

Investigation of the Alleged Corruption Case in the Rp 9.9 Trillion Education Laptop Procurement Budget: An Analysis of the Rp 10 Million Per-Unit Laptop Acquisition During Nadiem Makarim's Tenure

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ABSTRACT

The case of alleged corruption in the procurement of Chromebook-based laptop devices within the Education Digitalization Program at the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) for the 2019–2022 period, with a total budget of IDR 9.9 trillion, has attracted public attention. This research aims to evaluate the mechanism of laptop procurement, detect indications of irregularities, analyze the factors contributing to corruption, and discuss its impact on budget efficiency, accessibility, and the quality of education. This study adopts a qualitative approach using a case study methodology. Data are collected from procurement documents, media reports, and relevant legislation. Data analysis is conducted through content analysis to identify indications of irregularities, such as price mark-ups, collusion, fictitious procurement, and deviations from specifications. The findings indicate that the procurement mechanism is allegedly inconsistent with the principles of good procurement, alongside alleged “malicious collusion” leading to the use of the Chromebook operating system. The investigation process by the Attorney General's Office (Kejagung) is still ongoing, with witness examinations and seizures already carried out. This research is expected to contribute to the eradication of corruption in the education sector and produce policy recommendations that support better governance and accountability.

KEYWORDS

Corruption, Procurement, Education Laptops, Nadiem Makarim, Rp 9.9 Trillion



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INTRODUCTION

Corruption, as a very serious issue, remains a major focus in Indonesia. Irregular practices in the procurement of government goods and services receive significant attention because they can cause substantial financial losses to the state (Akbar, 2022). Legally, corruption is defined as an act that harms the state's finances, in accordance with the provisions of the Corruption Law. In the context of procurement, corruption can occur at various phases, from planning to contract execution. It is considered an extraordinary crime that requires comprehensive handling, given its far-reaching impact on the nation's life; strict law enforcement remains one of the key solutions. Corrupt practices in government procurement often arise through various *modus operandi*, reflecting the complexity of corruption in procurement, which demands a deep understanding of the different forms of irregularities.

Government procurement of goods and services is a crucial mechanism in managing the state budget, encompassing the processes of needs planning, budget preparation, supplier selection, and contract implementation. This procurement process must be conducted effectively, efficiently, and accountably to ensure the achievement of development goals. The importance of high-quality procurement is expressed by Tanyo (2020), who states that procurement must be carried out efficiently, effectively, and accountably, in accordance with the principles of good governance; therefore, transparency is a vital aspect (Setiyono, 2018). Transparency and accountability in procurement are key to preventing corrupt practices and

ensuring responsible budget use, as mandated in various procurement-related regulations, including Presidential Regulation Number 16 of 2018 concerning the Procurement of Government Goods/Services (Crime, 2020; Korupsi, 2022; OECD, 2016).

Various modus operandi of corruption in procurement include acts that harm state finances, bribery, embezzlement, extortion, fraud, conflicts of interest, and gratuities. The complexity of corruption in procurement can be observed through diverse methods and techniques, ranging from indicators such as inflated pricing to collusion between officials and providers (Creswell, 2021). This highlights the need for strict supervision and effective systems. Efforts to combat corruption in the procurement of goods and services can be implemented through preventive and control measures. Preventive efforts include strict supervision, the implementation of an e-procurement system, and enhancing the integrity and capacity of human resources involved in the procurement process. Meanwhile, control measures involve rigorous law enforcement with the imposition of severe penalties. The simultaneous use of prevention and control approaches is crucial to creating a clean and accountable procurement environment; however, their effectiveness largely depends on the commitment and consistency of all stakeholders.

The case of laptop procurement worth IDR 9.9 trillion during the era of Nadiem Makarim attracted significant public attention due to allegations of corruption (Antikorupsi.org, 2025; Intoniswan, 2025; Lensakini.com, 2025; Nugroho, 2025; Tempo.com, 2025). This raises important questions: How was the laptop procurement procedure conducted—from planning and budgeting to vendor selection? Were there irregularities (e.g., excessive price mark-ups, collusion, gratuities)? What were the triggering factors, including aspects of regulation, supervision, and governance? And how did these deviations affect budget efficiency, accessibility, and the quality of education

This study aims to: (1) analyze the mechanism for laptop procurement valued at IDR 9.9 trillion; (2) identify irregularities; (3) examine the factors that trigger corruption; and (4) analyze the impact on budget efficiency, accessibility, and education quality. This research is expected to contribute to anti-corruption efforts, particularly in government procurement processes, and to provide constructive policy recommendations.

METHOD

This research applies a qualitative approach using a case study methodology. The qualitative approach was chosen to explore in depth the potential for corruption in the procurement of laptops during the era of Nadiem Makarim (Assyakurrohim, 2023; Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). The case study is used to examine intensively the laptop procurement case, which is considered a tied system, by collecting detailed data from various sources. The purpose of this case study is to uncover the characteristics and distinctive features of the case being studied. This approach allows researchers to investigate in detail the phenomenon of corruption within a specific context and to reveal the underlying truth behind the phenomenon. A qualitative approach is used to understand the procurement process, identify irregularities, examine factors that trigger corruption, and analyze their consequences (Creswell, 1998; Creswell & Poth, 2016; International, 2023). Case studies provide a comprehensive perspective on the case, highlighting its characteristics and uniqueness. This research seeks to explore

various aspects of the case in order to gain a holistic understanding and to focus on collecting in-depth information.

The primary data sources in this study are secondary data, which include: (1) laptop procurement documents, (2) news and media articles, and (3) regulations related to procurement. Document analysis will be conducted. Data collection techniques consist of: (1) document analysis—examining procurement documents, and (2) in-depth interviews with relevant parties, if possible. Interview guidelines are prepared based on the issues identified. Data analysis uses a content analysis approach, which is a technique for systematically examining the content of documents and interview transcripts. The stages of analysis include data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Triangulation will be conducted to enhance validity. The analysis process will be carried out systematically to ensure that the research findings are verifiable and reliable.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Laptop Procurement Mechanism: An In-Depth Analysis of the Process and Possible Corruption Loopholes

The Attorney General's Office (Kejagung) is investigating alleged corruption in the procurement of Chromebook-based laptops by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) between 2019-2022, with a budget of IDR 9.9 trillion (Sari & Asmendri, 2020). The Education Digitalization Program, which is the umbrella of this procurement, is aimed at supporting the implementation of the Minimum Competency Assessment (AKM) in schools throughout Indonesia. However, based on preliminary findings, this procurement process is expected to face many problems, with indications of strong manipulation in determining specifications and operating systems of laptops, which has the potential to give room for corrupt practices. Efficient and effective procurement of government goods/services is crucial to support national development.

Needs Planning: Between Real Needs and Hidden Interests

The procurement process should begin with more thorough needs planning, including real needs analysis, clear technical specifications, and feasibility studies (Prabowo, 2017). However, the available information shows that the planning of laptop needs is allegedly not based on actual needs. Initially, the White Paper study recommended using the Windows operating system, but then switched to the Chrome or Chromebook operating system. This change raises question marks about the motivation behind the decision. "Corruption in the procurement of government goods and services is a serious problem that can hinder development and harm state finances. The alleged change based on a "malicious conspiracy" hints at the potential for intervention and a certain interest in determining the specification, which may benefit certain parties.

Budgeting: Questionable Transparency and Accountability

The budget set for the procurement of laptops reached Rp 9.9 trillion, with Rp 6.3 trillion of which was sourced from the Special Allocation Fund (DAK). A budget of this size should be managed with full transparency and accountability, in accordance with the principles of good procurement. However, the information circulating shows that there are indications that the budget management is not carried out transparently. ICW researcher, Almas Sjafrina, stated that procurement plans are not available in the Procurement General Plan Information System

(SiRUP) application, which makes it difficult for public oversight. Lack of transparency in procurement has the potential to increase the risk of corruption.

Auction Process and Vendor Determination: Signs of Collusion and Unfair Competition

The vendor selection process should be carried out through a competitive and clear auction mechanism. However, based on the information circulating, there are indications of collusion and unhealthy practices in the auction process. There are indications that some vendors have benefited in this process. According to a statement from the Head of the Attorney General's Office, Harli Siregar, there are around five vendors involved in the procurement of the laptops. "The importance of good procurement is emphasized by (Tantyo, 2020), who reveals that procurement must be carried out effectively and efficiently, and can be accounted for." The names of the vendors are still under investigation by investigators, to find out the roles of each.

2. Indications of Irregularities: Revealing the State's Modus Operandi and Losses

Investigators from the Attorney General's Office are investigating several indications of irregularities in the laptop procurement project, which shows various modus operandi of corruption.

- a) Price Increase: Alleged price increases on some laptop components.
- b) Collusion: There is an alleged collusion between officials and vendors.
- c) Fictitious Procurement: The possibility of fictitious procurement.
- d) Spec Deviation: There is a suspected deviation in the laptop specifications.

ICW (Indonesia Corruption Watch) also highlighted irregularities in this project, including procurement that is not a priority in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. Research shows that corruption in procurement can cause significant state losses and hinder development.

3. Parties Involved: Corruption Networks and Their Respective Roles

The Attorney General's Office has examined 28 witnesses. Various witnesses were examined, including: STN (Secretary of the Directorate General of Early Childhood Education, Higher Education, and Higher Education 2019), HM (Acting Director General of Early Childhood Education, Higher Education, and Higher Education 2020), KHM (Vice Chairman of the 2020 ICT Learning Tool Needs Analysis Technical Team), WH (Commitment Making Officer (PPK) of the Elementary School Directorate 2020–2021), and AB (Member of the 2020 ICT Learning Tool Needs Analysis Technical Team) (AMARINDA.NIAGA.ASIA). Page 1 of 2

1) Special Staff Roles

Searches in apartments belonging to specialized staff. Minister of Education and Culture, which is located in Cilandak, Kuningan Place, and Ciputra World 2. Two of them are former special staff of Minister Nadiem Makarim, each with the initials FH and JT. The involvement of this special staff shows that this case involves a wide network within the Ministry of Education and Culture. Investigators also confiscated electronic evidence, including laptops and mobile phones, as well as 15 agenda books from the search results.

2) Prevention of Special Staff

The Attorney General's Office officially filed a prevention and deterrence against three special staff of former Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Mendikbudristek) Nadiem Makarim, namely Jurist Tan, Fiona Handayani, and Ibrahim Arif. Prevention is proposed on June 4, 2025. The three people had previously been summoned to be examined, but did not attend.

3) The Role of Officials of the Ministry of Education and Culture:

Examination of officials of the Ministry of Education and Culture indicates their involvement in the procurement process.

4. The Evolution of Cases and Potential Legal Implications: Towards Strong Law Enforcement

Investigators have conducted searches at the residences of two former special staff members of Nadiem Makarim, identified as FH and JT (Kompasiana). From these examinations, investigators confiscated several electronic pieces of evidence (Barang Bukti Elektronik or BBE), including one laptop and four smartphones from FH, as well as two external hard drives, one free disk unit, and one laptop from JT (Kompasiana). In addition to electronic devices, investigators also secured 15 agenda books as documentary evidence. The Head of the Attorney General's Legal Information Center, Harli Siregar, revealed that investigators continue to gather evidence to determine those responsible. Harli also did not rule out the possibility of summoning the former Minister of Education, Nadiem Makarim, to provide clarification on the case, including matters related to the implementation of the Education Digitalization Program and his responsibilities as Minister of Education and Culture. The summoning of Nadiem Makarim, if carried out, would represent a significant step toward uncovering the facts and identifying those accountable for this alleged corruption. It could also help clarify the possible involvement of other parties. The case reportedly originated from a public complaint. Investigators are also examining indications of alleged collusion, suggesting deliberate planning and coordination in committing corrupt acts. Indonesia Corruption Watch (ICW) stated that procurement processes that do not align with actual needs and appear forced often stem from collusion and can lead to corruption. Strong law enforcement is therefore necessary to create a deterrent effect and prevent the recurrence of similar cases in the future. The Attorney General mentioned that there was malicious cooperation or collusion that influenced the procurement technical team to conduct a study supporting the purchase of laptops with the Chromebook operating system.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated alleged corrupt practices in the procurement process of Chromebook-model laptops for the Education Digitalization Program at the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) from 2019 to 2022. By analyzing secondary data derived from media reports, procurement documents, and relevant regulations, several key conclusions can be drawn.

Problematic Procurement Mechanism: The laptop procurement process is suspected to be inconsistent with the principles of good procurement as stipulated in Presidential Regulation Number 16 of 2018 concerning the Procurement of Government Goods/Services. There is a

strong indication that the planning of laptop needs and specifications was not based on actual requirements but rather on specific interests. The change in the operating system recommendation from Windows to Chromebook, despite limited internet accessibility in many regions of Indonesia, serves as evidence of alleged “malicious collusion.”

Identified Irregularities: There are strong indications of various forms of irregularities in the procurement process, including price mark-ups, collusion, fictitious procurement, and deviations in product specifications. The modus operandi of corruption identified aligns with corruption theories that emphasize abuse of authority and violations of the rule of law.

Involvement of Related Parties: The investigation by the Attorney General’s Office (Kejagung) has involved several parties, including officials from the Ministry of Education and Culture as well as the special staff of former Minister of Education Nadiem Makarim. The examination of witnesses and searches conducted in multiple locations demonstrate the existence of a widespread corruption network.

Case Developments and Potential Legal Consequences: The case remains under investigation, with the possibility of summoning former Minister of Education Nadiem Makarim. The ongoing legal process is expected to uncover the facts and ensure that those proven guilty receive strict sanctions. Strong law enforcement is essential to create a deterrent effect and prevent the recurrence of similar cases in the future.

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