

## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ETHICAL CONDUCT AND STUDENTS' EXAMINATION PERFORMANCE AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN KISII COUNTY, KENYA

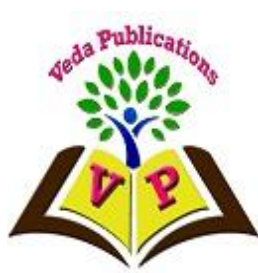
<sup>1</sup>Jared Mauti, <sup>2</sup>Dr. Benard Mwebi, <sup>3</sup>Dr. Eric Ogwora

<sup>1</sup>Kisii University P.O Box 408-40200, Kisii, Kenya.

Email: [mautijaredmomanyi@yahoo.com](mailto:mautijaredmomanyi@yahoo.com), <sup>2</sup> School of Education, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology Email: [bmwebi@jooust.ac.ke](mailto:bmwebi@jooust.ac.ke) <sup>3</sup>Kisii University, Email: [oyomaseno@yahoo.com](mailto:oyomaseno@yahoo.com)

Doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.54513/IJREP.2022.8201>

### Abstract



#### Article Info:

Article Received: 19-04-2022

Accepted on: 20-05-2022

Published online: 22-06--2022


This study investigated examination malpractices by students in Universities. The purpose was to examine the relationship between ethical conduct and students' examination performance and explore the challenges university students face during examinations. The study was conducted in Kisii County using a descriptive survey design within the qualitative and quantitative paradigms. It involved 270 students out of the 4,222 third year university students in 8 Universities. Simple random sampling technique was employed in coming up with the sample. A questionnaire was utilised to elicit data from the respondents. The instrument's validity was established by two experts who assured of its content validity and the usefulness of the scale employed in measuring data. The reliability of the instrument was assessed by employing a test-re-test approach in which the coefficient of correlation was computed. The instrument yielded a Cronbach Alpha of 0.83 and therefore was deemed reliable enough to be employed in data collection. Research data was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The study found that sometimes students do not have the correct perception of what constitutes examination malpractices and that institution administrators have done little to fight the vice. The study also found out that peer influence, a desire to excel, academic overload and the teaching environment were the leading factors responsible for examination malpractices among University students. Other equally important determinants include use of technology and procrastination. The study recommends that institution should formulate a code of conduct to be observed by every person involved in the management and practice of examinations.

**Keywords:** *Examination Malpractices, Performance Ethical Conduct.*

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## Introduction

Excellent academic performance is the ultimate study goal for every student because it opens opportunities to succeed in the future. Students need to know how they can earn the achievement in academic performance. Success in school is not so much determined by sheer intelligence as knowing how to study and when students perform what they should during their study period, it means that they have good study habits. To perform one must embrace good study habits such as time management, self-discipline, concentration, memorization and effort. To evaluate the quality of learners, the standard measurement that is used by various institutions is Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) which ranges from the lowest 0 to the maximum 4. A student who scores CGPA as 4 is considered as excellent academic performance while lower grades indicate lesser performance. A study by Finn and Frone (2004) found that low achievers are likely to cheat in examinations than higher achievers.

Examinations are a diving competition in which the performances of a number of individuals is judged and ranked in order. According to Guttman (1984), examination and certification are procedures that are very imperfect at the moment and need careful scrutiny. Some studies have come to the conclusion that if a student repeats in a level of his/her study he loses his or her self-esteem by 50 percent and if he or she fails again, it is further lost to 75 percent. Such a scenario will have a heavy toll on learner's character traits. The student becomes dejected and drops out of the institution when told to re sit for papers failed in an examination. Studies by Lukoye (2010) found that Kenya is bound to have a serious mental health problem if the current emphasis on examinations continues. Student have lost their self-esteem and felt inferior after failing to pass and move to the next year of study. According to Dewey (1897), the teacher should not be the one to stand in front of the room, doing out bits of information to be observed by passive students. Instead, the teacher's role should be that of facilitation and guide. As Dewey (1897) explains it, the teacher is not in the school to impose certain ideas or form certain habits in the child, but as a member of the community to select the influences which shall affect the child and to assist him or her in properly responding to these influences. The teacher becomes a partner in the learning process, guiding students to independently discover meaning, within the subject area.

In recent times, the Universities examinations have been facing a number of crises. These are largely manifested in inadequacies in the supply of basic instructional materials, infrastructure, and students' overpopulation, accommodation for staff and students, cultism, examination malpractices among others. Currently, the most disturbing of all these problems is examination malpractices which has posed a new challenge in the administration of examinations (McCabe 2009). This problem needs to be successfully tackled by the Universities if they are to be rightly positioned to train the requisite high-level manpower for the nation's development and add to the existing body of knowledge. Irregular lecture attendance by students, inadequate facilities for teaching and learning, exchanges of ideas due to proximity of test mates and over crowdedness of examinees are among the challenges that are facing University examinations. Others are: examinees having fore-knowledge of the questions before the actual examination time (leakage), awarding inflated marks to students who are friends to the lecturers, lecturers soliciting and wooing colleagues to award unmerited grades to their student friends.

The problems associated with examinations are heightened because of parents' neglect of their responsibility of bringing up their children morally, poor funding of education and poor state of facilities, as well as poverty in the society and increasing corruption. In any case, examinations in most tertiary institutions are not taken with the seriousness they deserve. There is rampant copying and flaws in examination rules. Many desks have been written on by the students and, therefore, making it easy for them to cheat in exams. The University administration is totally aware about this, but not much is done to curb cheating. Embezzlement of funds is a key challenge facing the education sector.

The free primary education is an initiative of president Kibaki's administration, but it has encountered many hurdles along the way. Donors have pumped in millions of dollars, but the bulk of this money has ended up in the pockets of some few greedy individuals. Commissions of inquiry are set up to calm the public, but the public is not made aware of the findings. Many heads of schools have complained that there are delays in disbursing the funds that each public school should receive. This has led to strikes; threats and even some schools have had to be closed indefinitely since they cannot sustain themselves. Suppliers need to be paid, but without funds, this is only a dream yet to be realized. Poor remuneration of teachers and

lecturers has led to strikes. Strikes do affect learning in all public institutions as the students have to go home till an amicable solution is arrived at.

The philosophers under this objective in question looked at examinations as a medium of paper qualification- a means to acquire a professional certificate. The most important questions here are, “do you have the papers?” If you do, “how many do you have?” The scholars did not address the process that is used in obtaining these certificates. The researcher will examine the process that is used in obtaining any certificate or paper qualification using the deontological ethical theory

### 1. Objectives

The objectives that guided the study there were to: -

1. Examine the relationship between ethical conduct and students’ examination performance.
2. Explore the challenges University students face during examinations

### 3. Research Questions

The following questions guided the study: -

1. What is the relationship between ethical conduct and students’ examination performance?
2. What challenges do students face during University examinations?

### Hypothesis

H<sub>01</sub> *There is no significant difference in examination performance between those who cheat compared to those who do not cheat.*

### 3. Rationale

The selection of Kisii County as the area to perform the study was motivated by among others two important reasons. These are: Kisii and neighbouring Counties have been reported for being notorious in examination malpractices particularly at secondary school level of education for a number of years now. Since majority of the students admitted into Universities operating at Kisii County are drawn from the region, perhaps there is also a high likelihood that the behaviour of examination cheating may have been carried to the examination system of the Universities. This seems logical if indeed, reports by the Kenyan

National Examination Council, responsible for secondary education testing are authentic. Although the subject of examination malpractices is well-researched by authors such as McCabe et al (2002), only a handful of isolated research efforts have investigated examination malpractices among university students. Consequently, not enough work has been done to study this phenomenon among university students especially in Kisii County. Limited as it is, the recent expansion of university campuses in Kenya, has brought issues of education quality at play and brought a fresh perspective on this topic.

#### 4. Literature Review

Ngolovoi (2006) asserts that increased workload and lack of competence by some lecturers could be affecting the delivery of quality education to students in universities in Kenya. Odebero (2010) noted that to survive the heavy workload, faculties developed the following survival mechanisms:

(i) Assigning graduate assistants and tutorial fellows full teaching responsibilities such that they teach both junior and senior classes.

(ii) Assigning graduate assistants and tutorial fellows' students advisory responsibilities including assessment of students in the field. Thus, it is not uncommon to see staff who had never taught in any school and who had no experience at all in the field being given the responsibility to advise when they needed more advice themselves.

(iii) Masters by project work. This is usually conducted by coursework, examination and project work (minor research) instead of the rigorous thesis. The major weakness of the project mode is that the project work does not go through the quality assurance process that full thesis has to endure.

(iv) Assigning junior faculty members to supervise. The main problem with graduate studies has been the explosion of demand for graduate studies against few competent supervisors. As a result, lecturers have to supervise up to 50 graduate students. In most instances, such lecturers would have been unable to do their PhD or to publish in peer refereed journal and they now see supervision of thesis as an opportunity for making money. Moreover, these students have to be dispensed with as quickly as possible to allow for more to enrol. It is not uncommon to find senior lecturers now rooting for even assistant lecturers to supervise.

(v) Appointing supervisors from other disciplines. Some of them rarely comprehend the content.

In private universities, it is common practice for teaching staff to be allocated teaching units in areas outside their core competencies. This negatively exposes the teaching staff, being „students“ learning together with the admitted students. A scrutiny of these copying mechanisms reveals that they are detrimental to the quality of higher education and negatively influence academic rigour. While it can be argued that technology may dictate fewer members of staff than before, it needs to be borne in mind that most of the teaching aspects require a combination of manual and mental operations like development and review of curricula, marking of scripts, preparation of lesson notes, supervision of student projects and thesis, field assessments and student consultations. The implication is that student enrolment needs to be made with due consideration to the number of qualified and competent teaching staff available for a particular discipline and where enrolments have to be increased; an appropriate recruitment of staff needs to be done.

According to Waituru (1999), lack of tutorial classes could lead to universities producing graduates with a lot of rote learning and poorly developed critical thinking abilities. The shortage of lecturers also makes organizing for tutorial classes a big challenge. These findings corroborate other studies which found that undergraduate students taking entrepreneurship course in public universities were dissatisfied with the course units and felt that the methods and approaches used to teach them were unsuitable (Gachiri, 2003). Ndeithu (2007) found that promotion of reading habits among Kenyatta University undergraduates was greatly constrained by the teaching and assessment methods.

## 5. Theoretical Framework

Immanuel Kant (1724 – 1804) believed that morality is the object of the law of reason. Just as objective physical laws necessitate physical actions (cause and effect) such as apples fall down because of gravity, objective rational laws necessitate rational actions. Therefore, a perfectly rational being must who is also perfectly moral finds it necessary to do what is rationally necessary. Because humans are not perfectly rational, Kant believed that humans must conform their subjective will to objective rational laws, which he called conformity obligation. He then argued that the objective law of reason is *apriori*, existing externally from

rational being. Just as physical laws exist prior to physical beings ; rational laws (morality) existed prior to rational beings. Therefore, according to Kant, rational morality is universal and cannot change depending on circumstance.

Kant's argument that to act in the morally right way one must act purely from duty begins with an argument that the highest good must be both good in itself and good without qualification. Something is "good in itself" when it is intrinsically good "without qualification", when the addition of that thing never makes a situation ethically worse. Kant then argued that those things that are usually thought to be good, such as intelligence, perseverance and pleasure, fail to be either intrinsically good or good without qualification. For example, pleasure may appear not to be good without qualification, because when people take pleasure in watching others suffer, seems to make the situation ethically worse. Therefore, Kant concludes that nothing in the world—indeed nothing even beyond the world—can possibly be conceived which could be called good without qualification except goodwill.

Kant then argues that the consequences of an act of good will cannot be used to determine that the person has a good will. In any case, good consequences cannot arise by accident from an action that was motivated by a desire to cause harm to an innocent person. Similarly, bad consequences cannot arise from an action that was well-motivated. Instead, Kant claims, a person has a good will when he 'acts out of respect for the moral law' (i.e., when they act in some way because they have a duty to do so). As a result, Kant formulated three significant categorical imperatives ; which are :

*i) Act only according to that maxim by which you can also will that it would become a universal law :* When someone acts, it is according to a rule, or maxim. For Kant, an act is only permissible if one is willing for the maxim that allows the action to be a universal law by which everyone seeks to act. Maxims fail this test if they produce either a contradiction in conception or a contradiction in the will when universalized. A contradiction in conception happens, if a maxim were to be universalized, it ceases to make sense because the "maxim would necessarily destroy itself as soon as it is made a universal law". For example, if the maxim 'it is permissible to break promises' was universalized, no one would trust any promises made, so the idea of a promise would become meaningless. Hence, the maxim would be self-contradictory because, when universalized, promises cease to be meaningful.



The maxim is not moral because it is logically impossible to universalize—we could not conceive of a world where this maxim was universalized. A maxim can also be immoral if it creates a contradiction in the will when universalized. This does not mean a logical contradiction, but that universalizing the maxim leads to a state of affairs that no rational being would desire. For example, when an individual argues that 'I will not give to charity', it produces a contradiction in the will when universalized because a world where no one gives to charity would be undesirable for the person who acts by that maxim.

*ii) Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end* : Kant argued that rational beings can never be treated merely as a means to an ends ; they must always be treated as an ends themselves, requiring that their own reasoned motives must be equally respected. This derives from Kant's claim that reason motivates morality. It demands that we respect reason as a motive in all beings, including other people. A rational being cannot rationally consent to being used merely as a means to an end, so they must always be treated as an end. Kant justified this by arguing that moral obligation is a rational necessity : that which is rationally willed is morally right. Because all rational agents desire to rationally be an end themselves and never merely a means ; it is morally obligatory that they are treated as such. This does not mean that we can never treat a human as a means to an end, but that when we do, we also treat them as an end in themselves.

*iii.) Every rational being must so act as if he were through his maxim always a legislating member in a universal kingdom of ends*: Kant made a distinction between categorical and hypothetical imperatives. On one hand, a hypothetical imperative is one we must obey if we want to satisfy our desires. For example, we 'go to the doctor' if only want to get well. On the other hand, a categorical imperative bind us regardless of our desires. For example, everyone has a duty not to lie, regardless of circumstances and even if it is in our interest to do so. These imperatives are morally binding because they are based on reason, rather than contingent facts about an agent. Unlike hypothetical imperatives, which bind us insofar as we are part of a group or society which we owe duties to, we cannot opt-out of the categorical imperative because we cannot opt-out of being rational agents. We owe a duty to rationality by virtue of being rational agents; therefore, rational moral principles apply to all rational agents at all times.



Kant's theory of ethics is considered deontological for several different reasons. First, Kant argues that to act in the morally right way, people must act from duty (*deon*). Second, it is not the consequences of actions that make them right or wrong but the motives of the person who carries out the action. Kant's deontological ethics says, "An action is moral when it is done out of duty, rather than consequences." In a test your duty is to answer the questions with whatever you have learned, and the purpose is to show how much knowledge you have gained, without cheating. When someone cheats his action is not done out of his duty. The action is directed towards the consequences, which might be the fear of failing, afraid of being embarrassed, or it might also be to gain benefit easily without putting much effort on studying.

If the intention of the individual performing the action is good then the action can be said to be good. The good intention is good without any qualification, according to Kant. The intention to cheat is not simply morally good. Someone cheats because of an exterior motive which might be the fear or the expectation of gain. "Duty is the necessity of action to be done out of respect for the law". Cheating is against the law of the examinations that says 'do not to cheat in examinations.

Kant's categorical imperative states that "you should act only according to the maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law". Would wish that everyone follows your action of cheating in examinations? If everyone cheated, then there will be no point in cheating. Grades will have no meaning if everyone cheats. You're cheating in order to gain some kind of unfair advantage over other examination-takers, who are not cheating. If everyone cheats, then cheating wouldn't be unfair and you won't even get any advantage. There would be no such thing as cheating. You would not therefore want everyone else to cheat and cheating can't be a universal law. Cheating is not an action done out of duty with good intention respecting the law, and it can't be a universal law. Therefore, cheating is not rational and is not morally right as of Kant's deontological ethics.

## 6. Research Methodology

The study employed a descriptive survey research design situated within both the qualitative and quantitative research paradigms. A questionnaire was utilised as the main tool to collect data from 270 students drawn from eight Universities within Kisii County. The central and focal point of targeting data for this study was the various University campuses situated within Kisii County, Kenya.

## 7. Target population

The study targeted University students as the primary objects of the research. It utilised students drawn from both private and public Universities. However, the study population was confined to only third year students in these universities. Third year students were preferred over students from other years in the universities because, they have been in University long enough and did not have the pressure of exams like 4<sup>th</sup> Years. Results of a field survey conducted by the researchers in 2013 on the number of universities versus the student population are tabulated in table 1.

**Table 1 Kisii County - University Student Population**

S/No	Universities	Total No. Students				Third Year Students		
		No	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
1	Public	8	4,000	5,000	9,000	951	771	1,722
2	Private	14	6,000	6,000	12,000	1,259	1,241	2,500
<b>Total</b>		<b>22</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>11,000</b>	<b>21,000</b>	<b>2,210</b>	<b>2,012</b>	<b>4,222</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Table 1 tabulates the total student population versus the population of interest. It shows that in 2013, eight (8) public compared to 14 private universities had set up campuses in Kisii County. The total student population was 21, 0000; of whom, 9,000 or 42.9% were females compared to 12,000 or 57.1% males. Further, the survey revealed that the third-year student

population (which is the study population of interest) were 4,222 of whom 2,012 or 47.7% were females compared to 2,210 or 52.3% who were males.

### 8. The Sample Size

The study utilised a sample of 8 Universities selected out of 22 Universities with campuses in Kisii County. The purpose was to assist in sampling students from these institutions who would participate in the study. This is in according to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), who assert that 30% of the respondents are adequate for a scientific study. The study further sampled 370 respondents from the Universities. Table 2 shows the population of 3<sup>rd</sup> years and the number of respondents selected for the study.

**Table 2. Number of 3<sup>rd</sup> Year students and sample selected**

Name	3rd Year's Population	No Sampled
Kisii	951	126
MKU	712	34
JKUAT	582	12
Nazarene	489	34
Rongo	382	44
JOOUST	265	74
E-SMART	168	34
Bugema	166	12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,715</b>	<b>370</b>

Table 2 shows that a total of 370 students were selected for the study, majority of whom were drawn from Kisii, JOOUST (Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology) and Rongo universities respectively. However, the smallest number of students

for the study was selected from Bugema and Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT).

## 9. Sampling Procedure

The study utilised a stratified random sampling approach to select students to participate in the study. The first stratum was the universities that would be involved. Therefore, out of the 22 universities with campuses in Kisii County, the study picked 8 to participate in the study. The procedure for selecting the 8 universities involved the researcher writing on pieces of paper the names of the 22 Universities with campuses in Kisii County. The papers were folded and then placed in a bowl. The researcher nominated one research assistant to draw out 8 pieces of paper from the bowl at random. The pieces of papers drawn indicated the Universities selected to participate in the study. To select individual students who participated in the study, the researcher used convenient sampling and selected the students who were available at the time of data collection as study respondents.

## 10. Findings

### **Ethical Conduct versus Examination Performance**

The first objective of the study was to find out if there is any relationship between ethical conduct and examination performance. To do this, the study examined the mean scores for those who reported having been involved in examination cheating against those who reported that they had not been involved in cheating by comparing mean scores using the one sample t-test. However, the procedure to get to this involved:

(i) To harmonise the grading system employed for comparison purposes since institutions employed different grading systems. Consequently, harmonisation was undertaken so that each system would be related to the CGPA. Table 4.2 shows how different grading systems were related to the CGPA.

**Table 3: Harmonization of the grading systems**

S/No.	Letter System	Class System	Credit System	CGPA
1	A and A-	1 <sup>st</sup> Class	Distinction	4.0
2	B+	2 <sup>nd</sup> Upper		3.5
3	B	2 <sup>nd</sup> Lower	Credit	3.0
4	B-			2.5
5	C+	3 <sup>rd</sup> Class	Pass	2.0

Table 4.2 shows that universities graded their students' achievement using three systems: the Letter system, the Class system or the credit system. The systems were converted to equivalent CGPA for the purpose of comparing performance and whether students who were involved in examination cheating behaviours performed better than those who were not involved.

(ii) Using the CGPA as a measure of performance, an independent sample t-test was calculated using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software to determine whether there were achievement differences in between those who did not cheat compared to those who cheated in examination. The study compared their means and variances obtained from the scores on examination performance. Therefore, a directional test of significance was considered appropriate to indicate whether there were significant differences in examination performance between those who indicated to have been involved in cheating over those who indicated having not been involved in examination cheating.

This is because, for one to decide that a group has performed better than another, the mean scores for the group must be significantly higher than the mean scores for the other. As a result, the study performed a two tailed t-test for independent samples assuming equal variances using the SPSS software (version 20) to test the null hypothesis:

H<sub>01</sub>: *There is no significant difference in examination performance between those who cheated compared to those who do not cheat in university examinations.*

The results of the analysis are tabulated in Table 4.

**Table 4: t-test for Examination Performance**

	<i>Not Involved</i>	<i>Involved</i>
Mean	3.35	3.40
S. D	.525	.381
Respondents	162	30
Df	190	
t-critical	.479	
t-Stat (equal variances not assumed)	.633	

The results of the analysis tabulated in Table 4.3 show that the mean scores for those involved in cheating behaviours was 3.40 while for those not involved was 3.35. To decide as to whether the results are significant or not, a t-test was run. The results show that the t-Statistics (.633) is greater than t-critical (.479) equal variance not assumed. This implies that there is a significant difference between the two groups being compared. Consequently, the null hypothesis which stated that ‘there is no significant difference in examination performance between those who cheated compared to those who do not cheat in university examinations’ was rejected, meaning that *there was a significant difference in examination performance between those who cheated and those who did not cheat.*

### **11. Challenges University Students Face during Examinations.**

The second objective was to explore the challenges university students face during examinations. To answer this question, the study analysed item 20 of the questionnaire which had suggested four challenges that were thought to affect students during university examinations. The analysis indicated that:

- (i) Majority of the students (i.e., 240 or 88.9%) interviewed indicated that a student will be affected by the way s/he manages his/her time both before performing examination and during examination the time of performing the examinations.
- (ii) However, majority of the students (i.e. 222 or 82.2%) interviewed indicated that discipline is not a challenge that face students in university examinations
- (iii) Majority of the students (i.e. 240 or 88.9%) interviewed indicated that the concentration span of a student both before taking an exam and during the examination will affect the student's achievements in university examinations.
- (iv) Lastly, majority of the students (i.e. 210 or 77.8%) interviewed indicated that the absorption rate of the study material by students is important in determining the performance of students in university examinations.

Table 5 lists the challenges in terms of importance that affect students on how they perform in University examinations.

**Table 5: Challenges University Students face during examinations**

S/No.	Challenge	%
1.	How a student manages his/her time	88.44
2	The concentration span of the student	84.00
3	The absorption rate of the material being read	77.78
4	Whether a student is Self-Disciplined or not	37.93

Table 3 shows that how a student manages his/her time; the concentration span of the student and the absorption rate of the material being studied are important challenges that affect the performance of students in University examinations.

## 12. Ethical Conduct versus Examination Performance

The purpose for examinations is, among others, to measure the knowledge acquired by a student. Consequently, students should take examinations without cheating. However, academic competence and intelligence are not a straightforward measure and unfortunately,



we have no method that fully captures the scope of a student's ability. The fact remains that we need at least some formal system to measure academic competence otherwise the academic system will fail to work. We need divisions between ability levels and the amount of experience and knowledge students actually possess, otherwise students will be in environments unsuited to them and won't be able to learn properly. There is no other way to do this other than by testing students in a fair and impartial manner. This is what examinations are good at because they are not vague. In fact, they have clear, measurable guidelines.

Cheating introduces unfair opportunities for others to excel when in the real sense they do not have those qualities. Cheating in examinations distorts the equation and rewards the undeserving. This is because, although one might get an answer right having cheated, the student does not have the actual knowledge. You don't learn by letting others fix your problem !

Students cheat for various reasons. The main reason for cheating is that an examination is considered as the best measure of the intellectual capacity and the intelligence of the person; therefore, students who are not self-confident and feel that they are not smart enough to work by themselves prefer to cheat to prove their level to others. Secondly, when students are not well prepared for the examination, they think they are obliged to cheat in order to pass and get better grades. Moreover, if a student is in an environment where everyone cheats, he will be influenced by them and he prefers to cheat too so as not to stay alone and isolated. They do not work and do their best; that is why they prefer to cheat to get highest average without hardship. Finally, the worst reason that pushes a student to cheat is a teacher who does not care if a student cheats or not, or when a teacher is not efficient to find cheaters in the class; he indirectly encourages the student to cheat.

### **13. Challenges Students face during Examinations**

About 89% of the students interviewed believe that the greatest challenges leading to academic malpractices are how a student manages his or her time and the concentration span of a student both before taking an exam and during the examination will affect the student's achievements in university examinations. Whenever, students fail to manage time, pressure for finishing reading assignments or deadlines for turning in assignments builds leading to the

student seeking alternative methods which usually involves academic dishonesty practices in an effort to stick to the deadlines. Students who procrastinate academic assignments are likely to cheat than those who don't. This is because procrastination can be seen as one measure of poor time management and therefore, they easily run out of time and then panic. Much time is spent on non-core activities at the expense of academic procrastination.

Another important factor in academic dishonesty is attention span usually defined as the amount of concentration time on a task without becoming distracted. Most educators and psychologists agree that the ability to focus attention on a task is crucial for the achievement of one's goals. However, estimates for the length of human attention span are highly variable and depend on the precise the definition of attention used. Attention span, as measured by sustained attention, or the time spent continuously on task, varies with age. Older individuals are more able to concentrate for longer periods than younger individuals

For time-on-task measurements, the type of activity used in the test affects the results, as people are generally capable of a longer attention span when they are doing something that they find enjoyable or intrinsically motivating. Attention also increases if an individual is able to perform the task fluently, compared to one who experiences some difficulties performing the task. Fatigue, hunger, noise, and emotional stress also reduce time on task. Common estimates for sustained attention to a freely chosen task range from about ten minutes to a maximum of around 20 minutes. After losing attention from a task, a person may restore it by taking a rest, doing a different kind of activity, changing mental focus, or deliberately choosing to re-focus on the first topic. Students, who exhibit a low concentration span, are likely to cheat as an alternative measure to post good grades.

About 78% of the respondents believe that a student's rate of understanding the study material is an important determinant of whether he or she performs well in university examinations. Combined with the concentration span, a student can make faster progress in academic programmes. The reasons students engaged in academic dishonesty varies, but range from performance, procrastination, too busy, not enough time to complete assignment or study for the test. After reviewing literature, Synder and Cannoy (2010) found that students cited very similar reasons for engaging in academic dishonesty. Lastly, about 82% of the respondents indicated that discipline is not an issue that can affect University students during examinations. However, the researcher disagrees with this finding. Simple logic

dictates that a student must be disciplined to be able to plan his or her time well in order to pass the examinations.

#### **14. Conclusions**

- i) There was a significant difference between those who cheated in examinations and those who did not cheat. Cheating in examinations gives advantages to those who do not deserve.
- ii) The challenges university students face during examinations were: How a student manages his/her time; the concentration span of the student; the absorption rate of the material being read and whether a student is self-disciplined or not in that order.

#### **15. Recommendations**

- i) High level of discipline should be instilled to the University learners. Discipline correlates with performance. Students who are notorious in flouting examination code of ethics should be rehabilitated or expelled from learning institutions to curb down the vice spreading widely.
- ii) There should be creation of an environment of moral integrity, mutual trust and promotion of team work among lecturers. Through guidance and counselling sessions, healthy and positive attitude, sound virtues like trust and team work will be inculcated. There should be an elaborate scheme of expanding physical facilities like lecture halls so as to accommodate huge enrolments in the Universities. This will curb down the menace of unquestionable habits demonstrated by learners who sit close to each other in the event of doing University examinations.

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