

Research Article

The Effectiveness of Problem-Based Learning Strategies and Integrity Values in Anti-Corruption Education in Higher Education

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Abstract

This study explores the effectiveness of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) strategies and the integration of integrity values in anti-corruption education within higher education institutions. The primary objective is to assess how these pedagogical approaches contribute to the development of ethical awareness and anti-corruption attitudes among university students. By utilizing a qualitative literature review method, this research synthesizes existing studies, articles, and academic papers that examine the intersection of PBL and integrity in anti-corruption education. PBL, with its emphasis on real-world problem-solving and active student engagement, is shown to promote critical thinking and ethical decision-making, which are crucial in understanding and combating corruption. The incorporation of integrity values within the curriculum further strengthens students' commitment to ethical behavior and social responsibility. Findings suggest that PBL not only enhances learning outcomes but also instills a deeper understanding of the importance of integrity in the fight against corruption. Moreover, the study identifies key factors that influence the effectiveness of these strategies, including faculty training, student participation, and institutional support. This paper concludes with recommendations for higher education institutions to implement PBL strategies and embed integrity values to foster a generation of students equipped to challenge corruption in their professional and personal lives.

Keywords: Problem-Based Learning, Integrity Values, Anti-Corruption Education



INTRODUCTION

In the face of growing concerns over corruption at both governmental and institutional levels, the need for comprehensive anti-corruption education has never been more urgent. Higher education institutions play a crucial role in shaping the moral and ethical framework of future leaders, policymakers, and citizens (Brigue & Orlu, 2023). One of the most effective ways to address corruption and foster a culture of integrity among students is through the integration of anti-corruption education within the curriculum. As educational systems seek innovative methods to enhance learning outcomes, Problem-Based Learning (PBL) has emerged as a promising pedagogical strategy (Ruben et al., 2023).

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is a student-centered approach that encourages active learning through real-world problems and scenarios. This teaching method not only enhances students' problem-solving skills but also fosters critical thinking, collaboration, and self-directed learning (Prihatin & Nugraha, 2025). In the context of anti-corruption education, PBL can provide a platform for students to engage with complex ethical dilemmas and understand the multifaceted nature of corruption. By working through real-world cases, students are better equipped to recognize and address corruption in their professional and personal lives.

In addition to PBL, the incorporation of integrity values is central to the fight against corruption. Integrity—characterized by honesty, ethical behavior, and a commitment to justice—forms the bedrock of any anti-corruption initiative. By instilling these values in students at the higher education level, institutions can ensure that future professionals will not only recognize corrupt practices but also act with integrity to combat them (Balontia, 2024). In this regard, anti-corruption education must transcend theoretical knowledge and emphasize the cultivation of personal and institutional ethical standards.

This study seeks to explore the effectiveness of combining Problem-Based Learning strategies with integrity values in anti-corruption education at the higher education level. It examines how this dual approach can enhance students' understanding of corruption, improve their decision-making processes, and ultimately contribute to a culture of integrity within society (Abdulai et al., 2025). By evaluating the outcomes of such educational interventions, this research aims to provide insights into the potential of PBL as a tool for promoting anti-corruption education and fostering long-lasting ethical principles among students.

In the subsequent sections, we will review the existing literature on PBL and anti-corruption education, discuss the role of integrity in shaping ethical behavior, and present the research methodology used to assess the effectiveness of this combined approach (Brigue & Orlu, 2023). Through this exploration, we hope to contribute valuable knowledge to the ongoing discourse on how higher education can best equip students to fight corruption and uphold ethical standards in their professional careers.

METHOD

This section introduces the topic, outlining the importance of anti-corruption

education, particularly within higher education settings. The focus of the study will be on two key aspects: Problem-Based Learning (PBL) strategies and the role of integrity values in fostering an ethical educational environment (Ughulu, 2024). The review will explore existing literature on both elements, examining how they can contribute to effectively combating corruption among university students.

Research Design

The research design for this study will be a qualitative approach, using a comprehensive literature review as the primary method. This review will analyze and synthesize existing research on Problem-Based Learning (PBL) strategies, integrity values in education, and anti-corruption education in higher education institutions (Anggraini & Rahmadi, 2021). The goal is to draw insights from previous studies to understand the effectiveness of these educational strategies in promoting integrity and reducing corruption.

Data Collection

The data for this study will be collected through an extensive search of peer-reviewed journal articles, books, conference proceedings, government reports, and other credible academic publications. The following criteria will be applied when selecting sources:

Inclusion Criteria:

1. Studies published within the last 10 years to ensure the relevancy and currency of the research.
2. Research that focuses on PBL strategies, integrity education, or anti-corruption initiatives in higher education contexts.
3. Studies from both developed and developing countries to offer a broad perspective on the topic.

Exclusion Criteria:

1. Non-academic sources such as news articles, blogs, or opinion pieces.
2. Studies that do not focus on higher education settings or those not directly related to PBL or integrity education.

4. Literature Review Framework

To analyze the effectiveness of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) strategies and integrity values, the literature review will be structured around the following key themes:

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in Higher Education:

1. Define PBL and its application in higher education.
2. Explore the theoretical foundations of PBL (e.g., constructivism, experiential learning).
3. Analyze studies that discuss how PBL has been implemented in various disciplines and its impact on student learning outcomes.
4. Identify how PBL fosters critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving skills, which are essential for combating corruption.

Integrity Values in Education:

1. Discuss the concept of integrity and its importance in academic and professional settings.
2. Examine how integrity education is integrated into curricula and how it is delivered through teaching methods and institutional policies.
3. Review literature on the impact of integrity education in shaping students' ethical decision-making processes.
4. Assess how integrity values are taught alongside anti-corruption education in universities.

Anti-Corruption Education in Higher Education:

1. Investigate the role of higher education in fostering an anti-corruption culture.
2. Explore the effectiveness of various anti-corruption education programs, including PBL, in reducing corrupt behavior among students.
3. Analyze case studies and program evaluations that assess the success of these initiatives in different educational systems.

Data Analysis

The analysis will follow a thematic approach. Key findings from each article will be summarized, and recurring themes related to PBL strategies and integrity education will be identified (Angelia et al., 2022). The analysis will focus on the following:

1. The relationship between PBL strategies and the development of ethical decision-making skills in students.
2. How integrity education influences student attitudes towards corruption and their readiness to act against it.
3. The synergies between PBL and integrity education in fostering a deeper understanding of corruption issues among students.
4. The synthesis will involve comparing the findings across different studies and evaluating the overall effectiveness of these methods in promoting anti-corruption behaviors.

Expected Outcomes

The qualitative analysis aims to reveal the potential of Problem-Based Learning strategies to enhance anti-corruption education in higher education settings. Furthermore, the review will highlight the importance of integrating integrity values into curricula to cultivate a generation of students who are equipped to resist and challenge corruption. It is anticipated that the findings will offer insights into the best practices for implementing PBL and integrity education in higher education to create a more ethical academic environment.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) strategies in anti-corruption education at higher education institutions has shown significant effectiveness in fostering critical thinking and active learning among students. PBL

encourages students to engage directly with real-world problems, enhancing their ability to analyze complex situations and propose ethical solutions (Sumaryati et al., 2022). By presenting corruption-related case studies, students are not only able to understand the nuances of corruption but also actively participate in solving these issues, which enhances their understanding of ethical decision-making processes.

Furthermore, integrating integrity values into the curriculum alongside PBL promotes a deeper understanding of moral responsibility and the importance of ethical behavior in both academic and professional settings (Sakban, Budimansyah, & Darmawan, 2025). This combination has been found to be effective in shaping students' attitudes, ensuring they internalize the values of honesty, transparency, and accountability. The focus on integrity within a problem-solving context helps students recognize the consequences of corruption and empowers them to act with integrity in their future careers.

The results suggest that the interactive nature of PBL, when paired with the emphasis on integrity, creates a powerful learning environment that not only equips students with the knowledge needed to tackle corruption but also strengthens their moral foundations. Moreover, students exhibit a higher level of engagement and retention when they see the direct relevance of their learning to real-world challenges. Therefore, the integration of PBL strategies and integrity values plays a crucial role in promoting anti-corruption education in higher education, shaping future leaders who are equipped with both practical skills and ethical frameworks to combat corruption effectively.

Table specifically on integrating integrity values with Problem-Based Learning (PBL) for anti-corruption education in higher education:

Aspect	Specific Description	Benefits for Students	Expected Outcomes
Integration of Integrity Values	Embedding values of honesty, transparency, and accountability within each problem-based learning module.	Students develop a clear understanding of moral responsibility and ethical behavior in academic and professional contexts.	Internalization of integrity values that lead to ethical decision-making.
Problem-Based Learning (PBL)	Using real-world corruption case studies as contexts for problem-solving to stimulate critical thinking.	Enhances analytical skills, problem-solving abilities, and real-life application.	Improved practical skills and a deeper understanding of corruption consequences.
Combining PBL and Integrity Values	Incorporating ethical discussions during PBL processes to connect solutions with moral implications.	Helps students relate theory to practice and understand the moral impact of corruption.	Development of proactive and responsible attitudes toward corruption.

Aspect	Specific Description	Benefits for Students	Expected Outcomes
Interactive Learning Environment	Active interaction between students and instructors through discussions and moral reflections.	Increases student engagement and retention due to the relevance of learning to real-world challenges.	Higher motivation to learn and stronger commitment to integrity values.
Holistic Anti-Corruption Education	Integrating ethics and PBL not only enhances knowledge but also builds a strong moral foundation.	Shapes future leaders equipped with both ethical frameworks and practical skills.	Graduates who are capable and committed to effectively combating corruption.

The issue of corruption remains one of the most significant barriers to development across the world. It undermines public trust, hampers social and economic progress, and erodes democratic institutions. To combat corruption, it is crucial to foster values of integrity and ethical conduct from an early stage. Higher education institutions play a key role in instilling these values and promoting anti-corruption education among students. One of the promising pedagogical strategies to achieve this goal is Problem-Based Learning (PBL). This discussion focuses on the effectiveness of PBL strategies and the integration of integrity values in anti-corruption education in higher education.

The Role of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in Anti-Corruption Education

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is a student-centered teaching method that involves the use of real-world problems to stimulate learning (Ulum et al., 2025). In PBL, students work collaboratively to solve complex, open-ended problems, which encourages critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and collaborative learning. When applied to anti-corruption education, PBL can be a highly effective strategy for promoting deeper understanding and engagement with ethical issues.

In traditional education systems, the focus tends to be on the delivery of theoretical knowledge, often detached from real-world application. This can result in students possessing a theoretical understanding of corruption but struggling to apply anti-corruption principles in practical scenarios. PBL addresses this gap by presenting students with authentic problems that require them to engage with complex situations where ethical dilemmas related to corruption can be explored. For instance, students might be tasked with analyzing a case study of corporate corruption or government bribery and proposing solutions that are grounded in ethical principles and integrity.

Table on the contrast between traditional education and Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in teaching anti-corruption, emphasizing real-world application and ethical engagement:

Aspect	Traditional Education	Problem-Based Learning (PBL)	Benefits of PBL
Focus of Learning	Primarily theoretical knowledge delivery, often abstract and detached from real-life contexts.	Engagement with authentic, real-world problems involving corruption and ethical dilemmas.	Bridges theory and practice; enhances critical thinking.
Understanding of Corruption	Students may understand concepts of corruption in theory but struggle to apply anti-corruption principles practically.	Students analyze real cases (e.g., corporate corruption, government bribery) to explore ethical complexities.	Develops practical skills to identify and address corruption scenarios.
Approach to Ethical Issues	Limited to lectures or textbook examples, often lacking depth in ethical exploration.	Facilitates active discussion and critical reflection on moral issues embedded in problem scenarios.	Strengthens moral reasoning and ethical decision-making capabilities.
Student Engagement	Often passive learning, focused on memorization and recall.	Active participation through problem solving, collaboration, and real-time reflection.	Increases motivation, involvement, and retention of knowledge.
Skill Development	Emphasis on knowledge acquisition rather than application or problem-solving skills.	Encourages development of analytical, problem-solving, and ethical judgment skills.	Prepares students for real-world challenges with integrity and competence.

The key benefit of PBL in the context of anti-corruption education is that it provides students with the opportunity to confront real-world issues, reflect on their values, and engage in discussions that challenge their thinking. Through this method, students can develop a deeper, more nuanced understanding of corruption and its

impact, beyond mere theoretical knowledge.

Fostering Integrity Values in Higher Education

While PBL helps students build critical skills, the underlying values of integrity must be instilled in the educational process for anti-corruption efforts to be truly effective. Integrity is the foundation of any anti-corruption initiative, as it drives individuals to make ethical decisions even when faced with temptations or pressures to act otherwise. In higher education, cultivating integrity among students involves creating an environment where ethical behavior is not only taught but also practiced.

Incorporating integrity values into the curriculum can be achieved in various ways, such as through dedicated courses on ethics, guest lectures by professionals who have navigated ethical challenges, or by including integrity-related discussions in every aspect of the learning experience (Sakban, Budimansyah, Darmawan, et al., 2025). A key element in fostering integrity is the active involvement of faculty members, who must model ethical behavior in both their personal conduct and their approach to teaching. Faculty can also create opportunities for students to engage with integrity in the classroom, such as through role-playing exercises, case studies, and debates where students must argue from the perspective of ethical decision-making.

Furthermore, integrity should not be confined to a specific subject area but should be woven into the culture of the university. This can be done through academic integrity policies, honor codes, and fostering a climate of transparency and accountability in all university activities, from administration to student governance.

Integration of PBL and Integrity in Anti-Corruption Education

The integration of Problem-Based Learning with integrity values is particularly potent in anti-corruption education. When students engage in PBL activities that are focused on ethical issues, they are encouraged to examine their own values and make decisions based on integrity, even when faced with the complexities of real-world corruption. For example, in a PBL exercise, students might be asked to analyze a corrupt government system and propose reforms. In doing so, they will need to consider not just the technical aspects of the problem but also the ethical dimensions, such as the role of personal integrity in enacting change.

This approach allows students to see how integrity can be practically applied in professional and societal contexts, and it encourages them to understand that the fight against corruption is not just a matter of changing laws or policies but also of fostering a culture of ethical conduct. Through repeated exposure to these challenges, students learn to recognize ethical dilemmas, weigh different perspectives, and make informed decisions based on integrity.

Impact on Student Behavior and Future Leadership

By equipping students with problem-solving skills and a strong sense of integrity, PBL can influence their future behavior and leadership styles. As students become more adept at analyzing and solving problems with an ethical lens, they are more likely to carry these values into their future careers. This has the potential to create a ripple effect, where these students, as future leaders, professionals, and policymakers, are better equipped to challenge corruption and advocate for ethical practices in their respective fields.

Moreover, students who engage in PBL exercises focused on anti-corruption are

more likely to develop a sense of social responsibility and a commitment to public service. In many instances, these students will be prepared to confront corruption head-on, using their critical thinking and ethical decision-making skills to advocate for transparent, accountable, and ethical governance in their professional lives.

CONCLUSION

The combination of Problem-Based Learning strategies and the integration of integrity values in anti-corruption education is a powerful tool in shaping the ethical foundation of students in higher education. PBL offers students an interactive and practical approach to learning about complex issues such as corruption, fostering critical thinking and collaborative problem-solving skills. Meanwhile, the emphasis on integrity ensures that students not only understand the problem but are also committed to making ethical decisions in their future careers. Together, these elements can play a pivotal role in producing graduates who are not only well-versed in anti-corruption policies and practices but who also embody the values of integrity necessary to create a corruption-free society.

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