

**ECONOMIC VARIABLES AS A TRIGGER FOR THE SEEDS OF
CORRUPTION PERCEPTION LEVEL IN ASEAN MEMBER
COUNTRIES**



THESIS

**SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ISLAMIC ECONOMICS AND
BUSINESS**

**SUNAN KALIJAGA STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY, YOGYAKARTA
AS ONE OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR OBTAINING A BACHELOR'S
DEGREE IN SHARIA ECONOMICS**

BY:

ISFIYA ANNABILA

NIM. 21108010027

**BACHELOR OF SHARIA ECONOMICS PROGRAM
FACULTY OF ISLAMIC ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS
STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF SUNAN KALIJAGA
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2024

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ISFIYA ANNABILA

NIM. 21108010027

SUPERVISOR:

ANGGARI MARYA KRESNOWATI, SE., ME.

19920107 202321 2 042

**BACHELOR OF SHARIA ECONOMICS PROGRAM
FACULTY OF ISLAMIC ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS
STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF SUNAN KALIJAGA
YOGYAKARTA**

2024

RATIFICATION SHEET



KEMENTERIAN AGAMA
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI SUNAN KALIJAGA
FAKULTAS EKONOMI DAN BISNIS ISLAM

Jl. Marsda Adisucipto Telp. (0274) 550821, 512474 Fax. (0274) 586117 Yogyakarta 55281

PENGESAHAN TUGAS AKHIR

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yang dipersiapkan dan disusun oleh:

Nama : ISFIYA ANNABILA, AWP
Nomor Induk Mahasiswa : 21108010027
Telah diujikan pada : Senin, 16 Desember 2024
Nilai ujian Tugas Akhir : A

dinyatakan telah diterima oleh Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis Islam UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta

TIM UJIAN TUGAS AKHIR



Ketua Sidang

Anggari Marya Kresnowati, S.E., M.E.
SIGNED

Valid ID: 6768f9d3d8b1e



Penguji I

Muh. Rudi Nugroho, S.E., M.Sc.
SIGNED

Valid ID: 6768d3762653e



Penguji II

Dr. Miftakhul Choiri, S.Sos.L., M.S.I.
SIGNED

Valid ID: 67690b6dc76e



Yogyakarta, 16 Desember 2024
UIN Sunan Kalijaga
Dekan Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis Islam

Prof. Dr. Misnen Ardiansyah, S.E., M.Si., Ak., CA., ACPA
SIGNED

Valid ID: 6769186725832

THESIS APPROVAL LETTER

To:

Dear Dean of the Faculty of Islamic Economics and Business
UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta
In Yogyakarta

Assalamualaikum wr.wb.

reading, researching, providing clues and correcting and making corrections as necessary, I as a supervisor am of the opinion that your thesis:

Name : Isfiya Annabila
NIM : 21108010027
Thesis Title : Economic Variables as a Trigger for The Seeds of Corruption Perception Level in ASEAN Member Countries

It can be submitted to the Faculty of Islamic Economics and Business, Department/Sharia Economics Study Program, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta as one of the requirements to obtain a Bachelor of Science degree in the field of Islamic economics.


With this, I hope that the thesis mentioned above can be submitted soon. I thank you for your attention.

Yogyakarta, 05 December 2024

Supervisor

Acknowledged,

Head of Program Study


Anggari Marva Kresnawati, SE., ME.
19920107 202321 2 042


Dr. Miftakhat Choiri, S.Sos., M.S.I.
19820219 201503 1 002

STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY OF THESIS

The undersigned:

Name : Isfiya Annabila
NIM : 21108010027
Program Studi : Sharia Economics
Faculty : Islamic Economics and Business

I declare truthfully, that my thesis entitled: Economic Variables as a Trigger for The Seeds of Corruption Perception Level in ASEAN Member Countries is a personal work and as far as the author's knowledge does not contain material published or written by others, except for certain parts that the author takes as a reference.

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SUNAN KALIJAGA
YOGYAKARTA


Isfiya Annabila
21108010027

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As one of the academic satcis of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, I am the undersigned:

Name : Isfiya Annabila

NIM : 21108010027

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Falultas : Islamic Economics and Business

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MOTTO

“Nothing Impossible for Allah as Long as We Are Striving and Hoping for His
Pleasure”

“Ridhollahu fi Ridho Walidain”



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My beloved parents, Bapak and Ibuk

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PREFACE

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Yogyakarta, 05 December 2024

Author,



Isfiya Annabila

21108010027

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COVER	i
RATIFICATION SHEET	ii
THESIS APPROVAL LETTER.....	iii
STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY OF THESIS.....	iv
PUBLICATION APPROVAL SHEET	v
MOTTO	vi
ACKNOWLEDGMENT SHEET	vii
PREFACE.....	viii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	xi
TABLE LIST	xiii
FIGURE LIST	xiv
APPENDIX LIST	xv
ABSTRACT	xvi
CHAPTER I.....	1
INTRODUCTION	1
A. Background.....	1
B. Research Questions	10
C. Research Objectives.....	10
D. Significance of Study	11
CHAPTER II.....	13
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	13
A. Theoretical Framework.....	13
B. Literature Review	21
C. Hypothesis Development.....	29
D. Research Framework.....	32
CHAPTER III.....	34
RESEARCH METHOD.....	34
A. Data and Variables	34
B. Empirical Model Specification.....	37
C. Best Model Selection Tests	40
D. Classic Assumption Tests.....	42

E. Statistic Test	44
CHAPTER IV	47
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	47
A. Research Data Analysis	47
B. Model Selection Test	53
C. Classic Assumption Test	60
D. Hypothesis Test Results	63
E. Discussion	66
CHAPTER V	76
CONCLUSION	76
A. Conclusion	76
B. Recommendations	79
REFERENCES	80
APPENDIX	



TABLE LIST

Table 2.1 Literature Review.....	22
Table 3.1 Sample Selection Criteria.....	35
Table 3.2 Operational Variable Definition.....	35
Table 4.1 CPI Average in 8 ASEAN Countries on 2003-2022.....	47
Table 4.2 GDP Average in 8 ASEAN Countries on 2003-2022.....	48
Table 4.3 Inflation Average in 8 ASEAN Countries 2003-2022	49
Table 4.4 Average HDI in 8 ASEAN Countries on 2003-2022.....	50
Table 4.5 Average Regulatory Quality in ASEAN 2003-2022.....	52
Table 4.6 Descriptive Statistic	53
Table 4.7 Specification Model Test Result.....	56
Table 4.8 Chow Test	58
Table 4.9 Hausman Test.....	59
Table 4.10 Fixed Effect Model (FEM)	60
Table 4.11 Multicollinearity Test.....	61
Table 4.12 Heteroscedasticity Test	62
Table 4.13 Autocorrelation Test	63
Table 4.14 Coefficient Determination (R^2) Test.....	64
Table 4.15 T Statistic test.....	65

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FIGURE LIST

Figure 1.1 ASEAN Corruption Perception Index 2023	3
Figure 1.2 ASEAN GDP Per Capita	5
Figure 1.3 ASEAN Inflation	6
Figure 1.4 ASEAN Human Development Index	7
Figure 1.5 ASEAN Regulatory Quality	8
Figure 2.1 Theoretical Framework	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Figure 4.1 Normality Test.....	61



APPENDIX LIST

Appendix 1 Data	88
Appendix 2 CEM Test Result	93
Appendix 3 FEM Test Result.....	94
Appendix 4 REM Test Result	95
Appendix 5 CHOW Test Result.....	96
Appendix 6 Hausman Test Result.....	97
Appendix 7 LM Test Result.....	98



ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the impact of economic variables on the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) in ASEAN member countries from 2003 to 2022. The research focuses on five independent variables - GDP per capita, Human Development Index (HDI), inflation, and regulatory quality - to identify their influence on perceived corruption levels. Using panel data analysis with the Fixed Effect Model (FEM), the study reveals that regulatory quality has a significant positive impact on CPI, reflecting their roles in reducing corruption perception. However, GDP per capita shows a negative relationship with CPI, suggesting that economic growth alone does not effectively combat corruption without robust governance mechanisms. Inflation and HDI exhibit marginal significance, indicating potential but less definitive effects. These findings underscore the need for ASEAN nations to strengthen institutional frameworks, improve governance quality, and focus on socio-economic equity to reduce corruption effectively. This research contributes to understanding the interplay between economic development and governance in a regional context, offering policy recommendations for sustainable anti-corruption strategies.

Keywords: Inflation, Regulatory Quality, HDI, Corruption, Development Economics

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

In the dynamic and interconnected world supported by digitalization in this century, the nations of the world are intertwined in various aspects, including the economy. Globalization opens up new opportunities for countries to increase trade, investment, and technology transfer. This has triggered the dynamics of rapid economic development in various parts of the world. Economic development is a complex and sustainable process that aims to improve people's lives (Syamhari, 2023).

Development Economics is the cornerstone of progress for many countries, including ASEAN member states. It focuses on strategies to improve the well-being of people by raising living standards, eradicating poverty, and promoting employment opportunities. Economic development plays an important role in realizing the ideals of national independence, which is to create a just, prosperous and equitable society (Syamhari, 2023). Economic development, which includes a multifaceted approach to understanding the factors that drive economic growth and welfare, is a complex and sustainable process with the aim of improving people's lives. One indicator of successful economic development is high and equitable economic growth (Marini, 2016).

However, the road to achieving this ambitious goal is often blocked by a formidable enemy: corruption. This widespread phenomenon erodes trust in governance, discourages investment, and creates inefficiencies in resources allocation, posing a significant threat to sustainable economic development. These problems undermine the joints of development (Lamjian & Tohari, 2022). Corruption has become a chronic disease that hinders the progress of nation and cause harm for peoples.

Corruption is a complex and persistent global issue, undermining economic, social and political progress in many countries. In the Southeast Asian region, corruption is one of the main challenges for ASEAN member

countries in achieving sustainable and inclusive development (Heng, 2020). Corruption undermines public trust in government, stifles economic growth and undermines governance. When corruption is rampant investors become reluctant to invest in the country. This can lead to scarcity of jobs, hamper economic growth and exacerbate poverty.

Islamic economics states that corruption is an immoral practice that is inextricably linked to a Muslim's moral principles. A Muslim is expected to follow the teachings of Al Amin (trustworthy) and Al Shadiq (honest). Corruptor has two balancing traits: al thama (greedy) and al kadzib (deceiver). This is in line with Islamic principle, which states that national sovereignty must be upheld in order to protect human life. As a result, the heart that results from corruption includes the haram heart. Category: Haram due to the method of applying it using a false path (Kencana, 2017). Aside from the fact that corruption is haram, it also creates greater economic inequality by not distributing wealth properly and equitably. In fact, the problem of corruption that we face today is not only in the government, but also from the smallest strata of society and also academic environments such as campuses and student organizations.

In developing countries, although globalization offers many opportunities, it also presents various challenges for economic development. One of the challenges is inequality between countries and regions. Developed countries generally have easier access to technology, capital, and global markets, so they benefit more from the globalization process. On the other hand, developing countries such as ASEAN still face various obstacles, such as inadequate infrastructure, limited human resources, and bureaucratic complexities. This may hinder them from taking advantage of globalization opportunities and improving their competitiveness.

ASEAN member countries are countries with abundant natural and cultural wealth, consisting of 11 member countries with various characteristics that have similarities in geographical location, cultural wealth and interests. The ASEAN organization was born on August 8, 1967 through the Bangkok

Declaration, signed by five countries in the Southeast Asian region, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, and Thailand with the aim of maintaining peace, enhancing regional unity, and creating a peaceful and prosperous Southeast Asian region (ASEAN, 2023). In addition to the similarities in terms of geography, ASEAN countries are also facing high levels of corruption in the country. The perception of corruption in countries can be seen from the data index issued by Transparency International (Transparency International, 2023).

Perceptions of corruption, measured through indices such as the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) published by Transparency International, are important indicators to assess the level of corruption in a country. This index provides an overview of how the public perceives corruption in the public sector, reflecting the level of trust in institutions and the integrity of public officials.



Figure 1.0.1 ASEAN Corruption Perception Index 2023

Source: Transparency International (2023)

The CPI is measured on a scale ranging from 0 to 100, where a score of 0 indicates the highest level of corruption, and 100 represents the cleanest state of affairs. The perceived level of corruption in ASEAN countries shows significant variation. Some countries such as Singapore (83) and Malaysia (50), which consistently top the CPI of ASEAN member states, show relatively low

levels of corruption. On the other hand, some countries such as Myanmar (20) and Cambodia (22), consistently rank at the bottom, indicating high levels of corruption in these countries. Singapore stands out as the only ASEAN country to secure a position in the top five countries with the highest CPI in 2023. Meanwhile Malaysia experienced an improvement in its score following significant reforms in its anti-corruption institution, SRPM, over the past two years. And Indonesia's CPI remains unchanged at 34. Despite the stability in Indonesia's CPI score, the country's global ranking dropped by five positions to 115th place in 2023 (Sipahutar, 2023).

However, each country in the world has different indicators in calculating its perception of corruption. Understanding the factors that influence the perceived level of corruption in ASEAN member countries is important to formulate effective strategies to fight corruption and promote sustainable development. ASEAN member countries have different income levels, political systems and cultures.

This study uses several aspects that must be considered and may affect the level of perception of corruption in ASEAN member countries, namely inflation, per capita income, Human Development Index (HDI), and regulatory quality. This has been examined several times by previous studies and how it affects the level of corruption. Studies conducted by Akça & Ata, (2012) and Rahmadina, (2021) state that inflation has a significant positive effect on the level of corruption, but this contradicts the results of Purbaningrum's (2020) which states that inflation has a negative effect on increasing corruption.

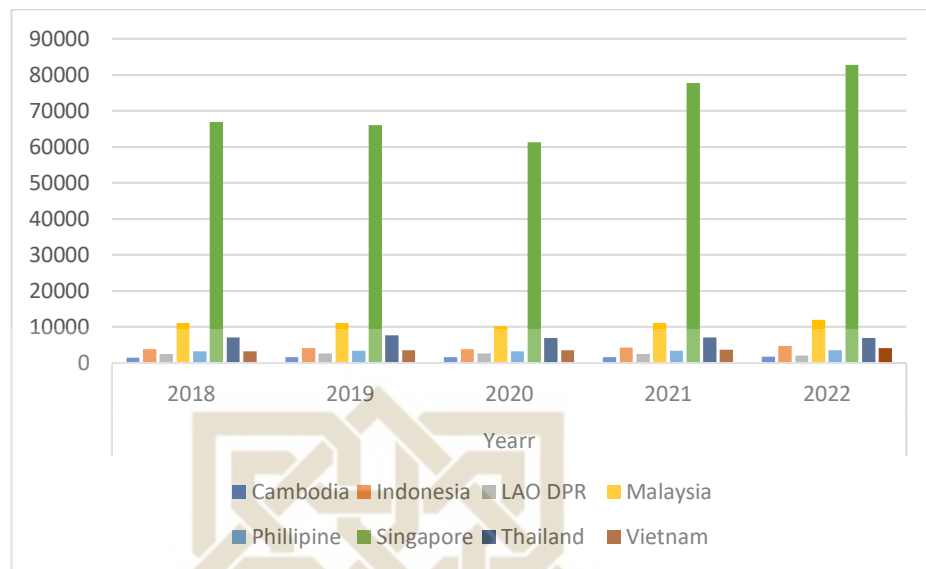


Figure 1.0.2 ASEAN GDP Per Capita

Source: World Bank (2023)

The GDP of larger economies like Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia consistently remains at higher levels compared to smaller countries. Indonesia shows a steady increase in GDP, reflecting its significant economic size within the region. Similarly, Thailand and Malaysia exhibit stable growth, although the pace appears slightly slower during some years. Meanwhile, Singapore consistently leads the group with the highest GDP, significantly surpassing other countries throughout the entire period. Brunei Darussalam and Vietnam exhibit steady growth as well.

Smaller economies such as Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Timor Timur remain at the lower end of the GDP spectrum throughout the period. Their GDPs exhibit slower growth trajectory but still reflect positive upward movement, indicating development over time. Despite the general growth, the year 2020, corresponding to the global COVID-19 pandemic, seems to have caused a slight dip or stagnation in GDP growth across most ASEAN countries, reflecting the economic impact of the crisis. By 2022, GDP levels resume their upward trajectory, indicating economic recovery.

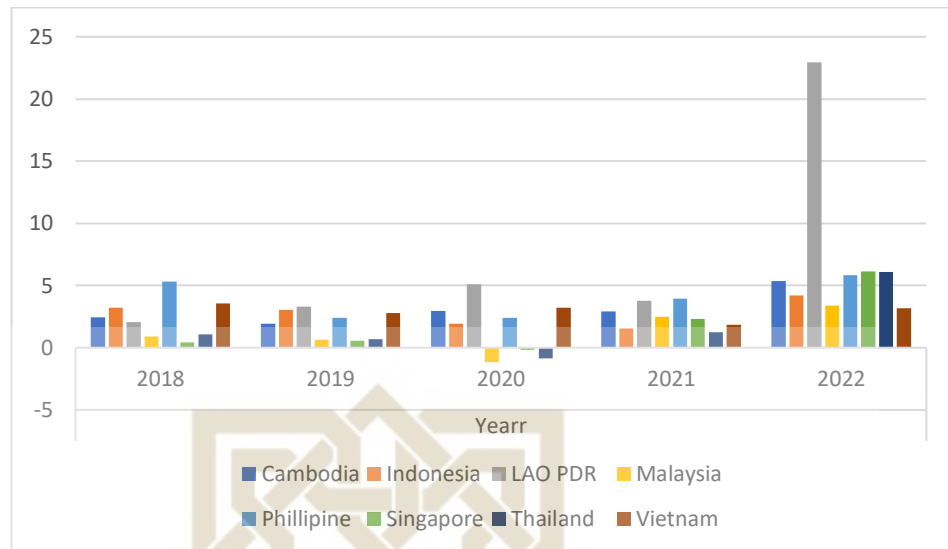


Figure 1.0.3 ASEAN Inflation

Source: World Bank (2023)

In the early years, inflation rates for most ASEAN countries remained between 0% and 5% with a few exceptions. In 2013 Myanmar experienced a relatively high inflation rate exceeding 10%, while Timor Timor also witnessed significant inflation spikes in 2014 and 2022, especially in 2022 when inflation surged to over 20%, marking a sharp increase compared to previous years. Brunei Darussalam, Singapore, and Malaysia consistently show low inflation rates throughout the decade, hovering close to 0% indicating stable economic conditions with controlled price rises.

In the other hand, Vietnam, Lao PDR and Cambodia experienced more fluctuating inflation, with several instances of notable increases, particularly in 2016 and 2022. The year 2022, stands out for several countries, especially Lao PDR, which saw an inflation rate exceeding 25% suggesting a severe economic challenge during this period.

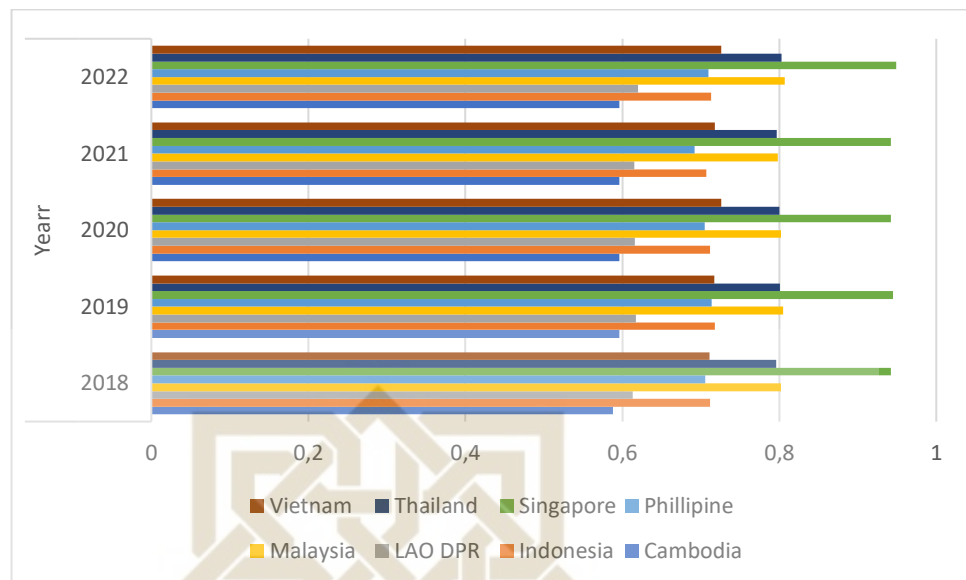


Figure 1.0.4 ASEAN Human Development Index

Source: United Nations Development Programme (2023)

HDI is a composite index measuring average achievement in key dimensions of human development for a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable, and having a decent standard of living. Countries such as Singapore, Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia consistently rank high on the HDI scale, indicating sustained development in human living standards. Singapore stands out, reaching close to the maximum HDI value of 1 throughout the years, demonstrating its status as a highly developed nation in ASEAN.

Thailand, Philippines and Indonesia show mid-range HDI values, with gradual improvements over the decade. These countries reflect steady progress in their human development policies, though they still have some distance to cover compared to the top ranked ASEAN nations. While on the lower end, Myanmar, Cambodia, and Timor Timur consistently rank below 0.6, indicating challenges in achieving higher human development levels. These countries, especially Timor Timur and Laos, appear to struggle with improving education, healthcare, and living standards, reflecting wider disparities in economic and social growth in the region.

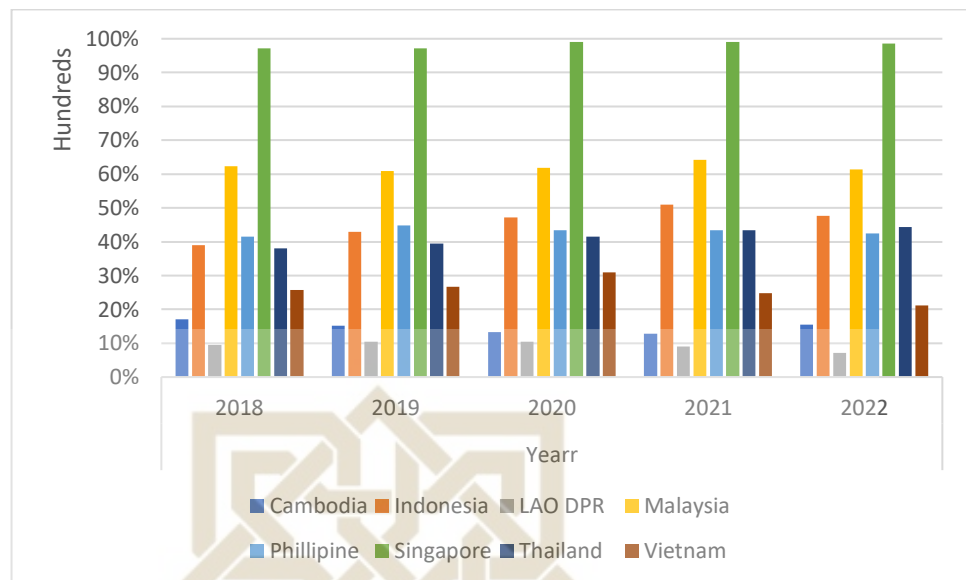


Figure 1.0.5 ASEAN Regulatory Quality

Source: World Governance Indicator (2023)

The chart shown that Singapore has consistently been at the top, with a very positive score throughout this period. This shows that Singapore has a stable and effective regulatory system, reflecting its excellence in the design and implementation of public policies that support economic growth and ease of doing business. Malaysia on the other hand, performed well albeit more volatile than Singapore. While Malaysia's score remains in the positive zone, there has been a slight decline in recent years, indicating new challenges in regulatory quality. Indonesia is in the middle with a relatively stable and neutral score. The quality of regulation in Indonesia shows an effort to improve, but has not yet reached an adequate level like Singapore or even Malaysia. This trend suggests that regulation in Indonesia can still be improved to encourage more competitive economic growth.

Vietnam shows a gradual improvement, although it remains in neutral to negative zone. This indicates progress in implementing better regulations, but still faces obstacles in effective execution. Countries such as Thailand, Myanmar and Timor Timur have struggled to improve their regulation quality, with scores remaining negative in territory. This indicates that these three

countries face major challenges in creating policies that support economic stability and attract foreign investment. And Cambodia has performed quite poorly in terms of regulatory performance throughout this period. With consistently negative scores, Cambodia needs to make major reforms in its regulatory policies to improve its economic competitiveness and business climate.

Mentioned in studies conducted by Rahmadina (2021), Asongu (2013), Bosci (2016), Churchill et al. (2013), Nugroho (2012), and Sandi et al. that income per capita has a positive effect on the level of corruption, while in other studies by Bosco (2016) and Purbaningrum (2020) that income per capita has a significant negative effect on the level of corruption. Another study by Rahmadina (2021) states that the human development index has a positive effect on the level of corruption, while Sarabia et al. (2020) states that the human development index has a negative effect on increasing corruption, these two things are in contrast to research by Abdullah (2018) which states that the human development index has no effect on the level of corruption. Research conducted by Churchill (2013) states that regulatory quality has a positive influence on increasing corruption, while research by Asongu (2013), Bosco (2016), Abdullah (2018) and Hariyani et al. (2016) state that regulatory quality has a negative effect, these two things are inversely proportional to the research conducted by Rahmadina (2020) which states that regulatory quality has no effect on increasing corruption.

Based on previous research, it shows that some studies provide different results regarding the factors that affect the level of corruption. Differences in the object of research and also several other supporting factors can cause differences in the results of these studies. This research comes to analyze the determinants of the level of corruption using the latest data with the object of countries that are in one geographical area and have many similarities, namely ASEAN member countries. This study uses the best panel data analysis method to test the relationship between the variables studied.

This study aims to analyze the determinants of the level of perceived corruption in ASEAN member countries in the period 2012-2023, to prove that corruption clearly has an influence on economic growth and triggers increasing inequality in society. In overcoming this, several leading countries have implemented various ways to eliminate the culture of corruption carried out by the government and the smallest strata of society. Some countries have succeeded in implementing extreme punishment for corruptors, but this is considered contrary to human rights. Meanwhile, many countries tend to fail in reducing the level of corruption due to the lack of synergy from various related parties and also the factors that cause corruption are not well identified (Syuraida, 2015). This research is expected to contribute to understanding the complex dynamics between corruption and economic development. Therefore, this research is entitled "ECONOMIC VARIABLES AS A TRIGGER FOR THE SEEDS OF CORRUPTION PERCEPTION LEVEL IN ASEAN MEMBER COUNTRIES".

B. Research Questions

Based on the background above, several research problems can be formulated as follows:

1. How does inflation affect the corruption perception index in ASEAN member countries?
2. How does GDP per capita affect the economic perception index in ASEAN member countries?
3. How does the human development index affect the corruption perception index in ASEAN member countries.
4. Does regulatory quality affect the corruption perception index in ASEAN member countries?

C. Research Objectives

Based on the previous research problems determinants above, the objectives of this study are as follows:

1. Analyzing the effect of inflation on the corruption perception index in ASEAN member countries
2. Analyzing the effect of GDP per capita on the corruption perception index in ASEAN member countries.
3. Analyzing the effect of Human Development Index on corruption perception index in ASEAN member countries.
4. Analyzing the effect of regulatory quality on the corruption perception index in ASEAN member countries.

D. Significance of Study

Based on the objectives of this study, this research has several benefits including:

1. For Academics Provide a deeper understanding of the factors that influence the level of economic perception in ASEAN member countries.
2. As Governments of ASEAN Member States Help formulate appropriate strategies to combat corruption in ASEAN member states.
3. For Researchers To provide scientific insight regarding the factors that influence the corruption perception index.

E. Systematics of Discussion

The discussion systematics on this research divide into five parts: CHAPTER I there is an Introduction. It is a part that contains: Background, explaining the context and conditions behind this research and why this is important to research. Problem Formulation, identifying the main problems that will be discussed in this study. Research Objectives, explaining the main objectives of this research and what is to be achieved. Benefits of Research, discussing in detail the benefits that can be obtained from the results of this research. Systematics of Discussion, provides a brief description of the structure and content of this study.

CHAPTER II Conceptual Framework. Is a section that contains: Theoretical Review, presents a theoretical framework that supports this research and explains the key concepts that will be used. Previous Research, summarizes

previous research relevant to this topic and highlights important findings. Research Hypothesis, builds a hypothesis based on the theoretical framework and previous research findings.

CHAPTER III Research Methodology. This is the section that includes: Type and Research Approach, describing the research design used and the reasons behind the choice. Population and sample, describing how the population and sample selection process in this study. Data and data sources, explaining how researchers get data and the reasons researchers choose the vulnerable time period in this study. Research Variables, explaining the variables studied and their measurements. Operational definition of variables, a more detailed explanation of the variables used in this study. Research Model, describes the econometric model related to the research and which will be used in the management analysis. Analysis method, describes the method that will be used in this study and the stages of the method.

CHAPTER IV Analysis and Discussion. Is a section that contains: Interpretation of Results, describes the results of data analysis and provides an interpretation of the findings. Relationship with theory, explaining how the findings of this study relate to the theoretical framework that has been put forward. Discussing the implications of research findings for corruption perception index determination, namely GDP, Inflation, HDI and Regulatory Quality

CHAPTER V Closing contains conclusions on the results of the discussion and answers to research questions. This chapter also contains suggestions for parties with an interest in this research. The researcher also conveyed the shortcomings in conducting this research as material for future analysis.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

A. Conclusion

Through the results of research data processing that has been obtained using quantitative panel data methods with fixed effect models (FEM) as well as interpretations and discussions that have been discussed in Chapter IV, there are several variables including GDP per capita, human development index (HDI), inflation, and regulatory quality, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. GDP per capita

GDP has a significant negative effect on the corruption perception index (CPI), so that when the amount of GDP increases, it will reduce the number of corruption perception indices in ASEAN member countries. These results do not illustrate the proposed research hypothesis. This negative relationship might imply that economic growth alone does not guarantee reduced corruption perception. It may indicate that, without simultaneous improvements in governance and transparency, the benefits of economic growth do not effectively reach the broader population and may even lead to perceptions of inequality or corruption.

This finding suggests that economic growth policies in ASEAN countries should be accompanied by efforts to strengthen institutions, ensure transparency, and promote equitable distribution of wealth. GDP growth alone may not suffice to reduce corruption perception without effective governance mechanisms in place. ASEAN policymakers might need to focus on reforms that improve public accountability, legal enforcement, and equitable access to resources, as these can help mitigate negative perceptions of corruption that might accompany economic growth.

2. Human development index

The finding that the Human Development Index (HDI) positively impacts the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) reflects a critical relationship between human development and reduced corruption perceptions. The HDI serves as a composite measure of a nation's socio-economic progress, encompassing life expectancy, educational attainment, and income per capita. A positive relationship between HDI and CPI indicates that as a nation develops in these areas, the public perceives lower levels of corruption. This suggests that enhancing human development can play a pivotal role in addressing governance challenges, particularly in combating corruption.

HDI has significant effect on CPI, the positive impact of HDI on CPI reveals that human development is a powerful tool in reducing corruption perceptions. By investing in education, healthcare, and income equality, governments can empower their citizens to hold institutions accountable and foster environments where corruption is less likely to thrive. This finding emphasizes that combating corruption is not solely about enforcing laws but also about creating a society where individuals are empowered to demand transparency and integrity. Future governance strategies in ASEAN and beyond should integrate human development as a central pillar to achieve sustainable progress in reducing corruption.

3. Inflation

Inflation has significant effect on CPI, indicating that the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) is negatively impacted by inflation, which implies that perceived corruption is positively correlated with inflation. According to this link, CPI ratings fall as inflation rises in the study's context, indicating a higher perception of corruption in ASEAN nations between 2003 and 2022. This outcome emphasises the wider ramifications of inflation-driven economic instability and how it affects public trust and governance.

This demonstrates how important inflation is in influencing how corruption is seen. In addition to upsetting economic stability, rising inflation erodes public confidence and governance frameworks, which fosters dishonest behaviour. Governments in ASEAN and elsewhere must make controlling inflation a top priority as part of their anti-corruption initiatives in order to solve this problem. To lessen perceived and actual corruption, this entails putting in place good monetary policies, bolstering institutional frameworks, and encouraging transparency in economic administration.

4. Regulatory quality

Regulatory quality has a positive significant effect on CPI, emphasizing that sound regulations are key to reducing corruption perception. High regulatory quality is positively associated with CPI, as it enables the government to create clear, fair, and enforceable regulations that discourage corruption. Effective regulatory frameworks limit the opportunities for corrupt practices by reducing bureaucratic inefficiencies and providing transparent guidelines for business operations. In ASEAN, countries with well-developed regulatory frameworks tend to report lower corruption perception, as the regulatory environment restricts the discretionary power of officials and ensures fair enforcement of rules. Regulatory quality, therefore, plays a critical role in shaping public perception of corruption by creating a trustworthy environment for economic and public transactions.

Quoting the Chairman of Transparency International, François Valerian, that corruption will continue to flourish until the justice system can punish criminals and keep governments in check. When justice is bought or politically intervened, it is the people who suffer. Leaders must fully invest in and guarantee the independence of institutions that enforce the law and fight corruption. It is time to end impunity for corruption.

B. Recommendations

Here are some recommendations for future research:

1. **Expanded Variables:** Future research could explore additional factors such as trade openness, foreign direct investment (FDI), and income inequality to provide a more comprehensive understanding of factors influencing corruption.
2. **Longitudinal Analysis:** Investigate how changes in regulatory reforms over time impact corruption perception, as gradual improvements might be more informative than static measures.
3. **Case Studies of ASEAN Countries:** In-depth case studies of select ASEAN countries can reveal unique country-specific factors affecting corruption perception and provide insights into successful anti-corruption strategies.

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