



Exploring National Examination Malpractice Mechanisms and Countermeasures: An Ethiopian Perspective

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Exam malpractice can be found in every nation in the globe. The practice of providing quality examinations in Ethiopian schools has ran into difficulties. The various forms of national examination malpractices, as well as preventative methods, were investigated in this study. A 5-point rating scale labelled 'Forms of Examination Malpractices Questionnaire (FEMPQ)' was adapted and administered to 1,359 respondents. To supplement the findings, an interview was also conducted with 15 educational officials. While Mean and Standard Deviations were used for quantitative data analysis, narrative analysis was used for qualitative analysis. Among the major forms of malpractices identified are; doing examinations in groups ($M = 4.43$, $SD = .739$), collusions ($M = 3.97$, $SD = .750$), leakages ($M = 3.44$, $SD = .787$), and receiving answers through mobile phones ($M = 3.73$, $SD = .711$). Findings from interview also revealed; some schools intentionally prepare examination classrooms in the darkest locations, assigning irresponsible invigilators/supervisors, and intentionally misplacing sitting arrangements during examinations. From the findings, the curbing strategies and educational implications are suggested as; schools should work upon students cognitive and moral developments. And, the country needs to establish an independent National Organization of Educational Measurement and Evaluation professionals, and gradually shift from booklet exam formats to online based exam practices.

Keywords: cheating, curbing strategies, examination malpractices, forms, national examinations

INTRODUCTION

Individuals can build good habits and create the correct mindset to work and live as good citizens through education (Gbenu, 2012). Thus, school education requires periodic learning and assessment in the form of tests, projects, practicals, or examinations in order to determine the students' level of knowledge and competency.

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Exam malpractices, on the other hand, are one of the current issues affecting the educational system.

According to the Ethiopian National Educational Assessment and Examination Agency, the first National Examination was held in 1946 for students who had completed grade 6 (NEAEA,2016). In 1950, the National Examination was changed to grade 8 due to a curriculum change, and in 1954, the Secondary School Leaving Certificate Examination (ESLCE) was created as a higher education entrance exam, with exams developed by subject matter experts at the Haile Selassie I University (HSIU) at the time (Zewudie, 2000). Prior to that, students were required to take a supplementary General Certificate Examination developed by England, which was funded by the government and which they had to pass.

Currently, three types of National Examinations are being given in Ethiopia: Primary school Leaving Certificate Examinations (PSLCE) for students who completed second cycle of primary education, grade 8, which is a mandate of Regional Education Bureaus since 2000 ; Ethiopian General Secondary Education Certificate Examination (EGSECE) given at the end of the first cycle secondary, grade 10, under the mandate of the National Educational Assessment and Examinations Agency (NEAEA) since 2000; Ethiopian University Entrance Examination (EUEE), given at the end of the second cycle of secondary education (preparatory education) developed by Institute of Educational Research (IER) of Addis Ababa University and administered by NEAEA for grade 12, since 2002.

Due to poor examination preparation, administration, and scoring procedures, the quality of examinations in Ethiopian schools has recently been tainted by malpractices, and this has become a major source of concern for relevant authorities. A growing number of stakeholders both inside and outside the academic community are concerned about the rapid deterioration of our educational quality as a result of widespread examination malpractice in the system. As a result, examination malpractice in Ethiopia has been a source of concern not just for teachers and school administrators, but also for a variety of interest groups, concerned citizens, some parents, employers of labour, and international organizations. The image of Ethiopian education has been severely tarnished as a result of exam malpractice, which plagues the country's educational institutions. As a result of widespread social media leaks of examination answers, Somalia cancelled national examinations in 2019, forcing students to repeat exams, resulting in student protests (as reported in African news by Tech Gist in Africa on 05/16/2019).

Similarly, in Ethiopia, the grade 12 National Examination was stolen and released on social media by an anonymous body in 2016, (Reported on Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation, 2016). This unanticipated incidence posed a significant challenge for all students, parents, and stakeholders, resulting in the extension of the exam timetable in anticipation of other exam types around the country. The country was plunged into a psychological, political, and economic crisis as a result of this catastrophic incident, which was termed the year of "the exam under examination." Similarly, the leakage of the same grade 12 National Examination in 2016, followed by unexpected grade

inflations in 2020, was a major roadblock for students, parents, and stakeholders, resulting in the cancellation of some subject scores and the withholding of results from suspected schools and students.

Although large-scale investigations into the prevalence of examination misconduct have not yet been conducted in Ethiopia because to national political concerns, some small-scale research have revealed negative consequences. For example, a survey conducted at Haramaya University by Nelson and Abdulaziz (2012) found that poor assessment systems pose a threat to quality education. According to this study, exams are beginning to resemble group work. They claimed that examination misconduct has resulted in lower educational levels, academic dishonesty, like as cheating and plagiarism, has reached alarming proportions in Ethiopian higher education institutions, as reported in Solomon (2017)'s research at Dire Dawa University. As a result, the significance of this research arises from the alarming rate of EMPs in Ethiopia's educational system, as well as the sophistication of cheating methods used by criminals in recent years. The researchers hoped that the findings of this study would help to bring these undesirable practices to the attention of not only teachers, students, parents, and administrators, but also policymakers, lawyers, and educational institutions at large, so that they could begin to consider remedies to cease them. To meet the aforementioned purpose, the study aimed to answer the following questions: (1) What are the different types of Ethiopian national examination malpractices? and, 2) What are the strategies that may be used to deter Ethiopians from cheating on exams?

Examination in an Educational Context

Education is an effort to prepare children to have the abilities, attitudes, and skills they will need in their everyday life. Educators are supposed to be able to empower the potential of intelligence, emotional attitudes, and skills through the learning process in order to have these qualities (Solichin, M.M., et al., 2021). As a result, one of the goals of education and training is to impart the value of honesty, integrity, respect for others, and hard effort. In this aspect, quality education contributes to quality workforce output, as opposed to all sorts of disciplinary behaviour, such as examination malpractices. Recent studies, such as Odongo (2014), have shown that malpractice can occur before, during, or after the examination, through teacher or invigilator assistance, smuggling of unauthorized materials, collusion between candidates, and copying by stretching neck to ('griffin') another candidate's work; and also after the examination, through score inflating by markers during script scoring or certificate falsification.

Emaikwu (2012) further on this topic, stating that if an examination is poorly conducted, the results may lead to erroneous conclusions and judgments that will negatively impact the learner, the instructor, the entire educational system, and society, and the sanctity of the examination process has been trivialized by a number of malpractices. In the similar way, the classroom management expert, Hewitt Seymour said:

“...We sometimes forget the seriousness of not preventing and handling cheating in our classrooms. If students can cheat on a test, it sends the message that they do not have to pay attention, do the homework, or study the subject you are working

so hard to teach. Besides, Seymour says, if cheaters get away with cheating---and get higher grades because they cheat---that sending a de-motivating message to the hard-working students in your class''. (Seymour E., 1997).

The prevalence of examination misconduct has a detrimental impact on exams and diminishes their value. This means that malpractice tends to jeopardize an examination's technical features, such as validity and reliability, and raises questions about the authenticity and trustworthiness of certifications and decisions based on the outcomes of such examinations (Nworgu, Uchekwe, and Nworgu, 2013).

Based on how they are administered, examinations are internal and external, as well as school-based and national examinations. Internal examinations are typically prepared and administered by institutions for students who have completed a course of instruction there utilizing teacher-made assessments. External examination, on the other hand, is an examination that is organized by an institution and is open to anybody who meets the entry requirements. National External examinations are often utilized to provide equal chances to all members of society; regardless of the type of education they have received (Ojerinde, 2000). Exam malpractices, on the other hand, are one of the current issues plaguing the global education system. Exam malpractices (EMPs) are described by educators as deliberate violations of official examination standards intended to provide a candidate an undue advantage or disadvantage (Wilayat, 2009).

Assessment and Examination Malpractices

Cheating during an examination is a worrying phenomenon because it will damage the doers. Academically it harms students because the teacher cannot measure their academic abilities accurately, even their standard competency, Davis & Drinan, as cited in (Sugiarti., & Husain, H., 2021). Literature confirms that characters are stronger than they appear. As a result, character education involves more than simply teaching a child what is right and wrong; it also instils the habit of doing good in students who comprehend, can feel, and want to do good. Character education is a mission similar to moral education (Kamaruddin SA., 2012). Furthermore, without character qualities such as honesty, sense of responsibility, kindness, and perseverance in the face of diversity, achievement will be meaningless. Conducting an evaluation that can collect data and offer information that can describe and anticipate the character of both the present and the future is one way to determine the progress of student character behaviour in accordance with the objective of learning. Authentic assessment is one type of assessment that helps with character education. Students are required to complete real-world tasks that demonstrate the application of relevant information and abilities in this style of assessment (Muller, 2005). It helps to measure products and performances that have meaning or value outside of academic accomplishment in this way.

According to studies, performance assessment has a favourable impact on students' intellectual abilities in areas including success, learning attitude, creativity, and questioning ability (Arhin, AK., 2015). Good examination design can promote social cohesion, assist in the fair selection of talents, foster faith in government institutions, and in the overall conduct of the public school system. In support of these, Ethiopia's

Ministry of Education published a curriculum reform in December 2010 that stressed a move from objective-based to competency-based education. Even if the national curriculum shifts to a competency-based one, the national examination system will continue to measure solely cognitive skills. As a result, aligning national assessments with the new curriculum is a challenge. In Ethiopian education, however, quality control is mostly focused on school inspection, monitoring, and control. While such measures are useful for gathering data on policy implementation, strategic planning, and public accountability, they are of limited use when it comes to controlling the classroom and learning process in order to achieve the stated goals.

External examinations, as a standardized assessment, serve as a vital quality assurance tool for curricular effectiveness and instruction, as well as fairness in selection based on educational achievements. When such assessments are poorly designed and prone to errors, they are unfit for their intended function. Better design and more transparency in the process are the solutions. Notably, the Ethiopian Education and Training Policy (TGE, 1994) stated that Continuous Assessment (CA) in academic and practical courses, as well as aptitude exams, would be conducted to ensure the construction of an all-round profile of students at all levels. As a result of this policy, students' learning outcomes in secondary and postsecondary education should be assessed utilizing CA techniques in connection to three core domains: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor (Desalegn, 2004).

METHOD

Scope of the Study

Ethiopia is divided into nine ethnically and federalist regions (Oromia, Amhara, the State of Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples, Tigary, Afar, Somali, Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambela, Harari, and two city councils) on the horn of East Africa (Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa). The study sites were chosen from Ethiopia's Oromia Region, which is geographically the largest and has the country's highest population, out of the country's nine Regional States and two City Administrations.

The Oromia Region is organized into 20 administrative zones, including two special zones (Surrounding Finfinne and Walo Kamise Special Zones), which are further subdivided into local administrative woredas and sub-cities, according to the most recent administrative structure. The Region spans 284,537.83km² and has a population of 34,622,239 people (CSA, 2020). In Oromia Region, there are now 1,409 secondary and preparatory schools (1,344 public and 65 private) with a total enrolment of 410,349 students and 11,559 teachers in public and private secondary schools (Grades 9-12). (Oromia Education Bureau Annual statistics, 2019).

To keep the research area in the region to a minimum, only secondary schools from the three Oromia Region zones (Central Arsi, East Showa, and West Arsi) were chosen as study sites. The regional official language, Afan Oromo, is also used as a medium of instruction for primary school students (Grades 1-8) in the area and zones. Teachers, school principals, Woreda education experts, Woreda education supervisors, Zonal

education experts, Regional education experts, MoE senior experts, and NEAEA directors were among the participants in the study.

Research Design

Mixed methods research designs were implemented in this study. We used the quantitative and qualitative data resources to validate the findings. In this sense, data collected on the same topic was triangulated so that the credibility and validity of research findings were checked.

Sample and sampling techniques

In this study, the purposive sampling technique was used to pick Oromia Regional State, and cluster sampling procedures were used to select three administrative zones, Central Arsi, East Showa, and West Arsi zones. Following that, 48 secondary schools (38 public and 10 private) were randomly picked using stratified and simple random selection approaches. Because there are more public schools than private schools, the proportion of school types varies, notably in remote administrative areas of the region. The following formula was used to determine the sample size for teachers across strata:

$$n_k = (n/N) N_k$$

Note; the sample size for K_{th} strata;

N_k = the total population of the the K_{th} strata;

N = the total population size, and

n = the total sample size.

As a result, a total of 1,359 participants were included in the study: 1200 teachers, 96 school principals, and 48 Woreda education supervisors for the quantitative study, and 10 woreda education experts, 2 Zonal education experts, 1 Regional education expert, 1 MoE senior expert, and 1 NEAEA director for the qualitative study.

Research Instruments

The quality of a study is mostly considered by the quality of research instruments and data collection tools. This study used data collection instruments in the form of questionnaire for the quantitative data, and interview guides for the qualitative data.

Questionnaire

Because there was no single solid instrument on EMPs, a questionnaire was built utilizing a combination of survey items previously used to investigate the origins, forms, and effects of EMPs committed by students in three separate studies by different researchers (Alutu&Aluede,2006; Akaranga & Ongong 2013; Petters & Okon ,2014). Finally, a questionnaire consisting two parts was developed. Part one (1) is personal data section, was used to collect personal information from the respondents, Part two (2) consists of 21 items used to examine Forms of Examination Malpractices Questionnaire (FEMPQ).

Interview Guides

To collect qualitative data, Woreda and Zonal education experts, Regional education experts, MoE senior experts, and NEAEA directors were given an interview guide. As a result, the researcher developed an Interview guide consisting of semi-structured items to assess the status of EMPs, the mechanisms and their consequences in order to facilitate a detailed discussion of the challenges and forwarded strategies from the perspectives of expertise and triangulate the results obtained from the questionnaire.

Content validation

It is critical to examine the content and face validity of the quantitative questionnaire scales and qualitative open-ended items after the researcher has completed them. Three Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) were contacted as a result of this, two from the measurement and evaluation fields and one from the English Language and Literature department. As a result, two teachers from Arsi University and one from Hawassa University were chosen to engage in the validation activity based on their qualifications, teaching experience, and willingness to participate. The generated questionnaire was emailed in soft copy to the reviewers' addresses, and the overall quality of the items was assessed. Modifications and changes were made based on the feedback received.

Reliability Test

The data collected from the pilot study participants were generally entered into the SPSS 25.0 package in order to compute the cronbach alpha reliability index. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was then calculated for each questionnaire subscale. As a consequence, cronbach's alpha for the FEMPQS was determined to be .73 for the before examination subscale, .86 for the during examination subscale, and .76 for the after examination subscale. The researcher removed items whose item-total correlations were minor (.30) and whose deletion significantly enhanced cronbach's alpha coefficient based on the reliability data. Finally, 21 items were fine-tuned before being used in the study.

Data Analysis

On the statistical program for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25, the quantitative data was examined using mean and standard deviations. Narrative analysis, on the other hand, was used to examine the qualitative data. The researcher recognized themes that arose throughout the discussions during transcribing and emphasized significant topics that the participants addressed several times. Finally, quantitative and qualitative data were synthesized and triangulated.

FINDINGS

Forms of Examination Malpractices

Under the heading of EMPs, the researcher discovered three constructs: before examination, during examination, and post examination malpractices. These constructs have a total of 21 item assertions (BEMPI=7 items, DEMPI=8 items, and AEMPI= 6 items). On a Likert scale ranging from 1 SDA (Strongly Disagree) to 5 SA

(Strongly Agree), the participants (teachers, principals, and supervisors) were requested to demonstrate their level of agreement in the nature of the forms of malpractices. For each construct, the responses were examined using the mean (M), standard deviation (SD), and rank order of the means. The researcher employed an interval classification in such a way that, an item mean of 1.5 to 2.5 was considered disagree (DA), 2.5 to 3.5 undecided (UD), and 3.5 to 4.5 agree. A Strongly disagree (SDA) was defined as a response below 1.5, while strongly agree (SA) was defined as a response above 4.5. Only the five most highly ranked things in the constructs were chosen for study. This was calculated independently for each of the three participant groups, with the final analysis and interpretations based on the average of their mean scores.

Table 1

Malpractices committed before examination as perceived by teachers, principals and supervisors

Item number	Item statement	Teachers		Principals		Supervisors	
		Mean(M)	SD	Mean(M)	SD	Mean(M)	SD
BEMPI-1	Hiring other persons to do on examination. /impersonation	3.82	.853	3.29	.794	3.17	.663
BEMPI-2	Buying or procurement of fake question booklets prior to the Examination	3.76	.873	3.34	.779	3.33	.663
BEMPI-3	Receiving examination papers from examination officials prior to examination	3.64	.882	3.33	.749	3.35	.729
BEMPI-4	Changing the alphabetical order of students' names with the intention of cheating	4.01	.730	3.86	.878	3.37	.703
BEMPI-5	Sitting intentionally wrongly by changing seat arrangement	3.53	.762	3.91	.769	4.08	.647
BEMPI-6	Creation of 'special centres' for collusion of examiners	3.98	.733	3.90	.788	4.02	.729
BEMPI-7	Arranging invitation or hospitality by schools to invigilators/supervisors	4.45	.719	4.55	.752	4.00	.772

Note: BEMPI-Before Examination Malpractices Items

The results in the table 1, show among seven items regarding exam malpractices committed before examination, the perception mean response of the participants show the major forms as; hiring other persons to do on examination/impersonation (M = 4.43, SD = .770), arranging invitation or hospitality by schools to invigilators/supervisors (M = 4.33, SD = .748), creation of 'special centres' for collusion of examiners (M = 3.97, SD = .750), sitting intentionally wrongly by changing seat arrangement (M = 3.84, SD = .726) and changing the alphabetical order of students' names with the intention of cheating (M = 3.75, SD = .770) respectively. In support of these, reports of the interview informants indicated that, some schools intentionally allocate examination

classrooms and halls in the darkest corridors and locations unsuitable for supervisions and encourage collusions of examiners. Similarly, some teachers and supervisors coordinate students to contribute money for invitation or hospitality and bargaining invigilators and supervisors a head of examination period. The fact that some principals and teachers purposively allow students to change their names completely, or alter its order of alphabets to get advantages of seating plan with clever students also increases the rate of crimes. The respondents also added the situation where fake exam answers disclosed on face book mediums and even exam booklets sold at different corridors distorts the quality of exam administration.

Table 2
Malpractices committed during examination as perceived by teachers, principals, and supervisors

Item number	Item statement	Teachers		Principals		Supervisors	
		Mean(M)	SD	Mean(M)	SD	Mean(M)	SD
DUEMPI-1	Exchanging examination booklets with answers written on them	4.43	.690	4.44	.880	4.54	.743
DUEMPI-2	Copying another student's work or answer	4.51	.635	3.90	.814	4.67	.595
DUEMPI-3	Receiving answers through mobile phones	4.02	.622	4.43	.880	4.27	.644
DUEMPI-4	Body writing or tattoo	3.73	.783	2.35	.846	2.52	.684
DUEMPI-5	Receiving prepared answers from invigilators	4.00	.682	3.25	.754	3.94	.697
DUEMPI-6	Getting answers by teachers/ invigilators in exam rooms	3.91	.661	3.88	.798	4.15	.618
DUEMPI-7	Insulting/assaulting supervisors, invigilators and others	4.06	.700	3.93	.785	4.15	.652
DUEMPI-8	Committing mass cheating/doing exams in group	4.39	.739	4.45	.679	4.46	.798

Note: DEMPI- During Examination Malpractices Item

The second category of forms of EMPs is malpractices committed during examinations. As shown in the table 2, there are 8 items listed under this category. Among these 8 items, respondents show their perception as; exchanging examination booklets with answers written on them ($M = 4.47$, $SD = .771$), committing mass cheating/doing examination in groups ($M = 4.43$, $SD = .729$), copying another students' work or answer ($M = 4.36$, $SD = .681$), receiving answers through mobile phones ($M = 4.24$, $SD = .715$) and receiving prepared answers from invigilators ($M = 4.05$, $SD = .712$) respectively. In supplement of these, the responses of interviewee also identified the malpractices during examinations as; collusion of examiners, mass cheating, receiving answers through mobiles, intentionally misplacing sitting arrangements, and exchanging booklets with answers. There is also a situation where an individual who is not registered as a candidate takes the place of the real student to do on examination.

Table 3

Malpractices committed after examination as perceived by teachers, principals, and supervisors

Item number	Item statement	Teachers		Principals		Supervisors	
		Mean(M)	SD	Mean(M)	SD	Mean(M)	SD
AEMPI-1	Invigilators giving extra time to write examinations	3.95	.732	4.13	.653	3.33	.781
AEMPI-2	Exam officials replacing answer scripts with new ones after examination	3.35	.703	3.39	.773	3.33	.663
AEMPI-3	Exchanging of answer keys by scorers during scoring	3.47	.780	3.32	.733	2.75	.978
AEMPI-4	Altering of marks and grades by scorers during scoring	3.38	.699	2.48	.917	3.23	.592
AEMPI-5	Exam officials wrongly or improperly sealing or packing exam answer forms	2.45	.771	2.49	.833	3.27	.736
AEMPI-6	Misplacing/exchanging of students' results by exam officials during printing certificates	2.13	.715	3.28	.660	2.42	.710

Note: AEMPI-After Examination Malpractices Item

On the third mechanism of cheating, as indicated in the table 3, participants responded the major mechanisms committed after examination as; invigilators giving extra time to written examinations ($M = 3.80$, $SD = .722$), exam officials replacing answer scripts with new ones after examination ($M = 3.36$, $SD = .713$), exchanging of answer keys by scorers during scoring ($M = 3.18$, $SD = .830$), altering marks and grades by scorers during scoring ($M = 3.03$, $SD = .736$), and misplacing/exchanging of students' results by exam officials ($M = 2.61$, $SD = .695$). Similarly, the informants suggested the malpractices occurring after examinations as; insulting supervisors and invigilators, refusing to return answer sheets at a given time or minutes, mistakenly entering wrong answer keys in to scoring machine, and misplacing students results during printing as a challenges of EMPs in national examinations.

What measures should be taken to mitigate the National Examination Malpractices?

The following is a summary of the interview findings about curbing strategies: To combat the criminality caused by examination malpractices, all educational stakeholders at both the local and national levels must work together. It was also suggested:

'Because EMP is a form of behavioural disorder, schools should not only preach or teach students the subject matter, but also instil moral and ethical values in them. 'Schools should form examination ethical committees that fight against malpractices committed by any proprietors,' it was suggested in this regard.

Again, it was suggested that:

'The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the Federal government, must adopt a clear code of conduct and an EMP Act that would allow concerned bodies to administer appropriate and standard judgments to offenders and perpetrators who directly or indirectly participated in EMPs.

It was also informed:

‘Schools should avoid students purposefully changing their names or alphabets during registration for national examinations in order to gain access to seats with smart students, and exam administrators, principals, school committees, and Woreda education experts should assign large classrooms for examination session and choose the best examination centres and locations.

The informants also indicated the importance of:

‘Changing the exam system from a booklet-based approach to innovative testing methods such as online testing or Commuter Based Testing (CBT).

Lastly, the informants suggested:

‘a redesigned curriculum with vocational and technical educations, with a lesser emphasis on earning degrees and certificates without the necessary knowledge and skills. Again, institutions should use post-hock entry examinations as a criterion for admitting students to universities and colleges during the application process.

DISCUSSION

The current study provides some key facts about the types of examination malpractices and how to prevent them in national exams. As a result, quantitative results using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviations reveal the major forms of EMPs committed before examinations, such as hiring other people to do the examination/impersonation, arranging invitations or hospitality by schools for invigilators/supervisors, the establishment of "special centres" for examiner cooperation, purposely seating incorrectly by changing seat arrangements and changing the alphabetical order of students' names in order to cheat. The findings from the qualitative interview data also highlighted the strategies used prior to the examinations, such as some institutions placing examination classrooms and halls in the darkest corridors and areas unsuited for supervision, and encouraging examiner collaboration. Similarly, some teachers and supervisors organize students to donate money for invitations or hospitality, as well as bargaining invigilators and supervisors, prior to the exam period. Pre-examination malpractices have been detected during the stages of setting items, writing items, printing test formats, packing exam booklets, storing, and transporting booklets to various locations. This means that several bodies are to blame for national examination leaks, and their management has become tedious and dangerous due to security and privacy concerns. Exchanging examination booklets with answers written on them, committing mass cheating/doing examinations in groups, copying another student's work or answer, receiving answers through mobile phones, and receiving prepared answers from invigilators are all examples of EMPs committed during examinations, according to the quantitative data.

In addition, interviewees identified the following malpractices during examinations: examiner collaboration, widespread cheating, obtaining answers via mobile phones, purposely misplacing sitting arrangements, and exchanging booklets with answers. Similarly, the quantitative data from the perceptions of teachers, principals, and supervisors revealed the major forms as invigilators giving extra time to written examinations, exam authorities replacing answer scripts with new ones after the

examination, scorers exchanging answer keys during scoring, scorers altering marks and grades during scoring, and exam officials misplacing/exchanging students' results. Similarly, the informants suggested that EMPS in national examinations face challenges such as insulting supervisors and invigilators, refusing to return answer sheets within a specified time or minutes, entering incorrect answer keys into the scoring machine, and misplacing students' results during printing. Some literatures and earlier study findings provide additional evidence in support of the above findings. For example, current scholars such as Odongo (2014) have shown that malpractice is known to occur before the examination, when a leak occurs; or during the examination, when teachers or invigilators provide assistance, unauthorized materials are smuggled, and candidates collude, replicating ('Giriffin') another candidate's work during the examination, as well as afterward, through score inflating by markers during script scoring or certificate fraud.

Similarly, some dishonest teachers assist students during examinations by bringing worked answers to test items into examination rooms, writing the answers on the boards, and distracting invigilators/supervisors by offering reinforcements to the officials in the teachers' offices during examinations. Students are encouraged to pay 'co-operation' fees for 'setting supervisors and examination officials' to this end. In support of these claims, the current study's findings are consistent with those of earlier studies. Teachers, on the other hand, can play an important role in helping students learn and apply a moral-reasoning process to serve as role models for telling the truth, respecting others, accepting and fulfilling responsibilities, playing fairly, earning and returning trust, and living a moral life, according to Lumokin in Nopemberi, S., & Sugiyam, Y. (2021). In light of the current study, Onyibe et al. (2015) suggested that EMPs can be mitigated by employing persons with strong morality, trustworthiness, and honesty to monitor and invigilate exams. Similarly, according to the findings of a study conducted by Ukpabi (2013), an increase in the number of invigilators present during examinations helped to reduce EMPs in schools, and the number of invigilators assigned to examination rooms should be proportional to the size of the examination rooms.

Leakage, or 'Expo,' is a highly common and most serious kind of EMPs, according to another study by Achio et al. (2012). It can occur at any point of the examination process, including before, during, and after the examination. It usually originates from exam authors, exam officers, exam printers, secretaries, drivers, teachers, principals, custodians, supervisors, and others who have access to the questions and marking schemes. Some of the EMPs commonly noticed after examinations, according to the same study by Achio et al. (2012), include colluding with member(s) of staff to replace the original answered script with a new prepared answer script, changing or swapping answer sheets, inflation of candidates marks, and examiner carelessness in marking or adding marks.

The guilt for the country's high level of EMPs is not one-sided, though; it must be shared. Teachers, students, private business owners, parents, and the government must all create the willpower to address this important issue. The outcomes of earlier studies and literatures on curbing techniques are likewise consistent. For example, according to Gbenda BL. (2008) and Yakubu (2010), examinations are led by a code of ethics, which

is translated into rules and regulations, in order to ensure transparency, honesty, validity, and trustworthiness. Exam malpractices are defined as any unethical conduct that leads to the violation of these laws and regulations, whether it occurs before, during, or after an examination. In this context, ethics in education and the debate of EMPs refers to the behaviour of students, teachers, parents, examiners, and law enforcement officers who must be favourably active in the event of an EMP (Odia Ochuko, 2011). Similarly, fostering a culture of academic honesty and integrity across schools, according to Makaula, F.B., (2018), is critical for instilling students' cognitive and moral development in resisting EMPs. This means that EMP has the potential to cause cultural deterioration, greater criminality, social unfairness, and corruption in society on a larger scale. Furthermore, according to Bitrus (2013), any individual or group of individuals found guilty of indulging in EMPs should be subjected to the full force of the rules and regulations governing examination administration in their respective institutions. Similarly, according to the deterrence principle, specific punishment singled out to offenders will 'deter' or prevent them from committing future crimes, and the fear of punishment will deter others from committing similar crimes (Wright,2010).

In a legal context, deterrence refers to any situation in which a person considers doing a criminal conduct but decides against it or limits it because he or she perceives a risk of legal punishment and is afraid of the consequences (Gibbs, 1986). This means that the harsher the punishment, the more likely a rationally calculated human being will refrain from unlawful conduct. Furthermore, different countries employ diverse measures to combat the occurrence of EMPs, which are ineffective. Another finding by Underwood and Szabo (2004) is that when students believe their teachers are committed and honest, the number of malpractices falls. Furthermore, educators should employ positive reinforcement and encourage pupils to develop a good view on life in order to deter them from cheating (Hulsart and Mccarthy, 2009). Similarly, the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) proposes that cheating occurs as a result of both the opportunity and the purpose to cheat (Bandura, 1997). This means that while a student may have a positive attitude toward cheating and may have friends who do it, the high level of exam monitoring in a particular class may make cheating extremely difficult or impossible. As a result, the Ethiopian Ministry of Education, in partnership with the Federal Government, should draft a clear code of behaviour and legislative directives. It should also be enshrined in EMP Acts and legislation, with every proprietor and offender held accountable for offending throughout the assessment process. Furthermore, the federal government should allocate sufficient funds to all regions based on the present ratio of exam centres or schools, examinees, examiners, supervisors, coordinators, and anyone who are directly or indirectly involved in the examination process. Despite the fact that the National Examination Agency was established by Council of Ministers Regulation No. 260/2012 and an examination administration manual was published, Ethiopia has yet to develop Decrees and Acts on EMPs.

At general, EMPs have been seen in several Ethiopian secondary schools on a regular basis. The consequences of such wrongdoings have far-reaching detrimental implications for society as a whole. As a result, EMPs, which began in Ethiopia as a minor crime, have taken on a frightening dimension and appear to have become a

permanent feature of the Ethiopian educational system. Efforts by governments, examining organizations, institutions, people, and concerned groups to alleviate the problem have yielded no major benefits. The majority of the informants believe that the EMP culture can be ended if and only if everyone avoids and controls academic cheating. In light of this, activities for students, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders should be conducted, such as consistent panels, seminars, and group discussion events on the topic of "examination ethics" and the consequences of cheating on exams. The findings also proposed that technology be used to move national examinations from a booklet method to other techniques such as online testing or computer-based assessment (CBT). Despite the fact that the NEAEA used several booklet coding schemes, this strategy is advised because to an alarming increase in EMPs in the country. In light of this, previous studies by Brew & Sachs (2007) revealed, in some universities, academic dishonesty is widely recognized as a worsening trend, associated with the expansion of the internet.

CONCLUSIONS

The researcher draws the following conclusions based on the aforementioned evaluation of the results. EMPs are no longer seen as evil by many students and instructors, and cheating is becoming the norm in various societies. As a result, EMP is not only ethically reprehensible, but also a criminal conduct that is currently devouring Ethiopia's educational system and threatening to destroy the country's whole society. Because new electronic tools have provided students more inventive ways to cheat on national examinations, the academic society must evolve. Educators must be aware of these techniques and even endeavour to be proactive in all examination processes. This means that other than traditional examinations or paper-and-pencil assessments, there is a need to find new techniques to measure students' abilities. To that purpose, all of our educational institutions, notably secondary and higher education institutions should automate examinations through the use of computers (ICT). At the same time, graduates should be exposed to rigorous assessments while looking for work in order to assess their abilities and to prevent examination malpractice. To this end, several Ethiopian universities, such as Adama and Addis Ababa Science and Technology Universities, hold post-hoc examinations for students seeking admission to higher education institutions. Finally, this study suggested that the Ministry of Education establish an independent National Organization of Educational Measurement and Evaluation professionals to advise the centre on the quality of national examination preparation, implementation, difficulties, and possibilities.

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