



The effect of lean culture on the reduction of academic corruption by the mediating role of positive organizational politics in higher education

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ABSTRACT

Familiarity with the strategies of Academic Corruption (AC) strengthens meritocracy values, increases participation, and education quality calls for the proper use of policies and cultural values by the higher education system. The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of lean culture (LC) on reducing AC with the mediation of positive organizational politics (POP). Statistical population of this research included faculty members of University of Sistan and Baluchestan, Iran. The method of this study was correlational, and it was conducted on faculty members of University of Sistan and Baluchestan with a sample of 185 people based on stratified random sampling method. The research tools included three questionnaires of lean culture questionnaire adapted from Maciag model (Maciag, 2019b), positive organizational policy questionnaire adapted from Kacmar and Carlson (1997); Nye and Witt (1993), & Sen et al. (2018) models and the researcher-made questionnaire of reduction of academic corruption adapted from Tierney and Sabharwal (2017) model. According to the findings, confirmatory validity, composite reliability, and Cranbach's alpha were reported to be appropriate in all the three tools. The analysis method was using Partial Least Squares (SmartPLS). The results showed that LC directly and indirectly was effective in reducing AC through POP. Moreover, LC had a direct effect on POP and POP had a direct effect on AC reduction. It could be stated that lean values besides positive organizational policy could play a constructive role in reducing AC; and reducing AC is somehow connected to cultural and political factors of higher education.

1. Introduction

Globalization can be an opportunity for universities to move society from an economy dominated by goods and services towards an academic economy (Haarhuis and Torenvlied, 2006; Tierney and Sabharwal, 2017; Jetter and Parmeter, 2018). On the other hand, threats like corruption at universities have increased (Treisman, 2000; Tierney and Sabharwal, 2017). Corruption is usually defined as a deviation from the norms and is a general term used for actions like favoritism, granting advantages and many other activities that is raised in higher education in many academic systems considering its dimensions, challenges, reduction and prevention (Denisova-Schmidt, 2018). Corruption in higher education depends on culture, organizational and supervision structures, resulting in a decline in professional skills, social inequality, and moral deviance (Weidman and Enkhjargal, 2008). Furthermore, by violating moral and legal norms, AC weakens education, destructs culture, and leads to the lack of trust (Tierney and Sabharwal, 2017). According to the studies, a serious reaction and cultural action on the side

of individual, professional and organizational behaviors is required to combat ACs in higher education centers (Weaver and Clark, 2015; Anechiarico and Goldstock, 2007; Heyneman, 2004). Using organizational culture theory brings about familiarity and confrontation of university staff with corruption (Tierney and Sabharwal, 2017). Culture and cultural changes are the most significant components of success in implementing and maintaining lean processes (Bhasin, 2015). LC is an epistemological metaphor at the university that is at the level of personal relationships and experiences (Kostera, 2005; Sikorski, 2009). As a part of the organizational culture of higher education, LC is a tool for managing organizational behavior and an organizational mechanism of control according to the philosophy, values and principles of lean management (Maciag, 2019b). In higher education, 'lean' refers to a culture based on the respect for individuals, entrepreneurship culture, a culture of transparency, trust and acceptance, and innovation (Radnor and Bucci, 2011; Lu et al., 2017; Kamp, 2017; Francis, 2014). Studies have considered the most important anti-corruption measures as cultural mechanisms, transparency, ethical codes, strict rules and

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