involving individuals who take advantage of their position to gain personal gain. The resulting losses not only affect state revenues, but also the stability of the national energy supply.

This issue is particularly significant in the context of public administration ethics. Corruption in the sector of state-owned enterprises such as Pertamina creates concerns about the integrity of the management of natural resources that should be managed for the benefit of the people. This incident demonstrates the need for increased transparency and accountability in every step of decision-making. Stricter governance reforms, including the implementation of effective supervisory systems and ethics education for employees, are essential to prevent the recurrence of similar cases in the future. Thus, corruption eradication efforts

are key in building public trust and creating a cleaner administrative environment with integrity.

The main objective of this analysis is to explore and understand the ethical violations that occurred in the PT Pertamina corruption case. This case reflects the complexity and negative impact of corruption in the public sector. By conducting an in-depth analysis, it is expected to identify the factors causing ethical violations, the influence of power, and weak oversight mechanisms, and provide recommendations for improving the ethics and governance system at PT Pertamina. By understanding ethical violations in this context, it is hoped to encourage awareness of the importance of integrity and accountability in the management of company resources for the benefit of the wider community.

The PT Pertamina corruption case from the perspective of public administration ethics is very important to study because corruption not only damages institutional integrity, but also creates distrust among the public. In the context of public administration, ethics serves as a foundation to ensure that public officials act with transparency, accountability and public interest. When corruption occurs, these values are compromised, resulting in a decline in public trust in government and the institutions that are supposed to serve them. The long-term impact of this is a loss of institutional legitimacy, which can inhibit public participation in government processes. Furthermore, this mistrust can decrease investment and economic growth, creating a negative cycle that is difficult to break. Therefore, analyzing this case from an ethical perspective is crucial to identify weaknesses and formulate future prevention strategies.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

- Corruption and Public Administration Ethics: Dr. Amalia Syauket and Dr. Dwi Seno Wijanarko (2016) argue that corruption in the public sector, particularly in state-owned enterprises (SOEs), hinders development and reduces public trust. They emphasize the need for integrity in the management of state resources.
- Good Corporate Governance (GCG): Fafako and Kurniasih (2024) explain the importance of implementing GCG in creating good governance. GCG not only involves the interests of shareholders but also considers the interests of all stakeholders, including the community. This is in line with the principles of transparency and accountability, which are expected to prevent corrupt practices.
- Analysis of Ethical Issues in Government: Hayani et al. (2024) conducted an analysis of ethical issues among government officials from a public administration perspective. They found that low transparency in budget management and procurement can trigger unethical practices, leading to a loss of public trust.
- Application of Public Administration Ethics: Ummah (2019) outlines the role of public administration ethics in achieving good governance. Emphasis on transparency, accountability, and integrity is key to building public trust and preventing corruption.

- The Impact of Corruption on Pertamina: TEMPO (2025) reported that corruption cases at Pertamina caused significant losses to the state, which impacted state revenue from the energy sector. This highlights the need for decisive action in law enforcement and governance reform.
- Ethics and Social Responsibility: Yogi Apriansya and Meiwanda (2021) emphasize that corruption in bureaucracy can be addressed by implementing strong public administration ethics. They suggest that ethics education for public officials should be a priority to create an anti-corruption culture.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In analyzing the corruption case at PT Pertamina from the perspective of public administration ethics, the approach used includes case studies and literature studies (Soegiyono, 2011). The case study was conducted by examining corruption incidents that occurred at PT Pertamina, including data collection through official documents, media reports, and interviews with relevant parties. The researcher reviewed various sources, such as scientific articles, books, and previous research journals related to the same topic. This approach allows researchers to understand the latest developments in the field, identify existing research gaps, and compare findings from various sources. By combining these two approaches, the analysis can provide a comprehensive and in-depth picture, and support the argument with.

## **RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The PT Pertamina corruption case occurred in the period 2018 to 2023, when the government set a policy that the fulfillment of domestic crude oil needs must be prioritized from domestic supplies. This means that PT Pertamina (Persero) is required to purchase oil from domestic Cooperation Contractors (KKKS) first before taking the import option. However, in practice, a number of parties within Pertamina manipulated the mechanism. According to information submitted by Qohar, there are strong indications that the three main suspects conducted conditioning in an internal meeting on the optimization of the downstream sector. The meeting became the basis for reducing refinery production, which should have been maximized to absorb domestic oil products. The decrease in refinery production caused the oil produced by domestic KKKS to not be maximally absorbed. They (Pertamina) rejected the crude oil on the pretext that the specifications were not suitable or economically unfavorable. As a result, domestic crude oil must be exported abroad, even though the goal should be to meet national needs (TEMPO, 2025).

Ironically, in order to cover the shortage of domestic crude oil supply that could have been filled by local production, PT Pertamina International Refinery and PT Pertamina Patra Niaga (Ardian Mulyadi, 2025) are importing heavily. The problem is that the price of this imported oil is much higher than the price of oil from within the country. Furthermore, it was revealed that in the process of importing crude oil and refinery products, there was a malicious collaboration between a number of Pertamina subholding officials and brokers. Suspects are

known to have illegally arranged for certain brokers to win the procurement. One of the manipulations involved the procurement of refinery products labeled as Ron 92 (Pertamax), when what was actually purchased was Ron 90 (Pertalite), which is of lower quality. The product is then blended at the depot to make it look as if it meets Ron 92 standards. This clearly violates operational standards and harms consumers (Yuniningsih et al., 2023).

The impact of this case is enormous, both for PT Pertamina and for the community and the country. First, from Pertamina's perspective, corruption can disrupt the company's operational and financial performance. The uncertainty caused by the corruption scandal can reduce investor and business partner confidence, which in turn affects the company's share value and its ability to access financing. In addition, budgets that should be allocated for infrastructure development and innovation could be misused, thereby hindering technological progress and operational efficiency.

For the community, the impact of corruption at Pertamina is felt through fuel price increases and a decline in service quality. When funds that should be used for energy subsidies are misused, the community can feel the negative impact directly, such as difficulties in obtaining fuel at affordable prices. In addition, corruption can also cause a decline in public trust in state institutions; the public becomes skeptical of the government's efforts to eradicate corruption and improve public services.

From the state's perspective, corruption cases at Pertamina have caused significant economic losses. State revenue from the energy sector has decreased due to leaks caused by corrupt practices, thereby impacting the government's ability to finance development and social welfare programs. Corruption also hinders foreign investment, as investors tend to avoid countries perceived to have high levels of corruption. This can lead to stagnation in economic growth, which in turn can worsen the social and economic conditions of the community. In the long term, ineffective anti-corruption efforts will only reinforce the culture of corruption itself, which is difficult to change.

The corruption practices that occurred at PT Pertamina show how important it is to apply the principles of Good Corporate Governance (GCG) in public administration ethics in government institutions and companies (Sumerti Asih, 2020). Good Corporate Governance (GCG) is a framework that organizes and manages companies to achieve efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability. The implementation of GCG not only focuses on the interests of shareholders, but also considers the interests of all stakeholders, including employees, customers, suppliers, and society (Fafako P & Kurniasih, 2024).

The first principle, transparency, emphasizes the importance of disclosing information regarding company decisions, processes and performance, so that all parties can make informed decisions. Accountability, as the second principle, requires management and the board of directors to take responsibility for their actions, creating a culture of accountability throughout the organization. Furthermore, responsibility relates to a company's obligation to contribute positively to society and the environment, by implementing sustainable practices. Independence emphasizes the need for decision-making that is free

from external influence, ensuring that decisions are made based on the best interests of the company. Finally, the principle of fairness underscores the importance of fair treatment of all stakeholders, creating an inclusive environment that reduces the potential for conflict. (Widiaswari, 2022)

By applying these principles, companies can enhance their credibility and reputation, support sustainable growth, and create long-term value for all stakeholders. Good GCG contributes to economic and social stability, creates a positive investment climate, and builds mutually beneficial relationships between companies and society and prevents corrupt practices (Yogi Apriansya & Meiwanda, 2021).

In the view or perspective of public administration ethics (Ummah, 2019), this case reflects a failure in basic principles such as transparency, accountability, and integrity. Low transparency in budget management and procurement leads to unethical practices, where decisions are taken without adequate oversight. Weak accountability also allows individuals to act without fear of sanctions and individuals are often not held accountable for their actions. Meanwhile, the integrity of employees becomes questionable when they engage in practices that harm the public, resulting in a loss of trust in government agencies and companies. In addition, there is also abuse of power for personal gain and some officials are involved in accepting bribes or embezzling. This violates professional ethics and social responsibility as part of state institutions (Hayani et al., 2024).

To overcome the PT Pertamina corruption case, perhaps the government needs several alternative solutions that can be applied (Mutiarita Gita Cahyani & Rahmania Ramadhani, 2022). First, strengthening the internal monitoring system and transparency in the procurement process must be carried out. Second, the application of digital technology, such as e-procurement, can minimize the gap of manual manipulation. Third, strict sanctions and moral rehabilitation for perpetrators, as well as ethics education in the work environment, need to be implemented. Fourth, a whistleblower protection system must be in place so that whistleblowers do not feel intimidated. Finally, independent and periodic audits and public involvement in monitoring SOEs are essential (Aslam, 2022).

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## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Corruption cases that occurred at PT Pertamina in the period 2018 to 2023 reflect the failure of the application of public administration ethics, especially in the aspects of transparency, accountability, and integrity. Corrupt practices in the procurement of crude oil and distribution of refinery products indicate abuse of power, collusion, and policy manipulation that harm the state and society. This has a serious impact on PT Pertamina's reputation as a strategic SOE, as well as reducing the level of public trust in state institutions.

From the point of view of public administration ethics, the weak implementation of Good Corporate Governance (GCG) principles, such as transparency, accountability, independence and fairness are the main factors that allow corrupt practices to occur. In addition, suboptimal internal supervision and lack of ethics education for public officials exacerbate the situation. Therefore, there is a need for systematic efforts to rebuild institutional integrity and strengthen oversight and law enforcement systems.

## **SUGGESTION**

1. Strengthening the Corporate Governance System by updating standard operating procedures (SOPs) that prioritise transparency, especially in crude oil procurement and processing.
2. Monitoring System Reform by implementing an integrated digital technology system to monitor Pertamina's entire business process chain, from procurement to distribution.
3. Risk Management Reform by mapping out corruption hotspots in Pertamina's business processes.
4. Restructure the Procurement Mechanism by reviewing the policy of prioritising the use of domestic crude oil with a more transparent mechanism and applying fair trade principles in all procurement contracts.

## **ADVANCED RESEARCH**

Corruption cases involving PT Pertamina between 2018 and 2023 indicate serious violations of the ethical principles of public administration, especially regarding transparency, accountability and integrity. In this study, we will delve deeper into the possible aspects of corrupt practices in this state-owned enterprise sector. The main focus will be on the mechanism of crude oil procurement and distribution of refined products that allegedly do not comply with public ethical norms that should be upheld by government institutions.

The research method includes a case study that analyzes incidents of corruption at PT Pertamina by collecting data from official documents, media reports, and video interview data with relevant parties. Through this approach, it is expected to identify the factors causing ethical violations, as well as the impact of corruption on company performance and public trust. This research also aims to provide concrete recommendations for improving the governance system and ethics education for employees, in order to prevent the recurrence of similar cases in the future.

The results of this research are expected to make a significant contribution to efforts to improve integrity and accountability in the public sector, and rebuild public trust in state-owned companies. By understanding the dynamics of this case, it is hoped that awareness will arise of the importance of applying the principles of Good Corporate Governance (GCG) and ethics in the management of corporate resources for the welfare of the wider community.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

The authors would like to thank all those who have helped in the research and writing of this article. The authors would like to thank Mr. Muhamad Hussein Maruapey for his guidance and support as well as fellow researchers who have provided valuable input. The authors would also like to thank their families for their moral support during the research process.

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