

Relationship Between Self-Control And Examination Malpractices Among Selected Sescondary School Students In Garissa County, Kenya

Daro Abdullahi Woche

Dr. Chrispus K. Wawire

Department of Educational Psychology, Kenyatta University, Kenya

Abstract: Examination malpractice is a modern-day disease which needs to be stopped in the education sector since it may lead to production of underqualified personnel in the job market. This study investigates the relationship between self-control and examination malpractice in Garissa County in Kenya. The study was conducted in eight selected public secondary schools in Garissa County, Kenya. The target population consisted of 301 respondents. The sample included 16 class teachers, and 285 students from form four. The data was analysed descriptively and organized in tables, frequencies, pie charts and percentages. For the purpose of analysing the data, the researcher used S.P.S.S (Version 25). Measures of central tendencies, measures of dispersions, frequencies and percentages were used to analyse the quantitative variables. The study revealed that there was no significant relationship between the examination malpractice and self-control with a correlation coefficient of .199 and at a significance level of 0.001 which is less than 0.05 ($r=.199$, p value $<.05$). The study recommends that Guidance and counselling should be emphasized in schools and taught as subject to help the learners successfully go through several stages in life and make them develop a holistic view about the world.

Keywords: self-control, examination malpractices, Guidance and counselling.

I. INTRODUCTION

In every modern state, education acts as a pre-requisite to national development. Through education students are not only educated, skilled and sufficiently guided to acquire appropriate expertise and knowledge but also how to change their attitudes towards communal life. History, and particularly western history reveals how in the past, nations were completed or dismantled, established vast empires, built armies and conquered their enemies or lost battles and collapsed altogether, all because of their educational system claims, (Wilayat, 2009). This is probably why it is such a universal thing whose product has to be subjected through examination system.

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Examination malpractice may be defined as deliberate wrong doing by the exam takers contrary to the examination rules in which some candidates may get an unfair advantage or disadvantage as claimed by (Wilayat, 2009). This may allow some students to get good results by any fraudulent means and this may encourage mediocrity since those students who got such results by fraudulent means may be rated equal to those who really struggled and worked hard on their own to excel.

Examination malpractice has many impacts (Makaula, 2018) asserts that it is a threat to dependability and legality of

education system and in the long run also threatens the sincerity of the examination. On top of causing a significant harm on the intellectual and moral development of the students examination malpractice may also damage the authority in charge of conducting the examination as was explained by (Makaulu, 2018). That is why the Kenyans have been questioning the Kenya national examination council as to how such examination could be leaked to the candidates.

In Kenya the situation could be the same or worse (Kithuka, 2014) postulated that the level of examination malpractice in Kenya had reached a disturbing level in such a way that even with the stakeholders making enormous attempt to curtail it such efforts have become futile. It was revealed by (Munachunga, 2014) that the prevalence of examination malpractice in Kenya in recent times have taken a precarious and extremely worrying trend since parents, teachers' supervisors and the schools' managers as well were directly involved in leaking of the examinations.

It is claimed by (Ragaa, 2001) that examination malpractice in the Kenya certificate of secondary education has been reported in Kenya in each and every year since 1995. For instance 741 cases were reported in the year 2006, the following year, 1875 students were found to have practiced malpractices in the national exams, in 2008, 1419 students had their examination cancelled, in 2009 1171 cases were found, and in 2010, 539 students were found to have engaged in malpractices, in 2011, 2972 candidates cheated in the examination, in the year 2012, 1254 results got cancelled., in 2013, 3812 candidates had their results cancelled, in the year 2014, 2975 students cheated in the national examination and in the following year 2015, a whopping 5101 candidates engaged in the examination malpractices. The situation in Garissa County has been the same over the last few years with a number of candidates having their exams cancelled and this has significance impact on the education in Kenya

Self-control may refer to the control of impulses, emotions, attention or behaviour in reference to a certain goal (Baumeister, 1994) People with a high self-control tend to have the ability to delay gratification hence they may not easily commit any fraudulent behaviours such the examination malpractices (Baumeister et al., 1994). On the other hand, people with low self-control are usually vulnerable and hence are susceptible to committing fraudulent behaviours such as the examination malpractices. Hence this study tried to find out the relationship between self-control and examination malpractices.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The practice of cheating in the exams at any level of education system has a great consequence on how valid or reliable the examination is, especially in secondary schools in Kenya. This further implicates on how authentic the certification is in reference to the examination malpractice and hence such certificate may not be recognized. Examination malpractice makes the decisions made on such results to affect the society at large where wrong people may be selected for job placements, training programs, advancement for further studies and also in employment while the highly deserving people get let out for not involving themselves in such deviant

behaviour. Cheating in the exam have led to the cancellation of the results for the respective students who have been found to have cheated and hence such a student may have wasted the four years in high school. The practice of examination malpractice also makes the public to lose faith and hope in national examination and further question the examination body for failure to execute its mandate of providing credible examination to the public. The parents for such students on the other hand may have struggled to raise the fees for such students only for the results to be cancelled and they may feel that their energy might have been wasted in raising of the fees for their children. Examination malpractices have also discouraged the students from working hard in school since a short cut to getting good grades is available. This has also demotivated the students hence bringing about a culture of laziness in the secondary schools. Research on psychological causes of examination malpractice has not been conducted in Garissa County especially concerning the behavioural causes of cheating in secondary schools in Garissa County and hence the researcher had to take this chance to conduct such a research. The high numbers of cheating in exams in Garissa County in secondary schools have raised concerns and a psychological solution to the problem was mandatory.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was guided by the following objective:

- ✓ To find out the relationship between self-control and examination malpractices.

ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS

The following alternative hypothesis was formulated for the study:

H_{01} : There is a relationship between self-control and examination malpractices. Test: Pearson's correlation coefficient

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study was based on the theory of crime which was put forth by (Gottfredson Hirschi, 1990) which explains that low self-control and the fact that there is the presence of the perceived opportunity may be the ultimate precursor to many forms of irregular and deviant behaviours chief among them, the examination malpractice.

It is further stipulated by (Arneklev et. al, 1993) that people who have low self-control may likely engage in abnormal activities since they possess personalities that tends to make them incline towards such deviant activities since they are incapable of withstanding temptations, especially when there is the perceived opportunity.

Findings on previous researches carried out in the context of examination malpractice was related with the theory of crime, and had shown flawless explanation about the concept which begins to show itself. The cases of examination malpractices in the secondary schools in Garissa Sub-county was omnipresent and this opportunity was further amplified by correlating with students who engage in examination malpractice as explained by (McCabe et al, 1997) In an

environment that is tempting, the students with a low self-control tend to engage in examination malpractices.

However, the general theory of crime may not have been able to explain the reasons as to why students who possess enough self-control do not cheat in the examination (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). students with low self-control tend to engage in the examination malpractice intentionally instead of spontaneously in what has become common in secondary schools in this modern era where cheating may not easily be detected and yet the opportunity to do the same is very high and the trending situations such as the customs favours cheating to take place where they all want to get an advantage for high grades as explained by (Graham et al, 1994).

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The study reviewed literature in relation to the examination and self-control. Self-control may refer to the ability of a person to overcome impulses that are undesirable such as bad thoughts, negative emotions and behaviours as defined by (Dewall et al, 2007). It is the ability of an individual to overcome behaviours that are unacceptable and it is usually a conscious effort explains (Baumeister et al, 2000). Hence this means that self-control is a behaviour or a process of overcoming a particular temptation in response to a competing goal and in this case the ability of a student to prevent themselves from engaging in examination malpractice.

According to (Gyurak & Ayduk, 2008) those individuals who possess a high level of self-control are likely to prevent themselves from engaging in deviant behaviours such as examination malpractice as compared to those with low self-control. Self-control has been associated with ethics and honesty that an individual possesses. That is why it is explained by (Uzochukuu, 2018) that a student who has the guts to engage themselves in the examination malpractice devalues themselves since they are directly portraying to the whole world that they cannot perform in an exam without the help of their friends.

The theory of crime as stipulated by (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990), low self-control is the chief purpose of all the fraudulent behaviours and it is “the individual level cause of crime” this means that all other sorts of explanations put forth by criminologists to try to explain the causes of crime could be bogus. (Evans et al, 1997) has affirmed in previous findings that indeed low-self-control plays a major role in criminal and deviant behaviours and examination malpractice in this particular study.

Individuals who tend to engage in examination malpractice due to low self-control tend to take such risks since they are usually after an immediate gratification (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990) these theorists also focused on the fact that a crime is facilitated by the presence or absence of self-control and hence their focus was majorly on that fact.

Individuals who can postpone their gratification usually tend to have a high self-control and hence are able to avoid committing any fraudulent behaviours such as the examination malpractice and those that are susceptible to carrying out such behaviour usually have low self-control. (Lilly et al.,1995)

suggest that self-control is normally obtained by individuals very early in life during the early childhood but even though such theorist suggests that one acquires self-control during the early childhood, there is no suggestion that the same changes with the age as someone grows up. It is the opportunity that changes and not the people as explained by (Siegel & McCormick, 2006)

Since criminal behaviours such as examination malpractices characteristically encompass danger and instant satisfaction, students who engage in examination malpractices are motivated by these stimuli.

A meta-analysis study found a very small correlation between delay of gratification tasks and self-control ($r=.15$) which was significantly a small correlation using questionnaires assessing traits of self-control (Saunders et al.,2017) hence it may not mean that students with high levels of self-control may not engage themselves in examination malpractice. This is the opposite of what was affirmed by (Thorndike, 1904) that people who tend to have high trait of self-control will actually display a greater state of self-control when faced with temptations such as the examination malpractice.

It is further stated by (De Ridder et al., 2012) who affirmed that the magnitude between trait self-control and the ability of one to control their behaviours across domains actually differs. Approximately 85-90% of the variance in the attainment of a goal by an individual is within a personal level and that people exert self-control in some areas of their lives better than others and (Koester, 2016) also agrees with such information. This may also mean that whether they possess high levels of self-control or not, individuals actually show different levels of self-control under different situations for example a student may show a high level of self-control in engaging in the examination malpractice but low levels of self-control in relation to stealing.

Attention and motivation are essential in curbing self-control and in most cases act as a pre-requisite to self-control hence as put forth by (Hoffnam et al., 2012) hence it is important for the students to be motivated enough in order to prevent them from engaging in the examination malpractice and instead exhibit a high level of self-control.

III. METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN: The study employed a correlation research design. A correlation research design measures two or more relevant variables and assesses the relationship that exists between such variables explains (Stangor, 2011). The variables were not at all manipulated hence correlation research design was more suitable for this study as was explained by (Johnson, 2008)

SOURCES OF DATA: The research made use of both the primary and secondary methods of data collection. Questionnaires were used to obtain the data from the teachers and students on behavioural causes of examination malpractices in their schools. The questionnaire for teachers, and students had the following sections. The first section was used to collect the background data of the respondents, including gender, work experience and academic

qualifications. Section two of the questionnaire comprised of Likert scales to measure the behavioural causes of examination malpractices. Section three had open-ended questions to propose ways of curbing examination malpractice in schools. The research also used secondary methods by looking for relevant information on the topic in the journals, magazines, the internet etc.

STUDY LOCATION: The study was located in Garissa county in Kenya across the eight selected public secondary schools in the County.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE SIZE: The sample comprised student population of 285 as guided by (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970) sample table. 16 class teachers were chosen from the respective schools. The whole sampling matrix therefore harvested an overall sample size of 301 for the research project. This made a total number of 301 respondents.

VALIDITY OF INSTRUMENT OF DATA COLLECTION: To ascertain the validity of the research instrument, the researcher liaised with the peers and also asked the experts about the extent of the validity of the research, that is through expert judgement (Anikweze, 2009). This was done before the study and also after the piloting process. Necessary improvements and modifications were made before they were employed in the actual collection of data.

RELIABILITY OF INSTRUMENTS OF DATA COLLECTION: To affirm the reliability of the research instruments, the researcher used the Cronbach's alpha to test both the questionnaires for the secondary school students and the one for the teachers. It is the most commonly used measure of internal consistency and the most appropriate measure of reliability especially when it come to the Likert scales instrument as explained by (Robinson, 2009)

PROCEDURE METHODOLOGY: Purposive sampling was used to select the eight secondary schools. To select a sample of form four students from each school, systematic sampling was employed because of its simplicity and periodic quality. This was a technique involving the direct selection of subjects or other primary sampling units from the sampling frames that was listed progressively, (Mugenda, 2008:189). Students were selected systematically by picking names from the class lists whereby every 2nd name was selected until the desired number of students was obtained. This ensured each of the samples had an equal opportunity of being a part of the sample, hence no deliberate bias. It was also not possible to take the data from all the students in the form four in the school.

Therefore, a total number of 285 students from the sampled schools participated in the study. The samples of the class teachers were also obtained through systematic sampling. Therefore, a total number of sixteen class teachers were respondents in the study two from each of the form four class. Where there were more than two streams in the school, simple random sampling, (lottery technique), was used to select two class teachers from each school to participate in the study

DATA ANALYSIS: For the purpose of analysing the data, the researcher used S.P.S.S (Version 25). Measures of central tendencies, measures of dispersions, frequencies and percentages were used to analyse the quantitative variables as explained by (Kothari, 2004)

Pie charts tables and graphs were used to show the presentation of the findings of the study. To test the hypothesis of the study the researcher used Pearson's product moment coefficients to elaborate the relationship between the variables.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

This study sought to establish the relationship between examination malpractice and self-control. The students were asked to state their rating of the role of Self-control on examination malpractice.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF THE STUDENTS

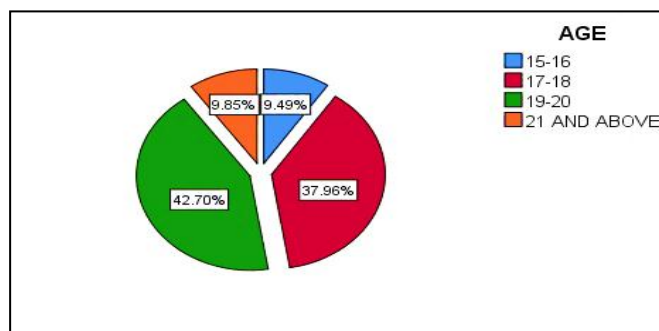


Figure 1: Age of students

The data presented in figure 4.1 indicates that most of the students were between the age bracket of 19 to 20(42.70%) years followed closely by those aged between 17 and 18(37.96).those aged between 15 to 16 years (9.49%) were significantly few meaning that most of the students went to school late. Those aged 21 years and above were also very few at (9.8 %) hence might have stayed in the school for a longer time. Generally, the data indicates that the students were mature enough to make an informed decision.

The responses from the students were rated on a Likert scale of 1-5(Strongly agree, moderately agree, neither agree nor disagree, moderately disagree and strongly disagree) the results were measured in percentages as shown in the table below.

FINDINGS FROM RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

Self-control	SA %	MA %	N %	MD %	SD %
Am often taken away by the spur of the moment.	68.6	22.6	6.9	1.5	0.4
I sacrifice most of my time to shape my future.	81	11.7	1.8	1.5	4.0
I usually concentrate on what gives me pleasure here and now.	3.3	2.6	6.6	28.5	59.1
I am very concerned with what may happen to my life in the long run.	1.5	0.7	4.4	23.0	70.4
I usually try to solve very hard projects.	2.2	3.6	4.0	21.9	68.2
When things get tough, I usually give up on them.	19.3	11.7	5.5	6.6	56.9
The easiest task in life usually gives me the pleasure.	51.1	18.6	7.3	6.6	16.1
I like performing tasks that gives me a hard time to solve.	53.3	17.9	2.2	4.4	21.9

I don't feel the amusement in doing the things that are tricky.	34.7	13.5	9.9	9.5	32.1
I often do risky things just to enjoy myself.	24.1	9.5	6.9	8.4	51.1
I never enjoy performing the tasks that may lend me into trouble.	62.4	6.6	4.4	4.4	22.3
Security is far less important than excitement and adventure	29.9	8.8	7.3	5.5	48.5
I would likely do something crazy than that which requires my energy.	21.9	11.3	9.9	5.5	51.5
Instead of seating and engaging in thinking, I would rather be on the move.	40.5	11.3	6.2	6.9	35.5
Instead of getting out to do things, I would rather sit and think of ideas.	62.0	12.4	5.1	3.6	16.8
I have more energy for adventurous activities as compared to the people of my age.	55.1	19.7	6.2	4.0	15.0
I care more about the other people before I start looking after myself.	47.4	20.4	2.9	4.7	24.7
I feel very sorry for the people when they go through a tough time.	69.0	13.5	3.3	1.8	12.4
If my actions intimidate other people, it's their own problem am not concerned.	25.9	8.8	8.4	8.4	48.5
As long as I get what I want, I don't care about the problems of the other people	13.1	7.7	3.6	9.1	66.4
It's not easy for me to lose my temper.	59.5	15.7	6.8	4.7	14.2
When my anger goes up, I feel more hurt and don't want to talk about it.	46.7	15.0	8.0	8.0	22.3
It's advisable for people to be far from me when am angry	39.1	12.4	9.9	9.1	29.6
When I get into fight with other people, I can easily sit and talk with them.	60.6	10.9	2.9	4.7	20.8

Source: spss analysis of responses to questions

Table 2: Results of SPSS analysis to question

The findings presented in the table shows that 68.6 % n=187 strongly agreed with the statement that they were taken by the spur of the moment, hence shows that they got lost in the moment. On the other hand 81% n= 221 strongly agreed that they sacrificed most their time to shape their future.59.1 n=161strongly disagreed with the statement they usually concentrate on what gave them pleasure here and there.70.4% n= 192 also strongly disagreed with the statement that they were very concerned with what may happen in their life in the long run.

The findings further shows that 68.2% n=186 strongly disagreed with the fact that they usually try to solve very hard projects.56.9 n= 155strongly agreed that when things got tough they usually gave up on them.51.1 n= 140 strongly agreed with the fact that the easiest task in life gave them pleasure.53.3% n=146 strongly agreed that they liked

performing tasks that gave them a hard time to solve.34.7% n= 95 strongly agreed that they don't feel the amusement in doing things that are tricky.51.1% n=140 strongly disagreed with the statement that they often do tricky things just to enjoy themselves.62.4% n=170 strongly agreed that they never enjoy performing the tasks that may lend them into trouble.48.5% n= 132 strongly disagreed that security is far less important than excitement and adventure meaning they preferred excitement and adventure to security

The findings also show that 51.5% n=141strongly disagreed that they would likely do something crazy than that which requires their energy.40.5% n=110 strongly agreed that instead of sitting and engaging in cheating in thinking, they would rather be on the move. 62.0% n= 169 strongly agreed that instead of getting out to do things, they would rather sit and think of ideas.55.1% n=150 strongly agreed that they had more energy for adventurous activities as compared to the people of their age.47.4% n=129 strongly agreed that they cared more about other people before they start looking after themselves.69.0% n= 189 strongly agreed that they felt very sorry for the people when they go through hard time.48.5% n= 132 strongly disagreed with the statement that if their actions intimidate other people, it's their own problem and that they are not concerned.66.4% n=181 strongly agreed that as long as they got what they wanted, they didn't care about the problems of other people.59.5% n= 163 strongly agreed that it's not easy for them to lose their temper. 46.7% n= 127 strongly agreed that when their temper goes up, they feel more hurt and don't want to talk about it.39.1% n= 107 strongly agreed that it's advisable for people to be far away from them when they are wrong. Finally, 60.6% n=166 strongly agreed that when they get into fight with other people they could easily sit and talk with them.

A Pearson product-moment correlation was run to determine the relationship between examination malpractice and Self-control and the results were as shown below:

Correlations

		Examination malpractice	Self-control
	Pearson correlation	1	.199
Examination malpractice	Sig. (2 tailed).		.001
	N	274	274
Self-control	Pearson correlation	.199	1
	Sig. (2 tailed).	.001	
	N	274	274

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05(2-tailed)

Source: Research Data (2020)

Table 1.2: Correlation between self-control and the examination malpractice

From the table 4.5, correlation analysis revealed Pearson's correlation coefficient of .199 and at a significance levels of 0.001 which is less than 0.05 (r=.199, p value <.05). The results indicate that there was no significant relationship between examination malpractice and self-control. Hence, we fail to reject the hypotheses H₀₂ there is no relationship between self-control and examination malpractice. The

findings contradict (Gyurak & Ayduk, 2008) who claimed that individuals who possess a high level of self-control are likely to prevent themselves from engaging in deviant behaviour such as examination malpractice as compared with those who have low self-control.

According to the theory of crime, low level of self-control is the ultimate cause of students engaging in the examination malpractice as was elaborated by (Gottfredson Hirschi,1990). The research carried out by this study actually indicates that most of the students had low self-control and yet there was significantly no correlation between examination malpractice and self-control. This can be explained by the fact that the trends in examination malpractices in the secondary schools have become highly entrenched in the system, so much so that it doesn't matter the level of self-control a student has to be able to engage in such malpractices.

The study goes in tandem with a meta-analysis study which found a very small correlation between delay of gratification of task and self-control ($r = .15$) which was statistically a small significance using the traits of self-control by (Sounders et al.,2017) hence as discussed earlier this may not mean that students who poses a high level of self-control may not engage in examination malpractice as shown by the results of this particular study.

Furthermore, it was elaborated by (De Ridder et al.,2012) that the magnitude between trait self-control and the ability of a person to control their behaviours across domains actually differs, Approximately 85-90 % of the variances in the attainment of a goal by an individual is within a personal level and that people exert self-control in some areas of their lives better than others as explained by (Koester, 2016) hence the students in this research may have shown low levels of self-controls in some traits and not in examination malpractices since the questionnaire for self-control had a purpose of testing the general level of self-control in students in life and not specifically on the examination malpractices.

Hence, we may conclude by stating that the fact that there was positive correlation among the variables indicates that self-control has some effect on the ability of the students to cheat in the examinations even though the significance was very minimal.

V. RECOMMENDATION

The results in this study revealed that there was no significant relationship between the student's self-control and examination malpractice which may mean that lack of self-control may not be the main reason as to why the learners engage in examination malpractices it was found that Students may have a high level of self-control but still engage in examination malpractices therefore the study recommends that Guidance and counselling should be emphasized in schools and taught as subject to help the learners successfully go through several stages in life and make them develop a holistic view about the world.

RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In reference to the findings, it is recommended for similar study to be carried out in private schools to enhance generalization of the study. Similar study should also be conducted in other institutions such as the colleges and universities.

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