

Anti-Corruption Behaviors of Higher Education Students

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Corruption is the main problem for the public and private sectors. The purposes of this research are to find out the level of anti-corruption behavior among higher education students and the factors that influence their anti-corruption behavior. This study employed a quantitative method by questionnaires given to 432 students at Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya, Thailand. The findings revealed that overall anti-corruption behavior was at a high level. It showed that students wanted the government to concentrate on the pressing issue of corruption, which needed to be resolved right away. While joining or becoming a people coalition against corruption, for example, attending rallies, calling, or protesting was considered at a low level. The results showed that the four factors; quality of democracy, lawfulness, social influence, and technology were positively correlated with anti-corruption behaviors. However, it found that only social influence, technology, and the quality of democracy can predict students' anti-corruption behaviors. The research has a lot of interesting implications for academics, practitioners, and policymakers to improve the measure of corruption.

Keywords: corruption, anti-corruption behaviors, students, higher education, Thailand

INTRODUCTION

Corruption is viewed as a key threat to the World Bank Group's dual aim of eradicating extreme poverty by 2030 and increasing shared prosperity for the poorest 40% of people in developing countries. Corruption disproportionately affects the poor and most vulnerable, raising expenses and limiting access to services such as health, education, and justice (World Bank, 2021). Corruption is a threat to human beings. It destroys their lives and communities and incites outrage, leading to an unstable society with violent conflicts. Corruption enables human rights abuses. Conversely, ensuring basic rights and freedoms means there is less space for corruption to go unchallenged. Corruption is defined as dishonest or illegal behavior and actions committed for personal gain by powerful people such as government officials or police officers. Corruption destroys trust, undermines democracy, obstructs economic development, and further exacerbates inequality, poverty, social division, and the environmental crisis. Exposing corruption and holding the corrupt to account can only happen if we understand the way corruption works and the systems that enable it. Melgar et al. (2010) noted that corruption and perception can be considered cultural phenomena because they depend on how society understands the rules and what constitutes a deviation. Thus, it does not depend only on societies but also on personal values and moral views. The perception of corruption is measured by transparency under good governance. Corruption is the dark behavior of society. It is the wrongful use of the powers assigned or contained to obtain personal benefits. In Thailand, corruption has existed since ancient times. There was corruption in the bureaucracy, which has evolved accordingly. Corruption has evolved significantly in recent years. Corruption methods have evolved in an increasingly complex direction. It often happens with large-scale government projects that are in the interests of the people. These remain unsolvable issues that are getting worse by the day. The situation of corruption has been a problem in Thailand's society continuously from the past to the present and tends to intensify and become more and more complicated due to the evolution of corruption with complex patterns, lack of problems, and consciousness of personal and collective interests that such problems cause the state and the nation to lose. The damage is the loss of the state budget to corruption. The Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) reveals that corruption levels remain at a standstill worldwide. The 2021 CPI results show that countries with well-protected civil and political liberties generally control corruption better. The fundamental freedoms of association and expression are crucial in the fight for a world free of corruption. According to CPI (2022), Thailand scored 35 points out of 100 in 2022. The country ranked 110th among 180 countries surveyed. It indicates the perceived level of public sector corruption on a scale of "high corruption". The figure reflects the problem of corruption in Thailand that needs more attention. The issue of corruption cannot be solved only by enacting legislation that increases the penalty for offenders; it is also a social and cultural problem. Therefore, dealing with the problem of corruption requires a combination of different methods. One of them is strengthening civil society and allowing people to participate in the government to reinforce the good governance system. Furthermore, raising awareness about corruption by instilling in young people the importance of preventing corruption, as well as changing attitudes, values, and norms, are significant efforts. It must start by creating and cultivating consciousness from childhood to solve corruption problems. Ca'belkova (2001) investigated the incentives for corrupt behavior and concludes that this issue is influenced by individual perceptions of corruption and the authority's tolerance level. The perception may have an impact on both the demand and supply of corrupt behavior. According to Melgar et al. (2010), even the perception and actual levels of corruption may be very different but the latter still has an impact on the former. Rose-Ackerman (2001) noted that low wages and poor monitoring in the public sector not only provide incentives for corruption but also foster perceptions of corruption even in the absence of actual corrupt behavior. As a result, the perceptions of corruption may facilitate or hinder the current level of corruption.

According to Tomo, Todisco, & Mangia (2019), there is not much research that provides insights into individual corrupt behavior in the context of education and into the individual qualities that might potentially explain such behaviors. Behavioral change approaches are gaining traction in policymaking as they seek to affect how individuals behave and make decisions. These approaches contribute to understanding how people decide to act toward and engage in corruption in anti-corruption policies. This

necessitates first an understanding of the psychology of corruption, and then a comprehensive approach to influencing both the mind and the environment in which the individual makes decisions. In the context of anti-corruption policies, this requires an awareness of the behavioral variables that contribute to engagement in corrupt behavior as well as an active engagement in combating that behavior. There is a lack of empirical information regarding the effectiveness of behavioral techniques in the fight against corruption. Because there are not enough research results available, it is impossible to offer recommendations regarding the behavioral techniques that should be implemented in the future to combat corruption.

The risk of corruption in education is readily apparent not only because it can be a covert factor that undermines the moral authority of governments and political systems (Melgar et al., 2010) but also due to the role that education plays in shaping young students, who are the future of society. However, the new generation of Thai youth has turned to paying more attention and giving importance to the campaign against corruption. It can be seen that groups from various institutions participate in activities organized by both public and private organizations. Especially the Anti-Corruption Organization (Thailand) or ACT continuously organizes activities. It is a goal of the drive and campaign to instill in the next generation the consciousness necessary for them to develop into future adults with straight hearts, cultivate discipline, and refrain from lying and cheating. Thus, this study emphasized the perception of corruption among the Thai youth. Prevention of corruption and misconduct by focusing on cultivating and nurturing the consciousness and behavior of integrity through compulsory courses from early childhood to higher education and creating a culture of honest behavior as well as participating in anti-corruption. Enhancing awareness by instilling morals and ethics among the youth to have a culture of honesty and anti-corruption attitudes and behaviors is the key to combating corruption. Thus, this study aims to find a direct empirical relationship between factors such as the quality of democracy, lawfulness, social influence, and technology and the anti-corruption behaviors of higher education students.

OBJECTIVES

The purposes of the study are as follows:

1. To investigate the degree of anti-corruption behaviors among higher education students.
2. To examine factors influencing the anti-corruption behaviors of higher education students.

CONTRIBUTION

This study advances the body of knowledge on corruption behaviors and develops a framework for describing the factors influencing the anti-corruption behaviors of higher education students, which has interesting academic and practical ramifications. It focused on point of view of perceived corruption and anti-corruption behaviors. It also develops a paradigm for describing how various variables influence students' anti-corruption behaviors.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Ca'belkova (2001), who has studied the motivations for engaging in corrupt behavior, this issue is influenced by both an individual's judgment of the extent of corruption and the level of tolerance displayed by the authorities. This perception could have an impact on both the supply and demand for corrupt behavior. Therefore, the impression of corruption may increase or decrease the current amount of corruption.

Chokwonkul (2017) studied "Strategies against corruption by building the values of student groups in Chaiyaphum Province." Strategies to create anti-corruption values include strategies for cultivating awareness according to Thailand in anti-corruption and strategies for enhancing knowledge and understanding Education in Anti-Corruption 3) Knowledge from research results is passed on to students to create anti-corruption values before joining the project.

You & Khagram (2005) discovered that inequality influences norms and beliefs regarding corruption and a strong interaction between inequality and democracy based on data from the World Values Surveys.

According to Anand et al. (2004); Ashforth & Anand (2003); Thomas et al. (2004), and Trevino & Brown (2004), corruption is a particularly sensitive topic due to the influence it has on the economic and social lives of nations. Melgar et al. (2010) also contended that the concept of corruption varies widely depending on societies and people.

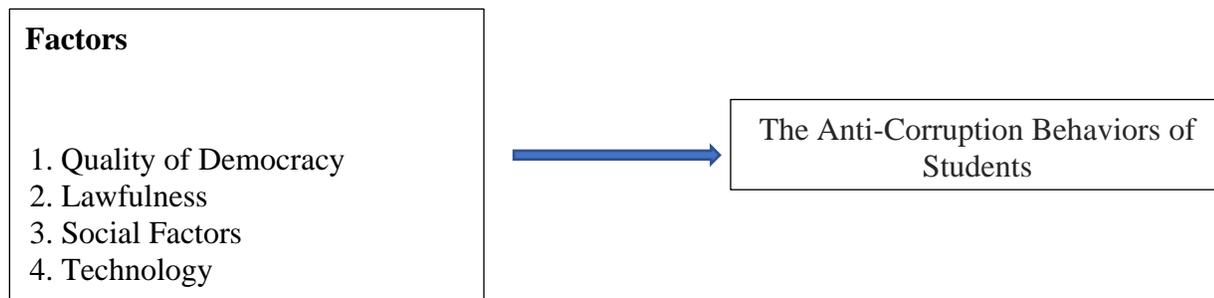
Political liberties, procedural fairness, free and fair elections, and accountability are further components of democratic quality that influence individuals' sentiments toward the political system (Magalhães, 2016; Marien & Werner, 2019). In addition, Montinola & Jackman (2002); Warren (2004) found that corruption is less prevalent in mature democracies than in authoritarian governments or more recent democracies. Thus, citizens exhibit steadfast opposition to corruption and have a negative opinion of corrupt politicians.

Jaroenjit et al. (2020) studied public expression against corruption problems. It can be seen that most of them choose not to do one or the other because it is not beneficial to take action or in some cases, they get benefits from corruption as well. In addition, most people choose to express themselves informally over formally due to concerns about the consequences.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Researchers established the following conceptual framework for this study after analyzing theories and concepts related to factors influencing the anti-corruption behaviors of students. Four factors were determined as the independent variables: the quality of democracy, lawfulness, social influence, and technology. While anti-corruption behaviors were employed as a dependent variable. The conceptual framework of this research is as below.

FIGURE 1
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



HYPOTHESES

This study hypothesizes that:

H1: *The anti-corruption behaviors among higher education students occur at a high level.*

H2: *The quality of democracy influences anti-corruption behaviors of higher education students.*

H3: *Lawfulness influences anti-corruption behaviors of higher education students.*

H4: *Social factors influence anti-corruption behaviors of higher education students.*

H5: *Technology influences anti-corruption behaviors of higher education students.*

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This research started from 2022 until 2023, with a duration of 1 year. In addition, this study focused on students studying for a bachelor's degree in the academic year of 2022 at Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya located in Muang District, Songkhla Province, Thailand.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used quantitative research methods by survey research to collect data via questionnaires from the sample group.

Population and Sample Size

The population of this study is students at the bachelor's degree level in the academic year of 2022 from Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya. The total population is 9,972 (**Office of Academic Promotion and Registration**, 2022). The total sample size is 370 students (Kercie & Morgan, 1970). Proportional stratified random sampling was used to identify the number of subjects in the sample, and a sample of students can be conducted using simple random sampling. The proportion of samples from each university was presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS

Faculty	Population	Sample
Liberal arts	1,716	64
Business Administration	3,857	143
Engineering	2,792	103
Architecture	590	22
Industrial Education and Technology	1,017	38
Total	9,972	370

Source: Office of Academic Promotion and Registration (2022)

Instrument

The instrument was a questionnaire based on studying various concepts and theories related to research objectives. The questionnaire was designed to capture the many aspects involved in anti-corruption behaviors. The questionnaire is structured in three parts with 41 questions concerning individual characteristics, factors influencing anti-corruption behaviors, and anti-corruption behaviors of higher education students. The questionnaires were divided as follows.

- Part 1: The researchers asked about the respondent's characteristics consisting of gender, age, college year, and faculty.
- Part 2: Factors influencing anti-corruption behaviors were evaluated on a five-point scale across 26 questions with four dimensions: 1) quality of democracy, 2) lawfulness, 3) social influence, and 4) technology.
- Part 3: Behaviors of the anti-corruption were assessed using 15 questions on a five-point scale among higher education students.

Goodness of Measurement

The researcher achieved validity by conducting literature studies, defining pertinent words, and designing a questionnaire for data collection. After that, the research instrument was presented to specialists so that they could evaluate the content validity, the content coverage of the study issue, and the consistency of the instrument's aims (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010).

After making the necessary revisions on the advice of the experts, the modified questionnaire was tested on 30 individuals who did not represent the population. To assess the reliability of the questionnaire, researchers used Cronbach's alpha approach. The measurement revealed that Cronbach's alpha findings for anti-corruption behaviors occurred at 0.791, while those for the quality of democracy, lawfulness, social influence, and technology ranged from 0.792 to 0.842. The findings verified the questionnaire's dependability (Hair, et al., 2010).

Data Collection

The questionnaire was distributed to 500 bachelor's degree students from five faculties in universities. The researcher collected data from the sample population by distributing questionnaires to them through assistants and an online questionnaire and they returned 432 respondents with a response rate of 86.4 %.

Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed by a social science program. The characteristics of the respondents were analyzed by descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage. The mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation (S.D.) were measured for anti-corruption behaviors. Finally, they were compared with the mean interpretation criteria. According to Wanichbuncha (2009), the criteria for translation of the scores are as follows.

- 4.51-5.00 Very high
- 3.51-4.50 High
- 2.51-3.50 Moderate
- 1.51-2.50 Less
- 0.00-1.50 Minimal

Pearson's correlation analysis was used to analyze how four factors affect anti-corruption behaviors among higher education students. Regression analysis was used for the estimation of relationships between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables. It can be applied for modeling the future relationship between variables as well as for determining the strength of the existing relationship between the variables. Moreover, regression analysis was conducted to test the hypotheses of the study.

FINDINGS

The results of the study are as follows.

Respondent's Characteristics

The majority of respondents were male (58.5%), while 41.5% were female. Most of them were 1st-year students (40.4%), followed by 2nd -year students (32.3%), and 3rd-year students (15.5%). In addition, most of them were studying in the Faculty of Engineering (45.5%), followed by the Faculty of Business Administration (16.5%), and the Faculty of Industrial Education and Technology (16%).

Degree of Anti-Corruption Behaviors Among Higher Education Students

The study's first objective is to investigate the degree of anti-corruption behaviors among higher education students. The results in table 2 showed that the overall anti-corruption behavior among higher education students occurred at a high level, with a mean value of 3.80. When the anti-corruption behaviors in each item were analyzed, it was found that the respondents stressed how important it was for the government to focus on the problem of corruption and that it was an urgent problem that needed to be solved immediately with a mean value of 4.13. It showed that students believe solving corruption is the primary responsibility of the government. In addition, they emphasized that they are constantly ashamed of themselves whenever they do something wrong or whenever individuals close to them are involved in corrupt activities (mean = 4.10). But they rarely join a people's coalition against corruption by going to rallies, making phone calls, or protesting (mean = 3.46). While playing a role in establishing an anti-

corruption network to investigate corruption is the least important (mean=3.33). The results confirm hypothesis H1 that anti-corruption behaviors of higher education students occur at a high level. Thus, hypothesis H1 was accepted.

TABLE 2
DEGREE OF ANTI-CORRUPTION BEHAVIORS AMONG HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS
(N=432)

The Anti-Corruption Behaviors of Students	Mean	S.D.	Level
1. Students demonstrate their culture and values of integrity.	3.95	.923	High
2. Students are always ashamed when they do the wrong thing or when corruption happens to those close to them.	4.10	.976	High
3. Students express themselves in various ways to make society aware that they are intolerant of people and any acts of corruption, such as expressing opinions, reprimanding, and admonishing those who commit corruption.	3.85	.968	High
4. Students do not tolerate any type of corruption, whether it is direct or indirect.	3.96	1.010	High
5. Students do not neglect or overlook any acts that are considered corrupt.	4.08	.977	High
6. Students want the government to focus on the problem of corruption, and it is an urgent problem that must be solved immediately.	4.13	.980	High
7. Students are involved in surveillance and monitoring risk behaviors to prevent corruption.	3.69	1.087	High
8. Students use various complaint channels to report corruption clues.	3.55	1.129	High
9. Students' actions provide a good example for others in anti-corruption.	3.76	.952	High
10. Students join or become a people's coalition against corruption by attending rallies, calling, or protesting.	3.46	1.167	Moderate
11. Students participate or play a role in establishing an anti-corruption network to investigate corruption	3.33	1.235	Moderate
12. Students are always on the lookout for news about corruption from both the public and private sectors.	3.64	1.052	High
13. Students can give knowledge and advice about corruption to others.	3.54	1.017	High
14. Students support the improvement of the law to add more severe penalties to punish the corrupt.	3.98	.956	High
15. Students call for rigorous social control to punish the corrupt.	4.03	.982	High
Total	3.80	.739	High

Source: Respondent data processed, 2022

Factors Influencing the Anti-Corruption Behaviors of Higher Education Students

Correlation Analysis

In analyzing the relationship between independent and dependent variables, the statistics used to analyze the data are the Pearson Correlation Coefficient, where the calculated correlation coefficient (r) ranges from -1 to 1. The results of the study in Table 3 revealed that the factors influencing anti-corruption behaviors of higher education students as a whole and all four dimensions are positively correlated with anti-corruption behaviors among students. It was statistically significant at the 0.01 level with a correlation coefficient (r) between 0.555 and 0.689, which motioned at a high correlation (Hair et al., 2010). According

to the findings, the strongest correlation ($r = .689$) was discovered between anti-corruption behaviors and social influence, followed by technology ($r = .615$), the lawfulness ($r = .606$), and quality of democracy ($r = .555$) respectively.

TABLE 3
CORRELATION BETWEEN FOUR FACTORS AND ANTI-CORRUPTION BEHAVIORS

Factors	1	2	3	4	5
1. Quality of Democracy	1				
2. Lawfulness	.685**	1			
3. Social Influence	.637**	.778**	1		
4. Technology	.587**	.679**	.749**	1	
5. Anti-corruption Behaviors	.555**	.606**	.689**	.615**	1

** significant at the 0.01 level

Regression Analysis

The researcher conducted a Multiple Linear Regression analysis to test the hypothesis of study H2 and to study the factors (independent variables) that together predict or predict the dependent variable. Regression analysis is a statistical method used to study the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables. Multiple regression analysis is used if there is more than one independent variable and one dependent variable (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). Using a linear regression model to make effective predictions depends on the selection of the most suitable model. This study used Stepwise Regression, in which all independent variables provide regression coefficients close to the values specified in the simulation and the model with the highest accuracy. The model that will be suitable should come from selected independent variables that have a strong influence on dependent variables. The results in table 4 revealed that there are 3 independent variables or predictors: social influence, technology, and quality of democracy, respectively, that can predict **anti-corruption behaviors** among students. They had an F value of 139.919 and were statistically significant at the 0.001 level. The variation in anti-corruption behaviors was explained by all three variables ($R^2 = 0.508$). Thus, the results confirmed that hypothesis H2 was accepted. This study expressed the relationship in a forecast equation as follows:

$$y = 1.230 + 0.447(x_1) + 0.186(x_2) + 0.161(x_3) \quad (1)$$

where y means Anti-corruption Behaviors, x_1 means social influence, x_2 means technology, and x_3 means the quality of democracy.

TABLE 4
REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Factors	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	p-value
Social Influence	0.411	0.447	7.897	.000*
Technology	0.169	0.186	3.472	.000*
Quality of Democracy	0.144	0.161	3.448	.000*
Constant= 1.230, $R^2 = 0.511$, Adjust $R^2 = 0.508$, F= 139.919				
*significant at level 0.001				

DISCUSSION

Degree of Anti-Corruption Behaviors Among Higher Education Students

An analysis of data on anti-corruption behaviors among higher education students found that the need for the government to focus on tackling corruption, which is an urgent problem that needs to be addressed immediately, was at the highest level (mean value = 4.13). It shows the feeling of the sample that the government is not serious about solving the corruption problem. The government always solves the problem at its root cause and does not rush to solve the problem. Corruption is a problem in Thai society, and it seems to be getting worse (Corruption Perceptions Index, 2021). The result of this study is in the line with the findings of Chuyrod, & Kanlyanamitra's (2017) study, which discussed the findings that corruption should be addressed urgently. In addition, students expressed that they were always ashamed when they do the wrong thing or when corruption happens to those close to them. It represents a subject who still feels ashamed when doing the wrong thing. This will manifest as restraint behavior when they know they have committed an offense. However, the findings also found that the participation of students to anti-corruption occurred at a low level (mean value less than 3.5). They had low participation or played a role in establishing an anti-corruption network to investigate corruption. They seldom join or become a people's coalition against corruption by attending rallies, calling, or protesting. It implied that participation in anti-corruption at the level of people's sectors or networks is still a problem. On the other hand, this could be because anti-corruption behaviors and values tend to happen on an individual level instead of as a group. People may be afraid of social expression and fear of being featured. Moreover, joining the people's sector network for anti-corruption is a form of expression consisting of many people. Thus, it takes time to set up, which must be a coalition with a leader. Therefore, there are always various problems that always occur. The results are in the line with the findings of Jaroenjit et al. (2020) and Engel (2005), which found that people choose informal prosecution over litigation for anti-corruption. In addition, Starkey (1997) concluded that problem analysis from networking methods corresponds to networking against corruption in four areas: 1) objectives; 2) leaders' dedication to the network, 3) resources; and 4) participation and benefits. Due to these conditions, it is the cause that leads to the problem of joining or establishing an anti-corruption network in the people's sector. However, the study of the anti-corruption behaviors of students confirms that most of the samples still emphasize its importance and still exhibit a high level of anti-corruption behaviors. The results are in the line with Phrakhrusripariyattaphimon et al. (2022) that concluded the network-building problem is the lack of cooperation between the people, the media, and independent organizations. Furthermore, there is a lack of communication and accurate information for the general public. In addition, various media outlets must unite to oppose the use of power for corruption.

Factors Influencing the Anti-Corruption Behaviors of Higher Education Students

The results showed that the four factors: quality of democracy, lawfulness, social influence, and technology are positively correlated with anti-corruption students' behaviors. It implies that paying more attention to four factors will also increase anti-corruption behaviors. However, this study found that only three factors can predict anti-corruption behaviors. Social influence is the most important factor in anti-corruption students' behaviors, followed by the quality of democracy and technology.

Social Influence

It means people around them, such as friends and family members, who influence their lives and can have an impact on them. In addition, it was described as beliefs, values, and norms of corruption perception. Students mentioned that think that ethics will cause people to fear doing wrong. These results are similar to Zúñiga (2018), who noted that social norms are informal norms derived from cultural values, practices, and traditions that influence individuals' social behavior and expectations. The students also think that less corruption can happen if people know about it and can control themselves. The findings are in line with Dupuy & Neset (2018), who mentioned that those with heightened views of authority and risk, personal gain and self-control, emotions, and rationalization narratives are more prone to engaging in corrupt behavior.

Quality of Democracy

It means political rights and freedoms under a democratic regime. The results mentioned that students have the freedom and autonomy to select representatives at all levels. They believe political stability will reduce corruption but they don't have opportunities to participate in politics. This is consistent with the findings of Melgar et al. (2009) that discovered people who have a positive attitude toward democracy are more likely to perceive a lower level of corruption. The results of this study are similar to Montinola & Jackman (2002), who concluded that political competition is important for democracy. It is believed to reduce corruption.

Technology

It can help detect fraud and corruption by enhancing social accountability and citizen participation. Students believe that advances in technology made it possible for work to be done transparently. Technology is also a key tool for monitoring the work of different government departments. In addition, they believe that social media can create an anti-corruption engagement model easily, such as setting up interest groups, collecting public opinions, and mobilizing for anti-corruption.

Lawfulness

It is about being open and honest, as well as meeting the transparency requirements of the right to be informed. Students accept that strict compliance with the law will create good social norms. They also believe in the justice system and that the legal system can be used to bring about justice. In addition, they believe equal law enforcement will lead to a fear of committing an offense.

SUGGESTION

The promotion of anti-corruption and misconduct efforts and political decision-making are in line with basic state policies. The government's priority is to lay the foundation for the people's awareness of anti-corruption. Building a community for surveillance and anti-corruption, as well as improving social governance, fosters an anti-corruption culture that includes discipline, honesty, and honesty as important measures for monitoring corruption. In addition, developing a curriculum, lessons, teaching methods, presentations, and anti-corruption models is a measure for educational institutions to participate in reducing corruption.

CONCLUSION

Corruption is widely regarded as a behavior engaged in when it is possible to acquire benefits through the use of discretionary power, motivated by personal values and moral beliefs. This study aims to contribute knowledge of anti-corruption behaviors of higher education students. The results showed that the four factors of quality of democracy, respect for the law, social influence, and technology were positively correlated with anti-corruption behaviors. Thus, increasing the factors will improve anti-corruption behaviors.

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