

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY IN KENYA UNIVERSITIES: USING THE PRISONER'S DILEMMA TO DEVELOP POSITIVE INTERVENTIONS

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### ABSTRACT

This paper explores unethical practices in universities in Kenya, showing the challenges they pose to academic integrity. There has been a rapid expansion of university education in Kenya, even though demand for higher education has plateaued in recent years. The number of qualified students seeking to join private universities, and associated tuition revenue, has declined significantly since 2017 when cheating in high school examinations was eradicated. Some universities have resorted to unethical practices to enroll students and offer programs that have not been accredited by the Commission for University Education (CUE). There is also a growing concern among governments, educators, students, and other stakeholders that unethical practices in higher education is spreading quickly and compromising the integrity of academic programs.

The paper proposes that strategies can be put in place to enhance academic integrity. It does this by considering why individuals act unethically, even though doing so contributes to damaging the credibility of the sector. The idea of the prisoner's dilemma is introduced to explain why it remains in individuals' interest to act in this way. Based on this, we suggest that changes be made to shift the balance of risk and reward. These changes can include efforts to detect unethical behaviour; discourage it through more consistent penalties; and to encourage and reward positive alternatives. We propose that everyone in Higher Education could contribute to these changes, suggesting interventions that could be made by teachers in classrooms; by trainers within universities; and by policy makers nationally.

**Keywords:** - *Unethical Practices, Academic Integrity, Credibility, CUE*