Effectiveness of Law Enforcement in Corruption Crime Investigations (Case Study of the Ternate Police Resort, North Maluku)

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Abstract. *The investigation of corruption cases is a crucial stage in law enforcement because it determines the quality of evidence and the continuation of the judicial process. At the Ternate Resort Police, efforts to combat corruption face various challenges, ranging from case complexity to limited resources. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of law enforcement in the investigation of corruption crimes at the Ternate Resort Police and to identify the obstacles affecting investigator performance, thereby formulating strategies to enhance accountability and professionalism in the investigation process. This research employs an empirical legal method with a qualitative approach. Data were obtained through literature review, examination of official investigative documents, in-depth interviews with investigators, and direct observation of ongoing case handling. The analysis was conducted descriptively and analytically by referring to Lawrence M. Friedman's legal system theory and Soerjono Soekanto's factors of legal effectiveness, enabling a comprehensive assessment of the interplay among legal substance, legal structure, and legal culture in the practice of corruption investigations. The findings show that corruption investigations at the Ternate Resort Police generally adhere to procedural requirements, and several cases have successfully reached the P21 stage. However, law enforcement effectiveness is not yet optimal due to limited personnel and investigator competence, inadequate investigative facilities, the complexity of document-based evidence, and coordination challenges among institutions. This study highlights the need for strengthening investigator capacity, improving investigative infrastructure, and developing more robust inter-agency coordination mechanisms as strategic measures to enhance the effectiveness of corruption case investigations in the region.*

Keywords: *Effectiveness; Corruption Crime; Law Enforcement; Investigation; Ternate Resort Police.*

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1. Introduction

Corruption remains one of the major problems facing the Indonesian nation. As an extraordinary crime, corruption not only causes financial losses to the state but also undermines social order, weakens public trust in the government, and hinders the achievement of national development goals[1]. Corruption erodes the foundations of justice, reduces the quality of public services, and gives rise to social and economic inequality which ultimately widens the poverty gap[2]. Therefore, handling and eradicating corruption requires serious attention from all elements of the nation, especially law enforcement officials.

Within the framework of the national legal system, law enforcement against corruption occupies a strategic position. Law enforcement officials, including the police, prosecutors, and judicial institutions, play a crucial role in ensuring that every legal violation is handled fairly, transparently, and accountably[3]. The police, in this case the Resort Police and Regional Police, are at the forefront in the process of investigating and investigating criminal acts of corruption [4]. The investigation process is a crucial stage that determines whether a case proceeds to trial. If the investigation is not conducted properly, the case could be weakened in court and even dismissed due to weak evidence, as stipulated in criminal procedure law and the principles contained in the Criminal Code (KUHP), which forms the basis of the national criminal justice system[5].

In North Maluku, corruption is a serious concern. As a developing province, North Maluku faces significant challenges in establishing clean, transparent, and corrupt-free governance. Several corruption cases that have emerged in this region demonstrate the ongoing abuse of authority, both within local government, budget management, and other public service sectors. This confirms that corruption occurs not only at the national level but also at the regional level, directly impacting people's lives.

The Indonesian National Police, through the North Maluku Regional Police and specifically the Ternate Resort Police, is one of the institutions playing a role in eradicating corruption in the region. Based on the Corruption Crime Case Data (Tipidkor) from the Ternate Police in February 2022, a police report (LP) has been filed indicating a case of alleged abuse of authority related to the management of insurance funds by a private party.

2. Research Methods

The type of research used in this study is empirical or sociological legal research, namely research that studies law in reality (*law in action*) [6]. This research not only examines legal

[1] Arman Man Arfa, "Memerangi Korupsi Melalui Pendidikan Anti-Korupsi: Membentuk Integritas, Kesadaran, Dan Kemampuan Kritis Dalam Masyarakat," *Jendela Pengetahuan* 16, no. 2 (2023): 128–42.

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[3] Farah Mutia et al., "Optimalisasi Peran Kepolisian Dalam Penegakan Undang-Undang Nomor 22 Tahun 2009 Terhadap Pelanggaran Lalu Lintas Anak Di Bawah Umur Pengendara Sepeda Motor: Studi Di Polresta Banda Aceh," *Indonesian Research Journal on Education* 5, no. 5 (2025): 484–91.

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norms as written in laws and regulations, but also examines how these norms are applied in the practice of investigating corruption crimes at the Ternate Police Resort, North Maluku.

The empirical approach was chosen because the research focuses on the effectiveness of law enforcement, which can only be measured through field realities, interactions between law enforcement officers, and the obstacles they face during the investigation process[7]. Thus, this research combines normative aspects that examine legal provisions related to criminal acts of corruption with empirical aspects in the form of investigative practices carried out by the police.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Effectiveness of Law Enforcement by the Ternate Police Resort in Corruption Investigations

The discussion regarding the effectiveness of corruption investigations (Tipikor) conducted by the Ternate Police Resort is based on a legal framework that views corruption as an extraordinary crime, a view expressly recognized in Law Number 31 of 1999 concerning the Eradication of Corruption. This law, through its preamble, stipulates that corruption not only harms state finances but also significantly impedes national development, thus demanding law enforcement that is not only procedurally sound but also substantively and effectively enforced[8]. Therefore, the effectiveness of the Ternate Police's performance is measured not only by fulfilling legal formalities, but also by the speed and quality of case file output, and the actual ability to recover the state's financial losses incurred. The fundamental principle in assessing this effectiveness lies in compliance with the mandate of Article 25 of the Corruption Law, which explicitly instructs that corruption investigations must be prioritized for expedited resolution and the realization of just legal supremacy. This legal basis serves as the primary benchmark for assessing whether investigative operations at the Police level are aligned with the ideals of national corruption eradication[9].

In terms of procedural compliance, a fundamental prerequisite for the legitimacy of all legal processes, the Ternate Police Department demonstrates a strong institutional commitment to the principle of due process of law. Compliance with the Criminal Procedure Code (KUHAP) and the National Police's internal Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) is believed to be key

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[4] Eko Saputra, *Peran Penegak Hukum Dalam Sistem Pidana Indonesia* (PT MAFY MEDIA LITERASI INDONESIA, 2025).

[5] Arie Mathea Andes, *Antara Keamanan Dan Keadilan: Diskresi Polisi Dalam Bingkai Hak Asasi Manusia* (Star Digital Publishing, Yogyakarta-Indonesia, 2025).

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[8] Susi Amalia, "Analisis Dampak Korupsi Pada Masyarakat (Studi Kasus Korupsi Pembangunan Shelter Tsunami Di Kecamatan Labuan Kabupaten Pandeglang)," *Epistemik: Indonesian Journal of Social and Political Science* 3, no. 1 (2022): 54–76.

[9] Bambang Wiratdany, "EFEKTIVITAS PENGEMBALIAN KEUANGAN NEGARA SEBAGAI PENYELESAIAN TINDAK PIDANA KORUPSI BERBASIS KEMANFAATAN (Studi Kasus: Kejaksaan Negeri Tanjungpinang)" (Universitas Islam Sultan Agung Semarang, 2024).

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to maintaining the integrity of investigations and, most importantly, mitigating the legal risks of pretrial motions [10]. Informant 1 (Head of Criminal Investigation Unit) emphatically stated this principle as the foundation of all investigative operations in his unit:

"Procedural compliance is our foundation. Every stage of the investigation, from the SPDP (Reporting and Investigation) to detention, is always strictly controlled to ensure legality and avoid pretrial loopholes."

This statement reflects a deep understanding of the serious consequences of procedural failures, which can invalidate the entire investigation effort even if material evidence of the crime is strong. This commitment is not only at the managerial level but also operationalized in the field, as emphasized by Informant 3 (Assistant Corruption Investigator):

"Procedure is the foundation of our daily work. We ensure that every report (BAP), summons, and seizure is carried out in accordance with the applicable format and legal provisions."

Regularity in the administration of investigations is vital given the complexity of Corruption offenses, which are regulated in detail in Chapter II of the Corruption Law (Articles 2 to 14). These offenses require careful proof of the elements of unlawfulness, abuse of authority (Article 3), and the existence of state financial losses. Procedural compliance serves as a double safeguard: it protects the suspect's rights and guarantees the validity of the evidence in the eyes of the court[11].

The Ternate Police's initial performance, while commendable in terms of compliance, indicates that substantive effectiveness still faces challenges. Overall assessments from informants indicate a serious effort to improve the quality of case files, leading to their being declared complete (P-21) by the Prosecutor's Office. However, demands for greater effectiveness often clash with resource realities.

Informant 2 (Head of the Corruption Unit) acknowledged obstacles that challenge this effectiveness: "Implementation in the field is structured according to the work plan, but we still face challenges related to the complexity of cases and the limited number of certified human resources."

This statement indicates a gap between the volume of cases to be handled, the difficulty of financial investigations, and the number of investigators with sufficient specialized expertise.

The core of effective corruption investigations lies in the collection of solid evidence. The evidentiary process can no longer rely solely on physical evidence or conventional witness

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[10] SYAHRI FAJAR HAMIKA, "PENEGAKAN HUKUM TERHADAP KASUS TINDAK PIDANA KORUPSI OLEH KEPOLISIAN (Studi Kasus Di Ilayah Hukum Polres Lembata Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Timur)" (Universitas Islam Sultan Agung Semarang, 2024).

[11] Prasojo Utomo, "IMPLIKASI KEPOLISIAN DALAM PENYIDIKAN TINDAK PIDANA KORUPSI PADA INSTANSI PEMERINTAH DAERAH (Studi Penelitian Di Kepolisian Daerah Jawa Tengah)" (Universitas Islam Sultan Agung Semarang, 2024).

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testimony; it must also encompass complex financial tracking. Informant 2 (Head of the Corruption Unit) explained the modern approach his team employs:

"We focus on synchronizing evidence, starting with sufficient initial evidence, then strengthening it through testimony from state financial experts, and asset tracing."

3.2. Key Obstacles in Corruption Investigations and Strategies to Improve the Effectiveness of Law Enforcement

The effectiveness of corruption investigations at the Ternate Police is largely determined by the legal structure operating internally within the institution. From Friedman's perspective, the legal structure is the primary foundation for successful law enforcement, as it is this structure that carries out the operational functions of the system. If this structure is weak, the entire law enforcement process will be impacted, especially in corruption cases that are complex, bureaucratic, and require high technical competence.

Interviews with investigators revealed that internal obstacles are systematic and recurring, affecting the speed of investigations and the accuracy of evidence. These obstacles can be broken down into three major groups:

1. Human Resources (HR) Constraints

The limited number and competence of investigators are the most dominant internal obstacles. The Head of the Criminal Investigation Unit stated directly that, "Our human resources are not ideal in terms of numbers. We have core investigators, but their numbers are minimal compared to the potential cases. Their competency is good, but not commensurate with the existing caseload."

This view was reinforced by the Head of the Corruption Unit, who emphasized, "The number of investigators with Civil Servant (PPNS) status and Corruption Court (Tipikor) certification is still very limited. Ideally, each team would have financial and audit specializations, but currently, this is far from ideal." Meanwhile, an assistant investigator expressed operational challenges, stating, "The caseload is high, while the number of assistant investigators is small. Sometimes we have to double as general investigators."

This situation aligns with Soerjono Soekanto's theory that the effectiveness of law enforcement is highly dependent on the quality and competence of the apparatus. In the context of corruption, investigators' skills must be superior because they must be able to understand the mechanisms of goods and services procurement, patterns of budget irregularities, and even simple auditing skills [12].

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[12] Gumilang Fuadi, Windy Virdinia Putri, and Trisno Raharjo, "Tinjauan Perampasan Aset Dalam Tindak Pidana Pencucian Uang Dari Perspektif Keadilan," *Jurnal Penegakan Hukum Dan Keadilan* 5, no. 1 (2024): 53–68.

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From the perspective of white-collar crime according to Sutherland, corruption crimes are crimes committed by educated people and use complex administrative mechanisms [13]. Therefore, investigators must possess in-depth financial, digital, and analytical skills. When competencies are limited and workloads are high, investigators' ability to conduct financial tracing, investigate patterns of irregularities, or establish links between documents and criminal acts is hampered.

The structural impact of a lack of human resources is evident in the long time it takes to resolve cases, the high potential for back-and-forth of files, and the decreased effectiveness of the process of proving the elements of Articles 2 and 3 of the Corruption Law. This demonstrates fundamental weaknesses in the legal structure, as explained by Friedman.

2. Obstacles in Technological Facilities and Infrastructure

Investigative support facilities also pose a significant obstacle. The Head of the Criminal Investigation Unit firmly explained, "Our facilities are not optimal. For digital forensics, we have to coordinate with the Regional Police because sophisticated equipment is not yet available at the Police." Dependence on the Regional Police makes electronic data analysis time-consuming, thus slowing down the investigation timeline.

The Head of the Corruption Unit added that, "Basic facilities are available, but specialized tools such as financial analysis software or advanced digital data extraction tools are still lacking." This presents a challenge because corruption cases almost always involve digital documents, transaction files, or other electronic data. An assistant investigator also stated, "Standard computers are sufficient, but we're still hampered in high-level data recovery."

Satjipto Rahardjo's theory states that modern law enforcement requires tools that keep pace with evolving crime trends. Without technological support, investigations will lag behind and be unable to address increasingly sophisticated corruption methods. In the context of corruption cases, electronic evidence plays a crucial role, so the limited availability of digital forensic tools directly impacts investigators' ability to secure and analyze evidence[14].

Furthermore, the lack of specialized software for asset tracing requires investigators to manually analyze budget flows and transactions. This manual method is not only time-consuming but also carries the risk of misreading or missing connections between data. This situation indicates that the Ternate Police Department's infrastructure is not yet at an ideal level to handle the complexity of corruption cases.

From Friedman's perspective, technological tools are part of the legal structure that determines the ability of law enforcement to carry out their roles effectively. If this structure

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[13] Zulkarnain, Hilalludin, and Suny, "Relevansi Pengampunan Korupsi Dalam Perspektif Islam Dengan Hukum Yang Berlaku."

[14] CASWADI, "FORMULASI IDEAL PENYIDIKAN TINDAK PIDANA KORUPSI YANG DILAKUKAN DALAM KEADAAN TERTENTU (Studi Kasus Kepolisian Resor Indramayu)" (Universitas Islam Sultan Agung Semarang, 2024).

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does not strengthen operational functions, the investigation process cannot proceed according to the principle of speed as required by law[15].

3. Budgetary and Internal Institutional Constraints

Operational budgets are also a significant obstacle. The Head of the Criminal Investigation Unit explained, "The budget is often not commensurate with the complexity of the case. Field investigations, witness summons, and document examinations require costs, but the allocation is not always sufficient." This highlights the need for adequate logistical support for corruption investigations.

Corruption cases cannot be resolved simply by summoning witnesses; they require cross-agency document tracing, physical verification of projects, and intensive coordination with external auditors. When budgets are limited, investigators' latitude is limited, especially for large-scale cases.

Internal institutional limitations are also evident in work patterns that still rely on manual systems. The Head of the Corruption Unit explained, "The internal database is not yet fully digitized. Filing is still manual, so it takes more time when files need to be re-examined." Document digitization is a crucial requirement for modern investigations, but at the Ternate Police, this has not been implemented optimally.

An assistant investigator added that workload distribution is also less than ideal: "Due to limited human resources, we implement a load-sharing system, but this results in some investigators handling multiple cases simultaneously."

In Soerjono Soekanto's theory, facilities and structure are two inseparable elements of effective law enforcement. If the budget, work equipment, and institutions are inadequate, the legal process will not run optimally. This condition aligns with field findings that indicate that corruption investigations at the Ternate Police Department face multiple internal obstacles.

Overall, the internal structural obstacles identified at the Ternate Police Department indicate that the effectiveness of corruption investigations is still influenced by fundamental factors such as human resources, infrastructure, and budget. These three obstacles are intertwined and create a structural condition that does not fully support modern investigations. From Friedman's perspective, a weak legal structure will prevent the law from being enforced effectively even if the normative regulations are sound.

This stage demonstrates that corruption investigations at the Ternate Police Department require fundamental strengthening of the legal structure to achieve swift, accurate investigations that meet professional standards.

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[15] Friedman, "The Legal System: A Social Science Perspective."

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External obstacles are the most dominant factor slowing down the corruption investigation process at the Ternate Police Department. Based on interviews with investigators, it was found that obstacles originating from outside the police institution have a direct impact on the timeliness, completeness of evidence, and synchronization between law enforcement agencies. Analysis of these external obstacles is important because, from Friedman's legal system perspective, the effectiveness of law enforcement is not only determined by internal structures but also influenced by legal culture and the external environment that shape patterns of coordination between agencies.

In practice, the four most significant external factors are obstacles to document access, waiting times for state loss audits, resistance from the accused, and differences in work rhythms between investigators, prosecutors, and state auditors. These four factors are not mutually exclusive but intertwined, creating a chain of delays that is difficult to break. Ternate Police investigators emphasized that the level of compliance of external parties with requests for documents or clarification often determines the speed of the investigation process. In this context, Soekanto's theory on implementing factors and community factors is relevant, because law enforcement will not function optimally without support from the social and bureaucratic environment that is the object of the investigation.

4. Conclusion

The effectiveness of the investigation is quite good normatively, but still hampered structurally and operationally. Field findings indicate that Ternate Police investigators have consistently implemented the provisions of the Corruption Law, both in the process of gathering evidence, procedural compliance, and coordination with the Prosecutor's Office and state auditors. Legal substance is used as the main guideline, including the application of the principle of asset recovery as emphasized in Articles 4 and 18 of the Corruption Law, which is reflected in the investigators' orientation towards recovering state losses through financial tracing techniques and evidence synchronization. However, this effectiveness is not optimal because there are still significant structural obstacles. The limited human resources certified by the Corruption Law, the lack of financial forensic specialization, and excessive workloads cause the evidence process to be slower and less technically sharp. In addition, limited infrastructure such as digital forensic tools and analysis software also create an investigative bottleneck that is not in line with the principle of rapid case resolution as mandated by Article 25 of the Corruption Law. External obstacles slow the investigation process and have a direct impact on the quality and timeline of case handling. The biggest obstacles stem from the slow issuance of the state loss audit report by the Financial and Development Supervisory Agency (BPKP), bureaucratic resistance from the reported agency in providing documents, and differences in work rhythms between institutions (the Police, the Prosecutor's Office, and the BPKP), which cause back-and-forth files (P-19) and significantly prolong the investigation process. Meanwhile, in terms of legal culture, investigators have integrity and a strong commitment to carrying out legal procedures, but the effectiveness of this positive culture remains limited by existing structural and operational obstacles. Thus, it can be concluded that the effectiveness of the investigation is partially strong in normative and cultural aspects, but weakened in structural and coordinative aspects.

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