

Evidentiary Status of Crown Witnesses in Indonesia's Anti-Corruption Proceedings: Legal Challenges and Human Rights Implications

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ABSTRACT

Background: In corruption trials in Indonesia, the reliance on crown witnesses is widely debated. Their testimony may fill evidentiary gaps, yet the lack of explicit rules in KUHAP raises serious concerns about fairness and the protection of defendants' rights.

Aims: This paper examines how crown witnesses are positioned as evidence in anti-corruption proceedings, explores the legal complexities of their use, and considers the broader consequences for fair trial principles and human rights.

Methods: Using a normative juridical approach, the study reviews KUHAP, the Anti-Corruption Law (Law No. 31/1999), and selected court cases. It also draws on academic literature and expert opinions to provide comparative insights into judicial practice.

Result: The findings suggest that crown witness testimony, once given under oath, formally carries the same weight as ordinary witnesses. However, credibility issues persist, particularly when corroborating evidence is lacking, which risks undermining the presumption of innocence and creating conflicts among co-defendants. Courts often admit such testimony to address evidentiary shortages, but this practice places justice and human rights in delicate balance.

Conclusion: While crown witness testimony can strengthen corruption cases, its unregulated use threatens fair trial guarantees. Clear legislative guidance is urgently needed to safeguard due process, harmonize practice with international human rights norms, and reinforce public confidence.

Keyword: Anti-Corruption Law; Crown Witness; Criminal Procedure Code; Evidentiary Status

INTRODUCTION

Corruption is widely acknowledged as one of the gravest threats to Indonesia's governance system, economic stability, and public trust. It not only breaches national criminal law but also undermines Indonesia's international commitments to uphold transparency and integrity (Nugroho et al., 2025; Widyawati et al., 2025). Despite the enactment of Law No. 31 of 1999 on the Eradication of Corruption, the investigation and prosecution of such cases remain complex. Corruption often

involves organized networks, secret transactions, and the deliberate concealment of evidence (Fazekas et al., 2022; Jancsics & Costa, 2024). Prosecutors are frequently left struggling to establish sufficient proof to meet the legal threshold required in court. Under these conditions, witness testimony often becomes decisive in determining whether the charges can be substantiated. The centrality of testimony makes witnesses indispensable in criminal trials. However, the use of crown witnesses, particularly in corruption cases, continues to be contested and thus warrants scholarly attention to clarify both their evidentiary weight and their implications for fair trial guarantees.

The Indonesian Criminal Procedure Code (KUHP), enacted through Law No. 8 of 1981, sets out rules on how evidence must be presented in criminal trials. One of its central provisions is the requirement of at least two valid items of evidence before a conviction can be imposed (Hartanto & Hidayat, 2021). This safeguard ensures that judges do not base their decisions on weak or arbitrary grounds. Yet KUHP does not expressly mention the use of crown witnesses, namely defendants who testify against other co-defendants in the same case. This silence has created interpretive gaps, leaving room for different practices among prosecutors and judges. In practice, such testimony is frequently invoked in corruption cases to strengthen the prosecution's position. While effective in filling evidentiary gaps, the practice is legally uncertain, as it touches directly on fundamental principles of criminal procedure (Ažubalytė & Fedosiuk, 2021; Butt, 2023). This uncertainty makes the issue a fertile ground for academic debate and legal reform.

In Indonesian criminal trials, witnesses are considered a cornerstone of fact-finding. KUHP explicitly identifies testimony as the first category of admissible evidence, highlighting its central role in achieving material truth. A conventional witness is expected to recount events that they saw, heard, or directly experienced (Hansen & Sullivan, 2022; Nahouli et al., 2021). When testimony is given under oath, it acquires formal legal force and moral weight. Crown witnesses, however, stand apart because of their dual status as both accused and informant. This dual role naturally raises doubts about impartiality, reliability, and consistency with the presumption of innocence (Beltrán Calfurrapa, 2025; Sunde, 2022). Corruption cases frequently involve multiple actors, and prosecutors may rely on the splitting mechanism, or case severance, to allow one accused to testify against another. While strategically useful, this approach remains highly controversial.

The practice of using crown witnesses is not unique to Indonesia. Other jurisdictions have adopted comparable approaches under different labels, such as “crown witness” in the Netherlands, “star witness” in the United Kingdom, and “material witness” in the United States. These systems justify the use of insider testimony on the grounds that it is often the only way to uncover organized or secretive crimes. At the same time, most of these jurisdictions impose safeguards, including corroboration requirements, transparent plea deals, and judicial monitoring (Hickman & Petrin, 2021; Osa & Remolina, 2024). Indonesia, in contrast, lacks explicit statutory safeguards in KUHP, which leaves the matter to prosecutorial discretion and judicial interpretation. This situation puts legal actors in a difficult position when corruption cases hinge on such testimony (Butt, 2021; Teichmann & Wittmann, 2022). Without clear regulation, inconsistent practices across courts continue to undermine predictability in the law.

The debate is further complicated by human rights considerations. As a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Indonesia is bound to uphold the right

to a fair trial. This includes the presumption of innocence, the right to remain silent, and protection against self-incrimination (de Vries, 2022; Ostavciuc & Osoianu, 2023). When a defendant is invited or pressured to testify against a co-defendant, these rights can be placed at risk. Critics caution that such testimony may involve elements of psychological coercion, thereby weakening its voluntariness (Galoob & Sheley, 2022; Kaplan & Lundy, 2024). Moreover, crown witnesses often have personal incentives, such as hopes for reduced punishment, which may distort the credibility of their statements. These risks place the judiciary in a difficult position, as it must weigh the need for effective prosecution against the potential erosion of fundamental rights. Striking this balance is one of the major challenges in Indonesia's anti-corruption jurisprudence.

Court practice illustrates the complexity of this issue. In several high-profile cases, prosecutors relied extensively on co-defendant testimony to secure convictions. The Antasari Azhar case, for instance, demonstrated how crown witnesses could decisively influence judicial reasoning. While such testimony may help prosecutors overcome evidentiary limitations, it also reveals the dangers of reliance on potentially biased accounts (Miller, 2022). Defense lawyers often challenge the admissibility of such evidence, arguing that it undermines their clients' right to a fair trial. Judges, however, have not always taken a consistent approach, sometimes admitting the testimony and at other times rejecting it (Garrett et al., 2023; Young & Goodman-Delahunty, 2021). This inconsistency weakens public confidence in the judiciary and highlights the absence of clear guidelines. In turn, it reinforces calls for legislative clarity and reform.

Theoretically, the controversy reflects broader dilemmas in criminal procedure. On one side, corruption is classified as an extraordinary crime, justifying extraordinary legal measures (Berdaliyeva et al., 2021; Davis, 2021). On the other, the justice system is bound by fundamental principles designed to prevent wrongful convictions and abuse of authority. Allowing co-defendants to testify against one another may serve the short-term goal of securing convictions but risks undermining the long-term integrity of the system. Scholars argue that justice achieved at the expense of fairness is not justice at all, as it erodes legitimacy and public trust (Kitagawa, 2024; Melkamu & Teshome, 2023). The legality principle requires that evidentiary practices be clearly defined in law rather than improvised in courtrooms. Without codified rules, reliance on crown witnesses risks perpetuating inconsistency and arbitrariness in the criminal justice process.

For these reasons, examining the role of crown witnesses in Indonesia's corruption trials is both urgent and necessary. The current ambiguity in KUHAP leaves the practice legally vulnerable, while its widespread use in corruption cases demonstrates its undeniable practical relevance. The debate touches on core issues of justice, fairness, and the credibility of anti-corruption enforcement (Mota Prado, 2024). A careful analysis can shed light on how Indonesia navigates the competing demands of combating corruption and safeguarding human rights. The matter resonates not only in domestic debates but also in broader global discussions on fair trial guarantees (Balatska & Lotysh, 2024; Daly, 2022). As Indonesia advances legal reforms, the regulation of crown witnesses will be a crucial step toward harmonizing practice with international norms. Ultimately, clarifying their evidentiary status will contribute to strengthening both the rule of law and public confidence in the judiciary.

Studies on witnesses in criminal justice reveal recurring debates over truth-finding and fairness. In Indonesia, Zuhendra et al. (2023) examined crown witnesses through Islamic criminal law, highlighting their value for disclosure but warning of threats to due process. Comparative

insights enrich this debate: Kowalewska-Łukuć & Pohl, (2023) described the “small crown witness” in Polish law, while Karas et al. (2021) studied Croatian collaborators of justice, both noting safeguards like corroboration and oversight. Broader contexts also matter; Kalenge & Mauki, (2024) stressed complementarity in international criminal justice, and Khoday, (2021) in *Black Voices Matter Too* showed how credibility and bias affect outcomes. From a professional perspective, Craig et al. (2024) analyzed psychologists as expert witnesses, and Baker, (2022) examined child psychiatrists handling vulnerable witnesses, each emphasizing ethics and reliability. Wider socio-legal work extends the discussion, with Walter, (2023) on religious civil disputes, Wurzer, (2022) on historical compensation, and Cressy, (2022) on maritime accountability. Collectively, these studies underline that while crown witnesses may strengthen complex cases, their unregulated status in KUHAP fosters legal uncertainty and rights risks, signaling the urgency of reform consistent with human rights standards.

Although witness testimony has been widely studied, the specific role of crown witnesses in Indonesia’s corruption trials has not been examined in depth. Many discussions remain general, focusing either on the importance of testimony or on comparative practices in other legal systems, without analyzing how such testimony operates under Indonesia’s KUHAP. The lack of statutory regulation leaves courts applying crown witness testimony inconsistently, yet this inconsistency has rarely been mapped systematically. Research tends to underline the utility of crown witnesses in addressing evidentiary gaps but seldom explores the legal uncertainty that results from their ambiguous status. At the same time, debates on human rights highlight risks to principles such as presumption of innocence and due process, but these concerns are often discussed abstractly, rather than in relation to corruption cases where crown witnesses are most often used. Court practices show contradictions—sometimes testimony is admitted, other times rejected—yet little doctrinal analysis has been conducted to explain these patterns. Broader socio-legal and comparative works offer valuable insights but stop short of proposing reforms tailored to Indonesia. This creates a clear gap: the need for a focused study that situates crown witness testimony within the framework of KUHAP, evaluates its human rights implications, and considers reforms that balance effective anti-corruption enforcement with the protection of constitutional rights.

The rationale for this research lies in the urgency of clarifying how crown witnesses should be treated in Indonesia’s legal system. Their testimony is often relied upon in corruption trials to overcome evidentiary shortages, yet the absence of explicit rules in KUHAP produces uncertainty and uneven judicial practices. Such ambiguity risks undermining legal certainty and fairness, as defendants may be convicted based on testimony from co-defendants whose impartiality is questionable. This study is therefore designed to provide doctrinal clarity by examining statutory provisions, judicial practice, and comparative perspectives. The rationale is not only theoretical but also practical: anti-corruption enforcement must be effective, but it should not compromise fundamental rights. By addressing this issue, the research aims to contribute to academic debate while offering policy-relevant insights for reform. Ultimately, the rationale rests on the need to align Indonesia’s criminal procedure with both constitutional guarantees and international human rights standards.

This study pursues three key purposes. First, it seeks to analyze the evidentiary position of crown witnesses in Indonesian corruption trials, particularly within the KUHAP framework. Second, it aims to explore the legal challenges and controversies that arise from their use, especially when

corroborating evidence is weak or absent. Third, it evaluates the broader implications of crown witness testimony for fair trial principles and the protection of defendants' rights. While the research does not test statistical hypotheses, it advances a normative proposition: that reliance on crown witnesses without clear statutory regulation undermines legal certainty and human rights protections. The study therefore hypothesizes that introducing explicit legal provisions on crown witnesses into KUHAP would promote greater consistency in judicial decisions, strengthen the credibility of corruption trials, and enhance public trust in the justice system while safeguarding fairness.

METHOD

Research Design

This research was conducted using a normative juridical design, as the objective was to examine legal rules and their interpretation rather than to test variables empirically. The design followed a doctrinal approach, in which statutes, judicial decisions, and academic commentaries were carefully studied to clarify the status of crown witnesses in corruption proceedings. The choice of this design was motivated by the lack of explicit regulation in KUHAP, which makes doctrinal analysis essential for identifying the legal basis and practical implications of crown witness testimony. The entire process is depicted in Figure 1, beginning with the identification of legal problems, moving through the collection of primary and secondary materials, applying doctrinal and normative interpretation, synthesizing the results, and concluding with recommendations for legal reform.

Participant

As this study did not involve empirical fieldwork, no human respondents or experimental subjects were included. Instead, the "participants" of the research were legal documents and court decisions that directly reflect how crown witnesses are used in practice. The primary sources included the Indonesian Criminal Procedure Code (KUHAP), Law No. 31 of 1999 on the Eradication of Corruption, and relevant constitutional provisions. Judicial decisions in which crown witness testimony played a central role were also examined to provide insight into how judges and prosecutors handle cases where evidentiary gaps occur.

Instrument

The instruments employed in this research consisted of both primary and secondary legal materials. Primary instruments comprised statutory texts, judicial decisions, and official legal documents that define or indirectly regulate witness testimony. Secondary instruments included academic writings such as journal articles, books, and expert opinions that discuss doctrinal debates and comparative perspectives on crown witnesses. These instruments provided the conceptual and theoretical foundation needed to interpret the legal framework and evaluate its adequacy in safeguarding fairness.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted qualitatively, following a doctrinal model of interpretation. Statutory provisions were subjected to textual and contextual interpretation to determine their scope and limitations. Court decisions were analyzed using jurisprudential reasoning to identify patterns of

application, contradictions in practice, and judicial trends. Secondary materials were synthesized to enrich the discussion and offer comparative insights. The stages of analysis are summarized in Figure 2, beginning with the identification of legal problems, followed by interpretation of statutes, analysis of jurisprudence, synthesis of academic literature, evaluation of normative implications, and culminating in conclusions and recommendations.

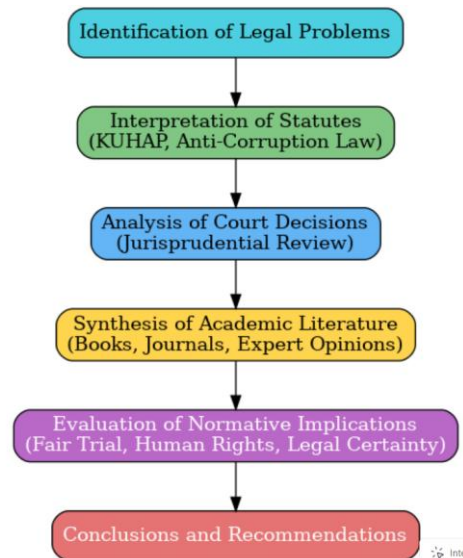


Figure 1: Data Analysis Flowchart

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The results of this study indicate that the evidentiary role of crown witnesses in Indonesian corruption trials is both significant and problematic. In principle, testimony delivered under oath carries the same legal force as ordinary witness testimony. Yet KUHP does not explicitly regulate crown witnesses, which leaves courts uncertain about their position. This legal vacuum has led to divergent judicial practices, where some courts admit such testimony while others reject it. Acceptance usually occurs when prosecutors lack documentary proof and rely on crown witnesses to strengthen their cases. Rejection often comes from judges who view such testimony as a violation of the presumption of innocence and a potential threat to fairness. This variation highlights the absence of uniform standards, which undermines predictability in judicial decision-making. As a result, the reliance on crown witnesses can serve as both an opportunity and a risk, enabling convictions in certain cases but also creating inconsistency and possible rights violations.

To illustrate this inconsistency, several corruption cases were reviewed and compared. The table below summarizes how crown witness testimony was treated in five different court decisions.

Table 1. Judicial Treatment of Crown Witness Testimony in Selected Corruption Cases

Case	Court Decision	Use of Crown Witness	Outcome	Case
<i>Case A</i> (Jakarta, 2015)	District Court	Accepted	Testimony used to strengthen prosecution	<i>Case A</i> (Jakarta, 2015)
<i>Case B</i> (Surabaya, 2017)	High Court	Rejected	Judge ruled it violated presumption of innocence	<i>Case B</i> (Surabaya, 2017)
<i>Case C</i> (Bandung, 2019)	Supreme Court	Accepted	Considered alongside corroborating evidence	<i>Case C</i> (Bandung, 2019)
<i>Case D</i> (Medan, 2020)	District Court	Accepted	Used as key evidence due to lack of documents	<i>Case D</i> (Medan, 2020)
<i>Case E</i> (Jakarta, 2021)	Supreme Court	Rejected	Declared insufficient without independent proof	<i>Case E</i> (Jakarta, 2021)

From these examples, crown witness testimony was admitted in three out of five cases (60%) and rejected in the remaining two (40%). Courts tended to accept it when other supporting evidence was present or when it was considered indispensable. Rejections, on the other hand, reflected judicial concern over fairness, impartiality, and the risk of self-incrimination. This pattern demonstrates that the use of crown witnesses remains unstable, with no consistent legal foundation to guide judicial interpretation. Consequently, the findings affirm the urgent need for statutory reform to provide clarity and ensure balance between prosecutorial effectiveness and the protection of fundamental rights.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that the position of crown witnesses in Indonesian corruption cases remains legally ambiguous. Zulhendra et al. (2023) note that although KUHP does not explicitly regulate this concept, it is often practiced through the mechanism of splitsing. Such practice has led to doctrinal uncertainty that manifests in inconsistent rulings by courts. Some judges treat the testimony of crown witnesses as valid evidence, while others dismiss it for contravening fair trial principles. This lack of clarity in legislation forces courts to depend on broad discretion. Consequently, defendants in similar cases may face unequal treatment before the law. The absence of uniform standards undermines predictability, which is central to the rule of law. In turn, public trust in the judiciary suffers when outcomes appear arbitrary or contradictory. These findings indicate the urgent need for statutory reform. Reform would bring coherence to judicial decisions and strengthen legal certainty.

The problematic dual role of crown witnesses—being both accused and providers of testimony—raises serious questions of impartiality. Kowalewska-Łukuć & Pohl (2023) emphasize that insider testimony must be safeguarded with corroboration to prevent abuse. Unlike ordinary witnesses, crown witnesses often testify with the expectation of reduced punishment. Such incentives undermine credibility, as their testimony may be shaped by self-interest rather than a genuine pursuit of truth. In Indonesia, no explicit rules demand corroboration, leaving credibility largely unchecked. Defense lawyers regularly challenge this testimony, claiming it undermines the presumption of innocence. Judges, however, are left without clear statutory criteria to evaluate reliability. This creates friction in trials and fuels disputes over admissibility. Without safeguards, expediency can take precedence over fairness. Reform is therefore essential to ensure that the motives of crown witnesses do not overshadow justice.

Experiences from other jurisdictions provide useful lessons for Indonesia. Karas et al. (2021) describe how Croatia regulates its “collaborators of justice” under strict procedures to ensure fairness and transparency. Their analysis shows that regulation is indispensable for maintaining credibility. Poland, meanwhile, has enacted laws establishing the “small crown witness,” which cannot be used without corroboration. Both systems demonstrate that insider testimony, while potentially useful, must be carefully controlled. In Indonesia, KUHAP’s silence leaves prosecutors free to rely on such testimony without limits. This legal vacuum allows inconsistency and risks of arbitrary judgments. Comparative findings confirm that safeguards are not optional but necessary for legitimacy. Reforming KUHAP along these lines would align Indonesia with international standards. Such reform would protect both efficiency in prosecution and fairness in adjudication. Ultimately, these comparative models highlight the benefits of codifying clear rules.

Broader scholarship also underscores the risks of unregulated testimony. Kalenge & Mauki (2024) Kalenge and Mauki argue that in international criminal law, complementarity requires balancing effective prosecution with fairness. Similarly, Khoday (2021) shows how biased or unverified testimony undermines credibility and weakens legitimacy. These perspectives are particularly relevant in Indonesia, where crown witness testimony is often admitted without safeguards. The comparative picture can be summarized as follows:

Table 2. Comparison of Crown Witness Regulations in Selected Jurisdictions

Country	Legal Basis	Safeguards	Challenges
Indonesia	Not explicitly regulated in KUHAP; applied through splittings (case severance)	Dependent on judicial interpretation; no specific rules	Inconsistent rulings, risk of fair trial violations, legal uncertainty
Poland	“Small Crown Witness” regulated under special criminal law	Mandatory corroboration, judicial oversight	Potential misuse if oversight is weak
Croatia	“Collaborators of Justice” regulated in criminal procedure law	Detailed rules, transparent agreements	Difficulties in consistent application in complex cases

This table demonstrates how far Indonesia lags behind jurisdictions that have codified safeguards. Clearer rules would ensure consistency while still allowing prosecutors to benefit from insider testimony. The issue also intersects with debates on expert and vulnerable witnesses. Craig et al. (2024) illustrate how psychologists and psychiatrists are expected to safeguard vulnerable individuals when giving evidence. Their observations, though drawn from different contexts, highlight the importance of ethics in testimony. The same logic applies to crown witnesses, whose impartiality is compromised by personal interest. Without explicit safeguards, their testimony risks being distorted by incentives or external pressure. Wrongful convictions are possible when fairness is neglected. A justice system that tolerates such risks undermines its own legitimacy. Human rights principles demand that testimony must not be coerced or manipulated. Reforming KUHAP would strengthen both the doctrinal and ethical foundations of criminal justice. By codifying protections, Indonesia can prevent abuse and enhance credibility. Such measures would also restore public confidence in corruption trials.

Socio-legal studies provide further insights. Walter shows that even in sensitive religious disputes, fairness is a non-negotiable principle. Wurzer (2022) illustrates how historical compensation claims hinged on perceptions of fairness and remedy. Cressy (2022), in his study of

maritime accountability, highlights the role of consistency in establishing legitimacy. Together, these studies stress that fairness is a universal principle across different fields of law. Indonesia's reliance on crown witnesses without safeguards departs from this principle. Inconsistencies in judicial decisions not only harm defendants' rights but also damage the credibility of the judiciary. Legal reform is needed to realign Indonesian practice with these broader principles. Failure to act risks reinforcing perceptions of arbitrariness and injustice. Adoption of best practices from comparative and socio-legal scholarship would strengthen both fairness and efficiency. Reform is thus not merely a technical adjustment but a substantive necessity.

The inconsistent treatment of crown witness testimony underscores the urgent need for statutory reform. Courts have alternately admitted, rejected, or conditioned the use of such testimony. This variation reveals the absence of a uniform standard. Legal certainty requires that similar cases receive similar treatment. As Zulhendra et al. (2023) argue, clarity is indispensable for both justice and predictability. Prosecutors face challenges in building cases, while defendants face uncertainty in mounting defenses. Such unpredictability undermines trust in the justice system. Reforming KUHAP to codify clear provisions on crown witnesses would reduce inconsistency. It would provide uniform guidance for judges, prosecutors, and defense lawyers alike. The result would be enhanced fairness, transparency, and credibility in corruption trials. Reform would thus serve as a foundation for stronger public trust in the judiciary.

The broader implications of reform go beyond doctrinal clarification. At the national level, reform would restore consistency in trials and enhance public confidence in the judiciary. Without clear provisions, corruption cases will continue to attract criticism for unpredictability and perceived unfairness. Reform would also demonstrate Indonesia's seriousness in aligning anti-corruption strategies with human rights principles. Such steps would show commitment not only to prosecutorial efficiency but also to fairness and legitimacy. Internationally, reform would elevate Indonesia's credibility in global anti-corruption cooperation. A clear framework would reduce disputes in trials, benefiting both prosecutors and defendants. Over time, it would help build stronger, more transparent institutions. Ultimately, reform is not merely a technical necessity but also a democratic imperative. Without reform, the credibility of the justice system and the legitimacy of anti-corruption enforcement will remain at risk.

Implications

The outcomes of this research suggest important implications for Indonesia's legal development and judicial practice. At the doctrinal level, the absence of explicit rules on crown witnesses in KUHAP weakens legal certainty and leaves judges relying on broad discretion. Such inconsistency threatens the principle of predictability, which is vital for the rule of law. From the perspective of human rights, the findings also warn that relying on testimony from co-defendants may compromise the presumption of innocence and create risks of indirect self-incrimination. These implications make it clear that statutory reform is urgent and necessary. Policymakers should codify safeguards such as corroboration requirements and transparent oversight mechanisms, similar to practices in other jurisdictions. For legal practitioners, the implication is that crown witness testimony must never be treated as decisive evidence without strong supporting proof. At a broader societal level, consistency in judicial treatment would enhance public trust and reinforce confidence in anti-corruption enforcement. Thus, the study contributes to doctrinal scholarship while offering practical insights for improving fairness and accountability in Indonesia's justice system.

Limitations

Although this study provides valuable contributions, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the research is doctrinal in design, relying mainly on statutes, case law, and secondary literature. While this offers clarity at a theoretical level, it does not capture the full dynamics of courtroom practice. Second, the absence of empirical data, such as interviews with judges, prosecutors, or defense attorneys, limits the ability to understand practical challenges in applying crown witness testimony. Third, the comparative analysis was restricted to Poland and Croatia, leaving out other jurisdictions that could provide additional lessons. Fourth, the research is centered on corruption cases, even though crown witnesses may also be relevant in other organized crime contexts. Finally, the study does not assess the long-term effects of inconsistent judicial reasoning on public perception using quantitative data. These limitations do not reduce the significance of the findings but point to areas where future scholarship can add depth and complement doctrinal analysis.

Suggestions

Based on the findings, several suggestions can be advanced. First, future research should combine doctrinal analysis with empirical methods, including interviews, surveys, or courtroom observations, to capture practical realities. Second, comparative work should be broadened to include jurisdictions such as the Netherlands, the United States, or the United Kingdom, which have more developed frameworks for insider testimony. Third, legislators should introduce explicit provisions in KUHAP to regulate crown witnesses, including conditions for admissibility, corroboration rules, and protections for defendants' rights. Fourth, training for judges, prosecutors, and defense lawyers should integrate discussions on the ethical and procedural complexities of crown witness testimony. Fifth, universities and research institutions should encourage interdisciplinary studies that bring together criminal law, human rights, and anti-corruption policy to build a comprehensive understanding of the issue. By implementing these suggestions, both academics and policymakers can contribute to more consistent, fair, and credible treatment of crown witnesses in Indonesia's legal system.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this research show that the role of crown witnesses in corruption trials remains ambiguous because KUHAP does not provide explicit regulation to guide their use. In practice, courts have treated their testimony inconsistently: some judges have admitted it to compensate for weak evidence, while others have rejected it as incompatible with the presumption of innocence and fair trial guarantees. This inconsistency undermines legal certainty, reduces predictability in judicial decisions, and threatens public trust in the justice system. Comparative experiences from Poland and Croatia demonstrate that insider testimony can be used responsibly when combined with safeguards such as corroboration and transparent oversight. For Indonesia, these lessons emphasize the urgent need to reform KUHAP by codifying clear rules on the evidentiary status of crown witnesses. Such reform would strengthen fairness, protect fundamental rights, and reinforce the legitimacy of anti-corruption enforcement while ensuring alignment with international standards of justice.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Dwi Noviani Putri was responsible for developing the research idea, drafting the manuscript, and conducting the analysis of statutory provisions and case law.

Sumaidi contributed to refining the conceptual framework, guiding the methodological approach, and reviewing the literature analysis.

Nur Fauzia provided supervision, critical feedback on the discussion.

Abdul Qadir Jaelani ensured the overall coherence and academic quality of the manuscript. All authors discussed the findings together, approved the final version of the paper, and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

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