

# Factors Influencing Examination Malpractices Among Students A case of Kenya Medical Training College

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate factors influencing examination malpractice in selected Kenya Medical Training campuses with an hypothesis that, there are no factors associated with exam malpractice among students in KMTC. This study employed a descriptive study design to collect data from selected 5 KMTC Campuses (Meru, Chuka, Embu, Nyeri, Othaya). The sampling procedure ensured uniform distribution of the study sample drawn from the 5 campuses with a sample size consisted of 4 teaching staff selected randomly from each campus and 20 final year students per sampled college. The total sample size consisted of 20 staff, and 100 final year students making a total of 120 respondents. Questionnaires were used to collect data from the selected institutions as per the objectives of the study. Data Analysis was done with an aid of SPSS version 21.0 for windows. Qualitative data was transcribed and analyzed thematically and used in the discussion of results. Descriptive statistics including frequencies and percentages were used to address the research questions. The study revealed that, lack of preparation for exams (68%) was not the reason for exam malpractice. The study reported some high levels of vigilance in examination invigilation including punishing students who were found cheating (96%) and invigilators being conversant with all forms of exam malpractices (89%). However, 78% of teachers did not agree that sitting arrangement can influence exam malpractice in their institutions. The study showed that teachers had maintained a high level of reputation by not aid the students in exam cheating (82%) and ensuring they are not involved in smuggling of materials in the exam rooms (98%). It was established that rarely were teachers involved in smuggling of materials in exam rooms and to a little extend did they take part in examination malpractice as reported by 65% of the respondents. The management of Kenya Medical Training Colleges can adopt the findings in this study to seal all the loopholes associated with examination malpractices.

**Keywords:** Examination malpractice, lecturer, students.

## INTRODUCTION

Examinations in schools are used to measure a learner understanding of the content at different levels and stages of schooling. Thus, examination results are used to determine learners' abilities and difficulties, teaching method effectiveness and the effectiveness of the curriculum (Nevenkosky et al., 2019) According to a study (Maker et al., 2012) , examinations are used to assess and evaluate whether the right knowledge has been acquired or not, through weekly tests, terminal tests, mock examinations and national examinations administered at the end of a given course. Examinations aid in finding out how much of the objectives of specific learning tasks a learner have learnt (Bell & Cowie, 2017; Heritage, 2010). Examinations are used for placing students in various institutions and jobs and provide feedback in the teaching and learning processes and curriculum delivery (Noor & Dangi, 2014). Therefore, examinations form a very important part in assessing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of students who have reached a certain level in academic institutions in any country. However some students undertaking examinations tend to adopt ways of unfairly cheating either before, during or after examinations(Starovoytova & Arimi, 2017). Cheating in an examination is an act of deception by students to gain unfair advantage over others by using unauthorized materials and information. There is a significant increase in test cheating, unpermitted student collaboration and an increased prevalence of chronic cheating(Catacutan, 2019). Students who cheat are either caught in

possession of written materials in the form of crib notes, with written notes on the desks, copying from each other's work, or with formulas written on their calculators (Amadi & Opuiyo, 2018) Cheating in examinations is a worldwide phenomenon. This is majorly because examination tests have become a high stake due to the various uses made of the candidates' results (Taradi et al., 2010). In a European context, according to a study there were high rates of cheating and goal-motivated cheating was reported among majority students in the United Kingdom (Newstead et al., 1996) Evidence suggests that agencies alter the timing of their actions and engage in cream skimming in response to specific performance measures (Propper & Wilson, 2003). They exclude weak students from sitting for examinations. Cheating was mentioned as another unproductive type of response to accountability incentives and misreporting of school dropout rates (Sullivan, 2016) Inadequate preparation was a major cause of examination cheating among students in schools (Brown, 2015).

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The study was conducted at Kenya Medical Training College (KMTC) Campuses in 5 campuses in Mt. Kenya region, Kenya (Meru, Chuka, Embu, Nyeri and Othaya). A descriptive cross-sectional study design was used and it entailed field study survey to establish the factors influencing examination malpractice in the 5 KMTC Campuses. The study population was all teaching staff and the final year students, target population consisted of 4 teaching staff from each campus randomly selected making a total of 20 teaching staff and 20 final year students in each campus totaling to 100 final year students. The study used a scientific procedure and a questionnaire to collect useful data from the selected institutions as per the objectives of the study were administered. Data analysis was done on the basis of the research objectives. Collected questionnaires were coded before entry into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. This was then interpreted, conclusions drawn and recommendations proposed. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics which comprise of standard deviations, frequency distribution and percentages, and presented using tables. Before commencing the study, approval was sought from KMTC Research and Ethics Committee. The participants were informed about the purpose, procedure and the benefits of the study. Informed consent was sought from the participants, anonymity was maintained by not indicating the names of the participants and the information obtained was handled with confidentiality.

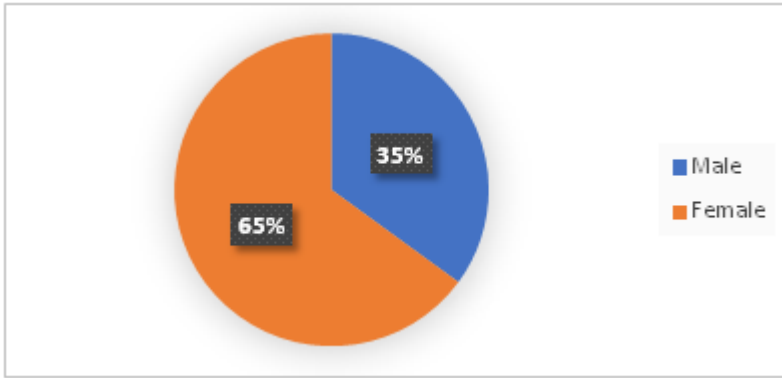
## **RESULTS**

### **Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents**

This section presents a brief description of the demographic characteristics of the study sample. Such a description is considered to be very important in providing a better understanding of the respondents included in the study and therefore provide a good foundation for a detailed discussion of the results based on the stipulated objectives of the study. The demographic characteristics included gender, age, and responsibility, number of years of service and education qualifications.

### **Gender of the Respondents**

The study sought to establish the gender of the respondents, and the findings obtained are presented on the pie chart below



**Figure 2: Gender of Respondents**

The study established that the majority (65%) of the respondents (Students at KMTC) were Female as compared to 35% of the respondents that were male. This implies that there was a disparity in the gender of the respondents, with the variance in favor of the female. The gender disparity in KMTC students can be explained by a study conducted by Block, Croft & Schmader (2018) to establish reasons why men are less-oriented to care-related careers. The study showed that men place less value on care-oriented courses because they tend to internalize different values compared to their female counterparts. Communal values influence the career goals of men and women with the latter choosing careers which focus more on caring for others.

### Age of the Respondents

The study further sought to establish the age distribution of the respondents, and the findings obtained are presented on the table 4.1.

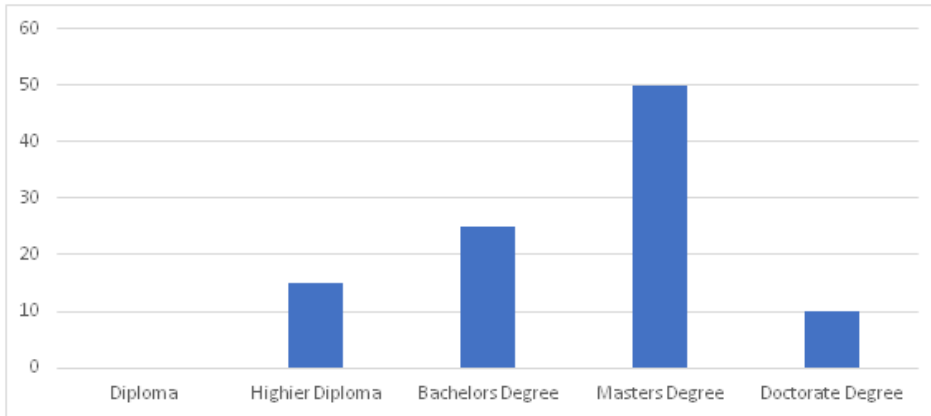
**Table 1: Age of the Respondents**

Ages	Frequency	Percentage
30 years and below	100	83.3
30-40 years	4	3.4
41-50 years	10	8.3
51-60 years	6	5
Total	120	100

The study established that the majority (83.3%) of the respondents were aged 30 years and below, while 8.3% were aged 41-80 years. This implies that the respondents were of adult age, and that the majority of the respondents were students. According to the college enrollment and student demographic statistics, the average for students enrolled in undergraduate courses is 21.8 and 27.2 for full-time and part-time programs, respectively (Hanson, 2021; Shrestha et al., 2019). Therefore, most of the students enrolled in colleges are between 18 and 29 years.

### Academic qualification of Lecturers

The study further sought to establish the academic qualifications of the lecturers and the findings obtained are presented on the bar graph below

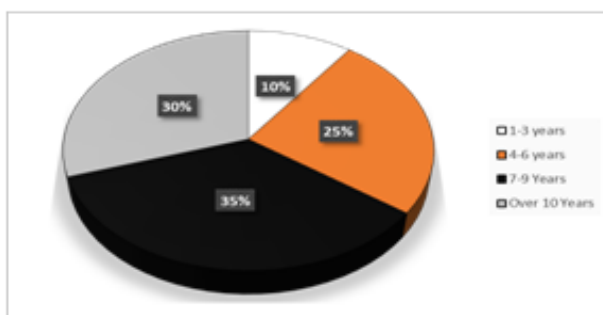


**Figure 3: Academic qualification of Lecturers**

The study established that 50% of the lecturers had a master’s degree, 25% had a bachelor’s degree, and 15% had a higher diploma while only 10% of the lecturers had a doctorate degree. As per the career guidelines for the KMTC, all the interviewed staff met the minimum qualifications for being part of the institution’s teaching staff (KMTC, Career Progression Guidelines 2012). This implies that the lecturers at the Kenya Medical training college had met the minimum qualifications to teach in the higher institutions of learning.

### Length of time in the Teaching Profession

The study sought to establish the length of time the respondents had taught, and the findings obtained are presented on the pie chart below

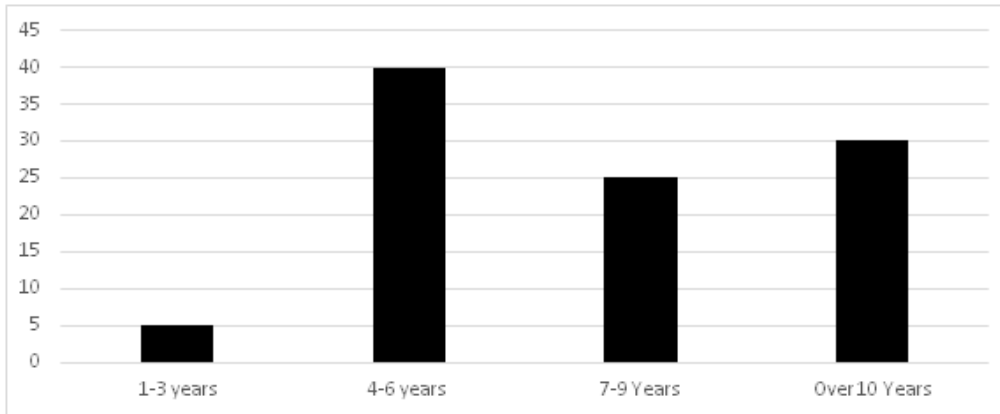


**Figure 4: Length of Time in the teaching Profession**

The study established that 35% of the lecturers had taught for a period of 7-9 years, 30% had taught for over 10 years while 25% had taught for 4-6 years. Only 10% of the lecturers had taught for 1-3 years. A study conducted to establish challenges faced by peer tutors in undergraduate institution showed that lack of experience was a major problem (Chai, 2013). The peer tutors experienced challenges in areas related to tutor-students’ relationship, role clarity and expectations, and tutor positionality. Findings in this study showed that the lecturers had an experience in teaching.

### Length of Service in the Current Institution

The study further sought to establish the length of time the respondents had served in the current institution. The findings obtained are presented on the bar chart below.



**Figure 5: Length of Service in the Current Institution**

The study established that 40% of the respondents had taught in the institution for 4-6 years, 30% had served in the institution for over 10 years while 25% of the respondents had served for a period of 7-9 years. The findings imply that most of the respondents had served in their current institution for over 4 years, which was adequate enough to qualify them as potential respondents. Familiarity with a particular institution is critical influencing the tutor-student relationship, tutor positionality, as well as the tutor role clarity and expectations (Ntuli & Gumbo, 2019). Having served in the specific KMTCS for more than 4 years, the staff had adequate information about the students and the institution at large.

### **Extent to Which Students’ Preparation for Examination’s Influence Examination Malpractice in Colleges**

The study sought to establish the extent to which the students’ preparation for Examination’s influence examination malpractice in colleges. The lecturer’s responses are presented on the *Table 2*.

**Table 2: Teachers responses on Extent to Which Students’ Preparation for Examination’s Influence Examination Malpractice in Colleges**

Statements	SD	D	A	SA
Students are always provided with course outlines	10	16	12	62
The curriculum is well covered	5	10	70	15
Students are provided Cats before the end of semester examination	0	0	90	10
Students are given enough time to revise alone or in groups	20	55	20	5
Students have adequate time revise before the examination	10	20	60	10
Students are taught on how to answer questions	20	10	60	10
Remedial classes are given to weaker students	10	90	0	0

The study established that the students were always provided with course outlines to enable them prepare for examinations, as was revealed by 62% of the respondents who strongly agreed. Before the examinations were done, the curriculum was well covered by the students, as was revealed by 70% of the respondents who agreed. A similar study conducted to establish causes of exam malpractices in five public universities in Kenya including Masinde Muliro, Kisii, Kibabii, Moi, and University of Eldoret showed that the causes are associated with different people in the universities including the students, administrators, academic staff and non-academic staff (Situma & Wasike, 2020). When students engage in non-academic activities throughout the semester and fail to adequately prepare for examinations, they panic and result in exam malpractice. 90% of the respondents stated that the students are provided Cats before the end of semester

examination, as was agreed by the respondents. Students were not given enough time to revise in groups, as was revealed by 55% of the respondents. When the lecturers fail to fully cover the course content required for students to sit for examinations, the latter may want to cheat in exams for them to pass and avoid supplementary or special exams (Situma & Wasike, 2020). Sixty percent (60%) of the respondents agreed that the students had adequate time to revise for the examinations. Students were taught on how to answer questions, as was revealed by another 60% of the respondents who agreed. A descriptive survey on triggers of examination malpractices in Zambia emphasized inadequate preparation, inadequate teaching and provision of revision materials, poor coverage of syllabus, and poor and inadequate infrastructure as key factors (Milumbe et al., 2022). Remedial classes were not given to the weak students, as was revealed by 90% of the respondents.

**Table 3: Students’ responses on Extent to Which Students’ Preparation for Examination’s Influence Examination Malpractice in Colleges**

Students’ responses	SD	D	A	SA
Students attends all the lessons	10	20	60	10
Students carry out the assignments as directed	10	30	55	25
Students are provided with examination timetable in advance	0	10	84	6
Students cheat in examinations because they have not been taught on what is assessed	0	68	10	22
Students have adequate time revise before the examination	8	52	18	12

The study established that the students were required by the administration to attend all the lessons, as was revealed by 60% of the respondents who agreed. 55% of the respondents agreed that students carry out the assignments as directed by their lecturers. Students are provided with examination timetable in advance to enable them revise accordingly, as was revealed by 84% of the respondents. Students did not state an excuse of not being adequately prepared as a reason for cheating in examinations, as was revealed by 68% of the respondents. Students did not have adequate time to revise for the examinations, as was revealed by 52% of the respondents. A similar study on causes and strategies to curb exam cheating in Senior High Schools in Ghana revealed that students perceived the following as the main factors influencing exam malpractice; insufficient preparation, willingness to pass the exams by all means, inadequate learning resources, and uncompleted syllabus and lessons by teachers (Adzrolo et al., 2021).

### **Influence of Examination Invigilation on Examination Malpractice in Colleges**

The second objective of the study sought to establish the Influence of Examination Invigilation on Examination Malpractice in Colleges. The findings obtained are presented in a four-point Likert scale and presented on the table below.

**Table 4: Influence of Examination Invigilation on Examination Malpractice in College**

Invigilation	SD	D	A	SA
Students are thoroughly checked before they enter in examination room	0	12	78	10
Two invigilators are always present during examination period	8	8	72	12
The seating arrangements cannot allow students to copy from each other Examinations	4	18	66	12
There is always an external Invigilator during examination period.	5	62	15	18
Invigilators are not allowed to carry any distracters in examination room.	10	8	58	24
Students are punished when found cheating in examination	0	4	82	14
Invigilators are conversant with all forms of malpractice during examination	0	11	71	18

The study established that the Students are thoroughly checked before they enter in examination room, as was revealed by 78% of the respondents who agreed. During examinations, two invigilators are always present during examination period to reduce the cases of malpractices, as was revealed by 72% of the respondents. A cross-sectional survey of the University of Development Studies to investigate acts of exam malpractice showed that smuggling of foreign material into exam rooms, writing answers on body parts, communication by seeking for answers from colleagues is the three major methods students engage to cheat in examinations (Thompson et al., 2019). The dual in the study recommended introduction of scanners and other electronic devices to detect exam cheating such as CCTV, and spacing of sitting arrangements to curb examination malpractice resulting from teachers' laxity in invigilation. Siting arrangements cannot allow students to copy from each other Examinations, as was revealed by 66% of the respondents. These results differed with those of Monteiro, Silva-Pereira & Severo (Monteiro et al., 2018), in investigating the existence of social networks in cheating behaviors among medical students. According to the study seating plans have a significant influence in exam cheating among medical students. Monteiro, Silva-Pereira & Severo (Monteiro et al., 2018) recommended teaching staff to come up with random seating plan during examinations to lower chances of exam anomalies. The current study further established that there is no external Invigilator during examination period, to help monitor the students doing examinations, as was revealed by 62% of the respondents. Invigilators are not allowed to carry any distracters in examination room, as was revealed by 58% of the respondents. Students are punished when found cheating in examination, as was revealed by 82% of the respondents. 71% of the respondents were of the opinion that invigilators are conversant with all forms of malpractice during examination. A study states that even under intense invigilation, students have techniques which they use to cheat including use of body parts. The students' innovativeness includes exposure of body parts by female students to distract or make invigilators uncomfortable. Students always devise techniques which seem unknown to invigilators to enable them succeed in cheating without being caught (Odongo et al., 2021).

### **Influence of Teacher's Reputation on Examination Malpractice in Colleges**

The third objective of the study sought to establish the Influence of Teacher's Reputation on Examination Malpractice in Colleges. The findings obtained are presented on the table below.

**Table 5: Influence of Teacher's Reputation on Examination Malpractice in Colleges**

<b>Teachers Reputation</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
Teachers assist students in cheating to ensure they pass in exams	12	70	10	8
Rewards gotten due to excellent performance is key to teachers abating of students cheating	10	55	22	13
Students can access examination papers before examinations through social media and other communication platforms	81	16	3	0
Teachers gives students hints that helps them answer exams Questions	0	52	41	7
Students should never write examinations without the presence of supervisors or invigilators	0	18	74	8
Teachers assist students to smuggle unauthorized materials/devices into an examination hall	10	88	2	0

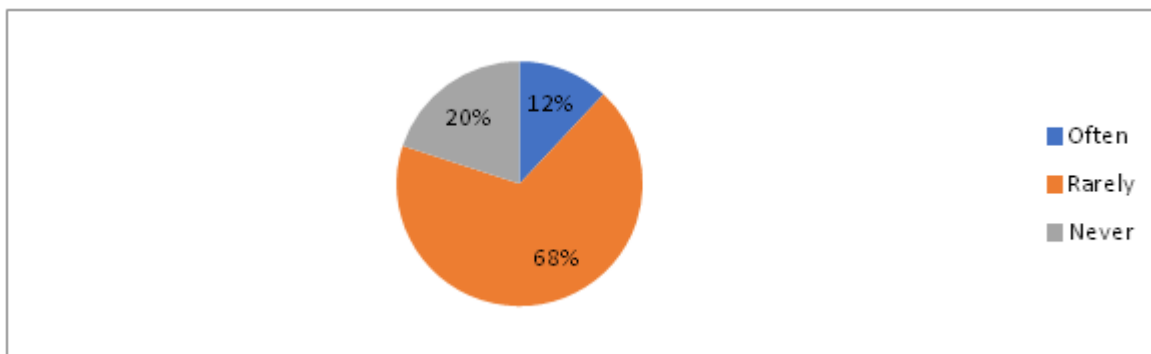
The study established that the teachers were not aiding in cheating of the examinations, as was revealed by 70% of the respondents. Rewards gotten due to excellent performance did not contribute to teachers abating of students cheating, as was revealed by 55% of the respondents. These results were similar to those of a study (Vincent-Robinson, 2016) where 33% of the respondents suggested that invigilators should be given a small allowance to motivate them and ensure that they are vigilant during the exam period. A study

mentions that some invigilators do not care about possible-exam-irregularities but are engaged in other activities including reading newspaper, marking reports, watching videos and chatting during examinations(Blau et al., 2017).

Students were not able to access examination papers before examinations through social media and other communication platforms, as was revealed by 81% of the respondents who strongly disagreed. These findings differ with (Akunne et al., 2021) who found out that taking mobile phones to examination halls is a culture of examination malpractice in Kenyan universities as agreed by 80% of the interviewed undergraduate students. The current study further established that the teachers gave students hints that help them answer exams Questions as was revealed by 52 % of the respondents. This is supported by (Situma & Wasike, 2020) , which found that the persistence of the challenge of examination malpractice in Kenyan colleges and Universities is as a result of involvement of academic staff and other officials in the unethical practice. Students were never allowed to write examinations without the presence of supervisors or invigilators, as was revealed by 74% of the respondents. Teachers did not assist students to smuggle unauthorized materials/devices into an examination hall, as was revealed by 88% of the respondents. Contrary, in their study (Situma & Wasike, 2020), authors reported that staff members in some universities and colleges are paid to leak examinations and allow unauthorized materials in the examination halls. The study also reported that poor supervision including lack of enough supervisors in an exam rom and overcrowding lead to exam cheating.

### Smuggling of materials in exam rooms

The study sought to establish how often students were able to smuggle written materials in the exam rooms. The findings obtained are presented on the figure



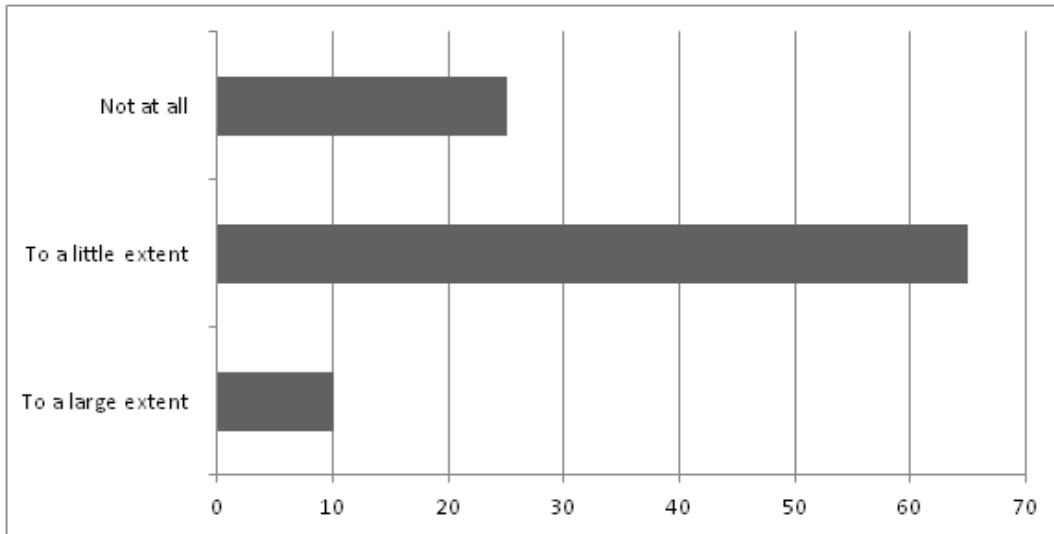
**Figure 6: Smuggling of Materials in Exam Rooms**

The study established that 68% of the students were of the opinion that written materials were smuggled in the classrooms rarely, 20% opinioned that there was never such smuggling, while 12% opinioned that the materials were smuggled often. Several authors have supported carrying of authorized material as a major form of examination malpractice in colleges and universities(Dr. Stephen Ifedha Akaranga, 2013). Students carry crib notes or note books in shoes, bras, hems, socks, belts etc. and refer to them during exams.

### Extent of teachers' involvement in malpractices

The study further sought to establish the extent to which teachers were involved in exam malpractices. The findings obtained presented on are figure below.





**Figure 7: Extent of Teachers Involvement in Malpractices**

The study established that 65% of the teachers were involved to a little extent, 25% were not involved at all, while only 10% were involved to a large extent in exam cheating. The study by (Adekunmisi, 2021) concurs with the findings of the current study that teachers are to some extent involved in examination malpractice. Further explains that teachers collude with the students to have the examination materials before the exam. In other cases teachers provide students with assignments or assessments which have similar questions to those found in examinations (Udim et al., 2018).

## DISCUSSIONS

The study sought to establish the factors influencing examination malpractices among students in KMTC in Mt. Kenya region. The study established that the students were always provided with course outlines to enable them prepare for examinations, as was revealed by 62% of the respondents who strongly agreed. Before the examinations were done, the curriculum was well covered by the students, as was revealed by 70% of the respondents who agreed and that 90% of the respondents stated that the students are provided with course materials before the end of semester examination, as was agreed by the respondents. Students were not given enough time to revise in groups, as was revealed by 55% of the respondents. 60% of the respondents agreed that the students had adequate time to revise for the examinations. Students were taught on how to answer questions, as was revealed by another 60% of the respondents who agreed. Remedial classes were not given to the weak students, as was revealed by 90% of the respondents. The study established that the students were required by the administration to attend all the lessons, as was revealed by 60% of the respondents who agreed. 55% of the respondents agreed that students carry out the assignments as directed by their lecturers. Students are provided with examination timetable in advance to enable them revise accordingly, as was revealed by 84% of the respondents. Students did not state an excuse of not being adequately prepared as a reason for cheating in examinations, as was revealed by 68% of the respondents. Students did not have adequate time to revise for the examinations, as was revealed by 52% of the respondents.

Students are thoroughly checked before they enter in examination room, as was revealed by 78% in response. During examinations, two invigilators are always present during examination period to reduce the cases of malpractices, as was revealed by 72% of the respondents. Siting arrangements cannot allow students to copy from each other in examinations, as was revealed by 66% of the respondents. There is no external invigilator during examination period, to help monitor the students doing examinations, as was revealed by 62% of the respondents. Invigilators are not allowed to carry any distracters in examination

room, as was revealed by 58% of the respondents. Students are punished when found cheating in examination, as was revealed by 82% of the respondents. 71% of the respondents were of the opinion that invigilators are conversant with all forms of malpractice during examination. The third objective of the study sought to establish the Influence of Teacher's Reputation on Examination Malpractice in Colleges. The study established that the teachers were not aiding in cheating of the examinations, as was revealed by 70% of the respondents. Rewards gotten due to excellent performance did not contribute to teachers abating of students cheating, as was revealed by 55% of the respondents.

Students were not able to access examination papers before examinations through social media and other communication platforms, as was revealed by 81% of the respondents who strongly disagreed. Teachers gave students hints that helps them answer exams questions as was revealed by 52% of the respondents. Students were never allowed to write examinations without the presence of supervisors or invigilators, as was revealed by 74% of the respondents Teachers did not assist students to smuggle unauthorized materials/devices into an examination hall, as was revealed by 88% of the respondents. The study established that 68% of the students were of the opinion that written materials were smuggled in the classrooms rarely, 20% opined that there was never such smuggling, while 12% opined that the materials were smuggled often. The study established that 65% of the teachers were involved to a little extent, 25% were not involved at all, while only 10% were involved to a large extent

## CONCLUSIONS

That the student's preparation levels had an influence on the rates of examination malpractices and strict invigilation was able to curb the cases of examination malpractices. The number of invigilators in the examination room was a determinant of the rates of cheating in the examination rooms. Though the cases were rare, some teachers were aiding the students to cheat the examinations.

### Recommendation of the Study

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that students are adequately prepared to do the examinations, and have covered the entire syllabus as required by the course outline, on time, so as to allow them time to revise and stiff penalties put in place for both students and lecturers

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