

Original Paper

Demographics of Students in Their Perspectives on Examination Cheating in Basic Education in Kenya

Millicent Adhiambo Ojwan'g^{1*}

¹ Department of Education, University of Eastern Africa, Baraton, Kenya

* Millicent Adhiambo Ojwan'g, Department of Education, University of Eastern Africa, Baraton, Kenya

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Abstract

This study sought to find out in depth the demographics of students in their perspectives on examination cheating in Basic education in Kenya. The target population was 838 university freshmen of 2018/2019 academic year in a selected faith-based University in Kenya. The sample was 272 students. This study was guided by Kohlberg's theory of moral development and Ajzen's theory of planned behavior. Descriptive survey research design was used. Questionnaires comprising both closed and open-ended questions were administered. Data was analyzed by the use of descriptive statistics. Findings reveal that lack of preparedness and an excessive emphasis on grades are the main causes of cheating, while punishment is a critical deterrent to cheating in examinations. The study recommends that schools should ensure that students are adequately prepared for examinations; emphasize mastery of content as opposed to grades; and subject examination offenders to more severe punishment.

Keywords

examination cheating, students' perspectives, basic education, demographics, Kenya

1. Introduction

“The greatest want of the world is the want of men-men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall” (White, 1903, p. 57).

The above quotation echoes the need for students of sound moral character resulting from both positive perspectives in judgement and self-discipline. It is rejecting examination cheating, which stands out as a big challenge in the education sector in the twenty-first century. Taylor (2014) opines that preventing

and detecting academic dishonesty has always been a challenge, which now escalates due to the presence of internet and computers. Examination cheating occurs globally at all levels of education, and Kenya is not excluded.

British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) News (2018, January 5) reports that more students were cheating in GCSE and A-level exams in England. Anderman (2018, February 15) also reports that in general, cheating increased as students moved into high school in USA. Voice of America (VOA) News (2017, Nov. 11) reports Rettinger as saying that cheating is difficult to prevent as it is deeply ingrained in the people's culture. Quintos (2017) reveals a 94% rate of prevalence of academic dishonesty in the Philippines. According to Agiresaasi (2018, May 4), cheating is a very common practice at all educational levels, and both students and teachers are guilty of leaking questions and answers in Uganda. In Kenya, the most outstanding thing in the education sector in 2015 was the rising cases of examination cheating, with reported incidents rising to 2,709 candidates in 111 centers compared to 1,702 in 93 centers in 2014 (Aduda, 2015, Dec. 31).

2. Statement of the Problem

According to section 10 of the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) Act No. 29 of 2012; KNEC is mandated to: (i) Set and maintain examination standards; and (ii) Conduct public academic, technical and other national examinations within Kenya at basic and tertiary levels, among other functions. In order for KNEC to effectively perform its stipulated functions, it has powers to cancel or withhold the results of candidates involved in examination irregularities or malpractices.

In view of the stipulated mandate of KNEC by the Republic of Kenya on the one hand, against the reported cases of cheating on the other hand, the researcher recognizes the need to redeem and salvage the dwindling integrity and dignity of certification, examination practices and its administration in Basic education. This survey embarked on investigating in depth the demographics of students in their perspectives on examination cheating in Basic education in Kenya.

3. Research Question

This study sought to answer the question: "What are the demographics of students in their perspectives on examination cheating in Basic education in Kenya?"

4. Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will benefit all stakeholders in education and the general public by creating awareness on the demographics of students' perspectives on examination cheating in Basic Education in Kenya for better practices.

5. Justification of the Study

Related studies done by Nyamwange, Ondima and Onderi (2013) on factors influencing examination cheating among secondary school students in Kenya; Muchai (2014) on factors that contribute to cheating in examinations in Technical Institutions in Kenya; Adow, Alio, and Thinguri (2015) on the management of KCSE Examination and its influence on irregularities among students in Kenya; and Owenga, Aloka, and Raburu (2018) on the relationship between selected personal determinants and examination cheating among Kenyan secondary school students. However, little has been done to investigate in depth the demographics of students in their perspectives on examination cheating in Basic Education in Kenya. The researcher, therefore, contends that there was need to fill the lacuna by conducting and documenting this study as a contribution to the body of knowledge and for use in the Basic Education sector.

6. Theoretical Framework

This study was informed and guided by Kohlberg's (1958) theory of Moral Development, which states that morality can be developed either negatively or positively, depending on how an individual accomplishes the tasks assigned him/her during each stage of moral development across his lifespan. In this study, it is clear that an individual's morality influences their choice to cheat or not to cheat in examinations. This study was further guided by Ajzen's (1991) theory of Planned Behavior, which states that expectations such as motivation and behavioral reactions are not always spontaneous but are planned. In this study, actions of students such as writing short notes on body parts and carrying unauthorized materials in to the examination room are planned ahead of time in an attempt to cheat in examinations in Basic education in Kenya.

7. Research Design

This study used descriptive survey research design for analyzing in depth the demographics of respondents in their perspectives on examination cheating in Basic education in Kenya.

8. Population and Sampling Techniques

Purposive sampling technique was used to sample one faith-based university in Kenya because it holds academic honesty, personal integrity, and moral values in very high esteem. The population was 838 first year students joining in the first semester of 2018/2019 academic year because they had just graduated from Basic Education, had not fully adjusted into higher education, and had the most current information which this study sought. This study used purposive sampling to select all first year students registered for the Courses: Introduction to Sociology and Introduction to Psychology. It was established that all freshmen, except Bachelor of Education (B Ed) students must register for either of the two courses during their first academic year in the selected faith-based university in this study.

Table 1. Population and Sample Size

Category	Target population	Sample size	Sample (%)
University freshmen	838	272	33%

Neuman (2011) suggests that for descriptive studies, a minimum of 30% of the target population is adequate. This study used 33% of the target population as shown on Table 1.

9. Research Instruments

This study employed the use of a self-constructed questionnaires which had both closed and open-ended questions on the demographics of students in their perspectives on examination cheating in Basic Education in Kenya. Two hundred and seventy two questionnaires were distributed and all were returned to the researcher. Hence there was 100% response rate.

10. Ethical Considerations

The purpose of this study was explained to the respondents, who were assured of confidentiality in the handling of information gathered. Participation was voluntary and consent was signed. There were no sensitive questions that could harm the respondents psychologically. Data was reported honestly.

11. Research Findings

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Question 1 stated: "What is your gender"?

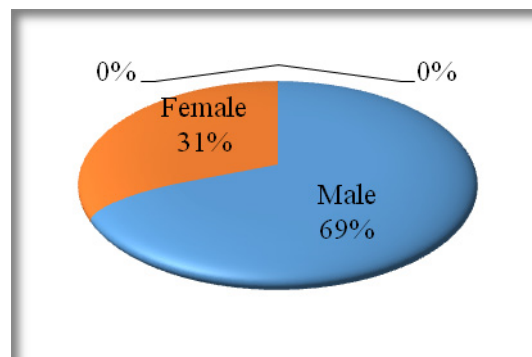


Figure 1. Gender Description

Figure 1 shows that 187 (69%) respondents were males while 83 (31%) were females in this study.

Question 2 (a) stated: *Are there situations where examination cheating is acceptable?*

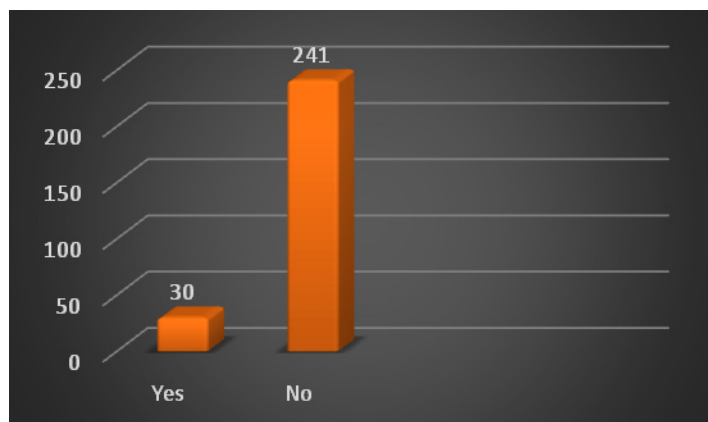


Figure 2. Situations Where Examination Cheating Is Acceptable

Thirty (11%) respondents affirmed, while 241 (88.6%) rejected that there are situations where examination cheating is acceptable. Only one (0.4%) respondent did not answer this question.

Question 2 (b) stated: *If yes, please specify the situations.*

Table 2 shows situations with the highest frequencies where examination cheating is acceptable as follows: When one has nothing to write and he/she must pass (60%); People believe KNEC examinations will define their life (13.4%); When institutions agree with Examination officials to cheat (6.7%); and When everyone cheats, you also need to cheat in order to compete favorably (6.7%).

Table 2. Situations Where Cheating in Examinations Is Acceptable

Responses	<i>F</i>	%
When one has nothing to write and he/she must pass	18	60.0
People believe KNEC examinations will define their life	4	13.4
When institutions agree with Examination officials to cheat	2	6.7
When everyone cheats, you also need to cheat in order to compete favorably	2	6.7
In order not to let my parents down	1	3.3
Wide syllabus coverage, the content is too much for students to master in a short period of time	1	3.3
When one realizes that the examination brought is outside of class work	1	3.3
High school especially National schools	1	3.3
Total	30	100

When one has nothing to write and he/she must pass. Two respondents said: “If it is the only way to pass” and “When one has nothing to write and he/she must pass”. These responses imply that cheating is acceptable when students are not adequately prepared for examinations.

People believe KNEC examinations will define their life. A respondent said: “In KNEC exams where people believe these exams will define their life and teachers help out”. This implies that a student’s fate is determined by his/her performance in National Examinations.

When institutions agree with Examination officials to cheat. A respondent said:” When the institution agrees with the officials offering exams to do so”. This response implies that some Examination officers collude with school authorities in facilitating students to cheat.

When everyone cheats, you also need to cheat in order to compete favorably. Two respondents said: “When everyone cheats you also need to cheat in order to compete” and “When you realize your competitors are also cheating”. This finding implies that students cheat in examinations so as to create a level ground.

Question 2 (c) stated: *If no, please state why not.*

Table 3. There Are No Situations Where Examination Cheating Is Acceptable

Responses	F	%
Examinations test capabilities of what one knows and can remember	71	31.1
Examination cheating is wrong morally and ethically	54	23.7
Examination cheating is not acceptable by KNEC	33	14.5
Examination cheating will produce incompetent graduates in the society	21	9.2
Students are meant to go through proper teaching and serious studying	14	6.1
I am honest	11	4.8
Examination cheating encourages laziness among students	9	4
Cheating makes Exam results not credible	8	3.5
All students should have a fair/level ground in examinations	7	3.1
Total	228	100

Table 3 shows statements denying that there are situations where examination cheating is acceptable. Although 241 respondents indicated that there were no situations whatsoever where examination cheating is acceptable (see Figure 2), only 228 of them gave reasons why not. The reasons rated the highest were: Examinations test capabilities of what one knows and can remember (31.1%); Examination cheating is wrong morally and ethically (23.7%); It is not acceptable by Kenya National Examination Council (14.5%); Examination cheating will produce incompetent graduates in the society (9.2%); and Students are meant to go through proper teaching and serious studying (6.1%).

Examinations test capabilities of what one knows and can remember. Some respondents said “Because by cheating one cannot know where they lay academically”; “Examination tests understanding of the student” and “Exam is meant to test the knowledge you have gained in a particular

area of study”. This finding implies that cheating in examinations beats the core purpose of exams, which is to assess learners’ capability, knowledge and understanding.

Examination cheating is wrong morally and ethically. Some respondents said, “It is wrong ethically” and “It is not morally right”, which implies that students do not cheat because it is morally and ethically wrong.

Examination cheating is not acceptable by KNEC. One respondent said, “It is against rules and regulations of examination council”. This implies that students are aware that cheating in examinations is illegal.

Examination cheating will produce incompetent graduates in the society. Two respondents said: “Students who cheat in exams, when they find jobs they are not able to pursue them properly” and “This will not help the student ... will produce bad manpower ... not competent”. This finding implies that cheating ultimately leads to incompetence.

Students are meant to go through proper teaching and serious studies. Three respondents said, “Students should prepare appropriately for the exam and avoid cheating”; “Students are given time to prepare themselves for examination so there is no need to cheat”; and “Students are meant to go through proper teaching and study”. These responses imply that there is no need to cheat if there are adequate teaching-learning processes.

I am honest. Some students said, “Exams should be honest work a person has done within the period of study”; “Honesty in exams should be upheld”; and “Honesty is needed in examination”. These responses imply that examination cheating is incompatible with honesty.

Question 3 (a) stated: *Have you ever cheated in a test or examination?*

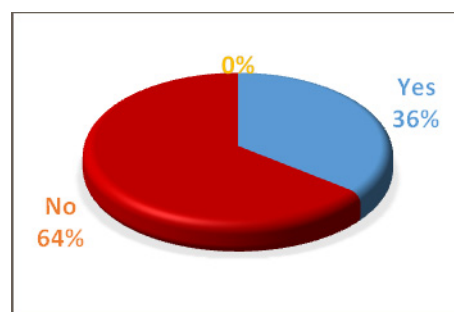


Figure 3. Ever Cheated in a Test or an Examination

Figure 3 shows that 96 (36%) respondents accepted while 174 (64%) denied that they had ever cheated in a test/examination. Two did not respond to this question.

Question 3(b) stated: *If no, please explain why not.*

Table 4. Reasons for Not Cheating in Tests or Examinations

Responses	F	%
Cheating in exams is illegal/unethical	38	21
I am confident because I am always adequately prepared for exams	38	21
I am an honest student/cheating is against my principles	36	19.9
Cheating in examinations can never help one to test his/her ability, understanding, the capacity to remember and even know weak areas for improvement	34	18.9
The repercussions when caught are not friendly	10	5.5
Cheating does not help in academic progress and is a waste of time	7	3.9
I love owning my result, that I have worked for, so as to celebrate	7	3.9
We were under maximum/strict supervision	4	2.2
I have never gotten the courage/opportunity to do so	3	1.7
Cheating brings a false pass which may cause incompetency in employment	2	1
Examination cheating leads to laziness	2	1
Total	181	100

Table 4 shows reasons for not cheating in tests or examinations. One hundred and seventy four (174) respondents generated 181 reasons as to why they had never cheated in a test or an examination, with few respondents giving more than one reason. The reasons with the highest frequencies were: Cheating in exams is illegal/unethical (21%); I am confident because I am always adequately prepared for exams (21%); I am an honest student/cheating is against my principles (19.9%); Cheating in examinations can never help one to test his/her ability, understanding, the capacity to remember and even know weak areas for improvement (18.9%) and students feared the repercussions when caught (5.5%).

Cheating in exams is illegal/unethical. Two respondents said, “Because it is illegal to engage”; and “Cheating in exam is unethical”. These responses imply that students are aware of the illegality of cheating in examinations.

I am confident because I am always adequately prepared for exams. Two respondents said, “I am always prepared for exams”; and “I adequately prepare enough for the exam”. This implies that there is no reason to cheat when there is adequate preparation for examinations.

I am an honest student. Two respondents said, “It is against my principles as a student”; and “I choose to be faithful enough”. This response connects with Level 3 of Kohlberg’s (1958) theory of Moral development, which is concerned with the universal principles that are in relation to the action done, in this case rejecting to cheat in examinations.

Cheating in examinations can never help one to test his/her ability, understanding, the capacity to remember and even know weak areas for improvement. Two respondents said: “I am supposed to

measure myself and know where to improve”; and “...for a better understanding of my capability”. This finding implies that cheating undermines the core purpose of examinations.

The repercussions when caught are not friendly. Two respondents said, “Fear of the consequences”; “It leads to canceling of my exam”. The reasoning here connects with Stage 1: Punishment-Obedience Orientation of Kohlberg’s theory of Moral Development where an individual follows the law for fear of punishment.

Question 3 (c) stated: *If Yes, when did you cheat in the test/exam?*

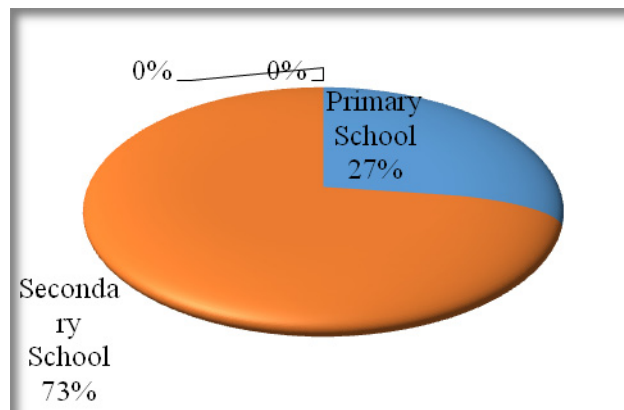


Figure 4. Education Level at Which Examination Cheating Occurred

Figure 4 shows that 10 (27%) respondents had cheated in primary while 27 (73%) had cheated in secondary school.

Question 3 (d) stated: *If yes, please explain why you cheated in the test/exam.*

Table 5. Reasons for Cheating in the Test/Examination

Responses	<i>F</i>	%
I had not prepared adequately for the examination but wanted to pass	68	70.8
Everyone else cheated/peer pressure	11	11.5
There was need because I was going to be expelled/repeat the class if I failed	7	7.3
Teachers provided us with some leaked exam papers	5	5.2
Pressure from the school and parents	3	3.2
One invigilator pointed a mistake on my paper and I wrote the correct answer	1	1
There was no Supervisor	1	1
Total	96	100

Table 5 shows reasons for cheating in examinations. Reasons with the highest frequencies were: I had not prepared adequately for the examination but wanted to pass (70.8%); everyone else cheated/peer pressure (11.5%); there was need because I was going to be expelled/repeat the class if I failed (7.3%); Teachers provided us with some leaked exam papers (5.2%) and pressure from school and parents (3.2%).

I had not prepared adequately for the examination but wanted to pass. Some respondents said: “So as to pass the exam”; “I was not ready for the test but wanted to pass”; and “I stayed long without attending classes due to lack of fees”. These responses imply that students resort to cheating as a quick way out when they are not adequately prepared for exams.

Everyone else cheated/peer pressure. Some respondents said: “Everyone else cheated so why not”; “Everyone in class was cheating and I did not want to fail either”; and “Influence having seen others practicing it”. These responses imply that peer pressure is a driving force to cheating in examination.

There was need because I was going to be expelled/repeat the class if I failed. Some respondents said: “There was need because i was going to be expelled if I failed”; “We were supposed to help each other I did not want to see my friend repeat the class”; and “I had not been in school for almost a whole term I feared repeating”. Fear of failure leads to cheating in examinations.

Teachers provided us with some leaked exam papers. Some students cheat in exams when they are pressurized by their teachers. Some respondents said: “Teachers provided us with some exam papers” and “It was provided by the subject teacher”. This finding implicates teachers.

Pressure from school and parents. Some respondents said: “...the pressure from the school and parents”; “I had failed in most exams and I needed a good grade to take home” and “Pressure so as not to disappoint my sponsors”. This finding implies that school and parental pressure for good grades leads to cheating.

Question 3 (e) stated: *If yes, in which Course(s)/Subject(s) did you cheat?*

Table 6. Courses/Subjects in Which Cheating Occurred

Courses/Subjects	<i>f</i>	Percent
Sciences and Math	51	18.8
Humanities	25	9.2
Languages	11	4.0
Arts	6	2.2
Total	93	34.2
Missing System	34.2	65.8
Total	272	100.0

Table 6 shows the Courses/Subjects in which cheating occurred. It appears that respondents were more vulnerable to cheat in exams in the Sciences and Math than in the other subjects.

Question 3 (f) stated: *If yes, where did you get the cheat exam materials from?*

Table 7. Sources of Cheat Examination Materials

Responses	<i>f</i>	%
From a fellow student/friend	42	43.8
From books and small sheets of paper which were hidden in my pocket	40	41.8
From teachers	6	6.2
From a paper that had leaked on social media and it was all over	6	6.2
From the Lab Technician	1	1
From an Invigilator	1	1
Total	96	100

Table 7 shows the sources of cheat examination materials. Ninety six respondents revealed fellow students and friends (43.8%); books and small sheets of paper hidden in candidates' pockets (41.8%) which were sneaked in to the examination rooms; teachers (6.2%), and social media (6.2%) as sources of cheat examination materials with highest frequencies.

From fellow students and friends. Some respondents said: "My desk mate"; "From fellow student"; "Classmate"; "A friend of mine..." and "From a friend". These responses implicate peers as an avenue of accessing cheat examination materials.

From books and small sheets of paper hidden in candidates' pockets. Some respondents said: "From a text book"; "Note book"; "The cheating materials were my summarized notes" and "I prepared a small sheet, had it in my pocket". These responses imply that laxity in invigilation/supervision motivates students to cheat in examinations.

From teachers. Some respondents said: "From teachers" and "Teachers and friends". Teachers who should safeguard a high conduct of examinations are culprits.

From a paper that had leaked on social media and it was all over. Some responses were: "From the internet"; "From online materials..." and "The paper had leaked on social media and it was all over". This finding implies that social media is an avenue of examination leakage.

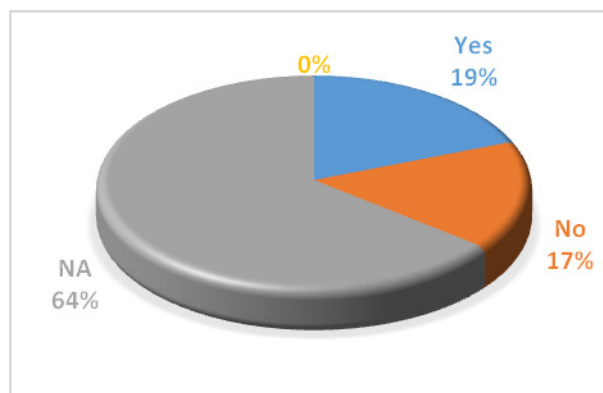
Question 3 (g) stated: *If Yes, how did you get the cheat materials?*

Table 8. Means Used to Obtain the Cheat Materials

Responses	<i>f</i>	%
I copied from my classmate/friend	42	43.8
I copied from a book/ <i>mwakenya</i> (short notes) which was sneaked in to the examination room	40	41.8
Teachers did them as Revision questions in classes	7	7.3
Through social media	3	3.1
I copied between my arm and also in my hand	1	1
The Invigilator pointed the mistake and I corrected	1	1
Through the Lab Technician	1	1
Through phone growling method	1	1
Total	96	100

Table 8 shows the means used to obtain the cheat materials. The means with the highest frequencies were: I copied from my classmate/friend (43.8%); I copied from a book/*mwakenya* (short notes) which was sneaked in to the examination room (41.8%); Teachers did them as Revision questions in class (7.3%); and through social media (3.1%). These findings are similar to those of the previous question which sought to find out where the respondents got the cheat exam materials from (see Table 7), except from “Teachers did them as Revision questions in classes”. This finding implies that teachers leak examinations in the disguise of revising.

Question 3 (h) stated: *If Yes, do you feel guilty about having cheated in the test/exam?*

**Figure 5. Feeling Guilty after Cheating in examination**

Although only 96 respondents had indicated that they had cheated in examinations in Basic Education in Kenya (see Figure 3), there were 97 responses to this question. While 52 (19%) respondents revealed

that they felt guilty after cheating in examinations, 45 (17%) said they did not feel guilty. One hundred and seventy five respondents did not participate in this question.

Question 3 (i) stated: *If you feel guilty, please explain why.*

Table 9. Reasons for Feeling Guilty

Responses	<i>f</i>	%
The marks earned were absolutely not mine	17	32.7
Because it is a dishonest act	13	25
Because I had broken the laws of Exams	8	15.4
I was caught by my teacher and disciplinary measures were taken accordingly	4	7.7
I was born a winner I don't have to cheat to be what God designed me to be	3	5.8
The cheating did not help me at all, I failed anyway	3	5.8
It is unfair to those who did not cheat in the exams	2	3.8
I managed to get into university but someone else did not due to lack of exam materials	1	1.9
It made me feel like a lazy person who cannot be ready for a test at any time	1	1.9
Total	52	100

Table 9 shows reasons for feeling guilty after cheating in examinations. The fifty two respondents who revealed that they felt guilty after cheating in examinations (see Figure 5) explained that: The marks earned were absolutely not mine (32.7%), it is a dishonest act (25%), and I had broken the laws of exams (15.4%) as the reasons with the highest frequencies for their guilt. Others (7.7%) indicated that they were guilty because they were caught by the teacher and disciplinary measures were taken accordingly.

The marks earned were absolutely not mine. Some respondents said: "I was awarded some marks that I did not deserve"; "It made me score grades which are not mine"; "I should not have earned the marks"; and "I did very well but it was not my effort". The cheating student realizes that he/she has lied because the marks earned are not his/hers. He/she may have a good grade but a sense of guilt weighs heavily on him/her.

It is a dishonest act. The guilt may be due to the realization that the student's bad behavior contradicts values caught in religious homes and schools. Examination cheating is not an honest act. One student said, "It is not good and it is sin and am not proud of myself".

I had broken the laws of exams. Some students said: "It is not a legal act" and "Because it is wrong to cheat in the first place". When National and Internal school examination regulations are publicized and explained, offending students may feel guilty when they cheat.

I was caught by the teacher and disciplinary measures were taken accordingly. Some students said: “It was a waste, we were identified and it was not pleasant”; and “I was caught by my teacher and disciplinary measures were taken accordingly. These responses imply that being caught and punished for cheating in examinations may lead to guilt feelings”.

Question 3 (j) stated: *If you do not feel guilty, please explain why not.*

Table 10. Reasons for Not Feeling Guilty

Responses	<i>f</i>	%
I was among the best students	19	42.2
Cheating was not out of my will	7	15.5
We are human beings, we have sinned a lot; it’s normal	6	13.3
It helped me continue with my studies	5	11
It was just a quick test; not main exam	3	7
I did not suffer the consequences	2	4.4
It did not add anything to my grade	2	4.4
I completed that level and I read enough after cheating	1	2.2
Total	45	100

Table 10 presents reasons for not feeling guilty. Reasons with highest frequencies were: I was among the best students (42.2%); Cheating was not out of my will (15.5%); We are human beings, we ...sinned a lot; It’s normal (13.3%); and It helped me continue with my studies (11%) as the four main reasons for not feeling guilty. Others belittled the immoral act by stating: It was just a quick test (7%).

I was among the best students. Some respondents said: “It is one way of passing exams”; “I saw its benefits”; “I was able to secure a chance for an outing as top ten students in Kiswahili” and “Its better helping myself in passing than fail in exams”. These responses imply that the end justifies the means. What matters is to be among excelling students.

Cheating was not out of my will. Some respondents said: “Because it was not out of my will”; “I was under pressure” and “What has passed has passed... was not my desire to do so. I was forced by circumstances”. These responses imply that cheating in unique circumstances is acceptable and does not lead to guilty feelings.

We are human beings, we have sinned a lot; it’s normal. Some respondents said: “It’s part of life”; “It was the norm of the days” and “To me it seems like something normal”. These responses suggest that the conscience no longer bothers students who cheat persistently.

It helped me continue with my studies. Some respondents said: “It helped me continue with my studies”; “It helped me relieve my pressure” and “I completed that level”. These responses imply that

the end justifies the means. The students were not guilty after cheating because it helped them complete that level of education and continue with higher education.

It was just a quick test. Some respondents said: “It was just a quick test, not the main exam”; “The exams were not that serious” and “It was just a five mark exam”. This implies that cheating in a test or a short exam is inconsequential.

Question 4 (a) stated: *Can you report a fellow student who is cheating in a test/exam?*

Figure 6 shows that 75 (28%) respondents affirmed that they could report a cheating fellow student, while 193 (71%) refused. Only four (1%) did not respond to this question. The percentage (71%) of those who cannot report a cheating student reflects the magnitude of the problem facing Basic Education in Kenya. This finding implies that majority of students do not provide support to the education system by reporting cheating culprits.

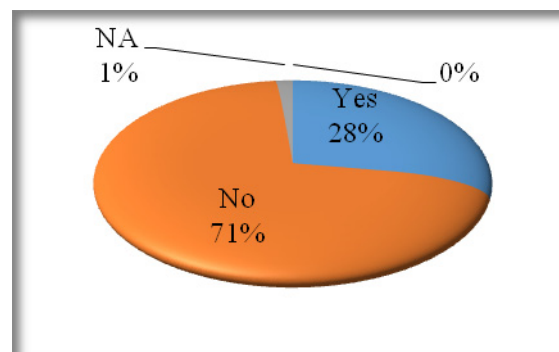


Figure 6. Reporting a Fellow Student Who Is Cheating in Examinations

Question 4 (b) stated: *If yes, please explain why you can report a fellow student who is cheating.*

Table 11. Reasons for Reporting a Fellow Student Who Is Cheating

Responses	<i>f</i>	%
To ensure that I am honest and my responsibility to assist in what is right even for the future	23	30.7
Cheating is illegal and is not worthy before God	19	25.3
The student is getting marks for nothing and could lead the whole class to a risk	13	17.3
It is a Christian virtue to ensure honesty in everyday activities	9	12
I will feel jealous if the student tops in class yet he/she cheated; it is unfair	6	8
We learn in order to become professionals in our areas of study	2	2.7
Cheating in exams create laziness	2	2.7
Cheating means he/she is ruining his/her own life unknowingly	1	1.3
Total	75	100

Table 11 shows reasons for reporting a fellow student who is cheating. Those with the highest frequencies are: To ensure that I am honest and my responsibility to assist in what is right even for the future (30.7%); Cheating is illegal and is not worthy before God (25.3%); The student is getting marks for nothing and could lead the whole class to a risk (17.3%); and It is a Christian virtue to ensure honesty in everyday activities (12%).

To ensure that I am honest and my responsibility to assist in what is right even for the future.

Some respondents said: “To ensure that I am honest and my responsibility to assist in what is right”; “We should always help each other and for that reason reporting him/her would help the student” and “It is my responsibility”. This finding implies that some students take personal responsibility to ensure that examination cheating is curbed by a willingness to report offenders. It connects with Stage 4: Law and Order orientation of Kohlberg’s (1958) theory of Moral Development where one respects the authorities, follows the rules, and does their duty.

Cheating is illegal and is not worthy before God. Some respondents said: “Cheating is not allowed and even it is not worth before God” and “It’s not acceptable ... therefore, cheating in exams is illegal”. Some students will report examination cheats because cheating is illegal.

It is a Christian virtue to ensure honesty in everyday activities. Some respondents said: “It is not integrity”; “It is a Christian virtue to ensure honesty in everyday activities”; “I want to help my fellow student to be honest in his/her life” and “Integrity should be upheld to the letter”. This finding implies that some students aspire to maintain integrity in examinations.

The student is getting marks for nothing and could lead the whole class to a risk. Some respondents said: “The student is getting marks for nothing and could lead the whole class to a risk”; “If that will lead to a universal disciplinary action where I will be affected” and “He/she may cause disruption to the entire students”. This finding implies that reporting examination cheats would benefit the whole class.

Question 4 (c) stated: *If No, please explain why not.*

Table 12. Reasons for Not Reporting a Fellow Student Who Is Cheating

Responses	<i>f</i>	%
It is none of my business	60	31.1
I really think its one’s life and you are the one who is accountable for your own deeds	44	22.8
The person might have not adequately prepared for the exam	25	13
It would lead to an academic punishment that may ruin his/her future life	24	12.5
It may bring hatred/enmity among your peers	17	8.8
I can only advise him/her after the exam	11	5.7
Because he wants a good future for himself	7	3.6
Cheating does not express any faithfulness and i view it as a crime	2	1

Sometimes you may think it is the right thing to do but it ends up being wrong	2	1
I may not have enough evidence	1	0.5
Total	193	100

Table 12 shows reasons for not reporting a fellow student who is cheating with those with the highest frequencies being: It is none of my business (31.1%); I really think its one's life and you are the one who is accountable for your own deeds (22.8%); The person might have not adequately prepared for the exam (13%); Because it would lead to an academic punishment that may ruin his/her future life (12.5%) and It may bring hatred/enmity among your peers (8.8%).

It is none of my business. Some respondents said: "I don't want problems"; "It is not my business"; "It is the role of the invigilators to catch cheaters" and "It's the role of those in authority". These responses imply that students expect examination invigilators, being in positions of authority, to do their work diligently.

I really think its one's life and you are the one who is accountable for your own deeds. Some respondents said: "It's there life"; "It's his/her choice" and "Everybody's life is in his/her hand, why should I follow after someone's decision"? These responses imply that each student should be held accountable for their actions in examinations.

The person might have not adequately prepared for the exam. Some respondents said: "The person might have not prepared for the exam"; "Maybe he/she doesn't understand the test"; and "I understand how it feels to be blank when doing a test". These responses imply that students go in to examinations unprepared one time or another.

It would lead to an academic punishment that may ruin his/her future life. Some respondents said: "There might be some serious consequences on the student"; "It can lead to his/her expulsion or exam cancellation" and "I don't want to be responsible of destroying someone's life". These responses imply that students would rather be quiet at wrong doing than report an examination culprit who may be punished.

It may bring hatred/enmity among your peers. Some respondents said: "Enmity will arise..."; "Because it is my friend" and "The student might harm you or say that may be you don't want him/her to pass". These responses connect with Stage 3: Good Boy-Nice Girl Orientation of Kohlberg's (1958) theory of Moral Development in which interpersonal relationships carries the day despite wrong doing.

Question 5 (a) stated: *Is cheating in tests/exams justifiable?*

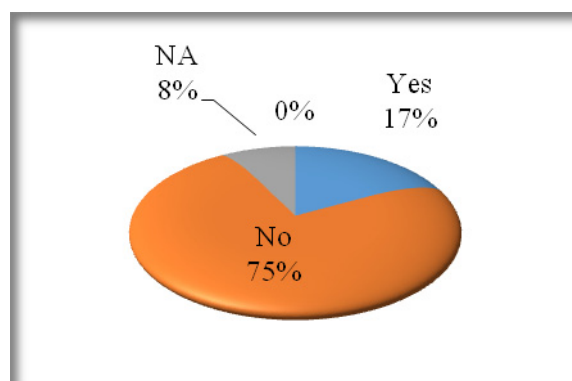


Figure 7. Cheating in Tests/Exams Is Justifiable

While 47 (17%) respondents accepted, 204 (75%) denied that cheating in examinations is justifiable. Twenty one (8%) did not respond to this question.

Question 5 (b) stated: *If yes, please explain why.*

Table 13. Reasons Why Cheating in Tests/Examinations Is Justifiable

Responses	<i>f</i>	%
Lack of preparedness for examinations	22	46.8
So that students can have good grades and become successful	9	19.1
Under some special circumstances	8	17
Pressure from parents and peers	7	15
Some KNEC officials have been leaking the examination for profit	1	2.1
Total	47	100

Table 13 shows reasons why cheating in tests/examinations is justifiable with those with the highest frequencies being: Lack of preparedness for examination (46.8%); So that students can have good grades and become successful (19.1%); under some special circumstances (17%); and Pressure from parents and peers (15%).

Lack of preparedness for examinations. Some respondents said: “You may have an idea of what to write but you don’t know how to phrase...looking on your friend’s paper you get the answer”; “Content given in class may not be sufficient”; “The instructor may somehow not deliver to the students as required” and “When the exams are so difficult”. This finding implies that examination cheating is justifiable when students are ill-prepared.

So that students can have good grades and become successful. A respondent said, “Some have cheated and become successful”. This response implies that the end justifies the means.

Under some special circumstances. Some respondents said: “You may be in deep issues like repeating that test which will be harder... I better cheat”; “One might have spent time studying but the

test doesn't favor him/her"; "Sometimes it may come in handy at a very desperate time" and "May be under some circumstances". This finding implies that cheating is justifiable in unique circumstances.

Pressure from parents and peers. Some respondents said: "If it is a result of peer influence"; "pressure from the parents"; "pressure from parents and peers" and "Students can cheat so as to please the parents out of pressure from them". Students cheat due to the overwhelming parental and peer pressure.

Question 5 (c) stated: *If No, please explain why not.*

Table 14. Reasons Why Examination Cheating Is not Justifiable

Responses	<i>f</i>	100
Rules and regulations should not be compromised	58	29
You should have adequately prepared before exams so that you do not cheat	44	22
It is dishonesty/a vice	28	12
It defeats the purpose of assessing levels of capability/understanding	22	11
It will affect/ruin the competence of professionals in the society	15	7.5
It is unfair to those who are working hard	12	6
It promotes laziness	8	4
After cheating there will be nothing one would have gained	6	3
It lowers the value/quality of education in the country	6	3
One should face the consequences	5	2.5
Total	204	100

Table 14 presents reasons why examination cheating is not justifiable. Those with the highest frequencies are: Rules and regulations should not be compromised (29%); You should have adequately prepared before exams so that you do not cheat (22%); It is dishonesty/a vice (12%); It defeats the purpose of assessing levels of capability/understanding (11%) and It will affect/ruin the competence of professionals in the society (7.5%).

Rules and regulations should not be compromised. Some respondents said: "It is the rules and regulations...rules should not be compromised"; "Because it is against examination rules"; "Everybody knows that cheating is prohibited in exams so there is no justification" and "No matter how hard the exam is, it is not right to cheat". These responses imply that students are aware of rules and regulations safeguarding examination practices.

You should have adequately prepared before exams so that you do not cheat. Some respondents said: "You should have already prepared yourself before exams so that you are unable to cheat" and "The examination is a fair test and those who work hard should receive the best result". This finding implies that there is no need to cheat with good preparations for examinations.

It is dishonesty/a vice. Some respondents said: “It is dishonesty”; “It is not an honest exercise to practice”; “It is not a good way of passing because it encourages dishonesty”; “It is against the Christian Ethics” and “Shows you are not trustworthy”. These responses connect with Level 2: Conventional Morality of Kohlberg’s (1958) theory of Moral development which includes the society in judging the morality of an action. Religion places negative judgement on examination cheating.

It defeats the purpose of assessing levels of capability/understanding. Some respondents said: “Exams are what determine who we are according to whatever we have been taught”; “So that one knows his/her scale of understanding”; “It defeats the purpose of assessing levels of understanding” and “Then there is no need of exams, one may not be able to gauge him/herself where they stand academically”. This finding implies that cheating curtails the purpose of examinations.

It will affect/ruin the competence of professionals in the society. Some respondents said: “It will undermine the society, those in Engineering and nursing courses will not offer quality services”; “Others get a higher grade that they have not worked for...leads to getting unqualified workers”; “It leads to unqualified personnel in work form” and “It causes incompetence in various fields...” This finding implies that examination cheating undermines competence and professionalism.

Question 6 (a) stated: *Is cheating in tests/exams necessary?*

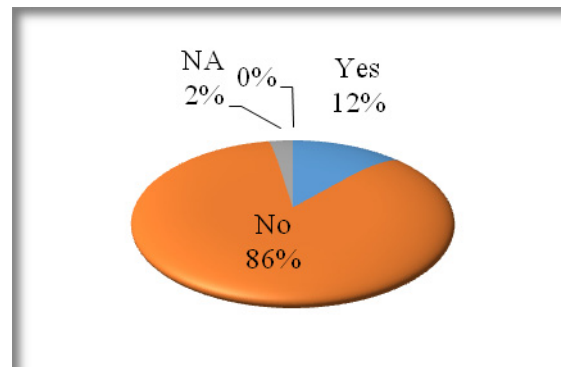


Figure 8. Examination Cheating Is Not Necessary

Figure 8 shows that 32 (12%) respondents accepted, while 233 (86%) rejected examination cheating as necessary. Two respondents did not answer this question.

Question 6 (b) stated: *If yes, please explain why.*

Table 15. Reasons Why Examination Cheating Is Necessary

Responses	<i>f</i>	%
For the sake of passing exams and securing a university admission	19	59.4
When one has not prepared for the examinations adequately	12	37.5
If all students cheat and by luck they have correct answers you will lose your position to students who did not deserve	1	3.1
Total	32	100

Table 15 shows reasons why examination cheating is necessary. Those with the highest frequencies are: For the sake of passing exams and securing a university admission (59.4%) and when one has not prepared adequately for the examinations (37.5%).

For the sake of passing exams and securing a university admission. Some respondents said: “For the sake of passing the exams”; “For getting good grades so as to get bursaries to university” and “Sometimes one is forced to cheat to move to the next level”. This finding implies that examination cheating is necessary for promotion to the next level.

When one has not prepared adequately for the examinations. Some respondents said: “When one does not have an idea on the subject”; “Sometimes when you forget some answers but you really need to pass the test”; “It is necessary only if one doesn’t know what to answer and must pass”; and “When you have little content”. This finding implies that unpreparedness necessitates examination cheating.

Question 6 (c) stated: *If no, please explain why not.*

Table 16. Reasons Why Examination Cheating Is Not Necessary

Responses	<i>f</i>	%
If one has prepared adequately for the examination then it is not necessary to cheat	68	29.1
One will not be able to test his ability/knowledge and work to improve in weak areas	67	28.8
When one gets into employment, it will be clear the grades are not his/hers	27	11.6
Cheating in examinations will give you grades that are not yours	20	8.6
You could end up being punished if caught	12	5.2
Students should seek to be honest	10	4.3
Students ought to believe in themselves/be confident	10	4.3
It promotes/encourages laziness	8	3.4
It is not right	7	3
It is letting others have an unfair advantage over those who work hard	4	1.7
Total	233	100

Table 16 shows ten reasons why examination cheating is not necessary of which the most highly rated were: If one has prepared adequately for the examination then it is not necessary to cheat (29.1%); One will not be able to test his ability/knowledge and work to improve in weak areas (28.8%); When one gets into employment, it will be clear the grades are not his/hers (11.6%); Cheating in examinations will give you grades that are not yours (8.6%); and You could end up punished if caught (5.2%).

If one has prepared adequately for the examination then it is not necessary to cheat. Some respondents said: “If a student prepares well he/she won’t have to cheat”; “Adequate preparation would create confidence and cheating wouldn’t be necessary” and “Once the student is well prepared the exam will not intimidate him/her”. This finding implies that cheating is not a necessity when there is preparedness for examinations.

One will not be able to test his ability/knowledge and work to improve in weak areas. Some respondents said: “It is a way to measure yourself: if one is not able he/she should improve”; “Tests and exams are supposed to be done to improve ourselves academically” and “One will not be able to test his ability in his area of study”. This finding implies that cheating beats the core purpose of examinations.

When one gets into employment, it will be clear the grades are not his/hers. Some respondents said: “When one gets into career objectives it will be clear the grades are not his/hers”; “This will bring about poor performance even when employed”; “It can make one end up in trouble in professionalism” and “It leads to fake professionals”. This finding implies that examination cheating results in incompetence.

Cheating in examinations will give you grades that are not yours. Some respondents said: “When you cheat you will be cheating yourself to be clever and intelligent”; “Cheating fakes someone’s result” and “Results are not the reality”. It implies that cheating yields fake results.

You could end up punished if caught. Some respondents said: “It may lead to suspension”; “You might be caught and penalized for it”; “You could end up disqualified when caught” and “It can make you expelled when caught”. Examination cheating has severe consequences.

Question 7 (a) stated: *Is examination cheating worth the risk?*

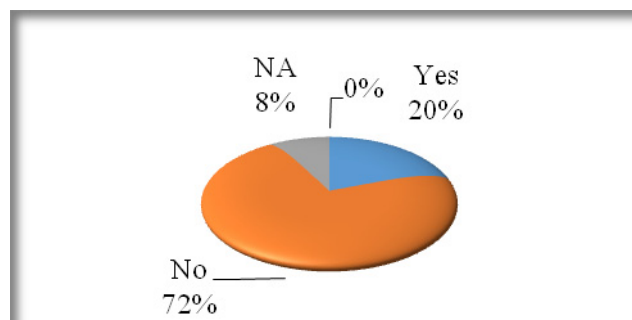


Figure 9. Examination Cheating Is Worth the Risk

Figure 9 shows 53 (20%) respondents affirming cheating in examinations as worth the risk, while 197(72%) rejecting the act as worthy of the risk. Twenty two (8%) respondents did not answer this question.

Question 7 (b) stated: *If Yes, please explain why.*

Table 17. Reasons Why Examination Cheating Is Worth the Risk

Responses	<i>f</i>	%
Better grades lead to greatness/determine one's future	32	60.4
Most students are not prepared for exams but they do not want to fail	21	39.6
Total	53	100

Table 17 shows two reasons why examination cheating is worth the risk as given by 53 respondents as follows: Better grades lead to greatness/determine one's future (60.4%) and most students are not prepared for exams but they do not want to fail (39.6%).

Better grades lead to greatness/determine one's future. Some respondents said: "Some grades determine the future"; "That's what education system wants us to believe that passing exams and having good grades is everything"; "Exams determine your future especially KCSE, you have to pass" and "The exam will be determining your whole life". These responses imply that good grades lead to a successful future.

Most students are not prepared for exams but they do not want to fail. Some respondents said: "You may not have been reading so the only way to pass is by cheating"; "How will I explain back home to my sponsors if I don't make it" and "Most students are not prepared for exams and they do not want to fail". These responses imply that cheating provides a way out for unprepared students.

Question 7 (c) stated: *If No, please explain why not.*

Table 18. Reasons Why Examination Cheating Is Not Worth the Risk

Responses	<i>f</i>	%
If you are caught the consequences are harsh	150	76.1
It will cause problems while offering poor quality services to the community	17	8.6
You risk but in the end you gain nothing	13	6.6
It is not right	10	5.1
Students should prepare adequately for exams	7	3.6
Total	197	100

Table 18 above shows reasons why examination cheating is not worth the risk. The reasons with the highest frequencies are: If you are caught the consequences are harsh (76.1%); It will cause problems

while offering poor quality services to the community (8.6%) and You risk but in the end you gain nothing (6.6%).

If you are caught the consequences are harsh. This response is similar to those of Questions 3b, 3i, 4c and 6c where respondents cited harsh consequences as a major reason for not cheating; cheating students feel guilty when caught and punishment follows; students would not report a cheating student because it leads to harsh repercussions, and cheating is not acceptable because you could end up punished if caught respectively. This finding implies that punishment is a major deterrent.

It will cause problems while offering poor quality services to the community. Respondents said: “It may seem enjoyable to cheat, but it will cause problems while offering poor quality services to those who are in need”; “If students cheat and get employed in a special field he/she will not work efficiently...have no required knowledge” and “You won’t be competent enough”. This finding implies that examination cheating leads to incompetence.

You risk but in the end you gain nothing. Some respondents said: “It can lead to higher chances of failing more so when the targeted exam was wayward”; “You can fail or have bad grades”; “You may end up scoring poorly as well as ruining your future experience” and “A person may end up losing job when identified”. These responses imply that examination cheating does not guarantee success.

Question 8 (a) As long as I am not caught, it is alright to cheat.

Figure 10 shows 43 (16%) respondents stating that it is alright to cheat as long as I am not caught, while 211 (77%) stating that it is not alright. Eighteen (7%) respondents abstained from answering this question.

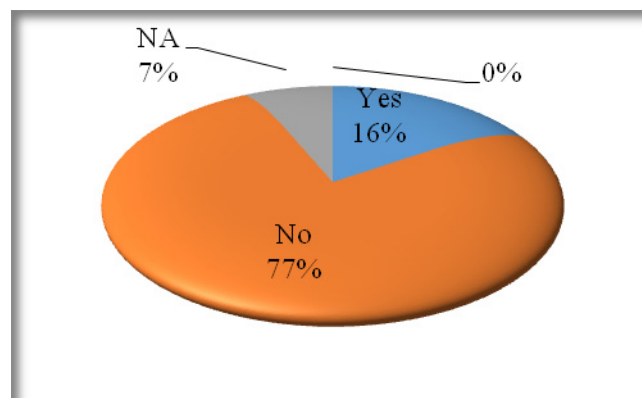


Figure 10. Alright to Cheat as Long as I Am Not Caught

Question 8 (b) stated: If Yes, please explain why.

Table 19. Reasons Why It Is Alright to Cheat As Long As I Am Not Caught

Responses	<i>f</i>	%
What matters is that I pass in the exam	13	30.2
Cheating may help me improve my grades	12	27.9
Cheating is profitable when I am unprepared	8	18.6
Because I was not caught, I was lucky	6	14
To make work easier	4	9.3
Total	43	100

Table 19 shows reasons why it is alright to cheat as long as one is not caught. Reasons with the highest frequencies were: What matters is that I pass in the exam (30.2%); Cheating may help me improve my grades (27.9%); and Cheating is profitable when I am unprepared (18.6%).

What matters is that I pass in the exam. Some respondents said: “Just to be sure to succeed”; “What matters is that I pass in the exam”; “Cos I will always pass with good grades. Remember that cheating is propelled by fear of failure and if you fail, you will appear as a person who is good for nothing”. This finding implies that the end justifies the means.

Cheating may help me improve my grades. Some respondents said: “It will lead to increase in grade”; “Because it may help me improve my grades”; “I would have gotten a high grade for free”; “Why not? You should get better grades”; “It boosts grades” and “You only need smart grades to have opportunity to access many institutions or job opportunities...” This finding implies that an excessive emphasis on grades is a motivator to cheat.

Cheating is profitable when I am unprepared. Some respondents said: “It is OK if you ... did not get enough time to study for that examination”; “It is profitable where I am not prepared well”; and “A drowning man clutches at a straw... if it is the only option”. This finding implies that cheating is alright when unprepared for examinations.

Question 8 (c) stated: *If No, please explain why not.*

Table 20 shows reasons why it is not alright to cheat in examinations. Those with the highest frequencies are: It is against such moral values as integrity (33.2%); Exams are meant to evaluate you honestly (17.1%); I will always be guilty (11.8%); and I would be deceiving myself with fake grades (11%).

Table 20. Reasons Why It Is Not Alright to Cheat in Examinations

Responses	<i>f</i>	%
It is against such moral values as integrity	70	33.2
Exams are meant to evaluate you honestly	36	17.1
I will always be guilty	25	11.8
I would be deceiving myself with fake grades	23	11
You may get good grades but will not perform well in higher education/ employment	18	8.5
You may be caught and suspended/jailed/results cancelled	18	8.5
The act develops into a habit/poor practice that cannot be controlled	14	6.6
I should not cheat if I prepared adequately for the examinations	7	3.3
Total	211	100

It is against such moral values as integrity. Some respondents said: “Moral values teach about honesty”; “It is against Christian values like honesty, integrity...”; “Honesty and faithfulness should be employed”. This finding implies that cheating is incompatible with integrity.

Exams are meant to evaluate you honestly. Some respondents said: “Because cheating...does not allow you to test yourself on what you understood”; “...exams usually test our understanding...” and “We should be honest in examinations so that we can examine ourselves if we can remember what we have been taught”. This finding implies that cheating beats the purpose of examinations.

I will always be guilty. Two respondents said: “Guilt will always haunt you and self judgement that you know that you are not up to a task” and “You will remain guilty for the rest of time”. This finding implies that perennial guilt feelings are a deterrent to examination cheating.

I would be deceiving myself with fake grades. Some respondents said: “It is not right because I’d be lying to myself with fake grades” and “Because I will be cheating myself and not testing my potential”. This finding implies that cheating in examinations is self-deceit.

12. Discussion

Lack of preparedness for examinations is a leading situation in which cheating is considered acceptable, justifiable, necessary, alright, and worth the risk. Either the student did not take sufficient time to study for mastery of content, or the teacher did not provide the required content and/or did not fully explain the content to the learner. Some students may delay at home for a long period of time to search for school fees. Additionally, there are cases where students do not have access to the required teaching-learning resources and educational facilities for adequate preparation. Such resources and facilities include textbooks, well-equipped libraries and laboratories. Previous studies reveal that poor preparations lead to cheating in examinations among secondary school students (Nyamwange, Ondima, & Onderi, 2013; Folson & Awuah, 2014; Adow, Alio, & Thinguri, 2015).

Students cheat so as to get good grades. Nyamwange, Ondima and Onderi (2013) found out that secondary school students experience excessive pressure to produce good grades. Ali's (2016) survey also revealed that pressure from family to do well motivate some students to cheat in examinations. Owenga, Aloka, and Raburu (2018) also found out that teachers facilitated students in examination cheating practices in secondary schools in Kenya. It is commonly believed that A's lead to successful careers in India, hence, the strong urge to cheat in examinations (BBC News, 2018, April 17).

Exam leakage may occur in the process of preparations for practical in the Sciences. VOA News (2017, Nov. 11) reported Anderman's study in two large universities in the USA, which revealed that to students, it is acceptable to cheat in courses they disliked, which were often Mathematics and Sciences. Anderman (2018, February 15) also observes that cheating increased especially when students moved into classrooms where Mathematics teachers did not emphasize mastery but grades and test scores, and those highly impulsive students, who are particularly vulnerable to cheat, are less likely to do so when their teachers emphasize mastery of content.

In Kenya's 8-4-4 educational system summative evaluation carries the day. When students do not meet the higher/tertiary education cut-off points, they may not move to the next educational level or be absorbed in a career of their choice. The urge to cheat is high as they want to pass and move on. Folson and Awuah (2014) reveal that some West African Examination Council officers collude with school administrators and police officers who accompany them to the examination centers to facilitate cheating for profit.

Students carry unauthorized materials and write short notes on their body parts into the examination rooms. A similar study by Maheka (2015) found out that students carried already answered scripts in to the examination room in Zambia. This finding connects with Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behavior which states that expectations such as motivation and behavioral reactions are not always spontaneous but are planned. In this case pressure to pass is the motivator and students do what it takes in planning to cheat in examinations.

Examination cheating beats the core purpose of the exams, which is to assess students' capabilities, knowledge and understanding. Cheating produces incompetent graduates and yet one of the key indicators of a good system of education is the quality of people needed in terms of their competencies (Ndalichako, 2009). Additionally, Agiresaasi (2018, May 4) postulates that examination cheating deters professionalism and service delivery.

Students cannot report cheats for fear that they would be punished. Additionally, some students do not cheat for fear of punishment. Punishment is identified as a key measure of curbing examination cheating (Nyamwange, Ondima, & Onderi, 2013; Adow, Alio, & Thinguri, 2015). Repercussions include cancellation and withholding of exam results and suspension/expulsion of students from school. Some schools in Kenya make offending students walk around in reflector jackets with the label "I am an exam cheat" for a period of time, which deters prospective cheats.

13. Conclusions

- 1) Lack of adequate preparedness for examinations and an over emphasis on good grades lead to cheating.
- 2) Students carry unauthorized materials and write short notes on their body parts into examination rooms.
- 3) There is laxity in invigilation/supervision of examinations.
- 4) Punishment is a critical deterrent to cheating in examinations.

14. Recommendations

- 1) Schools should ensure that students are adequately prepared for examinations.
- 2) Teachers should emphasize mastery of content as opposed to grades and test scores.
- 3) Invigilators/Supervisors should tighten their act by conducting thorough search on every student before entry into the examination room. They should also be alert in the examination rooms throughout the exam period as students must not be left unattended.
- 4) Schools should provide continuous guidance and dialogue with students about acceptable examination practices and create awareness on the dangers of cheating.
- 5) Ministry of Education should subject examination offenders to more severe punishments.

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