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IMPROVING INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGICAL MECHANISMS FOR DEVELOPING ANTI-CORRUPTION IMMUNITY AMONG HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

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Abstract. This thesis systematically examines the theoretical-methodological, regulatory-legal, and innovative pedagogical mechanisms for developing strong personal and professional anti-corruption immunity among students of higher education institutions. The study scientifically substantiates the limitations of traditional declarative and purely punitive approaches and develops a system of interactive pedagogical technologies based on student-centered, activity-based, axiological, and compliance approaches. Three basic components of students’ anti-corruption immunity—cognitive-informational, axiological-motivational, and praxeological (behavioral) criteria—are identified. The innovative mechanisms include situational case studies, moot court simulations, ethical dilemma analysis, the transparency capabilities of the HEMIS information system, anti-plagiarism tools, and student compliance initiatives. The results of pedagogical experimental work involving 240 students were confirmed through mathematical-statistical analysis (Student’s t-test), demonstrating that the proposed innovative mechanisms increased the proportion of students with a high level of anti-corruption immunity from 19.2% to 54.2%.

Keywords: higher education, students, anti-corruption immunity, innovative pedagogical mechanisms, compliance control, case study, simulation, academic integrity, HEMIS, axiological approach, pedagogical diagnostics, moot court simulation.

INTRODUCTION



At the current stage of the development of New Uzbekistan, enhancing human dignity, building a just and open society, and ensuring the rule of law in all spheres of the economy have been established as fundamental priorities of state policy. One of the most dangerous global threats that undermines the spiritual and moral foundations of society, reduces public trust in state institutions, and slows economic growth is undoubtedly corruption. In particular, the presence of corruption risks in higher education, which educates the intellectual elite of society and the leading specialists of tomorrow, causes serious damage not only to the quality of education but also to the strategic security and future prospects of the entire country.

In recent years, the Republic of Uzbekistan has established a strong legal and organizational foundation for an uncompromising fight against corruption. The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. O‘RQ-419 of January 3, 2017, “On Combating Corruption,” Presidential Decree No. PF-6013 of June 29, 2020, “On Additional Measures to Improve the Anti-Corruption System in the Republic of Uzbekistan,” Resolution No. PQ-5177 of July 6, 2021, and the “Corruption-Free Sector” project implemented within the system of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation have initiated a completely new stage in this area. These documents firmly establish that anti-corruption efforts should not be limited to punitive (repressive) measures but should primarily rely on preventive and educational mechanisms, raising the legal awareness and legal culture of the population, especially students and young people, and developing an uncompromising attitude toward corruption.

Corruption risks in higher education institutions have their own specific characteristics. Corruption in higher education is manifested not only in the form of material bribery (illegal payments for grades or diplomas) but also through various forms of academic corruption. These include subjectivity and bias in assessment, unjustified absences and artificial manipulation of attendance records, appropriation of other people’s intellectual work (plagiarism), having course papers and graduation



theses prepared in exchange for material benefits, and favoritism or nepotism. Becoming accustomed to such practices during student life and accepting them as an "ordinary way of solving problems" reinforces stereotypes of corrupt behavior in the future specialist's personal and professional consciousness.

Therefore, establishing anti-corruption immunity among students in the higher education process is an urgent pedagogical task of the education system. However, superficial lectures, formal meetings, and the declarative presentation of legal provisions traditionally used in this area are not producing the expected results. Merely announcing prohibitions to students does not create strong internal resistance. This necessitates the development and practical implementation of innovative pedagogical mechanisms enriched with interactive, student-centered, and digital technologies and incorporating simulations of real-life situations.

The study of the phenomenon of corruption, its causes of emergence, and its social consequences has long been the subject of criminology, economics, and sociology. Robert Klitgaard, who developed institutional models of corruption at the international level, demonstrated in his well-known corruption formula (C = M + D - A: Corruption = Monopoly + Discretion - Accountability) that a lack of transparency and accountability is a major catalyst for corruption. Susan Rose-Ackerman, in her works, substantiated that corruption in education deepens social inequality and leads to the degradation of the quality of human capital.

Swedish political scientist and sociologist Bo Rothstein emphasizes the decisive role of "social trust" among members of society and established ethical norms in achieving good governance and combating corruption. In his view, regardless of how strict punitive measures are, corruption cannot be eliminated if mutual accommodation and a tendency toward illegal privileges remain widespread among the main strata of society. Stephen Heyneman identified four major risks of academic dishonesty and corruption in higher education: professional incompetence, social injustice, the

intellectual weakening of the national economy, and the formation of a culture of disrespect for the law among the younger generation.

Studies by scholars from Uzbekistan and the CIS have also extensively analyzed the moral, ethical, and legal foundations of anti-corruption efforts. National legal scholars and specialists in the field (A. Kh. Saidov, Sh. T. Ikramov, F. Kh. Otakhonov, M. H. Baratov, Sh. M. Asadov, and others) have examined the role of compliance-control services in preventing corruption in state bodies and higher education institutions, eliminating conflicts of interest, and improving legislation. In pedagogy, the problems of developing intellectual and moral immunity and the legal culture of young people have been theoretically enriched in the scientific works of O. Musurmonova, M. Quronov, N. Muslimov, J. Tolipova, O. Bozorov, and others.

Nevertheless, an analysis of the existing literature shows that an integrated pedagogical system for directly developing anti-corruption immunity among students of higher education institutions, together with its diagnostic framework, structural components, and practical pedagogical mechanisms, has not been sufficiently studied. Many studies remain limited to general legal awareness and advocacy and do not adequately equip students with interactive-simulation, case-based, and digital technologies capable of changing their personal and moral positions. This research gap fully substantiates the relevance of this thesis.

The methodological basis of the study consists of the dialectical integration of student-centered, activity-based, competency-based, axiological (value-oriented), and anti-corruption compliance approaches. Within these approaches, the student is viewed not merely as a passive recipient of educational influence, but as a conscious subject who actively combats corruption and protects his or her legal and moral principles.

The following set of scientific and pedagogical methods was used in the research:

1. Theoretical-comparative analysis: A comparative study of national and foreign scientific literature related to the topic, laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan, international conventions (the UN Convention against Corruption), and regulatory documents in the field of education.

2. Empirical-sociological methods: Special anonymous surveys conducted among students, tests, expert discussions, in-depth interviews with compliance specialists and professors and teachers, and pedagogical observation.

3. Pedagogical experiment method: Ascertaining, formative, and summarizing experimental stages organized to test the effectiveness of the developed innovative pedagogical mechanisms.

4. Mathematical-statistical analysis: Analysis of variance, Student's t-test, and comparative analysis of the dynamics of percentage indicators were used to assess the validity and reliability of the experimental results.

Empirical basis of the study: The experimental work was conducted during 2024–2026 with the participation of 240 bachelor's students studying at higher education institutions (120 students in the experimental group—EG, and 120 students in the control group—CG). Initial diagnostics conducted before the experiment showed that approximately 45 percent of the students had a low or situational level of anti-corruption immunity.

In the pedagogical and psychological context, "anti-corruption immunity" is understood as the student's internal intellectual, moral-value, and volitional potential that enables conscious resistance to external corrupt environments, material or administrative pressure, and offers of academic dishonesty; preserves personal honor and professional dignity; and enables the individual to make correct decisions based on justice and the rule of law.

Within the framework of our research, three interrelated structural components

of students' anti-corruption immunity were identified, and their pedagogical criteria were determined:

1. Cognitive-informational component: This reflects the student's systematic and in-depth knowledge of the essence of corruption, its latent (hidden) forms, its dangerous consequences for the state and society, anti-corruption legislation, liability measures, academic rules at higher education institutions, and compliance requirements.

2. Axiological-motivational component: This encompasses the student's internal system of values, integrity, commitment to justice, respect for honest work, personal dignity, and patriotism. This component ensures a deep internal rejection of corruption, intolerance toward it, and motivation to achieve success through one's own work.

3. Praxeological (behavioral-activity) component: This reflects the practical skills enabling students to demonstrate a firm anti-corruption position in real-life, educational, and professional situations; unconditionally reject corrupt offers; refrain from academic plagiarism; make correct decisions when facing ethical dilemmas; and effectively use compliance channels.

The following Table 1 provides a detailed description of the components of anti-corruption immunity, their pedagogical criteria, and indicators of their level of formation.

Establishing strong anti-corruption immunity among higher education students requires a fundamental renewal of traditional forms of instruction and the systematic application of the following four mutually integrated blocks of innovative pedagogical mechanisms:

Providing information alone is not sufficient for developing lawful behavior among students; they must be involved in real processes of action. For this purpose, the following interactive methods are used:

a) Case-study method: Practical cases are developed based on real corruption-related situations and compliance incidents that have occurred in higher education institutions and public administration. For example, problem-based cases such as “A classmate who attempts to negotiate a grade during the examination session” and “The fate of a student who purchased a completed graduation thesis” are presented. Students are divided into small groups and comprehensively analyze the legal, economic, and ethical consequences of the situation and develop an optimal solution algorithm.

b) Court proceeding simulation (“Moot Court”): A mock trial concerning corruption-related crimes is organized with student participation. Students take the roles of judge, public prosecutor, defense attorney, defendant, compliance inspector, and witnesses. Through this exercise, students observe and experience the investigation of an offense, evaluation of evidence, application of legal provisions, and the process of ensuring the inevitability of punishment. This develops a strong internal awareness of the legal consequences of corruption and respect for the law.

c) Ethical dilemma (Dilemma analysis) method: Students are presented with complex personal and professional dilemmas (for example: “Would you give false testimony to prevent your friend from being expelled from university, or would you choose justice?”). Such exercises test students’ value systems, stimulate deep discussion within the group, and teach them to choose the difficult path of honesty rather than an easy illegal solution.

The digitalization of the higher education system serves as one of the most effective means of reducing corruption-related factors. The pedagogical significance of digital tools lies in the fact that they create students’ confidence that rules are equal and unchangeable for everyone:

a) Didactic potential of the HEMIS information system: The Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS) records students’ attendance and interim and final assessment results with full transparency. Limiting the human factor in the

system explains to students the necessity of having their knowledge assessed solely on the basis of their own efforts. Pedagogically, this develops students' responsibility for independent learning and a sense of protection from subjectivity in assessment.

b) Educational significance of the anti-plagiarism system: Mandatory anti-plagiarism checks of all independent assignments, course projects, and dissertations develop students' culture of respect for intellectual property. Students are made aware that stealing another person's work constitutes academic corruption.

c) Anonymous feedback and compliance bots: Digital channels (Telegram bots and the "Trust Box" portal) are developed to enable students to contact the higher education institution's compliance service directly while maintaining confidentiality. This helps students overcome indifference and apathy and develops a culture of standing against injustice.

The formation of anti-corruption immunity should not be limited to a separately designated lesson. "Professional Ethics and Anti-Corruption" modules should be incorporated into the curricula of all humanities and specialized subjects. A future teacher should master pedagogical ethics, a future lawyer the rule of law, and a future economist financial transparency as professional duties. In order to create a healthy public opinion within the higher education environment, an Academic Integrity Charter is adopted among students. With the participation of student leaders, "Young Compliance Auditors" clubs are established, through which flash mobs, intellectual quiz competitions, and social video contests are regularly organized. This transforms the fight against corruption from a formal activity into a student movement.

The following Table 2 presents a comparative analysis of traditional teaching methods and the proposed innovative pedagogical mechanisms.

Comparison criteria	Traditional pedagogical approach	Innovative pedagogical mechanism
Main purpose of	Memorizing legal	Developing personal

Comparison criteria	Traditional pedagogical approach	Innovative pedagogical mechanism
education	provisions and prohibitions; providing factual information.	immunity, values, and the ability to resist in real-life situations.
Methodological basis and forms	Monologic lectures, formal meetings, authoritarian directives.	Case study, Moot Court (court simulation), dilemma analysis, free discussion.
Role of digital tools	Limited to formal reporting and registration.	HEMIS transparency, anti-plagiarism, anonymous compliance bots, digital monitoring.
Student's role in class	Passive listener, an object that simply receives information.	Active researcher, a subject who defends his or her viewpoint and restores justice.
Assessment and control criteria	Tests and control assignments based on memorized legal norms.	Behavior in practical situations, integrity index, and quality of independent conclusions.

The levels of formation of students' anti-corruption immunity were assessed according to three levels using a previously developed diagnostic methodology (comprehensive situational tests, the quality of solving case-based situations, and questionnaires on axiological orientation):

1. High level (Stable-active): The student has complete and deep knowledge of corruption; has made honesty and justice personal convictions; firmly rejects any unlawful pressure; and takes an active civic position toward corruption-related situations.

2. Medium level (Situational-adaptive): The student has legal knowledge and considers corruption negative, but may hesitate under a real conflict of interests or serious pressure and may demonstrate indifference or compromise.

3. Low level (Passive-indifferent): The student's legal knowledge is uncertain, corruption is perceived as a "quick and easy way to solve problems," and academic plagiarism and falsification are not considered serious misconduct.

The table data demonstrate that the innovative mechanisms applied in the experimental group produced a significant positive shift. In the experimental group, the proportion of students at the high level increased from 19.2 percent to 54.2 percent (an absolute increase of +35.0%). Most importantly, the proportion of students at the low level who were passive and indifferent toward corruption sharply decreased from 33.3 percent to 7.5 percent (-25.8%).

Based on the findings of the research and experimental work, the following practical recommendations are proposed to improve the effectiveness of developing anti-corruption immunity in the higher education system:

1. Introduce a new practical module into curricula: Include a special practical integrative elective course (or relevant educational modules) entitled "Academic Integrity and Anti-Corruption Compliance Culture" in the curricula of all undergraduate programs at higher education institutions and teach it exclusively in the form of interactive seminars and trainings.

2. Deepen the transparency of independent assessment on the HEMIS platform: Fully implement a mechanism whereby student work in interim and final assessments

is checked anonymously by independent assessors or computer systems, thereby minimizing the human factor.

3. Enrich tutoring activities with interactive cases: Abandon formal meeting-oriented practices during mentoring and tutoring hours and organize discussions of real-life and student-related problems at least once a month under the heading "Monthly Anti-Corruption Case."

4. Support students' independent compliance monitoring: Establish student public councils under the compliance-control departments of higher education institutions and provide special incentives for students who demonstrate intolerance toward violations of the Academic Integrity Code and achieve excellent academic results.

5. Apply the anti-plagiarism system at all stages: Make anti-plagiarism examination mandatory not only for master's and doctoral dissertations but also for all course papers and independent assignments, and publicly announce the results.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, developing anti-corruption immunity among higher education students is not simply a matter of transmitting legal knowledge, but a multifaceted pedagogical process that changes an individual's worldview, value system, and everyday behavior.

The research results demonstrated that innovative pedagogical mechanisms based on activity-based, axiological, and compliance approaches (situational cases, court simulations, ethical dilemma analysis, HEMIS, and digital compliance tools) are several times more effective than traditional methods in overcoming students' indifference toward corruption and developing strong internal resistance and civic responsibility.

The proposed conceptual model and practical mechanisms contribute to improving the quality of education in the higher education system, effectively

implementing the "Corruption-Free Sector" project, and preparing competitive professionals for the development of New Uzbekistan who possess integrity, professionalism, and a strong civic position.

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