International Journal of Social Science Research and Review

ijssrr.com
editor@ijssrr.com
Volume 9, Issue 11
November 2026
pp. 184–188

The Role of the Iraqi Student Discipline Law in Achieving University Stability

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.47814/2paxhc96

Abstract

This study examines the role of the Iraqi Student Discipline Law No 160 of 2007 in fostering university stability across higher education institutions in Iraq It evaluates the legal procedural and behavioral frameworks of disciplinary regulations while analyzing practical challenges such as student legal unawareness enforcement inconsistencies administrative burdens and external political or social interferences The research highlights how consistent and fair enforcement of disciplinary standards curbing campus misconduct directly enhances academic performance protects institutional autonomy and cultivates a safe educational environment To overcome existing field obstacles the paper proposes standardizing administrative procedures enhancing legal awareness campaigns protecting investigative committees from external influences adopting a centralized digital discipline platform and providing adequate structural and legal support to university personnel.

Keywords: *Student Discipline Law, University Stability, Iraqi Higher Education*

Introduction

University environments serve as the foundational pillar for guiding community development pathways. These institutions cannot fulfill their cognitive and educational mission in isolation from a stable academic climate governed by strict legal regulations. Within this context, the legal framework for student discipline within the Iraqi university environment emerges as a pivotal legislative tool to consolidate the values of order and safety inside campuses.

Today, Iraqi universities face a complex set of challenges related to regulating behavior and securing a safe learning environment. Cultivating this fertile environment not only enhances the quality of education but also ensures the effective activation of academic communication among the stakeholders of the educational process (students and faculty members). Therefore, this study seeks to elucidate the substantive and procedural rules within the student discipline instructions of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research institutions, evaluating their field efficiency in reforming student conduct and safeguarding academic institutions.

Research Objectives

1. **Examining the Dimensions of University Stability:** Exploring the extent to which disciplinary frameworks contribute to shaping a safe and stable learning environment within Iraqi academic circles.
2. **Deconstructing Legal Enforcement Mechanisms:** Analyzing the administrative mechanisms and procedures used to activate disciplinary instructions, while evaluating their practical merit.
3. **Demonstrating Behavioral and Academic Impact:** Tracking the direct repercussions of legal provisions on student behavioral patterns, and their correlation with levels of institutional compliance and respect for university traditions.
4. **Identifying Field Obstacles:** Listing the problems that hinder the optimal application of regulations, whether these obstacles are administrative, social, or security-related.
5. **Developing the Law:** Formulating a package of procedural proposals and solutions based on the analytical data of the study, thereby ensuring higher levels of academic stability.

Research Problem

This research stems from a core problem centered on the conflict between legal texts and practical implementation challenges. This problem manifests in the following aspects:

1. **The Gap in Legal Awareness Among Students:** The lack of cognitive awareness regarding the importance of disciplinary systems leads to instances of resistance or non-compliance with behavioral regulations.
2. **Discrepancy in Enforcement Standards Among Universities:** An inconsistency is observed in the mechanisms of activating the law across educational institutions, creating a noticeable disparity in stability levels from one university to another.
3. **External Pressures and Interference:** University administrations occasionally face dictations or interventions from political or social forces, threatening the neutrality of the law and undermining the principle of absolute justice.
4. **Numerical Density and Administrative Burden:** The steady growth in student numbers places suffocating pressure on available resources, leaving administrative staff unable to monitor behavior efficiently.
5. **Internal and Security Conditions:** Unstable security conditions in some regions weaken the application and enforcement of the law.
6. **Limited Logistical and Human Support:** The discipline law suffers from an acute shortage of resources required for its implementation within the university campus.

Section One: Theoretical Approach to the Student Discipline System

First: Concept of the Student Discipline Law

Student disciplinary rules are defined as a structured framework of binding regulations and instructions aimed at engineering and guiding student behavior within the academic space. This legislative framework intends to obligate learners to adhere to the parameters of proper conduct, based on respecting the rights of peers and faculty members, preserving public property, and ensuring regular attendance in cognitive activities through legitimate pathways.

Second: Strategic Goals of Disciplinary Provisions

These legal systems aim to achieve several educational and organizational goals, most notably:

1. **Consolidating Responsible Behavior:** Guiding students toward adopting practices that reflect the values of integrity and personal responsibility.
2. **Providing Campus Security:** Minimizing points of tension and chaotic practices that could disrupt campus peace.
3. **Regulating the Educational Environment:** Providing a safe academic incubator that guarantees the preservation of rights and allows students to focus on knowledge acquisition without obstacles.
4. **Rooting Disciplinary Values:** Instilling high moral and professional principles as the primary driver for individual and societal advancement.

Third: Mechanisms of Law Implementation

1. **Formulating Frameworks and Sanctions:** Codifying behaviors through clear regulations that define prohibited acts and their corresponding penalties.
2. **Guidance on Rights and Obligations:** Disseminating legal culture among students to familiarize them with their duties, as well as methods for filing grievances and administrative appeals.
3. **Committees:** Assigning the task of investigating and examining violations to specialized committees that adjudicate cases in accordance with the law.
4. **Administrative Integration:** Building bridges of coordination between university leaderships and teaching bodies to apply provisions in a spirit of justice and transparency.

Fourth: Behavioral Repercussions of Disciplinary Frameworks

The added value of the law is evident in its ability to reshape student behavioral patterns by instilling concepts of mutual respect within the university. These regulations act as legal barriers that curb aggressive tendencies or negative practices that disrupt the flow of education, contributing directly to developing behavioral awareness and institutional loyalty.

Section Two: Practical Dimensions of the Discipline Law and University Stability in Iraq

First: Diagnosing the Current Realities of the University Environment

1. **Direct Political and Security Influences:** The structural stability of Iraqi universities is affected by surrounding political and security fluctuations, occasionally exposing them to external repercussions.
2. **Student Inflation:** The higher education sector faces quantitative leaps in student numbers, straining infrastructure and complicating disciplinary control calculations.
3. **Cultural Disparity:** Cultural and social diversity within the campus presents behavioral challenges that require wise management to contain differences and prevent conflicts.

Second: Core Importance of the Law

The core importance of the law lies in achieving the following dimensions:

1. **Creating a Safe Climate:** Curbing deviant behaviors and conflicts that threaten public tranquility within the campus.
2. **Spreading a Culture of Mutual Rights:** Codifying sanctions reinforces commitment to the rights of others, strengthening the university's social fabric.
3. **Elevating Academic Indicators:** Behavioral commitment drives serious academic regularity, reflecting positively on the quality of the academic output.
4. **Securing Institutional Autonomy:** Establishing internal legal pathways to resolve disputes blocks any external interventions or dictations.

Third: Analytical Reading of Field Practices

Research evidence indicates that firmness and fairness in applying disciplinary regulations lead directly to a reduction in student violence rates and an increase in academic regularity. Conversely, leniency and ambiguity in law enforcement within some institutions create a fertile ground for behavioral violations that undermine the foundations of the entire educational process.

Fourth: Obstacles to Law Application in Iraqi Universities

The prominent obstacles hindering the utilization of legal texts to achieve complete stability include:

1. **Cognitive Deficiency Regarding the Law:** Ignorance among a segment of students regarding the philosophy of the law and its organizational function.
2. **Lack of Consistency in Application:** The absence of a uniform standard and varying levels of strictness among colleges.
3. **Polarization and Non-Academic Relations:** Subjecting some decisions to tribal or political pressures, which empties the punishment of its deterrent value.
4. **Scarcity of Practical Capabilities:** Shortage of resources and qualified human personnel to manage investigative committees.

Fifth: Graduated Punishment Scale

The punitive system in the regulations is based on proportionality between the severity of the violation and its resulting disciplinary effect, aiming for correction and reform rather than exclusionary deprivation.

1. **Guidance Penalties (Warnings):** Target simple, first-time lapses (such as noise or dress code violations) for the purpose of drawing attention.
2. **Restrictive Penalties (Admonition and Reprimand):** Activated in cases of recidivism and repetition, leaving a mark on the behavioral record.
3. **Temporary Exclusion (Suspension for periods ranging from a month to an academic year):** Targets severe violations such as exam cheating and direct assault.
4. **Final Exclusion (Dismissal/Registration Cancellation):** The harshest penalty that terminates the institutional relationship with the student in cases of forgery or felonies.

Table No. (1): Classification of Prohibited Acts and Their Corresponding Punitive Effects

Classification of Violation	Resulting Punitive Effect	Nature of the Triggering Act	Legal Repercussion on the Student
First Degree	Warning or Admonition	Non-compliance with uniform dress, repeated lateness	An official record placed in the student's administrative file.
Second Degree	Temporary suspension (up to 30 days)	Creating chaos, verbal altercations with peers	Temporary deprivation from classes and examinations.
Third Degree	Suspension for a full academic year	Practices of exam cheating, misconduct toward professors	Deprivation from the academic year, counting the student as failed.
Fourth Degree	Final dismissal (Registration Cancellation)	Committing forgery, possession of contrabands, grave crimes	Permanent cancellation of university ID and bar from re-admission.

Source: *Student Discipline Instructions in Iraq No. 160 of 2007, as amended.*

Sixth: Procedural Framework for Student Investigative Guarantees

Legal justice requires surrounding the student with a set of guarantees protecting them from administrative arbitrariness, manifested in the following:

1. **The Right to Notice and Confrontation:** The administration's obligation to officially inform the student of the details of the accusation and the investigation date to grant them sufficient opportunity for defense.
2. **The Right to Present Defenses:** Ensuring the student's freedom to narrate their version, record their statements, and present evidence refuting malicious claims.
3. **Neutrality and Independence of the Investigative Body:** Forming committees from competent and independent members to ensure integrity and distance from personal influences.

Table No. (2): Procedural Complements for Student Guarantees

Administrative Phase	Prescribed Guarantee	Organizational Purpose of the Procedure
Preliminary Phase	Prior written notice	Breaking the element of surprise and enabling the student to build their defense.
Interrogation Phase	Recording statements and receiving evidence	Conclusively verifying facts and avoiding malicious reports.
Evaluation & Decision Phase	Providing rationale for the administrative decision	Highlighting the legal basis of the penalty to ensure transparency.
Post-Decision Phase	Institutional and judicial grievance/appeal	Reviewing administrative decisions and correcting any abuse of authority.

Conclusion

In light of the above, the student discipline law constitutes an indispensable social and legal control mechanism for establishing the foundations of university stability in Iraq. Activating this system in a transparent and just manner contributes to shaping a safe educational environment that nurtures rights and fosters responsibility, alongside continuous awareness raising.

Conclusions

This analytical study demonstrated a set of core findings, most notably that the disciplinary system plays a vital role in containing deviant behavioral practices and reinforcing values of mutual respect within Iraqi universities. However, the positive return of these provisions remains contingent upon overcoming obstacles such

as the lack of student legal awareness, varying administrative strictness among colleges, and resistance to political and social pressures that disrupt the neutrality of the academic institution.

Recommendations

1. **Increasing Legal Awareness:** Launching awareness campaigns by holding mandatory workshops during the first week of the academic term to introduce students to their set of rights and obligations.
2. **Standardizing Procedures:** Formulating a unified guiding manual for penalty application mechanisms applicable to all Iraqi universities to avoid localized individual interpretations.
3. **Safeguarding the Institution:** Creating a deterrent legal cover that criminalizes tribal or political interferences in the work of university investigative committees.
4. **Digital Disciplinary Transformation:** Building a centralized electronic platform for managing penalties and notices, ensuring governance, accelerating procedures, and preventing file tampering.
5. **Structural Support for Committees:** Supporting disciplinary committees with financial resources and full-time, trained legal personnel to ensure the efficiency and speed of investigations.

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