

Leadership Practices and Their Role in White-Collar Crimes in Autonomous Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract

In this 21st century, most world-class universities have excellent educational leaders who follow ethics, equity, integrity, and culture to develop excellent global universities. Unfortunately, many developing countries have recruited toxic leaders who indulge in white-collar crimes and destroy outstanding faculty teams. This research focuses on the growth of toxic leaders and their discrete decisions in recruiting, fixing basic pay, not authorizing exceptional faculty members to bid on global projects, not sharing the project gains, and facilitating the growth of coteries. Thirty cases have been considered from five autonomous institutions from one state. After analyzing the root causes, crimes were identified using toxic leadership theory, routine activity theory, and critical race theory. After conducting a SWOT analysis, appropriate inferences are drawn. Methods to eliminate white-collar crimes have been identified.

Keywords: *White-collar crime, Toxic leadership theory, Routine activity theory, Critical race theory, Strategies to eradicate white collar crime in engineering education*

1. Introduction

In this 21st century, most world-class universities compete with each other in developing human and knowledge capital. Outstanding leaders lead them with ethics, integrity, equity, and culture. Unfortunately, many other institutions are led by toxic leaders who believe in their discretion in making decisions and focus on self-growth [1][4][5][7][9][10][13][15][16][17][18][19][20][21][22][23][25][26][27][28][29][30][36]. Ultimately, they commit unlimited white-collar crimes, which destroy the growth of knowledge capital and human capital. Even though there are many cases of white-collar crimes in business, banking, manufacturing, automobiles, politics, and civil services, there are a few investigated cases in higher education. White-collar crimes in higher education, often characterized as non-violent criminal offenses, are typically committed by heads of institutions in educational institutions. Most of the white-collar crimes in higher destroy the outstanding faculty teams, reducing the quality of higher education programs, and low output in graduates with desirable attributes, a few consultancy projects, and perhaps zero diverse global faculty programs, and minimal Return on Investments (ROI). This phenomenon requires a deep investigation to plan and develop outstanding graduates and highly motivated

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faculty members who can develop innovative graduate and doctoral programs and undertake complex consultancy projects under many international development agencies.

1.1. Statement of the problem

The problem of white-collar crimes in engineering education destroys the high-performing faculty teams and the quality of graduates, and it reduces the faculty's abilities for planning consultancy projects and excellent interdisciplinary researchers. The growth of toxic leaders must be checked, and appropriate remedial measures must be examined. Ultimately, engineering institutions should meet the ever-growing challenges and provide needed human and knowledge capital.

Research Methodology: This paper considers 30 case studies collected from five autonomous institutions and the white-collar crimes committed by 15 toxic leaders. Case studies are verified using the triangulation method. The cases are analyzed, and inferences are drawn and checked against the following three other theories of crime: 1) Toxic Leadership Theory [3][24], 2) Routine Activity Theory [12], and 3) Critical Race Theory. An integrated model has to be developed to identify root causes. A SWOT Analysis has to be undertaken to suggest strategies to resolve white-collar crimes in engineering institutions.

Selection of Cases: The cases were selected based on feedback from faculty members, graduate students, and clients. By studying the cases, the researcher can focus on the transformation of the institute to achieve the vision, generate more human capital and internal revenue, and gain a reputation.

2. Literature survey

The concept of “white-collar crime” was introduced by Edwin H Sutherland in 1930 [29]. According to him, criminal acts are not associated with poverty but with the people of the upper elite class committing more harmful acts due to their social respectability and gain more benefits for themselves. It is essential to study the impact of white-collar crimes in autonomous institutes since there is no closer supervision of the criminals. They are responsible more for the outturn of the best faculty teams and poor placement of graduates. White-collar crimes in higher educational institutions, often characterized as non-violent criminal offenses, are typically committed by individuals in professional environments (National University). White-collar crimes undermine trust. Corrupt members get an unfair advantage through fraudulent activities that disrupt the level playing field for outstanding faculty members.

Further, they contribute to social inequality. Those with political and administrative support have more significant opportunities to evade justice. According to Matt Zbrog [19], the FBI discovered that at least 33 parents of high school students conspired with other individuals to commit bribery and fraud that would facilitate their children’s admission to prestigious colleges and universities. These parents are from the wealthy class.

According to Douglas Oliver [9], engineers are highly esteemed for honesty and ethics, but some engineers commit white-collar crimes and don’t follow ethics. Sagar Sharma and Renu Mahajan [27] stated that white-collar crimes are committed in private educational institutions since the whole authority is in the hands of the owner. When the authorities in autonomous institutions are empowered with academic, administrative, and financial autonomy, many unethical leaders manipulate the selection of faculty members, approve their training programs, share the project gains, reduce the salary to the eligible faculty, and not implement

research programs and consultancy projects, and stop the eligible faculty members' deputation to global institutes for advanced training programs.

White-collar crimes in engineering education are due to the selection of leaders (vice-chancellors, directors, deans, and principals) who have low vision, poor academic ability, incongruence mission, no ethics, no integrity, focus on self-development in all circumstances, and create coteries for support them. Many manipulate the purchases. Some are masters of embezzlement. Some indulge in forgery and take the honorarium through cash payment. Some even forward the externally funded projects to un-refuted organizations. White-collar crimes in many institutions exhibit a clear pattern. These offenders are better educated. White-collar crimes are more complex, requiring more planning [4]. According to the National University, white-collar crimes, despite their non-violent nature, are serious with far-reaching impacts. They can cause massive financial losses, erode trust in institutions, and contribute to social inequality. Emmanuel Erastus Yamoah [11] stated that white-collar crime is increasing in Ghana, and authorities must work untiringly to curb societal effects. Federal Board of Investigation (FBI Report 2007) found that in 2006, white-collar criminals committed a loss of \$300 billion annually in the USA. According to Katie et al. [15], white-collar criminals receive significantly shorter, less severe sentences for their crimes. Klenowski and Dodson [25] found that white-collar offenders usually have a criminal history, including infractions that span the spectrum of illegality. Corruption, fraud, and bribery are some of India's most common white-collar crimes. Greed, corruption, and lack of proper laws to prevent such crimes are the primary reasons behind the growth of white-collar crimes. White-collar crimes in higher education are carried out by highly educated educational leaders and administrators from high levels of society. "White-collar crime in higher education" refers to financially motivated, non-violent crimes committed by educational administrators like vice-chancellors, directors, deans, and principals. The lack of oversight associated with white-collar crimes means they can go undetected forever if the perpetrator does not keep committing the act.

Remarks: Most institutions suffer from white-collar crimes, a worldwide phenomenon. No study considers other previous research on crimes like toxic leader growth, critical race theory, and routine activity theory. Only a few authors have focused on white-collar crimes in higher education.

Why should we focus on Autonomous Institutes?

Toxic leadership in autonomous engineering institutes can indeed lead to white-collar crimes: Toxic leaders, especially those with narcissistic traits, are more likely to encourage fraudulent activities. Their behavior can be far-reaching, affecting not only the financial health of the institution and the morale of its faculty and staff. Institutions must have strong governance structures and accountability mechanisms to prevent and address such issues.

2.1. Fighting corruption in the engineering education sub-sector

Matsheza, Timilsina, and Arutyuova [26] suggested including anti-corruption education through projects or embedding it in curricula, a long-term strategy to change perceptions and behavior. They suggested open and transparent procurement processes that will develop integrity. According to them, participatory monitoring and social accountability initiatives will eliminate corruption. Information and media use, building on information laws, and free access to public information will help reduce leakages. Accountability mechanisms around teacher absenteeism are essential. According to Glendinning et al. [14], corruption in its many forms significantly threatens the integrity of education and research. It undermines the trust

placed in the educational process, devalues academic qualifications, and forces research outcomes to be questioned. All stakeholders interested in quality and standards carry tacit responsibility for identifying, addressing, and helping to eradicate corrupt practices. Strong commitment and leadership on integrity are essential prerequisites for addressing corruption and malpractice within an institution. According to Schmid [10], corruption in higher education is defined as “the lack of academic integrity. According to Kalinowski and Dodson [25], white-collar offenders tend to be more neurotic, less agreeable, and conscientious. According to Sood and Bala [28], white-collar crimes are due to greed, competition, and the absence of laws or punishments. Murial Poisson of the International Institute for Educational Planning [21] stated the magnitude of corruption and fraudulent practices in higher education worldwide. According to him, creating incentives to fight bribery and academic fraud is not easy, particularly in a context where appropriate accountability mechanisms have not counterbalanced the increased autonomy given to universities and where capacities to regulate and control corruption and fraud remain limited.

2.2. Representative cases of white-collar crimes in engineering education institutes [30][31][32][33][34]

- Cash withdrawals from the institute account but not brought to cashbook
- Forging the signature of the external examiner and emblazing the honorarium
- Selection of faculty members based on bribery and preferred categories
- Emblazing the project gains without sharing with the faculty and staff
- Converting personal trips into official trips and getting travel expenditures
- Improper claims in travel bills
- Claiming royalty on books on plagiarized books and prescribing them as textbooks
- Cheating in the approval of land records
- Not paying the prescribed quarter rent
- Not forwarding the applications of the expert faculty members to participate in international working group meetings.
- She is forwarding invitation letters to bid on projects to unqualified external organizations.
- Converting the workshop into personal property for undertaking production without getting approval and sharing the gains with the institute.
- All these white-collar crimes are planned and executed by the toxic leaders. If they are not deducted and resolved, the institute will lose its reputation, and the eligible faculty teams will be discouraged from undertaking innovative programs and projects. These case studies explicitly link them to the research focus.

2.3. Toxic leadership causes white-collar crimes

Winn and Dykes [22] stated that toxic leaders work for themselves or against the goals of their organizations, resulting in a dysfunctional environment. The improper selection of chief executives of organizations causes toxic leaders. Wine and Dykes [3][24][34] stated that yet not all organizations have CEOs or vice presidents who foster a supportive leader-development environment; some are dismissive or even hostile. However, much of the work under the radar of this romanticized ideal of leader development is toxic; leaders who work for themselves or against the goals of their organizations result in a poisonous, dysfunctional environment. According to Winn and Dykes, when a toxic leader creates a hostile workplace, it results in negative but pervasive consequences that adversely affect the subordinate’s

professional and personal life. This covert, destructive behavior is a stressor that costs organizations billions of dollars—worldwide productivity loss. According to Barling [1] and Bowling & Becher [5], the connection between toxic leaders and destructive behaviors necessarily begets many negative consequences. Toxic leaders do not fulfill their promises, but not because they wouldn't meet them if they could.

2.4. The emergence of toxic leaders in higher education institutes

According to Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser [24], toxic leaders need a conducive environment and susceptible followers. Toxic leaders mostly have had poor role models because they personalize power for themselves. They think they must control everything, not realizing that overcontrolling produces toxic effects. Blanca Klahan Acuna and Trevor Male [3] deduced the presence of toxic leadership in Chilean higher education. The specific impact of toxic leadership on the institution has to be studied, focusing on measurable outcomes like faculty turnover, loss of internal revenue, minimum consultancy programs, poor placement of graduates, and loss of impact on human capital development.

2.5. Identification of toxic leaders in higher education institutes

Kim [18] stated that educational leaders who work for their goals may not even know they are doing so. The following are warning signs that make a leader toxic:

- Unwillingness to listen to feedback from outstanding faculty members
- Emphasize their desires and ideas at the expense of any receptivity
- Excessive self-promotion and self-interest
- Always focuses on self-advancement
- Unlimited narcissism
- Lying and inconsistency
- Backtracking or shuffling on rules, norms, and standards
- Lack of moral philosophy
- Rewarding incompetence and lack of accountability
- Cliquishness
- Bullying and harassment

2.5. Critical Race Theory (CRT) [6]

It is an intellectual and social movement and loosely organized framework of legal analysis based on the premise that race is not a natural, biologically grounded feature of physically distinct subgroups of human beings but a socially constructed (culturally invented) category that is used to oppress and exploit people of color. Many toxic leaders in Indian higher education institutions create and maintain social, economic, and political inequalities between upper caste and lower caste.

2.6. Routine Activity Theory (RAT)

Cohen and Felson [8] hypothesized that postmodernity had facilitated the convergence in space and time of likely offenders to commit crimes against suitable targets in the absence of capable guardians. According to them, the opportunity for crime may depend on a configuration of distinct (though not disaggregated) elements of the aggressor or criminal; second, a correlate of the first, that the absence of either of the first two elements (aggressor

and target) or the presence of third (capable guardians) would be sufficient in itself to prevent a potential criminal event. The CEO (Vice-chancellor/Director/Principal/Dean) enjoys academic, administrative, and financial autonomy in higher educational institutes. The institute offers protected space, and it targets faculty members who don't have any support from higher officials or powerful politicians.

2.7. Comparison between Toxic Leadership Theory (TLT), Routine Activity Theory (RAT), and Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Toxic Leadership Theory (TLT) focuses on the behaviors and characteristics of leaders who have a detrimental impact on their followers and organizations. Toxic leaders often exhibit traits such as narcissism, manipulation, aggression, and a lack of empathy. The consequences of toxic leadership include decreased morale, increased stress, and reduced productivity among team members.

Routine Activity Theory (RAT) is a criminological theory that explains how crimes occur due to the convergence of three elements: a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the absence of a capable guardian. It emphasizes the importance of routine activities and how their changes can influence crime rates. The theory suggests that by altering routine activities, the opportunities for crime can be reduced.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is an academic framework that examines the relationship between race, racism, and power/authority. CRT posits that racism is systematic and embedded in local systems and policies rather than being solely a result of individual prejudices. It emphasizes the importance of storytelling and counter-narratives to challenge dominant narratives and highlight the experiences of marginalized groups.

Key Differences

Focus: Toxic Leadership Theory focuses on leadership behaviors and their impact on followers. Routine Activity Theory focuses on the situational factors that lead to crime, and CRT focuses on systematic racism and its effects on society.

Application: Toxic Leadership Theory is applied to organizational and leadership contexts. Routine Activity Theory is used in crime prevention. CRT is applied in legal studies, sociology, and education.

Goals: The goal of Toxic Leadership Theory is to identify and mitigate harmful leadership behaviours, the goal of Routine Activity Theory is to prevent crime by altering routine activities, and the goal of CRT is to challenge systematic racism and provide social justice.

Each theory provides a unique lens to understand and address different issues.

Synthesis

White-collar crimes in higher education were preceded by three other theories on crime, viz, toxic leader theory, critical race theory, and routine activity theory. None of the previous researchers focused on these theories. A broad focus on white-collar crimes in higher education can gather more critical information. In this research, an attempt has been made to draw a broad focus on deviant educational leaders who indulge in white-collar crimes. Thirty case studies were considered to analyze and check against other crime theories.

3. Case studies in white collar crimes

1. Refusing to nominate an outstanding faculty as an intern in a foreign university when he was selected based on his exceptional performance in an international technical working group meeting.

2. Advising the expert selection committee members not to select the fully qualified and well- accomplished faculty member
3. Reducing the pay scale for a new senior post created by the Ministry has been fixed based on the recommendations of an expert committee, but all the institutions have implemented it.
4. Not reliving a selected assistant professor to join an international faculty development program whose application was duly sponsored by the same Chief Executive Officer (CEO) but no other faculty can replace the selected member
5. The director has posted a professor of continuing education under a professor who is neither connected with the project nor qualified
6. For the selection of the dean's post, no advertisement was released, but one unqualified faculty member was recommended and selected alone.
7. For a principal's post, the credentials of an outstanding candidate were mutilated in the comparative statement, and the selection committee members were informed not to select that candidate.
8. Under the national level selection, one newly elected member was offered a pension benefit, which was there, but two internal candidates were denied since they opted to be in another scheme in the previous post.
9. When a qualified professor has applied to participate in a professional meeting held by an international organization, his application was transmitted after the closure of the due date.
10. When an outstanding professor prepared a bid document to plan a summer school for NRIs graduates, the director did not forward it to the client.
11. When a professor sent his research papers to an international conference, they were accepted, and he was selected to receive the funding for travel. The director didn't permit him to attend the meeting.
12. When an outstanding professor prepared a bid document for a project assessing the competencies of the Managing Directors (MDs) of ordnance factories under the Defence Ministry, the director did not forward his proposal.
13. After the completion of an externally funded project, the professor submitted a proposal to share the project gains as per the norms. The director didn't process it but took all the gains later.
14. An industry representative suggested forwarding the curriculum of a postgraduate program so that he can evaluate it and include the graduates in the company's selection list. The director has not forwarded the same to that company.
15. The institute's director decided not to develop the institute, and he feared it would not meet the standards.
16. The principal of an autonomous institute selected an unqualified faculty for a senior post and screened the qualified faculty. This qualified faculty filed a writ petition and won the case.
17. The director of an institute didn't allow the most qualified faculty to conduct a faculty development program. Still, he entrusted the same to an unqualified faculty member and joined the team to perform the training program.
18. A director of an autonomous institute changed the approved qualification for faculty members and selected unqualified faculty members. The qualified faculty members filed writ petitions and won the case.

19. The head of the department converted the mini workshop into his company's production unit but never obtained permission nor paid the service charge as per the norms.
20. A director of an institute claimed advance from the client institute for visiting and providing recommendations for development, but he never visited that institute.4.21. A director has left for a foreign visit, and the senior professor has taken over the post of director in charge. An engineering college requested that the director-in-charge review the proposal to develop the institute, and he obtained permission from the chairman of the Board of Governors and offered his suggestion. When the director returned, he said he should have only gotten his permission.
21. A director will get travel expenditures from the parent institute and not attend any consultative meeting held at the headquarters. Still, he will undertake consultancy work for three colleges with a national council and get travel expenditures from them.
22. A professor will not take up any development work but will not be available at his office. He will utilize the van for his personal use only.
23. A director will propose the names of the unqualified faculty members from his consortium for all development works.
24. A director wanted to be selected for a foreign assignment, but he didn't circulate the letter of invitation to the faculty. Meanwhile, another institute circulated a letter of invitation (LOI) to its faculty members, and one of them was selected.
25. Purchasing an interactive video system for management programs which is not meeting the needs of educational management program
26. Claiming travel allowances for fictitious official purposes.
27. Demanding bribes from the faculty
28. Demanding a job for the son of the director by reducing the institutional fee for conducting an employee development program
29. Sanctioning leave beyond five years based on a hefty bribe from a faculty member who decided to stay in a foreign institution.

3.1. Analysis of cases [30][31][32][33][34]

Table 1. Norms, desired action, possible reasons for discretion

Case No.	Norms	Desired Action	Possible Reasons for Discretion and Deviation	White-Collar Crime
1	Nominate since the institute is one of the Associated Institutes of UNESCO's Asian Center for Educational Innovation for Development (ACEID), Bangkok, Thailand.	There is no financial commitment, & Globalization is one of the missions.	Racial discrimination, the head of the institute visited that country more than 4 times.	Equity and ethics were not followed. Globalization will be affected.
2	Let the expert committee evaluate and recommend the candidate.	An outstanding internal candidate with considerable accomplishments needs to be recommended.	Fear for outstanding faculty members, Racial discrimination, Poor vision.	A citizen's constitutional rights have been violated—poor quality experts in the selecting committee.
3	The government has fixed the pay scale.	It has to be implemented since	Racial discrimination. Fear	The constitutional rights of a citizen

		the director has no authority to reduce the same.	for the outstanding candidate. Least respect for norms and rules.	have been violated. The candidate should have filed a writ petition.
4	When the application was forwarded, the need for foreign training was considered.	Should have been relieved with pay. No other candidate can be substituted.	Racial discrimination. Not interested in the institute's growth. I could have expected a bribe.	The right of the faculty has been denied. S/he can avail 5 years leave for training or employment.
5	The professor was selected based on his accomplishments.	Can't dilute the working hours. Dual responsibility will dilute the performance.	Delegation of responsibility is reduced. To support other department activities.	This is a torture. Candidates can appeal to the Board of Governors under the grievance redressal.
6	As per the recruitment rules, every post should be advertised.	Based on the prescribed quality, the best candidate has to be selected.	Based on the bribe received or protecting the consortium member.	Faculty members can file a writ and look for the judgment.
7	There is room for mutilating the credentials.	All qualifications and achievements should be included in the comparative statement.	Corruption. The selected candidate could have brought political pressure. Should have bribed the CEO.	The discriminated candidate can file a writ petition.
8	All the selected members on the national level have the same rights to get pension benefits.	Grant pension benefits without any discrimination.	Corruption. Racial discrimination.	The constitutional rights are violated. Need to seek justice through a writ petition.
9	The application should have been sent either by email or speed post.	Permit the faculty to send an advanced copy without any delay. Provide a 'No objection certificate' to attend the interview.	Hating the qualified faculty members. I could have expected a bribe.	The director wanted to stop, so he sent the application after the due date. The institute lost a golden opportunity to participate in the program.
10	All the national institutes have been approved to send project proposals.	The director has to review the proposal and suggest needed improvements, and then he has to forward it to the Ministry for Overseas Indian Community (OIC).	He has circulated the proposal to all the departments, and no one has opposed it. A few wanted to join the program.	The director wanted to downgrade the faculty and the institute. It is unethical and goes against the vision of the institute.
11	The director has to approve the paper presentation. Acceptance indicates the quality.	Each faculty contributes to the knowledge capital. The paper is based on innovations that UNESCO wants to share with other countries.	The director desired to prevent the faculty from getting recognition. His cognitive ability and vision are revealed now. The faculty is a coordinator of UNESCO's project.	In the long run, the reputation of the institute will be lost. The damage can't be corrected. Globalization efforts will be lost.
12	This institute has developed a reputation for assessing the	The director could have discussed the previous projects and	He is not an expert in organizational change and	The institute has lost an opportunity to show its strength in

	competence of MDs.	the solutions offered. Rejecting the proposal is not desired.	development. He never delegated needed authority to the professor.	solving the problem. Revenue is lost.
13	Fifty percent of the project gains must be remitted to the institute, and the balance must be shared by the members who worked.	The accounting department has to check the proposal and suggest following the sharing norms per the rules.	The director wanted to take all the project gains.	The institute and the project faculty lost the due share. Embellishment is a serious white-collar crime.
14	The institute should have utilized this opportunity to place the graduates.	The course director's initiatives were not approved. It shows the poor leadership of the director.	The director's vision is limited, and the program will be downgraded.	This is one form of the white-collar crime. The future of the graduates was obstructed.
15	Every institute has to develop based on strategic planning and government policy.	The director has to develop a strategic plan for the institute's growth. He has to implement the government policy.	His leadership is limited, and he would have felt that some new director would replace him.	Total loss to human capital development. The competitiveness of the nation will be reduced.
16	Faculty selection will only be based on accomplishments, achievement motivation, and attitude.	The faculty's application should have been assessed, and the strengths of the faculty should have been identified and compared with the job specification.	Pessimistic view of the candidate. Fear for their leadership. Inbuilt view of racial discrimination. I may be interested in a coterie.	Total loss to the leadership strength. Retention of the outstanding faculty will be difficult—a severe white-collar crime.
17	The best faculty with all attributes and cognitive ability alone can offer the program.	Per the rules, he should have forwarded the invitation letter to the expert and approved the program.	Snatching and giving the program to an unqualified faculty would be a sin.	Loss to the knowledge capital development. This is a typical white-collar crime.
18	No director can change the qualification prescribed in the Service and Recruitment Rules.	The screening committee should have checked the credentials, accomplishments, and evaluation reports.	Selecting faculty members who didn't possess prescribed qualifications is a criminal offense.	The affected candidates filed writ petitions and won the cases. The court has fined the director. This is a strong white-collar crime.
19	The Head of the Department (HOD) should have got approval from the director for any personal work and pay the service charge to the institute.	The HOD should have sent an estimation to the director and received approval before utilizing the mini workshop.	Taking authority and not following the norms and rules. He thinks that no one deducts and informs the director.	White-collar crime. Punishable by the institute.
20	The director has to get the approval of the Board of Governors for any project, and only then can he take it in advance.	The director should have submitted the proposal to the board. In the case of a foreign project, he should get clearance from the Ministry of Education.	I assumed that no one could deduct the crime and report it to the authorities.	Pure white-collar crime and punishable under the law.
21	The director-in-charge is empowered to make	The in-charge director obtained	The director, who was on a foreign	The director is at fault. When the

	day-to-day decisions.	approval from the chairman.	visit, couldn't demand to get approval from him only.	chairman of the board approves, it is a legitimate process.
22	The director is expected to attend the meeting held at the Ministry of Education.	The director has to attend the meeting. If needed, he can take another senior professor for assistance.	Corrupt behavior. He can't take bribes to solve the problems of private institutes.	Punishable under law. Violation of conduct rules. Strong white-collar crime.
23	It is compulsory to do the assigned work, such as taking classes, conducting tests, preparing curricula, conducting research, guiding research scholars, and publishing papers.	A professor can choose courses based on their expertise and conduct them. Further, they must propose research projects, guide research scholars, and publish papers. Offer consultancy projects.	I am not qualified as per the norms and do not have the expertise to conduct research. They may be exceptional heads and will allocate work to the juniors and claim leadership.	These non-performing heads of the departments will maintain an excellent rapport with the director and may feel that he/she is a supervisor. They will claim all authority for work.
24	The director has to entrust the development work to the faculty based on their expertise.	The expertise of the faculty members, projects completed, papers published, courses offered, and ongoing works are to be known to the director.	Proposing the names of unqualified faculty is due to the counterproductive growth of informal organizations.	This is also a white-collar crime. The director feels his discretion can't be questioned.
25	The Ministry of Education sends A Letter Of Invitation (LOI) to get the appropriate candidate.	The head of the institute has to circulate the LOI to all departments and collect applications. Then, they can forward the same to the Ministry of Education.	If he does not circulate the LOI, it is not his discretion. He can also send his application if he has the required qualifications and experience.	This is a white-collar crime since deviating from the rules and misusing authority.
26	There should be expressed needs for a system/ equipment/machine relevant to the learners for all purchases.	The director should have constituted a team of experts to assess the utility of the interactive video system, its cost, the type of lessons, and capability.	Purchasing this interactive video system by spending millions of rupees is not advisable. He is ignorant of the higher education administration curriculum.	When the equipment was useless, the public money of several million was wasted. This is a white-collar crime.
27	Travel expenditure is approved only for official trips.	The director has no authority to plan personal trips and claim travel costs.	Misuse of administrative and financial autonomy.	This is a white-collar crime.
28	The director cannot demand bribes from the faculty members to meet any personal expenditure.	The director will get his share of the project gains per the norms.	No ethics. Poor leadership. Misuse of administrative position. Autonomy without accountability.	This is a white-collar crime.
29	Course fees are based on the needs assessment, planning by	Reducing the course fee is a loss to the institute. Getting a	Toxic leadership.	It is a typical white-collar crime.

	the expert faculty members, and the resources provided.	job for his son instead of a legitimate revenue is a crime.		
30	Only the country's President is empowered to sanction leave beyond 5 years.	At the end of 4.5 years, the director should have requested the faculty to report for duty before the due date.	This director has not sanctioned leave for one semester for another faculty member to undertake additional courses.	A typical toxic leader who uses his discretion based on personal relations.

3.2. An integrated model for analyzing white-collar crimes

Table 2. An integrated model for analysing white-collar crimes

S. No.	Model	Features	Criminal	Victim
1	Toxic Leadership (Blanca Klahan Acuna & Trevor Male, 2022) [3][18][24]	Toxic leaders work for themselves or against the goals of their institutions, resulting in a dysfunctional environment.	Head of the institute	A faculty without any scaffolding
2	Routine Activity Theory (Marcus Felson and Lawrence E. Cohen, 1979)[12]	Criminals choose places and victims who no one scaffolds.	Head of an organization	A faculty member in an institute during service
3	Critical Race Theory (Britannica, 2023)[6]	The upper caste dominates and discriminates against the lower caste	Upper caste head of an institute	Lower caste faculty member
4	White Collar Crimes (Edwin. H. Sutherland, 1939) [4][7][9][11][13][15][22][23][25][28][29]	A crime committed by a person of high respectability in a profession violates trust.	CEOs of educational institutes	Faculty members

3.3. Classification of white-collar crimes [30 -34]

Table 3. Classification of white-collar crimes based on 30 case studies

Case No.	White-Collar Crime	Toxic Leadership Theory	Routine Activity Theory	Critical Race Theory
1	Not nominating a selected faculty to an International University	Yes	Yes	Yes
2	Advising the experts not to choose a faculty	Yes	Yes	Yes
3	Reducing Basic Pay	Yes	Yes	Yes
4	Not relieving the selected professor	Yes	Yes	Yes
5	Irrelevant Posting	Yes	Yes	Yes
6	Discretion in selecting a dean	Yes	Yes	Yes
7	Suppressing the credentials	Yes	Yes	Yes
8	Denying pension	Yes	Yes	Yes
9	Dispatching after the due date	Yes	Yes	Yes
10	Stopping the bid document	Yes	Yes	Yes
11	Stopping participation in an international	Yes	Yes	Yes

	conference			
12	Stopping the bid document	Yes	Yes	Yes
13	Taking all project gains	Yes	Yes	Yes
14	Stopping the due recognition	Yes	Yes	Yes
15	Not developing the institute	Yes	Yes	Yes
16	Selecting unqualified faculty	Yes	Yes	Yes
17	Snatching the best faculty development program	Yes	Yes	Yes
18	Changing the approved qualification	Yes	Yes	Yes
19	Utilizing the institute workshop for personal use	Yes	Yes	Yes
20	Embezzlement of advance	Yes	Yes	Yes
21	Denying the delegation of authority to a legitimate professor	Yes	Yes	Yes
22	Collecting travel expenditures from multiple institutes	Yes	Yes	Yes
23	Absence from duty	Yes	Yes	Yes
24	Selecting coteries	Yes	Yes	Yes
25	Suppressing the Ministry's vital communications	Yes	Yes	Yes
26	Irrelevant purchase	Yes	Yes	Yes
27	Misuse of travel grants	Yes	Yes	Yes
28	Demanding bribes	Yes	Yes	Yes
29	Demanding a job from a client	Yes	Yes	Yes
30	Stepping beyond authority	Yes	Yes	Yes

Inferences: All thirty cases prove that white-collar crimes are due to toxic leaders and are supported by routine activity theory and critical case theory. All the victims are the most accomplished faculty members. Excellent and balanced experts are needed to evaluate the applicants' credentials for selecting higher cadre faculty members. White-collar crime will increase if a toxic leader joins the institute as chief executive officer.

4. Multiple theories preceded white collar-crimes

Toxic Leadership Theory, Routine Activity Theory, and Critical Race Theory preceded white-collar crimes. Since autonomous institutes are endowed with academic autonomy, administrative autonomy, and financial autonomy, the environment is very conducive for toxic leaders to use their discretion to eradicate high-performing faculty members since they consider that the high-performing faculty will replace them. These toxic leaders never attempt to develop outstanding global programs and interdisciplinary research projects or support developing consultancy project proposals under international development agencies. They always help their coteries since they support them. In the case of internal revenue generation, they would take all project gains without sharing them with the project team members as per norms. They coerce the faculty and keep them under control. Unfortunately, they were supported by the Board of Governors since they never focused on the needed growth of human and knowledge capital. Most of the chairpersons are from industry. They never earned the abilities required in higher education development, institutional evaluation, global networking of the universities, and interdisciplinary research. No board member is focused on the internal academic environment. Many victims filed the cases and won them. High-performing faculty members don't seek external support from powerful higher authorities or politicians. They focus on their research programs, publications, and bidding for consultancy projects.

4.1. Growth of toxic teams [31][32][34]

Most toxic members were not qualified as per the norms and standards. They follow the line of least resistance and support the toxic leaders to get all service benefits. When one toxic leader leaves the organization, they look for another toxic leader. Sometimes, they scaffold the new toxic leader to destruction. These faculty members avoid all higher education challenges and update their knowledge. They become burned out soon. They never accomplish any high-level achievements.

4.2. Desired changes in the higher educational administration [33]

The institutes headed by toxic leaders lose their reputations, and internal revenue generation stops. The internal revenue generation depends on excellent faculty teams and their achievement motivation. This leads to poor Return on Investments (ROI). The regional competitiveness reduces. No foreign direct investment is possible in product design and prototype development. Unemployment increases. In this 21st century, the success of a growth economy depends on excellent higher education institutions, a conducive internal academic environment, and encouragement offered to the faculty members. The Board of Governors should facilitate a happy educational environment in higher education institutions to sustain outstanding performance by well-accomplished faculty teams.

Further, the board must focus on facilitating tenured faculty members' global leadership competencies to create higher education without borders. The leaders should create an inspiring culture of appreciation for high-performing faculty members and students. The board should select leaders with equity, integrity, ethics, humility, and outstanding culture in the development of world-class institutions. Outstanding faculty teams need protection against a toxic environment. Appropriate strategies are required to resolve toxic leadership actions in higher education institutions that impede faculty performance and innovation.

4.3. Eradication of white-collar crimes [31][32][34]

The following steps are recommended to eradicate white-collar crimes in higher education: The Board should select leaders with equity, integrity, ethics, humility, and outstanding culture. The board can constitute an inquiry committee headed by a retired judge to resolve the toxic leaders' actions. Every semester, the board should get feedback from all faculty members and students on the prevailing culture and difficulties they face in executing projects and research programs. White-collar crimes must be investigated, and legal actions must be taken. No CEO's tenure should be extended without assessing and auditing his performance against the standards and norms. The deducted deviations in financial activities will be carefully evaluated against financial rules and laws. Many universities have implemented a rotation of heads of departments once every three years. Many victims filed cases against toxic leaders, and the courts have fined the deviant CEOs, but no follow-up action was taken. This approach must be based on legal follow-up and not need to protect criminal deeds.

5. SWOT analysis

The strengths and weaknesses of the faculty members and the actions of educational administrators are analyzed and presented in Table 4.

Table 4. SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weakness
Autonomous institutes have the freedom to develop outstanding programs.	Toxic leaders usually deny them academic freedom.
Outstanding faculty team utilizes the academic freedom to plan innovative graduate and interdisciplinary doctoral programs.	Many educational administrators who don't have vision will usually obstruct the implementation of these programs.
They have the cognitive abilities to bid for global programs and render service.	Generally, many leaders with tunnel vision will not permit global projects.
They bring substantial internal revenue through royalties, course fees, sponsored research works, And project gains.	Most of the white-collar leaders embezzlement the project gains.
They try to reach the global level of recognized faculty through outstanding research publications and other learning packages.	Many leaders who believe in critical race theories will not allow them to reach global awards.
They possess excellent character and conduct.	White-collar criminals will try to tarnish their character.
They also plan seminars, conferences, and workshops to share the knowledge capital.	Toxic leaders will not permit these.
Generally, they are offered internships and visiting faculty positions in many global universities.	Toxic leaders never permit them to take up internships or visiting faculty positions.
They plan diverse global faculty development programs under various international development agencies (IDAs).	Toxic leaders will not approve diverse global faculty development programs under IDAs.
Outstanding faculty members inculcate needed cognitive abilities in fellow faculty members.	Leaders who believe in critical race theory never permit the development of the faculty teams.

Table 5. Opportunities and threats to the institutions

Opportunities	Threats
Only an outstanding leader focusing on equity, ethics, and integrity can create a mission to develop a global institution.	Under the fast developing and open economy, any foreign university can establish a country-specific institution to grab all outstanding faculty teams.
The 21st century provides many opportunities to bid for consultancy projects under IDAs, MNCs, and MSMEs.	These foreign university campus organizations will win all the consultancy projects.
Only empowered and outstanding faculty teams can offer diverse global faculty development under various IDAs	Under an open economy, these foreign universities will be leaders in attracting all candidates with excellent track records.
Many industries seek assistance from higher education institutes to establish regional executive development units/in-house employee training and development centers.	Institutes that practice white-collar crimes will not be able to get good returns on investment (ROI) in engineering education.
The leaders must create a winning culture for developing innovations in engineering education.	Institutions that toxic leaders head will face many lawsuits and must spend unlimited funds on lawyer fees.
The outstanding faculty need scaffolding, continuous mentoring, and excellent resources to create a world-class institution.	The turnover of excellent faculty will be significant, and it won't be easy to get similar faculty members.

6. Discussion

White-collar crimes have grown in most autonomous institutions. The CEOs assume that they are empowered to make discrete decisions. Many are against the laws, rules, and norms. There is a need for an internal audit. This downgrades the performance of well-accomplished faculty teams and pulls down the attributes of the graduates. The Chief Vigilance Officers (CVOs) of educational institutes need authority to investigate the white collar crimes even

though they are only paper tigers since they are subordinates of the toxic leaders. Critical Race Theory focuses on decisions based on caste, community, religion, language, gender, etc., are to be investigated, and appropriate action should be taken. The toxic leaders are to be controlled as per the law. High-performing faculty teams are to be scaffold. Every quarter, the board should get feedback from the faculty members, and any complaints received should be investigated. There is a need for a faculty handbook that should provide all rules, norms, rights, and administrative procedures. This will guide the faculty members in safeguarding their positions. The best-performing faculty members are to be rewarded based on their excellent contributions.

A. Concrete recommendations for eliminating white-collar crimes due to toxic directors/principals/deans/vice-chancellors:

- **Strengthen Governance Structure:** Plan and implement robust governance frameworks that include checks and balances to prevent abuse of authority. This can involve creating independent audit committees and ensuring transparency in decision-making processes.
- **Ensure Accountability:** Establish clear policies and procedures for reporting and investigating misconduct. Ensure that there are consequences for unethical behavior, including termination and legal action if necessary.
- **Regular Audits:** Conduct internal and external audits to monitor financial transactions and administrative decisions. This can help detect any irregularities early on.
- **Training and Education:** Train administrators and faculty on ethical behavior, legal compliance, and the consequences of white-collar crimes. This can help create a culture of integrity and accountability.
- **Whistleblower Protections:** Implement strong whistleblower protection policies to encourage faculty and staff to report unethical behavior without fear of retaliation.
- **External Oversight:** Engage external bodies, such as standing committee members of the Board of Governors and legal authorities, to oversee the institution's practices and ensure compliance with ethical standards.
- **Promote a Positive Culture:** Foster a positive and inclusive work environment where ethical behavior is rewarded, and toxic behavior is not tolerated. This can help reduce the likelihood of white-collar crimes.

By implementing these measures, autonomous engineering institutes can create a more ethical and transparent environment, reducing the risks of white-collar crimes caused by toxic leaders.

7. Conclusion

White-collar crimes in autonomous engineering institutions are more prevalent than in government institutions. Toxic leaders make discrete decisions using their administrative and financial autonomy. They never follow the rules, laws, and norms. Most of the well-accomplished faculty members are very much affected. These toxic leaders influence selection committee members or the authorities and get selected. Analysis of thirty cases of white-collar crimes indicates that they use their administrative autonomy ruthlessly. Later, they refused to nominate outstanding faculty members for an internship when selected based on their performances in technical working group meetings held by UNESCO's Asian Center for Educational Innovation for Development. They discriminate against the faculty based on language, caste, native state, etc. These indicate that they follow the critical race theory. They

never approve the government-prescribed salary and reduce it. It is based on their toxic leadership. These toxic leaders identify well-performing faculty members who don't have political support. This action coincides with Routine Activity Theory. Based on SWOT analysis, the loss to the engineering colleges and deprivation of faculty members lead to low return on investments. To eradicate such white-collar crimes, the Board of Governors should constitute a standing committee to get feedback from all faculty members before every Board meeting and resolve the case per the conduct rules. Extension of tenure of the toxic leaders should be avoided. The growth of coteries of toxic leaders should be eliminated. Every faculty member should contribute to planning advanced programs and bidding for projects under various projects, research, and publications. Utmost care should be taken to select leaders with equity, ethics, and integrity.

This research established valuable insights into the connection between toxic leadership and white-collar crimes in many autonomous educational institutions. Further, it presents a string case using case studies and theoretical frameworks. The concrete recommendations will prevent the recruitment of toxic leadership mainly responsible for white-collar crimes in educational institutions.

A. Concrete recommendations:

- **Internal Grievance Procedures:** The victims should file a formal complaint through the institute's internal grievance procedures. This can initiate an investigation into allegations of white-collar crimes.
- **Legal Action:** If the internal procedures are ineffective, the faculty members can seek legal action. This involves filing a lawsuit for solving internal crimes.
- **Policy Reforms:** Instituting clear policies on financial matters, selecting learners, recruiting faculty members, bidding for externally funded consultancy projects, sharing the project gains, training the faculty members, and allocating funds for development.
- **Supplying faculty handbooks** with a clear policy framework for all development activities will provide better guidelines for all professional activities.
- **The selection of the best faculty members** with excellent accomplishments, character, and conduct is recommended.
- **A few institutes** have established an internal audit system that audits all purchases and disposal of unserviceable tools, equipment, and machines. This system is recommended for all institutions.

7.1. Limitations in this case study research

This research has focused on five autonomous institutes and only covered fifteen chief educational officers [CEOs like Directors/Deans/Principals]. Through the triangulation process, the statements are verified. The conclusions are not general. However, there is a need to focus on many institutions and CEOs. A statewide study will yield more in-depth and valuable findings since these white-collar crimes are present in many professional institutions.

7.2. Suggestions for future research

It is suggested that state-wide research be undertaken by considering many higher education institutes and professional institutions. The results will be more authentic for wider use. One can establish more significant correctional methods if an interdisciplinary approach

are taken. The results can bring significant changes toward effective planning of the state's higher education system.

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