

Strategies for curbing examination malpractices: Perspectives of teachers and students

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to examine the perception of teachers and students towards the efficiency of the techniques implemented to reduce examination malpractices in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis. The design for the study was a descriptive survey. The study was guided by six research questions. The study employs the use of multi-stage sampling technique. The sample of the study comprised 280 invigilation teachers and 370 students from 10 public senior high schools in Sekondi-Takoradi. A 4-point rating scale questionnaire named “Stakeholders Perceptions of the Effectiveness of the Strategies for Curbing Examination Malpractice Questionnaire (SPESCEMQ)”, was adopted. Means, standard deviation was used for analysing data. The results of the study revealed that the strategies adopted for curbing pre-examination were effective, but post-examination malpractices were slightly effective in the Sekondi-Takoradi metropolis. Students and teachers also agreed that banning schools involved in examination malpractices from writing external examinations and imprisonment of supervisors for aiding and abetting examination malpractice are not effective. In conclusion, it appears that both teachers and students have adopted new strategies in making post-examination to be ineffective. Per the conclusions of the investigation, West African Examination Council (WAEC) is encouraged to intensify the use of electronic means in checking students since students also adopt new methods of cheating before, during and after examination.

Keywords: Examination, Examination misconduct, Pre-examination strategies, During examination strategies, Post examination strategies, Implementation strategies, West African examination council.

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Highlights of this paper

- The paper was to investigate the perception of teachers and students on the effectiveness of the strategies used in reducing or curbing examination malpractices in the Sekondi-Takoradi metropolis.
- The paper revealed strategies that are not effective and suggested for their removal from the education system in Ghana.
- Notwithstanding the paper revealed the ineffectiveness of the post examination malpractice strategies.

1. INTRODUCTION

Examination is the process of testing and assessing against a standard. It is also a means of determining one's degree of performance and achievement. Examination malpractice is described as any anomalous behaviour demonstrated by a candidate or anybody assigned with administering an examination before, during, or after the examination that breaches the norms and standards governing such administration (Oluyeba & Daramola cited in Alutu and Aluede (2006)). Examination malpractice is defined in this research as any anomalous behaviour by examinees, examiners, or anybody else connected with an examination, whether before, during, or after it, that provides an unfair advantage to certain persons.

According to Asante-Kyei and Nduro (2014) exam continues to be one of the most acceptable techniques for evaluating and appraising what students have learned. They contended that any activity made during the exam may jeopardize the legitimacy, reliability, and authenticity of the grades, as well as the certificates gained. Because of the competitive nature of the job market, as well as cultural expectations, students are frequently under pressure to do whatever will make them achieve victory in their exams. As a result, some learners turn to unethical measures to pass their exams.

Examination of malpractices in Africa's poorer countries is quite concerning. Boakye-Adjei (2015) noted that examination malpractices were progressively becoming the norm in Ghanaian culture and the country as a whole. Kagete (2008) acknowledged that examination security is currently a key government concern in Kenya, however, this is not unique to that country. Examination misconduct has taken a hazardous and worrisome turn in Zambia in recent years. According to Folinias and Ngosa (2013), exam malpractices were committed by parents, teachers, supervisors, and even school administrators.

According to Phiri and Nakamba (2015), despite robust procedures in place to protect the security of test papers, administering exams in Zambia has become one of the biggest difficulties confronting the education system. The narrative is the same in Uganda, Tanzania, and many other emerging African countries (Anzene, 2014; Patrick, 2014). Examination misconduct substantially undermines the credibility of any country's educational excellence.

It is well known that over the last two decades, Ghana has seen an alarming upsurge in incidences of examination misconduct. According to Olatunbosun (2009), every examination season sees the rise of new and inventive methods of cheating. According to Olatunbosun (2009), the Vanguard Newspaper, Weekend Pointer, and Daily Independent, there is increased involvement of students, teachers, and parents in exam malpractice.

Examination malpractice is divided into three categories: before, during, and after the examination. Those that occur prior to the examinations include, among other things, the sale of live question papers; multiple registrations (when the same candidate registers for two or more examinations, two candidates write the examination while only one submits a script); and multiple registrations (where the same candidate makes two or more entries for the same examination, two candidates write the examination while only one submits a script). This is done with the assistance of school leadership and examination officials. Impersonation, postponing the start of the test to allow mercenary to

discover answers to questions for specific candidates, and naming testing places in exceptionally remote and difficult terrain are among the others (Aworanti, Agarry, & Ajani, 2012; Nzene, 2014; Obudigha, 2010).

The use of Continuous Assessment and the transmission of proper grades to examining bodies is an important step in preventing examination misconduct (Adeyemi, 2010; Akanni & Odojin, 2015; Duvie & Eluwa, 2016). This is because Continuous Assessment (CA) forces students to make good use of their study time, while teachers have an early opportunity to examine their teaching approaches. The CA also alleviates the anxiety associated with a one-shot examination. Duvie and Eluwa (2016) discovered that test anxiety substantially, dependently, and jointly predicted examination misconduct in their study on predictors of examination malpractice.

In Ghana, exam misconduct has continued to take many forms. According to Yayra (2015), It might take the following forms: selling exam question papers, unorganized in exam rooms, smuggling essential written documents into examination halls, impersonation, harassment, etc. It appears that pupils are not the only ones engaging in this conduct, which makes the situation even more precarious. It is considered that guardians, instructors, school officials, and test authorities all work together with learners to perpetrate this misconduct, and the involvement of some or all of such elements makes it harder to fight (Ijaiya, 2004).

However, many exam bodies, as well as the government, regional, and local municipalities, have implemented a variety of steps to eliminate exam misconduct either before, throughout, and when the exam was done. Checking students properly to avoid the entry of foreign materials, sitting arrangements (pre-exam strategies), verifying candidates' identity cards to guarantee that they match the person who is taking the exam, banning the use of digital gadgets such as mobiles and e-readers, and making surprise inspections to exam hubs by officers from the exam body (during the exam itself) are all security measures that may be implemented, responses prepared on sheets other than those supplied for are not counted too (post-exam strategies).

Exam misconduct is a societal issue plaguing Ghana's education sector, and it must be addressed immediately. Exam misconduct happens in several factions of the Ghanaian education system, but the current research focuses on secondary school. According to studies, many failures and abnormalities occur in people's careers as a result of the pandemic of exam misconduct at this critical level of education. The more the government, teachers, exam boards, and other well-meaning persons strive to solve the issue at hand, it happens that the majority of offenders devise mediums to thwart any attempt to match it.

This issue is growing more serious, transitioning from the age of learners copying from their peers to the use of sophisticated electronic gear such as mobile devices and disguised ear aid. Exam misconduct has rendered credentials given in Ghana invalid, preventing several students with excellent grades from defending their certificates. Such students' performances are not comparable with the caliber of their diplomas. Most upsetting is the situation in which students who have been admitted to study abroad are exposed to inhumane treatment due to doubts about the legitimacy of their diplomas. Cheating during the exam is a big issue for some parents, educators, educational administrators, and governments since it is a key factor that has the potential to damage Ghana's whole education system, including Sekondi-Takoradi. For instance, cases of exam misconduct in Ghana increased from 22,391 in 2018 to 48,855 cases in 2019 (West African Exam Council Forum, 2019). In Table 1, candidates involved in exam misconduct in West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) from 2015 to 2019 are provided.

Table 1. Candidates Involved in Exam Misconducts in WASSCE from 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 2019.

Exam type			2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
WASSCE	May/June	Candidates involved	12,754 4.76%	14,229 5.26%	13,793 4.77%	22,391 7.14%	48,855 14.12%

Source: West African Exam Council Forum (2015); West African Exam Council Forum (2016); West African Exam Council Forum (2017); West African Exam Council Forum (2018); West African Exam Council Forum (2019).

In the year 2014/15 two senior high schools from Sekondi-Takoradi results were withheld due to misconduct that occurs during the writing of the exam. Again, in the year 2017/18 three senior high schools from Sekondi-Takoradi results were withheld due to exam misconduct. The 2020 WASSCE saw over 500 students from Sekondi-Takoradi caught in the act of misconduct. Thus, it is worth pointing out that exam misconducts need to be investigated within the Metropolis.

Examining bodies are known to have utilized a range of tactics to address exam misconduct. The cancellation and withholding of candidate results are one of these procedures. On the other hand, exam misconduct's repercussions have remained unabated. Is it as if all methods for combating exam misconduct in Ghanaian public exams are ineffective? The study's problem is thus to find out what teachers and students in the education system think about the efficiency of the measures used in Ghana's public tests to avoid exam dishonesty.

This investigation aimed to look at issues of Students' and teachers' perceptions towards effective drawn procedures chosen in handling exam misconduct during nationwide exams in Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis. The study's main aim was to explore effective strategies adopted in reducing exam misconduct.

1.1. Research Questions

1. What are students' opinions on the efficiency of the techniques used to combat pre-exam misconduct in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis Senior High Schools?
2. What are instructors' opinions on the success of the techniques used to combat pre-exam wrongdoings in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis SHS?
3. How do learners feel about the success of the techniques that have been implemented to control misconducts that occur during exams at the Senior High Schools in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis?
4. What are teachers' perceptions of the efficacy of the procedures that were developed for preventing disruptions during exam misconduct at the Senior High Schools in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis?
5. How do learners feel about the success of the solutions that have been used in senior high schools in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis to reduce post-exam misconduct?
6. What are the opinions on the success of the solutions that have been used in the Senior High Schools in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis to reduce post-exam misconduct among the teaching staff?

1.2. Theoretical Framework

This study is based on Bandura's self-efficacy theory and Wigfield and Eccles' expectation-value theory of achievement motivation. Bandura (1997) repeated that one's conviction in one's capacity to finish a task, attain goals, or succeed in certain conditions plays a significant effect on how one tackle these activities.

He anticipated that self-efficacy can impact whether a task is started, how much effort is put in, and how determined one is to accomplish the activity when faced with obstacles. Much academic research has discovered a significant beneficial relationship between self-efficacy and academic achievement (Jones, Paretti, Hein, and Knotl, 2010; Lodewyk and Winne 2005; Louis and Mistele 2011 cited in (Loo & Choy, 2013; Purzer, 2011)).

The degree to which students believe in themselves or their abilities to successfully complete this test work has a big influence on how they approach this examination. Students who have a high sense of self-efficacy are more likely to approach the exam prepared and calmly. The more the students' self-efficacy, the more active their effort to succeed will be. When students lack self-efficacy, they are more prone to suffer anxiety and resort to dishonest strategies to pass tests. The low academic performance of Ghanaian secondary school students, as well as their determination to

cheat, is due to a lack of self-efficacy, or the capacity to accomplish a tough task in adverse circumstances. This study is likewise based on Eccles, Wigfield, and their colleagues' expectation value theory of achievement motivation.

This theory attempts to explain people's selection of accomplishment tasks, persistence in completing them, energy in carrying them out, and performance on them. Individuals' choice, perseverance, and performance, according to the theories, may be described by their views about how well they will do on the activity and the level to which they value the activity. Expectations and ideals are thought to have a direct impact on accomplishment choices. They also have an impact on performance, effort, and perseverance. Secondary school pupils feel they would perform better in a test if they cheat, and they are aware of the importance of the certificate they will receive, therefore their decision to cheat. Task-specific beliefs, such as aptitude beliefs, the perceived difficulty of different tasks, and individual ambitions, among others, are considered to impact expectations and values. As a result, students are frequently underprepared for exams; they fear them and seek alternatives.

This idea accurately captures why students engage in examination malpractice and why the behaviour persists. A significant number of students have obtained outstanding marks through examination misconduct to secure admission to postsecondary institutions, motivating others to follow suit.

What people perceive reinforces their choice of achieving tasks through negative values, and this has preserved their conviction in how well they will perform on the activity, which is the examination if they choose examination malpractice.

1.3. Research Design

Every research project is unique, and as a result, research designs are developed to meet the specific needs of each study. Others believe that when selecting a suitable research design, the most important factor to examine is whether the design is capable of giving trustworthy responses to the research questions (Polit & Beck, 2004). A descriptive survey was the method of research used in this study. Nworgu (2006) asserts design as a section that aims to compile information on and describe methodically the specific characteristics or facts of a given community. This approach was deemed appropriate because the researcher's primary goal was to describe the measures made to decrease exam misconduct in the public exam as perceived by teachers and students inside the educational system.

1.4. Study Area

One of Ghana's sixteen regions, Western Region consists of seventeen districts with Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis as its capital city. It is the third-biggest city in the nation of Ghana and a key commercial hub, according to the World Bank. Its administrative headquarters are at Sekondi, and its total land area is 385km. In addition to acting as the regional and district capitals, the twin city also represents the Western Region. On Ghana's west coast, Sekondi-Takoradi is surrounded by the Gulf of Guinea to the south, the Ahanta West District to the south, the Mpohor Wassa East District to the north, the Komenda Edina Eguafo-Abrem District to the east, and the Mpohor Wassa East District to the north. The city can be found on the western coast of Ghana, roughly 280 kilometres to the west of Accra, the capital of the nation, and around 130 kilometres to the east of Ghana's neighbour, Togo, La Cote D'Ivoire.

1.5. Sample and Sampling Procedures

For the study, a total of 370 forms (3) students and 280 invigilation teachers were chosen from a pool of potential participants. A multi-stage sampling procedure was relied upon in this investigation which comprises two or more sampling techniques. In multistage sampling, the first stage involved the use of the purposive sampling technique in

the selection of schools, all schools in Sekondi-Takoradi were used. The second stage involved the use of a proportionate stratified sampling technique in selecting the 370 forms (3) students out of the total of 9,949 students and 280 invigilation teachers out of the total of 988 senior high invigilation teachers as respondents (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). Again, this is necessary since the various schools vary in the numerical strength of the students and teachers. The third stage involved using the simple random sampling (lottery method) mode in selecting the specific students and teachers from these institutions to be partakers in this investigation.

1.6. Data Collection Instrument

The tool that was used to gather data for the research was called the Stakeholders Perceptions of the Effectiveness of the Strategies for Curbing Exam Misconduct Questionnaire (SPESCEMQ). The instrument underwent a test of internal consistency using Cronbach Alpha after it had been put through pilot testing in the Cape Coast Metropolis. After the pilot testing, the instrument was evaluated (r). A reliability value of 0.838 is assigned to Section B, which includes 14 different strategies; a reliability index of 0.802 is assigned to Section C, which includes 9 different strategies; and a reliability index of 0.806 is assigned to Section C, which includes 8 different methods. A dependability index of 0.909 was given to the overall Sections, which are made up of 31 different techniques.

1.7. Validity and Reliability

The instrument's content, construct, and face validity were all tested. As a result, the instrument was provided to certain professionals in the assessment and educational administration to validate. The professionals made the required adjustments and suggestions to enhance the device.

2. FINDINGS

Research Question 1: What are students' assessments of the efficiency of the techniques employed for suppressing pre-exam misconduct at the Senior High Schools in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis?

Table 2. Statement on pre-examination strategies for students.

Statement on pre-exam misconducts	Mean	Std. deviation (S.D)
Appointment of supervisors early enough before the exam.	2.88	1.01
Appointment of exam monitors far in advance of the test's scheduled start time.	2.97	0.96
The examination bodies must ensure that supervisors have sufficient mobility.	2.90	0.98
Providing adequate answer scripts and exam papers before the exam.	3.06	1.03
Providing an adequate number of staff members to supervise and invigilate public examinations	3.08	0.98
Provision of enough security at each of the exam centres to ensure security and uninterrupted exams.	2.94	1.03
Registration of students with their passport pictures.	2.93	1.09
Taking measures to ensure that educators, exam monitors, and other personnel receive adequate pay to reduce the risk of unethical behaviour on their part.	2.99	0.95
Exam organisations are responsible for conducting adequate supervision of the candidate enrollment process to prevent non-school applicants from being registered for examinations.	3.03	0.98
Taking measures to ensure that all examinations begin at the same time in each testing location.	2.97	1.01
Making certain that the exam papers are well-protected and correctly sealed to avoid any accidental leaks before the exam.	3.06	1.05
A proper check of students' passports before the exams to discourage impersonation.	2.92	1.05
Provision of adequate seats before the exam.	3.19	0.93
Proper checking of students before the exam to ensure that no foreign materials are with them.	3.07	1.02

According to the findings in Table 2, students believe that the strategies being used are beneficial in reducing main exam misconduct in nationwide exams in Sekondi-Takoradi. All of the strategies implemented were deemed beneficial in reducing student pre-exam misconduct. The range of the mean ratings on the selected strategies was more than or equal to 2.5. From Table 2, the students indicated that the provision of adequate seats before the exam is effective (M= 3.195, S.D= 0.925).

Furthermore, students responded that having sufficient personnel for public exam monitoring and invigilation is appropriate. (M= 3.084, S.D= 0.977). Students indicated that the Appointment of supervisors early enough before the exam was effective (M= 2.876, S.D= 1.013), it is speculated from the discussion with the heads of the schools, that supervisors are not appointed by the exams bodies because once you become a headmistress you are already a supervisor.

Students also felt that exam boards' supply of enough mobility for supervisors had been effective. (M= 2.905, SD= 0.963). It is speculated from the discussion with the heads of the schools, the supervisor is not provided with enough mobility to enable them to move from one centre to the other, this can be seen during the BECE exam since supervisors are appointed by the exam bodies, unlike the WASSCE where the headmistress is used as supervisors to supervisor their centre.

Research Question 2: What are the views on the success of the techniques that have been used in the Senior High Schools in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis to reduce the number of pre-exam misconducts?

Table 3. Statement on pre-examination strategies for teachers.

Statement on pre-exam misconducts	Mean	Std. deviation (S.D)
Appointment of monitors well in advance of the test's scheduled administration.	2.72	0.88
Appointment of exam monitors far in advance of the test's scheduled start time.	2.82	0.85
The examination bodies must ensure that supervisors have sufficient mobility.	2.85	0.96
Providing adequate answer scripts and exam papers before the exam.	3.11	0.95
Providing enough personnel for supervision and invigilation of public exam	3.21	0.86
Provision of enough security at each of the exam centres to ensure security and uninterrupted exams.	2.92	0.99
Registration of students with their passport pictures.	3.24	0.93
Ensuring that teachers, invigilators, and supervisors are well remunerated to guard against involvement in misconduct.	2.91	1.14
Exam organisations are responsible for conducting adequate supervision of the candidate enrollment process to prevent non-school applicants from being registered for examinations.	3.16	0.88
Ensuring that all exam takes off at the same time in each exam centre.	3.11	1.03
Making certain that the exam papers are well-protected and correctly sealed to avoid any accidental leaks before the exam.	3.29	0.76
A proper check of students' passports before the exams to discourage impersonation.	3.10	0.93
Provision of adequate seats before the exam.	3.36	0.71
Before the test, there must be a thorough search of the pupils to verify that they are not carrying any prohibited items.	3.15	0.87

According to the findings in Table 3, teachers believe the techniques being implemented help reduce pre-exam misconduct in public exams in Sekondi-Takoradi. All tactics implemented were evaluated as successful or extremely effective in reducing teacher-before-exam misconduct. Demonstration of the range of mean scores on the implemented strategies was more than or equal to 2.5. The data from the teachers also confirm what the students' impressions are

on strategies used to prevent pre-exam misconduct. From Table 3, the teachers also agree with the students that the Provision of adequate seats before the exam is very effective (M= 3.368, SD= 0.711).

Additionally, the teachers said that ensuring that exam papers are well-sealed and preserved before the exam is extremely effective. (M= 3.296, SD= 0.763). teachers also agree with students that the assignment of supervisors before the exam was effective (M= 2.729, SD= 0.887), it is speculated from the discussion with the heads of the schools, that supervisor are not appointed by the exams bodies because once you become a headmistress you are already a supervisor. Based on the result it can be said both teachers and students have less knowledge about the claims of the various heads of the schools.

Teachers also indicated that the Provision of adequate mobility for supervisors by exam bodies has been effective (M= 2.825, SD= 0.856).

Research Question 3: What are students' perceptions of the efficiency of the techniques relied upon in handling exam misconduct at the Senior High Schools in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis?

Table 4. Statement on during examination strategies for students.

Statement on during exam misconducts	Mean	Std. deviation (S.D)
An unannounced visit to exam centres by external supervisors.	2.66	1.13
Ensuring that all answer scripts are collected by an authorized person at the end of the exam.	3.33	0.85
Handing over to the law enforcement agents any candidates caught cheating during the exam.	2.76	0.96
Proper searching of students who go out during exams to ensure that no foreign materials are with them.	2.82	1.04
Attendance forms must be filled by candidates and collected by invigilators on each paper.	3.21	0.92
Preventing candidates from "giraffe" during an exam.	2.75	1.00
Preventing the use of prepared materials during an exam.	3.03	0.93
Handing over to the law enforcement agents, all those caught assisting the candidate during an exam.	2.63	1.05
Preventing individuals who are not registered exam invigilators from giving external assistance to students during an exam.	2.93	1.40

According to the results in Table 4, students accept the strategies being implemented as beneficial for reducing exam misconduct in public exams in Sekondi-Takoradi. All of the strategies implemented were judged as either successful or highly effective in reducing student exam misconduct. This was demonstrated by the range of the mean ratings on the adopted strategies being more than or equal to 2.5. The data from the students also support what the teachers' thoughts are on cubing tactics used during exam misconduct. According to Table 4, students responded that having an authorized person collect all response scripts after the exam is immensely effective (M= 3.338, SD=0.857).

Also, the students indicated that Attendance forms must be filled by candidates and collected by invigilators on each paper are also very effective (M= 3.216, S.D= 0.929). Students also reported that not using prepared materials during an exam is effective (M= 3.032, S.D=0.931), Students prosecuted for turning over to law enforcement agents, all those caught aiding candidates during an exam, on the other hand, are slightly effective since their mean is just above the average (M= 2.638, S.D= 1.053). Students also agree that unannounced visits to exam centres by external supervisors (M= 2.665, SD= 1.139), preventing candidates from "giraffe" during an exam (M= 2.757, S.D= 1.004) and Handing over any candidates discovered cheating during the exam to law enforcement officials (M= 2.768, SD=0.966) appears slightly effective in reducing exam misconduct during the exam.

Research Question 4: What are teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the strategies adopted for curbing exam misconduct at the Senior High Schools in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis?

Table 5. Statement on during examination strategies for teachers.

Statement on during exam misconducts	Mean	Std. deviation (S.D)
Unannounced inspections of testing locations by personnel from other organisations.	3.13	0.94
Ensuring that all answer scripts are collected by an authorized person at the end of the exam.	3.41	0.63
Handing over to the law enforcement agents any candidates caught cheating during the exam.	2.78	1.02
Proper searching of students who go out during exams to ensure that no foreign materials are with them.	2.94	0.94
Attendance forms must be filled by candidates and collected by invigilators on each paper.	3.34	0.71
Preventing candidates from "giraffe" during an exam.	2.78	0.84
During an examination, candidates are not allowed to use any prepared materials.	3.10	0.90
Those individuals who are detected aiding candidates during an examination will be handed over to law enforcement officers.	2.85	0.98
Preventing individuals who are not registered exam invigilators from giving external assistance to students during an exam.	3.10	0.94

According to the findings in Table 5, teachers believe the strategies being implemented are successful in reducing exam misconduct in public exams in Sekondi-Takoradi during the exam. All of the techniques implemented were judged as either successful or highly effective in reducing student exam misconduct. The range of the mean ratings on the selected strategies was more than or equal to 2.5. The data from the teachers also corroborate the students' perceptions of cubing strategies used during exam misconduct. According to Table 5, ensuring that all answer scripts are collected by an authorized person after the exam is extremely effective (M= 3.4143, SD=0.63906).

Also, teachers felt that having candidates fill out attendance forms and have them collected by invigilators on each paper is immensely effective (M= 3.3464, SD=0.71691). Teachers also stated that prohibiting the use of prepared materials during exams is effective (M= 3.1071, SD=0.90158), Teachers, on the other hand, have been charged with turning over to law enforcement authorities, and anybody discovered supporting a candidate during an exam has been penalized is slightly effective (M= 2.8536, SD=0.98555). Teachers concur with the student, stating that unannounced visits to exam centers by external supervisors (M= 3.1393, SD=0.94199), preventing candidates from "giraffe" during an exam (M= 2.7821, SD= 0.84181) and any candidates detected cheating during an exam being turned over to criminal authorities (M= 2.7893, SD= 1.02403) are effective in curbing exam misconduct during the exam.

Research Question 5: How do students feel about the success of the solutions that have been used in senior high schools in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis to reduce post-exam misconduct?

According to the findings in Table 6, students regard the strategies being implemented as slightly successful or effective for reducing post-exam misconduct in public exams in Sekondi-Takoradi. All of the measures used were judged as modestly helpful in reducing student post-exam misconduct.

The range of the mean ratings on the selected strategies was less than or equal to 2.5. According to Table 6, reviewing of exam scripts where misconduct is suspected (M= 2.8297, SD= 1.06975), withholding of applicants' results for adequate inquiry when exam misconduct is suspected (M= 2.8243, SD= 1.01957), Disqualification for answers not written on the given answer booklet (M= 2.6703, SD= 1.06404), If a candidate is detected cheating, his

or her results are cancelled (M= 2.6378, SD= 1.04307) and Cancellation of all results for mass misconduct at any exam center (M= 2.6027, SD= 1.12450) is considered slightly effective because it is barely over 2.5. Supervisors, on the other hand, were imprisoned for aiding and abetting exam misconduct (M= 2.3189, SD= 1.12422), schools implicated in exam misconduct are barred from writing external exams (M= 2.4568, SD= 1.08676), and teachers implicated in exam misconduct are blacklisted (M= 2.4622, SD= 1.04890) are regarded as ineffective since their means are less than 2.5.

Table 6. Statement on post-examination strategies for students.

Statement on post-exam misconducts	Mean	Std. deviation (S.D)
Cancellation of entire results for mass misconduct in any exam centre.	2.60	1.12
Cancellation of candidate's result if caught cheating.	2.64	1.04
Banning of schools involved in exam misconduct from writing external exams.	2.46	1.09
Imprisonment of supervisors for aiding and abetting exam misconduct.	2.32	1.12
Blacklisting of teachers involved in exam misconduct.	2.46	1.05
Withholding of candidates' results when exam misconduct is suspected for proper investigation.	2.82	1.02
Disqualification of answers not written on the answer booklet provided.	2.67	1.06
Marking exam scripts when misconduct is suspected.	2.83	1.07

Research Question 6: What are teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the strategies adopted for curbing post-exam misconduct at the Senior High Schools in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis?

Table 7. Statement on post-examination strategies for teachers.

Statement on post-exam misconducts	Mean	Std. deviation
Cancellation of entire results for mass misconduct in any exam centre.	2.60	1.09
Cancellation of candidate's result if caught cheating.	2.96	0.93
Banning schools involved in exam misconduct from writing external exams.	2.49	0.98
Imprisonment of supervisors for aiding and abetting exam misconduct.	2.43	1.08
Blacklisting of teachers involved in exam misconduct.	2.66	1.02
Withholding of candidates' results when exam misconduct is suspected for proper investigation.	3.17	0.87
Disqualification of answers not written on the answer booklet provided.	2.91	0.92
Marking exam scripts when misconduct is suspected.	2.82	1.00

According to the findings in Table 7, teachers see the strategies being implemented as slightly effective for reducing post-exam misconduct in public exams in Sekondi-Takoradi. All of the strategies implemented were regarded as ineffective or marginally useful in reducing student post-exam misconduct. The range of the mean ratings on the selected strategies was less than or equal to 2.5. Table 7 shows that when exam misconduct is suspected, applicants' results are withheld for adequate inquiry (M= 3.1750, SD=0.86845), If a candidate is detected cheating, his or her results are cancelled (M= 2.9643, SD=0.92679), Disqualification for answers not written on the given answer booklet (M= 2.9071, SD=0.91889) and When exam misconduct is suspected, commenting of exam scripts (M= 2.8179, SD= 1.00127) is slightly effective, but the withholding of applicants' results for adequate inquiry is massively effective, according to teachers in Sekondi-Takoradi. Teachers agree with students that schools implicated in exam misconduct should be barred from writing external exams (M= 2.4893, SD=0.98003) and Supervisors' imprisonment for aiding and abetting exam misconduct (M= 2.4286, SD= 1.08676) is ineffective in reducing post-exam misconduct since the mean was less than 2.5.

3. DISCUSSION

3.1. Perception of Teachers and Students concerning the Strategies Adopted for Curbing Pre-Exam Misconduct

The findings from the current study show that the strategies adopted in curbing pre-exam misconduct based on teachers' and students' perception was effective in Sekondi-Takoradi. Both teachers and students had a positive perception of strategies adopted in curbing exam misconduct. These findings were similar to [Akunne, Chigb-Obasi, and Iwogba \(2021\)](#), who argued that perceived strategies for curbing exam misconduct among secondary school students in Nigeria are very effective for curbing exam misconduct. Notwithstanding, these findings were not similar to the finding from [Oluchukwu \(2012\)](#) who carried out a study on the views of stakeholders about the efficacy of the measures implemented to combat exam misconduct in Nigeria's public exams.

[Oluchukwu \(2012\)](#) argued that the strategies were not effective in Nigeria since the means were below 2.5. It is speculated that headteachers play a significant role in making these strategies effective, these strategies were not effective in the study of [Oluchukwu](#) because it is speculated that Nigerian students are braver than Ghanaian students. There are so many factors that can cause the strategies not to be effective such as the method used in [Oluchukwu](#) study he used a survey with an interview which differ from the current study, and economic factor and environmental factors could bring the difference. It is speculated that Nigerians are braver than Ghanaians, so as a result of their braveness, they can violate these strategies from students' perspective.

The study also agreed with [Dzakadzie \(2015\)](#) also find out that there is a negative attitude toward stakeholders' perception in curbing exam misconduct. He argued that the majority of the stakeholders see exam misconduct as a crime that should not be endorsed, notwithstanding few majorities see it as a way of giving external help to their fellow students. Teachers and students assume that owing to Ghanaians' religious heritage, they would not participate in exam misconduct; as a consequence, the strategies used to prevent pre-exam misconduct are effective.

It is speculated that at the secondary level most of the headteachers and teachers in Nigeria do not have accommodation within the campus as a result that moving from their various houses to schools put them under pressure. In Ghana, most of our headteachers and teachers at the secondary level are given accommodation within the campus, which could be a reason why there is a significant difference in the strategies adopted in curbing pre-exam misconduct in Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis.

3.2. Perception of Teachers and Students Concerning the Strategies Adopted for Curbing Exam Misconduct during Exams

The current investigation's findings suggest that the strategies used to prevent exam misconduct were effective. The results were not similar to [Okunloye, Balogun, and Oladele \(2019\)](#) who carried out a study on Teachers' Perceptions on Use of Values Clarification Strategy for Curbing Exam Misconduct in Upper-Basic Schools in the Ilorin Metropolis it was indicated that the strategies were ineffective. Geographical considerations, economic issues, and environmental variables might all have a role. According to [Joshua \(2008\)](#), Exam dishonesty is seen by the vast majority of those with an interest in education not as something that brings standards down, but rather as something that helps students, helps schools fulfill high expectations, helps improve school images, and compensates for deficiencies in schools. It is speculated by some teachers and students that, sometimes teachers are not able to complete their syllabus as a result that they allow students to solicit help from their mates during the exam.

The results are comparable to those found by [Folson and Kwadwo Awuah \(2014\)](#) who researched the topic of preventing test misconduct during Ghana's basic education certificate examinations (BECES). Candidates who are detected cheating on their examinations might be handed over to the appropriate authorities on an annual basis by external examiners. The fact that WAEC throws out the results of these candidates and even sends the perpetrators over to the police for prosecution in court may be what led to the techniques being used to crack down on test

cheating. In the Ghanaian culture, cheating is not encouraged to be done during an exam, notwithstanding it is speculated by some students that, sometimes teachers are not able to complete their syllabus as a result that they allow students to solicit help from their mates during the exam.

3.3. Perception of Teachers and Students Concerning the Strategies Adopted for Curbing Post-Exam Misconduct

The current study's findings imply that the strategies used to combat post-exam misconduct were ineffective. These findings were similar to the findings from the study by Oluchukwu (2012) suggested that the strategy employed in reducing post-exam misconduct is ineffective in Nigeria. This is possible because it is speculated by headteachers, teachers, and students that those leaders who drive the education system do not apply or use the strategies which should be used for curbing post-exam misconduct. Notwithstanding, the findings also agree with an investigation carried out by When probing the alleged reasons for misconduct in general populace tests by fresh students at ST. Augustine's College of Education, Akoka, and Lagos State, Idahosa (2004) discovered that the large bulk of interested parties perceive exam misconduct as a way of aiding and abetting, achieving lofty aspirations, enhancing school impression, and reimbursing for school inadequacies, instead of as a factor in reducing performance targets. This was discovered during the investigation of the alleged reasons for misconduct in general populace exams by fresh learners.

Further expounding on the shortcomings of the strategies, teachers, and students indicated that one of the reasons why the strategies are ineffective is that the Ghanaian society of today celebrates those who excel without determining how success happened; when trying to secure a job or get into graduate school, the importance of having certifications and getting excellent marks is emphasised, but skill development is not taken into consideration. Students who feel they did not do well on the test may, as a consequence of this fact, engage in post-exam misbehaviour before the results are officially published.

3.4. The Implications of the Findings for External Exams in Ghanaian Secondary Schools

The study's outcomes have ramifications for the administration of external exams in secondary schools. The majority of the management strategies reviewed were effective. However, according to the findings of this study, the continuance of examination malpractice in the system resides outside the techniques. Combating exam malpractice may continue to be a futile undertaking until Ghanaians as a whole change their attitude toward the crime. The hypotheses' findings appear to show that each step of the examination has its distinct method to restrict malpractice and that if these are allocated to certain panels, there may be some beneficial consequences.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In summary, while evidence in this field is still very limited, it appears that exams malpractices are the easiest way to deal with poverty in the Ghanaian Education system, as indicated by students and teachers, may be associated with the well-being of both the students and teachers outcomes potentially more so than their personality. Given ongoing concerns regarding students' and teachers' mental thinking about exam malpractices, further research should use robust methods and a range of financial difficulty measures to establish whether there are long-term causal relationships between examination malpractices and students' achievement in their final examination. Hence it is recommended that secondary students are given orientation on how to manage their time to study by management to avoid students and teachers engaging in exams malpractices since it has effects on mental ability. The management is also to sensitize teachers on financial difficulty and its effects through educational seminars and training programs.

The counselling centre in collaboration with management, Student Representative Concile, and other student organizations should educate students on rules and regulations before exams, during exams, and after exams issues.

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