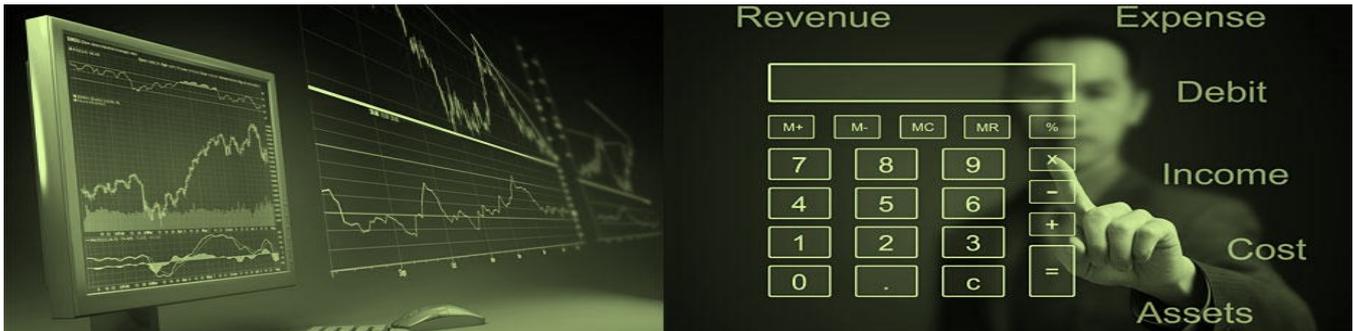


## IMPACT OF ETHICAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT IN FOSTERING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

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### INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions are always concerned with academic integrity and ethical standards to be maintained in campus. Institutions take special efforts to adhere to ethics and integrity policies despite which the issue of academic dishonesty especially electronic cheats is a rising concern in all higher education providers in Middle East. The objectives stated below would serve as a guide to the readers to follow the chapter in a harmonized pattern.

On review of this Chapter, the reader is expected to be able to;

- a. Identify the elements of academic dishonesty.
- b. Classify the components of dishonesty found in campuses.
- c. Demonstrate an understanding of different approaches to manage ethics and integrity in academics.
- d. Analyze why institutional efforts to curb dishonesty fails.
- e. Design a model of Ethical Learning Environment in alignment to the policies prevalent on dishonesty framed by the institution.
- f. Recommend steps institutions need to follow for successful implementation and sustain Ethical Learning Environments .

### ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Cheating is a form of wrong doing similar to unethical issues prevailing in business scenarios. Problems are never ending but a better way to tackle a problem is not allowing it to arise. As stated by Rawwas and Isakon (2000), cheating was positively related to opportunity to cheat than any other variables. Further, it is a necessity to identify the root cause of the problem rather than



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pondering over the problem itself .It is a matter of fact, the students fear from dishonesty norms and procedures and their response would normally include remarks of their peer students cheating and scoring high while those who do not cheat fall prey to grading bias. In this chapter, we would discuss about what is cheating and why cheating occurs. The chapter would also take you through an interesting yet soulful understanding on what ways students cheat and how perspective forms a factor in fostering academic integrity in campus.

**Academic Dishonesty- A Plague in Higher Education**

Academic integrity is still a novel term that needs to be researched. The frequency of academic dishonesty issues is on the rise and electronic cheats including plagiarism is a growing concern in almost all educational institutions. Every institution would have a cheating incident in its history, perhaps many. Yet what these universities have done to tackle or minimize incidents of cheating would be a matter worth study. McCabe, Trevino & Butterfield (2001), state from their studies that cheating has become a common act of fraud among college students. Cheating during examinations using printed materials, electronic gadgets and smart watches have been increasing since last two decades. Integrity is important in all areas of life especially in academics. Academic integrity involves a tie up with organization to share respect and responsibilities with each other. A positive relationship between the institution and students is a must to tackle the issue related to dishonesty. A major flaw found among the students is wrong understanding of what is ethical and what is non-ethical.

Academic freedom refers to the liberty of teaching and learning to pursue knowledge without any interruptions or restrictions. When academic freedom is mistaken to be a freedom to utilize any information without accountability, it leads to dishonesty.

Academic integrity requires research and efforts by academic stakeholders to bear accountability and follow a professional level of formulating and proceeding research with standards, design and a proper framework being developed by clearly establishing ethics.

Academic dishonesty includes any or all types of unethical activity including, cheating, dishonest conduct, plagiarism, collusion and more.

While the instructors and academic specialists work their best on minimizing the wrath of rising cases of dishonesty ,the minimal efforts taken to educate the students and nurture a culture that follows better integrity in academics pose as a potential threat to be addressed.

To add to the woes, technological proliferation into academics though they have eased learning and teaching has equally opened opportunities to cyber crimes and dishonesty issues where the responsibility to accredit knowledge utilized, is not followed leading to plagiarism.

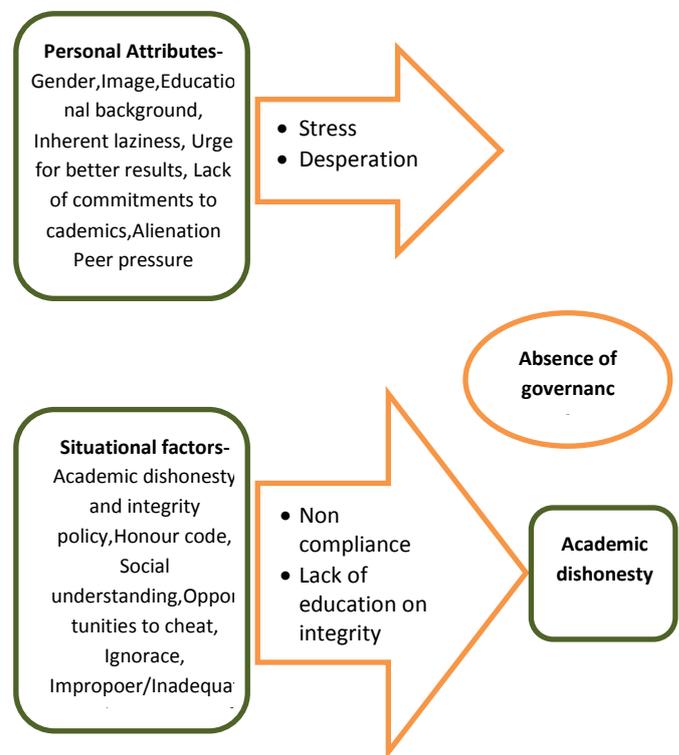
Research studies emphasize on the importance of nurturing integrity inside campus. De Russy (2003), in his study on academic integrity states “professional ethics begin on college campus”. Higher education colleges in the Middle East are vested with a serious responsibility of embedding culture of honesty and integrity along with qualitative teaching into their academic framework.

When the reported values of student population who cheat or attempt to cheat in colleges ranges from 9 percent to 95 percent, it is not hard to assess the presence of potential issues. This may be due to several factors ranging from gender, educational background, peer pressure, competitive pressure, misunderstanding of academic policies or even ignorance of existing policies. In further research, stress and competition have been identified as the two major causes that force students to cheat.

Researches have been carried out since decades to identify the main factors attributing to cheating tendency. The model in Fig.1 depicts possible factors that lead to dishonesty among students.

**Fig.1-Factors attributing to academic dishonesty**

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All the universities are aware of dishonesty issues that plague academic system and have one or the other system to monitor and treat academic dishonesty. But how much these policies bring impact is still questionable. An open and transparent system of academic integrity implementation is much a requirement in this grave hour.

Often the issue of dishonesty arises when the facts related to academic ethics is discussed at campuses with minimum or no clarity. Academic freedom is often misinterpreted by

students as a leniency to cheat. The usage of resources by the students and researchers which is an academic freedom can turn out to be dishonesty if used inappropriately in an assessment at class. This jeopardy puts the instructors in a melancholy state of balancing student misconduct to quality demands in the institutions.

### Components of Dishonesty Found in Campus

Cheating or dishonesty may take any form from simply copying a peer student's paper for submission to selling exam papers stolen from office or forging bogus transcripts. Some of the dishonesty components found in colleges include;

- a) Students copying from other students in exam
- b) Pretend illness to avoid tests
- c) Take an exam instead of others
- d) Purchase question papers or assignments and submit as one's own work
- e) Supporting peer students during exam using signals and chits
- f) Using print chits, electronic aids or answer support during exam
- g) Plagiarism
- h) Undue favor from instructors in return for bribes
- i) Forge or alter university documents

The above list is in-exhaustive and never ending. According to research conducted by Prof. Donald McCabe and the International Center for Academic Integrity, in the last 12 years, the percentage of students who admit cheating on tests is 39%. The percentage of students who cheat on written assignments is 62% and those who admit written or test cheating is 68% of undergraduate students. This is just undergraduates. When added to the number of graduates, the values are devastating.

Chapman & Lupton (2000), in their study found that from 443 American Business students, cheating self-reports included 66% of male students and 45% of female students.

It is a fact that adolescents find successful and creative methods to cheat on exams and class assignments. Bramucci (2003), explains in his study that it is a common technique of cheating where students during the exams place note books or sheets of paper containing answer cues on the floor or open bags on the floor containing materials of support. Some students even move around the hall in the pretext of taking water from dispenser or would go to the invigilators to clear doubts just to take a look at their peers' papers on their way back.

If there's an intention to cheat, the ways are millions. Rolling a chit with answers into the pen, carving equations on pen or pencil, writing notes on exam table or even writing and sticking answers on the labels of water bottles can be some of them to mention.

Students faking illness during exam take it as an effort to get hold of the questions delivered to prepare them better for a re-sit /missed exam. One of the common acts of dishonesty among college students in the Middle

East is writing on their arms and covering the notes with their long sleeves or even sticking notes on the lap and covering it (with the Abhaya worn by women). An extended effort takes the students to a level where even if they submit their electronic devices to the invigilators, a spare mobile phone is hidden in the pocket or on the seat to use them to cheat by viewing images or PowerPoint slides served as lecture notes. As said, with an intention to cheat, the methods are endless.

With the advent and heavy use of technology including smart phones, smart watches and ear phones, cheating is an easy step towards better grades. Technology used in cheating is not restricted to examination. Students gain access to a wide range of information including worked out assignments in one click including buying an essay to be submitted to class which to students prove to be a smart option though it violates codes of academic integrity.

### Ethics Implementation Approaches

As discussed earlier, cheating results due to stress and competition and the best way to tackle stress is fight or flight. When educational institutions oath to provide quality education, they are in no way willing to fear issues on dishonesty and leave education arena. They would fight with all might to gain and maintain academic ethics and integrity.

Williams (2001), in his study affirms that academic dishonesty prevention process starts with an approach to ensure each one of the students understands and are able to define academic dishonesty in the same way. Instructors are the main source for prevention of dishonesty in academics. They own some influence over the students they handle in class and would be perhaps the best communicators for academic policies on dishonesty. They should be the first to communicate with the students about ethics and integrity on the first day of a semester.

All the universities try their best to combat the dishonesty issues through prevention and intervention measures which seldom give quality results. A study conducted among universities in the Middle East reveals the existence of policies on academic dishonesty in every institution but the reach of these policies is often limited to the printed booklets given as handout to the students.

Limiting the class size to a manageable number say 15-20 students a class, is also a common strategy followed apart from shuffling students, seating mix ups and routine change in assignments to combat ethical fallacies in class. It needs much experience to understand cheating and plagiarism has formed a normal incident in student maturation and learning process and it keeps re-occurring every semester. Instead of working on stopping cheating or punishing students for dishonesty, universities need to take time to understand how students can be prevented from cheating or how the urge to cheat can be obliterated from students' mind.

Students are given awareness on academic dishonesty and integrity in classes and through seminars. Research studies reveal that confusion on the distinction between what is ethical and non-ethical is prevalent among students and when it comes to universities; there still lies an unclear thread whether cheating is to be treated as a disciplinary misconduct or academic misconduct. Clarity in this issue is definitely worth a study.

Honour codes in institutions allow students to make an integrity contract where any violations are reported for a penalty. In the presence of honour codes, some institutions do follow an unproctored examination system which works well with military and small schools of education due to shared allegiance to institution and values. According to McCabe, it has been found that institutions following honour codes have the lowest rate of cheating cases. He also found that the honour code system had a warm welcome among the faculty to implement better effective measures to the offenders. Since then, there has been a rise in the number of universities and higher education systems using the honour code as a way to minimize and combat cheating in campus.

Another way used to curb dishonesty is by communicating the consequences of dishonesty. Including a short paragraph on penalties following academic dishonesty and plagiarism is one of the approaches being followed by universities expecting it would provide an early warning to the students with a tendency to cheat. Contracts to abide by the policy taken by instructors in class and punishments being given based on the offense by the students are some common actions taken by universities in Middle East.

Instructors need to be encouraged to deliver different sets of questions in exams and assignments to prevent students from cheating. Mixing up the student places during tests, jamming electronic gadgets in class are other quick fixes to avoid cheating.

### **Role of Environment, Ethics and Perspective in Building Ethical Learning Environment**

Ethics is often referred to as standards of behavior that enable us to judge what is right or wrong. Ethics provides individuals with a systematic and rational way to resolve dilemmas by choosing the best course of action to be opted. So, can the approach towards ethics be generalized? Well, the answer would be negative. Researches in past decades have listed prominent factors that affect integrity in a higher education.

Gender is one of the noted factors related to research on academic integrity. It has been studied that female students are identified to be better in understanding and interpreting academic integrity policy statements and following them in comparison to male students. Research reports of more than half a century studies have revealed male students have more favorable attitudes towards cheating when compared to female students.

Environment plays a vital role in paving the personality and character of a student. Students are seen to respond

positively to instructors who are respectable and who respect them. Anderman et al., (2010), denote the students having a stronger connection to their teachers, if the instructors are experts in the subject they handle and when the instructors portray their effectiveness in campus development and student progress. When this attachment grows stronger, the propensity to cheat declines.

The level of commitment an instructor maintains towards the holistic development of a student and the command over student life in campus is a major factor to embed qualities of ethics and integrity in campuses.

Communication is yet another powerful tool to create among the students an awareness of ethical learning. There need to be a clear understanding on what academic integrity is and what causes the violation of codes of conduct. It is evident that institutions work towards creating awareness about academic integrity in campuses. Yet, it has also been confirmed by researches that it is often common in universities for faculties and instructors to bypass university policy and handle cheating incidents on individual basis. This arises due to misconception, ignorance and reluctance of faculty members or invigilators on how to understand and implement policies due to;

- a) Improper or inadequate knowledge about academic integrity and dishonesty related policies
- b) Lack of evidencing to prove cheating by student
- c) Reverse litigations of instructor or invigilator being biased to students during examination
- d) Fear of hurting reputation and career image of students
- e) Anxiety related to student response to the allegation

Following the individual treatment of dishonesty makes the institutional policies ineffective as there exists a parallel procedure of treatment that gives leniency on cheating related issues in campus.

Studies also indicate that students perceive academic dishonesty differently. Wrong or misunderstanding of academic integrity aspects is an inseparable issue when institutions in Middle East is focused.

Firstly, it needs to be understood and accepted that ethics often is the result of one's perspective over the act of decision making. Each one has his own say on what is right and wrong. This distinction would also have a bearing on ethics related to academic integrity.

Secondly, what is the basis that helps one decide on whether an act is ethical or not? And could the standards of ethics so set, be applied to all situations faced in an academic scenario?

Each college or university respond to academic dishonesty in different way. Though the ways to respond may differ, the reflex that triggers action is mostly negative. The impact of fostering ethics in academics will bring in much impact if the effort to punish students for cheating is replaced by educational efforts in campus to generate an awareness of academic integrity and ethical culture. This could leverage the instances of cheating and fraud.

Different people have different moral perspectives and they tend to have wide options to deal with morality issues based on these set of perspectives. It is important to closely follow ethics in academics for any university to be successful, healthy and high performing. To foster ethical culture in an organization, it needs to be fair in its internal administration for establishing justice. This step is achieved by attending and managing grievances and dispute resolution efficiency. The policy used by the organization, here academic, need to be followed and rightly implemented thus, forming a benchmark in the industry. The visionaries and leaders must be competent enough to motivate ethical work style among employees. Ethical conduct in academic knowledge sharing process need to be treated as a measure for promotions and career advancement to promote ethics in all areas of academic life. Ethics in academic institutions should be an inseparable part of the vision and mission of the institution. Academic institutions need to directly connect ethical awareness and ethical conduct with its reputation by emphasizing communication of ethical behavior in campus transparently. Academic ethics forms the basis of academic integrity. The core values of academic integrity including honesty, trust, fairness, respect and duty is the base of any Ethical Learning System. Academic integrity plays a vital role in an organization where in its absence, academic discourse becomes mere impossibility, learning becomes distorted, assessments become unjust and biased and integrity is seriously compromised. Academic integrity becomes important when it is required to

- a) Defend and protect academic credibility and reputation of the institution/ university.
- b) Ensure students receive due credit for their efforts.
- c) Advise students the role of academic integrity and guiding them with best practices.

The above aspect to ensure integrity in campus takes the responsibility towards establishment of fostering Ethical Learning Environment in academic institutions.

**A Framework for Ethical Learning Environment**

Prevention is always better than cure. Institutions need to work on prevention of academic dishonesty rather than dealing cases of cheats and plagiarism in campus. For academic dishonesty to be minimized through standard procedures, the following stages needs to be adopted by universities;

- a) Investigate the possible gaps between the policy framed by the institution and practices on academic ethics.
- b) Identify the possible inconsistencies in implementation of integrity policy of the institution
- c) Provide exemplars of practice that can be aligned to the policy and put it to action
- d) Statement of penalties to be followed on breach of the integrity policy of the institution
- e) Launch the Ethical Learning Environment to monitor the academic integrity in the institution.

It is worth studying in detail what these stages are and how they can be practically implemented.

**Stage 1: Investigate the possible gaps between the policy and practices on academic ethics**

All universities develop policies which form public statements of their response to any reported issues of academic dishonesty and to uphold integrity. With these policies, the universities explain their definition of acts of dishonesty and how the cases of violation are treated if reported. This effort is expected to minimize the occurrence of unethical acts. The issue arises when these policies and penalties are not standardized across universities. When a policy is implemented and a student is charged, the first comment of response is that the rule is not prevalent in other institutions they why here? For students, inconsistency of standards creates a fear of being arbitrary in treatment or even subject to unjustifiable punishment.

As Figure 2 illustrates academic institutions need to maintain a culture of academic integrity around which the policies, procedures and implementation need to be formulated. Extending the research model by East (2009), the following model can be utilized to eliminate the gap between policies and procedures which forms the first step to align policies with culture of academic integrity in campuses.

**Fig. 2-Cultural Integrity implementation model**



**Stage 2: Identify the possible inconsistencies in implementation of integrity policy**

Policies developed by institutions on academic dishonesty and academic integrity need to be properly communicated to the stakeholders, involving management, academic staff, students and the society without which the purpose of framing policies remain unserved. Centre for Academic Integrity in their statement of ten principles of Academic integrity for faculty emphasize on certain principles to be followed by faculty members apart from students to enhance the ethical environment. Academic integrity in faculty can be encouraged through proper training and engagement of faculty members in

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- a) Preventing opportunities that may trigger acts of dishonesty.
- b) Encouraging environment of trust and respect in the campus.
- c) Challenging academic dishonesty acts when they arise.
- d) Creating awareness among student community on ethical culture in campus.

**Stage 3: Provide exemplars of practice that can be aligned to the policy**

Proper education on academic integrity must be ensured for impactful culture of ethics to prevail in any organization. Seminars and workshops on ethics and academic integrity should be a part of the curriculum every semester. Though it may call for repetition of facts, it is evident the more we get exposed to a fact, the more we retain them in memory. The effort will in time lead to state where students would erase the instinct of cheating from their subconscious mind as each time they are provoked, the ethical learning gained stops them from doing the act. Adding a short paragraph of the policy in all course outlines and discussing the policy in class at the beginning of every semester will help reinforce the policy. Again, it is the responsibility of faculty members to urge the students to learn ethically.

Students are major change agents in academic institutions. Students tend to responds to peers more than to instructors. Hence, students need to be vested with the responsibility of creating and maintaining a culture of ethics in campus. An integrity committee comprising of students and faculty members can create an impactful change in academic dishonesties occurring in the campus.

Often it is more convenient to throw the blame of not being ethical on faculty members or students. The truth rests in the fact that a proper guide to ethical understanding and performance is often absent in universities.

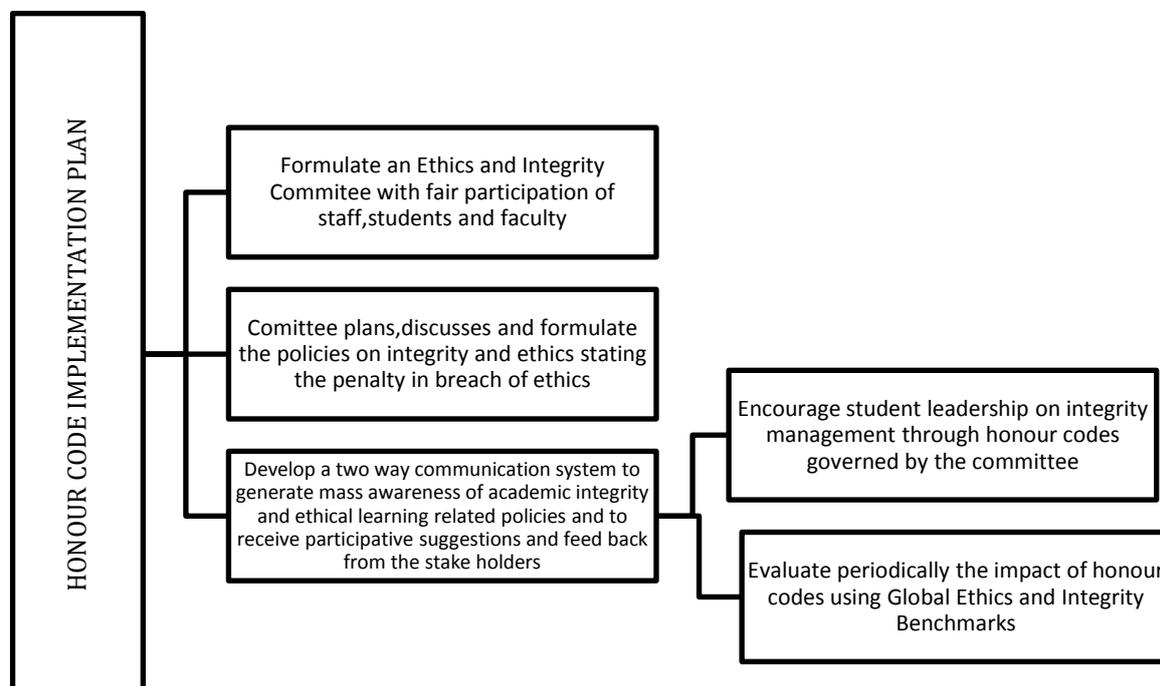
Donald McCabe and Linda Trevino in their years of study on cheating in campuses have concluded their study with a finding that traditional academic honour codes have a large impact on cheating and affirm that the honour codes are one of the effective ways still that could help build an ethically cultured campus with academic integrity.

In the Middle East universities following an honour code system is minimum. Many of the faculty members are unaware of the fact whether their institution follows an honour code. The honour code is not a one-time statement. It needs to be reviewed as evenly as the policies of the university.

Honour codes are promises made by students to be ethical during their entire learning life in campus and this promise is controlled by penalties that the student need to face in case of breach of the honour code which they have accepted to follow.

Honour codes are strong traditional academic codes that include provisions for unproctored exams, student faculty commitment to ethical learning process, strong role of students and employees in ethical policy formulation and implementation and better student awareness on non-tolerance of breach of ethics and integrity in campus. The following flow chart provides an extension of honour code implementation design by McCabe.

**Fig.3- Honour Code Implementation Plan**



The above plan for implementation of honour code lays down a simple yet effective implementation system that can be adopted in any academic framework in alignment with academic and institutional effectiveness policies. The Global Ethics and Integrity Benchmarks (2015) , is a well set out ethics assessment and benchmarking system which can be utilized to maintain the quality of integrity at par with international standards. The assessments as set in standards need to cover the following parameters;

- I. Foundation ethics –Covers vision, leadership, ethics in resources and legal compliance
- II. Ethics culture-Covers organizational culture, disciplinary and reward measures, ethics communication and ethics training system.
- III. Ethical risk management-Covers risk assessment, whistle-blowing ,conflicts of interest, transparency and corruption

Assessments are mandatory to make sure the Ethical Learning Environment works in order and quality in the campus.

**Stage 4: Statement of penalties to be followed on breach of the integrity**

As a part of conducting Ethics Training and Education, organizations need to follow the following steps.

- a) Provide well-designed ethics training to all employees in the organization including the board of governance with stipulated ethics training hours to be completed annually on ethics and implementation of ethics.
- b) Evaluate the Ethical Environment periodically to check for efficiency in transforming and maintaining an institution into an Ethical Learning Environment.
- c) Reward employees portraying outstanding ethical standards which in turn would motivate all to perform ethically efficient.
- d) Work in alliance with global ethical forums and systems to encourage research and implementation of internationally valued ethical standards in campus.

Making Ethical Learning Environments involves academic stakeholders being trained for sensitivity to ethical issues and a well worked out plan for exploring and investigating ethical aspects. A well planned procedure to assess ethical issue when practiced regularly turns into a norm in time which strengthens the ethical learning system. A framework for ethical decision making need to be implemented to enhance the quality of ethical learning environment. The following framework can enable implementation of ethical decision making.

**Table 2. Framework for Ethical Decision Making**

|                      | Expected outcomes  | Expected responsibility  | Expected quality  |
|----------------------|--|--|---|
| Investigating issues | What are the expected outcomes out of the investigation?   | Who is responsible for the investigation process?  | What are the expected character traits of the investigator?   |
| Penalties            | What is the outcome from the penalty imposed?  | What are the steps involved and who is responsible for imposing penalty?   | Would the penalties lead to a better awareness among academic population?                                       |
| Awareness            | Will the ethical decision making as a process be successful in creating better awareness of academic ethics in campus? | What effective forms of awareness can be utilized for creation of a culture of academic integrity and who would helm the initiation of awareness programmes? | Will the responsibilities handled by the decision making experts reflect a better academic integrity in campus? |

In most of the cases, the above framework can successfully work as an action plan and/or as an ethical environment assessment tool to study the impact of Ethical Learning Environment in a campus.

Steps to apply the above framework to cases in campus involves,

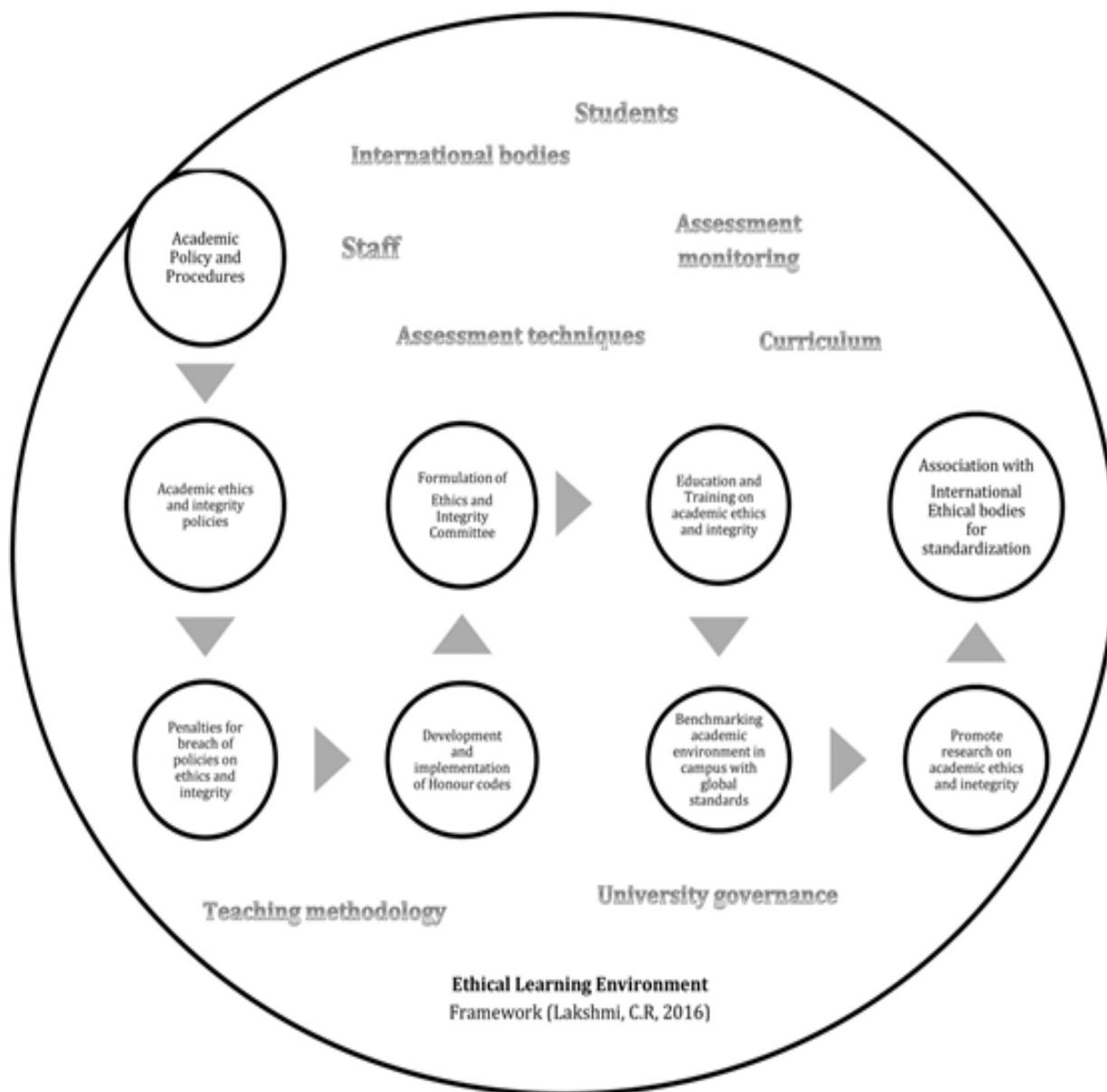
- a) Thorough and in depth analysis of ethical breach recognized in campus.
- b) Consider the parties involved in decision making process.
- c) Assess the penalties for different forms of dishonesty with levels of intensity to be considered.
- d) Gather relevant information on cases received and formulate possible actions that could be taken from investigation to decision on a reported cheat.
- e) Make a decision and implement it.
- f) Evaluate the impact of decision making process.

Once the penalties are decided and the honour codes are generated the entire institution is bound to Ethical Learning System. Academic integrity in an institution is a state where ethics is understood in the same way by all without any differences may it be even perception or culture and where the state of ethics is followed by all. To make sure academic integrity is honoured and charted well, an Ethical Learning Environment is required.

**Stage 5: Launch the Ethical Learning Environment to monitor the academic integrity**

The framework for Ethical Learning Environment with its five stage implementation progress makes sure the ethical culture is being fostered from the foundation of the institution starting from SMART-Specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound goals and objectives be formulated as policies for governing academic ethics and integrity. The Ethical Learning Environment itself encompasses a universe of stakeholders who play vital role in planning, designing and implementing ethics and integrity within a campus. Fig4. would be able to generate a better awareness on the Ethical Learning Environment.

**Fig.4-Ethical Learning Environment (2016)**



The Ethical Learning Environment goes ineffective without proper governance including the academic staff, management and students who play a vital role in the environment where they are themselves the formulators and acceptors working towards ethical culture in the institution.

The policies and procedures pertaining to academic integrity also need to be skillfully designed to leave no loop holes to dishonesty of any form to enter the academic environment. The policies need to clearly state the different forms of dishonesty along with their definitions to ensure there is uniformity in the level of dishonesty related understanding among the stakeholders. For effective working of the policies, penalties related to breach of policy must be clearly stated with the levels of offense and the punishments related to each offense.

Students and academic members need to be united in formulation of honour codes through formulation of Ethics and Integrity Committee. Though Ethics and integrity policies are prevalent, there need to be a simpler mode of implementation and that would be through honour codes. The honour codes adhere to the cores aspects of the integrity and dishonesty policy being practically followed by the student and staff rather than the whole policy being tried to be studied by the heart. These honour codes reflect the principle that teaching is an equal form of ethical undertaking.

Combining ethics and learning is a requirement for successful Ethical Learning Environment. Ethics in teaching and learning includes, competence in content of study, pedagogical competence, confidentiality development of students intellectually, unbiased student assessments, respect for students, respect for colleagues and respect for the institution.

Decades of study suggest that honour codes can minimize academic dishonesty by constantly generating awareness that ethical behavior in campus is expected from them. The mission of Higher education should be to foster holistic development of students and this can be achieved only if the development flows through an ethical process. The educators need to develop ethical standards in students that would support ethical decision making in their future lives as well.

Ethical Learning and awareness can be promoted in campuses in many ways. Apart from policies and procedures of ethics being introduced to the students at the beginning of each semester, the institution may include seminars, workshops and paper presentations on topics of academic integrity and role of ethics being discussed. This in turn will encourage more research and understanding in the field of ethics in academics. Debates and Case studies can be included into the curriculum to create more discussion and in depth study on integrity thus making the learning process an awareness step on ethics in campus.

It is the responsibility of the instructors to build an environment of ethical commitment. For this, the institutions may find ways to enhance opportunities for engaging students actively in academic integrity based experimental learning processes that expose them to real life ethical issues. The curriculum need to be redesigned in a way that the students get a chance to understand the ethical implications in business and management scenarios making them more vigilant in assessing 'what is right and what is not right'. Engagement of students in national and international ethical initiatives such as combined projects on ethics and projects on integrity with international universities can bring in diversified views, forming a way for better learning and understanding of ethics and treatment of ethics worldwide.

The academic institutions need to realize that assumptions of students entering the campus with ethical background is very rare and it is more a necessity that institutions provide some form of orientation on what student life in

campus will be like, what are the dos and don'ts in the campus. Though all orientations cover the aspect of dishonesty, the fact is that dishonesty as perceived by student is cheating by looking at peer's paper whereas dishonesty includes much more with highlight on plagiarism in assessments.

Ego and drive for self- development is a reason for academic dishonesty. The demand of students who cash on getting fake certificates and credentials is on the rise creating a lobby of technology experts who generate fake credentials of any or all Universities around the world. These fake credentials are used to get into better job opportunities, avail financial support from banks and credit outlets .Hence, the demand for such fake documents have increased in years. Technical expertise in the duplication and reproduction of these credentials have led to the birth of 'diploma mills' who produce with much ease university or any documents with flawless precision and quality to the extent it is difficult to identify them to be fake. In Israel, one such instance has been attributed to the institutional policy where government workers were eligible to automatic wage increase with academic progression. This urge has led to a fast growth of a forgery scandal.

Ambiguity and lack of clarity to what constitutes academic fraud has added to the plight. Techniques to overdo plagiarism trackers have also been invented by students. Hence, it is evident that the intentions to cheat or be unethical need to be wiped to sustain an environment of ethical learning in academic institutions. Academic awareness is the only way to get this objective achieved. With awareness of ethical standards, benchmarking the academic standards to international standards adds to the strength of academic integrity systems. For the ethical Learning Environment to be efficient and effective benchmarking the ethical standards followed by the institution to worldwide standards is important. The Global Benchmarks for Ethics introduces key performance indicators (KPIs) to be measured. The so measured KPIs are then compared to the international averages to assess the institutional effectiveness of integrity and ethics in campus.

Faculty members, students and academic staff need to be encouraged to organize and attend international conferences on academic integrity and ethics management to learn, realize and share knowledge about academic ethics and integrity with others in campus. This helps in turn to develop a culture of ethical research.

When it comes to integrity and ethics in academics the context is definitely interpreted by academic staff and students. Hence, research in the field of academic ethics and integrity must be encouraged among faculty and students. Joint campaigns on ethics awareness inside and outside campus is a much called for action due to rising trends of dishonesty. Academic freedom is the prime principle of research and the underlying blight in academics is the very misuse of this freedom in the form of plagiarism, cheating and collusion. It is the responsibility of the university to provide academic staff and students

with a free academic environment. But in current setting, this freedom needs to be monitored and regulated to give stakeholders more accountability in working with ethics. Accountability by stakeholders involved in all levels of academics, is now a basic condition for eliminating academic fraud. The paradigm shift from a negative to positive culture needs tireless effort and dedication from the stakeholders of Ethical Learning Environment.

Moving from a culture of dishonesty to a culture of integrity requires concrete efforts to combat threats prevalent in the society. A program for mass awareness and re-education in public and private sector expecting ethical behavior is much a necessity. As we take a step to research and create mass awareness, the pedagogical step should start from finding ways to eliminate the causes of fraud. This includes reducing the over expectation of faculty, minimization of pressure imposed on students, usage of smart techniques to avoid instances of cheating and increasing awareness of negative impact when dishonesty occurs.

The Ethical Learning Environment is a summative model formed by the steps above. The stakeholders in this environment include students primarily, academic staff, faculty, university governance and international bodies. The Ethical Learning Environment is never complete without ethical teaching standards being implemented which includes curriculum to be redesigned to include more aspects on ethics and integrity being discussed inside and outside class rooms.

## CONCLUSION

Academic dishonesty is an outcome of different subjective and objective issues. The objective issues include peer pressure, ambitions to achieve better results mixed with ignorance related to ethical learning. Objective factors include institutional effectiveness issues, unclear policies or lack of proper implementation of ethical measures.

There is no one-stop solution for academic dishonesty that could be applied universally. Each institution needs to tailor policies, procedures and efforts to tackle academic integrity issues that complement existing academic structure and framework.

Using a team approach, academic integrity can be promoted in every academic institutions of Middle East. To assist higher education providers in Middle East and globally, the International Centre for Academic Integrity offers ample opportunities to share information on institutional policies, quality frameworks, conferences ,workshops and seminars where students and faculty members can develop and share awareness on aspects related to academic integrity.

It is time to reconsider the ways dishonesty is understood by college students. Instead of believing students come to higher education with a strong knowledge of ethics, colleges should cultivate efforts on how students can be made more aware of specific forms of dishonesty and the benchmark of integrity to be maintained in campus.

In current context, business relies heavily on ethical assessment tools as a part of their human resource functions. Organizations are specific in designing assessment tools to cover and assess ethical aspects during recruitment processes. In no way would an organization, tolerate acts that would bring in disgrace affecting the ethical reputation in the society. Hence , organizations are always thoughtful while choosing the right 'fit' which would include educational and skill based expertise synergized by ethical understanding of working in public and private sectors.

The chapter is an extensive research understanding by the author to design an Ethical Learning Environment that can be implemented in universities of Middle East and worldwide. Information from various sources have been collected and collated to design the framework with steps of implementation discussed at each stage. Yet it is not a strict pattern and the author expects and encourages universities to understand the stages of implementation of the Ethical Learning Environment and tailor it to align with university policies and norms to make the campus a more conducive environment with ethics and integrity synced to behavior of the campus beings rather than them remaining as words of consciences or moral codes in university manuals.

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