
EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE ON STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN MATHEMATICS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF UGANDA. A CASE STUDY OF BUREMBA SS, KAZO DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

This research report study aimed to investigate the “examining the impact of examination malpractice on students’ performance in mathematics in secondary schools of Uganda; a case study of Buremba SS, Kazo district”. Questionnaires were used to collect data under a case study research design. Qualitative and quantitative means were used to analyze the data. The objectives of the study used were; to examine the extent to which teachers’ alleged involvement in cheating influences students’ involvement in examination malpractices, to examine the impact of examination leakages on students’ academic performance and to examine how impersonation affects students’ performance in secondary schools in Uganda. To achieve this objective, the study sampled 100 respondents because it is large enough compared to the study population that is 1 Head teacher, 15 Teachers, 50 Students, 5 Mathematics teachers, and 29 Parents. The respondents were selected using simple purposive sampling method, it was important because it gave the researcher freedom to select certain respondents with in-depth knowledge regarding the issue under investigation. The regression results shown a statistically significant positive relationship (at 5 percent level of significance) between the poor study habit and the cases of examination malpractices in this study since its p-value was less than 0.05. The results were as postulated and this means that on average, a unit increase in the poor study habit leads to a 3.25 increase in the cases of examination malpractices in public universities when the other independent variables are held constant. Emphasizing process rather than product during problem-solving sessions. promoting collaborative learning in science classes. Helping students to develop a positive attitude towards examinations.

Key words: examination, malpractice, students’ performance, mathematics and secondary schools

Background of the study

Examination has been generally accepted as the best means of assessment. It is a formal test of knowledge or ability. Infact, in a school setting, examination is a means of evaluating the quantity of knowledge a student has acquired within a specific period of time. Adekunle (2003) sees examination as an instrument used for the assessment of individual skills and knowledge content, both in general and specific area of study. Teaching and learning become more effective when the students are subjected to an examination process to determine the extent to which the students have assimilated the content of the instruction given and the teacher can also assess himself from the performance of the students (Pauline, 2023).

Students' performance has been an issue of great concern since the beginning of modern education. Majority of the countries have realized that in the heart of educational process are the students. Further it has been noted that all the innovations being seen in education without good performance are destined for failure (Anthony, Kazaara, & Kazaara, 2023). Globally, the main objective of education in any democratic society is to provide learners with quality education that enlightens them to be productive members of the society (Oromo et al., 2023). Examination malpractice have assumed an alarming trend in Uganda, probably due to candidate's fear of failure, lack of confidence, laziness, and inadequate preparations and most often, their inability to study effectively (Anthony, Kazaara, Kazaara, et al., 2023). Examination malpractice has become a major challenge to 2 examination and supervisory bodies, especially the government of Uganda, University administrators and parents alike (Maduka, 2011). According to UNESCO (2010) mathematics knowledge is basic need that must be conferred to every child. This is strengthened by the fact that mathematics is a compulsory subject in Uganda especially among O'Level students. This is done for the fact that knowledge gained in learning is essential for all members of society (Godfrey et al., 2023).

Problem Statement

The persistent occurrence of examination malpractices has been a major concern to educationists (Aghenta, 2000; Ige, 2002). Despite the high premium placed on examinations by the National Policy on Education (FGN, 2004), it seems that examination malpractices have not been properly addressed in secondary schools in

Uganda. Observations have shown that there is mass cheating in examinations in Uganda. Paul (2012) agreed on the fact that students nowadays are no longer hard working and dedicated towards their academic endeavors. They are characterized by a desire for success and wealth without a corresponding emphasis on legitimate means and avenues to be used positively in achieving success (Christopher et al., 2022). The desire to pass at all cost is responsible for examination malpractice (Ajibola 2006). Uganda's education system is largely certificate and good grades oriented. Students, parents, school management and others tend to push harder on wards to get the certificate and good grades by all means. As a result, much value and emphasis are placed on certificate instead of knowledge, skills and competence (Christopher et al., 2022). Many school leavers and dropouts have certificates without knowledge, skills and the right attitude. This is why examination malpractices are increasing day after day for the rush to get paper qualification for jobs they possess or good grades to secure employment. Itedjere (2006) sees it from the moral tone of the society; that it is a statement of truth that the school, like any other social institution, does not exist in a vacuum, rather it exists within a geopolitical and socio-milieu. Hence, behaviours are expected to conform and reflect the acceptable societal norms and ethos as regards various functional roles and the executions of duties and services. Also, Okafor (2000) blamed the society for examination malpractice. He said: In a country where dishonesty has been enshrined by the adult sector as an idol of worship, children have learnt to steal with impunity; examination malpractice (in all shades and forms) has become the order of the day among our students at all level of the educational arrangement (Victoria et al., 2023). In Uganda today, people value money more than any other thing thereby reminding one of a saying that "the end justifies the means" (Mark et al., 2023). The trend in the examination malpractices is inimical to academic development and advancement and needs to be drastically addressed hence the immediate urge and need for conduction this research study to asce1iain the impacts of examination malpractices on academic performance.

Specific objectives

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1. *To examine the extent to which teachers' alleged involvement in cheating influences students' involvement in examination malpractices*
 2. *To examine the impact of examination leakages on students' academic performance*
 3. *To examine how impersonation affects students' performance in secondary schools in Uganda.*

Research questions

1. *What extent does teachers' alleged involvement in cheating influences students' involvement in examination malpractices?*
2. *What is the impact of examination leakages on students' academic performance?*
3. *How does impersonation affect students' performance in secondary schools in Uganda?*

Methodology

Research Design

The study applied a non-experimental design called descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey research is defined as scientific method in which information is collected without changing the environment it includes surveys and fact-finding enquiries of different kinds, which seeks to obtain information that discloses existing phenomenon (Mugenda, 2003). The major purpose of descriptive research design described the state of affairs as it exists at present (Kothari, 2003). The design involved primary research methods for the collection of primary data. The justification for using this design was that it clearly explores the existing status of two or more variables at a given time.

Target Population

Target population was considered to be the particular populace from which, information is to be obtained (Ngechu, 2004).

The target population was 200 respondents including head teacher, teachers, students, and parents of Buremba secondary school in Bulemba Sub County, Kazo district in western Uganda.

Sampling Size Selection

This study used a non-probability kind of sampling called purposive sampling.

According to Saunders et al (2000), purposive or judgment allows the researcher to make a choice of cases which according to his own view/opinion or judgment that give information which is in line with objectives stated. For this specific study, where we have a large population, Cochran (1963) table used to yield a representative sample for proportions thus obtaining a sample of 100 respondents that is 1 head teacher, 15 teachers 50 students, 5 mathematics teachers and 29 parents because it is large enough compared to the target population in Buremba SS

Data Collection Methods

Both primary and secondary data collection will be used to collect data. E.g. questionnaire which means a set of questions will be organized in order to obtain information from the respondents. Alternatively, the researcher used questionnaires in the personal interviews as guide to the questions relevant to the study.

Interviews

This involved verbal interaction between the researcher and respondents. The researcher prepared the interview guide questions in connection to research questions. The technique was used because, sample was controlled more effectively, more information and that too in greater depth was obtained, also the technique associated with greater flexibility, therefore the researcher has the opportunity to restructure questions so as to reach the research objectives. Interview helped to get reliable and valid information relevant to the research.

Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a tool of data collection which consists of a number of questions printed or not in definite order on a form or set of forms (Kothari 2007). The questionnaires were administered by distributing them to respondents who expresses themselves freely by giving thorough answers. This technique enabled the researcher to collect a lot of information over a short period of time. It was also suitable for large populations and information collected was easily described in writing. The questionnaires consisted of both open ended and closed-ended questions. Due to this, questionnaires were administered to head teacher and staff of Buremba SS.

Data Analysis

Both qualitative and quantitative data collected was analyzed on the objectives and research questions of the study using descriptive statistics such as frequency tables to show the general features of impact of examination malpractice on students' academic performance in Buremba Secondary School using SPSS (Nelson et al., 2022).

RESULTS

Reasons why students engage in examination malpractices

Table 1: Reasons of examination malpractices

<i>Nature</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Substance abuse</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>20.0</i>
<i>Poor Study Habit</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>40.0</i>
<i>Indiscipline Among Students</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>15.0</i>
<i>Poor Concentration During lessons</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>5.0</i>
<i>Poor lesson Attendance</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>20.0</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100.0</i>

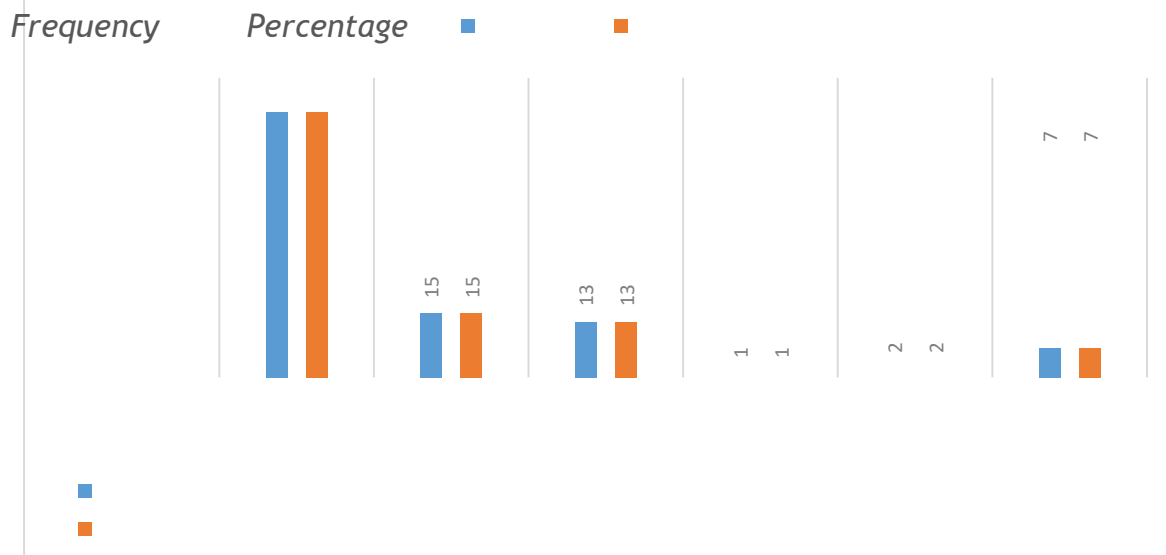
Source: Author, 2022

The study result shows that the most reason why students engage in examination malpractices at the School of Statistics and Planning at Buremba SS is poor study habit (40%). Others include; substance abuse (20%), indiscipline among students (15%), poor concentration during lessons (5%) and poor lesson attendance (20%).

Devices employed in demolishing examination malpractices among secondary school students

Figure 1: Devices employed by students in demolishing examination malpractices

DEVICES EMPLOYED BY STUDENTS IN

DEMOLISHING EXAMINATION MALPRACTICES

	Improved on their study habits	Reading	Attending lessons	Believing yourself	Whistle blowing	Discussion
Frequency	62	15	13	1	2	7
Percentage	62	15	13	1	2	7

Source: Author, 2022

Study results in table 2 above show that the most common device employed by students in demolishing malpractice is improvement in their study habits (62%). Others include; reading (15%), attending lectures (13%), believing in yourself (1%), whistle blowing (2%) and discussion (7%).

Descriptive analysis

Whether examination leakages affect students' academic performance in secondary schools

Table 3: Variance of Analysis (ANOVA) results for examination malpractices and academic performance

<i>Between</i>	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	
<i>Within Groups</i>					
<i>Total</i>	<i>10.253</i>	<i>100</i>			

Source: Author, 2022

Where; * 1%=99, ** 5%=95 and * ** 10%=90 levels of significance

As seen from Table 3 above, Variance of Analysis (ANOVA) was run to find out the relationship between cases of examination malpractices and academic performance of students at Buremba SS, Kazo District. Study results showed that the there is a significant relationship between the cases of examination malpractices and academic performance of students at Buremba SS, Kazo District at 5 percent level of significance since the p-value is less than 0.05. It was reported that students know in advance, all the officials concerned with the examination despite the secrecy maintained by West African Examination Council.

Teachers' alleged involvement in cheating influences students' involvement in examination malpractices

Table 4: Teachers' alleged involvement in cheating influences students' involvement in examination malpractices

Teachers' alleged involvement in cheating influences students' involvement in examination malpractices	Response										
	SA		A		NS		D		SD		T. T
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	%
Teachers assist students in cheating to ensure they pass in exams	35	35	30	30	6	6	10	10	19	19	100
Teachers assist students to smuggle unauthorized materials/devices into an examination room	20	20	25	25	10		35	35	10	10	100
Teachers give students hints that helps them answer exams questions	30	30	10	10	5	5	38	38	17	17	100

Source: Primary Data 2022

From table 4 above, it can be observed that 35% of the respondents strongly agreed to the assertion that teachers assist students in cheating to ensure they pass in exams, 30% agreed, 6% were not sure, 10% disagreed while 19% strongly disagreed with the statement.

Respondents were also asked whether teachers assist students to smuggle unauthorized materials/devices into an examination room. 20% strongly agreed, 25% agreed, 10% were not sure, 35% disagreed while 10% strongly disagreed with the statement. Further still, 30% strongly agreed to the assertion that Teachers give students hints that helps them answer exams questions, 10% agreed, 5% were not

sure, 38% disagreed while 17% strongly disagreed with the statement.

Effects of impersonation on students' performance

Table 5: Effects of impersonation on students' performance in secondary schools in Uganda.

		Unstandardized Coefficients			
	(Constant)	8.33	.710	.881	.317
	Indiscipline among students	-.047	.071	.315	.091
	Poor concentration during lessons	.111	.336	.121	.849
	Poor lecture attendance				

Source: Primary Data 2022

a. Dependent Variable: Examination malpractices,

Where; * 1%=99, ** 5%=95 and * ** 10%=90 levels of significance

The regression results in Table 5 above shows a statistically significant positive relationship (at 5 percent level of significance) between the poor study habit and the cases of examination malpractices in this study since its p- value is less than 0.05. The results were as postulated and this means that on average, a unit increase in the poor study habit leads to a 3.25 increase in the cases of examination malpractices in public universities when the other independent variables are held constant. The regression results in Table 5 above shows a statistically significant positive relationship (at 5 percent level of significance) between the poor lecture

attendance and the cases of examination malpractices in this study since its p-value is less than 0.05.

Conclusion

The regression results shown a statistically significant positive relationship (at 5 percent level of significance) between the poor study habit and the cases of examination malpractices in this study since its p-value was less than 0.05. The results were as postulated and this means that on average, a unit increase in the poor study habit leads to a 3.25 increase in the cases of examination malpractices in public universities when the other independent variables are held constant.

Recommendations

The most direct impact of this study will hopefully be in the classroom and will help teachers to use the findings, in particular; Using student-centered teaching approaches, using meaningful activities in their classrooms, promoting conceptual understanding in all subjects.

Emphasizing process rather than product during problem-solving sessions. promoting collaborative learning in science classes. Helping students to develop a positive attitude towards examinations. Motivating students in their learning. Enhancing the academic achievement of all students.

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