

**THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ESTABLISHING A STUDENT CLUB FOR COMBATING
CORRUPTION: AN ANALYSIS OF HIGHER EDUCATION PRACTICES IN
UZBEKISTAN AND ABROAD**

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Abstract: This study explores the role of student-led integrity clubs as a proactive mechanism for preventing corruption in higher education, focusing on Uzbekistan and comparing practices in Finland, Singapore, Canada, Denmark, and South Korea [1]. Using a qualitative research design grounded in comparative policy analysis and review of Scopus and Web of Science literature, the study identifies challenges faced by Uzbek universities, including subjective grading, insufficient ethics education, plagiarism, and weak monitoring. The proposed model emphasizes transparency, accountability, and student participation. Additionally, a KPI-based reward system is introduced to strengthen motivation and institutionalize ethical behavior. These findings highlight student engagement as a crucial but underutilized component in building corruption-resistant academic environments.

Keywords: corruption, higher education, student club, integrity, transparency, academic honesty, international experience.

1. Introduction

Corruption in higher education remains one of the most damaging forms of institutional misconduct. It undermines public trust, weakens academic standards, and erodes merit-based evaluation systems. Globally, academic corruption appears in forms such as grade manipulation, bribery, nepotism, plagiarism, and contract cheating. Because universities shape the ethical foundations of future administrators and professionals, corruption in academia poses long-term threats to national governance and human capital development.

Uzbekistan has implemented essential reforms to mitigate corruption, including the Law on Combating Corruption (2017)[2] and the establishment of the Anti-Corruption Agency (2020)[3]. Despite these efforts, key problems persist: students often perceive grading as influenced by subjective or relational factors; plagiarism remains widespread due to insufficient academic writing skills; and ethics education has not been systematically integrated into curricula. International experiences demonstrate that student participation is a decisive factor in strengthening integrity. Finland, Singapore, and Canada actively involve students in ethics training, dialogue sessions, and anonymous reporting mechanisms. These models prove that integrity culture grows more effectively when students play an active, rather than passive, role. This study develops a conceptual framework for a Student Integrity Club tailored to Uzbekistan's educational context, drawing on global best practices.

2. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative, exploratory, and comparative research design. Data sources include peer-reviewed articles from Scopus and Web of Science, policy reports from UNDP, OECD, and Transparency International, and national documents from Uzbekistan's Anti-Corruption Agency [4]. Additional insight was obtained through informal interviews with faculty and surveys among students. The methodological framework consisted of four stages: identifying integrity challenges within Uzbek universities; evaluating foreign integrity models; developing an adapted Student Integrity Club model; and validating the model through expert feedback. Ethical standards were maintained by anonymizing all participants. Limitations include limited empirical datasets within local institutions and differences in administrative structures across international models.

3. Results

The analysis revealed several significant integrity challenges within universities in Uzbekistan:

- Subjective grading practices weaken academic transparency.
- Plagiarism remains prevalent due to insufficient academic integrity training.
- Integrity committees lack autonomy and enforcement capacity.
- Ethics and citizenship courses are limited or absent.
- Student participation in integrity initiatives remains low.

International models demonstrate more advanced approaches. Finland's Integrity Units employ student-led campaigns; Singapore integrates ethics into compulsory curricula; Canada utilizes anonymous digital reporting systems; Denmark hosts annual Integrity Dialogue Weeks; and South Korea applies KPI-based evaluations [5]. These models underscore the effectiveness of structured student engagement in promoting transparency.

4. Discussion

The findings indicate that student participation plays a critical role in shaping ethical academic environments. Student Integrity Clubs serve as platforms for peer-to-peer learning, awareness activities, and monitoring ethical behavior. This participatory approach encourages students to internalize integrity values, making anti-corruption initiatives more effective.

The proposed model includes transparent membership selection, operational independence, structured internal committees, and a KPI-based reward system. KPIs motivate measurable contributions such as organizing events, developing projects, supporting academic integrity training, and improving transparency. Challenges such as funding limitations and faculty resistance may arise. However, partnerships with organizations like UNDP and Transparency International can provide support and ensure sustainability[6].

5. Conclusion

Student-led integrity clubs represent an effective mechanism for enhancing academic honesty and combating corruption in higher education. Drawing from international practices, the proposed model emphasizes transparency, student participation, and performance-based motivation. Implementing Student Integrity Clubs in Uzbekistan can foster ethical culture,

improve institutional credibility, and support the country's long-term anti-corruption strategies. Empowering students to take leadership roles in ethics promotion contributes to developing a responsible and integrity-driven generation.

Appendix: Performance-Based Reward System (KPI Model)

This appendix outlines the KPI-based reward system designed to motivate student participation and strengthen integrity practices within the Student Integrity Club. KPIs include activity efficiency, student engagement, innovation, transparency, social impact, academic contributions, and integrity culture. Rewards include non-material incentives such as certificates, ambassador titles, and recognition, as well as material rewards such as mini-grants, internships, and scholarships. The evaluation framework categorizes members into A, B, and C groups based on their KPI scores. This system promotes fairness, transparency, and consistent engagement, ensuring the long-term success of the Student Integrity Club.

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