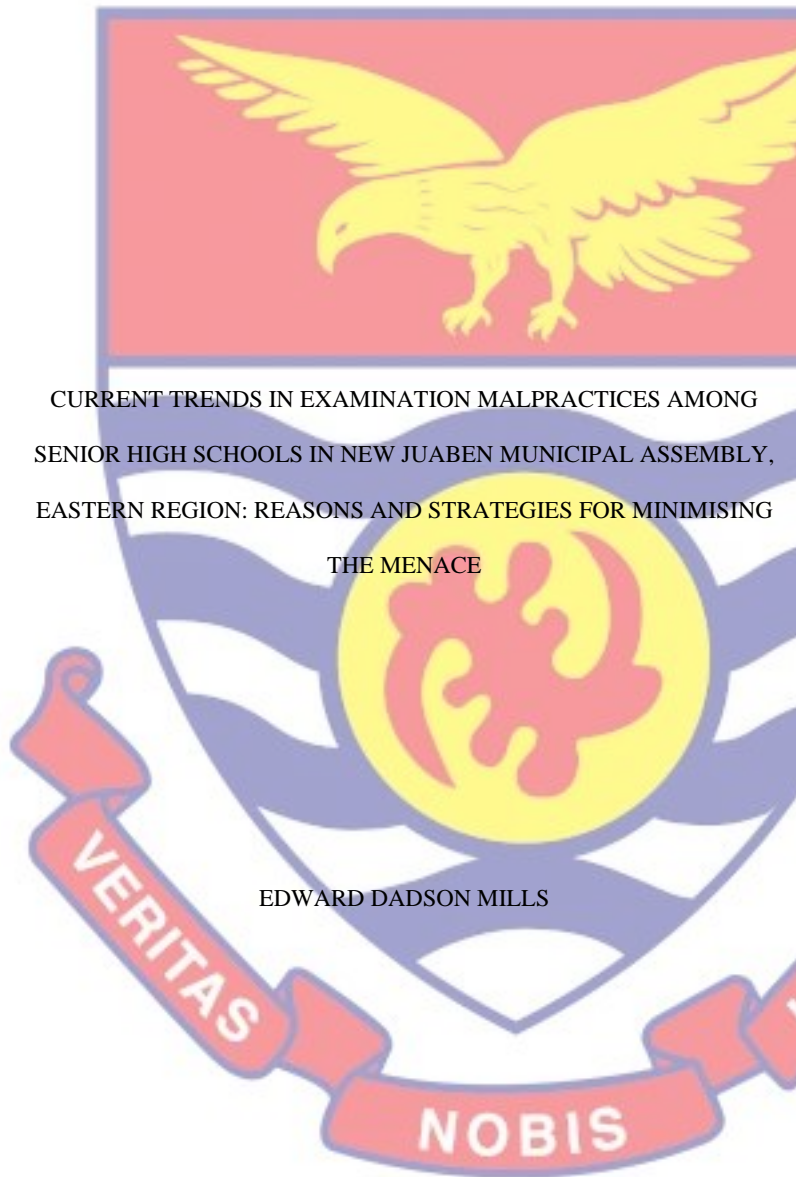


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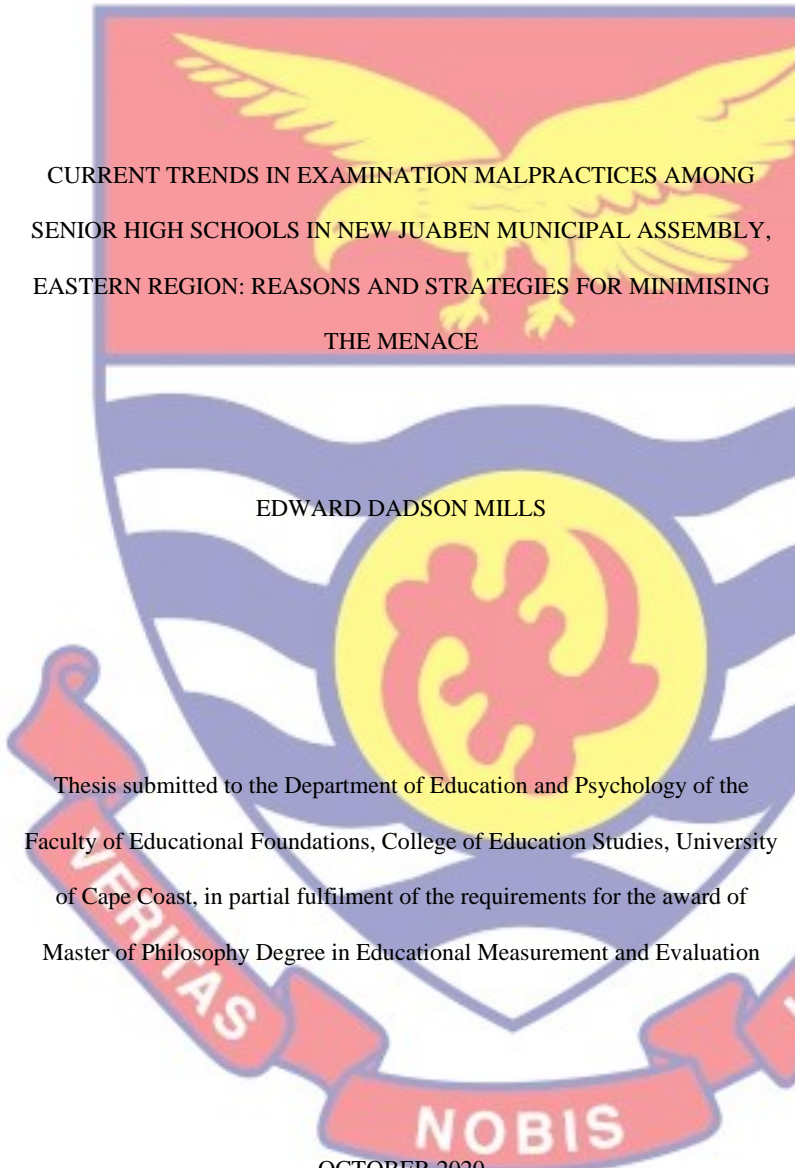


CURRENT TRENDS IN EXAMINATION MALPRACTICES AMONG  
SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN NEW JUABEN MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY,  
EASTERN REGION: REASONS AND STRATEGIES FOR MINIMISING  
THE MENACE

EDWARD DADSON MILLS

2020

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST



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THE MENACE

EDWARD DADSON MILLS

Thesis submitted to the Department of Education and Psychology of the  
Faculty of Educational Foundations, College of Education Studies, University  
of Cape Coast, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of  
Master of Philosophy Degree in Educational Measurement and Evaluation

OCTOBER 2020

DECLARATION

**Candidate's Declaration**

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature ..... Date.....

Name.....

**Supervisor's Declaration**

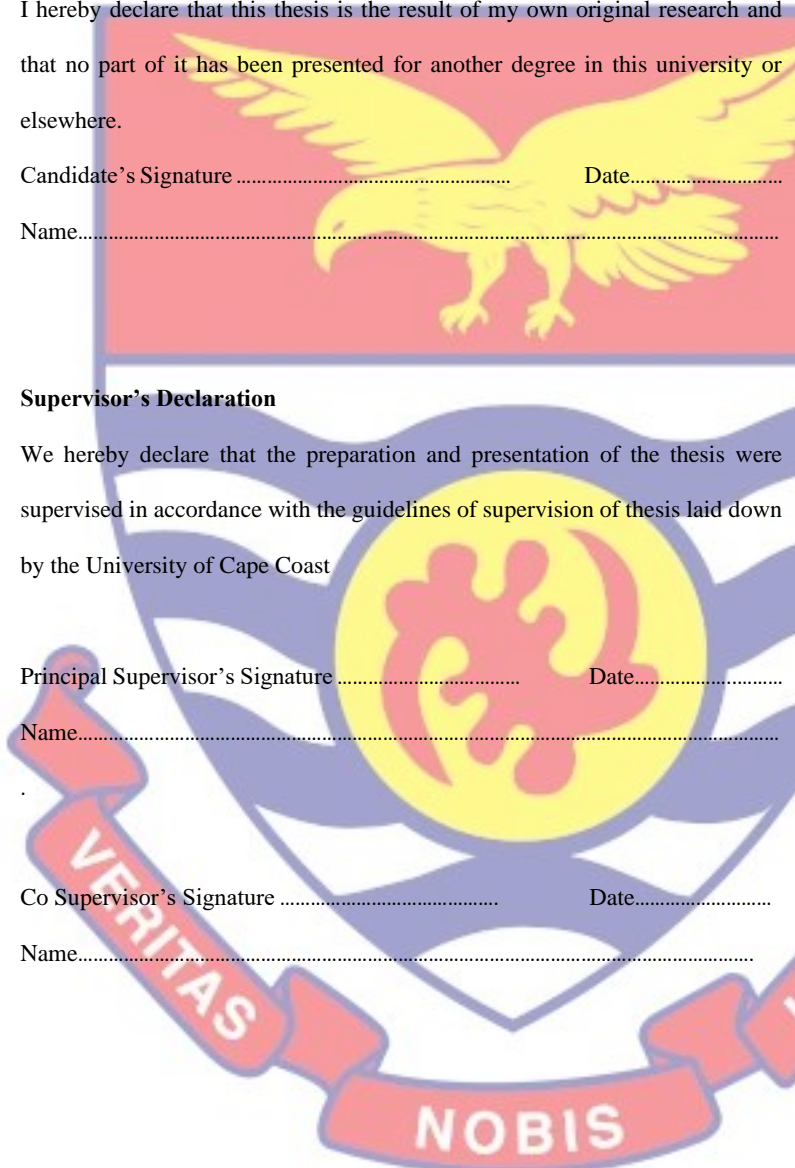
We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines of supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast

Principal Supervisor's Signature ..... Date.....

Name.....

Co Supervisor's Signature ..... Date.....

Name.....



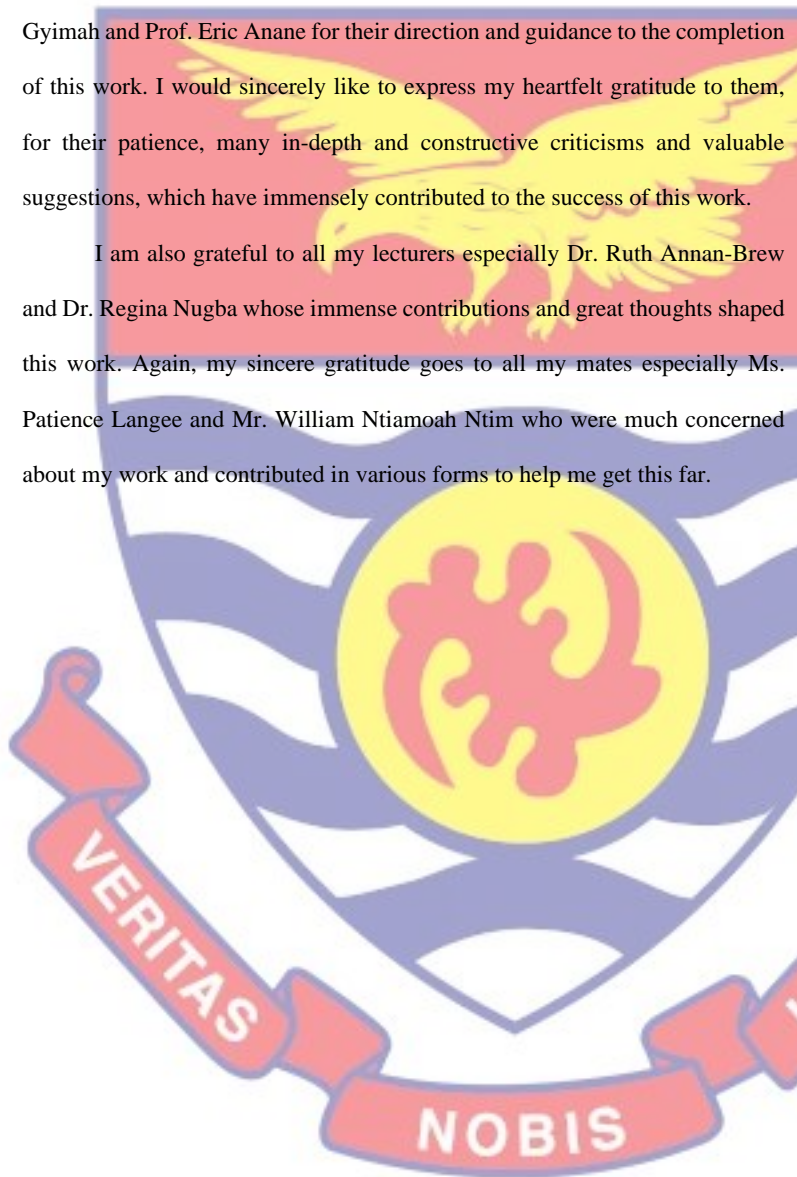
#### ABSTRACT

The study investigated the current trends of examination malpractices among senior high schools in New Juaben Municipal Assembly in the Eastern Region of Ghana, the persons involved, and the reasons that account for their involvement and ascertain effective strategies for curbing the menace. A descriptive survey design was used. The population of the study consisted of all senior high school teachers and students in New Juaben Municipal. Simple random sampling was used to select teachers and students for the study. A structured questionnaire was employed for data collection. The overall reliability statistic for the students' questionnaire. The teachers' questionnaire yielded a reliability coefficient. Data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed that (i) obtaining questions through social media before examination is the most practiced forms of examination malpractices. Further, the results show that students, invigilators and teachers are considered as the individuals that are mostly involved in examination malpractices. Besides, (i) poor students' attitudes towards learning, (ii) inadequate school facilities and (iii) poor teaching are the three topmost reasons that drive many persons to indulge in examination malpractice. The findings further revealed that effective teaching is the best strategy for combating examination malpractices. Also, provision of adequate facilities for teaching and learning, instant punishment to anyone who engages in examination malpractices, encouraging series of tests before final exams and rewarding honesty and excellence are the next best strategies for combating examination malpractices. Further analyses showed that gender and school type have no influence on students' choices about the best strategies for curbing examination malpractices.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am very much grateful to my supervisors Dr. Kenneth Asamoah-Gyimah and Prof. Eric Anane for their direction and guidance to the completion of this work. I would sincerely like to express my heartfelt gratitude to them, for their patience, many in-depth and constructive criticisms and valuable suggestions, which have immensely contributed to the success of this work.

I am also grateful to all my lecturers especially Dr. Ruth Annan-Brew and Dr. Regina Nugba whose immense contributions and great thoughts shaped this work. Again, my sincere gratitude goes to all my mates especially Ms. Patience Langee and Mr. William Ntiamoah Ntim who were much concerned about my work and contributed in various forms to help me get this far.



### DEDICATION

To my lovely daughter, my parents, and my sister for their love and support.



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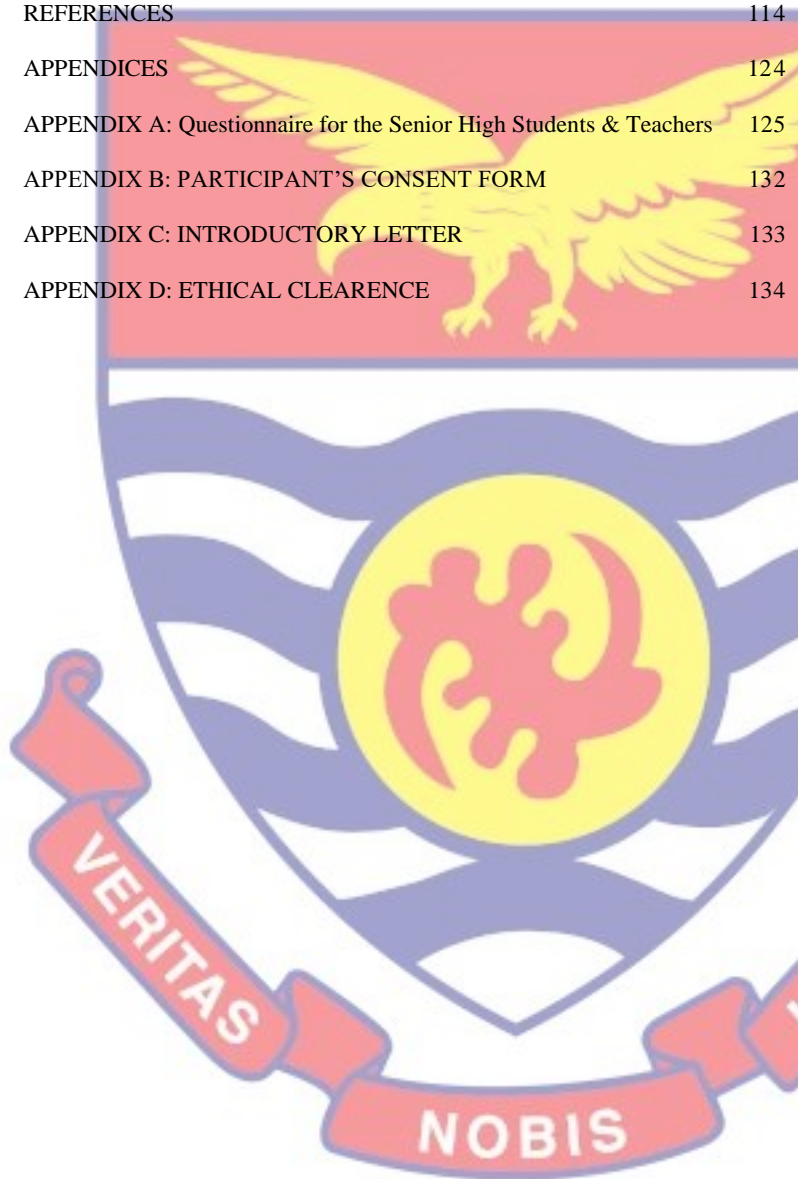
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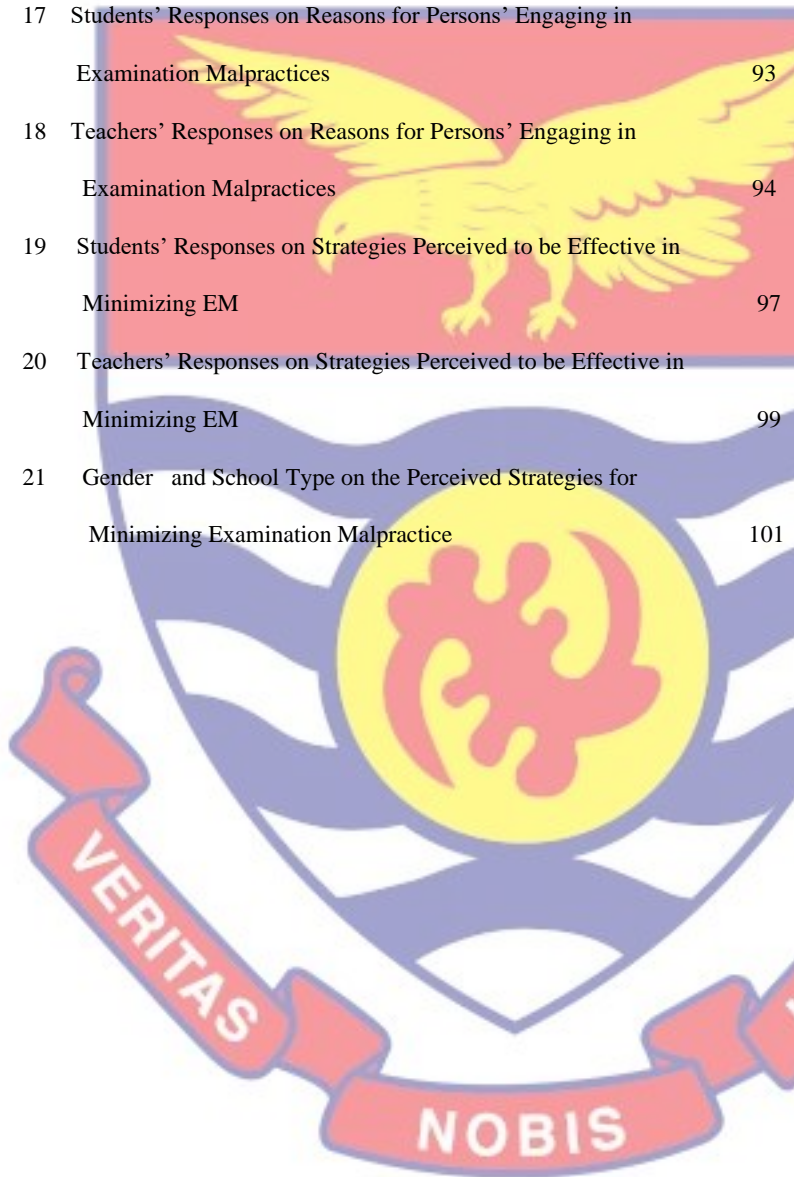
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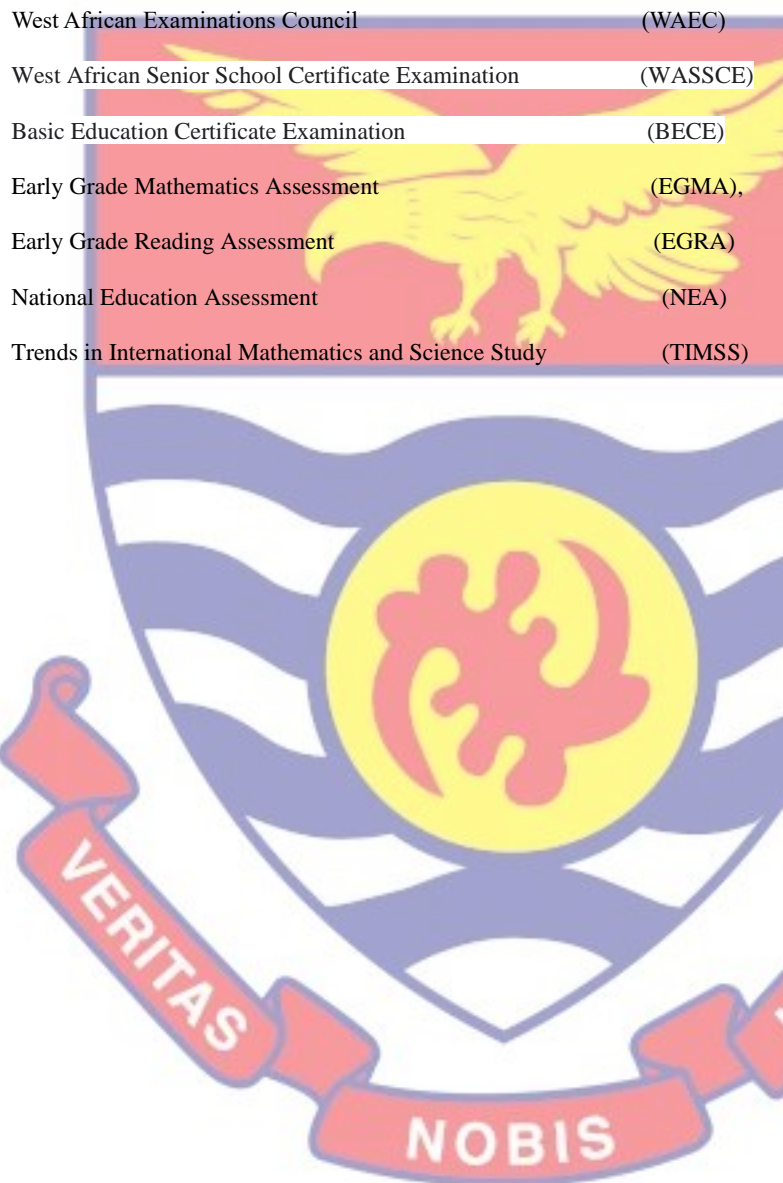
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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

West African Examinations Council	(WAEC)
West African Senior School Certificate Examination	(WASSCE)
Basic Education Certificate Examination	(BECE)
Early Grade Mathematics Assessment	(EGMA),
Early Grade Reading Assessment	(EGRA)
National Education Assessment	(NEA)
Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study	(TIMSS)



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Over the past decades there has been a public outcry about the alarming rate of examination malpractices in Ghana and especially in Eastern Region. Parents and other educational stakeholders, notable West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and religious leaders, have raised concerns about the phenomenon. Cases of malpractices keep rising every single year. Strategies adopted over the years seem to be less effective in minimizing the menace. The focus of the study, therefore, is to identify the forms of examination malpractices among senior high schools in New Juaben Municipal in the Eastern Region, individuals who are involved in the acts of examination malpractices, the reasons that account for some individuals' to indulge in malpractices, and strategies to curb the menace. This study is paramount because it is a global issue. Moreover, there hasn't been a comprehensive research on examination malpractices in Ghana and most of all in the Eastern Region. Hence, there is the need to investigate into the problem to gather enough information that will equip individuals concerned with education and examination in the municipal to understand the phenomenon better and understand their role in combating the menace.

#### Background to the Study

Education is growing in every part of the globe today. The role of education in transforming societies and improving the general wellbeing of individuals cannot be overemphasized. As a result, most countries across the world put premium and huge budgets on education. In Ghana, successive governments have attempted to improve the standard of living of their populist

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through education. As such, numerous intervention projects and resources are channeled towards improving the standards of education year in and year out, and most importantly, increasing access. Education is being appreciated than ever before. Today, education is geared towards producing individuals that are long-life learners. It aims at preparing individuals to become well-rounded and engaged citizens in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century World.

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Education is an essential process, through which individuals are groomed to the realization of their abilities. Through the process of education, learners are given the opportunity to understand public life and trained to acquire the needed skills, attitudes and knowledge that is useful in the world of work (Akaranga & Ongong, 2013). In Ghana, it is an honour for every family or home to see its kinsmen educated. It is not uncommon to see families that place premium on high quality of life without prioritizing the education of their children.

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It is nearly impossible for any country to build a sustainable economic development without conscious and well-planned investment in human resource. Education enriches the quality of an individual's life and leads to broader social benefits to individuals and society. In Ghana, education is considered as the basic right that all citizens have to receive in order to acquire a specific type of training for life (Anamuah-Mensah & Mereku, 2005; Anamuah-Mensah, Mereku & Gharthey-Ampiah, 2008). Undeniably, education provides the opportunity for individuals to get access to good jobs and sustainable living. It places individuals in better positions of realizing their entrepreneurial skills and hence offers them a good standard of living.

The vital role played by education in an individual's life, therefore, suggests that the various structures and systems put in place to ensure effective management of an educational system is paramount. One of the major structures of every educational system is examination. Examination systems have been an integral component of every educational system across the world for centuries (Chinyani, Kadodo, Madungwe & Mandiudza, 2013).

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According to Chinyani *et al.* (2013), examinations play a critical role, especially in the process of teaching and learning although it has its own challenges. Chinyani *et al.* (2013) write that the history of examinations dates as far back as the ancient Chinese during the rule of Great Shun, the emperor. The emperor, Chinyani *et al.* write, examined his officials and promoted them or terminated their appointment based on their performances. Examinations have since then been used all over the world to determine students' performance.

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Even though examinations have continued to take biting criticisms, especially in modern times, yet no reliable substitute form of assessment has been offered (Chinyani *et al.*, 2013). The use of examinations still holds a critical role today. It still stands as the most standard way of assessing learners' achievements as well as ensuring teacher accountability. Major decisions like selection, promotion, certification, to mention but few, are based on examination results. To this end, the numerous decisions based on examinations, the students' life becomes heavily dependent on passing examinations at all cost.

Chinyani *et al.* (2013) opined that, in most African countries, one's ability to passing a test or examination serves as a gateway to many prospects

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in the individual's life. In Ghana, it is not uncommon to hear students and parents alike trivializing the purpose of education to passing an examination. One's ability to memorize discrete bits of information and memorize facts to pass examinations is recognized as a sign of intelligence rather than using knowledge to solve problems in everyday life. In Ghana, it is not surprising to see a Basic Design and Technology students not progressing from Junior High School to Senior High School because even though he or she can practically craft with his/her hands, his/her inability to use language to produce the steps involved in making these very crafts condemns him/her being a failure since he/she could not pass examination.

As a result of this rather unfair opinion of the functions of examinations, according to Chinyani et al (2013), students are burdened to pass examinations at all cost. As a result, they employ all means necessary, including indulging in acts that are inappropriate.

To reiterate, it is imperative to recognize that examination plays a far critical role in any educational setting. Examinations provide the avenue for understanding what students have learnt and how well they have learnt it. The absence of examinations would most likely cause students to stay away from their books. Examinations are essential tools for schools, colleges and all other training institutions to ascertain knowledge, skills, attitudes that students have acquired over a period of time. Examinations can serve as a tool for facilitating attitudinal change among students. Students are most likely to read their books and study what they are taught when they know they will be examined at a stipulated time. Examinations serves as a way to express our knowledge and ability, be it in a written, oral, and other assessment forms in order for the

institution to ascertain how well students are performing and their readiness to fit into the world of work.

However, when the success of a student is highly dependent on passing examinations, then students are pushed to do everything possible to pass. This usually results in students cheating and engaging in other inappropriate means, otherwise known as examination malpractice, to pass the exam at all cost. According to Adeoye (2010), any unacceptable act by an examinee that unfairly places him/her in an undue advantage contrary to the established rules and regulations of the examination are considered examination malpractice. To reiterate, Adeoye (2010) posits that examination malpractice refers to all kinds of cheating which does not permit examiners to determine the true ability of students. It includes direct and indirect actions by students that tend to give them results which do not reflect their real abilities.

Further, examination malpractices are all acts that flout those West African Examinations Council rules and regulations, therefore undermining the psychometric properties (reliability and validity) of the scores obtained by students and eventually the truthfulness of the certificates issued by the council (Adeoye, 2010). Philemon as cited in Badejo and Gandonu (2010), opines that any activity of misconduct perpetrated to conflict the set rules which puts other examinees at an unfair advantage or disadvantage can be considered as an act of examination malpractice. Thus, it is a careless and an unlawful act by students in examinations or any formal test setting.

Students engage in several forms of activities that are considered as malpractices. It includes the popular “giraffing” style, where examinees stretch their necks to copy other examinees answers, directly communicating orally

with others in the course of the examination, exchanging papers, entering exams halls with mobile phones, notes or textbooks or copying on sheets of papers popularly known as “apor”, or copying on desks, palms, laps, and in handkerchiefs. In some other instances, invigilators are contracted and paid to aid in creating an atmosphere for the examinees to communicate their answers, in other words, cheat in the examination (2018).

According to Badejo and Gandonu (2010), in some instances, a more organized system is used where students purchase questions from examination bodies through corrupt agents or bank officials or individual entrusted with the safekeeping of examination question papers. Annan (2005) writes that some go to the extent of employing the services of another person to take the examination for him/her, otherwise known as impersonation.

Over the decades, a number of researches have been conducted by numerous educational institutions across the world on the factors that influence students to indulge in examination malpractices and effects that these malpractices have on the students and the institutions as well. For example, in a study conducted by Carter (1929) in colleges in the United States of America, almost a hundred years ago, suggests that the phenomenon has been in existence probably from the beginning of examination itself and continues to persist today. They concluded that out of 443 participants used in the study, eighty-five students stated that fear of not passing as the foremost cause for engaging in examination malpractice. That is, the fear of failing and being labelled as a failure by family and friends alike was unbearable for students hence their desire to do everything possible to pass including breaking the code of ethics governing examinations. Further, the fear of repeating the course and possibly

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not being able to pursue higher academic qualifications encouraged students to cheat.

Besides, a large number of participants considered the desire for higher grades as the main reason for engaging in malpractices. Their desire for higher grades which they believe comes with certain privileges urges them to engage in malpractices. Other factors revealed by the research include laziness or unwillingness to study hard, lack of proper ethical and moral standards, and dislike for teachers.

In a related research conducted by *Steininger, Johnson, and Kirts (1968)*, they enumerate the following as some of the factors that contribute to examination malpractices. They are; the level of interest of course content, the relevance of tests, difficulty level of test, and quality of teaching. Most of these factors still exist today, hence the phenomenon rages on across the world.

The situation is not different in Ghana. According to Dzakadzie (2019), Ghana has seen an upsetting rate of increase in the incidence of examination malpractices. There is grave evidence of the continuous rise of malpractices in Ghana. Yearly reports on examination malpractices by West African Examinations Council (WAEC) indicate that the phenomenon persists and is on the rise. The major national examinations conducted by WAEC, namely; Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE), Advanced Business Certificate Examination (G/ABCE) and West Africa Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) are without malpractices (WAEC, 2018). WAEC's reports on malpractices over the past five years attest to the notion that examination malpractices continue to thrive in national examinations in Ghana.

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Table 1: Examination Malpractices in BECE, G/ABCE and WASSCE  
from 2015-2018

Examination Type		2015	2016	2017	2018
BECE	Candidates	1,141	1,834	15,868	15,998
	involved	0.31%	0.421%	3.38%	3.14%
WASSCE	May/June Candidates	12,754	14,229	13,793	22,391
	involved	4.76%	5.26%	4.77%	7.14%
WASSCE	Nov/Dec. Candidates	932	557	1,269	
	involved	0.65%	0.45%	1.09%	
G/ABCE	Candidates	9	13	-	2
	involved	0.31%	0.43%	-	0.10%

Source: WAEC-Ghana (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018).

Table 1 shows that malpractices over the past four years is on the rise, especially in WASSCE. The number of candidates involved in examination malpractices in WASSCE keeps increasing. Although WAEC has over the years worked vigorously instituting mechanisms to combat incidences of examination malpractices and render it unpleasant, these mechanisms have failed to achieve its results. In 2015, WAEC cancelled 12,289 subject result and 457 entire results. In 2017, there was a cancellation of 13,720 subject results and 67 entire results (WAEC, 2018). Yet these actions have failed to deter students from engaging in malpractices. Borrowing the words of a WAEC official, “nowadays examination malpractices among Junior High students during BECE has become a community project. Some community leaders openly connive with teachers and invigilators to aid students to cheat during exams”.

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According to *Haines, Diekhoff, LaBeff, and Clark (1986)*, most of the researches into examination malpractices have been in diverse forms. This is mainly because students who are likely to cheat are of different characteristics. *Haines et al.* note that the gender of students, their ages, academic performance, class position, the level of students' test anxiety are some of the determinants which "predispose" some students to indulge in malpractices. Moreover, most educational institutions do not pay enough attention to issues of malpractice mostly because of the complexity of the phenomenon and the lack of structures that can help curb the menace.

Gleaning from above, it is clear that critical attention must be given to this phenomenon called examination malpractice. It is imperative that a new and fresh perspective into the concept is given in order to unearth the underlining causes, its effects and most importantly efficient ways of addressing the issue.

#### **Statement of the Problem**

For many years, numerous researches on examination malpractices in Ghana have indicated that the phenomenon persists and continues to rise. *Folson and Awuah (2014)*, in research conducted on combating examination malpractices in the BECE in Ghana, report that examination malpractices in the BECE is so deep-rooted that the canker is becoming a normal practise where almost every BECE candidate is interested in gaining fore knowledge before the commencement of each paper. They report that headteachers, teachers, parents and the candidates themselves join forces to acquire question papers days or hours before writing those papers. Further, they report that, in some instances, WAEC officials, examination supervisors and invigilators openly indulge in malpractices of various forms. *Folson and Awuah* further opine that the whole

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malpractice syndrome in the BECE revolves around two major cartels which they describe as “first-sourced” and “second-sourced” cartels. First-sourced cartels claim WAEC officers as their primary source of obtaining the examination questions. The questions are then passed on to the second-sourced cartels who distribute the questions to interested parties.

Dzakadzie (2019) reports, in research conducted to assess the intervention strategies that stakeholders preferred in curbing examination malpractices in Senior High Schools in the Volta Region of Ghana, that examination in Ghanaian secondary schools has been tainted with rampant malpractices. He concluded that poor teaching by teachers and insufficient teaching and learning facilities are major catalyst to cheating during examination. In related research by Dzakadzie (2015), he indicates that majority of education stakeholders’ attitude towards examination malpractice is unfavourable. The stakeholders believed that malpractices must be seen as a crime that needs to be combated. Also, *Achio, Ameko, Kutsanedzie, Alhassan and Ganaa (2012)* state that majority of students of Accra Polytechnic have been involved in one form of examination malpractice or the other. They go on to say that most of the students confessed that examination malpractice is bad.

Several other researchers have identified the inherent causes and suggested various strategies to curb the menace, yet the practice surges on. Current trends have emerged. Examinees are adopting different strategies to overcome the structures put in place to check malpractices (WAEC, 2018). Oko and Adie (2016) opine that as long as the phenomenon remains, its consequences on both education and the society will be disastrous. Year in and year out, WAEC’s reports on examination malpractices show that the number

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of candidates involved in malpractices keeps increasing. Table 2 shows the current state of malpractices in West Africa Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) in Ghana from 2015 to 2018.

Table 2: *Examination Malpractices in WASSCE from 2015 - 2018*

	2015		2016	
	May/June	Nov/Dec	May/June	Nov/Dec
Candidates involved	12,754	932	14,229	557
	4.76%	0.65%	5.26%	0.45%
Number sat	267,741	143,116	270,318	123,017
	2017		2018	
	May/June	Nov/Dec	May/June	Nov/Dec
Candidates involved	13,793	1,269	22,391	
	4.77%	1.09%	7.14%	
Number sat	289,207	117,087	315,247	

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Source: WAEC, Ghana.

The data as shown in Table 2 generally indicates the persistence and increase in malpractices in WASSCE in Ghana over the past four years. In both the May/June and Nov/Dec., there is a continuous rise in malpractices. It further shows that in 2015, out of 267,741 candidates who sat for the examination in May/June, 12,754 candidates contributing 4.76% were involved in various forms of malpractices. The number increased in 2016 and 2017. In 2018, there were 22,391 candidates involved, contributing 7.14% of the 315,247 candidates who sat for the examination. This clearly shows that malpractices in WASSCE in Ghana are major problems and strategies adopted to combat the practice have



not been effective. According to WAEC-Ghana's report on examination malpractices in WASSCE (2018), the increase in malpractices is large as a result of the use of Information and Communication Technology through social media platforms. This, according to the report, makes it difficult for WAEC to control the spread of leaked questions to other parts of the country. The report for the past four years shows that "collusion detected in scripts and in objective test" contributed a huge portion of the malpractices recorded. This is as a result of most candidates gaining knowledge of the questions before sitting for the exam. And this is attributed to the use of social media platforms to aid in the acts of malpractices (WAEC, 2018).

Again, the use of mobile phones during examinations has increased. The number of mobile phones recorded increased from 36 in 2016 to 96 in 2018, representing over 160% increase. This goes to corroborate the assertion that the use of technology and especially social media platforms are the dominant force in current trends in examination malpractices in WASSCE in Ghana.

In 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 WASSCE, WAEC reported the cancellation of some examination papers following investigations into the malpractices. Again, WAEC published names of candidates involved in examination malpractices in the newspapers. These decisions were made with the hope of addressing the increasing incidence of examination malpractices in the country. Yet, shreds of evidences show conclusively that the situation has not changed. It can be seen that most efforts being made to check examination malpractices in the country. Therefore, this will help to understand the attitudes of different individuals from diverse background towards examination malpractice.

This situation of the continuous increase in examination malpractice in the WASSCE over the years clearly suggests that the strategies that have been adopted to combat the menace over the years have not been successful. Perhaps individuals involved in these malpractices are adopting new strategies. This raises questions about the understanding of the current trends in examination malpractices among senior high schools in Ghana and in particular Eastern Region and the strategies that can best address the issue. It is therefore imperative to turn attention to finding out the new ways that individuals are adopting. Answers to these questions are not readily available in the Ghanaian school system. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the current trends of examination malpractices and find empirically supported answers to these questions which constitute the problem that this study is designed to address.

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#### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study was to determine the current trends in examination malpractices and identify the best strategies to minimise the menace. The specific research objectives are to:

1. ascertain the various forms of examination malpractices among senior high schools in New Juaben Municipal in the Eastern Region of Ghana;
2. ascertain the key actors (persons) in examination malpractices among the senior high schools in New Juaben Municipal in the Eastern Region of Ghana;
3. find out the reasons that account for individuals' involvement in examination malpractice;

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4. examine the strategies perceived to be effective for minimising examination malpractice in senior high schools in New Juaben Municipal in the Eastern Region of Ghana.

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### Research Questions

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, these research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What are the forms of examination malpractices among senior high schools in New Juaben Municipal in the Eastern Region of Ghana?
2. Who are the key actors involved in examination malpractices among senior high schools in New Juaben Municipal in the Eastern Region of Ghana?
3. What reasons account for persons' engaging in examination malpractices?
4. What strategies are perceived to be effective in minimising examination malpractice among senior high schools in New Juaben Municipal in the Eastern Region of Ghana?

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### Hypothesis

The following hypotheses were tested.

#### Hypothesis 1

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant difference in mean ratings between male and female students on the perceived strategies that are effective for minimising examination malpractice.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant difference in mean ratings between male and female students on the perceived strategies that are effective for minimising examination malpractice.

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## Hypothesis 2

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant difference in mean ratings between public senior high school and private senior high school students on the perceived strategies that are effective for minimising examination malpractice.

H<sub>2</sub>: There is a significant difference in mean ratings between public senior high school and private senior high school students on the perceived strategies that are effective for minimising examination malpractice.

### Significance of the Study

The significance of this study cannot be underrated. The study will be of high significance in that it will help the following categories of people in the following ways:

1. The students: This study will provide the requisite knowledge to students in knowing the implications of involving oneself in the act of examination malpractice. That is, it is hoped that the findings will spell out clearly the effects of malpractices on students, thereby sensitizing them on the need to refrain from all acts of malpractices.
2. The teachers: This research work will provide rich information to the teachers on the current forms of examination malpractices that are practised by students as well as ways of curbing them. The findings from the study will help teachers understand the implications of their actions in aiding students in malpractices and therefore, identify their role in contributing to combating malpractices.
3. Education and Examination Authorities: The authorities in charge with organising and supervising examination will benefit immensely from this study as it will help keep them informed on the recent forms of examination

malpractices practiced by students, the individuals involved, its implications and the strategies that can be employed to combat the menace. Notable of these authorities will be WAEC and National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA).

4. The government: The government will be a huge beneficiary of this study. The research work will help the government to see reasons why malpractices should be reduced to the barest minimum if not eliminated to ensure that only qualified students are produced into the world of work. Findings from the research will enable the government come to the realization of ensuring that only trained and qualified teachers and examination officers with integrity are employed in schools.
5. The society/parents: This study will immensely assist parents and the society at large in knowing what the implications are when their children and wards are involved in examination malpractices. The findings from this research will inform parents and members of the community to come to the realization that the consequences of producing unqualified individuals into society are grievous and damaging to every society. The significance of this study is to unearth the depthness of malpractices in examinations in senior high schools, especially in the Eastern Region of Ghana. To that end, parents and all community members will understand their roles in contributing to curbing the menace.

#### **Delimitation**

The phenomenon of examination malpractice can be found in all regions of Ghana (WAEC, 2018). However, this study will focus on New Juaben Municipal in the Eastern Region of Ghana. This is because, according to WAEC

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(2018) Eastern Region recorded the third-highest malpractice incidence making it a good area for the study. A study of this nature can be conducted across the entire nation but due to resource constraints such as funding and personnel, I decided to select one region.

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### Limitations

As a result of the use of survey as the design for this study, respondents acted in an unnatural way. This is because, survey design possesses the problem of demand characteristics; thus, participants respond in a fashion that echo their idea of the kind of responses they perceive the researcher would want from them.

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### Definition of Terms

- Examination Malpractice refers to any careless and an unlawful act by individuals in examinations or any formal test setting.
- Key Actors refers to persons involved in various forms of examination malpractices.

### Organisation the Study

The study was organised into five chapters. Chapter one looked at the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, research hypotheses, significant of the study, limitation and delimitation. Chapter two dealt with the review of related literature. The third chapter looked at the research instrument, sample and sampling procedures, data collection methods, and the method of data analysis. The fourth chapter dealt with presentation and discussion of results whiles the fifth chapter dealt with the summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The study was about the current trends of examination malpractices among senior high schools in New Juaben Municipal in the Eastern Region of Ghana. Chapter one looked at the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, the research questions and hypotheses. Further, the significance of the study was highlighted as well as the limitation and delimitation. This chapter explores related literature to the study. The aim is to review related works of other researchers and authors. The subheadings under which the review was done are as follows;

#### Theoretical Review

1. Self-efficacy theory by Albert Bandura
2. Expectancy-value theory of achievement motivation by Wigfield and Eccles.
3. Attribution theory by Heider

#### Conceptual Review

1. The concept and purpose of examination
2. Types of examinations in Ghana
3. Examination malpractice
4. Validity
5. Test score inflation
6. High stakes examinations

### **Empirical Review**

1. Evidence of examination malpractices in Ghana.
2. Effects of examination malpractices.
3. Forms of examination malpractices among senior high schools in Ghana.
4. Strategies for curbing examination malpractices.
5. Persons involved in examination malpractices in Ghana.
6. Reasons that account for persons' engagement in examination malpractices.
7. Gender and Examination Malpractice.

### **Theoretical Review**

#### **Self-efficacy by Albert Bandura**

The study first of all employed Albert Bandura's Self-efficacy theory. The theory states that an individual's ability to effectively complete a task is one's self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994). Bandura (1994) opines that an individual will mostly likely attempt to engage in tasks that they consider accomplishable and would shun tasks that they believe they cannot successfully accomplish. However, individuals who possess strong self-efficacy are most likely to initiate and complete challenging tasks. According to Bandura, such individuals see challenging tasks as tasks that must be learnt and not threats that must be shunned. Individuals with high self-efficacy initiate challenging tasks and remain committed to accomplishing it. In the event of impediments to the successful completion of the tasks, they elevate their efforts and persevere until



the tasks are completed. Bandura (1994) reiterates that efficacious people approach intimidating circumstances with self-confidence that they can control. And that in the event of failures or setbacks, they swiftly make a recovery of their sense of efficacy. They characterize failure as the lack of putting in adequate effort to completing the tasks. They face intimidating circumstances with the guarantee that they can take hold over the situation. Possessing this attitude eliminates the tendency of depression and lessens stress as well.

On the contrary, Bandura (1994) opines that, a person would not undertake tasks they consider being threatening because they possess low self-efficacy and doubt their capabilities. They shun these tasks upon their own weakness or as a result of the prevailing challenges inhibiting them from succeeding. They quickly lose trust in their competencies and abandon these tasks in the face of challenges or failure because they consider unsatisfactory performance as weak ability and as a result would not need to fail severally for them to lose confidence in their abilities. Attitudes such as these lead to risk of depression and increases stress.

Deducing from the theory, one can infer that students who possess high self-efficacy are likely to study harder and work assiduously to complete assignments and pass their examination without resorting to engaging in examination malpractices due to fear of failure. When such students are faced with difficult topics and assignments, they do not give up. Instead they continue to work hard to complete their tasks and obtain good grades fairly. On the other hand, students who possess low self-efficacy are likely to stay away from difficult assignments. They quickly abandon their books when they are faced with challenges in their studies. They are therefore likely to engage in

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examination malpractices to complement their inefficiencies and poor learning habits. It is therefore imperative for all students to develop high self-efficacy beliefs in order make them willing to persevere even in times of difficulties in their studies thereby staying away from all forms of malpractices in examination.

### **Sources of Self-Efficacy**

In order to develop self-efficacy beliefs, Bandura propounds four sources of inspiration. They are mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion and somatic and emotional state.

### **Mastery Experience**

According to Bandura (1997), mastery experience is the most efficient means of developing one's self-efficacy. Bandura opines that mastery experiences help build strong conviction in one's personal efficacy. That is, when we do something and we are successful, it boosts our self-efficacy, this is because it is easy to trust that we can take up a new challenge because it bears resemblance to an earlier task that we succeeded. For example, a student is likely to believe that she would be successful in passing a test on addition if she has been successful in previous addition tests and had mastered the concept. However, if the student's efficacy beliefs are not confidently established before failures set in then her sense of self-efficacy will be weakened by the failures.

Bandura (1997) concludes that when one gains conviction that they have what it takes to accomplish a task successfully, they endure in the midst of difficulties or threats and immediately bounce back from obstacles or setbacks. By enduring difficult challenges, they come out even tougher from the difficulty or challenge. Offering avenues for students to achieve mastery in mathematics

is the purpose for offering practice exercises. As the students continuously solve more examples they become proficient and increase their self-efficacy.

To sum it all, one can infer that when students master concepts that they are taught through constant and adequate practice they become confident in themselves. They therefore approach their examination with the conviction that they will be successful and hence avoid all forms of examination malpractices.

### **Vicarious Experience**

Bandura (1997) postulates that vicarious experiences provided by individuals recognised as role models in the society is a means of developing and reinforcing self-efficacy. In other words, the tendency of an individual believing in him/herself in initiating and completing a task is surely influenced by seeing people who have been successful under similar circumstances. People usually look up to individuals they consider as role models possessing the qualities that inspire them. According to Bandura, the more one associates with such persons, the more it impacts on the individual's self-efficacy. Conversely, observing others fail lowers one's judgments of his/her own self-efficacy believes and so demoralises one's determinations.

To conclude, it is true to say that one is most likely to believe that if people who possess similar capabilities have failed a task then he or she is likely to fail. It is therefore imperative to motivate students by giving them the opportunity to interact with individuals who have been successful in such tasks. This will reassure them of their own ability to succeed without having to engage in any acts of malpractices in their examinations.

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### **Verbal Persuasion**

The next element influencing self-efficacy beliefs is verbal persuasion. Individuals who are persuaded verbally that they have what it takes to accomplish a task successfully, tend to muster courage to mobilize and sustain their efforts in completing the task to a successful end (Bandura, 1997). Bandura reiterates that verbal persuasion boosts one's self-efficacy and leads the individual to persevere to be successful. On the contrary, individuals who are made to believe that they would fail at a task mostly give up immediately in the event of adversities or setbacks (Bandura, 1994).

In summary, Bandura is saying that students should be encouraged by reassuring them that they have the capacity to accomplish their tasks. That is, we should verbally motivate students to uplift their confidence to study harder and succeed in their examinations without engaging in any form of malpractice.

### **Somatic and Emotional State**

Somatic and emotional experiences also serve as a means for some individuals in boosting their self-efficacy. Bandura (1997) opines that when a person considers taking up a task, his/her physical and emotional states contribute to the possibility of accomplishing the task successfully or failing. Stress, anxiousness, worry, and fright affect an individual's self-efficacy adversely. This may result in one abandoning the tasks for fear of failing (Bandura, 1997). According to Bandura (1997), people construe their anxiousness and fear as signs of weakness to non-achievement of given tasks.

In conclusion, according to the Self-Efficacy Theory, one's self-efficacy and for that matter our behaviour is affected by our mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasions and somatic and emotional states.

This theory helps us to understand that students' success in their performances is due to the level of motivation and willingness on the part of the students to engage and interact with a given task. According to Louis and Mistele as cited in Loo and Choy (2013) and Purzer (2011), numerous researches in education have established that there is positive relationship between academic performance and their self-efficacy beliefs. As Bandura (1997) hypothesized, the level to which one believes in himself can determine if the individual will commence a task, the level of energy that will be used and the extent to which he will persevere to see the task through to its successful conclusion. This means the level of a student's self-efficacy will determine how much he believes in successfully passing examination and this will influence how he approaches the examination.

If learners possess high self-efficacy, they believe they can study and pass their examination, and so they are likely to prepare well and pass their examinations. When students believe that they have prepared well for an examination, they are not likely to resort to inappropriate means to pass. Conversely, when students have low self-efficacy, they become anxious and lose confidence about passing their examination. Because of that, they resort to fraudulent ways of passing the examinations. The high incidence of examination malpractices among SHS students could be attributed to low self-efficacy. Students are constantly looking for ways and means of passing their examinations because they lack confidence in themselves and they fear they will fail.

When students master what they are taught and are encouraged to believe that they have what it takes to pass their examination, it will boost their

self-efficacy, hence they are motivated to prepare well for their examination. They are then most likely to stay away from all acts of examination malpractices.

To sum it all, students with high self-efficacy beliefs have high self-esteem in general (Bandura, 1997). Such students are keen to commence a given task, will expend the required effort, and persist in their quest to completing the task in order to achieve success. Students with high self-efficacy tend to prepare well for their examinations and they are likely to stay away from all acts of malpractices. However, students who lack self-efficacy suffer anxiety and lack self-confidence. Such students are likely to engage in all forms of malpractices in order to pass examination. It is imperative, therefore, to encourage students to believe in themselves and trust that when they take their studies seriously, they are likely to increase their self-efficacy. This will in the end propel them to write their examinations fairly without engaging in examination malpractices.

#### **Achievement Motivation by Eccles, Wigfield and their Colleagues**

This theory seeks to enlighten why individuals make certain choices of tasks, and the level of determination to complete those tasks. Wigfield (1994) posits that an individual's motivation to perform different achievement tasks emanates from the level of expectations the individual possess about being successful and the significance he/she attributes to the success.

According to Atkinson (1964), expectancies are one's beliefs that they will either succeed or fail at a task. Eccles, Adler, Futterman, Goff, Kaczala, Meece and Midgley et al (1983), expand the definition of Atkinson. They posit that expectancies for success are an individual's beliefs about how best an impending task will be performed either presently or sometime later. As

individuals, our expectations and the expectations of others from us to be successful propel us to take up difficult tasks and persevere till they are successfully accomplished. Atkinson (1964) defines value as the desirability of successfully completing a task or failing it. An individual is more likely to be associated with tasks that are considered as valuable with a wide-ranging motivational outcome, as well as better accomplishments (Shechter, Durik, Miyamoto, et al., & Harackiewicz, 2011). Expectancies and values are considered to have a positive relationship with an individual's choice of tasks, the performance he/she puts up, and the determination to complete the task (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). They contend that a person's preference of task, resolve, and performance on the task can be described in relation to the extent to which they will perform the task and how much they cherish the task.

In Ghana, the expectations of SHS students and that of the family and the entire community on these students on making it to the tertiary level of education cannot be overemphasized. With such high expectations, the students are most likely to do everything possible to pass their examinations; including engaging in malpractices. Although high expectations does not necessarily suggest making the wrong choices, Eccles and Wigfield (2002) reiterate that one's preferences of tasks are considered to be affected by task characteristics both negatively and positively. Again, the preference for a particular task is considered to have some amount of costs related with them exactly so because one choosing one task often leads to rejecting the other. Therefore, students are likely to make the wrong choices when presented with the opportunity. A choice between studying hard and preparing well for examination and engaging in malpractices to pass.

Besides, the value and possibility of achievement of numerous choices are important factors of choice (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). The value attached to attaining a WASSCE certificate motivates students to resort to unacceptable means to pass their examination. This theory rightly explains the reason for students' engagement in examination malpractices and the continuous existence of the menace.

To conclude, students' high expectations of succeeding in WASSCE and the value of the WASSCE certificate in offering them the opportunity of higher academic endeavours urge them to make choices of achievement tasks through negative values; thus the choice of examination malpractice.

#### **Attribution Theory by Heider (1958)**

Humans are intrusive naturally. We at all times question why and how things happen to us and around us. Ordinarily, questioning happenings around us helps us to seek answers to them. However, sometimes in our quest to seek answers to these questions, we make attributions. For instance, one is likely to attribute failing an examinations to many causes; "It was because I wasn't prepared". "The topics I studied were not among the questions". "I don't like that course" etc.

According to Heider (1958), so fundamental is the intuitive nature of humans seeking for reasons as to why and how things occur that it has been considered as an attribute of humans. The Attribution Theory explains this nature of humans. The theory sought to establish and elucidate the psychological and modes of communications associated with daily accounts, especially accounts of people and societal happenings (Heider,).



According to attribution theory, people are persistently searching for reasons to explain why an event turned out the way it did (Weiner, 1986). Attribution theory can be said to significantly explain why students indulge in examination malpractices. Students are likely to attribute their poor performances to various reasons thereby justifying their involvement in malpractices without considering the repercussions. 'Lack of good teaching', 'inadequate infrastructure for teaching and learning', 'high personal expectations and expectations from parents and friends', 'others were also cheating', are some of the reasons students attribute their involvement in examination malpractices.

Our everyday actions such as comments people make and every action they engage in can be explained with respect to attributional inquiry, by others and by the individual. The results of this inquiry have possible substantial effects for the way the individual reacts to their actions and that of others.

In this research, the role of attribution theory as a theoretical framework helps to explain students and teachers' beliefs about why they involve in examination malpractices. Intrapersonal attribution theory (Weiner, 1974, 1986, 2000) states that a person conceives reasons for their accomplishments and disappointments or failures, reflecting accurately or inaccurately of the reality. For instance, Akosua may trust that she is a good student but was ill prepared for the examination, due to this she attributes her reason for cheating in the examination to pass because a good student must not fail.

In conclusion, it is consistent with attribution theory for students to attribute their involvement in examination malpractices to reasons that will protect their self-esteem. The theory explains, to a large extent, why students,

teachers, headteachers, invigilators, supervisors, etc. persistently engage in malpractices without considering the damning consequences of their actions because the reasons they attribute it to make them feel their actions are justified. As long as this dogma exists, students and all persons involved in examination malpractices will continue to make attributions that give them a certain gratification and justification for their continuous involvement in malpractices.

### **Conceptual Review**

#### **The Concept and Purpose of Examination**

Examination is a formal process of collecting information about students' performances or abilities in a particular field. Oduwaiye cited in Ushie and Ishanga (2016), postulates that examination is a well-ordered assessment system where students are presented with a set of tasks (questions, performances, etc.) in order to determine how much knowledge or skill the individual has acquired. Examinations are conducted day in and day out in various parts of the society but mostly used in educational institutions. At the hospital, patients are examined by medical experts through oral questions and further laboratory examinations in order to make decisions about the best diagnosis for the patient. At a soccer academy, aspiring footballers are examined through various trials such as dribbling skills, stamina, kicking, agility and team play. However, the use of formal examinations is mostly found in schools and colleges. Students are subjected to daily, weekly, termly and yearly examinations to obtain information to make decisions about their progress, the progress of the institution and the progress of the entire educational system as well.

According to Chinyani *et al.* (2013), examinations have played a pivotal role for many years in educational systems the world over. They opine that, examinations serve numerous purposes especially in the learning process. In the absence of examinations, students are likely not to read their books and endeavour to excel in school. Examinations offer schools and colleges the opportunity to assess students' knowledge, skills and talents. It also plays a central role in making important decisions concerning selecting of students, placing of students and decisions on the efficiency of study programmes (Mogapi, 2016). Examinations can serve as a tool for facilitating attitudinal change among students and teachers (Chinyani *et al.*). Several studies have revealed that examinations either positively or negatively effect teaching and learning. Students are most likely to study and practice their skills taught when they are made aware that they will be examined at the end of the course of study. In research conducted by Mogapi to ascertain the extent to which examinations influence classroom activities, the findings revealed that examinations influence the choice of teaching methods of majority of the teachers and that most classroom engagements between teachers and learners focus on preparing learners towards examinations including skipping non-examinable topics in the curriculum. This, as a result, may lead to the possibility that learners are not taught certain important content because these contents not examined.

Besides, teachers expressed their opinion that how comprehensive a topic is taught is influenced by examinations. That is, the extent of time and energy used to treat a particular content is influenced by the nature of the examination and the depth of the content (Mogapi, 2016). And so teachers spend less time teaching and rather focus extensively on the use of past questions to

prepare students for examinations. That is to say examinations encourage teachers to teach to the test.

In summary, the critical role of examination in education cannot be overemphasised. However, when it becomes a treat to students' progress, then they are likely to indulge in unacceptable acts, thus examination malpractice.

**Types of Examinations in Ghana:** There are various forms of examinations used in Ghana. From the basic schools up to the university level, various kinds of examinations are used to assess students' performance. In all Ghanaian basic and senior high schools, end of term examinations are organized to ascertain how students are achieving the standards set for the various grade levels. Most of these end of term examinations are school-based where teachers set their own questions to examine their students and evaluate the term's academic work. In some districts and municipalities, however, a common core examination is organised for all schools in the district/municipal. In such instances, examination questions are obtained from external examination units. However, the examinations are written, marked, and graded by teachers at the various school levels. Examinations at the tertiary level are mostly semester-based where students are made to write one-shot examination at examination halls or given term papers to research on and submit at the end of the semester.

Aside these School-Based Examinations (SBE), the various grade levels do not write external examinations that evaluate students' performance and achievement termly or yearly. However, at every terminal point there is a national examination conducted for all students. At the end of grade nine (JHS 3), which is the first terminal point of basic education, all the students sit for the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). It is written at selected

centres in the districts across the country. Upon writing of BECE, students receive a Basic Education Certificate signifying satisfactory grade-level mastery of subjects including English language, Mathematics, Integrated Science, Social Studies, Information and Communication Technology, Basic Design and Technology, Ghanaian Language, Religious and Moral Education and French (optional). Students are then selected into the Senior High Schools for a three year continuous education. On completion, they write the West Africa Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE). Students who pass the WASSCE then make an entry into the tertiary (teacher/nursing training colleges, polytechnics, and universities, etc.).

Beside these two main terminal exams - BECE and WASSCE - there are other National and International examinations organised in Ghana to mainly obtain data on students performs and evaluate the standard of academic performance in the school system. The examinations include, Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA), Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA), National Education Assessment (NEA), Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) to cite but few (CRDD, 2012). TIMSS is an international examination organized for grade 8 students in Mathematics and Science among some selected countries across the world. Ghana took part in TIMSS 2003, 2007 and 2011. EGRA and EGMA are early grade reading and mathematics assessment for grade 3 pupils in Ghana.

The NEA, which is one of the most commonly used national examination, is a standardized multiple-choice achievement test designed biennially for Primary 3 and Primary 6 pupils and aligned to the national curriculum in English and Mathematics. The purpose of the assessment is to

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provide policy-level information regarding class achievement and system performance (NEA, 2011). The NEA, as a pointer of quality education at the early grade level, uses stratified random sample of learners in B3 and B6 (CRDD, 2012). The result is generalised and comparisons are made with respect to region, gender, type of school (public/private) and school location (urban/rural) classifications. The assessment is focused on measuring pupils' performance in specific subjects (English and Mathematics) and sought to find out the levels reached by pupils on the laid down benchmarks for the NEA.

On the NEA benchmarks, a score below 33% indicates that pupils are reaching below minimum competency, a score between 33% and 54% indicates that pupils are reaching minimum competency, and a score of 55% and above indicates pupils reaching proficiency level (NEA, 2011).

In summary, there are numerous examinations in Ghana and so the phenomenon of examination malpractices will always be an issue in these examination systems. It is therefore imperative that in order for these examinations to fully perform their purpose for which they were established, all forms of malpractices must be eliminated.

**Examination Malpractice:** Examination malpractice can be defined as any act perpetrated intentionally during examinations that is against the rules and regulations of examinations intended to offer candidates an unjustified advantage or disadvantage (Ushie & Ishanga, 2016). The Nigeria Examination Malpractice Act (1999) states that examination malpractice is any act of omission or commission by a candidate or any such individual in connection with the examination who in expectation of, beforehand, in the course of or at the end of any examination illegally acquire any benefit for oneself or another

in a way that flouts the regulations guiding the conduct of examinations to the extent of undermining the validity, reliability, and genuineness of the examination and eventually the honor of the certificates given out (Onyibe, Uma et al. & Ibina, 2015). Also, examination malpractice is any act considered to be in contradiction to the laid down rules governing the examination perpetrated to hand a candidate an undeserved advantage or disadvantage, (Wilayat, quoted in Akaranga & Ongong, 2013).

From the various definitions, it follows to say that examination malpractices are all unacceptable behaviour by any person involved with an examination either before, during or after the exam that offers the candidate an unfair advantage. The definitions clearly reveal that examination malpractices lead to undue advantage handed to individuals who do not deserve the grades and certificates they eventually acquire. That is, the culprits tend to gain good grades which translate to good certificates and eventually good schools/colleges/universities or work to the detriment of candidates who genuinely obtained grades that portray their true ability. Besides, the act is not only perpetrated by candidates but also all individuals who are involved with its organization and those that have interest in it. Teachers, headteachers and administrators, WAEC officials, security personnel, invigilators, parents, government officials, etc. are all involved in examination malpractice one form or the other (WAEC, 2018).

It is imperative to say that the concept has major consequences on our educational system yet it has been in existence for many decades and continues to rise. There are evidence of researches (Carter, 1929) dating as far back as the 1920s on examination malpractices. Also, according to Anzene (2014), the first

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report of examination malpractice in Nigeria date as far back as the year 1914. WAEC (2018) indicates that the rate of examination malpractice keeps rising and that the act has become so rampant that every examination period encounters the occurrence of novel and clever ways of engaging in malpractices.

In Ghana the phenomenon is not a new concept. Examination malpractices exist at all levels of education in Ghana. There are evidences of examination malpractices in BECE, WASSCE and examinations in colleges/universities in Ghana (Dzakadzie, 2019; WAEC, 2018; Folsom & Awuah, 2014).

To conclude, examination malpractice is a concept that requires critical attention to ensure that it is curbed in order to reduce its effects on the integrity of our educational system.

#### **Empirical Review**

**Evidence of Examination Malpractices in Ghana:** In Ghana, there are evidences of examination malpractices from the basic school level through to the colleges and universities. For many decades, Ghana has encountered numerous incidents of examination malpractice not only in high stakes examinations such as those organized by West African Examinations Council (WAEC) but also in school-based examinations. WAEC's annual reports on examination malpractices for the past two decades indicate that the phenomenon is indeed a major problem and is on the rise (WAEC 2018). WAEC reports of malpractices in BECE, WASSCE, WASSCE private and G/ABCE indicate that examination malpractices are on the rise. For instance, the data shows that 4.76% of the total number of candidates who sat for the 2015 WASSCE May/June were involved in one form of malpractices or the other. The number



increased in 2016 to 5.26%. The increase was even worse in 2018 which recorded 7.14%. The story is not different in BECE. WAEC data on examination malpractices in BECE clearly shows that the phenomenon is on the rise with 2015 recording 0.31% and increasing to 3.14% in 2018.

Numerous researches on examination malpractices in Ghana also attest to the fact that the phenomenon is existent and rampant in Ghana. In a study conducted by Folson and Awuah (2014) on combating examination malpractices in the BECE, they report that examination malpractices have been recorded in BECE for many years. Their findings show that the whole syndrome starts weeks before the start of the examinations itself, where in some instances WAEC officials are cited to have sold the questions to some schools especially the private schools. The whole situation gets worse as it is then catapulted by WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, and other social media outlets to the whole country. Folson and Awuah indicate that headteachers, teachers, parents and in some cases, government officials are involved in exam malpractices in BECE. The researchers describe the period of BECE as a money making period. Agents obtain the questions from dishonest WAEC officials and sell it to interested schools and individuals. Papers are sold as high as GH¢2,500 and as low as GH¢1,500 per paper.

WAEC (2018) report on examination malpractices in BECE shows that even though it is working assiduously to combat the menace, perpetrators continue to develop sophisticated ways of cheating. Worse of all is the use of modern devices like mobile phones and computers and social media platforms which makes it extremely difficult to manage the situation. They report that in some instances community members form cartels to prevent WAEC officials

and law enforcement personnel from executing their job during BECE. These cartels threaten to harm them if they refuse to soften their stands to allow their wards to cheat in the examination. According to Folson and Awuah, in 2009, over 500 candidates were sanctioned for indulging in one form of examination malpractice or the other in BECE. In 2010 the number more than doubled to 1,083. Then it further rose to 1,127 in 2011. Although it dropped to 823 in 2012, this figure is still considered high.

Again, current data by WAEC on examination malpractices in BECE corroborate the evidences of the rise of the phenomenon in the country. In 2015, 1,141 candidates were sanctioned to have been involved in all forms of examination malpractice. The number rose to 1,834 in 2016 which indicated more than 50% increase. The situation worsened as it rose to an unprecedented figure of 15,868 in 2017 and further rose to 15,998 in 2018.

In WASSCE, examination malpractices are as rampant as in BECE. Ordinarily, it is not surprising to conclude that poor students and those who are ill-prepared have the tendency to engage in examination malpractices as the only means of making up for their incompetence. In Ghana, most senior high school students indulge in one act of exam malpractice or the other. In a research conducted by Dzakadzie (2015) on stakeholders' attitude towards examination malpractices in Senior High Schools in the Volta Region, he indicated that examination in Ghanaian secondary schools has been plagued with rampant malpractices and that the act is becoming a regular practice in our school systems. His findings revealed that even though majority of the stakeholders' attitudes toward examination malpractice is unfavourable, there was a substantial minority that showed a favorable attitude towards the act. This

suggests that in as much as some individuals urged by high expectation from parents and teachers, demand for high aggregates by schools and institutions, etc. to indulge in malpractices, others have natural inclination to cheat.

In 2017, WAEC reported the cancellation of some examination papers following their investigations into cases of malpractices in WASSCE. Again in 2018, WAEC cancelled papers of candidates involved in examination malpractices and went further to take other stricter decision such as barring candidates. Besides, Ghana's Act on examination misconduct, Act 719 of 2006, outlines various punitive measures for various violations that contravenes the laydown rules of examinations. Even so, various religious leaders have openly castigated the acts and urged authorities to combat the canker called examination malpractice. Yet, the phenomenon keeps blooming and shows no sign of leaving the school system any time soon.

Examination malpractice is not a strange concept among colleges and universities in Ghana. In a study conducted by Achio *et al.*, (2012) on concerns on issues of examination malpractices in Accra Technical University, they reported that out of the 90 participants used for the study 33, representing 36.7 %, admitted ever been engaged in one form of malpractice or another. Majority of the thirty-three participants reported that they got involved in the malpractice with reasons such as to prevent failure and re-sitting the examinations. A few of them (6.0%) said they had no reason for the act, and this might be as a result of peer pressure or a mere adventure.

In conclusion, although academic dishonesty forms significant part of difficulties facing examinations globally, the damning consequences of examination malpractice cannot be overemphasized: depriving competent

people from gaining admissions and jobs, recruiting incompetent persons for various works and reducing academic certificates to a mere paper with no prove of substance in the individuals that hold them, it is imperative to critically examine the issue. With undoubtable evidences shown in Ghana through WAEC reports and numerous researches, authorities in Ghana need to find effective and robust strategies to combat this pernicious threat.

### **Examination Malpractices And its Implications**

The effects of academic dishonesty can be very grievous and damaging to the integrity of the any educational system. Any act of dishonesty especially in examination should not be condoned. The significance of examinations cannot be underrated. This inevitability of examination in the education system means that malpractices could have dangerous consequences if not curbed. Many researches have been conducted over the years to identify the effects that examination malpractices have on students' performances, the institutions and the entire nation as a whole.

Akaranga and Ongong (2013) believe that examination malpractices can lead to the tainting of the integrity of not only the individuals who engage in the act but also the institutions which register cheating candidates. Malpractices can lead to people ridiculing the certificates that students finally acquire. People will begin to doubt if the certificates issued by the institutions commensurate the competence of the graduates who hold them. Akaranga and Ongong reiterate that such graduates suffer from being recognized and accepted in the job market. Again, teachers and lecturers from such institutions lose confidence in themselves and can hardly be comfortable among fellow colleagues from other institutions. Another effect of examination malpractice is the expulsion of

students from the academic institution (Akaranga & Ongong,). Most academic institutions have instituted policies that are aimed at punishing culprits. In serious cases, perpetrators are expelled from the institution.

Another effect of examination malpractices is that it can lead to imprisonment of perpetrators. Examination malpractice is considered a criminal offence in most countries. In Nigeria for example, the national constitution through act 33 of 1999 makes it a crime to indulge in examination malpractice. This act requires that any candidate caught in examination malpractice should pay a fine of 100,000 naira or be jailed for three years (Akintunde & Selzing-Musa, 2016).

Further, a common consequence of examination malpractice is the cancellation of results. Year in year out, WAEC cancels results of students involved in examination malpractice. Data on decisions taken by WAEC following an investigation in examination malpractices in WASSCE shows that WAEC has embarked on cancellation of results almost every single examination period. For instance in 2015 12,289 subject results were cancelled. The number increased to 13,570 in 2016 and 13,720 in 2017. Such actions mean that those students would not be able to gain admission into tertiary therefore, leading to them re-sitting the exams or retiring early into the world of work.

In addition, examination malpractices offer students who engage in it an undue advantage over innocent students. It deprives innocent student's the opportunity for admission. Since admission requirement in most tertiary institutions in Ghana require only aggregate scores from WASSCE, students who cheat to gain good grades are favoured and gain admission to the detriment of the innocent students. The trickling down effects of admitting such students

into tertiary institutions is that it leads to putting unfit individuals into undeserved positions. Individuals who succeed as a result of examination malpractice do not possess the requisite knowledge and skills to complete their assigned tasks and professional obligations successfully (Oko & Adie, 2016). Oko and Adie posit that examination malpractice produces individuals with no academic standards resulting into undesirable reputation for upcoming leaders who may end up being fraudulent in their appointed offices.

Finally, research has shown that students who engage in examination malpractices are likely to engage themselves in acts such as prostitutions for females who do not have money to buy questions and or stealing for males for the same reason as their female counterparts (Oko & Adie, 2016).

In conclusion, it is evident that the effects of examination malpractices on the individual, the institutions, the world of work, and the entire nation are dire. It therefore behooves all the stakeholders of the examination systems and the entire educational sector to become advocates against examination malpractices.

#### **High Stakes Examinations And its Effects on Examination Malpractices**

Examinations, for many years, have played an indispensable role in education. Many countries the world over attach much significance to students' achievement through test performances. In Ghana, the Ministry of Education, through WAEC conducts examinations to determine the performance of students in order to make critical decisions about the students. Students, at the end of JHS 3 write the BECE in order to gain access to SHS whereas SHS 3 students write the WASSCE in order to gain access to colleges and universities. Besides, the ministry conducts other national and international examinations

aimed at monitoring the quality of education offered to learners, and also on ascertaining the effectiveness of teachers' work output in the schools. Such national examinations include NEA, EGRA, EGMA and TIMSS. Some Ghanaians also take proficiency examinations such as SAT, TOE FL, GRE, etc. All these types of examinations are classified as high stakes examinations. Such examinations and their outcomes are held in high esteem by most stakeholders in education such as students, teachers, parents, policy-makers, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other educational partners/donors and enthusiasts.

High stakes examination is the kind of examination in which the students are supposed to excel to be able to complete school, enroll into an education program, or gain access into university, gain sponsorship or scholarship, (Resnick, 2004). According to Casbarro (2004) high stakes exams mostly inflict anxiety on test-takers due to its significance to the test-takers. Kumandaú and Kutlu (2010) opine that these examinations are considered to decline the value of education, and result to ineffective ways of ascertaining the true performances of learners.

Although in the words of Yeh (2005) the concern of many experts in education is that high-stakes examination may well be flawed, hence the curriculum may be narrowed; in terms of knowledge and skill acquisition, causing teachers to "teach to the test", may not be entirely true. Yeh argues that when curriculum, standards, examinations, and professional development are well-aligned, it can safeguard the teaching and testing of learners based on key content areas and skills they are required to possess and demonstrate. Yeh reiterates that teachers will be able to ascertain and deal with learners' strengths

as well as areas that need improvements if tests are well-designed. This will then provide quality information for the purposes of accountability.

However, numerous researchers believe that high-stakes examinations tends to make teachers to narrow down the curriculum to focus on what is important in examinations to the detriment of attending to all the essential elements in the content prescribed in their curriculum (Etsey, 1997; Hess, 2002 & Johnson, 2007). The evidence is very glaring in Ghana. For instance, most JHS teachers stress on certain subjects to the detriment of others because out of the nine subjects that is examined in BECE, only six is used for the final aggregate score for the students. Again, out of the six, four, Mathematics, English Language, Integrated Science and Social Studies, are compulsory subjects that contribute to the aggregate score. This makes teachers focus on the four subjects more than the others. Even within the individual subjects, certain topics are emphasized by teachers than other topics. Take Mathematics for example, a topic like “Geometric Construction” has been tested in BECE every single year since 1990 till date except in 2010. This will definitely force teachers to teach to the test as well as encourage learners to memorize standard algorithms as opposed to learning meaningfully.

According to Kumandaŋ and Kutlu (2010), high-stakes examinations do not necessarily reflect learners’ academic accomplishments and real-life accomplishments. They emphasize that high-stakes examinations rears negativity in students such as fright of unachievement, anxiousness to test, and some other challenges. Further, the overemphasis on high-stakes examinations usually puts unnecessary pressure on teachers, hence they tend to inflate students’ test scores (Gulek, 2003).



In Ghana today, a lot of emphasis is being placed on conceptual understanding as opposed to overemphasizing information memorized routinely which shoves aside important concepts and high academic creativity. Watson, Johanson, Loder, and Dankiw (2014) put it better when they report that as a consequence of high-stakes examinations “the type of instructional strategies utilized in the classroom to communicate content has moved from engaging activities involving higher-level thinking toward a focus on more repetitive, rote practices specifically intended to raise student scores on multiple choice tests” (p. 2). High-stakes examinations most likely pushes students to focus more on what is important to the examinations as opposed to what skills are important to be successful individuals in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century world. Unfortunately there still exist high demands for high grades in schools and colleges in many countries across the world and especially in Ghana.

High-stakes examinations have grave potential of causing students to go every length to make good grades including engaging in examination malpractices. High-stakes examination is every so often considered as contributing to narrowing down the curriculum and thereby leading to ill-preparation hence resulting to cheating (Ysseldyke *et al.*, 2004).

To conclude, it is understandable of these perpetrators of malpractices, indeed predictable – after all, their future academic success and careers are directly affected by the scores they obtain on these tests - as long as high-stakes examination continue to be the success criteria of students’ achievement and progress on the academic ladder, they are most likely to resort to all manner of ways to pass these examinations, including engaging in examination malpractices.

### Test Score Inflation And its Effects on Examination Malpractices

For many years, authorities in measurement have argued that high-stakes examinations are capable of leading to unacceptable ways of preparing for test taking and score inflation (Ysseldyke *et al.*, 2004). According to Koretz (2005), test score inflation refers to increase in scores that significantly exaggerates the achievement of learners than it implies.

Koretz (2005) opines that the response to the problem of high-stakes examinations by some measurement experts which suggest that tests well aligned with set standards in the curriculum make high-stakes examinations relevant and highly valid cannot be entirely true. He argues that if test are aligned with standards, and students are presented with the important content through effective teaching, how then would students' performances and achievements be deceptive?

Many individuals who have gone through the various levels of education, once upon a time, recall a time in elementary school, JHS or SHS the joy in scoring an 'A' in a test. The sheer feeling of the accolade "excellent" brought pride in us and even our parents. If you are lucky, you earn a toffee or better still an ice cream. However, did anyone questioned whether the "A" was actually earned and represented our true performance? Due to the demand on teachers to prepare students to pass their examinations, they are likely to inflate students' scores in order to satisfy authorities. It is not an understatement- indeed inevitably so- to say that as long as teachers are pushed to account for their work output through the scores that their students obtain, then they are put in a situation to inflate students' scores.

A typical example in the case of Ghana is the continuous assessment scores for students in BECE and WASSCE. The score is supposed to contribute 30% component of students' final score in BECE and WASSCE. However, teachers are mostly found inflating such score with the hope of boosting the aggregate score of their students. In a study conducted by Gershenson (2018), the study revealed that although majority of students are given excellent scores, only a handful go on to score high marks on the national examinations for those same grade levels. That is, a chunk of the students who are given top grades from their teachers perform abysmally on the statewide examinations. For instance in Algebra 1, more than one-third of the students who had 'Bs' from their class teachers could not attain "proficient" score on the statewide tests. Gershenson asserts that, teachers inflate their students' grades for many reasons. Teachers may inflate grades in an attempt to impress students and parents or to boost their schools' status or that of their classrooms.

Whatever the reason, however, inflating scores brings a lot of undesirable consequences (Gershenson, 2018). Score inflation may perhaps cause students to become complacent. This may discourage them from devoting more time to their studies which will result into poor performances and prevent them from achieving higher on the academic ladder. When students' grades are inflated, it seems students are progressing academically but might not actually be improving, hence resulting into the neglect of any extra tuition, attention, and the necessity to increase their efforts in order to succeed. Parents too are blinded from realizing the needs of their wards in order to provide extra help for them.

To sum it all, it is imperative to acknowledge that one of the eventual consequence of inflating students' scores is that when the students find themselves in a situation where they are not offered that extra boost on their scores they may, when the opportunity presents itself, resort to inappropriate means of passing their examinations, including engaging in examination malpractices to supplement their poor grades.

### **Forms of Examination Malpractices Among Senior High Schools in Ghana.**

Examination malpractices have been perpetrated in many forms. For the purpose of this section, it will be grouped under three themes. Thus, malpractices before examination, during examination and after examination. The review of this section is put together from a number of researches.

#### **Forms of examination malpractices before examination**

The forms of examination malpractices perpetrated in Ghana before examination come in diverse forms. Prominent among them is leakage of questions. Folson and Awuah (2014) report that in BECE for example, agents acquire examination questions; in some instance examination papers, from unscrupulous WAEC officials at a fee and sell them to interested schools and individuals. This means before the examination, content of the examination is exposed. When questions are leaked, the students get the opportunity to answer and memorize them before taking the exams.

Another form of malpractice before examination is pre-recording of content or answers on tapes. With the availability of ear devices, students are able to listen to the tape to aid in cheating during the examination.

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Again, before examinations, some students buy over supervisors, invigilators and or security personnel to gain opportunity to cheat during the exams. When invigilators and security personnel are won over, students get the leeway to smuggle prohibited materials such as scripted answers on pieces of papers, recorded materials, and also get the opportunity to communicate with other students during the exams as well.

Last but not least form of malpractice practiced before examinations is hiding of materials in vantage places around the examination centre. For example students hide textbooks, mobile phones, etc. in washrooms around the examination centre and make use of them when they ask permission to make use of the washroom.

#### **Forms of Examination Malpractices During Examination**

It has already been pointed out that before examinations, students mechanize various ways to aid them in cheating. Apart from these acts before the examination, students also devise very creative ways of cheating during examinations. The commonest act of malpractice during exams is collusion. WAEC (2018) report on forms of malpractice and irregularity detected in WASSCE and BECE shows that the most prominent of the forms was collusion. Collusion means students receiving assistance from other students, teachers, invigilators and supervisors during the exams.

Sneak in of unacceptable materials is another wide-used type of malpractice during examinations. Students script content as well as answers on pieces of sheets and sneak them into the exams premises. In some instances, textbooks are hidden under desks in order to gain access during the exams. These smuggled materials are mostly taken into the exam hall in pants, shoes,

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shirt collars and in some instances hidden in vantage but inconspicuous places before the examination commences.

Another prominent form of malpractice during examination is stealing from other examinees with or without their intentions. As a result of sloppy supervision or poor sitting arrangement in exams hall, students are able to gain access to their friends' work to copy. Students are able to practice what has come to be termed "giraffing"; stretching of the neck to copy. Others pass their answer booklets to friends or script answers on question papers and exchange them.

Besides, students also use non explicit language to communicate during examination. For example, students use a certain number of fingers to represent an answer especially during multiple choice section. Others make signs on rulers and pens that are strange to invigilators and pass them to friends who understand such coded language.

Another form of malpractice during examinations is impersonation (WAEC, 2018). This has to do with unregistered individual taking the place of a registered candidate to write for him or her. In such cases students connive with supervisors and invigilators in order not to be caught easily. Impersonation demands high level of connection between the candidate and the supervisors/invigilators as this is a very serious offence if caught.

Also, another common form of malpractice during examinations that is gaining popularity among students in Ghana is the use of mobile phones and its social media platforms. Today, it is very common to meet every student with a mobile phone device with internet access that can easily aid in obtaining information within minutes. Social media platforms have become one main

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avenue for circulating leaked questions quickly. A lot of students are able to receive questions and answers minutes before exams. Some are also able to search for answers to questions in the exam hall during the exam. According to WAEC (2018), social media has made it a daunting task to control the leakage of questions and its spread. Gone were the days where a few schools will manage to connive with some corrupt officials of WAEC to obtain questions for their students. In 2015, WAEC cancelled the entire BECE midway into the writing of the examination. Investigations proved that majority of the candidates across the nation had gotten access to the questions weeks before the examination. WAEC report indicated that the institution was shocked to have known that the leakage was nationwide and that the main catalyst was mobile phones/social media platforms.

#### **Forms of Examination Malpractices After Examination**

Examination malpractice does not end with the writing of the examinations. Some students connive with makers and pay huge sums of money to obtain good grades. Marker malpractices usually exist in tertiary institutions where their influence is great. This is because tutors/lecturers are directly responsible for students' final grades. Nonetheless, in SHS and JHS, teachers are culpable of inflating their students' continuous assessment scores submitted to WAEC to contribute to the students' aggregate score. Although this phenomenon is quite difficult to carry out in WAEC marking since the candidates do not know who directly marks their papers, yet, some markers, out of negligence, mark students down or inflate their score (Onah, 2013; Akaranga & Ongong, 2013; Folson & Awuah, 2014; Suleman, Gul, Ambrin & Kamran, 2015 & Akintunde & Selzing-Musa, 2016).

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### Strategies for Curbing Examination Malpractices

The consequences of examination malpractices on the entire education system can be very devastating. Since examination plays a critical role in decision making about students, it is imperative to ensure that students' score represent their true abilities. Any error introduced into the score will lead to producing graduates that do not fit the purpose for which they were prepared. As a result, examination malpractice must be checked. Effective strategies need to be devised to combat malpractice at all times. Over the decades, numerous researchers have researched into the best strategies for fighting malpractices. Folsom and Awuah (2014), Suleman *et al.*, (2015), WAEC (2018) and Dzakadzie (2019), recommend the following strategies to combat malpractices in examination.

One of the strategies to combat the issue of leakage of questions is by presenting a new set of questions within the shortest possible time. WAEC should at all times be prepared to replace leaked papers in a swift manner to avert the problem of leakages. By so doing, students would be discouraged from depending solely on leaked questions knowing very well that different set of questions are likely to be presented.

Again, schools should not be given the opportunity to have their students write together in the same classrooms. Index numbers of candidates within the centres should be mixed to make it difficult for candidates to collude during examinations. When candidates are not familiar with one another, they tend to



be less confident in copying from other candidates. Again, they are likely to lodge a complaint when they see other candidates cheat to their disadvantage.

Implementation of the laws and rules governing examinations should be done effectively. Students who are caught perpetrating the acts of exam malpractice should be punished severely in accordance to the law to deter others from engaging in the act. In doing so, however, there should be an increase in the number of invigilators and supervisors in the exam centres. Also, there should be unannounced visits by officials who are dedicated and exude integrity. Perpetrators must be made to face the full extent of the law.

Further, the continuous assessment system (SBA) should be looked at again. An effective and computerized system should be put in place to monitor students' performances from the early grades so that too much premium is not placed on the final exams. In doing so, teachers must be held accountable when it is detected that students' scores have been inflated. For instance when there is a drastic change in a student's score from one grade level to another, an investigation should be done to determine the cause. If found to be an issue of inflated score, the teacher(s) involved should be punished accordingly.

Public campaigns and education on the effects of EM should be embarked on from time to time to sensitize all stakeholders. Also, candidates who excel with honesty should be rewarded, likewise teachers who work diligently to prepare their students to pass honestly. Teachers should be encouraged to ensure good teaching that helps students to have conceptual understanding of concepts instead of rote memorization of discrete bits of information that they usually end up forgetting and lead to cheating by students during exams.

Provision of adequate facilities for teaching and learning should be ensured by the government to help students prepare well for exams. In some senior high schools, there are no laboratory equipment for science practical lessons. As a result, teachers are forced to concoct marks for the students during their final examinations.

Finally, the Ministry of Education and WAEC should employ people who are reliable with integrity to manage the examination system. Corrupt officials should be redrawn and punished severely to sever as deterrent to others.

#### **Persons Involved in Examination Malpractices**

Examination malpractice is perpetrated by almost all persons that have a role to play in the delivery of examination in the education sector of Ghana. Folsom and Awuah (2014), WAEC (2018) and Dzakadzie (2019), identify the following stakeholders:

**The Students:** The entire examination malpractices is geared towards offering ill-prepared and corrupt students an undue advantage to pass. According to Dzakadzie (2015), most students no longer uphold the values of hard work and academic excellence, as a result they become susceptible to the option of cheating in examinations. They show little or no interest in studying hard and have inculcated the habit of cheating in every examination the least opportunity that presents itself. They lack self-efficacy to initiate tasks and stay committed to complete the tasks successfully. Deceitfulness has become the order of the day, and no longer upholds the virtue of honesty and self-discipline to write and pass examination.

**The Teachers:** In as much as students are poised to pass their examination at all cost, teachers are likewise motivated to see their students

make the best of grades as a sign of giving good account of themselves to their superiors. It is not an understatement- indeed inevitably so- to say that as long as teachers are pushed to account for their work output through the grades that their students obtain, then they are put in a situation to aid their students to cheat. WAEC (2018) reports of instances where some teachers send worked answers to the examination questions to the examination hall. In some cases, they take money from the students in order to bribe invigilators and pave a way for the students to copy during the exams.

**Parents and Guardians:** Most parents have high aspirations for their wards. They desire to see their wards aspire higher on the academic ladder and land a good profession. As such some parents will go every length to ensure that their wards pass their exams. Some parents encourage their wards to seek for help from friends during exams to augment their efforts. Some even go to the extent to connive with supervisors in charge of the exams to create avenues for their wards to indulge in one form of malpractice or the other.

**School Heads/Administrators:** Some school heads/administrators, especially those in the private schools, throw their weight behind their teachers and students to do all that it takes to pass the examination and obtain a good percentage score for the school. For most of these private schools, their main aim of resorting to examination malpractices to improve their performance is to boost enrollment.

**The Government:** for political gains, some government officials at the various levels (Districts, Municipal, Metropolitan, etc.) connive with supervisors and other examination officials to help boost the performance of students in his/her governing area. Others also put undue pressure on teachers

to ensure good performance of their students and in so doing teachers are often put in a compromising position and therefore engage in malpractices in order to satisfy the authority.

**Examination Bodies/Invigilators:** Some personnel who are responsible for examinations for WAEC and other examination bodies are culprits of examination malpractice. They compromise their position and integrity for monetary gains by selling exams questions to heads of schools and other interested individuals.

**The Law Enforcement Personnel:** some corrupt law enforcement personnel who are put in charge of examination centres connive with teachers, invigilators and students to create an environment for cheating. These personnel who have the responsibility of ensuring that the right thing is done, shamefully compromise such trust put in them by the society for their selfish gains.

#### **Reasons that leads to examination malpractices**

According Onyechere (2004) one major reason that influence many individuals to indulge in examination malpractices is the overemphasis placed on the attainment of good grades and certificates. Due to these higher expectations from teachers, parents, employers and the educational institutions themselves, students are put under undue pressure to succeed. As result candidates with low cognitive ability and cannot obtain high grades on paper and pencil tests and examinations tend to resort to various forms of malpractices the least chance they get. Securing better results at all cost becomes the agenda any time the opportunity presents itself and the act persists so long as it yields favourable results.

Newberger (2003) posits that majority of teachers' reluctance to clamping down on examination malpractices is because most of these teachers sympathize with culprits and perceive the acts of examination malpractices a means of helping students as a result of their inability to cope with grade oriented examination system. He reports that majority of students believe that failing to help a colleague in an examination is an act of unfriendliness. Hence, most of these students and teachers alike consider examination malpractices as way of helping one another.

Omotosho (1990) observed that inadequate and poor school infrastructure to support effecting teaching and learning is another major reason why most students and teachers indulge in malpractices in examinations. They believe that these students and teachers feel oblige to substitute examination malpractices for the poor and unavailability of essential school facilities. They feel that if the demand for success is not accompanied by the required resources then examination malpractices become a compensation.

Further, poor teacher attitude towards teaching is another major reason that drives some individuals into examination malpractices. Oluchukwu (2012) asserts that some teachers claim that as a result of poor remuneration they have to supplement their income thereby their less committed to teaching effectively and in most cases leaving a number of topics not treated before examinations. Again, some teachers lack mastery of their allocated subjects and hence teach inefficiently. These contribute immensely to the involvement of most students and teachers alike in examination malpractices.

### Gender and Examination Malpractice

Several researches on examination malpractices have considered the issue of gender and examination malpractices. In a study by Badejo and Gandonu (2001) investigating the predisposing factors towards examination malpractice among students, involving 120 males and 120 females, the findings showed that gender has no bearing with respect to the factors that predispose students towards examination malpractice.

Conversely, Omotere (2010) in a case study at Ijebu-ode Local Government Area of Ogun State which included gender as a predictor of examination malpractice among secondary schools students, the researcher sampled 100 males and 100 females from 4 secondary schools, using simple random technique. Analysis of the data, using step wise regression, revealed that more females are involved in examination malpractice than males. The findings, therefore, suggest that being a male or female can influence one's involvement in examination malpractices. Hence, this finding contradicts the findings from Badejo and Gandonu (2001).

Omotere (2010) findings which concluded that more females are involved in examination malpractices than males contradicts with a study by Olasehinde-Williams, Abdullahi, and Owolabi (2003). In that study, Olasehinde-Williams, Abdullahi, and Owolabi sampled 268 final year students of the faculty of education using simple random sampling techniques. The study sought to investigate the relationship between background variables and cheating tendencies among students. The null hypothesis was tested using independent samples t- test. The findings revealed that more males were involved in cheating in an examination than females.

Oluchukwu (2012) carried out a research study to investigate stakeholders' perceptions of the efficiency of the strategies adopted for combating malpractices in public examinations in Delta state, Nigeria. The researcher adopted descriptive survey design involving 1000 education sector stakeholders with 467 males and 533 females, multi stage sampling techniques. This technique included simple random sampling techniques, proportionate random sampling techniques, and purposive sampling techniques. Data was analysed using mean, independent samples t-test and one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

From the findings, both male and female education sector stakeholders rate the strategies for curbing examination malpractice as slightly effective. That is, no statistically significant difference was obtained in the mean ratings of the effectiveness of the strategies adopted for curbing pre-examination malpractice. There was however a significant difference at 0.05 levels between male and female respondents means ratings of the effectiveness of strategies adopted for combating during examination and post-examination malpractice.

Evidence from the various researches indicates that there seems to be no consensus on the gender that is more involved in examination malpractice. However, gender being a variable in this present study, the researcher seeks to find out if gender influences the reasons that propel individuals who indulge in examination malpractices.

### Validity

According to Cronbach (1971), validation is the process by which evidence is collected to support the types of inferences that are to be made from test results. To Cohen and Swerdlik (2009), validity has to do with making

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conclusions and correctness of inferences based on test results and grounded in evidence. Further, Nitko (2001) posits that validity is the “soundness of your interpretations and uses of students’ achievement results” (p. 36).

Nitko (2001) explains that to authenticate one’s explanations and uses of assessment scores, one should provide proof to support the appropriateness of these interpretations and uses. Validation is therefore a critical process if our interpretations about who our students are based on their assessment results are concerned. According to Cohen and Swerdlik (2009), validation has to do with gathering and evaluating evidence about validity. There are three major forms of validity evidence. They are; construct validation, content validation and criterion-related validation.

#### **Content Validation**

According to Crocker and Algina (2008), content validity is the process of ascertaining the extent to which the test items adequately represent the domain or construct of interest. Cohen and Swerdlik (2009) opine that content validation designates “a judgment of how adequately a test samples behavior representative of the universe of behavior that the test was designed to sample” (p.176). The universe of behaviour in relation to achievement tests, refers to the percentage of content that the test covers in relation to the percentage of content that the course covers.

#### **Criterion-Related Validity**

Criterion-related validity, according to Cohen and Swerdlik (2009), is an assessment of the adequacy an individual’s test score with respect to some relevant criteria. That is, one’s most probable standing on some measure of interest. The measure of interest being the criterion. There are two major forms



of validity evidence of criterion validity. These are concurrent validity and predictive validity.

Cohen and Swerdlik (2009) postulate that the extent by which test results are acquired simultaneously with a certain criterion measure is referred to as concurrent validity. That is, when test results are obtained at the time the criterion measures are obtained. Therefore, the test acquires representative characteristics making it possible to perform the same functions as some other tests. In most instances, concurrent validity when easily and quickly is done, the new test is preferred to the other tests.

Predictive validity, however, is the extent to which test results predict some criterion measure (Cohen & Swerdlik, 2009). That is, predictive validity has to do with the situation when a test effectively foretells someone's performance yet to happen sometime in the future. Test results of predictive validity could be acquired at some period of time and the criterion acquired sometime later. This mostly happens after some intervention measures have been implemented.

### **Construct Validity**

Cohen and Swerdlik (2009) opine that construct validity refers to the correctness of interpretations made from test results with respect to the individual's performance on a construct. A construct is a well-formulated scientific knowledge that seeks to describe an individual's behavior (Crocker & Algina, 2008). Psychological constructs are not directly observable, for example, constructs such as "intelligence," and "creativity," are psychological constructs. Constructs are fundamental qualities that may be used by a test writer to explain test behavior.

Validity of students' achievement results is very important if critical decisions about the students are to be taken. For instance, interpreting a students' score as excellent may have damning consequences if the score do not truly represent the ability of that student. Many factors can affect validity. Any error introduced into students' score apart from what the scores truly represent can affect the decisions made about the students.

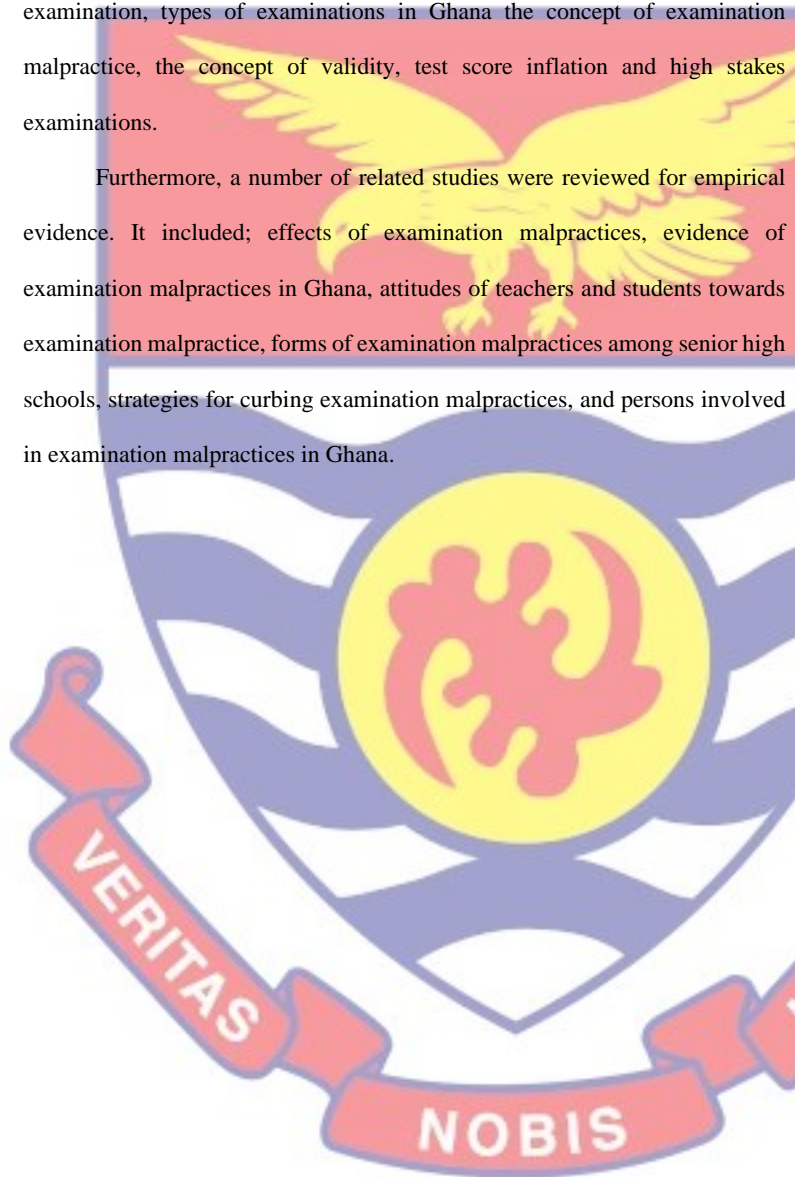
Examination malpractices significantly affect the validity of students' results since those students do not show their true ability. As in predictive validity, if we based on a senior high school student's result to predict that he/she will be a successful candidate in medical school, then that prediction is only valid if the student's WASSCE result is a true performance of that student. Conversely, if that student cheated to make the grades, then that prediction is bound to fail. Examination malpractices offer students an undue advantage to perpetrators and so decisions taken based on their performances are bound to yield wrong conclusions.

#### **Chapter Summary**

The chapter examined related literature to examination malpractices. The review covered the theoretical, conceptual and empirical review. Three major theories namely; Self-efficacy by Albert Bandura, Achievement Motivation by Eccles, Wigfied and colleagues and Attribution Theory by Heider, were reviewed. The theories provide an understanding of why some individuals engage in examination malpractice. For instance, Bandura (1997) opines that students with high self-efficacy beliefs have high self-esteem and that such students are keen to initiate and to put in the required energy when necessary, hence they tend to prepare well for their exams and they are likely to

stay away from all acts of malpractices. Review was again done on concepts related to examination malpractices. It covered the concept and purpose of examination, types of examinations in Ghana the concept of examination malpractice, the concept of validity, test score inflation and high stakes examinations.

Furthermore, a number of related studies were reviewed for empirical evidence. It included; effects of examination malpractices, evidence of examination malpractices in Ghana, attitudes of teachers and students towards examination malpractice, forms of examination malpractices among senior high schools, strategies for curbing examination malpractices, and persons involved in examination malpractices in Ghana.



## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODS

#### Introduction

This section looked at the research methods adopted for this study. It also includes the research design, sampling procedures, the research instrument, population and the study area. Further, it also defines the sources of data including the data collection and handling procedures, and ethical concerns.

#### Research Design

Sarantakos (2005) defines research design as the coherent order of sequence for conducting a study, including the various parts of the research study. It embodies data collection methods and analysis, including managerial processes needed to be employed for the study in order to reduce problems and avoid unnecessary delays. According to Mouton (2001), research design refers to a blueprint or plan that describes the intentions of the researcher to carry out the study. It shows a practical framework or idea for conducting of any research study. That is, it mirrors the strategies or plans stipulating how related data on a chosen construct should be gathered and analysed. To explain further, Amedahe and Asamoah- Gyimah (2018) opine that research design refers to the framework, plan, or scheme that the researcher uses to investigate a scientific problem. The research design outlines the type of study, research questions, hypotheses, variables (dependent and independent), and, in some instances, methods of data collection and a plan for the analysis. Manheim (1977) asserts that the design of the research does not only forestalls and stipulates the

apparently numerous choices in connection with collecting and analysing data, but also presents a sound foundation for these choices. Research design also helps to navigate smoothly to carry out the various research processes. This helps to produce adequate and the required information without spending too much time and money (Amedahe & Asamoah -Gyimah, 2018).

*Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007)* are of the view that the choosing a particular research design for a study depends on the purpose of the study. Because the main aim of this research is to examine the current trends of examination malpractices among senior high schools in New Juaben Municipal in the Eastern Region, analyse the implications and identify the best strategies to curb the menace, a descriptive survey design was employed. Gay (1992) as cited in Amedahe and Asamoah -Gyimah (2018) opines that descriptive design has to do with the collection of data to answer research questions and test the hypotheses in relation to the study. Best and Kahn (2007) postulate that the key characteristic of the descriptive survey design has to do with the fact that the researcher examines through observation in order to describe what he/she finds. This type of design helps answering questions such as “what”, “who”, “where”, “how” and “when”. It is a design that aids in studying current events.

As reiterated by Amedahe and Asamoah-Gyimah (2018), the main focus of a descriptive survey is to witness, describe and document aspects of an event in its natural setting. A descriptive study may be concerned with the attitude or views (of a person) towards anything. It employs numerous data collection methods including questionnaire, interviews, pre-testing, examination of documents and observation. The use of visual aids, for example charts and graphs, to aid readers to better comprehend the data distribution is a key strength

of the descriptive design (Jacobs, 2011), hence, its relevance and appropriateness to this study.

However, researchers have warned that one should be wary of the limitations of the design. Basically, if biases are not controlled, the data in descriptive research is likely to be exposed to misrepresentations. That is to say, since descriptive survey depends on observing events directing to gather the data, proper organization and systematic presentation of the data is paramount before precise conclusions and generalisations can be made. And so the researcher must take the necessary precautions in order to avoid drawing conclusions and making inferences that are not truly representative of the population (Amedahe & Asamoah-Gyimah, 2016; Jacobs, 2011). Besides, in survey research design the researcher does not include experimental treatment of the respondents. Basically, survey design has to do with the description of trends in the data and not give rigorous descriptions. That is, because survey researchers do not experimentally manipulate the events, they cannot describe cause and effect. Survey researchers often compare variables, but their attention is focused more on understanding the population and less on correlating variables or attempting to predict outcomes (Creswell, 2012).

Regardless of these shortfalls, descriptive survey design helps to ascertain the relationship between variables under study. In doing so, further questions can be posed for further clarification. Again, it helps the researcher to generalise as a result of the representativeness of the sample. Since the population was so large in this research, it was prudent to employ this design in order to allow for making a general conclusion about the entire population.

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It was chosen as the most suitable design for this study because it offered the best opportunity given the characteristics of the phenomena under study with a description of the situation using a specified population.

#### **Study Area**

This study was conducted in New Juaben Municipal. The district is among twenty-one (21) districts of the Eastern Region of Ghana. Its capital which doubles as the Eastern Regional capital is Koforidua. New Juaben Municipal Assembly has a projected land area of 110 kilometre square which is 0.57% of the entire land area of Eastern Region. The district shares borders to the northeast with East-Akim Municipal Assembly, then to the east and south with Akuapim North District and to the west with Suhum Kraboa Coaltar District.

The population of the Municipal, from the 2010 population and Housing Census was 183,727 constituting 7 percentage of the entire Eastern Region population. According to Ghana Statistical Service (2010), a large number of the population, thus (54.9%), presently in school are primary and junior high schools. Senior high school students constitute 12% of the population presently in school.

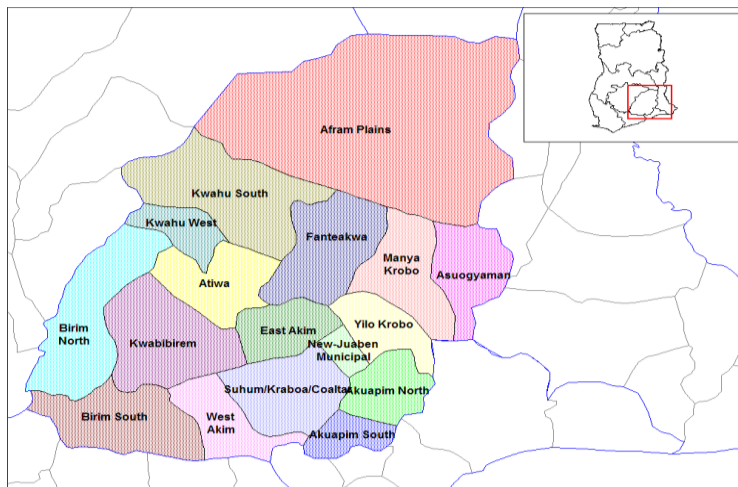


Figure 1: Graphical Map for New Juaben Municipal

Source: Google map, 2020.

### Population and Setting

The population is a set of individual to whom the results of the study would apply and therefore are considered the centre of the entire research study (Creswell, 2012). Thus, the population refers to the set of individuals to which inferences from the study would be made. Gay (1992) opines that population is the set of individuals the researcher is concerned with, and to which he intends to generalize the results. He goes on to explain that the population has a unique characteristic that makes it different from other groups or individuals. Further, Johnson (1994) reiterates that participants in a population must have the characteristics and information that the study requires. According to Amedahe and Asamoah-Gyimah (2018), there are two types of population in research namely target population and accessible population. Target population of a study is the whole group for which the results of the research are to be referred (Amedahe & Asamoah-Gyimah). In other words, the target population



describes those entities for which generalisations of the study will be made (Kothari, 2004). Kothari (2004) warns that the target population must be defined explicitly to clearly show the eligibility or otherwise of the sampled cases for the study. Hence, delimiting the environmental and temporal characteristics of the target population is paramount. All senior high school students and teachers of New Juaben Municipal in the Eastern Region of Ghana made up the target population for this study. There are 9 public Senior High Schools and 4 private Senior High Schools, totalling 13 senior high schools in the Municipal Assembly. The total students' population during 2019/2020 academic year was 20,027. The teachers' population, was 732. Amedahe and Asamoah-Gyimah opine that accessible population also referred to as the study population is considered a subset of the target population and to which the results and inferences from the study apply. The researcher takes their sample from the accessible population (Kothari, 2004). It is the population from which respondents are drawn from to generate the required data for the study. For this study, the accessible population constituted final year students and teachers of Senior High Schools in New Juaben Municipal Assembly.

Table 3 shows the distribution of the population for the study.

Table 3: *Final Year Students' Data for New Juaben Municipal Assembly*

*Senior High Schools*

Total Population	Public	Private
6, 478	6, 170	308
	Boys	Girls
	3, 681 (59.7%)	2, 489 (40.3%)

Source: Field survey (2020)

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Table 4: Teachers' Data for New Juaben Municipal Assembly Senior

High Schools

Total Population	Public	Private
732	688	44
	Males	Females
	501 (68.4%)	231 (31.4%)

Source: Field survey (2020)

**Sample and Sampling Procedures**

According to *Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007)*, “the quality of any piece of research stands or falls not only by the appropriateness of methodology and instrumentation but also by the suitability of the sampling strategy that has been adopted” (p. 100). They warn that researchers must decide early on sampling in the entire planning of the study. *Cohen et al.* define sample as the subset of the entire population about which results from the study is typical of the entire population. *Sarantakos (1998)*, reiterates that carefully selection of the sample should be done to ensure representativeness of the population and allow for generalization.

In the process of selecting the sample for the study, I had the intention of using all 13 senior high schools in the New Juaben Municipal. However, I struggled to get access to one of the public senior high schools due to the school’s policy on the COVID-19 pandemic protocols. Again, for one of the private senior high schools, there were only 9 students who had been made to join another school to prepare for the WASSCE. Hence, 11 out of the 13 Senior High Schools (comprising 8 public Senior High Schools and 3 Private Senior

High Schools) were used for the study. Thus, all public Senior High Schools and Private Senior High Schools were used for the study.

Furthermore, the study employed the simple random sampling technique in selecting respondents for the study. According to Cohen et al. (2007), this technique includes randomly selecting the required number of subjects for the sample from a list of the population. According to Amedahe and Asamoah-Gyimah (2018), this sampling technique offers every element of the population a fair opportunity of being chosen. Further, the probability of a respondent from the population being chosen is not affected by choosing other respondents of the population. However, Cohen et al. caution that one problem related with this technique is that it requires a whole list of the population and this is not always easy to acquire. Again, the lottery method was employed to select 660 respondents involving 520 students and 140 teachers for the study.

Amedahe (2002) opines that a sample size of 5% to 20% of the population in many quantitative studies is appropriate for the purposes of generalization. Hence, in this study a sample size of 660 senior high school students and teachers, representing 9.2%, out of the total population of 7,210 students and teachers in New Juaben Municipal Assembly is appropriate and therefore is enough for generalisation. The table below shows the distribution of the respondents used for the study.

Table 5: *Distribution of Study Participants*

Total Sample size	Students		Teachers	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
660	520		140	
	274 (53%)	246 (47%)	84(60%)	56(40%)
	Private	Public	Private	Public
	125 (24%)	395 (76%)	12(9%)	128(91%)

Source: Field survey, (2020)

**Research Instrument**

Research instrument refers to the tools for collecting data from respondents for the study. Some of which include questionnaires, tests, interviews, etcetera (Amedahe & Asamoah-Gyimah, 2018). Questionnaire was chosen as the instrument to collect data to answer the questions set for this study after a thorough review of related literature. Amedahe and Asamoah-Gyimah are of the view that, it is easier to administer questionnaires. That is, questionnaires can be completed quickly and are friendly as well. It is fast to score and as such requires relatively small amount of time from both researchers and respondents to score and respond to, respectively. As a result of the relatively shorter time it took me to administer and score, questionnaire was preferred. Again, it gave me the opportunity to ensure anonymity of respondents (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003; Muijs, 2004). The use of questionnaire enabled the

researcher to collect potential information about examination malpractices among senior high schools in New Juaben Municipal in Eastern Region.

The questionnaires consisted of close ended items and were administered to students and teachers. They were researcher-constructed questionnaire with rating scale type of questions. In employing questionnaire for this study, I had to be wary of the issue of dishonesty as a major weakness of this type of instrument. According to Amedahe and Asamoah-Gyimah (2018), participants are likely not to be 100 percent honest with their responses, as they posited. This, they believe, may be as a result social desirability bias and making an attempt to guard against their confidentiality being exposed. Hence, I assured respondents that as part of my responsibilities I am to protect their privacy and that they were under no circumstance supposed to provide any information that exposes their personal identity. Again, I made them aware that they had every right to opt out of the process.

The same form of questionnaire was used for both students and teachers although it was indicated on the questionnaires as Teacher Questionnaire and Student Questionnaire. In order to develop a good questionnaire, I did a thorough reading on numerous methodologies that have been used over the years on examination malpractices and with the help of my supervisor, I was able to develop the questionnaire. There were five sections on the questionnaire. Section A sought for demographic data and it had two items. There were seven items on Section B which sought to ascertain information on the various forms of examination malpractices. The items were of the 4-point Likert scale with responses of 'rarely', 'sometimes', 'often' and 'always', scored 1,2,3,4 respectively for positively worded questions. Section C had eight items that

sought to ascertain information on persons who are involved in examination malpractices. The items on this section were also of the 4-point Likert scale with responses of 'rarely', 'sometimes', 'often' and 'always', scored 1,2,3,4 respectively for positively worded questions. Under Section D, there were seven items that sought to ascertain the reasons that propel individuals to indulge in examination malpractices. A 4-point Likert scale with responses of 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree', scored 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively for positively worded questions, was used for this section. The last section (E) had eight items and sought to find out the strategies that are perceived to be most effective in minimising examination malpractices. The items were of the 4-point Likert scale with responses of 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree', scored 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively for positively worded questions.

#### **Pilot Testing of Instrument**

As part of the process to ensure that the questionnaire designed to collect data for this study is worthwhile and will generate data that is representative of the sample and the entire population, the questionnaire was subjected to a pilot testing. Especially when the instrument was self-constructed by the researcher, it was imperative to pilot test it to ascertain its suitability and practicality (Donald, 1990). According to Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003), it is easy to overlook mistakes and ambiguities in question layout and construction when designing a questionnaire. Besides, Awanta and Asiedu-Addo (2008) also warned that there is the possibility that the reliability estimate of the questionnaire will be very high because there is consistency with respect to the responses, yet may have low validity as a result of it failing to measure the construct it intend

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to measure. Hence I took the process seriously.

Teachers and students from the Eastern Region where the study was to be conducted were chosen because they represented the targeted respondents of the study. Fifty (50) SHS students and ten (10) teachers were used in the pilot testing. The feedback of the respondents helped to improve the quality of the questionnaire in terms of content coverage, content validity and reliability. A typical example was that as a result of the piloting, I separated “copying in the exam hall using mobile phones” and obtaining questions from the internet and other social media platforms before examination” which were initially put together.

#### **Validity and Reliability of the Instrument**

To check for the validity of the instrument, the researcher allowed two (2) senior lecturers who are experts in the field of research at the Department of Psychology and Education in University of Cape Coast, to evaluate the questionnaire for content and construct as well as face validity. After their feedback was received, the necessary changes to the content of the questionnaire were made. After, this process, a pilot test was conducted in a school that wasn't part of the actual research. Since the instrument was a multi-dimensional, reliability statistic for each section was determined as well as the overall statistic for the instrument. Sections B, C, D and E of the students' instrument yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.61, 0.66, 0.87 and 0.77 respectively. The overall reliability statistic for the students' questionnaire was 0.71. Further, Section B, C, D, and E of the teachers' instrument yielded reliability coefficient of 0.35, 0.41, 0.61 and 0.43 respectively. The teachers' questionnaire yielded an overall reliability coefficient of 0.401. Both questionnaires yielded acceptable

reliability coefficients.

Table 6 is the table of values showing the reliability estimates for the various sections of both the students' and the teachers' questionnaires and the overall reliability estimation after data collection. *Table 6: Reliability Estimate for Questionnaire Items*

Section	Reliability Statistics		N of Items
	Cronbach's Alpha		
	Students' Questionnaire	Teachers' Questionnaire	
B	0.720	0.711	7
C	0.788	0.689	8
D	0.618	0.692	7
E	0.838	0.891	8
Overall	0.771	0.713	30

Source: Field survey, (2020)

#### Data Collection Procedure

To begin data collection, I obtained an introductory letter from the Department of Education and Psychology, University of Cape Coast. The letter was then given to the headteachers of the participating SHS. A specific teacher was then assigned to me to help me with the data collection. I took time to explain the purpose of the study to the teacher and the processes required for the data collection. Since the sampling technique was simple random sampling, I could not have the chance to meet all the respondents personally as the data collection took more than a day. However, I encouraged the teacher assigned to me for the data collection to inspire respondents to be truthful with their responses because the study was for academic purposes and that the findings



would also be beneficial to students, teachers and the entire examination system in the country. Unfortunately, during the week for data collection, all schools were shut down and students were asked to go home due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, this delayed the collection of the research data. I resumed data collection from June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020 when schools were reopened. By 10<sup>th</sup> July, 2020 all questionnaires have been collected from all 11 SHS that were involved in the data collection. In all, I used two weeks for the data collection. I had almost 100 percent return rate, since only one teacher questionnaire was not returned. The introduction letter is presented in Appendix C.

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**Data Analysis**

Coding and analysis of responses on the items were carried out personally in order to ensure the accuracy of the data entry. Data were screened prior to running of any analysis. The screening helped to clean the data and eliminate errors that could have resulted from coding, missing items, outliers, etc. Descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviations and percentage scores were calculated for participants’ responses to research questions. Dependent and independent samples t-test were used to test the research hypotheses. Assumptions of normality and homogeneity pertaining to the use of t-test were also tested. Table 7 shows the result of the Normality test.

Table 7: *Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality*

Factor	Categories	Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.
Gender	Male	0.901	274	0.061*
	Female	0.981	246	0.142*
Type of School	Private	0.974	125	0.081*
	Public	0.919	395	0.077*

\*Normal ( $p > 0.05$ )

Results from Table 7 show the Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality with respect to gender and type of school on the strategies perceived to be effective in minimizing examination malpractice. From Table 7, it can be observed that the dependent variable; strategies that are perceived to be effective in minimizing examination malpractice, was normally distributed for each of the categories in the independent variables. Therefore, the assumption of dependent variable being approximately normally distributed for each combination of the levels of the independent variables was met.

To test whether the independent variables gender and school type with respect to the strategies that are perceived to be effective in minimizing examination malpractice have equal variances, Levene's test was employed. Results of the Levene's Test of equality of error variances are presented in Table 8.

Table 8: *Levene's Test of Homogeneity of Variances*

Factor	Levene's Statistic			Sig.
	(F)	df1	df2	
Gender	0.086	1	518	0.769*
Type of School	0.110	1	518	0.741*

\*Equal variance across groups ( $p > 0.05$ )

Table 8 shows that for both categories, thus gender and school type, equal variances were assumed for the dependent variable across groups ( $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, the assumption of homogeneity of variance was met.

### **Ethical Consideration**

The importance of upholding the ethics of research cannot be overemphasized. According to Cohen *et al.* (2007), ethical concerns may generate from the nature of phenomenon investigated and the procedures they apply in acquiring truthful and consistent data, hence each phase in the study brings concerns on ethics. According to them, these issues may emanate from the characteristics of the research project itself, the techniques to be used, data collection methods, participants' characteristics, and the nature of data gathered, and for what use researcher intends for the data. In order to deal with ethical problems in research, Cohen *et al.* propound that the researcher must establish clearly, the purpose of the research to the participants. The researcher must also make known, if any, risks to the participant; ensuring that they are in the position of making their own choice, if not, have someone consent to their participation. However, participants must be given the opportunity to redraw at any stage (Cohen *et al.*). In addressing the above concerns and suggestions raised, I took a number of steps in order to deal with any ethical concerns that may arise.

Before I began data collection, I obtained ethical clearance from the Ethical Review Board of the College of Education Studies, UCC for the endorsement of the purpose of my research and data collection instrument. After my research proposal and instrument have been vetted by the ethical board and permission granted, I took introductory letter from the Department of Psychology and Education, UCC which enabled me to seek permission from the Municipal Director of Education, and the Department in charge of assessment in the Municipal Education Office. I also sought permission and approval from the headteachers of the various schools to administer the test items. I also

established a cordial relationship with some of the teachers in the various schools, thereby acquiring the necessary assistance and support needed to carry out the data collection.

Further, anonymity of the participants was considered by paying heed to all the required standards and lay down regulations. Anonymity is a critical concern in relation to research principles. This is because it offers the respondents the opportunity to conceal their identity, Oliver (2010) pointed out. In this study, participants were not made to provide their names or any form of identification to their person. The names of the various schools were also made anonymous.

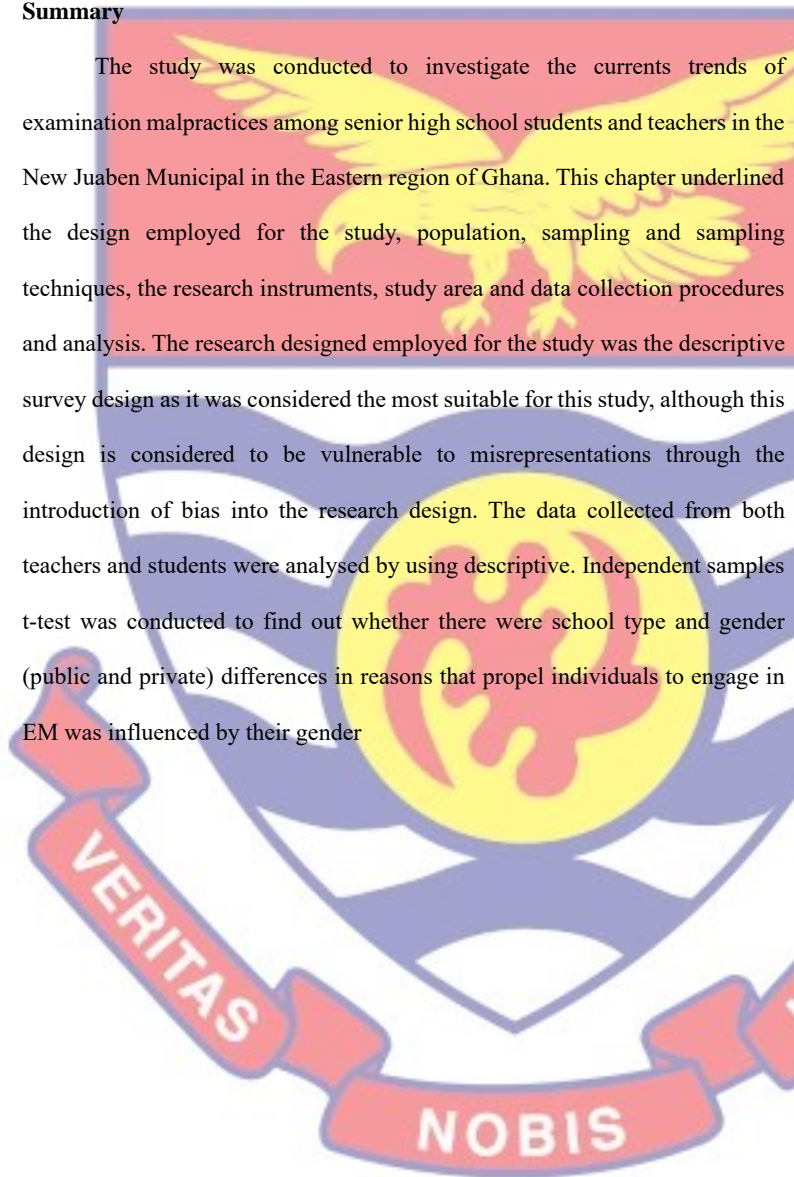
Again, all respondents were assured of confidentiality both in written and verbal forms. As a precautionary measure, participants were not made to indicate their names on the questionnaire. Participants were also guaranteed of privacy of their responses and the information they provided for the research. Also, I ensured that participants gave their consent to be part of the study willingly. As reiterated by Burns and Grove (2001), the consent of participants should be sought willingly devoid of intimidation or inducement. Therefore, a written consent was signed by the headteachers and the teachers on behalf of their students after the aims, procedures and duration of the study were made known to the authorities and respondents.

Finally, on ethical issues, one critical ethical consideration was the acknowledgement of the works of other researchers that were used to enrich this study. As such works of various researches on examination malpractices and all other useful information to support the other parts of this study were recognised

accordingly through both referencing and quotations to ensure that academic dishonesty was avoided.

### Summary

The study was conducted to investigate the current trends of examination malpractices among senior high school students and teachers in the New Juaben Municipal in the Eastern region of Ghana. This chapter underlined the design employed for the study, population, sampling and sampling techniques, the research instruments, study area and data collection procedures and analysis. The research design employed for the study was the descriptive survey design as it was considered the most suitable for this study, although this design is considered to be vulnerable to misrepresentations through the introduction of bias into the research design. The data collected from both teachers and students were analysed by using descriptive. Independent samples t-test was conducted to find out whether there were school type and gender (public and private) differences in reasons that propel individuals to engage in EM was influenced by their gender



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the current trends of examination malpractices among senior high schools in New Juaben Municipal Assembly in the Eastern Region of Ghana. This chapter will take a look at the presentation and analysis of the data. The data analyses and presentation will be done according to the research questions. The participants used for this research study were teachers and final year students of senior high schools in New Juaben Municipal Assembly in the Eastern Region of Ghana.

Percentages, means and standard deviations were mainly employed to analyse the data collected from participants. The first section of the chapter looks at respondents' demographic characteristic. Following that, the findings of the study are presented and discussed in various sections with respect to the research questions and hypotheses formulated on forms of examination malpractices practiced by students and teachers, the persons involved in malpractices, the reasons that account for persons' involvement in examination malpractices, and strategies perceived to be effective in minimizing the menace. The analysis and discussions were carried out based on the following research questions.

#### Research Questions

1. What are the forms of examination malpractices among senior high schools in New Juaben Municipal in the Eastern Region of Ghana?
2. Who are the key actors involved in examination malpractices among senior high schools in New Juaben Municipal in the Eastern Region of Ghana?

3. What reasons account for persons' engaging in examination malpractices?
4. What strategies are perceived to be effective in minimizing examination malpractice in New Juaben Municipal in the Eastern Region of Ghana?

## Results

### Analysis of Background Data

Background of the participants is discussed in this section. Table 9 shows the gender distribution of the students.

Table 9: *Gender Distribution of Students*

Gender	Frequency	Percent (%)
Male	274	53
Female	246	47
<b>Total</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field survey, (2020)

It can be observed from Table 9 that, out of the 520 students sampled for this study, 246 (47%) were females while 274 (53%) were males. Males, therefore, slightly exceeded the females. The distribution of the teachers, according to gender, employed for the study is presented in Table 10.

Table 10: *Distribution of Teachers by Gender*

Gender	Frequency	Percent (%)
Male	84	60
Female	56	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field survey, (2020)

It can be observed from Table 10 that, out of the 140 teachers who responded to the items, 56 (40%) were females and 84 (60%) were males. This indicates that on gender representation, there were more males than females. The distribution of the students, according to their school type, employed for the study is presented in Table 11.

Table 11: *Distribution of Students by School Type*

School Type	Frequency	Percent
Private	125	24
Public	395	76
Total	520	100

Source: Field survey, (2020)

It can be observed from Table 11 that, out of the 520 participants, 125 representing 24% were private senior high school students and 395 participants representing 76% were public senior high school students. This shows that in terms of the type of school attended by students used for the study a greater number of them attended public senior high schools. Table 12 shows the distribution of teachers by type of school.

Table 12: *Distribution of Teachers by School Type*

School Type	Frequency	Percent
Private	12	9
Public	128	91
Total	140	100

Source: Field survey, (2020)



The distribution of the teachers with respect to school type as indicated in Table 12 shows that, out of the 140 teachers who responded to the questionnaire, only 12 representing 9% were private senior high school teachers with 128 representing 91% being public senior high school teachers. This shows that in terms of the type of school teachers teach used for the study, a far greater number of them are public senior high school teachers.

**Research Question One: What are the forms of examination malpractices among senior high schools in New Juaben South Municipal in the Eastern Region of Ghana?**

In ascertaining from students and teachers the forms of examination malpractices, participants' responses were analysed and discussed using means and standard deviations. The results from students' responses are presented in Table 13.

Table 13: *Students' Responses on the Forms of Examination Malpractices*

Sn	Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Obtaining questions through social media before examination	520	2.52	1.070
2	Copying during examination	520	2.47	.866
3	Invigilators helping students	520	2.03	.837
4	Sending foreign materials to exam hall	520	1.99	.782
5	Use mobile phones to cheat during exams	520	1.52	.783
6	Parents obtaining questions for their wards before examination	520	1.45	.751

7	Someone else going to the examination hall to write for another person (Impersonation)	520	1.37	.619
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Source: Field survey, (2020)

From Table 13, the findings of the analyses show that majority of the respondents are of the view that (i) obtaining questions through social media before examination (M = 2.52, SD = 1.070) is the most practiced form of examination malpractices among senior high schools. (ii) “Copying during examination” (M = 2.47, SD = .866) is the next most practiced form of EM. This is followed by “invigilators helping students” (M = 2.03, SD = .837). “Sending foreign materials to examination hall” (M = 1.99, SD = .782) is the fourth most practiced form of EM among senior high schools. “Use of mobile phones to cheat during exams” (M = 1.52, SD = .783), “parents obtaining questions for their wards before examination” (M = 1.45, SD = .751), and “someone else going to the examination hall to write for another person (Impersonation)” (M = 1.37, SD = .619), are the bottom three of the forms of EM among senior high schools in New Juaben Municipal Assembly.

Table 14 presents teachers’ responses on the forms of examination malpractices among senior high schools in New Juaben Municipal Assembly.

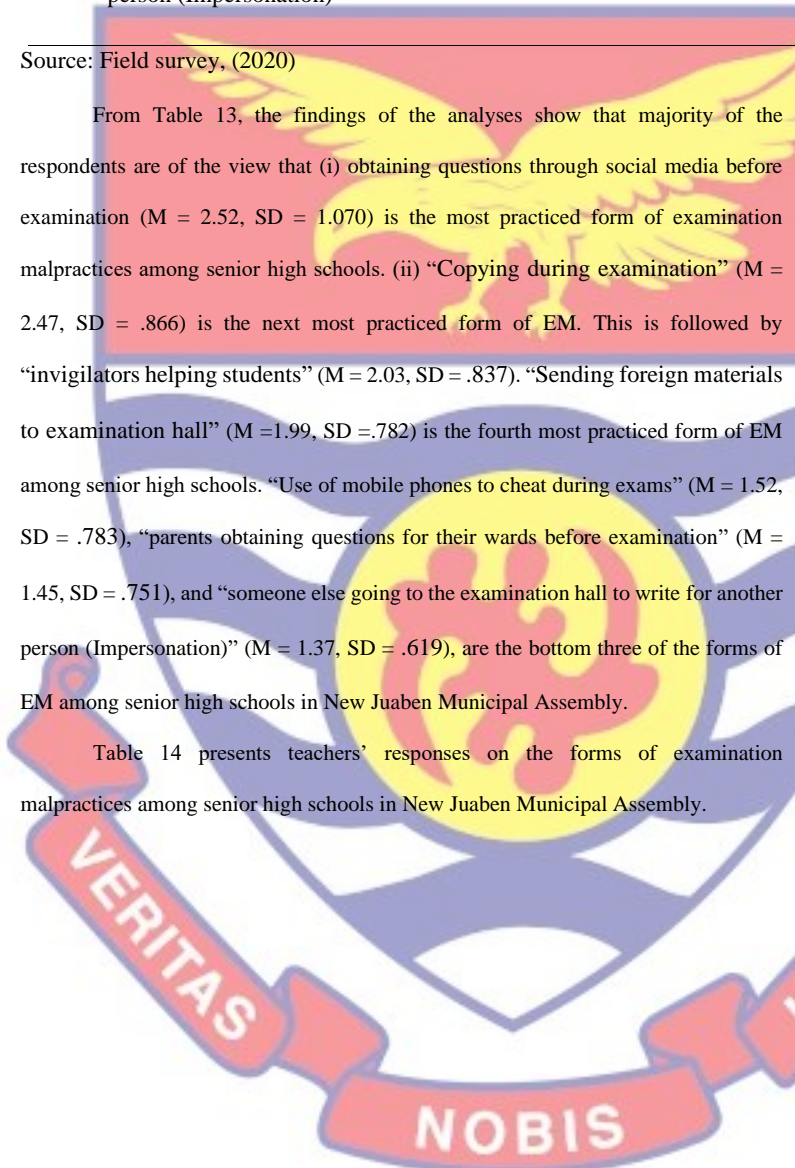


Table 14: Teachers' Responses on the Forms of Examination Malpractices

Sn	Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Obtaining questions through social media before examination	140	3.19	.755
2	Copying during examination	140	2.89	.840
3	Sending foreign materials to exam hall	140	2.85	.856
4	Invigilators helping students	140	2.61	.765
5	Parents obtaining questions for their wards before examination	140	1.89	.736
6	Use mobile phones to cheat during exams	140	1.79	.737
7	Someone else going to the examination hall to write for another person (Impersonation)	140	1.27	.477

Source: Field survey, (2020)

From Table 14, the findings of the analysis show that majority of the teachers are of the view that “Obtaining questions through social media before examination” (M = 3.1, SD = .755) is the most practiced form of examination malpractices among senior high schools. “Copying during examination” (M = 2.89, SD = .840) and “Sending foreign materials to examination hall” (M = 2.85, SD = .856) are the next two most practiced form of EM. “Invigilators helping students” (M = 2.61, SD = .765) is the fourth most practiced form of EM among senior high schools. “Parents obtaining questions for their wards before

examination” ( $M = 1.89$ ,  $SD = .736$ ), “Use of mobile phones to cheat during exams” ( $M = 1.79$ ,  $SD = .737$ ), and “someone else going to the examination hall to write for another person (Impersonation)” ( $M = 1.27$ ,  $SD = .477$ ), are the bottom three of the forms of EM among senior high school in New Juaben Municipal Assembly.

#### **Discussion of Research Question 1**

The research question 1 investigated the forms of examination malpractices among senior high schools in New Juaben Municipal in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The findings revealed that various forms are employed by perpetrators of EM in their deed. From the findings, both students and teachers showed knowledge of the existence of all the forms of malpractices that this study sought to investigate. This finding is corroborated by findings of numerous studies. In a WAEC (2018) report on the types of examination malpractices among senior high schools in Ghana, most of these forms of malpractices were found to have been employed by perpetrators. Again, this finding is consistent with Ajayi and Ayodele (2002), who concluded that individuals who engage in EM employ various forms. The various forms of EM identified in their study corroborate the findings in this study. Further, the two most practiced form of examination malpractice as revealed by both students and teachers’ responses are “obtaining questions through social media before examination” and “copying during examination”. This finding is consistent with WAEC findings in 2018, as WAEC indicated that copying during examination was one of the most practiced forms of malpractice with over 75% of cases of EM being attributed to this form of malpractice.

Conceivably, the alarming part of these findings in this research, and indeed should raise concern among all stakeholders in the education sector, is the use of social media platforms for cheating. Folsom and Awuah (2014) report that, agents acquire examination questions and disseminate them through the use of social media platforms. Also, Okebukola (2014) reported that the supremacy of the analogue type of copying is yielding to digital, where leaked question papers with answers are downloaded from dubious websites and social media platforms.

Further, “sending foreign materials to examination hall” which came out as one of the top four forms of EM from both teachers and students’ responses is corroborated by WAEC (2018). WAEC report on malpractices indicated that this form of malpractice is among the three most used form of EM. Again, invigilator involvement in EM, is identified as the third and fourth most perpetrated form of EM by students and teachers respectively. This finding is consistent with WAEC’s findings where the most prominent of the forms of EM was collusion – an act which included students receiving assistance from invigilators during the examinations. The findings also revealed slight differences in the responses of teachers and students. From the analysis, the use of mobile phones during examination was sixth most used form of EM for teachers but was the fifth choice by students. Again, parents’ involvement in EM was a fifth choice by teachers but students considered it to be the sixth most used form of EM. Impersonation, however, was considered to be the least choice of EM by both students and teachers. This finding is consistent with WAEC, as impersonation recorded only 0.01% in May/June 2018 WASSCE.

Who are the key actors in examination malpractices among senior high schools in New Juaben Municipal in the Eastern Region of Ghana?

Analysis and discussions of participants' responses on research question two are presented in this section. In ascertaining from students and teachers the key actors (persons) involved in EM, participants' responses were discussed using means and standard deviations. The results of students' responses are presented in Table 15.

Table 15: *Students' Responses on the Key Actors Involved in Examination Malpractices*

Sn	Key Actors	N	Mean	SD
1	Students	520	2.75	.897
2	Invigilators	520	2.01	.772
3	Teachers	520	1.96	.809
4	School Administrators	520	1.53	.825
5	WAEC Officials	520	1.49	.660
6	Security Personnel (Police Service)	520	1.43	.673
7	Government officials	520	1.37	.622
8	Parents/Guardians	520	1.33	.590

Source: Field survey, (2020)

It can be observed from Table 15 that all these categories of persons (key actors) are involved in EM in senior high schools in New Juaben Municipal Assembly as each of the categories recorded some responses from participants. The means and standard deviations of the responses indicate that out of the 520 students who responded to the questionnaire, majority of them hold the view that "Students" (M = 2.75, SD= 0.897) are the main perpetrators of EM. Further, "Invigilators" were identified as the next key actors of examination malpractices

(M= 2.01, SD = .772). Further, “Teachers” (M = 1.96, SD = .809) were identified as the next group of persons involved in examination malpractices completing the top three most persons that indulge in various forms of malpractices in examinations. The rest of the key actors which made the bottom five all recorded some significant endorsement from the respondents as being involved in examination malpractices. The order in which they appear are; School Administrators (M = 1.5, SD = 0.825) WAEC officials (M = 1.49, SD = .660), Security Personnel (Police Service) (M = 1.43, SD = 0.673), Government officials (M = 1.37, SD = .622), and Parents/Guardians (M = 1.33, SD = .590). Teachers’ responses concerning the key actors involved in examination malpractices among senior high schools in New Juaben Municipal are presented in Table 16.

Table 16: *Teachers’ Responses on the Key Actors Involved in Examination Malpractices*

Sn	Key Actors	N	Mean	SD
1	Students	140	3.51	.684
2	Invigilators	140	2.76	.767
3	Teachers	140	2.55	.932
4	WAEC officials	140	2.54	.817
5	School Administrators	140	2.16	.792
6	Parents/Guardians	140	2.01	.673
7	Security Personnel (Police Service)	140	1.95	.842
8	Government officials	140	1.63	.682

Source: Field survey, (2020)

Results from Table 16 show that all the 8 key actors are involved in EM in senior high schools in New Juaben Municipal Assembly as each of the

categories of key actors recorded some significant responses endorsing their involvement. The responses indicate that out of the 140 teachers who responded to the questionnaire, majority of them hold the view that “Students” ( $M = 3.51$ ,  $SD = 0.684$ ) are the top most group of persons that perpetrate the acts of EM. Further, “Invigilators” were identified as the next key actors of examination malpractices ( $M = 2.76$ ,  $SD = 0.767$ ). The results further indicate that “Teachers” ( $M = 2.55$ ,  $SD = 0.932$ ) were the third group of persons involved in various forms of examination malpractices, completing the top three categories of individuals that are key actors in examination malpractices. The rest of the key actors, the order in which they appear are; “WAEC officials” ( $M = 2.54$ ,  $SD = .817$ ), “School Administrators” ( $M = 2.16$ ,  $SD = .792$ ), “Parents/Guardians” ( $M = 2.01$ ,  $SD = .673$ ), Security Personnel (Police Service) ( $M = 1.95$ ,  $SD = 0.842$ ) and Government officials ( $M = 1.63$ ,  $SD = 0.682$ ), completed the bottom five of the key actors involved in examination malpractices among senior high schools in New Juaben Municipal Assembly in the Eastern Region of Ghana.

#### **Discussion of Research Question 2**

The research question 2 investigated the key actors involved in examination malpractices among senior high schools in New Juaben Municipal in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The findings revealed that all the eight key actors are involved in EM as each of category of the key actors recorded some significant endorsement from both teachers and students. From the findings, both students and teachers indicated that the top most category of key actors involved in EM in New Juaben Municipal are “Students”. This finding is not entirely surprising as students are the centre of examinations. The finding



further revealed that “Invigilators” and “Teachers” are the next top two key actors who engage in malpractices in examination. These findings are consistent with Onyechere (2004). Onyechere listed students, subject teachers, invigilators/supervisors as key agents of malpractices in examinations.

Again, findings from both Table 15 and Table 16 show that, WAEC officials and School Administrators are the next two top groups that are involved in EM. This completes the top five of the key actors involved in EM. This finding indicates that individuals that are directly involved in examinations are most likely to engage in the act as these top five key actors are all directly involved in various activities of examinations. The bottom three key actors also recorded responses that indicate that these categories of persons are involved in examination malpractices, although quite a substantial number of the respondents hold the view that these persons are rarely involved in EM. The findings of research question 2 are consistent with Dzakadzie (2019), Folsom and Awuah (2014), Joshua (2009), and WAEC (2018), as these studies identified all these persons as actors in examination malpractices.

The findings also revealed slight differences in the responses of teachers and students. From the analysis, parents’ involvement was the last choice by students but teachers considered this category of key actors as the fifth choice. Similarly, “Government officials” was the last choice for teachers but was considered by students as the seventh choice.

**What reasons account for persons’ engaging in examination malpractices?**

Means and standard deviations were used in ascertaining from students and teachers reasons that account for some persons’ engagement in examination malpractices. The results are presented in Tables 17 and 18.

Table 17: *Students’ Responses on Reasons for Persons’ Engaging in Examination Malpractices*

Sn	Statements	N	Mean	SD
1	As a result of poor students attitudes towards learning	520	2.87	1.009
2	As a way of meeting high expectations (i.e., parents, school and society)	520	2.81	.955
3	As a result of poor teaching	520	2.64	.860
4	As a result of inadequate school facilities	520	2.63	.999
5	As a way of boosting school image	520	2.31	.919
6	As a way of helping others	520	2.21	.957
7	To increase standards of education in the district/municipal/metropolis	520	2.03	.884

Source: Field survey, (2020)

Results of the analysis in Table 17 indicate that majority of the students perceive “poor students attitudes towards learning” (M =2.87, SD = 1.009) as the main reason why some persons engage in EM. Further, the responses indicate that “meeting high expectations (M =2.81, SD = .955) is the second most reason that account for why some persons indulge in malpractices during examinations. “Poor teaching” (M =2.64, SD = .860) and “inadequate school facilities” (M =2.63, SD = .999) were endorsed by respondents to complete the top four

reasons that account for persons' involvement in examination malpractices. The other three reasons identified in this study were endorsed by respondents as the bottom three reasons that account for some persons' involvement in examination malpractices. The order in which they appear are (i) boosting school image (M = 2.31, SD = .919), (ii) a way of helping others (M= 2.21, SD = .957), and (iii) increase standards of education in the district/municipal/metropolis (M = 2.03, SD = .884) are reasons that account for persons' involvement in EM. Table 18 presents a summary of teachers' responses with respect to reasons that account for persons' engaging in examination malpractices.

Table 18: *Teachers' Responses on Reasons for Persons' Engaging in Examination Malpractices*

Sn	Statements	N	Mean	SD
1	As a result of poor students attitudes towards learning	140	3.75	.467
2	As a result of inadequate school facilities	140	3.43	.589
3	As a result of poor teaching	140	3.26	.716
4	As a way of meeting high expectations (i.e., parents, school and society)	140	3.16	.558
5	As a way of boosting school image	140	3.16	.615
6	As a way of helping others	140	2.96	.628
7	To increase standards of education in the district/municipal/metropolis	140	2.81	.729

Source: Field survey, (2020)

Results from Table 18 show that majority of the teachers perceive "poor students attitudes towards learning" (M =3.75, SD = .467) as the prime reason

why some persons engage in EM. Besides, the responses indicate that “inadequate school facilities” ( $M = 3.43, SD = .589$ ), “poor teaching” ( $M = 3.26, SD = .716$ ), and “meeting high expectations” ( $M = 3.16, SD = .558$ ), completed the top four reasons that accounts for most persons’ involvement in examination malpractices. Finally, the results indicate that respondents were of the view that “boosting school image” ( $M = 3.16, SD = .615$ ), “a way of helping others” ( $M = 2.96, SD = .628$ ), and “increasing standards of education in the district/municipal/metropolis” ( $M = 2.81, SD = .729$ ), are the bottom three reasons that account for individuals engaging in EM.

### **Discussion of Research Question 3**

The research question 3 sought to find out the reasons that account for persons’ involvement in EM among senior high schools in New Juaben Municipal in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The findings revealed that both students and teachers hold the view that poor students’ attitudes towards learning is the single most prominent reason that accounts for many individuals to engage in EM. This perhaps is not surprising as students are the centre of examinations. This means, therefore, that failure to prepare adequately towards examinations is a sure consequence of driving students to substitute the act of malpractices for their ineptitude. This finding is consistent with Jimoh (2009) who identifies the causes of examination malpractice to include the students’ nonchalant behaviour over studying.

Furthermore, results of the students’ responses indicate that majority of the students are of the view that “high expectations from parents, teachers, society, etc. on students to pass examination” and “poor teaching on the part of teachers” are the two other most prominent reasons that account for many

persons to indulge in EM. Yusuf, Yinusa, and Bamgbose, (2015), corroborate this finding as they reported that lack of teacher commitment, poor teaching methods and desire by students to pass by all means due to high expectation from relations, are key factors that leads to EM. The findings further revealed that “inadequate school facilities”, endorsed by majority of the students is the fourth most prominent reason that account for many persons’ involvement in acts of EM. However, in the case of teachers, majority endorsed this factor as the second most prominent reason. The overwhelming endorsement of this factor as one of the top four reasons that account for some persons’ involvement in malpractices during examination by both teachers and students is not surprising as this finding is consistent with Badejo and Gandonu, (2010) and Dzakadzie (2015), as it was identified in these studies that inadequate school facilities is a major reason that account for some individuals to indulge in EM as they are not able to adequately prepare for examinations.

From the findings, it is realised that both teachers and students consider (i) poor students attitudes towards learning (ii) inadequate school facilities (iii) poor teaching and (iv) meeting high expectations, as the four top most reasons that account for many persons’ involvement in examination malpractice.

Although (i) boosting school image (ii) as a way helping others (iii) as a way to increase standards of education in the district/municipal/metropolis, were the bottom three choice for both teachers and students, many of the respondents hold the view that these are still good enough reasons that account for some persons’ involvement in various acts of examination malpractices.

What strategies are perceived to be effective in minimizing examination malpractice among senior high schools in New Juaben Municipal in the Eastern Region of Ghana?

Research question four sought to find out the strategies that are perceived by teachers and students to be the most effective in minimizing examination malpractice among senior high schools in New Juaben Municipal in the Eastern Region of Ghana. Means and standard deviations of the responses were computed. Table 19 presents a summary of students' responses.

Table 19: *Students' Responses on Strategies Perceived to be Effective in Minimizing EM*

Sn	Statements	N	Mean	SD
1	Ensure good teaching	520	3.39	.697
2	Provision of adequate facilities for teaching and learning	520	3.29	.847
3	Encourage series of tests before final exams (e.g., school mocks and district mocks)	520	3.18	.903
4	Reward for honesty and excellence	520	3.15	.937
5	Focus education on skill acquisition instead of paper and pencil examination	520	3.06	1.012
6	Instant punishment to anyone who engages in EM	520	2.85	.937
7	Public campaigns and education on the effects of EM	520	2.78	.948
8	Employ people who are reliable to manage the examination system	520	2.78	1.012

Source: Field survey, (2020)

The data analysis in Table 19 shows that the students are of the opinion that each of the strategies identified and used in this study has the potential of helping minimize the menace of examination malpractices. From the findings, “Ensuring good teaching” ( $M = 3.39$ ,  $SD = .697$ ) is perceived by majority of the respondents to be the most effective strategy for minimising examination malpractices. Further, the findings revealed that “Provision of adequate facilities for teaching and learning” ( $M = 3.29$ ,  $SD = 0.847$ ) is perceived by students to be the next strategy that can help minimize examination malpractice. “Encourage series of tests before final examination” ( $M = 3.18$ ,  $SD = 0.903$ ), “Reward for honesty and excellence” ( $M = 3.15$ ,  $SD=0.937$ ), and “Focusing education on skill acquisition instead of paper and pencil examination” ( $M = 3.06$ ,  $SD=0.012$ ), are the next three strategies perceived by students to be effective in minimizing examination malpractice. Finally, the results indicates that “Instant punishment”, “Public campaigns and education on the effects of EM” and “Employing people who are reliable to manage the examination system”, are the bottom three out of the eight strategies identified for this study. However, these three strategies received an overwhelming endorsement by respondents that they will be effective in minimizing examination malpractice.

Table 20 presents a summary of participants’ responses with respect to the strategies perceived to be effective in minimizing examination malpractice.

Table 20: *Teachers’ Responses on Strategies Perceived to be Effective in Minimizing EM*

Sn	Statements	N	Mean	SD
1	Ensure good teaching	140	3.89	2.521
2	Instant punishment to anyone who engages in EM	140	3.76	.443
3	Provision of adequate facilities for teaching and learning	140	3.70	.532
4	Reward for honesty and excellence	140	3.66	.517
5	Focus education on skill acquisition instead of paper and pencil examination	140	3.66	.533
6	Public campaigns and education on the effects of EM	140	3.64	.483
7	Employ people who are reliable to manage the examination system	140	3.50	.569
8	Encourage series of tests before final exams (e.g., school mocks and district mocks)	140	3.34	.642

Source: Field survey, (2020)

The findings in Table 20 show that majority of teachers perceive all these strategies to be effective in minimizing malpractices in examination as each of the strategies received high endorsement from teachers. From the findings, “Ensuring good teaching” (M = 3.89, SD = 2.521) is perceived by majority of the respondents to be the most effective strategy for minimising



examination malpractices. Further, the findings revealed that “Instant punishment to anyone who engages in examination malpractices” ( $M = 3.76$ ,  $SD = 0.443$ ) is perceived to be the next most effective strategy for minimising EM. This finding is different from that of the students as it was a sixth choice for students. “Provision of adequate facilities for teaching and learning” ( $M = 3.70$ ,  $SD = 0.532$ ), “Reward for honesty and excellence” ( $M = 3.66$ ,  $SD = 0.517$ ), and “Focus education on skill acquisition instead of paper and pencil examination” ( $M = 3.66$ ,  $SD = 0.533$ ), are perceived by teachers to be the next three most effective strategies for minimising EM.

The results also indicate that “Public campaigns and education on the effects of EM” ( $M = 3.64$ ,  $SD = .483$ ), “Employ people who are reliable to manage the examination system” ( $M = 3.50$ ,  $SD = .569$ ) and “Encourage series of tests before final exams (e.g., school mocks and district mocks)” ( $M = 3.34$ ,  $SD = .642$ ) are the bottom three out of the eight strategies identified for this study. However, these three strategies received an overwhelming endorsement by respondents that these strategies will be effective in minimizing examination malpractice.

The result was also analysed using the dependent samples t-test to test the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in mean ratings with respect to gender and independent samples t-test to test the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in mean ratings with respect to type of school on the strategies perceived to be effective in minimizing examination malpractice.

Table 21 shows distribution of students with respect to gender and school type, their means and the result of the t-test.

Table 21: *Gender and School Type on the Perceived Strategies for Minimizing Examination Malpractice*

Factor	Categories	N	mean	Std. deviation	df	t	Sig.
Gender	Male	274	24.41	4.96	245	.301	.764
	Female	246	24.29	5.10			
Type of school	Private	125	25.22	4.75	518	1.89	.059
	Public	395	24.25	5.08			

\*significant ( $p < 0.05$ )

The analyses in Table 23 show that there are no significant differences in the mean ratings with respect to the categories of the various factors, gender ( $t = .301$   $p = 0.764$ ) and school type ( $t = 1.89$ ,  $p = .059$ ). Therefore, the null hypotheses that there is no significant difference in mean ratings with respect to males and females and private and public schools on the strategies perceived to be effective in minimising examination malpractice were not rejected. Hence, we reject the alternative hypotheses that gender and school type statistically influence SHS students' choices of strategies for minimising examination malpractices.

#### Discussion of Research Question 4

The research question 4 sought to find out the strategies that are perceived to be effective in minimising examination malpractices among senior high schools in New Juaben Municipal in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The findings revealed that both students and teachers hold the view that “effective teaching” is the most effective strategy for combating EM. This finding is

consistent with Dzakadzie (2015) who concluded that stakeholders put high premium on good teaching as one of the best intervention strategies to curb examination malpractices. This is an indication that perhaps radical improvement in teaching in senior high schools could help minimise the menace.

The findings further show that students believe that provision of adequate facilities for teaching and learning and encouraging series of tests before final examinations are the next two best strategies for combating EM. Teachers, however, differ in their choice as their responses indicated that “instant punishment to anyone who engages in EM” and “provision of adequate facilities for teaching and learning” are the next two best strategies for combating EM. The respondents’ view on the provision of adequate facilities for teaching and learning as one of the top three best strategies, is consistent with Dzakadzie (2015). In that study, as many as 92% of the respondents endorsed provision of adequate facilities as one of the most effective strategies. The findings in this research, in terms of percentages, revealed that 80.6% of the respondents endorse the provision of adequate facilities. This finding, therefore, suggests that authorities in charge of education of senior high schools should ensure that adequate facilities are provided to augment teaching and learning.

The rest of the students’ responses, ranked in order, are reward for honesty and excellence endorsed by 75.8%, focus education on skill acquisition instead of paper and pencil examination, endorsed by 70%, instant punishment, endorsed by 68.8%, public campaigns and education on the effects of EM, endorsed by 65.7% and employing people who are reliable to manage the

examination system, endorsed by 65.6%. A finding worthy to note is that even though the use of “instant punishment” received an overwhelming endorsement from teachers as the second most effective strategy, 31.2% of students disagreed with the use of instant punishment, thereby placing sixth in their ranking. This finding is consistent with Dzakadzie (2015), who reported that 172 (29%) of the respondents disagreed on instant sanction on culprits. He concludes that perhaps perpetrators do not recognise that examination malpractice is a crime that should be punishable.

The rest of the teachers’ responses, ranked in order, are provision of adequate facilities for teaching and learning, focus education on skill acquisition instead of paper and pencil examination, public campaigns and education on the effects of EM, employ people who are reliable to manage the examination system, and encouraging series of tests before final examination.

In as much as there were overwhelming endorsement of the strategies by both teachers and students, it is worthy to note that a few of the respondents, especially the students, disagreed with some of the strategies. This finding is corroborated by Dzakadzie (2015), who indicates that in spite of the overwhelming endorsement of the strategies, some respondents disagreed. In the case of teachers, there was an insignificant proportion of them disagreeing with the strategies with less than 2% in all cases except for “encouraging series of tests before final exams” which recorded about 7%.

Further, results from the study show that the mean ratings, with respect to gender and school type, on the strategies perceived to be effective in minimizing EM show that students responses are relatively the same. Again, the t-test results show that being a male or female and attending public or private

senior high school has no influence on the choices of students strategies they perceive to be effective in minimising EM. This finding is related to the findings of Badejo and Gandonu (2001) that gender has no influence on an individual engaging in EM or their preference of strategies for curbing the menace. However, the findings in this study contradict with Omotere (2010). Omotere in a case study at Ijebu- ode Local Government Area of Ogun State which included gender as a predictor of examination malpractice among secondary schools students, revealed that more females are involved in examination malpractice than males and that the their choice of strategies for combating EM differ significantly from that of their male counterparts. Again, the findings from this study contradict with Olasehinde- Williams, Abdullahi, and Owolabi (2003) in a study to investigate the relationship between background variables and cheating tendencies among students. The findings revealed that more males were involved in cheating in an examination than females and that their preferences of strategies for combating EM differ significantly from that of their female counterparts.

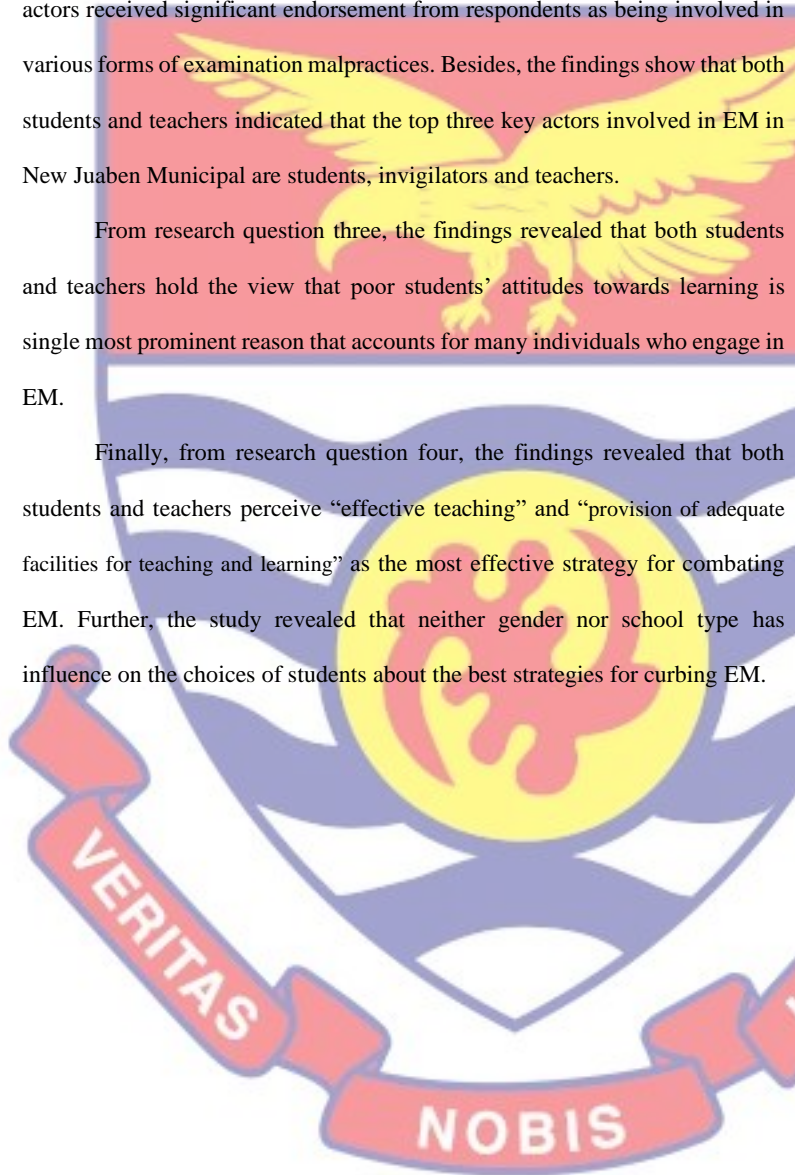
#### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter presents the discussions of the findings of the study. The analyses and discussions covered four researched questions. Findings from research question one of the study showed that both students and teachers showed knowledge of the existence of all the forms of malpractices that this study sought to investigate. Further, the two most practiced form of examination malpractice as revealed by both students and teachers' responses are "obtaining questions through social media before examination" and "copying during examination"

From research question two, the findings of the study revealed that all the 8 key actors identified for this study are involved in EM. Each of the key actors received significant endorsement from respondents as being involved in various forms of examination malpractices. Besides, the findings show that both students and teachers indicated that the top three key actors involved in EM in New Juaben Municipal are students, invigilators and teachers.

From research question three, the findings revealed that both students and teachers hold the view that poor students' attitudes towards learning is single most prominent reason that accounts for many individuals who engage in EM.

Finally, from research question four, the findings revealed that both students and teachers perceive "effective teaching" and "provision of adequate facilities for teaching and learning" as the most effective strategy for combating EM. Further, the study revealed that neither gender nor school type has influence on the choices of students about the best strategies for curbing EM.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Overview

The purpose of this study was to investigate the current trends in examination malpractices. The study specifically investigated the various forms of examination malpractices that exist in senior high schools, the reasons that account for persons' involvement in EM, the key actors that are involved in EM, and ascertain the strategies perceived by respondents to be effective in minimising examination malpractice among senior high schools in New Juaben Municipal Assembly in Ghana.

Four research questions were formulated to guide the study. They are:

- (i) What are the forms of examination malpractices among senior high school students and teachers in New Juaben Municipal in the Eastern Region of Ghana?
- (ii) Who are the key actors in examination malpractices among senior high school students of New Juaben Municipal in the Eastern Region of Ghana?
- (iii) What reasons account for persons' engaging in examination malpractices? and
- (iv) What strategies are perceived to be effective in minimizing examination malpractice among senior high schools in New Juaben Municipal in the Eastern Region of Ghana?

Two research hypotheses were also analysed. Hypothesis one sought to ascertain if males and females differed in their mean ratings with respect to strategies perceived to be effective in minimizing examination malpractice. Hypothesis two then sought to find out if the mean ratings of public senior high

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schools differ significantly from that of private senior high schools with respect to strategies perceived to be effective in minimizing examination malpractice.

The research was conducted in New Juaben Municipal in the Eastern Region of Ghana. 11 senior high schools comprising eight public and three private schools. The study employed simple random sampling technique to select the respondents. The sample size for the data was 660 respondents comprising 520 final year students and 140 senior high school teachers. A descriptive survey design was employed for the study as the focus of the study was to describe the current trends of EM among senior high schools in New Juaben Municipal Assembly. Data was collected by means of questionnaire with five sections, structured using the Likert Scale. Percentages, means, standard deviations, independent samples t-test and dependent samples t-test were used to analyse the data collected.

### **Summary**

The following key findings were made:

It was found in this study that the most practiced form of examination malpractice as revealed by both students and teachers' responses is "obtaining questions through social media before examination". Besides, "copying during examination", "sending foreign materials to examination hall" and "invigilators helping students" are the next forms of malpractices commonly practiced during examinations. The other three, "use of mobile phones to cheat during examination", "parents obtaining questions for their wards before examination", and "someone else going to the examination hall to write for another person (Impersonation)", were equally endorsed by respondents as being ways employed by perpetrators of examination malpractice.



The findings from the study revealed that all the 8 key actors are involved in EM. From the findings, both students and teachers indicated that “Students” are the main key actors involved in EM in New Juaben Municipal. “Invigilators” and “teachers” are the next two key actors of malpractices in examination among senior high schools in New Juaben Municipal. “WAEC officials” and “School Administrators” are the next two top groups that are involved in EM. The bottom three key actors, parents/guardians, Security personnel (Police service) and “Government officials” recorded responses that indicate that these groups of persons are sometimes involved in examination malpractices.

From the findings, both teachers and students consider “poor students attitudes towards learning” as the main reason that accounts for some students’ involvement in examination malpractices. Further, “Inadequate school facilities”, “Poor teaching and “Meeting high expectations”, are the next three top most reasons that account for some persons’ involvement in examination malpractices. Although (i) boosting school image (ii) as a way helping others (iii) as a way to increase standards of education in the district/municipal/metropolis, were the bottom three choice for both teachers and students, many of the respondents hold the view that these are still good enough reasons that account for persons’ involvement in examination malpractices..

The findings revealed that both students and teachers hold the view that “effective teaching” is the best strategy for combating EM. The findings further show that provision of adequate facilities for teaching and learning, instant punishment to anyone who engages in EM, encouraging series of tests before

final exams and rewarding honesty and excellence are the next best strategies for combating EM. The rest, “public campaigns and education on the effects of EM and employing people who are reliable to manage the examination system”, were considered to be the least effective strategies for combating EM. Besides, the study also revealed that being a male or female and attending public or private senior high school has no influence on students’ choices about the best strategies for curbing EM.

### **Conclusions**

The study revealed that a new trend of examination malpractice is emerging. Currently, perpetrators are obtaining questions through social media platforms before examination. Most of the researches on examination malpractices over the years have found “Copying during examination” “Sending foreign materials to examination hall” and “Invigilators helping students” to be the most prevalent forms of malpractices in examinations. However, with the proliferation of technology and its accompanying social media platforms in almost every part of the country, perpetrators get access to leaked questions and disseminate them to many others. This finding is very worrisome. This is so because Okebukola (2014) had warned that the supremacy of the analogue type of copying is yielding to digital, where leaked question papers with answers are downloaded from dubious websites and social media platforms. Perhaps, the rise in cases of EM is thriving in the school system; irrespective of the numerous strategies and actions adopted by authorities to curb it, mainly as a result of the new trend that this monster called examination malpractice has taken.

Furthermore, students, invigilators, teachers, WAEC officials and school administrators, serving as key actors in examination malpractices suggests that individuals that are directly involved in examinations are mostly the culprits of examination malpractices. This means that the fight against EM in all its ramifications is crucial and daunting, and as such should be intensified and persistent as these groups of individuals are inevitably going to be part of the examination system at all times.

Also, “Poor students’ attitudes towards learning” is the main reason that accounts for most students’ involvement in examination malpractices. This suggests that, some students put up unwholesome attitudes towards their leaning with the believe that they can engage in various acts of malpractices in examination to earn good scores. For that reason, until effective strategies are put in place to clamp down on all forms of malpractices, perpetrators will continue to see these acts of malpractices as a means of obtaining good scores instead of committing to their studies and putting up the right behaviour towards their learning.

Again, inadequate school facilities and poor teaching serve as a motivation for culprits to engage in malpractices as a substitute for the deficiencies in these areas. When there is high expectations on students and teachers to achieve high academic success at all cost, it serves as a recipe for most perpetrators of examination malpractice, hence, doing all that it takes including indulging in the acts of malpractices. That is, when students and teachers are highly expected to achieve success in examinations but there are insufficient facilities to aid effective teaching and learning, then examination malpractices become an alternative to meet such high expectations.

The study has shown that fighting examination malpractices will demand first and foremost, good teaching. When teachers teach students well to gain conceptual understanding of what they are taught, they are most likely to approach examinations with confidence and pass fairly without having to engage in malpractices. Besides, provision of adequate facilities for teaching and learning will aid students and teachers alike to prepare effectively for examinations. Also, meting out punishment instantly to anyone who engages in EM will serve as a deterrent to others to stay away from EM. Finally, the study has shown that being a male or female and attending public or private senior high school has no influence on students' choices about the strategies that should be adopted to minimise EM. This means the various strategies can be implemented holistically without having to institute different strategies for males and females or for private of public schools.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are suggested based on the findings of this research for policy and practice.

1. The authorities in charge of examinations in senior high schools in New Juaben Municipal should be proactive by organising periodic guidance and counseling for students and teachers on the ills of examination malpractice and how to avoid such practices.
2. WAEC should employ a more robust anti-cybercrime unit to monitor and apprehend perpetrators who resort to the use of the internet through social media platforms to obtain questions before examination.
3. School authorities in all senior high schools in New Juaben Municipal should ensure adequate preparation of students for the examination by

the subject teachers. In order to make this effective, teachers' welfare should be improved so that they will teach conscientiously in the hope of producing more scholarly students, who will not be interested in examination malpractice.

4. The government should enforce the Act on examination malpractice to ensure that culprits are punished as spelt out in the Act. And ensuring that severe instant punishments are meted out to perpetrators and benefactors of EM.
5. Government should make effort to augment the deficit in required facilities in all senior high schools in New Juaben Municipal needed to make teaching and learning effective, thereby ensuring the adequate preparation of students which will motivate them to desist from indulging in any act of malpractices in examination.
6. Poor handling of examination materials by custodians should be properly readdressed. In other words, the managers of examination, namely examination councils (e.g. WAEC), invigilators, supervisors, law enforcement agents should be made more effective. In doing so, individuals who fight and/or expose examination malpractices should be rewarded and given public acclamation to encourage others.

#### **Suggestions for Further Research**

1. Further studies can be carried out on the extent to which the use of digital means especially social media platforms is impacting on examination malpractices in Ghana. This will provide knowledge on the effective strategies that can be adopted to combat the menace.

2. A replication of this study involving a larger sample is suggested in other regions and especially to cover the entire country.



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**APPENDIX A**

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST**

**SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH**

**FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS**

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND PSYCHOLOGY**

**Questionnaire for the Senior High Students & Teachers**

The purpose of this questionnaire is to identify the forms of examination malpractices among Senior High School (SHS) students in Ghana, its effects and strategies for combating the menace. It is hoped that the results of the research will help expose the lapses in our examination system and aid in policy decisions concerning effectiveness of examinations in Ghana. Please, respond to all items and do it honestly. No attempt will be made to associate your name with the completed instrument. All information will be kept **CONFIDENTIAL**. Thank you for your time.

**Instructions**

Please consider each of the questions carefully and indicate the response that appropriately applies to you. Please indicate your response to each item by ticking [✓] or writing in the appropriate space provided.

**Section A: Demographic Data**

1. Gender
  - a. Male [     ]
  - b. Female [     ]
2. What category is your school?
  - a. Private [     ]
  - b. Public [     ]

**Section B**

**Forms of Examination malpractices**

Instructions: For each statement, please tick [√] the appropriate box.

Statements	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1. Copying during examination				
2. Sending foreign materials to exam hall				
3. Use mobile phones to cheat during exams				
4. Obtaining questions through social media before examination				
5. Someone else going to the examination hall to write for another person (Impersonation)				
6. Invigilators helping students				
7. Parents obtaining questions for their wards before examination				

**Section C:**

**Persons involved in examination malpractices**

Instructions: For each statement, please tick [] the appropriate box.

Items	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1. The Students				
2. The Teachers				
3. Parents / Guardians				
4. School Administrators (e.g. Headteacher, secretary, bursar, etc.)				
5. Invigilators				
6. WAEC officials				
7. Security Personnel (Police service)				
8. Government Officials				

**Section D:**

**Reasons why some persons engage in examination malpractices**

Instructions: For each statement, please tick [√] the appropriate box.

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. As a way of helping others				
2. As a way of meeting high expectations (i.e., parents, school and society)				
3. As a way of boosting school image				
4. As a result of poor teaching				
5. As a result of inadequate school facilities				
6. To increase standards of education in the district/municipal/metropolis				
7. As a result of poor students attitudes towards learning				

**Section E:**

**Strategies Perceived to be Effective in Minimizing Examination**

**Malpractices**

Instructions: For each statement, please tick [] the appropriate box.

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Public campaigns and education on the effects of EM				
2. Reward for honesty and excellence				
3. Ensure good teaching				
4. Provision of adequate facilities for teaching and learning				
5. Instant punishment to anyone who engages in EM				
6. Focus education on skill acquisition instead of paper and pencil examination				
7. Encourage series of tests before final exams (e.g.,				

school mocks and district mocks)				
8. Employ people who are reliable to manage the examination system				



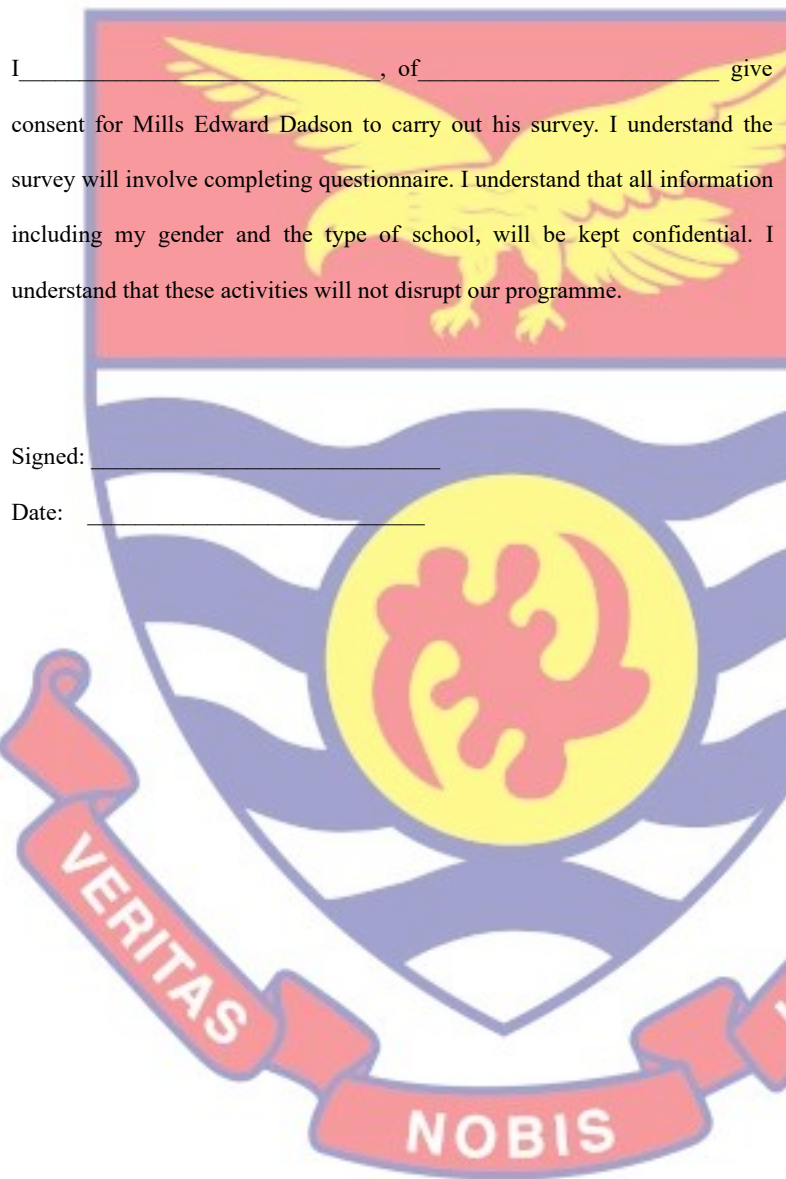
**APPENDIX B**

**Participant's Consent Form**

I \_\_\_\_\_, of \_\_\_\_\_ give  
consent for Mills Edward Dadson to carry out his survey. I understand the  
survey will involve completing questionnaire. I understand that all information  
including my gender and the type of school, will be kept confidential. I  
understand that these activities will not disrupt our programme.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_





APPENDIX C

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

