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MANAGEMENT AND THE LONG-TERM MECHANISM FOR COMBATING CORRUPTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS OF ANHUI PROVINCE IN CHINA

МЕНЕДЖМЕНТ ТА ДОВГОСТРОКОВИЙ МЕХАНІЗМ БОРОТЬБИ З КОРУПЦІЄЮ У ВИЩИХ НАВЧАЛЬНИХ ЗАКЛАДАХ ПРОВІНЦІЇ АНЬХОЙ В КИТАЇ

Summary. In recent years, many corruption cases have emerged in the higher education institution system of Anhui Province, which has had a negative impact on society. There are four reasons for these corruption cases: (1) Higher education institution leaders have not established a correct view of power, performance, and professionalism; (2) The power of top higher education institution leaders is overly concentrated, and resources are excessively abundant; (3) The appointment and mobility of higher education institution officials are not standardized; (4) The supervision of leading cadres in higher education institutions is not strong enough. In order to further prevent corruption cases in our province's higher education institutions, it is recommended to implement the following seven mechanisms: (1) Strengthen ideological education on anti-corruption and integrity; (2) Strengthen constraints on the power of higher education institution party secretaries and presidents; (3) Strengthen supervision of decision-making on 'major issues' in higher education institutions; (4) Strengthen supervision of the 'three no direct responsibilities' for school leaders; (5) Enhance job exchanges among higher education institution officials; (6) Strengthen inspections and

audits of higher education institutions; (7) Strengthen supervision and enforcement of higher education institution discipline.

Keywords: management, open education, quality of education, higher education, fight against corruption, mechanism.

Formulation of the problem. In recent years, there have been several cases of corruption among major higher education institution leaders in the higher education system of Anhui Province, China, which is worth pondering. Why is corruption occurring among the main leading cadres of the higher education system in Anhui Province? How to prevent similar corruption from happening again? Fortunately, we found the answer from the perspectives of the following two outstanding figures. More than 100 years ago, the British political theorist John Emerich Edward Dalberg-Acton pointed out that "power leads to corruption, and absolute power leads to absolute corruption"; Today, Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee, emphasized that "it is necessary to strengthen the restraint and supervision of the

operation of power, put power in the cage of the system, and form a punishment mechanism that does not dare to be corrupt, a prevention mechanism that cannot be corrupted, and a guarantee mechanism that is not easy to corrupt.” It can be seen that we should further improve the supervision and management system of the higher education system in Anhui Province and strengthen the supervision and restraint of the power of the main leading cadres of higher education institutions, so as to effectively curb the occurrence of corruption in the higher education system in Anhui Province.

Analysis of the latest research and publications.

In a comprehensive analysis, Wang Xiaoyan [7] examines the strengthening of anti-corruption and integrity-building efforts in higher education from four key perspectives: enhancing the understanding of anti-corruption issues, promoting clean governance, intensifying ideological and political education on anti-corruption, and strengthening institutional management and the establishment of a robust supervisory and restraint system. Zhao Bi [12] focuses on the creation and refinement of an evaluation system to bolster anti-corruption and integrity initiatives in higher education. This perspective, however, is limited to a post-hoc analysis of oversight mechanisms concerning anti-corruption efforts within these institutions. Xia Ying [9] explores the interconnections between ideological and political education and system improvement, the link between rewarding integrity and punishing corruption, the relationship between leadership at different hierarchical levels, and the connection between campus-based and off-campus integrity education. These aspects are all considered crucial for enhancing anti-corruption and integrity work in higher education institutions. Fan Wei [5] proposes a four-pronged approach to strengthening anti-corruption and integrity efforts in higher education. The author highlights the importance of upholding Party leadership, reinforcing ideological and political education, establishing and improving a system of supervision and restraint, and enhancing the quality of discipline inspection and supervisory teams within these institutions. Finally, Li Xue and Meng Tong [6] present a three-fold perspective on advancing anti-corruption and integrity work in higher education. Their views emphasize improving the quality of discipline inspection and supervisory teams, intensifying political oversight, and strengthening disciplinary control and law enforcement within higher education institutions.

Highlighting previously unresolved parts of the overall problem. It can be seen from the above that the above authors not only did not analyze the

reasons for the occurrence of corruption in higher education institutions, but also did not point out the special basis of legal nature for strengthening the anti-corruption and integrity work in higher education institutions, did not point out the main objects of supervision and restraint in higher education institutions, did not point out the main content of supervision and restraint on higher education institutions, and did not point out the main methods of supervision and restraint on higher education institutions. This article addresses the limitations of the aforementioned authors' viewpoints by analyzing the root causes of corruption in higher education institutions. Specifying the legal and institutional framework for strengthening anti-corruption and integrity efforts, namely the Higher Education Law of the People's Republic of China and the Regulations on the Work of Grassroots Organizations in Ordinary Higher Education Institutions of the Communist Party of China. Identifying the primary subjects of supervisory management and restraint within higher education institutions as the Party Secretary and the President. Defining the core content of supervision and restraint as the “three key decisions”. Categorizing the principal methods of supervision and restraint, which include the “three non-direct accountability” method and a method for strengthening personnel rotation and exchange.

Statement of the task. In China, generally speaking, in order to curb the occurrence of an undesirable phenomenon, it is necessary to first analyze the cause of this undesirable phenomenon, and then find a solution to the problem from this cause. In the same way, in order to curb corruption in higher education institutions in Anhui Province, it is necessary to first analyze the many reasons for corruption in higher education institutions in Anhui Province, and then find countermeasures for the long-term anti-corruption mechanism of higher education institutions in Anhui Province based on these reasons. This paper analyzes four reasons for corruption in higher education institutions in Anhui Province, and then puts forward seven countermeasures for the long-term anti-corruption mechanism of higher education institutions in Anhui Province.

Summary of the main material. In recent years, there have been several corruption cases in higher education institutions in Anhui Province of China. Reasons for corruption in higher education institutions in Anhui Province. From the above five typical cases, it can be seen that in our higher education institution system in Anhui Province: 1. Whether it is an undergraduate higher education

institution or a junior college, its leading cadres may be corrupt; 2. Whether it is a full-time cadre at the higher education institution level or a deputy cadre at the higher education institution level, it may also be corrupt; 3. Whether it is higher education institution-level cadres or middle-level cadres, they can also be corrupt.

Through research, it is found that there are four reasons for corruption in higher education institutions in Anhui Province (see Figure 1 below).

Affected by erroneous ideologies such as “exquisite life” and “gratification in time”, some young cadres do not think about hard work and make contributions in their jobs, and do not establish the correct view of power, political performance, and career of leading cadres in higher education institutions. The “top leaders” (Party Committee Secretaries and Higher education institution Presidents) in higher education institutions often wield significant influence over human resources, administrative authority, and financial control. In such circumstances, some higher education institution leaders may exploit their administrative power for personal gain, facing corruption risks stemming from practices like “one-pen approval for spending, one-word decisions for appointments, and autocratic decision-making.” Given the relatively independent nature of higher education institutions, if key administrators-especially top leadership-remain unchecked during decision-making processes, it could lead to corrupt

officials indulging in luxury lifestyles and sensory pleasures. These individuals might abuse their power, sliding into the abyss of corruption when driven by insatiable desires. Higher education institutions have the characteristics of “small society and large grassroots”, with a large number of people and complex relationships with classmates, classmates, and fellow villagers, which belongs to a typical “acquaintance society”. Some higher education institution presidents have been serving in one unit for a long time, and their interests are intertwined, which is prone to problems. At the government department level, the Provincial Department of Education manages 31 public undergraduate higher education institutions and 9 public junior higher education institutions. These higher education institutions are not only numerous, but also scattered in various cities in the province, resulting in the provincial Department of Education not being able to supervise. At the same time, higher education institutions are relatively closed, all of which are on-campus supervision (lack of social supervision), and it is difficult for on-campus supervision to supervise the higher education institution leaders.

At the level of higher education institution-level special supervision agencies, the supervision of higher education institution-level leaders is not strong enough. The investigation of some higher education institution secretaries and presidents confirms that there are weak links and huge

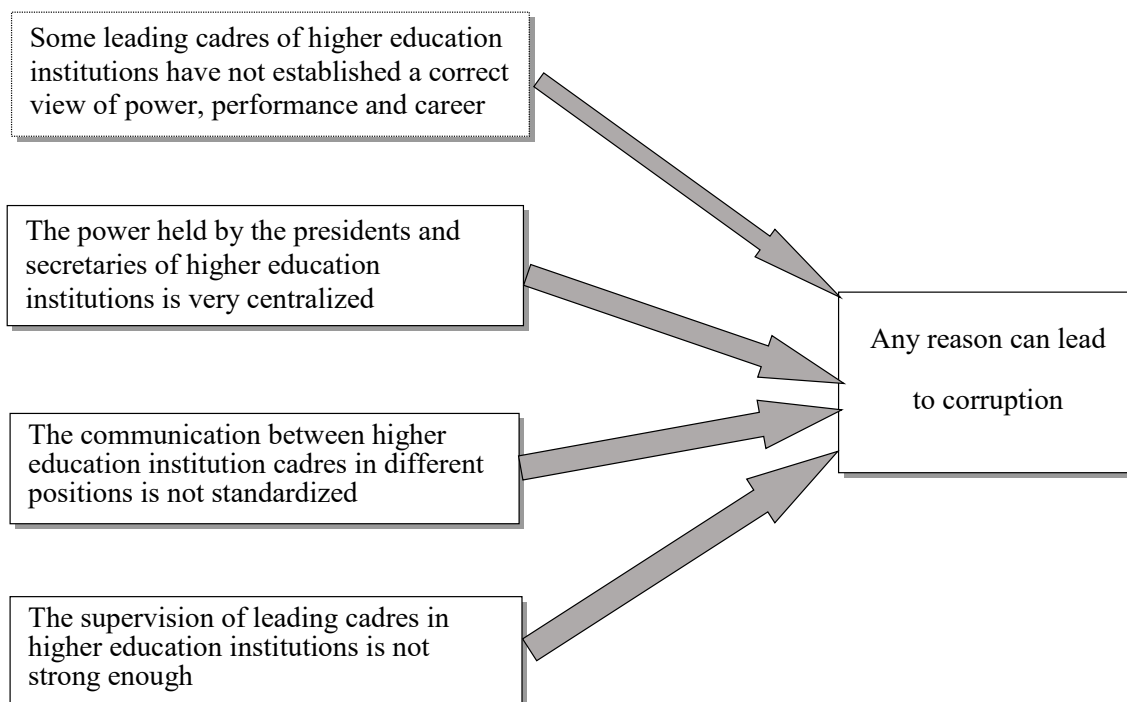


Figure 1. Causes corruption in higher education institutions in Anhui Province

Source: generated by the author

loopholes in the supervision of discipline inspection and supervision institutions in higher education institutions, and the supervision and accountability of higher education institution discipline inspection commissions are often loose, loose and soft. Some higher education institution discipline inspection and supervision institutions are prone to being trapped in the small environment and microclimate of higher education institutions, with few personnel and weak professional capabilities. Some higher education institutions use discipline inspection and supervision cadres in mixed positions, lack of professional ability, and have the problem of not daring to supervise and unwilling to supervise ideologically. The internal power structure of higher education institutions is relatively centralized, the discipline inspection and supervision system lacks relative independence and rigid guarantees, and it is difficult for peer-level supervision and lower-level supervision to play a full role [10].

At the level of the higher education institution's second-level special supervision agency, the discipline inspection and supervision work of the party organizations of some second-level institutions is not very solid, and many of the discipline inspection members of the party organizations of the higher education institution's second-level institutions are full-time teachers, who are not familiar with the supervision and enforcement of discipline, and are very close to the majority of faculty and staff in terms of interpersonal relationships and emotions, making it difficult to effectively play a supervisory role.

At the same time, the democratic supervision of the Education Congress is ineffective. Some higher education institutions are not transparent enough on issues of great concern to faculty and staff, such as funding expenditure, personnel appointment reform, and major project construction, and only inform the executive committee of the higher education institution education congress of the relevant situation, but not to the representatives of the education congress. Therefore, the substantive participation of the representatives of the higher education institution education congress is insufficient, coupled with the information asymmetry, the democratic supervision effect of the higher education institution education congress is ideal.

The next step is to formulate proposals for a long-term mechanism for anti-corruption work in higher education institutions in Anhui Province. In Western, as early as more than 100 years ago, British political theorist John Emerich Edward Dalberg-Acton, after a long study of history, concluded:

“Power leads to corruption, and absolute power leads to absolute corruption” [11].

In China, in recent years, the General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee has repeatedly emphasized, “We say that locking power in the cage of the system means that it is the power to be legal, regulated, controlled, and supervised” [2].

The essence of corruption in higher education institutions in Anhui Province is power derailment and behavior deviation, and many corruption problems are related to unscientific power allocation, irregular use, and inadequate supervision. Therefore, to restrain and supervise the power of leading cadres in higher education institutions, while strengthening anti-corruption and clean education, the most fundamental thing is to improve the power allocation and operation restraint mechanism. The following are countermeasures and suggestions for the long-term mechanism of anti-corruption work in higher education institutions in Anhui Province from seven aspects (see Figure 2).

The primary task of party style and clean government education is to clarify the educational goals, that is, to enhance the awareness of integrity and self-discipline of party members and cadres, and to build a solid ideological defense line against corruption and degeneration. In addition, leading cadres in higher education institutions will be tested on anti-corruption and integrity knowledge, and they can continue to serve after passing the examination. In terms of education methods, we should make full use of modern information technology means, such as online classrooms, online live broadcasts, short videos, etc., to make education more vivid, intuitive and convenient. The main idea is to strengthen the system of checks and balances on the power of party secretaries and university presidents to combat corruption effectively. This is achieved by clearly defining their respective roles and responsibilities, strictly adhering to procedural rules for decision-making, and implementing robust oversight mechanisms. The goal is to ensure transparency and accountability in the governance of higher education institutions, thereby reducing opportunities for malfeasance.

The fight against corruption in higher education institutions is fundamentally based on strengthening oversight of decision-making processes, specifically the “Three Major and One Big” framework. This concept encompasses the collective decision-making on critical issues such as strategic development, personnel appointments, major projects, and significant financial expenditures.

To ensure transparency and prevent malfeasance, these decisions must be the result

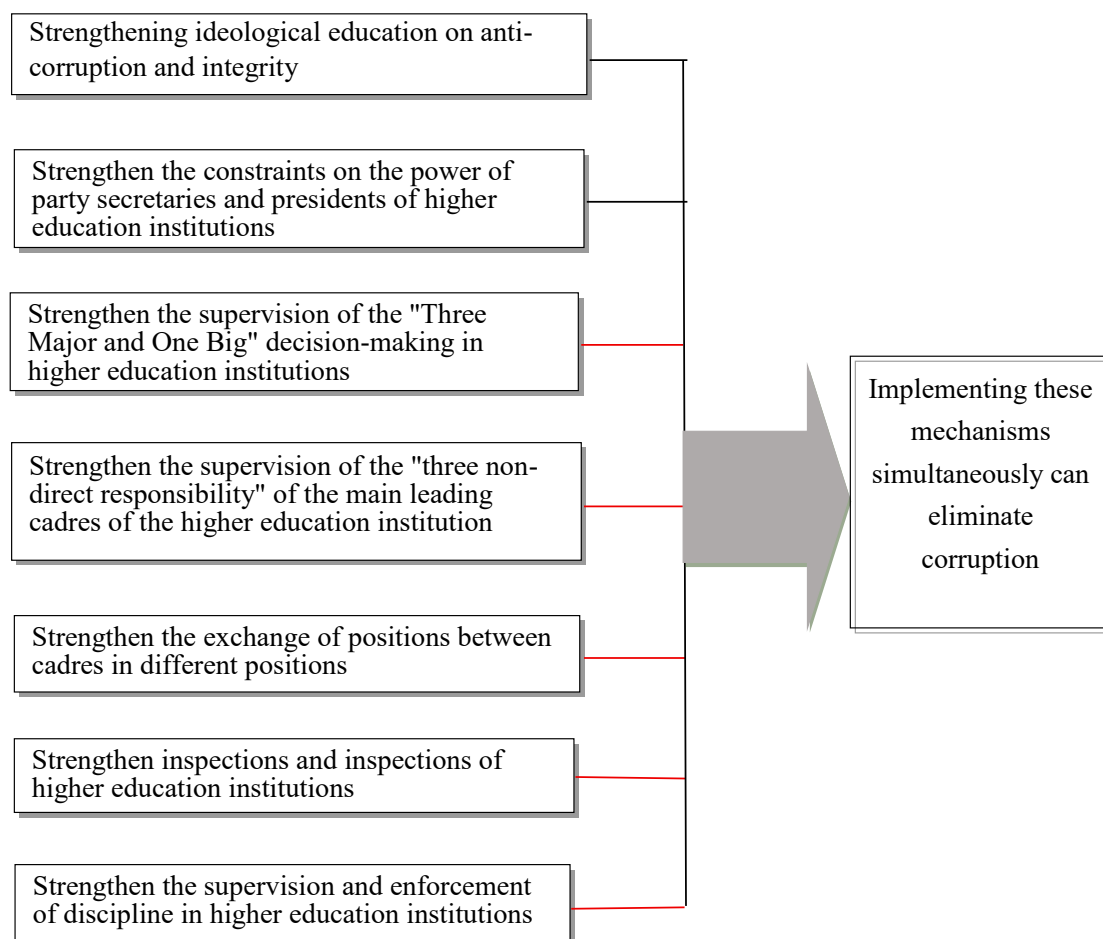


Figure 2. Suggestions on the Long-term Mechanism for Anti-Corruption

Source: generated by the author

of in-depth analysis and extensive deliberation, and they must be approved at meetings following established procedures. A crucial element is also the implementation of accountability mechanisms, which include systems for information disclosure, reporting, and decision evaluation. This approach thus provides a systematic control that limits opportunities for illicit activities [8].

The core idea is to combat corruption in higher education institutions by implementing structural and personnel reforms. The primary method involves establishing a “three non-direct responsibility” system, which prohibits top leaders (the party secretary and president) from directly overseeing key departments like personnel, finance, and infrastructure. This decentralizes power, allowing leaders to focus on strategic development while preventing the concentration of authority that can lead to corruption. Furthermore, the text advocates for a cadre exchange system to prevent the formation of “acquaintance societies”, which are breeding grounds for corruption. By regularly rotating leading cadres between different departments or institutions, particularly after a

set number of years, this approach disrupts long-standing relationships and enhances oversight, thereby promoting accountability and transparency in the management of higher education [9].

To strengthen the construction of clean government in higher education institutions, it is necessary to further clarify the functional positioning, responsibilities and authority of discipline inspection and supervision institutions in higher education institutions, highlight political supervision, strengthen discipline inspection responsibilities, give supervision power, and ensure full coverage of supervision and enhance the effectiveness of supervision. Of course, the focus is on the inspection and supervision of the party secretary and president of higher education institutions. The party secretary and president of higher education institutions play the most important role in all aspects of the higher education institution's work. Most of the problems in higher education institutions can be attributed to the lack of attention paid to the members of the leadership team, especially the “top leader”. It is necessary to find the entry point for higher education institutions

to implement the “three major ones”. In the decision-making stage of the “three major issues” of higher education institutions, it is necessary to grasp the “three links” of soliciting opinions before decision-making, deliberation principles in decision-making, post-decision-making notification and situation feedback, supervise and inspect the scientificity, rationality and feasibility of soliciting opinions, the democracy of collective deliberation, the scope of notification and the effectiveness of feedback. It is necessary to give full play to the supervisory role of the masses. It is necessary to carry out in-depth openness of party and government affairs in higher education institutions, and promptly disclose the higher education institution's “triple and one” decision-making process to all teachers and students through meeting minutes and videos. Improve and ensure the supervisory role of the executive committee of the higher education institution education congress, and carefully listen to the opinions and suggestions of teachers and students on the reform and development of the higher education institution. Improve the reporting channels for faculty and staff, protect the personal information of anonymous whistleblowers of faculty and staff, and severely punish leading cadres who retaliate against whistleblowers [13].

In the academic context, an effective strategy for combating corruption in higher education institutions necessitates a substantial reinforcement of disciplinary oversight and enforcement. This approach requires the establishment of independent and highly qualified inspection teams with expertise in law, finance, and auditing. To ensure objectivity and avoid the influence of “acquaintance-based societies,” these personnel must be appointed from outside the institution. It is crucial to guarantee the independence of the secretary of the inspection and supervision commission and the resident inspector from the university's leadership, ensuring they report solely to higher authorities. Furthermore, inspections should be intensified, and prompt action must be taken on detected violations, with the results of investigations made public to create a strong deterrent effect. This will compel leaders to recognize the significant risks associated with corruption, while also encouraging party members and cadres to consistently uphold principles of integrity, ultimately fostering a culture where corruption is deemed unacceptable.

In conclusion, this study confirms that combating corruption in higher education institutions in Anhui Province, as in other regions, necessitates a comprehensive and multifaceted approach. The documented cases of corruption

among leaders point to systemic issues rooted in the concentration of power, a lack of effective oversight, and outdated management mechanisms. The analysis reveals that the primary causes of corruption stem from the excessive authority of “top leaders” (the Party Secretary and President), the insufficient independence of supervisory bodies, and the prevalence of “acquaintance societies” which impede objective oversight. To establish a long-term anti-corruption mechanism, the proposed strategy focuses on three key areas: power decentralization, enhanced supervision, and cadre rotation. Implementing the principle of “three non-direct responsibilities” would limit the direct control of leadership over finances, personnel, and projects, thereby mitigating corruption risks. Simultaneously, it is essential to improve oversight of decision-making by adhering to the “Three Major and One Big” principle, which ensures transparency and collective action. Finally, the regular rotation of leading cadres would dismantle the “breeding ground” for corrupt conspiracies and foster objective governance. In this way, only a systemic reform that integrates institutional and personnel changes can build a reliable barrier against corruption.

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Анотація. У статті досліджено причини корупції серед керівних кадрів вищих навчальних закладів (ВНЗ) провінції Аньхой (КНР) та запропоновано комплексний механізм її запобігання. Актуальність теми зумовлена низкою гучних корупційних скандалів, що свідчать про системні проблеми в управлінні освітньою сферою. У ході дослідження було проаналізовано існуючі наукові підходи до боротьби з корупцією та виявлено їхні недоліки, зокрема відсутність глибокого аналізу першопричин, чіткої правової бази, а також конкретних об'єктів, методів та змісту нагляду. Головна ідея роботи полягає в тому, що корупція є наслідком неконтрольованої влади. Спираючись на цей принцип, дослідження ідентифікує чотири основні причини корупції: ідеологічні та особистісні фактори (недостатнє усвідомлення молодими кадрами принципів доброчесності, що призводить до зловживання службовим становищем), концентрацію влади у «топ-керівників» (секретаря партії та президента ВНЗ), недостатню ефективність внутрішніх та зовнішніх наглядових органів, а також наявність «товариств знайомств» (acquaintance societies), що створює сприятливий ґрунт для корупційних змов та ускладнює об'єктивний нагляд. Для побудови ефективного довгострокового механізму боротьби з корупцією запропоновано сім ключових заходів. Серед них посилення ідеологічної та політичної освіти; децентралізація влади через впровадження принципу «трьох непрямих обов'язків», що обмежує безпосередній контроль керівників над кадровими, фінансовими та інфраструктурними питаннями. Посилення нагляду за прийняттям рішень за принципом «Три основні та одне важливе» (Three Major and One Big), що охоплює колективне вирішення ключових питань; впровадження обов'язкової ротації керівних кадрів для запобігання корупційним зв'язкам; реформування системи дисциплінарного нагляду та забезпечення її незалежності; посилення громадського та демократичного нагляду; розробка ефективних механізмів виявлення та покарання корупційних дій. Запропоновані заходи, що поєднують інституційні та кадрові реформи, дозволять створити надійний, довготривалий бар'єр проти корупції, сприяючи прозорості та ефективності управління у ВНЗ.

Ключові слова: менеджмент, відкрита освіта, якість освіти, вища освіта, боротьба з корупцією, механізм.

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