

Perception of the Secondary Level Students Regarding the Examination Ethics

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Article Info

Received: January 27, 2024
Accepted: April 20, 2024
Published: July 22, 2024
Available online: August 10, 2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/gd.v9i1.68546>

Keywords: Examination, Ethics, Perception

Abstract

In the study entitled Perception of the secondary level students regarding the examination ethics in Nepal, the Grade XII students expressed their opinions on examination ethics. The Grade XII students from a school in the Kathmandu district were randomly chosen to participate in the survey. The study found that the students were aware of exam ethics. They agreed that sustaining examination ethics in Nepal is complicated. 51.7% of the students favored implementing rules to follow examination ethics. 89.7% of the students decided on a fair examination. 40.5% said their parents, teachers, and stakeholders favored cheating, whereas 59.5% followed the examination ethics. However, maintaining the ethics includes being aware of impersonation and cheating. Most students perceived the examination as complex, so keeping ethics was hard. According to the study's conclusions, the government and educational institutions must act to address these issues and advance examination ethics.

Introduction

The educational system is only complete with exams. Students' knowledge and abilities are evaluated, and decisions regarding their future are made using this information. Exams, however, are equally susceptible to plagiarism and other unethical activities. This is a severe issue since it threatens the integrity of the educational system and the reliability of the exams.

Examination ethics have long been a source of controversy in Nepal. Exam collaboration, impersonation, and cheating have all been reported. Due to these worries, requests have been made for Nepal to enhance its examination ethics.

According to Sperry (2007, p. 38), "ethics" is the philosophical study of moral action, moral decision-making, or how one leads a decent life. It is a discipline of philosophy that "deals with how we ought to live," claim Pojman and Fieser (2012, p. 2). It concerns an activity's morality or determining if an action is right and behaving appropriately.

Exam fraud is not just an issue in Nepal but an international occurrence. Cizek (2003) defines exam cheating as fraud, dishonesty, or deceit in academic assignment or using, attempting to use, or assisting in an academic study, or using, or assisting in operating or supporting others in using materials that are inappropriate or prohibited in the context of the academic assignment in question.

According to McCabe (2006), exam cheating results from academic integrity in exam handling being so seriously undermined that action needs to be taken. According to Kisamore, Stone, and Jahawar (2009), examination malpractice is a premeditated conduct carefully planned and coordinated by the parents and classmates and carried out by the students (Candidates).

Parents often seek shortcuts for their children's academic success by providing them with pre-made study materials and sometimes even supporting them in impersonating others during exams. This is especially prevalent due to parental influence or factors within the home environment where, in some cases, siblings may be used to impersonate the student, as noted by Fasasi (2008) and in a separate study conducted in the United States, Kisamore, Stone, and Jahawar (2009) stressed that parents frequently condone cheating and may even pressure their children to excel academically, to the

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extent that some parents encourage their children to copy from more academically accomplished peers to pass tests or examinations. The study also revealed that while numerous methods or strategies may be employed in exam cheating, it remains universally unacceptable to resort to such deceptive means to succeed in examinations. Bandura (1986) argued that low self-efficacy among students is a primary factor contributing to academic cheating in school settings.

According to Mathema and Bista's (2006) analysis of the SLC exams, which included test administration as a critical component, the whole test administration process could be better. The study draws attention to unethical situations, including prejudice and discrimination by test monitors. The administration of the SLC test, they write, "is far from fair and just to the students, and the mission of administration of the public examination to provide equal opportunity to all students to show their abilities has yet to come into practice" (p. 91). Similarly, they draw attention to enhancing the testing environment itself.

Nigerian researchers Alutu and Aluede (2006) investigated how secondary school pupils viewed ethical issues and cheating during exams. In the study, 200 students from two public schools were randomly chosen and given two questionnaires. It was discovered that most students needed a better idea about examination ethics and thought their involvement in examination malpractice was common and challenging to eradicate. According to research, exam cheating is encouraged by parents, instructors, and even school administrations.

As a fix for the issue, the researchers proposed counseling intervention options. Oladunni (2010) conducted yet another research in Nigeria. He also looked at how students felt about exams and the ethics of taking them. He gave two sets of questionnaires to 1000 pupils, whose average age was 21.3. He discovered that most pupils needed clarification about the test and its underlying morals. Students used exams as a means of oppression, degrading treatment, and a barrier to climbing the career ladder. As a result, they frequently broke the norms and guidelines for exams. Again, from Nigeria, Oloyede (2012) investigated how students and instructors felt about cheating during exams. One hundred students from 4 different schools were given a survey based on the Likert Scale. He discovered that there are a variety of causes for examination malpractice, including peer pressure, insufficient preparation, parental pressure for excellent scores, and others.

A research study by Grimes and Razek (2006) spanning multiple countries, including Belarus, Croatia, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Russia, Ukraine, and the USA, aimed to understand the factors influencing cheating among high school students. The study identified that significant determinants of cheating included the students' personal beliefs about the ethics of cheating, whether it was socially acceptable, and various aspects of the classroom environment. Kisamore, Stone, and Jahawar's (2007) research found a connection between individual situational factors and academic misconduct, including exam malpractice. Ogodulunwa (2011) further confirmed that students' attitudes towards cheating in exams varied based on their interactions with peers, gender, religion, and course of study. It observed that their attitudes and interactions with peers influenced students' behavior during exams, including cheating. Another study conducted by Afokasade, Airate, and Suleiman in 2014 in Lagos state, Nigeria, identified the primary reason for student cheating as a lack of confidence. Ong'ong'a and Akaranga's (2013) study clarified that students engaged in exam malpractices primarily due to personal motivations, particularly their self-efficacy. These unique factors stemmed from inadequate preparation and a strong desire to pass exams at any cost.

Statement of the Problem

This study was conducted to determine how students perceive examination ethics in light of the continuously rising incidents of examination malpractice and the issues related to the administration of exams in Nepal. Very little research has been carried out regarding examination ethics in Nepal. The restriction about cheating is mentioned on the admit card for the exam. Teachers, parents, and stakeholders often talk about the adverse effects of cheating. However, examination ethics is not followed correctly in the examination hall. This research is carried out about the students' perception of examination ethics. The findings of this study will also be used to construct counseling treatments that school counselors anticipate to preserve ethics and minimize malpractices by instilling a healthy attitude in early school students. This will make it easier to change students' attitudes and behaviors that may be socially unacceptable and detrimental to their academic success. This research specifically addressed the following issue: What is the prevalent opinion among students regarding ethical behavior during the exams?

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were specified as follows:

- 1) To identify the prevalent opinion among the students regarding ethical behavior during the exams and
- 2) To determine the perception of the student's examination ethics.

Methods of the study

A sample of 58 pupils was taken from a public secondary school in Kathmandu Metropolitan City that was chosen at

random. The “Examination Ethics Questionnaire” tool had 14 items designed to collect responses from students about their perceptions of examination ethics and their opinions of essential persons.

RESULTS

The study results are presented below and grouped according to the research questions.

What is the general perception of students toward examination ethics? The answer to this question is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Students’ Knowledge of Examination Ethics

S.N	Students Perception	Response Categories			
		Agree		Disagree	
		f	%	f	%
1	Exam ethics suggest that a small amount of exam cheating is acceptable.	28	48.3	30	51.7
2	It implies that pupils are free to cheat if their actions go unnoticed.	13	22.4	45	77.6
3	It is tough to pass the test well if you don’t cheat.	40	69.0	18	31.0
4	I need help from others in the hallway to pass.	29	50.0	29	50.0
5	Everything is correct if someone looks at the exam questions ahead of time.	31	53.4	27	46.6
6	To copy from someone else’s paper, it is a good idea to make plans to sit next to them.	18	31.0	40	69.0
7	During the test, I can let my friend copy my paper.	36	62.1	22	37.9
8	For someone else, I can take the test.	29	50.0	29	50.0
	Total		48.3		51.7

The replies in Table 1 can be interpreted in the ways listed below. 48.3% of the students agreed that exam ethics suggested that a small amount of exam cheating was acceptable. 22.4% of the students agreed that students are free to cheat if their actions go unnoticed. 69.0% of the students favored difficulty passing the test well if we didn’t cheat. 50% of the students expressed needing help from others in the hallway to pass. 53.4% of the students agreed that everything was correct if someone looked at the exam questions beforehand. 31.0% of the students decided to copy from someone else’s paper, so it was a good idea to make plans to sit next to them. 62.1% of the respondents agreed to let their friends copy their papers. Half number of the respondents favored taking the test for someone else. 51.7% of the students perceived cheating in the examination was unethical.

Table 2: Students’ opinions in support of fair examination

S.N	Students Perception	Response Categories			
		Agree		Disagree	
		f	%	f	%
1	It implies that pupils must adhere entirely to the proper test-taking procedures.	48	82.8	10	17.2
2	I prefer having my ability to take exams supported by regulations.	56	96.6	2	3.4
	Total		89.7		10.3

Table 2 talks about students’ opinions in support of fair examination. 82.8% of the respondents were optimistic about the proper test-taking procedures. 96.6% of the students preferred having their abilities to take exams supported by regulations. 89.7% of the respondents’ perception was in favor of fair examination.

Table 3: Students' opinions towards parents, teachers, and stakeholders on examination cheating

S.N	Students Perception	Response Categories			
		Agree		Disagree	
		f	%	f	%
1	Some teachers assist their pupils in passing.	35	60.3	23	39.7
2	Some school principals organize corporate cheating at their institutions.	14	24.1	44	75.9
3	Parents who encourage cheating exist.	16	27.6	42	72.4
4	There is nothing my parents will not support. I must defraud.	29	50.0	29	50.0
	Total		40.5		59.5

The replies in Table 3 can be interpreted in the ways listed below. Most students agreed that some teachers assisted their pupils in passing. Most respondents disagreed that some school principals organized corporate cheating at their institution. 72.4% of the students said that parents who encouraged cheating exist. The exact number of students supported that there was nothing their parents would not help; they should defraud. 59.5% of the students perceived those parents, teachers, and stakeholders as against examination cheating.

Discussion

According to the study, most pupils think cheating during exams is widespread in Nepalese schools. And some parents, teachers, and school principals condone their indulgence. This is hardly unexpected because passing exams is often considered a sign of effective teaching, and most lazy teachers who have never taught would do everything to ensure that their students did.

The reason why school principals organize corporate cheating for their institutions is that they believe that when their students perform exceptionally well on any given external exam, it will entice other students who may not believe in working hard for their grades to join them in achieving high rates through engaging in examination malpractice.

All of these are close to the complete collapse of our value system. Success in the past was attained by perseverance. Today, however, the situation is the opposite: Success is determined by your ability to earn diplomas and excellent marks without considering the procedure.

There is a critical need for stakeholders in the educational sector and society at large to take radical action to end the crisis of examination misconduct that currently afflicts the Nepalese school system if certificates from Nepalese schools are to be respected and the products are to receive the much-desired respect on the global labor market. Additionally, as parents, guardians, and teachers are the primary people looking after pupils, conducting practical counseling interventions with these stakeholder groups is essential.

The findings of this study suggest that most students have an erroneous idea about the ethical nature of exams. For instance, they consider the following violations of test ethics: teachers assisting kids in passing exams, parents encouraging their children to cheat, and school administrators facilitating corporate cheating at their institutions. In this respect, school counselors may think about promoting the creation of an examination ethics club, through which helpful information will be made available to all students and employees of the institutions. School counselors might even go further by working with the club for examination ethics. Due to their education, school counselors are qualified to assist students in maintaining the best possible behavior while taking exams. This can be accomplished by maintaining an effective network of communication between school counselors and students, teachers, principals, and significant others; giving spontaneous talks to individuals and groups of students on the expected behavior before and during examinations—this helps to sensitize the student and reduce phobia, anxiety, and tension typically associated with examinations; and giving lectures on effective study techniques. Organize media discussions to raise public awareness of the benefits of examination ethics; educate teachers and invigilators on proper conduct during exams (this activity should be carried out each term in cooperation with the Vice Principal for Academics and the Exam Officers); and encourage subject teachers to promptly refer students in need of academic counseling to the counselors.

Conclusions

Adolescents are developing lifelong beliefs about social justice and establishing their expectations for personal behavior. They stand to gain a lot from thoughtful discussions about the impact of honesty and dishonesty on the well-being of individuals, families, businesses, and communities. These conversations should be integrated into all areas of the school

curriculum. It is crucial to prioritize promoting integrity, and parents should collaborate closely with educators. Schools should reinforce ongoing guidance from parents and provide them with ethical questions for discussions at home.

Some may question whether schools or parents can influence honesty beyond early childhood. Still, most of the public believes in the power of education to instill essential values at any age to help students succeed. Secondary schools could develop educational content demonstrating honesty as the foundation for trust, equality, fair treatment, and personal growth. Additionally, these curricula should highlight how ethics can influence students' motivation to learn, perseverance, and recognition of earned achievements. Society benefits when students are introduced to these principles and embrace integrity as their way of life.

It is advised that school counselors maintain regular contact with the parents and instructors since some parents and teachers actively urge their pupils to cheat on exams. School counselors will be able to learn about students' opinions on test fraud and how it may be eliminated by having dialogues with them. School counselors might further educate the children on how to avoid engaging in exam fraud. The Parent/Teachers/Students' Association forum might also be utilized to discuss the matter with parents. Additionally, regular formal training for examiners about anticipated behavior should be organized.

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