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ASSESSMENT 2: CASE STUDY REPORT

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TITLE : Corruption Case of Marsam Buhera

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Introduction to Integrity and Anti-corruption

Integrity and anti-corruption are fundamental pillars of ethical behavior and professionalism in any field. The concepts of integrity and anti-corruption are essential to maintaining trust and accountability in the public and private sectors. Integrity refers to the quality of honesty and strong ethical principles, while anti-corruption encompasses measures and practices aimed at preventing, detecting and addressing corrupt activities. These principles ensure that individuals and organizations operate transparently and fairly, maintaining public confidence and creating a level playing field.

The importance of integrity and anti-corruption cannot be overemphasized, especially in a professional environment where ethical behavior has a direct impact on the credibility and operational effectiveness of an organization. Integrity requires individuals to adhere to ethical standards, resist temptation, and act in accordance with their values even when faced with personal or professional pressures. Anti-corruption, on the other hand, involves the implementation of strong systems and practices to deter and address unethical behavior such as bribery, fraud and misappropriation of resources.

The recent case of the director and manager of a college who were fined RM180,000 for making false claims highlights the importance of adhering to integrity and anti-corruption measures in a professional environment. The case highlights that deviation from ethical norms can lead to serious legal consequences and damage an organization's reputation. In this case, College officials were found guilty of submitting false claims for reimbursement, which is not only a violation of personal and professional ethical standards, but also a violation of the law. The substantial fine reflects the seriousness of the misconduct and serves as a reminder of the importance of maintaining integrity and implementing effective anti-corruption measures.

In any work environment, integrity is key to building trust with customers, colleagues and the public. When people work with integrity, it leads to a culture of honesty and accountability in the organization, which in turn enhances the organization's reputation and effectiveness. For example, if a company's employees are honest in reporting work progress and problems, the company will be able to resolve issues in a timely manner, which in turn will increase productivity and customer satisfaction. However, if there is a lack of honesty, or if corruption is not dealt with adequately, the company may face legal penalties, financial losses, and even loss of public trust.

Anti-corruption measures aim to prevent and combat corrupt practices and ensure that organizations operate fairly, transparently and responsibly. These measures include the establishment of strict rules and regulations, regular inspections and the promotion of ethical behavior. For example, if a company has a clear anti-bribery policy in place and regularly audits its finances, the company is better able to prevent bribery from occurring,

which not only protects the company's assets, but also improves operational efficiency and builds a good corporate reputation.

In conclusion, the case of the College officials emphasizes the critical role of integrity and anti-corruption in the professional world. Upholding ethical standards and implementing strong anti-corruption measures are essential to maintaining trust, ensuring fairness and fostering a positive organizational culture. The case serves as a powerful reminder of the consequences of unethical behavior and the importance of upholding the principles of integrity and transparency.

Selection of Case Study

Nowadays, there are various corruption cases happening in the workplace due to people's greed to obtain personal benefits or people being threatened by someone, especially in places of education which are often being overlooked. Thus, we will focus on the case study of a corruption case and crime which are committed by the dean in a college. In 2018, the dean of college, Marsam Buhera has fraudulently disguised the fake documentation as authentic documentation and used it to make a claim in the Eastern College Office Management Supervisor program. He intentionally listed down the incorrect amount of enrolled students which was not matched with the actual number in the documentation so he could use the allowance for personal interest. Eventually, he was penalized to pay RM267, 000 for each charge or face 4 months in jail.

Violation of Human's Welfare

Humans always think that corruption is always far from themselves but actually it is not. This study case is an excellent example for revealing how corruption happens in our daily life and how it can violate human's welfare. Although we might not be able to witness the scene, it does not represent that corruption never happens in our daily life. For our case study, the scene is located at college and the corruption action done by the dean of college has breached human benefits. This is not only risking students' welfare, it also affects the college's reputation and welfare of workers in the college as well. Via this case study, people will know that corruption can be done by any people, in any form and anywhere, even in the education places. Meanwhile, they will also know the importance of protecting human's welfare and take action to prevent the cases of corruption happening in daily life.

Greed of Human Nature

Due to the advancement of technology and quality of life experienced by people, the requirement of humans is getting higher. There are some people who only have limited capabilities to approach high quality of life or fulfill their expected requirements. Thus, they will be greedy and feel dissatisfied over time. In order to immediately reach the goals, they might go off the track and use the illegal way to fulfill their own satisfaction. In our case study, the dean of the college manipulated the student list info to take extra claims from the Eastern College Office Management Supervisor program. Even though he clearly knew that this behavior is not acceptable and illegal, he still kept doing it and owned a fluke mind as he believed that he would not be caught or discovered. In the end of the case, the dean has been caught and penalized seriously. Thus, one of the purposes of this case study is to warn people not to fall into the corruption trap due to the momentary greed.

Misuse of Power

In the workplace, the higher the person's position, the more power he or she has. However, it does not represent that the person with higher power is allowed to abuse the power to do something which ignores their own duties and principles. In our case study, the dean of the college has abused his power to manipulate the data recorded in the claim document and personally took the allowance distributed from the Eastern College Office Management Supervisor program. At the end, he was sentenced by judges and got penalized in the form of money and prison. In short, this case study is also focusing on appealing to people using their power ethically and legally instead of misusing the power to conduct corruption activities or gain personal benefits.

Promote Self-Awareness

Besides understanding the harms of corruption, our selection of this case study is also for promoting self-awareness of people. Only people who have the correct self-awareness mentally are able to prevent themselves from falling into the gulf of corruption. In our case study, the dean of college decided to manipulate data and use fake documentation to get the extra claim from the Eastern College Office Management Supervisor program due to a lack of self-awareness. He did not realize how serious the consequences he may face. Once he gets caught, it is too late and no second chance for him to regret. Thus, this case study can be used to stimulate people's self-awareness towards corruption via enabling them to understand how the corruption may occur in daily life and what consequences if they do so. Via this use case, people may get to know the corruption and do have confidence to protect themselves and cope with corruption seduction.

Overview of the Chosen Case Study

Background Information:

Case study background: The case under scrutiny involves Marsam Buhera, the dean of a college, who was found guilty of committing fraud by submitting false claims to secure government funds. This case has drawn significant attention due to its implications for both institutional integrity and the broader educational sector.

Institutional background: The college where Marsam Buhera served as dean is a well-established educational institution known for its programs in various fields. As an educational institution, it is expected to maintain the highest standards of integrity and transparency, particularly when dealing with public funds. However, this case highlights a grave breach of these standards, impacting not just the college's reputation but also its operational integrity.

Main Events:

1. **Fraudulent Activities:** In 2018, Marsam Buhera was implicated in a scandal involving the falsification of documents. He allegedly created and submitted fake documentation to claim additional funds from the Eastern College Office Management Supervisor program. Marsam inflated the number of enrolled students and provided inaccurate data to obtain a government grant meant to support educational programs.
2. **Discovery and Investigation:** The fraudulent activities came to light when discrepancies in the financial documentation were noticed by internal auditors and external regulators. An investigation was launched, revealing that Marsam had intentionally manipulated records to secure RM267,000 that was not rightfully his. The investigation uncovered a pattern of deceit involving false invoices, attendance records, and other critical documents.
3. **Legal Proceedings:** Following the investigation, legal proceedings were initiated against Marsam Buhera. The case was brought before the court, where the evidence of fraudulent behavior was presented. Marsam faced charges of financial misconduct, including falsification of documents and misuse of funds. In 2024, he was convicted and ordered to pay a substantial fine of RM180,000, or face longer imprisonment if the fine was not paid.

4. **Penalties and Consequences:** The court's decision underscored the severity of the misconduct. The penalty imposed on Marsam was significant, reflecting the seriousness of the offense. Beyond the financial repercussions, Marsam faced professional consequences, including the loss of his position and a damaged reputation, which would hinder his own future employment opportunities.

Key Stakeholders:

1. **Marsam Buhera:** As the central figure in the case, Marsam Buhera was responsible for the fraudulent activities. His role as dean gave him authority over financial matters and the ability to influence institutional decisions. His actions betrayed the trust placed in him by the institution, students, and the government.
2. **Eastern College Office Management Supervisor Program:** This program, which was defrauded by Marsam, is a crucial initiative designed to support educational institutions. The program's funds are allocated to enhance educational resources and support student development. The misuse of these funds undermines the program's objectives and impacts other institutions that rely on such support.
3. **Students and Faculty of the College:** The students and faculty of the college are significant stakeholders affected by the scandal. Students may experience disruptions in their educational experience, while faculty members might face an environment of mistrust and lowered morale. The overall educational mission of the college is compromised, affecting the quality of education and institutional stability.
4. **Government and Regulatory Bodies:** The government agencies responsible for monitoring and regulating the use of public funds are also key stakeholders. The fraudulent activities compromised the integrity of the funding process and called into question the effectiveness of oversight mechanisms. Regulatory bodies were involved in investigating the fraud and ensuring that appropriate legal actions were taken.

5. **The General Public:** The broader community and the public at large are stakeholders in this case. Public trust in educational institutions and government programs is essential for societal stability. The case has implications for how the public perceives the integrity of educational institutions and the management of public funds.

6. **Legal and Compliance Professionals:** Lawyers, auditors, and compliance officers involved in the case played a crucial role in uncovering the fraud, presenting evidence, and ensuring that justice was served. Their efforts in maintaining accountability and transparency are critical in addressing and preventing similar ethical breaches.

Analysis of the Case Study

Ethical Dilemmas or Violations

To effectively discuss the ethical dilemmas and integrity issues in the Marsam Buhera case, it is first necessary to understand the context and nature of the wrongdoing. The case centers on Marsam's abuse of his position as a director and manager by falsifying documents and making false claims, causing significant financial losses and betraying the public trust.

Abuse of Power and Trust

This case involves several critical ethical dilemmas and issues of integrity that seriously jeopardize social justice. Marsam's abuse of his power as a dean and administrator is a serious ethical violation, especially in an educational environment where trust and integrity are critical. As an academic leader, Marsam should uphold high standards of integrity and honesty. However, he used his power for personal gain by forging documents on the student grant application form to claim a RM19,000 grant for the Kolej Eastern Computer Network Operation Programme and misappropriated this government grant for his own use. This use of authority is not only a breach of his duty to manage the college's resources, but also a complete violation of the ethical standards he is supposed to uphold. His behavior also undermined the moral fabric of the education system, creating a ripple effect that eroded public confidence and tarnished the reputation of the College. The abuse of power for personal gain also highlights the lack of adherence to professional ethical standards and sets a dangerous precedent for others in power.

Fraud and Deception

The act of creating and submitting the false documents was patently fraudulent. By submitting fake company invoices, trainee lists, trainee attendance forms, and receipts for the Scheme's trainee allowances, Marsam intended to defraud government officials and college management in order to obtain additional government grants and keep them for itself. Marsam's actions raised suspicions amongst students and the community that a wider culture of dishonesty may have existed within the organization. This led to a significant decline in the College's reputation.

Impact on Stakeholders

These moves by Marsam also disproportionately affect stakeholders, including but not limited to government, students, and the education community. The misuse of funds for educational programs deprives genuine participants of resources that could have benefited their learning experiences. In addition, such corrupt practices erode the public's trust in educational institutions and the governments that aim to support educational programs. The misuse of funds for educational programs has deprived genuine participants of resources that

could have benefited their learning experiences. These resources, which could have helped more students or educational institutions in need, are wasted and abused by Marsam for his own personal gain. This incident also raises questions about the systemic issues that may have led to this type of fraudulent activity, and Marsam's series of misdeeds is a wake-up call for the government and the public.

Systemic Issues and Prevention

It prompted the government and the public to review the agency's internal controls, oversight mechanisms, and ethics. In order to prevent similar incidents from recurring and allowing the educational resources provided by the state to its people to be misused by those with the best of intentions, it is important for institutions to implement strong systems to monitor and verify reimbursement claims and expenditures. This measure, apart from being effective in preventing the recurrence of such corruption, can also serve as strong evidence to help the relevant agencies to identify and arrest the perpetrators more quickly, if needed.

The Marsam Buhera case reveals the consequences of breaches of ethics and integrity. It emphasizes the critical importance of ethical leadership, transparency and accountability within and outside educational institutions. Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach that includes legal enforcement, organizational reform and commitment to ethical standards. By fostering a culture of integrity, organizations can ensure that their actions are consistent with their values and societal expectations, ultimately contributing to a more ethical and just society.

Factors Contributing to the Ethical Issues

Greed of Human

People always pursue excellence in everything, they like to blindly compare themselves with others. Once they find out that there is a person who is better than them, they would want the best even though they have already been in a good environment. In order to achieve the target, human greed will drive them to apply all possible legal or illegal ways to bring them there. Thus, this is why the ethical issues happened, especially for corruption cases. In our case study, the dean of the Eastern College, Kota Kinabalu, Marsam Buhera has falsified the list of students in the claim document. The main motivation of this crime is he wanted to obtain a large amount of money for personal uses via illegal shortcuts. It can be deduced that he was not satisfied with his current job salary so his greed has caused a desire to get more money. Once he has obtained sufficient money, he can buy any item he wants. Thus, we can conclude that the claim (money) is a tangible or valuable item which is pursued by him. In other possible cases or ethical issues, it can also be any other item as long as the item is able to fulfill the human's greed and desire.

Economic Condition

Sometimes, the intention which contributes to the ethical issues can be passive as the current situation forces people to commit corruption. The prices of various things are continuously increasing nowadays, it indicates that people have to spend more money to buy all the items while the affordability of people is getting lower. This phenomenon has caused the inability of poor or low income families to maintain their lives in this environment. This extremely bad economic situation has forced some of the people to decide to commit corruption and the item to pursue is money most of the time. In our case, Marsam Buhera has made a false declaration of value of RM 267, 000 when filing a claim in the Eastern College Office Management Supervisor program. Then, he stole the money distributed from the program for his own use instead of distributing it to the students. Thus, we can deduce that he might face financial problems such as bankruptcy and unaffordable to maintain family lives so he wanted to take risks and try to get more money through illegal acts. So, he will have enough money to maintain lives.

Laxity of Law

In a country, the enforcement of law is extremely important for restricting the abilities and privileges of citizens to implement unethical behaviors. However, people might greet the law with scorn or even ignore the law if the law is too lax. People will consider it does not matter if they committed the corruption due to the light punishment and the laziness and indulgence of law-enforcement officers. Thus, they will seize this "chance" to commit corruption for obtaining whatever they want without concern about the welfare of people and the impact brought to the country. In our case study, Marsam Buhera has manipulated the student list on the claim document for claiming the money which does not belong to him as his contempt for the actions of law

enforcement officers. Meanwhile, he also flattered himself that he would not be caught by the police. He believed that the punishment would be light even if he was arrested by the police. The laxity of law and the ignorance by citizens would cause a continuous happening of corruption cases. Without taking steps to tighten the laws and control, the number of corruption cases will gradually increase and affect the healthy and fair life of people in the country.

Cultural or Social Norms

People always like to follow suit without self-awareness. When they see others doing it, they will want to follow with it no matter if it is actually correct or wrong. Thus, these imitated behaviors will become a norm or habit which is difficult to change. Via the same way, corruption may already become a cultural or social norm nowadays as a lot of people desire to immediately achieve something via shortcuts as far as possible. The sad thing is that people do not realize or do not want to admit it. In our case study, Marsam Buhera used falsified documents to file a claim in the computer network operation plan of Oriental College in 2018. In 2022, he also manipulated and provided a fake claim document for claiming student allowance. In fact, there are a lot of people who have already used similar tactics to get money illegally and unethically before Marsam. This behavior might already become a cultural or social norm indistinctly. Thus, we may deduce that Marsam copied those people's modus operandi for obtaining the money. In conclusion, these evil practices will not stop and there will be more people to copy from this norm like what is done by Marsam if we did not take any precaution to prevent the happening of ethical issues.

Impact of the ethical issues on the organization or individuals involved

Impact on the Organization

The fraudulent activities carried out by Marsam Buhera have far-reaching consequences for the college's reputation and overall stability. When an educational institution is involved in corruption, it suffers a significant loss of credibility not only among students and parents but also within the wider community. Trust is the foundation upon which educational institutions build their relationships with stakeholders. Once this trust is broken, it can lead to a cascade of negative outcomes. Potential students and their families may choose to enroll in other institutions that are perceived as more trustworthy, leading to decreased enrollment numbers. This decline in student numbers can have a direct impact on the college's financial health, as tuition fees are a primary source of revenue for many institutions.

Moreover, the college may face difficulties in securing essential funding and forming partnerships that are crucial for its growth and development. Donors, sponsors, and educational partners are likely to withdraw their support or hesitate to engage with an institution that is entangled in an ethical scandal. The perception of financial instability and ethical lapses can make it difficult for the college to attract and retain high-quality faculty and staff, further weakening its ability to deliver a robust educational program. Additionally, regulatory bodies may impose sanctions or increased oversight on the institution, adding to its operational challenges and potentially leading to further financial strain.

The misuse of funds that were intended for educational purposes also has a direct and detrimental impact on the institution's ability to fulfill its mission. SDG 4 (Quality Education) emphasizes the importance of providing inclusive and equitable education for all. When resources meant for enhancing educational programs and supporting students are diverted through fraudulent activities, the institution's capacity to deliver quality education is significantly compromised. This misallocation not only hinders the current educational initiatives but also creates a negative precedent that can have long-term consequences. The institution may struggle to attract future investments, as potential donors and partners might fear that their contributions will not be used effectively or ethically.

Impact on Individuals

For Marsam Buhera, the consequences of his involvement in fraudulent activities are profound and multifaceted. The legal repercussions he faces, including substantial fines and the potential for imprisonment, are immediate and severe. These penalties are designed not only to punish the wrongdoing but also to serve as a

deterrent to others who might consider engaging in similar unethical behavior. The legal process itself can be lengthy and stressful, adding to the personal and financial burden that Marsam must bear.

Beyond the immediate legal consequences, Marsam's professional reputation is irreparably damaged. In the field of education, where trust and integrity are paramount, being associated with corruption can be career-ending. It is unlikely that Marsam will find future employment in educational leadership or any position that requires a high level of trust and responsibility. His involvement in corruption undermines the very principles that educational institutions are built upon, making it difficult for him to regain the confidence of potential employers or colleagues.

Furthermore, Marsam's actions have a broader impact on the individuals within the institution, including staff and students. When a leader is implicated in unethical behavior, it can create a sense of disillusionment and cynicism among employees. Staff members may feel demoralized and question the ethical standards of the institution as a whole. This can lead to a decline in morale, making it more challenging to foster a positive and productive work environment. For students, the knowledge that their institution's leadership has engaged in fraudulent activities can be deeply unsettling. It may cause them to question the value of their education and the integrity of the degrees they are working toward.

In a broader context, Marsam's actions could have a ripple effect, influencing how other educational leaders and institutions approach their responsibilities. This case serves as a cautionary tale, highlighting the importance of ethical leadership and the severe consequences of failing to uphold professional standards. It underscores the need for educational institutions to prioritize integrity and transparency in all aspects of their operations, to prevent similar incidents from occurring in the future.

Potential Strategies to Address the Ethical Dilemmas

Implementing Regular Monitoring and Evaluation

In order to address the ethical dilemmas, all of the companies or organizations should execute regular monitoring and evaluation to prevent corruption incidents at the workplace. More than one supervisor should be distributed to each department so they can easily detect unethical behavior of their subordinates. Meanwhile, the chances for subordinates to entrap or bribe the supervisors are extremely low as the self-awareness can be consolidated when there are more than one supervisor who are making decisions. Besides, each supervisor should also carefully review processes, transactions and behaviors over specific time intervals. Thus, the potential issues would not escalate into significant problems which involve the security and reputation of the company or organization. Moreover, the company can also carry out evaluation which can assess the potential risks related to corruption and other unethical activities. Thus, it can develop and implement effective mitigation strategies for reducing the likelihood and impact of ethical breaches. Additionally, the company should also strictly limit the privileges of employees based on their roles and responsibilities. So, they will not get any chance to manipulate the sensitive information and commit corruption.

Establishing Sufficient Whistleblower Protection

There are some people who have witnessed the scene of corruption but they did not report it to the supervisor or the related government sector such as Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC). Most of the reason is because their personal safety will be at stake once they have reported it. Thus, they will be afraid of it and decide not to disclose it. In order to solve this issue, companies should encourage employees to report unethical behavior without fear of retaliation. Meanwhile, the companies should also immediately provide a safe and secure environment to their employees to prevent them from being revenged by intended people. Apart from that, companies should also offer sufficient training for all employees regularly to acknowledge them about the importance of business ethics, impact of carrying out unethical actions and the measurement steps to prevent corruption. So, the employees can clearly understand how they should behave in the company and their self-awareness will also be motivated. Once there is any unethical behavior being discovered, the employees will be able to report it to the supervisors or MACC without hesitation.

From the government, the related sector such as Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) should always provide assistance to the whistleblower twenty-four-seven. So, the safety of whistleblowers can be ensured. Not only that, the whistleblowers will also be more likely to come forward and provide comprehensive information of wrongdoing. Besides, MACC should also provide the detailed contact information for the whistleblower so that they can easily get help from the officer from MACC. Usually, the whistleblowers will

tell the truth about the wrongdoing only when they feel protected. So, the whistleblower protection is extremely crucial for discovering and preventing the happening of ethical dilemmas.

Tightening Rules and Regulation

Not only for the government, the organizations should always keep their rules and regulations tight, especially the rules related to unethical behavior. The organizations should define rules and regulations clearly to provide a unambiguous statement for all employees. So, they are able to highlight what is acceptable behavior and what is not. Meanwhile, they should place those rules and regulations posters at conspicuous places so the employees will be able to view the rules and regulations and keep reminding themselves not to indulge in unethical practices. Apart from that, the organizations should also create the related regulations which take the transparency in operations as compulsory action, especially for the financial information and decision-making process. Via this method, a full view of any intended manipulation on the business operations can be found. Moreover, companies should also set heavy penalties to the employees who have violated the rules and regulations such as termination and fines. This series of penalties are able to intimidate those employees who are interested in corruption behaviors as they will get serious punishment once they have carried out unethical actions.

Expanding Education Syllabus

Since people of low age are possessing a powerful learning ability, the education sector should seize this opportunity to consolidate students' consciousness about ethics. The ministry of education should add new subjects about ethics to the students' education syllabus. Via effective teaching and learning at school, students will be able to differentiate between ethical and unethical behaviors. Meanwhile, it can also raise the self-awareness among students about the importance of integrity and the consequences of unethical practices. Not only that, the publisher of this subject's teaching materials should also relate the topics to the real-world cases from different perspectives such as friends, social, workplaces and other common scenarios. So, the students can effectively understand ethical and unethical behaviors that might happen in the real world in advance. In the future, they can imprint the ethical behaviors in their mental model and consider it as common sense and norms. Thus, corruption or unethical cases can be reduced or eliminated effectively.

Conclusion and Reflection

The case of Marsam Buhera and subsequent ethical issues within Oriental Institute highlight the critical importance of integrity and anti-corruption measures in maintaining organizational credibility and social trust. This case highlights the far-reaching impact that unethical behavior by individuals can have at the broader organizational and societal levels, underscoring the critical importance of maintaining high ethical standards in all areas of professional and institutional life.

Massam's behavior reveals a deep-seated problem rooted in individual greed, institutional problems, and cultural norms that tolerate and even perpetuate unethical behavior. The impact on the college was widespread, affecting its reputation, financial stability, and ability to fulfill its educational mission. For Massam himself, the personal and professional costs have been severe, including potential legal penalties and irreparable damage to his career and personal reputation. The implications of such ethical violations are far-reaching.

Addressing these ethical dilemmas requires a multifaceted approach. Implementing regular monitoring and evaluation, establishing robust whistleblower protection mechanisms, tightening regulations, and expanding ethics education efforts are all critical strategies. In addition, incorporating ethics into educational curricula can help instill a sense of integrity at an early age and shape future leaders who are less likely to engage in unethical behavior. Together, these measures will foster a culture of transparency, accountability, and ethical behavior, thereby preventing the recurrence of similar problems and contributing to a more just and equitable environment.

Reflecting on this case, it is clear that the principles of integrity and anti-corruption are not just abstract ideals, but a practical necessity for the successful and ethical functioning of any organization. It requires systemic reforms and personal accountability, and ensuring that these principles are entrenched in organizational practices and individual behaviors can greatly enhance operational effectiveness and public confidence. This case serves as a powerful reminder that ethical violations have serious consequences and that unwavering adherence to ethical standards is essential to fostering a culture of trust and integrity.

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