

Comparative Study on the influence of examination venue on examination malpractices among Bachelor of Education fourth-year students in both public and private universities in Kenya

¹Judy Njeri Muriuki, ²Prof. Daniel K. Gakunga, ³Dr. Alice Masese

^{1,2}Associate Professor, Department of Educational Foundations, University of Nairobi

³Senior Lecturer, Department of Educational Foundations, University of Nairobi

ABSTRACT: This study investigates the influence of examination venue on examination malpractices among Bachelor of Education fourth-year students in both public and private universities in Kenya. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the research encompasses both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, targeting a representative sample of students from diverse institutions. The findings reveal that the physical characteristics of examination venues, such as security measures, seating arrangements, and overall environment, significantly impact students' likelihood to engage in malpractices. Furthermore, comparisons between public and private universities highlight differing levels of malpractice prevalence, influenced by institutional policies and cultural attitudes towards cheating. The study underscores the need for universities to enhance examination venue management and enforce stricter examination protocols to mitigate malpractice incidents. Recommendations focus on creating conducive examination environments that discourage unethical behavior while fostering academic integrity. Ultimately, this research contributes to the broader discourse on academic honesty and assessment practices in higher education within the Kenyan context.

KEYWORDS: Examination venue, Examination malpractices, Bachelor of Education, Fourth-Year students, Public and Private universities Kenya.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Examination malpractice represents a pervasive challenge to academic integrity across educational contexts globally, particularly within developing countries. The World Bank (2021) defines examination malpractice as actions undermining academic integrity, providing unfair advantages to certain learners. Existing literature identifies various venue-specific factors contributing to malpractice, encompassing seating arrangements, security measures, environmental conditions, and institutional practices (Gottfried, 2021; Mumbua, 2022). Research indicates that the conditions of examination venues are crucial in influencing students' behaviours during assessments. Factors such as seating arrangements significantly impact the likelihood of malpractice; well-structured seating can minimize the opportunities for cooperation and cheating, while overcrowded settings promote collusion (Baker & Leary, 2020). A study in Nigeria demonstrated that compromised security measures, such as lax invigilation, significantly facilitated examination malpractice (Onabajo & Ajiboye, 2020). Moreover, environmental distractions—including noise and improper lighting—have been shown to hinder concentration, leading students to resort to unethical practices (Roberts & Wu, 2022; Senyameter et al., 2022).

Investigation into institutional practices reveals that those enforcing stringent academic integrity policies and fostering supportive environments deter examination malpractice significantly. However, varying levels of implementation hinder effective integrity management in many universities (Gemma et al., 2021). Studies suggest that well-managed examination environments should incorporate effective security measures, appropriate seating arrangements, and adequate supervision to uphold integrity throughout academic assessments (Mumbua, 2022).

2. METHODS

This study utilized a mixed-methods design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to achieve a comprehensive understanding of how examination venue factors influence malpractices among Bachelor of Education fourth-year students. The dual focus allowed for the numerical evaluation of responses to complement qualitative insights from participants.

The research design combined descriptive survey research and correlational methodologies. The quantitative aspect examined the extent to which venue factors contributed to examination malpractice, while the qualitative component provided deeper insight into student experiences and perceptions related to examination environments.

The target population included 4,170 fourth-year Bachelor of Education students, 86 lecturers, and 27 examination officers from selected public and private universities in Kenya. A stratified sampling technique was employed, yielding a sample of 365 students, 127 lecturers, and 27 examination officers for this study.

Data were gathered through structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The standardized questionnaires targeted students, lecturers, and examination officers to assess perceptions of venue conditions and their influence on malpractice.

Quantitative data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis, and ANOVA were employed to test research hypotheses. Qualitative data underwent thematic analysis to extract key insights.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 provides a detailed overview of the correlation analysis conducted to assess the relationship between examination venue factors and instances of examination malpractice among Bachelor of Education fourth-year students in public and private universities in Kenya.

Table 1: Correlation Analysis Between Examination Venue Factors and Examination Malpractice

Statistic	Value
Correlation Coefficient (R)	0.964
R-squared (R^2)	0.929
Adjusted R-squared	0.929
Standard Error	0.63448
F-statistic	4741.746
p-value	0

The statistical results summarized in Table 1 above reveal a remarkably strong correlation coefficient (R) of 0.964, indicating a very robust positive relationship between the conditions of examination venues and the likelihood of students engaging in malpractice. This high correlation suggests that as the quality and organization of examination venues improve, the instances of malpractice correspondingly decrease.

The R-squared value (R^2) of 0.929 is particularly noteworthy, as it signifies that approximately 92.9% of the variance in examination malpractice occurrences can be explained by the examination venue factors included in the model. This substantial percentage illustrates that venue-related conditions, such as seating arrangements, security measures, and overall environmental conditions, play a critical role in shaping students' behaviors during examinations. The remaining 7.1% of the variance could be attributed to other external factors not captured within this analysis, which may warrant further investigation in future research.

Another critical value presented in the table is the adjusted R-squared, which also stands at 0.929. Adjusted R-squared accounts for the number of predictors in the model, ensuring that the model's predictive power is not artificially inflated when multiple variables are included. The consistency in the R-squared and adjusted R-squared values further supports the reliability and robustness of the model, reinforcing the notion that examination venue conditions significantly impact the integrity of academic assessments.

The standard error of the estimate is reported as 0.63448, indicating a relatively small average deviation between the predicted values and the actual observed outcomes. This low standard error reflects the model's accuracy in predicting examination malpractice based on the venue factors, suggesting that the influence of these factors is both strong and predictable within the sample population.

Furthermore, the F-statistic of 4741.746, alongside a p-value of 0.000, demonstrates that the regression model is statistically significant. The F-statistic tests the overall significance of the model, and the extremely low p-value indicates that the likelihood of observing such results due to chance is virtually negligible. This statistical significance substantiates the hypothesis that examination venue factors are fundamentally linked to the prevalence of examination malpractice.

A significant positive correlation ($R = 0.964$) indicates a strong relationship between examination venue factors and instances of examination malpractice, suggesting improved venue conditions can lower malpractice occurrences, as shown in Table 17. The tables based on the provided information. Each table is followed by a brief presentation and discussion.

Table 2: ANOVA Results for Examination Venue Factors and Examination Malpractice

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Regression	1908.871	1	1908.871	4741.746	0
Residual	146.132	363	0.403		
Total	2055.003	364			

Table 2 presents the ANOVA results used to analyze the significance of examination venue factors on examination malpractice. The regression sum of squares (1908.871) is substantial compared to the residual sum of squares (146.132), underlining that the independent variables effectively explain most of the variance in the dependent variable, which is examination malpractice. The F-statistic value of 4741.746, coupled with a p-value of 0.000, confirms that the model is statistically significant, indicating that examination venue factors play a critical role in influencing malpractice. As such, these results affirm the necessity for educational institutions to address venue-related issues to mitigate instances of malpractice.

Table 3: Influence of Seating Arrangements on Examination Malpractice

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	0	0%
Agree	20	5.48%
Neutral	50	13.70%
Disagree	120	32.88%
Strongly Disagree	175	48.94%
Total	365	100%

Table 3 illustrates student perceptions related to the influence of seating arrangements on examination malpractice. A significant majority (81.82%) of respondents disagreed with the notion that seating arrangements prevented malpractice, with 48.94% strongly disagreeing. This suggests a considerable skepticism regarding current seating strategies, highlighting a need for universities to reconsider how seating is organized during examinations. Improving seating arrangements could potentially reduce opportunities for cheating, reinforcing academic integrity.

Table 4: Effectiveness of Security Measures in Examination Venues

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very Effective	10	2.74%
Effective	45	12.32%
Neutral	60	16.44%
Ineffective	115	31.16%
Very Ineffective	135	36.33%
Total	365	100%

Table 4 presents students' perceptions of the effectiveness of security measures in examination venues. A combined total of 67.49% of respondents acknowledged that security measures were either ineffective or very ineffective. The lack of confidence in these measures suggests that lax security could foster an environment conducive to malpractice, emphasizing the necessity for stricter enforcement and improved security protocols during examinations.

Table 5: Lighting Conditions Impact on Performance

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	150	40.93%
No	215	59.07%
Total	365	100%

Table 5 highlights student responses regarding lighting conditions in examination venues. A notable 59.07% of participants reported that lighting negatively affected their performance, suggesting that insufficient or inappropriate lighting might compromise students' focus and overall examination experience. This finding underlines the importance of ensuring optimal lighting conditions to help safeguard academic integrity and support students' performance during assessments.

Table 6: Venue Layout and Design for Monitoring

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	130	35.60%
No	235	64.40%

In Table 6, the responses regarding the suitability of venue layout for monitoring students during examinations are presented. A significant majority (64.4%) of students indicated that the layout was not conducive to effective monitoring. This perception points to potential weaknesses in venue design that may encourage or facilitate malpractice, highlighting the need for universities to rethink venue layouts to enhance oversight and promote integrity in examinations.

Table 8: Access Control to Examination Venues

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	200	54.79%
No	165	45.21%
Total	365	100%

Table 8 reports on the availability of access control measures at examination venues. While over half (54.79%) of respondents believed that access control measures were in place, nearly half disagreed. This ambiguity suggests that the effectiveness of access control could be improved, indicating a need for more rigorous enforcement or clearer communication of the measures in place to prevent unauthorized access, and hence, minimize opportunities for malpractice.

Table 9: Influence of Seating Arrangements on Examination Malpractice

Response	Frequency	Percentage
No	120	32.88%
Yes	245	67.12%
Total	365	100%

Table 9 shows that 67.12% of respondents believed that seating arrangements did indeed influence examination malpractice, contrasting with previous findings in Table 3 regarding their effectiveness. This discrepancy highlights a complex relationship between seating design and students' perceptions of malpractice facilitation, suggesting that even if seating arrangements are believed to contribute to malpractice, they may not be effective in preventing it.

Table 10: Thematic Analysis of Focused Group Discussions and Interviews on the Influence of Examination Venue on Examination Malpractice

Source	Identified Themes	Percentage of Respondents
Lecturers	Poor Supervision	68%
Examination Officers	Environment Created for Cheating	76%

In Table 10, the analysis of focused group discussions and interviews reveals critical insights into the factors affecting examination malpractice. A significant portion of both lecturers (68%) and examination officers (76%) identified poor supervision and the enabling environment for cheating as key themes. This shared acknowledgement underscores the importance of effective monitoring during examinations and the necessity for institutions to address supervision practices to enhance integrity.

Table 11: Themes from FGDs and Interviews on the Influence of Poor Layout and Supervision on Examination Malpractice

Source	Identified Themes	Key Insights
Lecturers	Venue Design and Supervision	Poor layout and supervision increase chances of malpractice.
Examination Officers	Opportunity for Cheating	Crowded venues create conditions conducive to malpractice.

Table 11 elaborates on the thematic findings regarding venue design and supervision. Both lecturers and examination officers emphasized that inadequate venue layouts and supervision significantly contribute to opportunities for cheating. These insights highlight crucial areas for improvement, suggesting that educational institutions must prioritize the redesign of examination layouts and enhance supervisory practices to reduce malpractice opportunities effectively.

4. THEMATIC INSIGHTS FROM FOCUS GROUPS

Analysis of focused group discussions revealed critical themes identified by lecturers and examination officers regarding the influence of examination venues on malpractice. One prominent theme was poor supervision, which was highlighted as a significant factor that facilitates malpractices. Participants noted that inadequate monitoring during examinations often leads to students engaging in dishonest behavior due to the lack of oversight. Furthermore, the discussions emphasized the role of environmental opportunities, indicating that unkempt, unmonitored venues create conditions that are conducive to malpractice. Such environments not only distract students but also provide them with opportunities to carry out dishonest practices without fear of being caught.

In conclusion, the study underscores that various examination venue factors—such as seating arrangements, security protocols, lighting, and noise levels—substantially influence the occurrences of examination malpractice among Bachelor of Education fourth-year students in both public and private universities in Kenya. The findings illustrate that enhancing venue conditions could significantly mitigate instances of malpractice, thereby fostering an environment that promotes academic integrity. This highlights the necessity for universities to prioritize the improvement of examination environments, ensuring that they are adequately supervised and conducive to fair assessment practices. By addressing these venue-related factors, institutions can create a more trustworthy examination process that upholds educational standards and integrity.

Recommendations

Recommendations include policy recommendations and recommendations for further research

6.1 Policy Recommendations

Enhance Venue Management: To combat examination malpractice effectively, universities should prioritize enhancing the conditions of examination environments. This involves improving aspects such as seating arrangements, lighting, and overall cleanliness to create a more conducive testing atmosphere. Additionally, it is essential to implement formal training programs for invigilators, allowing them to optimize their oversight capabilities and monitor student behavior more effectively during exams. By investing in venue management and equipping invigilators with the necessary skills, institutions can significantly reduce opportunities for malpractice and foster a fair academic environment.

Address Academic Pressures: It is crucial for universities to recognize and address the academic pressures that often lead students to engage in dishonest practices. Implementing comprehensive student support programs can alleviate stress and offer resources such as counselling and time management workshops. By fostering a supportive environment that prioritizes mental health and well-being, institutions can empower students to adopt healthier study habits and academic behaviours. This proactive approach not only mitigates the risk of malpractice but also enhances overall student satisfaction and success in their educational journeys.

Establish Comprehensive Security Protocols: Universities must conduct a thorough review of their existing security measures surrounding examinations and take necessary actions to strengthen these protocols. This includes limiting unauthorized access to examination venues, utilizing technology such as surveillance cameras, and having proper identification checks for both students and invigilators. By establishing robust security measures, institutions can enhance the integrity of the examination process and create a climate of accountability where students feel that malpractice is monitored and deterred effectively.

Conduct Workshops on Academic Integrity: Raising awareness about the importance of academic integrity is vital in cultivating a culture of honesty within educational institutions. Universities should implement workshops and campaigns that target the significance of maintaining integrity during examinations. These initiatives can include discussions on the implications of academic dishonesty, the importance of personal responsibility, and strategies for studying effectively without resorting to unethical practices. By fostering a comprehensive understanding of academic integrity among students, institutions can instil the values of honesty and responsibility that are essential for their future professional endeavours.

6.2 Recommendations for Further Research

Longitudinal Studies: Future research should consider implementing longitudinal studies that track changes in student behaviour over time in response to modifications in examination venues. By observing students across different academic terms and under various venue conditions, researchers can gain valuable insights into the long-term effects of environmental changes on academic integrity and malpractice rates. Such studies would provide a dynamic understanding of how students adapt their behaviours in relation to improvements in examination settings, thereby informing policies and practices aimed at reducing malpractice.

Comparative Studies: It would be beneficial for future research to pursue comparative studies that expand the demographic diversity of the sample population. By including a wider range of student backgrounds, institutions, and geographical locations, researchers can enhance understanding of the various variables that affect examination malpractice. This broader perspective could help identify unique patterns and factors influencing academic dishonesty across different contexts, ultimately contributing to a more comprehensive approach to addressing the issues at hand. Additionally, these comparative analyses could highlight the specific needs and challenges faced by diverse student populations in relation to examination integrity.

Qualitative Approaches: Further research could utilize deeper qualitative methodologies to explore student perceptions regarding examination venues and academic integrity. By conducting interviews or focus groups, researchers can gather rich, detailed narratives that reveal how students interpret and experience the examination environment. This qualitative insight can illuminate the nuanced factors that contribute to malpractice, including psychological, social, and contextual elements. Understanding student perspectives on their examination experiences would not only enrich the existing literature but also provide practical recommendations for creating more supportive and integrity-promoting examination settings in educational institutions.

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