

The Phenomenon of Examination Malpractice: An Example of Nairobi and Kenyatta Universities

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Abstract

This paper focuses on examination malpractices in educational institutions with particular reference to two public universities in Kenya. To facilitate this discussion we posed the following questions: What is an examination malpractice? What is its cause? Does examination malpractice contribute to educational goals or development? Are students aware of the repercussions of examination irregularity? And finally, what are institutions of higher learning doing to curb this reprehensible behaviour? To answer these questions, we administered questionnaires and conducted interviews on staff and students from the two Public Universities. The research revealed that some of the prevalent forms of examination irregularities include: candidates colluding with invigilators and examiners; impersonation, writing synoptic notes. Since these are ethical questions, we based our investigation on Thomas Hobbes' theory of State of Nature and noted that these forms of examination malpractice are also common phenomena in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions in other parts of the world. There is therefore need for institutions and governments to enforce remedies against the menace in learning institutions.

Key words: Examination malpractice, education, students, institutions, lecturers, ethical codes.

1. Introduction

One of the contemporary problems affecting the education system today is examination malpractice. It is a global phenomenon reported in Japan, Pakistan, Great Britain and here in Africa. In Kenya, it first came to public notice when the Kenya National Examinations Council introduced the use of computers. The Minister of Education then derecognized the examination results of Kenya Certificate of Primary Education citing massive examination irregularity in one of the counties; even as the culprits cried foul blaming computers for the vice! Since then, each examination season has been characterized by new and ingenious ways of examination irregularity. This paper is not an evaluation of the existence of this recalcitrant behaviour at the two institutions, but a general investigation and discussion of the concept in order to appreciate its meaning, causes, consequences and / or impact upon the examinees and their institutions of learning whenever it occurs. The paper attempts to find out what the two institutions have put in place to deal with this malice, apart from suggesting and recommending ways of carving out this nefarious behaviour from education institutions.

2. Meaning of Terms

In every country, *education* is viewed as an important instrument of national development. It is a necessary process, through which young adults are equipped to lead productive lives according to their talents and interests. Through education, learners are not only taught, trained and adequately guided to acquire appropriate skills and knowledge but also how to change their attitudes towards public life. History, especially western history reveals how in the past, nations were made or unmade, established empires, built great armies and conquered their enemies or lost battles and collapsed altogether, all because of their educational system (vide Wilayat, 2009). In fact, those who have read classics may remember how the Romans despite their great empire, had to import Greek philosophers to Rome in order to run their educational system. Proper education has long term and tangible impact upon those who have gone through its process. This is probably why it is such a global phenomenon whose outcome has to be subjected through examination system. But this form of western knowledge acquisition is quite different from the African traditional way of learning, where knowledge was basically empirical and practical. It was passed on orally through common and practical tests. In such traditional set up, students had simply to commit to memory, learn by rote, or through observation (Ibia, 2006). Definitely, there was no need for certification, since education was viewed as a means to an end and not an end in itself. The western tradition of basing knowledge acquisition on certification has its own advantages and disadvantages. Obviously, it is not full proof of knowledge retention. A common belief solely in the acquisition of an educational certificate as a proof for one's qualification may explain the frequent media reports that some

Kenyan students buy educational certificates to prove their academic worth! But more and above, the practice does explain why students are prone to examination irregularity. What is necessary for such students is to obtain educational certificate irrespective of unethical means used in the process of its acquisition.

Unlike the African traditional education which is rarely theoretical with little consideration for theoretical evaluation, the western formal educational system is both practical and theoretical, whose outcome depends almost entirely on systematic evaluation. And, such assessment, explains Tyler (1950) is the process of determining the degree of which certain desirable changes in behaviour have actually taken place, that is, through examinations system.

2.1. Examination

Examination is the most common tool around which the entire system of education revolves. There is hardly any educational system which does not include one form or another of assessment as an indicator of the said system of education. It is the instrument used to decide who is permitted to go to the next academic level. In fact, it is the results of examinations and teachers' judgements which form the grading system in which all the students are classified annually or more frequently (Siddiqui and Bukhari, 1991 quoted by Iqbal Khan et. al. 2011). Examination indeed, is not only a process of assessing the progress of students but, it also motivates and helps them to know their academic strengths and weaknesses apart from providing teachers with opportunities to try new methods of teaching (Malik, 1987; Shah, 1998). This is why many learners would do everything possible to pass an examination even when their abilities are questionable. Examination therefore, is the tool used to facilitate decision making on the performance, educational advancement and job opportunity for an individual (vide Fasasi, 2006, Wilayat 2009).

2.2. Examination Malpractice

Examination has two main distinct concepts. First, to achieve the purpose for which it is designed and second, to be a reliable consistent means of measurement (Wilayat 2009). When however, irregularity or examination malpractice occurs, then the validity and resulting outcome is questionable. *Examination malpractice* is however, commonly defined as a deliberate wrong doing contrary to official examination rules designed to place a candidate at an unfair advantage or disadvantage (Wilayat 2009:2). Fasasi (2006) adds that examination malpractice may be understood as "a misconduct or improper practice, before, during or after any examination by examinees or others with a view to obtaining good results by fraudulent means". From these two definitions, it can be concluded that examination malpractice is an unethical act because it encourages mediocrity in that students who succeed through such unorthodox methods may be rated equal to those who struggle on their own to excel. It is important therefore, to discuss examination malpractice in order to create awareness among both students and authorities concerned, and, to suggest proper measures for controlling such deviant activities of examinees during examination period. To emphasize the need for the awareness, we may attempt a conceptual clarification of some common terms used in this paper as follows:

2.3. Quality

Quality may mean something good, ideal or high standard, while *quality assurance* on the other hand, is consistent provision and utilization of good and high standard resources intended to foster effective teaching and learning in every stage and aspect of the education system (Fasasi, 2006). Quality and quality assurance are accordingly, aspects which are measured by an *examination* which is the key element upon which education is centred.

Finally, *input* is human and non human resources provided by an organization from the beginning of a programme to the implementation stage and to the end of the programme. We may add here that it is a process that involves activities such as teaching, learning, and counselling, to which personnel in the educational institutions engage (Vide Fasasi, 2006:16). With this brief background and definition of terms, we may now discuss the ethical view upon which examination malpractice is associated.

2.4. Ethics and Morality

Although, it is not the intention of this paper to give an in-depth analysis of the concept of ethics, examination malpractice is a moral issue which must be discussed and analysed from an ethical theory. Ethics according to Omeregbe (1993) is a branch of philosophy which deals with human action. On the other hand Ome and Aman (2004) argue that ethics is a normative science of human conduct and basically evaluates human action. But, Hornby (2002) further adds that ethics could comprise normative principles which not only control but also influence the behaviour of individuals.

A common aspect of ethics is morality which deals with good or bad conduct although emphasis is laid on what ought to be done. Examination malpractice thus, falls within these ethical dimensions. But, here in Kenya, there is well established constitution and elaborate laws that spell out what ought to be done and the consequences that may arise in case of any form of violation. Such concern with solution to any ethical violation is grounded in Thomas Hobbes' (1946) theory of 'State of Nature' which explains that before the formation of an organized society, human beings did not have any set of laws, or any sense of authority, morality or justice (cf. David B.

Ingram and Jennifer A. Parks, 2002). This clearly points out that there was no sense of progress because morality is at the centre of civilization and social development. In education and discussion of examination malpractice, morality is about the conduct of teachers, parents, examiners and law enforcement agents who need to be positively involved in dissuading candidates from any form of examination malpractice (Odia Ochuko 2011:196). And any involvement in this vice is a clear reflection of the moral decadence of the extended democratic Kenyan society. In most cases nevertheless, the culprits who are involved in examination malpractice are attracted by their own material gains and are not concerned about the harm that they are causing to others. Examination malpractice as it were falls short of Kant's Categorical imperative where he notes that one should engage in an action that he or she can recommend to be embraced by others(vide Odia Ochuko 2011:197). And, in any case, a culprit caught in this misconduct will try all means available to free him or herself from this heinous exercise which explains clearly a deficiency in moral values.

After examining briefly the ethical considerations underpinning examination malpractice, we now attempt to answer our second question. Namely, does examination malpractice benefit and contribute to the desired educational development?

3. Impact of Examination Malpractice upon Examinees and Educational Development

Examination is a very integral part of any educational system. In fact, a cursory look at educational institutions seem to suggest that schools, colleges and universities have been established for the sole purpose of preparing students for examinations (cf. Khan 2004). This is why, teaching, learning process and the success of any given educational system is evaluated according to the purpose and efficacy of its examination system. Here in Kenya, during a pending scheduled examination season, every parent may need to hire a coaching expert to prepare their children for the said examination with the understanding that teachers at the schools are also doing their bit. In fact, at one time the concern for private tuition was almost getting out of hand and the Ministry of Education had to step in to protect parents from the exploitation by self appointed experts!

The significance of examinations nevertheless cannot be underrated. They are conducted and managed to assess the performance of the learners and establish whether they have the expected standard of academic learning and knowledge. This is why, Iqbal Khan et. al. (2011) quoting from Malik (1987) and Shah (1998) underlines the same significance saying: "Examination is an important process of assessing the progress of students which motivates learners, helps them to know their strengths and weaknesses, and provides opportunities to the teachers to try new ways of improving their teaching methodology. But for the realization of fitness of purpose, equity, integrity and confidence, efficiency and cost effectiveness, transparency, and beneficial effects on classroom practice are considered to be the key characteristics of good examination system (vide Iqbal Khan, et. al. 2011). Any practice out of these can hardly be associated with laudable outcome of examination as a measuring tool for educational level.

The seriousness of examination as the primary end of formal education at the institutions of learning can never be underrated. It often engages the students in a competitive manner to achieve good results and satisfy the expectations of both their teachers and parents. However, notwithstanding our observation, passing examinations and obtaining certificates are nevertheless essential for the success of the examinees in today's competitive world. And, it is not merely the acquisition of certificates; the success needs to be measured by good grades. This is because, for one to join any reputable training programme or university, a standard grade is required. Once more this expectation or need for success, explains why students are prone to examination irregularity.

Unfortunately, the negative impact of examination malpractice often leads to discontinuation of a student from an academic institution. In fact, almost all universities have put in place measures and procedures for dealing with examination malpractices whenever they are deemed to occur. For example, Kenyatta University 2011/2013 catalogue, in reference to examination irregularity says: "A student who is caught involved in any examination irregularity shall be suspended immediately by the Registrar (Academic) upon receipt of instant report, pending appearance before the Disciplinary Committee". Whereas at the University of Nairobi, a memo from the Acting Registrar Academic dated December 30, 2011 addressed to all students, reminds them of the gravity of cheating in examinations, with reference to both Senate Resolutions Numbers 1913, and 1914 dated 12th July, 1978. Like Kenyatta University, the memo spells out the grave consequences of examination malpractices which include expulsion from the university. Both Universities strongly advise candidates against smuggling unauthorized materials into examination halls including mobile phones and other forms of examination cheating. Indeed, the existence of examination malpractice in educational institutions can hardly be doubted. And, the concern is whether the stringent regulations put in place by institutions of higher learning are able to deter examinees from the vice!

All in all, examination irregularity does not only affect its agents, but rather the institutions which register cheating candidates are equally culpable. For, when they (students) finally acquire certificates whose academic contents they can hardly measure up to in any competitive interview; the schools, colleges and universities which

housed them are equally underrated. As soon as particular educational institutions are associated with examination malpractices, their graduates, and even certificates issued from such institutions are not recognized and accepted in the job market. Their documents are viewed by the public as mere indications of the educational level the bearers have attempted but without genuine completion. As a result, the number of potential stakeholders of the institutions may shrink and former alumni may be reluctant to be identified with the institutions. But even teachers and lecturers from the same schools, colleges or universities can hardly be comfortable among fellow colleagues from other institutions. And internationally, education system of a country known for examination cheating will be underrated. To correct such negative impact is not an easy and simple exercise. This is why examination irregularity in all its forms must be eradicated from every institution of higher learning.

It is not only unethical but a potential path and preparatory stage for social corruption. Each and every educational institutional worth its name should not entertain or lightly treat examination malpractices. Almost all our interviewees condemned the practice even as some of them blamed the administrators of examinations. In other words, examination irregularity is not confined to examinees but may involve the teachers and lecturers alike.

Here in Kenya, though without any substantive evidence, some workers in Kenya National Examinations Council have been suspected and accused of leaking out or selling examination papers to selected potential candidates. Such suspicion is corroborated by the Ministry of Education's frequent suspension of examination results from some schools at the end of each examination season. A good number of our interviewees accused some university lecturers for the vice. For example, when some lecturers delay giving out results of some students at the end of a semester or alter their marks, this too may be interpreted as an examination malpractice. The magnitude of examination irregularity cannot be underestimated. Hence, the parents, and teachers are apprised of the dangerous practice of cheating and its adverse effects on the moral, intellectual and social development of the youth (Iqbal Khan, et. al. 2011:602).

Owing to the expenditure of time and space, we cannot assume that we have exhausted the discussion on the negative impact or consequences of examination malpractices. Nevertheless, the foregoing, attempts to suggest that examination irregularity does not benefit and contribute to the desired educational development. This is because, the goal of education, especially tertiary education is to inculcate proper values for the benefit and survival of the learners and their society; and to develop intellectual ability of students in order to question and appreciate their local situations and external environments. And, finally to enable them acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable the learners to be self reliant and useful members of the society, let alone promoting and encouraging scholarship and willingness to serve the society (vide Tola Olujuwon, Undated).

To ensure successful achievement of these aims, there has to be a well organized and effectively managed examination system that would permit competition among examinees for promotion to the next academic level or entry into a job market. But when learners resort to examination malpractices the competition cannot be fully realized. It could be deemed fraudulent because, those who may genuinely occupy the said positions would be denied what should actually be their right. Some of the interviewees confidentially expressed how they suspect that occasionally some students may go to postgraduate programmes, not because they really merited the continuity but rather because some malpractices were used in the process during undergraduate work. Such suspicion and accusation is sometimes verified when the said postgraduate students find it difficult to adequately prepare and accelerate their postgraduate work especially in writing research proposals! After highlighting some of the common consequences of examination irregularities, it is appropriate to ask and answer our third question-What forms do examination irregularity take?

4. Forms of Examination Malpractices

It has already been pointed out that during each examination season; students tend to invent very ingenious ways of cheating in examinations; some of which may be very challenging even for the most vigilant invigilators to detect. But, being common global phenomenon, forms of examination malpractices are indeed numerous! The more people advance in technology, the more this immoral act becomes complicated. In Kenyan public universities, a most common reported form of cheating is by use of *mwakenya*. *Mwakenya* was originally a document published by secret Kenyan political group agitating for social change during the reign of KANU, the one party political system regime, before the introduction of the multi party politics. The document was forbidden by the Kenyan government and those who were found in its possession were prosecuted in a court of law and either detained or imprisoned. Therefore, university students who prepare and carry synoptic notes into the examination hall in the name of *mwakenya*, do so deliberately knowing that it is an evil act with dire consequences. Otherwise, several authors have identified common forms of examination malpractices to include:

4.1. Collusion among candidates themselves and between them and officials in charge of Examinations

This may involve a prior arrangement where an official handling examination materials leaks the same to the

intended candidates. If not, they may sell the actual examination paper at a fee to the examinees or to their parents. Here in Kenya, occasional media reports about examination leakage by some workers of the Examination Council and suspicion of sex grades at the institutions of higher learning may corroborate such illegal arrangements between students and examination officials.

4.3. Impersonation or misrepresentation

Kenya, like in other parts of the world has embraced the programme of continuing education in its learning institutions. Today, almost all Kenyan universities compete for admission and registration of students in their Institutional Based Programme (IBP) Outreach or External Degree Programme (EDP). These students only come to the institutions during the vacations when regular students are away from the university. At the University is minimal and depending on their number in a class, lecturers may not be in a position to physically identify all of them during an examination schedule. One can easily sit and write an examination or sign an E10 Form (which verifies that a candidate sat for a particular examination under specified invigilators) on behalf of another candidate. We did not verify any such incident among the two selected universities for this study, but some lecturers mentioned it as a form of possible examination malpractice and we cannot ignore it. Although it is a rare form of examination irregularity in Kenyan public universities, it is probably controlled by the use of examination cards which every student sitting for a paper is expected to display in order to verify their identity and candidature. The most unsuspecting ingenious candidates could even exchange examination cards or replace the genuine candidate's photograph found in their identity card with theirs!

4.4. Written notes on Examination desks, walls, palms, clothes and electronic devices

Normally, sitting arrangement in the examination hall is done during daytime prior to students' arrival for the paper the following day. However, if the examination room is not locked, the unsuspecting students will get into the hall and jot down short hand notes about course content on the desks or on the walls closer to where they plan to sit. Apart from these, they will also write short notes in their palms, handkerchiefs, toilet paper, hems of their clothes or even on petty coats and refer to them to cheat while in the examination hall. Some ingenious students will hide mobile phones in secret parts of their bodies which they can use to send text messages on the questions to people outside the examination hall, who will then text the answers back.

4.5. Giraffing

This form of cheating takes its name from one of the African wild animals with an extremely long neck, legs and a small head. Kenyan students are very familiar with this expression in reference to examination cheating. It is a process in which an examinee stretches out his/her neck as far as possible to spy and see what a fellow candidate has written down for a given question. Although it is a very common malpractice among candidates in the lower classes of the education system, it is not a remote method even at the university! This explains why during examinations, lecture halls are rearranged and space between students is made wider than on the normal lecture hours or days.

4.6. Submission of multiple Scripts

This form of examination irregularity is very attractive in a crowded classroom or hall with fewer examination officials or invigilators. It has occasionally been used by some students to defeat examination regulations and works well where the candidate has a prior arrangement with the examiner or invigilator and has in his or her possession the examination questions. Such a candidate will have answered all the necessary questions in a separate answer booklet which is smuggled into the examination hall to be handed in with the rest of the collected scripts. The candidate will however, take away the one which was pretentiously written in the examination hall. This is why it is important to guard against students during examinations not to carry in or out answer booklets from the examination hall.

4.7. Coded sign Language

The use of coded or sign language is often used by some candidates to cheat in examinations. For example, one may drop a ruler or pen deliberately to draw the attention of a fellow candidate in order to facilitate their communication and accelerate the planned method of cheating. The same coded language can be used in a computer or calculator and the invigilator may not suspect the interpretation.

4.8. Bribery

This form of malpractice may be used to enhance teacher- student collusion. It brings in economic perspectives in examination malpractices. Here, a student may pay an examination official some money not necessarily to buy the question paper, but be allowed to use the illegal materials smuggled into the examination halls, if not to extend examination schedule (vide Azuka N.G. Alutu et.al. 2006 and Tola Olujuwon et. al. Undated).

4.9. Exchanging answer booklets

The candidates sitting for an examination may arrange in advance to emphasize and revise certain selected topics or particular areas in which they are well versed in. And, in an examination hall, the candidates will sit strategically and exchange their answer booklets. Such a malpractice occurs if the candidates are not well spaced and the invigilator is not keen.

It is these use of several forms of examination irregularities that makes it difficult for strict invigilators to successfully identify and prevent the ingenuity of students in examination malpractices. Examination malpractice is indeed a challenge to educational system in the world today. The agents of this educational vice include parents or guardians who may buy examination papers, bribe examiners and or invigilators. Head teachers or principals may get money from the candidates so as to turn a blind eye to illegal practices in the examination hall and finally the lazy students who rarely study and do not take their work seriously, the examiners who set and mark the papers, those who print the question papers and supervisors or invigilators (cf.Tola Olujuwon et. al. Undated). All these are responsible for the various forms of examination irregularity. This is why we pointed out that the vice is a complex phenomenon whose eradication involves several participants and or predators. Having pointed out the meaning, impact or consequences, forms and agents of examination malpractices; we may now elaborate on its causes in order to discuss the conclusion and make recommendations against the irregularity.

5. The Causes of Examination Malpractices

We have already hinted that examination malpractice is an unethical act. Accordingly, the proneness to such immoral action must be linked to parental upbringing. In Africa, children's behaviour is expected and believed to reflect the moral well up-bringing by their parents. Again, because of social status and economic ability, most parents may be easily persuaded to bribe their way through for the sole success of their own children and self gratification. Some of these parents may be either officials or friends of examiners. They are accordingly, familiar with the paths leading to various methods of examination irregularity.

Second, today unlike the African traditional set up where families had full authority in bringing up their children, the role has currently been taken over by teachers. Most young people in fact, spend more time with teachers than they do with their biological parents. Teachers are therefore expected to morally influence their students. They should thus engage them in dynamic, active and interactive learning based on strong academic and moral foundation. This is important if they have to produce young adults who are not only competitive but are efficient and relevant to their own society. Ethically, teachers must play their role and fulfil such teaching responsibilities. Some of our respondents pointed out that at the University level; some lecturers hardly complete covering the course outline given out to students at the beginning of each semester. Worse still, though this may be hard to satisfactorily verify some interviewees in our discussions pointed out that those lecturers who rarely complete their syllabuses tend to be very generous in marking examination scripts by giving higher grades perhaps to prevent possible complaints from the affected students.

In Kenya, the tradition of publicly releasing the examination results by the Ministry of Education at the end of each examination season; tends to cause tension among school Principals, Teachers and Parents whose candidates fail to excel. Even at the Universities, Faculties, Schools and Colleges whose students do not pass well to be selected for further degree programmes may not feel comfortable at every graduation ceremony. It is such tensions, be it at primary, secondary or university level that are said to be remote causes of examination malpractices. Third, the main actors of examination irregularity – revolves around the students! Although today it is commonly believed that, learning has been revolutionized, made easier and available because of digital and technological know-how, very few students seem to take seriously their academic work. This is because, a good deal of time may be spent before a television set or on internet surfing, face book conversation and or computer games. Yet still, they would want to aspire for success without corresponding hard work to merit the desired goals. Accordingly, an easy alternative is to design methods of succeeding through examination malpractices.

Fourth, as pointed out already, the Kenyan system of education tends to overemphasize the significance of certificates. Unfortunately, when these are obtained illegally through cheating in examinations they have no academic value. There is, in fact, a world of difference between qualification based on paper and that of actual knowledge and skill in the said area (Vide Nwankwo, 2011). Yet, not many students would be ethical enough to be dissuaded from irregularly acquiring certificates. Finally, availability of various forms of information communication technologies such as computers, calculators and mobile telephones, do not help the fight against examination malpractices; but rather exacerbate it in the absence of strict invigilation.

6. Findings and Discussion

In this paper we investigated the phenomenon of examination malpractices in Kenyan public universities using Nairobi and Kenyatta Universities as examples to facilitate and contextualize the discussion. In examining the concept of examination malpractice and its existence as a universal phenomenon, we administered a total of three hundred and seventy five (375) questionnaires to the two universities and distributed them as indicated in table 1.

To confirm and verify the existence of examination malpractice in the two universities, we categorized our respondents into six groups as indicated in table 2. Our assumption indeed verified that the irregularity is a Kenyan problem at the institutions of higher learning.

We noted that the origin of public awareness started with a massive irregularity in one of Kenyans counties and that since then, it has continued to be an annual expectation after each examination season. The methods and forms of cheating at the university level are however different from those at the lower level of education. Even though, the repercussions in each situation are almost identical. The existence of examination malpractices is verified by the fact that the two institutions have examination regulations, stating clearly what happens when a student is involved in the irregularity. Commonly, when a student is caught cheating s/he may be suspended, asked to repeat the year, a semester or is given a warning letter. Such decision however, may be examined and recommended by the Vice Chancellor depending on the gravity of the malpractice.

The causes of examination irregularity are several as shown in table 3. These causes are not only associated with the candidates, but some of them involve the university staff or nonchalant attitude of examination administrators. They include ethical behaviour, psychological, social and economic gains. Even though in other parts of Africa, sexual favour commonly requested by the examiners seems to stand out, the two sampled universities revealed that a large number of students and crowded examination halls are major causes of this evil act. These are followed by the commonly mentioned sexual favour and inadequate preparation for the examination, namely lack of serious study by potential examinees. From our investigation, some respondents revealed that sexual favour should not necessarily be restricted to an initiative made only by lecturers. In fact, an incident was narrated to us where in one of the public universities, a female student closed herself inside a lecturer's office and attempted to talk about a sexual relation in exchange for higher grading of the mark threatening to shout if her intention was not responded to. This for some may be a remote case, but we could not simply write it off and ignore to report it here!

Two hundred and ninety five (295) respondents accused lecturers for making students be prone to examination irregularity by not covering the syllabus as indicated in the course outline. But the lecturers who participated in this study denied the accusation pointing out that at the university level, students study with the aid of the course outline and should not wait to be taught, but rather they should use the same to study by themselves. Otherwise, what is the use of a library in the university and the reading list normally attached to a course outline!

Finally, one hundred and twenty (120) students mainly from the School of Education pointed out that during teaching Practice, some lecturers invite them for a drink for which they (students) may if they are female be required to pay in kind. The student teachers may be either exploited sexually or economically for a good report about their teaching practice.

We pointed out in the paper already the existence of examination malpractice in the universities and in table 4 we present an analysis of the several forms of cheating in an examination. The most prevalent form of cheating in examinations involves the diverse use of synoptic notes. These small writing is similar to using a coded language that may be written on well folded sheets of paper, on the arms, thigh, clothes, not to mention calculators or toilet papers. And, even though both the University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University have prohibited the use of mobile phones in examination halls, some of our respondents admitted that a number of examinees do use them. Finally, we did not get a significant number of respondents to confirm the common talk in the city of Nairobi that a good number of students pay some capable individuals to write for them projects or theses. Only a mere 16.7% concurred that some Kenyans sell certificates. This is good for us as a country because it confirms the standard of our education system and therefore the importance of certificates obtained from our institutions of higher learning. Those respondents who were selected to form part of this study generally agreed that examination malpractices are wicked acts that should not be allowed to go on. However, they drastically differed in suggesting uniform methods of eradicating the malice from our education system as shown in table 5.

The majority preferred a warning letter with 96% in support and 80% preferred semester suspension from the university. Very few supported the harsh decision of expulsion, arguing that with apparent existence of corruption in Kenya, even if a student is expelled from a given University, s/he will still find way into other universities and continue with the ill practice.

7. Conclusion

The paper was not meant to evaluate a historical account of examination malpractice at the two Universities as such; rather it sought to verify the possibility of its existence in the said institutions. And, if it does exist, what methods are put in place to prevent its prevalence. In the process, we found out that examination irregularity is a global phenomenon which is evident even in other institutions of higher learning. The assumption is verified by the inclusion of regulations on examination irregularities found within the universities selected for this study. The malpractice is indeed not only a moral or ethical issue, but it is both a psychological and socio-economic problem. Its presence can ruin down the standard of any given academic institution and even lead to isolation of the culpable institutions. We accordingly recommend for a strict collective ethical method to eliminate it from institutions of higher learning.

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LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Categories of Respondents

Type of respondents	No.	Percentage
Academic members of staff	20	5.3%
Examination administrators	10	2.7%
Students (undergraduate and post graduate)	345	92%
TOTAL	375	100

Table 2: Existence of Examination Malpractices

Category	No.	Percentage
Post graduate students	17	4.5%
Fourth year students	60	16%
Third year students	94	25.1%
Second year students	100	26.7%
First year students	74	19.7%
Academic staff	20	5.3%
Examination administrators	10	2.7%
TOTAL	375	100%

Table 3: Causes of Examination Malpractices

Case	No.	Percentage
Sexual favour	350	93.3%
Crowded examination hall	360	96%
Large number of students	360	96%
Inadequate preparation by students	340	90.7%
Failure to complete the course outline	295	78.7%
Economic gain (e.g. during practicum)	120	32%

Table 4: Forms of Examination Malpractices

Category of cheating	No.	Percentage
Leaking the examination papers by lecturers	105	28%
Diverse forms of Synoptic notes	360	96%
Using mobile phones and calculators	280	74.7%
Using coded language	44	11.7%
Giraffing	32	8.5%
Impersonation	05	1.4%
Giving extra time to candidates	03	0.8%
Writing projects or theses for others for a fee	60	16%
Changing results' transcripts	40	10.7%
Buying certificates	06	1.6%

Table 5: Suggestions for alleviating Examination Malpractices

Nature of Punishment	No.	Percentage
Warning letter	360	96%
One Semester suspension	300	80%
One year suspension	156	41.6%
Repeat the examination(s)	275	73.3%
Expulsion from the University	28	7.5%

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

THE PHENOMENON OF EXAMINATION MALPRACTICES: AN EXAMPLE OF NAIROBI AND KENYATTA UNIVERSITIES

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

- Gender: Tick (✓) as appropriate: Male (✓) Female (✓)
- Tick (✓) as appropriate your year of study
 1st year () 2nd () 3rd () 4th () Post graduate ()
- In which College, school or faculty are you registered? _____
- In the Department(s) of _____

B. COMMON EXAMINATION IRREGULARITIES

Read the following sentences and tick (✓) against as either (Agreed or Disagreed) as appropriate.

- I am interested in cheating, provided the examination is difficult: Agree () Disagree ()
- Cheating is good since most people who cheat often pass their examinations without repeating or even being punished: Agree () Disagree ()
- No matter how much you read, if you don't cheat, you will fail: Agree () Disagree ()
- I cheat in examinations because I lack the necessary confidence in myself: Agree () Disagree ()
- I cheat because my colleagues cheat in examinations: Agree () Disagree ()
- I will cheat in examinations if my parents support the idea: Agree () Disagree ()
- Cheating is good in competitive examinations because passing will please both parents and friends: Agree () Disagree ()
- Most parents encourage their children to cheat in examinations: Agree () Disagree ()
- The Kenyan system of education seems to encourage cheating in examinations: Agree () Disagree ()
- Cheating is very common in Kenyan institutions of higher learning: Agree () Disagree ()
- Only those who cheat have high grades in examinations: Agree () Disagree ()
- Cheating is recommendable for difficult examinations: Agree () Disagree ()
- If I do not cheat, those who cheat in the same examination will have an advantage over me:

- Agree () Disagree ()
18. Cheating is the only way out if a lot of work done over a long period of time is to be examined once in a short time: Agree () Disagree ()
19. Cheating is helpful for people who are very nervous about examinations: Agree () Disagree ()
20. It is good to arrange to sit next to someone in order to copy from his /her paper: Agree () Disagree ()
21. I can take examinations for another person: Agree () Disagree ()
22. If the question paper is availed to me before the examination, I will definitely pass: Agree () Disagree ()
23. If I am offered to buy the examination question paper ahead of the examination, I will definitely be interested: Agree () Disagree ()
24. Some lecturers/ teachers encourage cheating in examinations: Agree () Disagree ()
25. A few lecturers/ teachers help their students to pass examinations: Agree () Disagree ()
26. It is in fact difficult to eradicate cheating in examinations in the Kenyan institutions of learning: Agree () Disagree ()
27. Students should never write examinations without the presence of supervisors or invigilators: Agree () Disagree ()
28. Smuggling unauthorized materials in an examination hall is a common way of cheating in examinations: Agree () Disagree ()
29. Cheating in examinations is a proof of moral decadence of a society that leads to corruption: Agree () Disagree ()
30. Any cheating in examinations is a fraudulent act that should be severely punished: Agree () Disagree ()
31. I am interested in cheating in University examinations because I do not have sufficient time to prepare for the examination: Agree () Disagree ()
32. Cheating in examination makes me feel pretty guilty: Agree () Disagree ()
33. I may not feel guilty to cheat if the lecturer/teacher does not teach properly: Agree () Disagree ()
34. Cheating is not necessary if a candidate has adequately prepared before the examinations: Agree () Disagree ()
35. Buying certificates is alright, provided one is not caught: Agree () Disagree ()
36. Buying certificate is another form of cheating in examination: Agree () Disagree ()
37. Suggest ways and means of eradicating cheating in examinations:

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