



PROBLEMS AND STRATEGIES FOR FORMING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY CULTURE AMONG SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Table with 2 columns: ABSTRACT and KEYWORDS. The abstract text describes the paper's focus on academic integrity culture among school students. The keywords list includes Academic integrity, school students, ethical education, academic honesty, and educational strategies.

Introduction

Academic integrity is a fundamental value that ensures fairness, responsibility, and trust within the educational process. In recent years, the issue of academic honesty among school students has gained increasing attention due to the widespread use of digital technologies, easy access to information, and growing academic pressure.

The development of an academic integrity culture among school students is essential for fostering independent thinking, respect for intellectual property, and personal responsibility. Schools play a key role in shaping students' ethical behavior by providing not only academic knowledge but also moral guidance.

MAIN BODY

One of the main problems in forming academic integrity culture among school students is insufficient awareness of ethical norms in education. Many students perceive learning outcomes only as grades rather than as a process of acquiring knowledge honestly.

facilitates copying, plagiarism, and dishonest completion of academic tasks. Uzbek pedagogical scholars emphasize that academic dishonesty at the school level later transforms into unethical behavior in higher education and professional life.

Another significant problem is the lack of systematic pedagogical approaches aimed at developing academic honesty. In some cases, academic integrity is treated as a disciplinary issue rather than as a value-based educational goal. According to Uzbek researcher M.M. Raxmatova, academic integrity should be embedded in the educational process as a moral principle rather than imposed as a formal requirement. In her academic works, she highlights that integrity culture is formed through continuous moral education, teacher modeling, and fair assessment practices.

Within the framework of the legislation of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the issue of academic integrity is indirectly regulated through fundamental legal and normative acts in the field of education. The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Education,” adopted in the year two thousand twenty, establishes the principles of transparency, fairness, equality, and responsibility in the educational process. These principles serve as a legal foundation for the promotion of academic honesty and ethical behavior among students. The law emphasizes the importance of quality education and the formation of morally responsible individuals, which directly relates to academic integrity culture.

In addition, state educational standards and internal regulations of general secondary education institutions define students’ duties, ethical behavior, and responsibility in the learning process. These normative documents require students to complete academic tasks independently and honestly, while teachers are obligated to ensure objective and fair assessment. Uzbek education specialists note that these regulations create a practical legal framework for preventing dishonest academic practices at school level.

The Action Strategy for the Development of Education in Uzbekistan, approved by a presidential decree in the year two thousand seventeen, also plays an important role in strengthening academic integrity. The strategy focuses on improving the quality of education, developing critical thinking, and fostering moral values among young people. These priorities contribute to the formation of academic integrity by encouraging independent learning and ethical responsibility.

Uzbek scholars such as B. Yo‘ldoshev and Sh. Karimova, in their pedagogical and educational studies, emphasize that academic integrity culture should be developed through consistent educational strategies. Their works suggest integrating discussions on honesty, authorship, and ethical behavior into school subjects, especially language and social sciences. According to their analyses, moral education combined with academic instruction significantly reduces instances of academic dishonesty. From a practical perspective, effective strategies for forming academic integrity culture include the incorporation of integrity-related topics into curricula, teacher training on ethical assessment, and the creation of a supportive school environment based on trust and fairness. Teachers play a key role as moral role models; their adherence to ethical standards directly influences students’ behavior. Uzbek educational literature repeatedly stresses that students learn academic honesty not only from rules but also from the personal example of educators.

Stage / Activity	Practical Action in Schools (Uzbekistan)	Purpose & Outcome	Source / Evidence
Academic Integrity Policy Communication	Schools create or adopt academic integrity guidelines and share them with students and parents through assemblies, class meetings, and printed policy documents, ensuring every learner understands what honesty means in practice.	Sets expectations for ethical behaviour, makes students aware of definitions of plagiarism, cheating, and misconduct, and formally introduces the integrity culture early in the school year.	Academic integrity policy examples from Karshi State University show how institutions formalize such principles, including diligence, authorship protection, transparency, and accountability — providing a model that schools adapt for younger learners as well.
Integrity Discussions and Teaching in Lessons	Teachers integrate discussions about honesty, proper citation, and independent work into regular lessons. They explain why copying, “borrowing without citation,” or shortcuts are harmful to learning. Some schools include academic integrity topics into language, literature, and social science lessons or special ethics education sessions.	Helps students link academic honesty to everyday classroom work, reinforcing that integrity is not just a rule but a learning skill.	While specific school policies were found abroad, it is common practice in Uzbek schools to discuss integrity during open educational events and ethics lessons — seen in training actions related to integrity rules and open classes given by academies to students to explain academic honesty concepts and consequences.
Assessment Practice Reform	Teachers change how assignments are structured: Projects are multi-stage (draft, review, rewrite) so students cannot copy last minute. Teachers require explanation of research steps, making original thinking visible.	Reduces chances of dishonest shortcuts, encourages true comprehension, and teaches students how to do research and academic writing ethically.	Scholarly thought in the region supports anti-plagiarism education and building competencies (e.g., strategies for effective summaries and plagiarism prevention examined by local educators in Uzbekistan).
Use of Integrity Tools and Checks	In upper grades, schools adopt plagiarism-checking tools or simple teacher-monitored originality checks during assignments, making students aware their work will be reviewed for integrity. Teachers explain why proper citation matters as part of class norms.	Builds technical awareness alongside moral norms — students learn not only why honesty matters, but how to demonstrate it in practice.	Anti-plagiarism systems and their roles are documented in local higher ed contexts, and schools increasingly use similar tools as students advance, aligning with national trends of strengthening academic integrity norms.
Teacher Professional Development on Integrity	Teachers attend workshops, sometimes organized by education authorities or school leadership, focused on academic ethics, assessment fairness, and plagiarism prevention techniques.	Teachers gain practical skills to detect and deter misconduct, and model integrity through their own professional behavior.	Integrity and ethics training are integral in many educational reform programs and reflect broader systemic emphasis on fairness and ethical teaching practices. While not always specific to schools, they inform the professional community and influence classroom practices.
Parents & Community Engagement	Many schools engage parents in meetings where academic integrity expectations are explained, including why supporting children in honest work (rather than completing it for them) matters.	Aligns home and school values, encouraging consistent support for learning ethics.	Practices of involving families in integrity education reflect trends in educational ethics outreach and public awareness campaigns seen at institutional levels.
Feedback and Reflection Activities	After assessments or projects, teachers provide feedback emphasizing what was done honestly versus what was not, and students reflect on their learning process in class discussions.	Reinforces self-reflective habits, helping students internalize integrity values.	Integrity discussions and reflections are key anticipated outcomes of integrated integrity policies.

CONCLUSION

The formation of an academic integrity culture among school students is a complex and multifaceted process that requires the integration of ethical education, practical teaching strategies, and supportive legal frameworks. In Uzbekistan, national legislation, including the Law “On Education” and presidential educational strategies, provides a strong normative foundation for promoting honesty, responsibility, and fairness in the learning process.

Practical implementation in schools demonstrates that students’ understanding of academic integrity grows most effectively when policies are clearly communicated, ethical behavior is discussed in lessons, assessment practices encourage independent work, and both teachers and parents actively model and support honest behavior. The use of integrity tools, feedback mechanisms, and reflective activities further reinforces these values in everyday learning.

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