



The Relationship Between Level of Personal Integrity and Anti-Corruption Attitudes among Polytechnic Students

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KEYWORDS: personal integrity, attitude against corruption, polytechnic students, anti-corruption education, ethical values.

ABSTRACT: This study aims to examine the relationship between the level of personal integrity and attitudes to reject corruption among students of Sultan Mizan Zainal Abidin Polytechnic. Corruption is a moral issue that still plagues Malaysian society and values education at the higher education institution level is seen as an important component in forming a generation of integrity. A total of 111 students were involved in this study through a survey design using a questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale. Descriptive analysis showed that the level of personal integrity (mean = 4.31) and attitudes to reject corruption (mean = 4.56) were at a high level. Spearman's correlation test showed a significant positive relationship between personal integrity and attitudes to reject corruption ($r = 0.720$, $p < 0.01$). Meanwhile, the Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis tests found no significant differences according to gender, department and level of exposure to corruption issues. Overall, the results of the study prove that the formation of integrity and the ability to reject corruption of polytechnic students is more influenced by values education and institutional culture than demographic factors.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Corruption remains one of the most worrying moral and social issues in Malaysia. It does not only undermine the people's trust in the integrity of the country's administrative system, but also erode the value of justice and weaken the foundation for the development of an ethical society. Despite various awareness campaigns, enforcement actions and prevention initiatives implemented by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), corruption cases still recur in various forms such as abuse of power, gift-giving and petty irregularities that are considered "normal". This situation shows that efforts to foster moral values and integrity still need to be intensified at all levels of society, including higher education institutions which are the initial sites for the formation of morality and social responsibility of the younger generation.

Personal integrity is a core value that reflects an individual's honesty, trustworthiness and moral principles. In the context of polytechnic students, this value is not only seen in academic honesty alone, but also includes self-discipline, responsibility in assignments, and fairness in decision-making. Students with integrity will carry out their duties transparently even without supervision, and reject all forms of fraud or abuse of power. Strong integrity values not only form an ethical personality, but also serve as a safeguard against corrupt practices in their professional lives.

To strengthen the formation of these moral values, Polytechnic Malaysia has introduced the MPU22071 course: Integrity and Anti-Corruption as part of the general compulsory program. This course provides exposure to students on the concept of integrity, social responsibility, and the implications of corruption on national development. It also emphasizes the value of moral courage and civic awareness so that students are able to reject any form of corruption from the time they are studying. The implementation of this course is hoped to produce polytechnic students who do not only have technical skills, but also excellent personalities and strong moral principles.

Although this value education effort is receiving increasing attention, the question still arises as to the extent to which the implementation of integrity in this course really influences students' attitudes towards corruption issues. This study was conducted to examine the relationship between the level of personal integrity and attitudes towards rejecting corruption among polytechnic

students. Through this study, it is hoped that it will be possible to identify whether students with high integrity also show a strong tendency to reject corruption in any form.

2.0 STUDY OBJECTIVES

2.1 To identify the level of integrity and anti-corruption attitudes among students

2.2 To determine the strength and direction of the relationship between personal integrity scores and anti-corruption attitudes scores

2.3 To assess whether there are differences in personal integrity scores and anti-corruption attitudes scores according to student demographics

3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

A study by Lim et al. (2022) examined the influence of individual attitudes and the role of parents on the tendency to give bribes among Malaysian society. Through Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) analysis, this study found that negative attitudes towards corruption and the value of honesty nurtured by the family play a significant role in shaping attitudes to reject corruption. This study provides an insight that the formation of integrity and moral values begins at the early socialization stage and values education in higher learning institutions needs to function as a continuation in building a zero-corruption culture in Malaysia.

Meanwhile, Manaf et al. (2023) examined the aspects of corruption prevention in the education sector through a qualitative case study approach that focused on policy implementation and the role of institutions. Findings showed that value-based education, transparent governance and leadership with integrity were the main factors that contributed to the formation of a culture of integrity among educators and students. However, human resource constraints, uneven levels of awareness and weak supervision still pose challenges to the effectiveness of the policy. This study emphasizes the need for synergy between government policies, MACC and educational institutions to ensure that the implementation of integrity programs truly has an impact on reducing corruption in Malaysia.

Next, Sabli et al. (2016) examined the issue of declining academic integrity in Malaysian higher education institutions and identified the causes of student dishonesty through the framework of the fraud triangle theory. Pressure, opportunity and rationalization were identified as the main factors that drive students to commit academic misconduct such as plagiarism and imitation. Interestingly, this study showed that academic misconduct can be the starting point for unethical practices and has the potential to develop into corrupt behavior in the workplace. Therefore, the author emphasizes the importance of implementing ethics education and integrity-based monitoring systems among students so that a culture of honesty can be fostered from the beginning.

In the context of reporting misconduct, a study by Mohamed et al. (2019) focused on the role of whistle-blowers in curbing fraud in higher education institutions. Based on the theory of ethical behavior and the organizational integrity model, this study found that the effectiveness of reporting mechanisms is highly dependent on an institution's culture of integrity and protection of whistleblowers. Barriers such as fear of retaliation and distrust of management were identified as factors that undermine the effectiveness of this system. The authors emphasize that a transparent reporting system supported by an institutional integrity policy can create a learning ecosystem that is free from fraud and corruption.

Overall, these five studies show that the formation of an attitude of rejecting corruption does not only depend on legal awareness, but is closely related to personal integrity, institutional culture, family role, and social support. Although many efforts have been carried out at the university and government agency levels, studies focusing on the polytechnic context are still limited. Therefore, a study on the relationship between the level of personal integrity and attitudes of rejecting corruption among polytechnic students is very important to assess the extent to which the MPU22071 course (Integrity and Anti-Corruption) really has an impact on the formation of moral values and honesty among TVET students.

4.0 STUDY METHODOLOGY

4.1 Study Design

This study uses a descriptive and correlational survey design to assess the level of personal integrity, attitudes towards rejecting corruption and the relationship between the two variables among students of Sultan Mizan Zainal Abidin Polytechnic. A quantitative approach was chosen to enable the collection of empirical data that can be analyzed objectively using non-parametric statistical methods.

4.2 Population and Sample

The study population consisted of 111 students of Sultan Mizan Zainal Abidin Polytechnic. The sample size was determined based on the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table which suggested that the number of respondents was sufficient for a medium-sized population. The sample selection was done randomly stratified to ensure representation from three departments, namely Civil, Mechanical and Electrical Engineering.

4.3 Data Collection Methods

The instrument of this study consists of two main constructs, namely the Level of Personal Integrity and the Attitude of Rejecting Corruption, which were each developed to measure the dimensions of moral values and ethical tendencies of students towards the issue of corruption. Each item in both constructs was assessed using a five-point Likert Scale that assessed the level of agreement of the respondent with the given statement, starting from 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Slightly Agree, 4 = Agree, to 5 = Strongly Agree. This scale was chosen because it allows the researcher to quantitatively assess the level of perception and tendency of students towards integrity and anti-corruption attitudes in more detail and facilitates descriptive and inferential statistical analysis.

4.4 Data Analysis

Descriptive analysis was used to assess the level of self-integrity and students' attitudes towards rejecting corruption based on the level classification by Sidek (2005), namely low (1.00 – 2.33), medium (2.34 – 3.66) and high (3.67 – 5.00). For inferential analysis, the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests showed that the data did not comply with the assumption of normal distribution ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, this study used non-parametric analysis to assess the relationship and difference between variables. Spearman's rho test was used to determine the relationship between the level of self-integrity and attitudes towards rejecting corruption, while Mann-Whitney U Test was applied to identify differences based on gender. In addition, Kruskal-Wallis Test was used to assess the difference in scores between departments of study and the level of students' exposure to corruption issues through the media.

4.5 Pilot Study and Instrument Reliability

A pilot study was conducted on 30 students of Sultan Mizan Zainal Abidin Polytechnic to assess item suitability, language comprehension, and instrument reliability before the actual study was conducted. The results of the analysis showed that Cronbach's Alpha value = 0.848 for the two main constructs, namely Personal Integrity and Anti-Corruption Attitude, which indicates a high level of reliability. This finding proves that all items in the instrument are consistent and suitable for use in measuring the constructs studied in the actual study.

5.0 STUDY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Respondent Demographics

Based on Table 1, a total of 111 students were involved as respondents in this study. In terms of gender, the majority of respondents were male students, which was 89 (80.2%), while female students were only 22 (19.8%). This finding shows that the participation of male students is much higher than that of female students, in line with the composition of students in polytechnics, most of whom are pursuing engineering.

In terms of department or study program, the findings show that the Department of Electrical Engineering (JKE) had the highest number of respondents, which was 54 people (48.6%), followed by the Department of Mechanical Engineering (JKM) with 51 people (45.9%), while the Department of Civil Engineering (JKA) recorded the lowest number, which was 6 people (5.4%). This pattern shows that the majority of respondents in this study came from the two main engineering departments that have the highest student enrollment in polytechnics.

Meanwhile, for exposure to corruption issues through the media, the analysis showed that the majority of respondents stated that they were rarely exposed to corruption issues (41.4%), followed by never (29.7%), often (20.7%) and very often (8.1%). This finding gives the impression that although corruption issues are often reported in the media, the level of exposure of polytechnic students to this issue is still at a moderate level, possibly due to limited interest in current issues related to corruption or lack of exposure in academic and co-curricular activities.

Overall, this demographic profile shows that the study respondents were dominated by male students from the Department of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering, and had moderate levels of exposure to corruption issues in the media. This provides important context for the analysis of the relationship between personal integrity and attitudes towards rejecting corruption, as gender background and field of study may also influence how students evaluate and respond to issues of integrity and corruption.

Table 1: Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Variables	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	89	80.2
	Female	22	19.8
Department	JKA	6	5.4
	JKM	51	45.9
	JKE	54	48.6
Frequency of Exposure to Corruption Issues through the Media	Never	33	29.7
	Seldom	46	41.4

Frequently	23	20.7
Very Often	9	8.1

5.2 Normality Analysis

The normality test shows that both variables, namely the Level of Personal Integrity and the Attitude of Rejecting Corruption, are not normally distributed with a significance value of 0.000 on Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk. From the aspect of difference, this indicates that the use of parametric tests such as independent t-test or ANOVA is not appropriate if you want to compare groups of students based on certain categories. On the other hand, the differences between groups can be analyzed using non-parametric tests such as Mann-Whitney U or Kruskal-Wallis, which do not require the assumption of normality. This gives an understanding that although the majority of students show high integrity and attitudes of rejecting corruption, there is a small variation between individuals that can be analyzed as a group.

In terms of relationships, non-normal data indicate that Spearman correlation is more appropriate to assess the extent to which self-integrity is related to attitudes towards rejecting corruption. This analysis allows us to test the hypothesis that the higher the level of self-integrity of students, the higher their tendency to reject corruption. This approach also allows us to understand the monotonic relationship between the two variables, where although not perfectly linear, an increase in one variable is expected to increase the other. In a practical context, these results emphasize that self-integrity acts as a moral determinant that strengthens students' stances towards unethical practices, while individual variations provide an opportunity to identify groups that need additional emphasis on values education.

Table 2: Results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk Normality Tests for Level of Personal Integrity and Attitudes Against Corruption

	Normality Test					
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
PERSONAL INTEGRITY	.143	111	.000	.896	111	.000
ANTI-CORRUPTION ATTITUDE	.239	111	.000	.763	111	.000

5.3 Level of Student Integrity

Table 2 shows that the level of self-integrity of polytechnic students is at a high level with an overall mean of 4.31 and a standard deviation of 0.622. In general, this finding illustrates that students have a strong awareness of ethics and moral values in carrying out academic and social responsibilities. All items measured recorded a mean score above 4.00, indicating that students not only understand the importance of self-integrity, but also practice it consistently in their daily lives at the institution of learning.

The item with the highest score was A6 (mean = 4.49, s.p = 0.686) which refers to the statement "I feel responsible for ensuring that group work is done fairly and transparently." This finding shows that students emphasize the aspects of accountability and transparency in group work, in line with the values of professionalism and integrity outlined in modern work ethics. Students are seen to understand that the success of a group does not only depend on the final result, but also on the fair, honest and transparent implementation process. This reflects an awareness of moral responsibility towards group members and the importance of avoiding selfishness or taking advantage in collaborative situations.

A study by Jaruman and Mihaj (2023) conducted at Mersing Polytechnic supports this finding. The study assessed teamwork skills from an Islamic perspective and emphasized that technical skills alone are not sufficient without ethical values such as trust, responsibility and fairness in the division of tasks. The findings show that when group activities are implemented based on the principles of transparency and peer accountability, it can reduce the tendency of members to take advantage and strengthen an ethical work culture. This finding is in line with the current results for item A6 which emphasizes students' moral responsibility to ensure that group tasks are implemented fairly and transparently.

In line with this, a study by Utha et al. (2024) in Bhutan also demonstrated that the implementation of the Groupwork Assessment Framework based on an action design approach can increase elements of accountability and fairness among students. Through peer assessment and self-reflection, students become more sensitive to individual contributions and more open to transparent communication in groups. This shows that a structured and inclusive assessment mechanism is able to foster moral and ethical awareness among students, in line with the findings of A6 which emphasizes integrity in the context of collaborative work.

Next, the second highest item, A7 (mean = 4.44, s.p = 0.697), which is "I prioritize trust and honesty in daily affairs even when it is difficult," shows that students have a strong intrinsic moral compass. They hold on to the principles of trust and honesty even in challenging situations, indicating that the value of integrity is not something that is adhered to because of supervision or punishment,

but because of self-awareness. A study by Daud et al. (2023) from the University of Malaya supports this finding when they found that a positive social environment and interaction with an ethical academic community help to form the value of trust and responsibility in students. Researchers emphasize that the value of integrity cannot be cultivated only through rules, but must be born from an intrinsic moral awareness that is nurtured through continuing education and an ethical campus culture.

This finding is also reinforced by a study by Chen et al. (2022) which examined the effects of peer assessment on the formation of accountability and honesty in university student group activities. The study found that students who were actively involved in peer assessment valued the values of transparency and fairness more, thus reducing dishonest behaviors such as free-riding or score manipulation. Indirectly, this mechanism encourages students to practice the values of trust and honesty, in line with the current findings of items A6 and A7.

The next two items, A3 and A8 (mean = 4.35), illustrate two important dimensions of personal integrity, namely rejection of dishonesty and moral courage in reprimanding misconduct. Item A3 shows that students refuse to take advantage of personal interests if it involves dishonesty, while A8 shows their willingness to reprimand a friend who has committed a mistake. Both items show the firmness and social courage (moral courage) of polytechnic students in defending truth and justice.

A study by Esmail et al. (2024) found that university students in Malaysia who have a high level of moral reasoning are more likely to reject dishonest behavior and dare to advise friends who have committed misconduct. Internal moral awareness is their main motivation to uphold the truth without expecting external rewards. This study is in line with the current results for items A3 and A8 which show the ability of polytechnic students to express moral courage in social situations. Meanwhile, a study by Samuni et al. (2024) at Universiti Malaysia Sabah also showed that structured exposure to integrity and anti-corruption courses increases students' sensitivity to the issue of dishonesty and encourages them to reject immoral acts. Although not directly measuring the courage to reprimand friends, the strong foundation of moral values detected in this study is a prerequisite for the formation of social courage in the academic community.

Overall, the four highest items in Table 2 (A6, A7, A3 and A8) indicate that polytechnic students have high ethical awareness and are able to demonstrate the value of integrity in various contexts, whether in group work, individual affairs, or social interactions. This reflects comprehensive moral maturity, where students evaluate actions based on moral principles, not simply rewards or social pressure. This finding also confirms that the efforts of educational institutions in strengthening the value of integrity through curriculum, anti-corruption programs and co-curricular activities have succeeded in forming a generation of students who are self-confident, ethical and able to reject any form of dishonesty and corruption.

Table 3: Student’s Level of Personal Integrity

	Question Item	Min	Standard Deviation	Level
A1	I always keep the promises I make to friends or lecturers.	4.28	.844	High
A	I am willing to admit my mistakes even when no one is watching.	4.24	.765	High
A3	I refuse to take advantage of personal gain if it involves dishonesty.	4.35	.870	High
A4	I will report unethical behavior among friends even though I am worried about their reaction.	4.08	.865	High
A5	I judge my actions based on moral standards, not just current profits.	4.23	.809	High
A6	I feel responsible for ensuring that group work is done fairly and transparently.	4.49	.686	High
A7	I prioritize trust and honesty in daily dealings even when it is difficult.	4.44	.697	High
A8	I am willing to reprimand a friend who exhibits dishonest behavior.	4.35	.794	High
Overall Score		4.31	.622	High

5.4 Attitudes to Reject Corruption Among Students

Table 3 shows that attitudes to reject corruption among polytechnic students are at a high level with an overall mean of 4.56 and a standard deviation of 0.567. This finding indicates that students are not only aware of the evils of corruption, but also show a strong moral stance to reject all forms of unethical practices that can affect justice and trust in society. In general, all items measured recorded high scores exceeding 4.4, indicating that the values of integrity and honesty have been successfully internalized by students as a whole, not just at the level of knowledge but also in intentions and principles of action.

Among all the items, the three that recorded the highest scores were B5 (mean = 4.68), B3 (mean = 4.63) and B8 (mean = 4.57). Item B5 shows that students strongly agree that strict punishment should be imposed on corrupt perpetrators, reflecting a high level of moral awareness and understanding that corruption prevention should be implemented through principled and legal actions. A study by Johari and Ahmad (2024) examined the impact of the Integrity and Anti-Corruption Course (KIAR) on the attitudes and behaviors of students in dealing with the challenge of corruption. The results of the study showed that students who took the KIAR

course showed a significant increase in awareness and ability to reject corruption through an interactive and reflective approach, supporting the findings of item B5 which showed students' support for strict punishment as a preventive measure.

Item B3 also shows a deep dimension of personal integrity, when students express their willingness to reject job opportunities that involve corruption. This attitude shows that students place moral principles above material interests, demonstrating moral maturity in making decisions based on pure values. A study by Tengku Sulaiman et al. (2025) found that personal moral values, ethical awareness and intrinsic integrity play a major role in determining an individual's decision to reject wrongdoing even if there is material reward. A study by Khalili et al. (2024) also emphasized that high moral identity and sensitivity to moral emotions (such as guilt and shame) increase students' tendency to reject unethical actions. Both studies are in line with the findings of item B3, indicating that polytechnic students prioritize moral principles over personal gain in making ethical considerations.

Meanwhile, item B8 highlights moral courage in students, namely the willingness to reject instructions involving corruption even if they come from superiors. This proves that the value of integrity is not only understood theoretically, but also applied in real situations that may involve social pressure or power. A study by Hassan et al. (2020) shows that a deep understanding of ethical and moral values is important in shaping students' character and integrity, while a study by Kamsan et al. (2023) emphasizes that students who understand moral and ethical values deeply are more willing to reject corruption even when faced with pressure or instructions from superiors. This finding reinforces the understanding that polytechnic students are able to consistently uphold the principle of integrity and show social courage in facing moral challenges.

Overall, these three highest items (B5, B3, B8) indicate that polytechnic students have a high level of moral awareness and the ability to act based on integrity values even in challenging situations. The attitude of rejecting corruption is not only driven by fear of punishment, but is born from a deep understanding that corruption undermines dignity, justice and social trust. Students have internalized the value of integrity as the basis for ethical actions in their academic and professional lives, making moral principles the main guide in facing situations involving ethical challenges.

Table 4: Anti-Corruption Attitude Among Students

	Question Item	Min	Standard Deviation	Level
B1	I will refuse offers of money or gifts intended to influence official decisions.	4.49	.819	High
B2	I believe reporting corruption incidents is the right thing to do even though there are risks.	4.53	.749	High
B3	I am willing to turn down a job opportunity if it involves corrupt practices.	4.63	.723	High
B4	I will support institutional initiatives to combat corruption.	4.55	.723	High
B5	I think strict punishments should be imposed on corruption perpetrators to teach them a lesson.	4.68	.603	High
B6	I believe individuals with strong integrity tend to reject corruption.	4.51	.724	High
B7	I reject any form of "small gift" that could be considered a bribe.	4.56	.656	High
B8	I dare to refuse instructions involving corrupt practices even if they come from superiors.	4.57	.669	High
Overall Score		4.56	.567	High

5.5 Strength and Direction of the Relationship Between Self-Integrity Score and Anti-Corruption Attitude Score

Based on the results of Spearman's rho analysis, the correlation coefficient between the level of self-integrity and anti-corruption attitude is 0.720 with a p value of = 0.000, indicating that this relationship is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). According to the classification of correlation strength by Chua (2014), the value of 0.720 belongs to the strong category, which indicates a strong and meaningful relationship between the level of self-integrity of students and their tendency to reject corruption. In terms of direction, this positive coefficient shows that when the level of self-integrity increases, the attitude to reject corruption also increases. This indicates that students who have strong moral and ethical values are more likely to reject all forms of corrupt practices even when faced with social pressure or material opportunities. This relationship is positive monotonic, meaning that both variables move in the same direction consistently; an increase in self-integrity is closely related to an increase in anti-corruption attitude, although the change is not necessarily linear. Overall, these findings emphasize that personal integrity is a key factor that shapes attitudes towards rejecting corruption among polytechnic students.

This finding is also supported by the study by Mohamad et al. (2023) entitled Study on Understanding of Students of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the Klang Valley on the Characteristics of Corruption in the Learning Process. This study involved 105 respondents from various HEIs and found that 80% of students had a high understanding of the characteristics of corruption, especially in relation to bribery, reward giving and abuse of power. This finding shows a good level of awareness of the concept of

academic integrity and sensitivity to corruption issues, which in turn forms a strong foundation for an attitude of rejecting corruption. This is in line with current findings that students with high integrity identify and reject acts that contradict ethics and moral values more than those who don't.

In addition, a study by Zin et al. (2023) that examined the perceptions of technology engineering students towards corrupt practices in their careers also showed a similar pattern. The respondents showed high awareness of the value of integrity and rejected any form of corruption including gifts, money or goods in return for services. This finding further strengthens the evidence that ethical and integrity values instilled since in educational institutions have a significant influence on the formation of a corruption-free professional attitude. This is in line with current findings that show that polytechnic students with high personal integrity have the moral determination to reject corruption even in situations of social pressure or external influence.

In the institutional context, a study by Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (2022) through the UMK Anti-Corruption Plan 2022–2026 also reinforces this empirical evidence. The plan emphasizes the importance of strengthening governance and instilling integrity values among university staff through 82 strategic initiative plans. This systematic approach demonstrates how institutions with a strong culture of integrity can create students who not only understand but also practically embrace anti-corruption principles. This supports current findings that a learning environment based on ethical values can enhance students' personal integrity and develop a consistent attitude of rejecting corruption.

Overall, all these studies reinforce the finding that personal integrity plays an important role in shaping attitudes against corruption among students. Students who have high ethical awareness and are in an educational ecosystem that emphasizes moral values tend to show strong moral resolve towards integrity practices. Therefore, values education, ethics intervention programs, and institutional policies that support a culture of integrity need to be continued to ensure a generation of students who are not only academically literate but also morally sound and free from the influence of corruption.

Table 5: Spearman Correlation Between Personal Integrity Scores and Anti-Corruption Attitude Scores

		Correlation	PERSONAL INTEGRITY	ANTI-CORRUPTION ATTITUDE
Spearman's rho	PERSONAL INTEGRITY	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.720**
		Sig. (2-way)	.	.000
		N	111	111
	ANTI-CORRUPTION ATTITUDE	Correlation Coefficient	.720**	1.000
		Sig. (2-way)	.000	.
		N	111	111

Table 6: Correlation Strength Classification (Chua, 2014)

Correlation Coefficient (r)	Correlation Strength (Relationship)
±0.91 to ±1.00	Very Strong
±0.71 to ±0.90	Strong
±0.51 to ±0.70	Mid
±0.31 to ±0.50	Weak
±0.01 to ±0.30	Very Weak
0	No relationship

5.6 Differences in Personal Integrity Scores and Anti-Corruption Attitude Scores According to Student Demographics

5.6.1 Gender

Based on the Mann-Whitney U test, the results showed that there was no significant difference between male and female students in terms of personal integrity levels (U = 879.500, Z = -0.743, p = 0.458) and anti-corruption attitudes (U = 951.000, Z = -0.216, p = 0.829). Significant values exceeding the 0.05 level indicate that gender is not the main determining factor in differentiating the level of integrity and anti-corruption attitudes of students. In terms of mean rank (Mean Rank), male students showed slightly higher values for personal integrity (Mean Rank = 57.12) compared to female students (Mean Rank = 51.48). A similar pattern was also observed for attitudes towards rejecting corruption where males (Mean Rank = 56.31) slightly outperformed females (Mean Rank = 54.73). However, this difference was too small to be considered statistically significant.

These findings are also in line with the study by Mahmood and Kuan (2025) in the article The Influence of Academic Integrity on Academic Performance Among ODL Undergraduates in Kuching, Sarawak. The study used a mixed approach involving questionnaires and interviews with distance learning students at two major universities in Kuching. Quantitative analysis showed that dimensions of academic integrity such as honesty, fairness and responsibility had a positive correlation with academic performance. However, when analyzed by gender, the difference in scores between male and female students was not statistically significant. Qualitative findings showed that both genders received uniform exposure to integrity policies and practices through learning modules, thus resulting in almost the same level of value appreciation. The implications of this study support the results of current research that gender is not the main determining factor for the level of personal integrity and anti-corruption attitudes among students, and rather emphasizes the role of the integrity education context and institutional organizational culture in shaping students' ethical values.

In addition, a study by Ahmad et al. (2022) entitled Awareness and Attitudes of Undergraduate Students Towards Plagiarism: Are There Any Differences Between Genders? also reinforces these findings. This study involved undergraduate students at a university in Malaysia using a questionnaire and t-test analysis and Mann-Whitney U. The results of the study showed that there was no significant difference between male and female students in terms of awareness and attitudes towards plagiarism. This shows that gender is not a factor that differentiates the appreciation of ethical values or moral behavior, rather both genders show almost the same level of understanding and acceptance of the issue of academic honesty. This finding is also in line with the findings of a current study in the context of polytechnic students who reject corruption based on awareness of ethical values, not on gender differences.

Overall, the continuity between these three findings illustrates that the formation of integrity and anti-corruption attitudes among students is no longer dependent on gender factors, but is more influenced by the effectiveness of value education, social experience and institutional organizational culture. This emphasizes that efforts to foster integrity need to be continued comprehensively and inclusively so that moral and ethical values continue to be the backbone in the development of high-integrity human capital in Malaysia.

Table 7: Differences in Personal Integrity Scores and Anti-Corruption Attitudes by Gender

Variables	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Mann-Whitney U	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	Interpretation
Personal Integrity	Male	89	57.12	5083.50	879.500	-0.743	0.458	No significant difference
	Female	22	51.48	1132.50				
Anti-Corruption Attitude	Male	89	56.31	5012.00	951.000	-0.216	0.829	No significant difference
	Female	22	54.73	1204.00				

5.6.2 Department of Studies

Based on the Kruskal-Wallis test, the results showed that there was no significant difference between departments in terms of the level of personal integrity ($H = 1.660, p = 0.436$) and attitude to reject corruption ($H = 2.774, p = 0.250$), because the significant value exceeded the 0.05 level. This indicates that the level of integrity and anti-corruption attitudes of students are consistent across the three departments of study involved. In terms of Mean Rank values, students from the Department of Electrical Engineering (JKE) recorded the highest average score for both constructs, namely personal integrity (Mean Rank = 57.44) and attitude to reject corruption (Mean Rank = 60.20). This was followed by students from the Department of Mechanical Engineering (JKM) for personal integrity (Mean Rank = 56.37), while the Department of Civil Engineering (JKA) recorded the highest score for attitude to reject corruption (Mean Rank = 62.75). However, this small difference is not statistically significant and simply reflects the variation in the distribution of student perceptions between departments.

Analytically, these findings illustrate that differences in study disciplines do not play a major role in influencing the level of appreciation of integrity values and determination to reject corruption. This is due to the Polytechnic's uniform curriculum approach, where all departments expose students to the same courses and activities to strengthen ethics and integrity. The Polytechnic's organizational policy that emphasizes the value of accountability and social responsibility also helps ensure that the appreciation of ethical values is not focused on a specific field of study. Furthermore, the collaborative learning environment between students from various departments has the potential to foster collective ethical awareness. This means that differences in majors or technical backgrounds do not have a major impact on moral evaluations or views on corruption.

This finding is supported by the study by Ab Rahman et al. (2024) entitled The Role of the Government in Anti-Corruption Education in Malaysia and Its Impact on Society. The study examined how Malaysian government policies, particularly through the National Anti-Corruption Plan (NACP) and strategic collaboration with the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), have

successfully strengthened anti-corruption values education at the higher education institution level. The authors emphasize that the implementation of a comprehensive and systemic integrity education policy has increased awareness and rejection of corruption among students regardless of their field of study. This finding directly supports current results showing that academic discipline is not a determining factor in the level of integrity or attitudes towards rejecting corruption.

In addition, the report on Integrity and Corruption Course: Ethics Education Module for IPT Students published by the MACC and the Ministry of Higher Education (KPT) in 2021 also emphasized that the uniform implementation of integrity modules in all higher education institutions is an important effort to form a comprehensive culture of ethics and anti-corruption values. This module covers aspects of accountability, social responsibility and the principles of personal integrity, delivered through a structured learning approach centered on the student experience. The effectiveness of this approach contributes to the uniformity of student integrity levels across departments and fields of study.

Overall, these results indicate that the formation of integrity and attitudes against corruption among polytechnic students is institutional and systemic in nature, not dependent on the department or field of study alone. These findings emphasize the important role of an integrated curriculum, national values education policy, and institutional organizational culture in producing students who are not only technically knowledgeable, but also ethical and have high integrity as future professional workforce.

Table 8: Comparison of Personal Integrity Scores and Anti-Corruption Attitudes by Department of Studies

Department of Study	N	Mean Rank (Personal Integrity)	Mean Rank (Anti-Corruption Attitude)
Civil Engineering (JKA)	6	39.83	62.75
Mechanical Engineering (JKM)	51	56.37	50.75
Electrical Engineering (JKE)	54	57.44	60.20
Total	111		
Kruskal-Wallis H		1.660	2.774
df		2	2
Asymp. Sig. (p)		0.436	0.250

5.6.3 Level of Exposure to Corruption Issues

The results of the Kruskal Wallis test showed that there was no significant difference between the frequency of exposure to corruption issues through the media and the level of personal integrity ($H = 3.208$, $p = 0.361$) and attitudes to reject corruption ($H = 4.369$, $p = 0.224$). This significant value exceeding the 0.05 level indicates that students' integrity and anti-corruption attitudes are not significantly influenced by the frequency of exposure to corruption issues through the media. However, the Mean Rank value shows an interesting pattern: the higher the frequency of students' exposure to corruption issues through the media, the higher the average score for personal integrity (66.39) and attitudes to reject corruption (66.61). This pattern indicates that media exposure may have an implicit learning effect on the formation of students' moral awareness and ethical values. From an analytical perspective, these findings suggest that the media functions as a catalyst for ethical awareness, although not strong enough to reveal a statistically significant difference. This is likely because local media content is increasingly acting as a value education tool, particularly through news reports, social campaigns and documentaries published by agencies such as MACC and BERNAMA that highlight narratives of integrity and social responsibility.

A study by Mokhtar and Ma'arof (2022) entitled Awareness on Corruption Issues and Its Impacts on Employee's Morale also reinforces this finding. The study involved 80 enforcement officers of the Road Transport Department (JPJ) in Johor Bahru using quantitative questionnaire methods and Pearson correlation analysis. The findings show that awareness of corruption issues, which includes aspects of knowledge, experience and attitude, has a significant relationship with work morale; officers who are more aware of corruption issues show higher work morale. Although this study was conducted in a different context, it shows a pattern in line with the findings of polytechnic students, namely awareness of corruption issues and the value of integrity are catalysts for the formation of attitudes rejecting corruption. This proves that the element of awareness and understanding of ethical issues can strengthen integrity even without direct influence from media exposure.

In addition, a study by Habib Sultan et al. (2025) entitled Anti-Corruption Education as the Basis of Student Values: A Qualitative Survey at Universiti Malaysia Perlis also supports these findings by using a qualitative approach involving 98 students from various faculties at Universiti Malaysia Perlis. Semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis were conducted to examine the role of anti-corruption education in shaping students' moral and ethical values. The results of the study showed that anti-corruption education occurs not only in the classroom, but also through learning experiences, reflection activities and social interactions that form value awareness holistically. Four main dimensions were identified: student learning experiences, moral value formation, systemic

community efforts and guidance for facing professional challenges. The researchers concluded that transformational anti-corruption education, which connects real life experiences with integrity values, is more effective in shaping students' personalities than purely theoretical value teaching methods.

Overall, the combination of these three findings shows that although exposure to corruption issues through the media does not have a statistically significant effect, it still functions as an indirect value learning agent, in line with the concept of value internalization. When supported by contextual and experiential anti-corruption education, the level of student integrity will increase and subsequently strengthen the attitude of rejecting corruption among students of higher learning institutions in Malaysia.

Table 9: Differences in Personal Integrity Scores and Attitudes Rejecting Corruption According to Frequency of Exposure to Corruption Issues Through the Media

Level of Exposure to Corruption Issues	N	Mean Rank (Personal Integrity)	Mean Rank (Anti-Corruption Attitude)
Never	33	49.12	49.74
Seldom	46	56.09	54.14
Always	23	61.63	64.54
Very Often	9	66.39	66.61
Total	111		
Kruskal-Wallis H		3.208	4.369
df		3	3
Asymp. Sig. (p)		0.361	0.224

6.0 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the results of this study prove that the level of personal integrity and attitude to reject corruption among students of Sultan Mizan Zainal Abidin Polytechnic are at a high level and show a strong positive relationship between the two. Although the analysis shows no significant difference according to gender, department or level of exposure to corruption issues, the mean pattern that increases with the frequency of media exposure shows the great potential of media as a value education tool that cannot be underestimated. This finding emphasizes that the formation of integrity and the ability to reject corruption is more influenced by the effectiveness of value education, organizational culture, and social experience than demographic factors alone. This also illustrates the effectiveness of the institutional approach in implementing a culture of integrity in polytechnics as a comprehensive and ethical learning ecosystem.

To ensure the sustainability of the culture of integrity among students, several suggestions are put forward. First, anti-corruption modules such as the MPU22071 course should be reviewed periodically so that their content remains relevant to current corruption issues and the actual context of the industry and society. Second, ethical values and integrity need to be integrated into all technical and practical courses so that the appreciation of values becomes part of students' daily practices. Third, institutions are advised to utilize social media, documentaries, and interactive materials as an ongoing approach in strengthening anti-corruption awareness. Next, collaboration with the MACC and local communities through workshops, corruption case simulations, and integrity campaigns can increase students' practical understanding of real ethical issues. Finally, further research is recommended to evaluate mediating factors such as religious values, moral empathy, and peer influence on the relationship between integrity and anti-corruption attitudes. Overall, the formation of a corruption-free generation requires a systemic and transformational approach that not only emphasizes theoretical knowledge, but also the appreciation of integrity values in the actions and culture of the educational organization itself.

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