



RESEARCH PAPER

Teachers' Perceptions on Examination Malpractice at Secondary School Level: A Descriptive Investigation

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ABSTRACT

The study focused on the identification of factors which are involved in examination malpractice, along with identification of the easiest way of cheating adopted by the students and proposed tentative solutions to prevent examination malpractice. From the literature, six factors of examination malpractice were identified and tested against null hypotheses. For carrying out this research, three objectives and six null hypotheses were formulated. The survey design was used and data were collected from 290 secondary school teachers of Karachi through a random sampling technique. Findings of the study revealed that parents, school culture, teachers' role, education system, social factors, and students' attitude toward the study have a significant contribution in examination malpractice. It was also found that copying from other students is the easiest way of cheating in exams. Majority teachers suggested that examination malpractice can be prevented by securing question paper. Based on the findings, security of the question papers are highly recommended. Furthermore, parents and teachers and parents should not pressurize students for marks instead they should ensure that students study enough.

Introduction

Education has become a tool for national development. Strong foundation of education is a vital component to promote technological, social and physical aspects of any society. Therefore, the government established educational institutions throughout the country to prepare students who can face the challenges of the society

(Elmurod, 2021). In Pakistan, one of the goals of education is to enable children to confront future difficulties and to develop them to satisfy the country's workforce needs (Rehmani, 2003). In educational institutions, students are provided counselling along with the teaching to build required skills in students and promote knowledge. Certain learning outcomes are set for the students to build their knowledge and skills, and to check either the students have achieved those learning outcomes or not, the test is designed (adeqoke, 2010). In the early grades, schools are responsible to conduct an exam in school premises and evaluate students' performance. At the higher grades, students are appeared in standardized test. Examination is a formal test of someone's knowledge or aptitude in a certain topic, notably via answering questions or practical exercises, and that it is used to determine how much of a subject matter in a particular field of study the applicant has learned. Previously, students would conceal their behaviour, but today they openly proclaim them (adeqoke, 2010).

Exams are extremely important not just in our educational system, but also for our society (Amadi & Opuiyo, 2018). In Pakistan, different types of examinations are conducted by different authorities, for example, lower and higher school certificate examination, a diploma or degree exams, entrance test, CSS exams, etc. Students have to qualify a particular exam in which they appeared (Rehmani, 2003). However, students now a days have a variety of options for gaining success in these exams, one of which is cheating in exams by copying from others or leaking exams papers (Birks et al., 2020).

Exam malpractice is defined as a purposeful violation of official examination norms intended to give unfairly advantage or disadvantage to a candidate. Examination malpractice according to Amadi and Opuiyo (2018), is "any form of misbehavior that leads to the alteration of or a tempering with the prescribed ways of conducting examination in any given system. He further said examination malpractice is a punishable offence which is committed during the process of normal and recognized examination" (p. 13).

Exam malpractice has become a national issue. Traditional education was built on experience and practice before the introduction of western-style schooling. Knowledge was passed on orally and through practical exams, and the method of training was straightforward. The only options for students were to commit to memory, learn by rote, or observe (Osadebe & Bini, 2018). Students had the right attitude of education, seeing it as a means to a goal rather than an end in itself, because traditional education put little or no emphasis on certification. Furthermore, dishonesty was frowned upon in society at the time, and violators were harshly punished (Udoh, 2011).

The Pakistani education system's reliability is frequently questioned. Every year, numerous media stations broadcast news displaying photographs and recordings of students clearly and courageously cheating in ostensibly "prestigious" board exams (Khan et al., 2019).

Exams are seen as essential milestones in accomplishing one's goals by students, parents, and schools, as well as the only predictors of career opportunities and entrance to further education institutions (Mulongo et al., 2019). As a result, the emphasis is mostly on earning higher grades or marks. Parents and institutions continue to put immense pressure on students to perform well in exams. Peer pressure among students is often seen because of the fear of being ridiculed if someone fails or get bad marks. (Amadi & Opuiyo, 2018). Students at secondary and upper secondary schools (SSC and HSSC) have a fear of failing and not being able to go into colleges or universities, as the importance is given on the degree or certificate instead of their understanding or practical skills. Every goal oriented accomplishment obliges a certificate. Exams, on the other hand, serve an important function not just in our educational system, but also in society as a whole. The society expects its children to perform a wide range of specialized tasks (Tanveer et al., 2012).

Examinations are essential to a students' academic experience at any educational level because they are used to objectively assess a students' academic performance (Nwankwo & Nwankwo, 2020). Examination results influence a student's future progress and employment opportunities (Khan et al., 2019). This means that exams should be done properly to ensure that they test what they are supposed to test and that the results reflect a candidate's genuine position. Examination misconduct is, however, widespread in Pakistan (Haq et al., 2020). Despite the great value placed on exams, research suggests that examination misconduct is increasing day by day, which effects on examination integrity (Muchemwa & Alice, 2017). Therefore, the researcher need to investigate the root causes of examination malpractices at secondary school level by using the following research Hypotheses

1. With respect to teachers' perceptions, parents' attitude significantly promote malpractices in exams at secondary school level.
2. With respect to teachers' perceptions, school culture significantly promote malpractices in exams at secondary school level.
3. With respect to teachers' perceptions, teachers themselves significantly promote malpractices in exams at secondary school level.
4. With respect to teachers' perceptions, education system significantly promote malpractices in exams at secondary school level.
5. With respect to teachers' perceptions, societal pressure significantly promote malpractices in exams at secondary school level.
6. With respect to teachers' perceptions, students' attitude towards study significantly promote malpractices in exams at secondary school level.

Material and Methods

The survey design under the quantitative research approach was used in the study to address the research objectives. All the private secondary school teachers of Karachi, Pakistan were included in the population. Data was collected from 290 private secondary school teachers of Karachi through a random sampling technique. A data was collected through a personal visit. A self-developed questionnaire was used to collect the data. Questionnaire consist three sections, Section "A" comprised the question about the easiest cheating method with nine option. Section "B" consisted six factors which are involved in examination practice, each were measured on three point Likert scale from Disagree = 1 to Agree = 3. Factor 1 (parents' involvement) contain six items, factor 2 (schools' culture) contain 5 items, factor 3 (role of teachers) contain 6 items, factor 4 (education system) contain 6 items, factor 5 (social factor) contain 5 items, and factor 6 (students' attitude toward study) contain 5 items. Section "C" of the questionnaire was about tentative solution to prevent examination malpractice and it contain six options. Before collecting the data, questionnaire was piloted with 78 private secondary school teachers and obtained a reliability of 0.87. Questionnaire was also validated with expert to ensure its validity. All the ethical guidelines were full filed during the research.

Results and Discussion

Analysis of Data

Factors associated with examination malpractice

Hypothesis 1: With respect to teachers' perceptions, parents' attitude significantly promote malpractices in exams at secondary school level.

Table 1
Parents' involvement in examination malpractice

	"Value"	"df"	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
"Pearson Chi-Square"	33.10	2	.000

Referring to table 1, it was found that the tabulated value of chi-square (5.991) is smeller then computed value of chi-square ($\chi^2 = 33.10$), with degree of freedom 2 at 95% confidence level. Here, the null hypothesis will be rejected as $p < 0.05$, which confirms that the parents have a significant role to promote malpractices at secondary school level examination.

Hypothesis 2: With respect to teachers' perceptions, school culture significantly promote malpractices in exams at secondary school level.

Table 2
Schools' involvement in examination malpractice

	"Value"	"df"	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
"Pearson Chi-Square"	31.29	2	.000

Referring to table 2, it was found that the tabulated value of chi-square (5.991) is smaller than computed value of chi-square ($\chi^2 = 31.29$), with degree of freedom 2 at 95% confidence level. Here, the null hypothesis will be rejected as $p < 0.05$, which confirms that the schools' culture contribute to promote examination malpractices significantly at secondary level.

Hypothesis 3: With respect to teachers' perceptions, teachers themselves significantly promote malpractices in exams at secondary school level.

Table 3
Teachers' involvement in examination malpractice

	"Value"	"df"	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
"Pearson Chi-Square"	27.30	2	.000

Referring to table 3, it was found that the tabulated value of chi-square (5.991) is smaller than computed value of chi-square ($\chi^2 = 27.30$), with degree of freedom 2 at 95% confidence level. Here, the null hypothesis will be rejected as $p < 0.05$, which confirms that the teachers have a significant contribution to promote malpractices at secondary school level examination.

Hypothesis 4: With respect to teachers' perceptions, education system significantly promote malpractices in exams at secondary school level.

Table 4
Involvement of education system in examination malpractice

	"Value"	"df"	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
"Pearson Chi-Square"	24.70	2	.000

Referring to table 4, it was found that the tabulated value of chi-square (5.991) is smaller than computed value of chi-square ($\chi^2 = 24.70$), with degree of freedom 2 at 95% confidence level. Here, the null hypothesis will be rejected as $p < 0.05$, which confirms that the education system has a significant contribution to promote malpractices at secondary school level examination.

Hypothesis 5: With respect to teachers' perceptions, societal pressure significantly promote malpractices in exams at secondary school level.

Referring to table 5, it was found that the tabulated value of chi-square (5.991) is smaller than computed value of chi-square ($\chi^2 = 39.90$), with degree of freedom 2 at 95% confidence level. Here, the null hypothesis will be rejected as $p < 0.05$, which confirms that the societal pressure has a significant contribution to promote malpractices at secondary school level examination.

Table 5
Involvement of societal pressure in examination malpractice

	"Value"	"df"	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
"Pearson Chi Square"	39.90	2	.000

Hypothesis 6: With respect to teachers' perceptions, students' attitude towards study significantly promote malpractices in exams at secondary school level.

Table 6
Students' attitude in examination malpractice

	"Value"	"df"	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
"Pearson Chi-Square"	58.90	2	.000

Referring to table 6, it was found that the tabulated value of chi-square (5.991) is smaller than computed value of chi-square ($\chi^2 = 58.90$), with degree of freedom 2 at 95% confidence level. Here, the null hypothesis will be rejected as $p < 0.05$, which confirms that students' attitude toward study has a significant contribution to promote malpractices at secondary school level examination.

The Easiest Adopted Ways of Examination Malpractice

Figure 1 shows the teachers' perceptions about the easiest adopted way of examination malpractice. According to the responses, the easiest way of examination malpractice is copying from nearby candidates, which were selected by 26% of respondent. The next easiest method for examination malpractice is to keep unauthorized material like copy or book or any solve materials with them. External threaten can also be easily adopted for malpractice in examination. Even though ghost centers means selecting examination centre by their own choice is also preferred by 10% respondent.

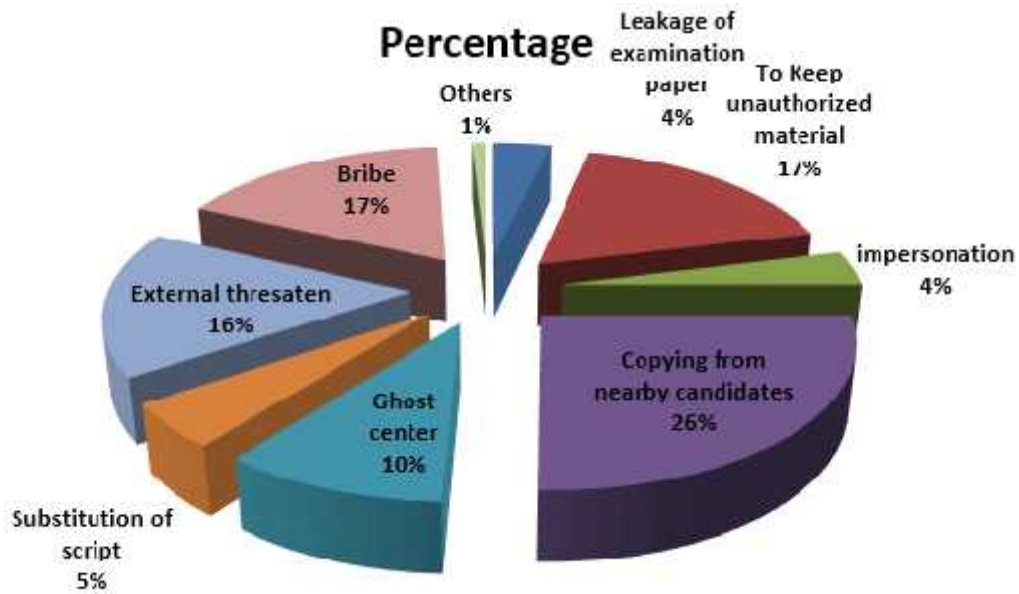


Figure 1: Easiest adopted ways of examination malpractice

Tentative Solutions to Stop Examination Malpractice

Figure 2 shows the teachers' perceptions about the tentative solutions to stop examination malpractice. According to respondent, examination malpractice can be stop by different means. Almost 32% respondent select that examination malpractice can be stop by providing proper security of examination question paper, 15% select that if subject teacher do not get chance in the way of invigilation then chances of cheating can be reduced. If our education system emphasis less on certificates/degree and paper qualification then the chances of examination malpractice will be reduced.

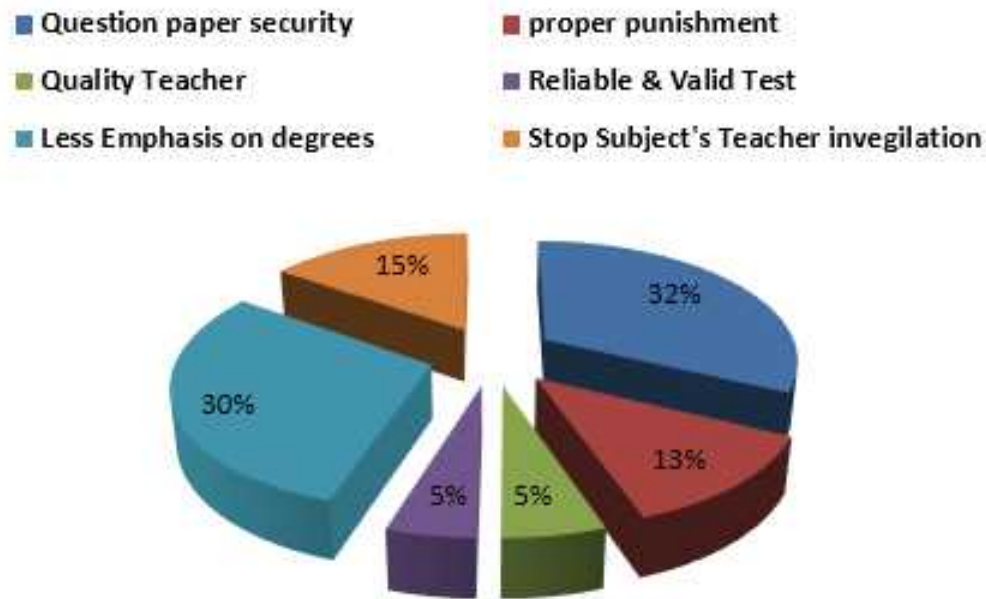


Figure 2: Tentative solutions to stop examination malpractice

Conclusion

The examination malpractices are no longer a new phenomenon in the Pakistani education system and the society at large. However, this was embarked upon the researcher to expose the forms of examination malpractice teachers involve themselves i.e., the causes, the role they play in aiding examination malpractice. It was further to expose the negative impact of teacher's involvement in examination malpractice and way of curbing this courage. Setting of examination question papers are also contribute a significant role in examination malpractice which was supported by Okoro (2011), according to him, examination paper pattern encouraged students to cheat in exam. This means that queries that demand pupils to reproduce information will force them to look for the facts elsewhere if they are unable to recall them instantly. Inadequate exam preparation is another source of examination malpractice. Teachers have been accused of facilitating test misconduct in numerous ways. Teachers give answers to students in the examination hall and even work sums for students to copy rapidly before they are rubbed (Situma & Wasike, 2020). Teachers may believe that if the students do not get good marks in exams, it will be a question on their teaching and the school management and society will know that they did not provide instruction effectively, which ultimately cause bad appraisal. Therefore, they help students to cheat in exams or assist them to write answers to protect their own false image. Teachers also do this to claim that their school produce high score achievers so that the school reputation can be built in the society and the enrollment ratio would be increased. When both teachers and students place a high priority on learning, there is minimal reason to cheat. When grades are most important, however,

cheating becomes more common as students attempt to improve their class standing or appear helpful to friends by allowing them to copy their work. Examination dishonesty is thus encouraged by marks pressure destroy individual character (Newberger & Newberber, 2009). Berliner (2005) also confirmed that the students are too much pressurized to obtained good marks in exam, which leads them to adopt the easiest way to score high by cheating in exams. According to Newberger & Newberber (2009), the teacher's reluctance to investigate proof of cheating stems from sympathy for pupils struggling to adapt in a grade oriented system. When students are caught cheatings, teachers often show their sympathy to the children and ignored this act purposefully.

School culture is also a factor which contribute its role to promote examination malpractice. In many cases, instructors' and schools' reputations are based on students' achievement in public examinations; this is especially true when the school's official or unofficial standing in external examinations is disclosed. There's also the issue of incentives given to winning schools or specific subject instructors, which encourages both school administrators and teachers to commit fraud (Umar, 2003). Students' attitude also play a significant role in examination misconduct. Because they are either sluggish or suspicious, certain pupils are more likely to cheat than others (Nwankwo & Nwankwo, 2020; Osadebe & Bini, 2018; Udoh, 2011; Umar, 2003). Furthermore, Newberger and Newberber (2009) proclaimed that boys are more familiar with different cheating methods which they have learnt from their families or from their society. Cheating in a game to win is one type of example where the boys start learning to cheat before practiced actually in the examination hall. Connecting to this, Bandura (1977), confirmed that the "observational behaviour has a significant impact on child' behaviour". This is because youngsters witness and copy what other persons do, whether they are their teachers, friends, parents, relatives, or any person from the society. When students or youngsters experience dishonesty in their immediate environment or in greater society, they develop the habit of becoming dishonest in their interactions (Azar & Applebaum, 2020). According to Gentina et al. (2017), children are merely replicating what they observe in society. They may have witnessed their parents using money to get admittance, jobs, and other favours, either for themselves or for their children. This may lead individuals to pursue the same lifestyle as those who are successful in exam fraud. Many students throw caution to the wind when it comes to "student laziness." The majority of them have limited time to devote to their academics. They spend their time going to parties and organizing gangs that engage in nefarious activities (Situma & Wasike, 2020).

Social factors and parents' pressure are also play a significant role to promote dishonesty in the exams. Apart from pressure from parents on children to achieve good grades or scores, society also places a great value on formal qualifications, which puts pressure on students directly or indirectly (Cornelius-Ukpepi & Ndifon, 2012). Nenty (1985) asserted that, even in the most deplorable circumstances, society exerts indirect pressure on children to succeed. The author believes that youngsters cannot

be taught that honesty pays but that failure is not an option. Methodology of investigation.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the analysis of findings. The study recommends that;

1. According to the conclusions of the study, parents should set a positive example for their children by not pressuring them and attempting to assist them pass exams in inappropriate ways.
2. To prevent cheating, teachers should correctly teach their topics, oversee their students, and report incidents of cheating.
3. Students should not be pressurized for distinction marks, as every child has its own individual capability.
4. Change of examination centre or choose examination centre by their own wish should be strictly forbidden.

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