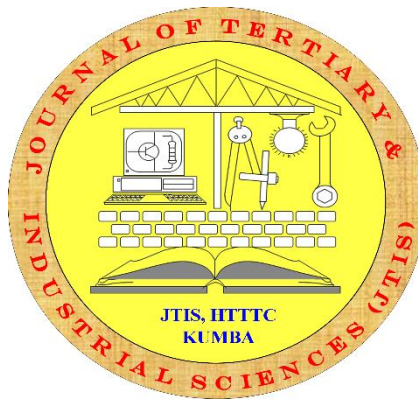


ISSN 2709-3409 (Online)

# JOURNAL OF TERTIARY AND INDUSTRIAL SCIENCES

A MULTIDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL OF THE HIGHER TECHNICAL TEACHERS'  
TRAINING COLLEGE, KUMBA



**VOLUME 4, NUMBER 1**  
**FEBRUARY, 2024**

**PUBLISHER:**  
**HIGHER TECHNICAL TEACHERS' TRAINING COLLEGE (HTTC)**  
**UNIVERSITY OF BUEA**

P.O Box: 249 Buea Road, Kumba  
Tel: (+237) 33354691 – Fax: (+237) 33354692  
Email: [editor@jtis-htttcubuea.com](mailto:editor@jtis-htttcubuea.com)  
Website: <https://www.jtis-htttcubuea.com>

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## **Assessment of Examination Malpractice and its Impact on Students' Academic Success in Secondary and High Schools in Yaoundé, Cameroon**

By

**Kenneth Yuomeyse**

Department of Curriculum and Evaluation  
Faculty of Education  
University of Yaoundé 1

### **Abstract**

The purpose of the study is to examine examination malpractice and its impact on students' academic success. There are growing cases and causes of examination malpractice during assessment and evaluation in secondary and high schools which need to be redressed. The study made use of descriptive survey research design. Data was collected using Predisposing Examination Malpractice Questionnaire (PFTEMQ) and sub scale of Examination Malpractice and Student Achievement (EMAA) questionnaire with modifications. The sample was 278 secondary school students selected using a simple random sampling technique. Bandura self-efficacy theory was used to explain the variables. The results were analysed using Pearson moment product correlation and regression analysis which indicated a positive significant relationship between institution, teachers, students' factors related examination malpractice and academic success. This implies that types of examination misconduct, students, teachers and schools' involvement in examination malpractice highly affect students' academic success. The study strongly recommends that counselling services, motivation, and conducive learning environment be provided to curb examination malpractice.

**Key words:** Assessment, Examination, Malpractice, Academic Success, Secondary Schools

### **1. Introduction**

Education concerns the aggregate of all processes through which an individual develops attitude, aptitudes, abilities, and all forms of conduct that are of positive value to himself and his community. Through the process of education, humans develop their emotional, intellectual, spiritual, physical abilities and become absolutely participating members of their society. According to Akaranga and Ongong (2013), education is a process through which adolescents are equipped to lead productive lives commensurate with their interests and talents. Learners through the process of education are not only taught, trained, and adequately equipped to acquire useful skills and knowledge, but also learn how to conform to adequate public life (Usma & Aliyu, 2023). Education could be informal or formal. Informal education is not necessarily planned to be systematic,

pedagogically conscious, and according to disciplines, but rather is holistically problem oriented, unconsciously incidental and associated to situation management and fitness for life. Formal education takes place in a structured environment where everything is clearly carried out by the teacher in teaching the learners. Formal education takes place in a school setting with classrooms of many students learning together with a trained, certified subject teacher (Usma & Aliyu, 2023).

Formal education is a teaching and learning process that is appraised through examination, orally or written at the end of the studying period. Oduwaiye (2014) opines that examination is an organized technique of assessment which presents learners with a series of tasks or questions tailored towards ascertaining the learners' acquired skills and knowledge. Examination process determines learners' progress, helps and motivates them to know their academic weaknesses and strengths as well as providing educators with opportunities to try new teaching methods (Akaranga & Ongong, 2013). To Emaikwu (2012), examination as part of educational evaluation is aimed at determining the learner's level of intellectual competence or skill acquisition and understanding after a training period. An examination or a test is an assessment designed to ascertain a test taker's skills or knowledge, physical fitness, aptitude or classification in many other contents (Usma & Aliyu, 2023). A test may be conducted on a paper, orally, on a computer or in an endorsed area that needs a test taker to perform physically a set of skills. When an examination is not well conducted, the feedback expected may not be obtained. The result of such an assessment leads to wrong judgments and decisions which affect the learner, the teacher, the community and the education industry (Usma & Aliyu, 2023). The cardinal principle in the science of education testing, measurement, assessment and evaluation is that any act of examination misconduct that successfully goes unchecked, diminishes the credibility of the results and the resultant certificate awarded to students.

For effective organisation and management of final year examinations in Cameroon, the General Certificate of Education Board (GCEB) was created with the motto: Measuring Learning with Honesty. The examination Board was created by Decree N<sup>o</sup>: 93/172 of 1<sup>st</sup> July 1993 as rectified by Decree No 07/45 of 5<sup>th</sup> March 1997 and it is placed under the custody of the Ministry in charge of Secondary Education. The mission of the Board is to organise the General Certificate of Education examinations in both general and technical subjects for Ordinary and Advanced Level candidates. During the 2023 session of examinations, the Cameroon General Certificate of Education Board (GCEB) released figures of candidates sanctioned for examination malpractice. According to the statistics published by the Board, 1,891 cases of examination malpractice were registered during the 2023 June Session (Ndong & Ebanga, 2023). The candidates were involved in examination malpractice ranging from collusion, script substitution, and impersonation, use of pre-prepared materials, cell phones and violence. Candidates who were caught with cell phones, impersonating, and substituting scripts had their results cancelled and each given a three-year suspension from writing examinations organised by the Board.

Candidates who were discovered with pre-prepared material, collusion and involved in acts of violence saw their results cancelled and were prohibited from taking part in any related examinations organised by the GCE Board for a period of one year (Ndong & Ebanga, 2023).

Apart from students involved in examination malpractice organised by the General Certificate of Education Board (GCEB), there are many cases of examination misconduct taking place during classroom continuous assessments, evaluations and end of year promotion examinations in secondary schools in Yaoundé, Cameroon. There are persistent reported cases of students involved in examination malpractice during the process of assessment and evaluation in schools. Students are often caught using pre-prepared materials and answers, cell phones, copying from exercise and textbooks during the written sessions of examinations. Some students write answers on sheets of papers, programmed smart watches and take to class during evaluation. It has also been observed that some of the examination malpractices are caused by factors related to institutions, teachers and parents. The improper structure of timetables, insufficient follow up of teaching activities, poor attendance of teaching and frequent absences by teachers, too much focus on cognitive evaluation, lack of affective and psychomotor provisions in setting, socio-professional shortcomings like strike actions are some of the factors relating to examination malpractice given by stakeholders involved in education. Students caught in examination malpractice are mostly those who do not attend classes regularly. The negative influence from peers and too much involvement of students in social activities are some of the root causes of examination misconduct.

The problem of this research is that there are growing cases and causes of examination malpractice during the writing of the General Certificate of Education (GCE) examination sessions, classroom continuous assessments and promotion examinations in secondary schools which need to be addressed. Whether the examinations and assessments are subjective, objective or standardised, there are cases of examination misconduct. Some of these examination malpractices are caused by students, parents, teachers and the institutions. Some of the consequences of these examination leakages are that they give false impression of knowledge and understanding by students and breeds laziness, mediocrity, stupidity, discouraging hard work which is the foundation of growth, progress and certificates awarded to students. The study seeks to examine the significant relationship between examination malpractice and students' academic success in secondary and high schools. Thus, the work:

Examines the significant relationship between school factors related to examination malpractice and students' academic success in secondary and high schools.

Investigates the significant relationship between teacher factors related to examination malpractice and students' academic success in secondary and high schools.

Analyses the significant relationship between students' factors related to examination malpractice and their academic success in secondary and high schools.

The work is guided by the following specific research hypotheses:

There is a significant relationship between the school factors related to examination malpractice and students' academic success in secondary and high schools.

There is a significant relationship between the teacher factors related to examination malpractice and students' academic success in secondary and high schools.

There is a significant relationship between the students' factors related to examination malpractice and their academic success in secondary and high schools.

## **2. Literature Review**

Examination malpractice is any conscious act of wrong doing, contrary to the rules of examinations or examination Bodies with the intention to give a candidate undue advantage. Examination malpractice, which is also known as cheating, involves the unlawful actions that students take during their examinations to try to get good marks or unacceptable passes. Amadi and Opuiyo (2018) define examination malpractice as any form of misbehaviour that leads to the tempering or altering with the prescribed ways of conducting examination in any given system. This is an act or irregular manner of candidates testing which violates the rules and regulations governing the conduct of examinations. Because of examination malpractice, students neglect to read their books with the hope of obtaining magic performance they are used to in every examination (Usma and Aliyu, 2023). Examination malpractice has become endemic in the educational system. Students involve themselves in this act because they want to achieve success; parents are involved because they want excellent grades for their children; teachers and other educational stakeholders are engaged because of the material, financial, and other intangible benefits for involvement in examination malpractice (Maheshwari, 2011). Examination is a means of determining a student's degree of performance and success. Examination malpractice concerns any abnormal behaviour demonstrated by examiners, examinees, or anyone involved in the chain of examination or assessment whether before, during, or after, that provides an unjust advantage to certain people (Dadzie and Annan-brew, 2023). Examination malpractice is a thoughtful practice of misbehaviour by stakeholders including students, academic authority, teachers, and parents before, during and after examination to lift the academic image of the school and the students in the assessment and evaluation (Asante-Kyei and Nduro, 2014).

According to Onyibe et al. (2015), in every examination, candidates develop new methods of carrying out examination malpractice. The instances of examination malpractice ranges from leakage of questions, impersonation, tampering with results, computer fraud to fraudulent practices by invigilators. Adie & Oko (2016) identify some forms of examinations malpractice which include leakage, impersonation, and smuggling of foreign materials, copying, collusion, and marking malpractice. The phenomenon took forms such as the following: impersonation; bringing in foreign materials, such as books and calculators; substituting answer sheets with already worked scripts, stealing, converting, and misappropriating scripts; collusion in the examination hall involving copying; and organized cheating involving assistance from teachers and invigilators



(Aminu, 2006; Onuka, 2011). Some of the tricks used under examination misconduct included, bribing, smuggling foreign materials into the examination rooms such as prepared notes and material written on palms, thighs (especially for girls), and in text books or novels for subjects such as Literature, and they also go in with various tricks such as, "hide and seek" and gadgets designed to assist them to pass the examinations instead of relying on their own abilities (Ake Gronlund et al., 2010; Daily Graphic, 2013).

There are three categories of examination malpractice: before, during, and after the examination. Those that occur before the examinations include multiple registrations when the same student registers for two or more examinations, two students write the examination while only one submits the exams script done with the assistance of exams officials and school leadership, the sale of live examination question papers, impersonation, postponing the start of the exams to allow mercenary discover answers to questions for some candidates, and naming examination places in difficult terrain and remote areas (Dadzie and Annan-brew, 2023; Nzene, 2014). Examination malpractice might include poor organisation in examination halls, selling question papers, smuggling of important written documents into exams rooms, impersonation, harassment, etc. Students are not the only ones involved in this misconduct. Instructors, guardians, school administrators, and examination authorities all work together with students to perpetrate this misconduct and the involvement of these stakeholder make it harder to eradicate (Ijaiya, 2004).

According to Obasi (2009), examination malpractice has disadvantageous effects on all angles of society: the home, the individual, the school, the private sector, the government and the international community. To Ajayi (2009), examination malpractice cannot be eradicated unless the entire society manifests high degree of integrity, responsibility and honesty by combating this threat with all vigour and rigour it warrants. There should be regular public education campaigns, less emphasis on certificate qualification for determining students' fate for job placement and enforcement of punishment for culprits to eradicate the ills of examination malpractice. Examination malpractice is the deliberate wrongdoing opposed to official rules of examinations and the different forms of malpractice are mostly carried out at the pre conduct stage, conduct stage and evaluation stage (Maheshwari, 2011). Omonijo (2010) and Akpa (2012) add that, examination malpractice is a misconduct or improper practice, before, during or after any examination by examinees or others with the intention to obtain good results by fraudulent means. From these definitions, it can be concluded that examination malpractice is an unethical act because it encourages mediocrity in that students who succeed through such unorthodox methods may be rated equal to those who struggle on their own to excel.

## **2.1 Bandura self-efficacy theory**

The self-efficacy theory developed by Bandura (1997), advances the view that individuals possess a self-belief system that allows them to exercise control over their feelings, cognitive processes, behaviour and motivation. The theory provides an agentic view of

human behaviour in which individuals, through their own self-referent thoughts and feelings, can in part determine the course of actions they take. The self-efficacy theory suggests that individuals who have more confidence in their abilities and skills will exert more effort to perform a task, persists longer to overcome any difficulties than those who have less confidence in their potentials (Hasan, 2006). The theory operates within a causal model of triadic reciprocity, where personal factors in the form of cognition, biological events, behaviour, and environmental factors interact and influence one another.

## **2.2 Institutions' factors related to examination malpractice**

George and Ukpong (2013) observed that the increasing rate of examination malpractice are dubious admission policies and ill-equipped library facilities in schools. Onyechere (2004) and Awambor (2004) cited by Usma & Aliyu (2023) added that poor school facilities like inadequate or lack of examination hall, poor sitting arrangement, poor invigilation, privatization and commercialization of education, weak parental function are some of the causes of examination malpractice. Some of the school related examination malpractice factors are poor invigilation, too difficult setting of examination questions and lack of conducive examination environment (Usma & Aliyu, 2023). The practice of corruption, inadequate monitoring of examinations, careless implementation of rules and regulations governing examinations, parental and students' intimidation, are the institution causes of examination malpractice (Suleman et al., 2015).

According to Joshua (2010), some Heads of schools and principals engage in examination misconduct to obtain a hundred per cent pass in official examinations to lift the academic image of their institutions. The State indirectly and unknowingly contributes to examination malpractices. The failure to provide teaching learning materials, adequate infrastructure, poor remuneration and pay packages for teachers are some of the factors responsible for examination misconduct in schools. Examination officials fail to enforce the rules governing examinations just because they accept bribe or are paid to allow students cheat in examinations Halls (Joshua, 2010). To Bolarin (2002) principals, school teachers, security agents, public examination Boards personnel, and parents have been accused of assisting students to cheat during examinations. Some causes of examination misconduct include over enthusiastic school leaders to ensure that their schools have best performances to boost their self-esteem or ego. The lack of security during examination is another cause of examination misconduct. Examination questions are poorly handled before examinations and the answer booklets are not always well secured after writing examinations (Suleman et al., 2015).

Institution self-efficacy beliefs are the motivational construct of Heads of schools and principals self-perceived level of competencies, relating to the actions and decisions they take concerning their schools. The degree to which school administrators' belief in their competencies during examination has great significant effects on how they approach these evaluation exercises. Heads of schools with low self-efficacy are unsatisfied and

engage themselves in examination malpractice. They engage in dubious admission policies, corruption, and embezzlement of school funds. These over enthusiastic school leaders will engage themselves in examination misconduct. They will bribe examination officials to have best performances. Those with high self-efficacy will provide a conducive environment for teaching, assessment and evaluation of students.

### **2.3 Teachers' factors related to examination malpractice**

According to Kasim and Yakubu (2018), most teachers spend less time in teaching and do not cover their syllabus or scheme of work before rushing students for examinations. The end result is to use cheating in order to make the students pass. Some teachers cover poor teaching with examination fraud during evaluation. Abayeh (1996) cited by Adamu et al. (2021) observed that the poverty level of supporting workers is at all-time high, and to better the situation, these workers would use villainous techniques to complement their deficient salaries. In support of this view, basic and secondary education teachers mostly do not have the expertise in the disciplines they teach since some of them were not well trained and their trainers not adequately motivated. The teacher related examination malpractice factors according to Usma and Aliyu (2023) include lack of commitment on the part of teachers, teacher's threat to fail students, teacher's anxiety caused by non-completion of the course materials, un-stimulating course materials, leakages through teachers and strikes that mostly interrupt teaching, learning and school programmes.

According to Ikura (2010), some teachers are very incompetent and do not often give the correct requirements for examinations to students. Animasahun and Ogunniran (2014) observed that some teachers, because of poverty, connive with students to cheat during invigilation and supervision of examinations. The inadequate teaching facilities in schools, insufficient trained teachers, poor remuneration and insufficient teaching equipment are factors that influence teachers to develop negative attitude towards examination and actively engage themselves in examination malpractice (Ajibola, 2011; Animasahun, 2013). Teachers are mostly unsatisfied with school facilities and services, work load, motivation and reward system, professional development programmes which push them to participate in examination malpractice to get some money (Animasahun & Ogunniran, 2014). Teachers encourage students to engage in examination malpractices. They help students in buying of examination questions to read and write the examination well. To Denga and Denga (2008), some teachers get themselves involved in examination malpractices by dictating correct answers to students in the hall during writing to boast that their schools are teaching well by obtaining distinctions and high credits. Adzrolo et al. (2021) support that those teachers who failed to complete lessons and syllabi before the date of examination answer questions and give to the invigilators to give to students in the examination rooms.

Self-efficacy is necessary for teachers' abilities to effect change, influences the choices they make regarding new situations. The degree to which teachers' belief in their competencies to evaluate students learning has great significant effects on how they approach these evaluation exercises. The more teachers have high self-efficacy, the more they are

engaged and ready to evaluate students well. Teachers with high self-efficacy are satisfied and motivated. They use good teaching methods and evaluation strategies. Those with low self-efficacy do not have the expertise in the disciplines they teach. They develop negative attitude towards examination and actively engage themselves in examination malpractice.

### **2.3 Students' factors related to examination malpractice**

Students' personal factors are the most important responsible for examination malpractice. The desire to pass at all cost, fear of failure or getting low marks, lack of confidence and being ill prepared for examinations are the most important causes of examination malpractices. The spirits of dogged attention to study today by students in order to pass their exams on their own without involving in any sharp form of practices has been thrown to the dogs (Animasahun & Ogunniran, 2014). Secondary and high schools' students have a fear of failing and not being able to proceed into universities and importance is given on the certificate instead of their practical skills or understanding (Aslam et al., 2021). In Ghana, Daily Graphic (2013) reported that the occurrences of examination malpractices had assumed an alarming trend mainly due to candidates' fear of failing, lack of confidence, laziness, inadequate preparation and, above all, the inability to apply themselves to their studies. Students perfected various forms of cheating in examination rooms. Animasahun (2013) opines that some students get indulged into examination malpractices intentionally, others get involved through ignorance, forgetfulness or carelessness to apply rules and regulations governing exams or pressure from peers. Laziness and inadequate or insufficient preparation for examinations are some of the most important causes of examination malpractice (Adekale, 2009; Omotosho, 2007). Animasahun & Ogunniran (2014) add that low morality, poor preparation for examination, poor school facilities, inadequate guidance and counselling, nonchalant attitude and absenteeism are factors associated with ill preparation for examinations by students.

According to Ajibola (2011), the anxiety to acquire and present certificates for a job in most countries caused many students struggling to get the certificates by all forms negatively or positively. Ikura (2012), observes three categories or groups of factors responsible for examination malpractices. These include psychological factors, environmental factors and intelligent factors. Psychological factors include anxiety and stress to meet subjects' demands, creating of failure, tremor or scoring low grades force some students to engage into examination malpractice. Environmental factors concern close sitting nature of candidates and inadequate coverage of syllabuses while intelligent factors involve candidates of different level of academic strength or Intelligence Quotient (IQ). The failure to recognise their levels of IQ can make students who are weak to compare themselves with students who are naturally gifted not doing extra efforts and hard work to match the brilliant intelligent students. The academic non-brilliant or weak students can get themselves engaged in examination malpractice (Animasahun & Ogunniran, 2014).

According to self-efficacy theory, students' self-efficacy beliefs are the motivational construct of their self-perceived level of competencies, relating to their actions and achievements in the classroom. The degree to which students in secondary and high schools believe in their potentials to succeed and complete their classroom continuous assessments, promotion and certificate examinations has great significant effects on how they approach these evaluation exercises. The students with high sense of self-efficacy are more likely to approach the examination well prepared and ready to complete any challenging tasks. The more learners have high self-efficacy, the more they are active, engage and ready to succeed. Those students with low self-efficacy will lack confidence, suffer anxiety and laziness which will push them to engage in examination malpractice in schools. These group of students will resort to dishonest techniques and strategies to pass examinations at all cost.

#### **2.4 Effects of examination malpractices on students' academic success**

Examination continues to be the most acceptable technique for assessing and evaluating students' learning in secondary schools. Because of rampant cases of examination malpractice, the society is losing confidence in the certificates awarded by some examination bodies and institutions to students. Any unjust activity made during examination may jeopardize the reliability, legitimacy and authenticity of the grades and the certificates students obtained (Asante-Kyei and Nduro, 2014; Uzoamaka et al., 2021). Because of the cultural expectations and competitive nature of the job market, students are frequently under pressure to do whatever will make them achieve victory in their examinations. Some of learners turn to unethical measures to pass their examination (Dadzie and Annan-brew, 2023). Examination malpractice does not only wreck the educational system but gradually introduces students into the practice of fraud

According to Abdulkadir et al. (2021), the consequences of examination malpractice is the danger of unacceptable compromise of standard promotion of corruption and moral decadence, fraud, fatal professional errors, destruction of institutions and dullness. Examination malpractice poses a great threat to the validity and reliability of the educational measurement and assessment. Akaranga and Ongong (2013) pointed out the effects of examination malpractice which include dismissal of students from schools, corruption, bad study habits and refusal of admission to genuine students. The lack of trust in examination bodies, dismissal of students, underachievement in the job market, lazy attitude towards instruction and corruption are some of the effects of examination malpractice (Adzrolo, et al., 2021; Otoo, 2018). According to the study carried out by Onyechere (2008) cited by Ben Adzrolo et al. (2022) the consequences of examination malpractices are discouragement of brilliant students to study hard, deprivation of innocent students' opportunity for admission and reduction in work efficiency.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Participants

The participants for this research work were 278 secondary school students from Form four, Form five, Lower and Upper sixths. These participants sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) Sample size determination table. They were selected from the Anglophone subsystem of education both private and public secondary schools in Yaoundé VI Sub Division in the Centre Region of Cameroon. The simple random sampling method was used to select the population's participants. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented on the table below:

*Table 1: The demographic characteristics of the respondents*

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	64	23.02
	Female	214	76.98
Class	Form Fourth	96	34.53
	Form Five	87	31.29
	Lower Sixth	43	15.47
	Upper Sixth	52	18.71
Type of school	Public	134	48.20
	Private	144	51.80
Age	< 16 years	154	55.40
	= 16 years	49	17.63
	> 16 years	75	26.98

According to table 1 above both 64 male (23.02%) and 214 female (76.98%) participants were included in the research process and 96 (34.53%) were from Form four, 87(31.29%) from Form five, 43(15.47%) from Lower sixth, 52(18.71%) from Upper sixth. There were 134 respondents from public school (48.20%) and 144 from private schools (51.80%). 154 participants were above sixteen years (55.40%), 49 were 16 years (17.63%) and 75 participants were below sixteen years (26.98%).

#### 3.2 Material and design

The research data was collected from the participants using a questionnaire in a descriptive survey research design. Institution, teacher and students' factors related to examination malpractice were assessed using Predisposing Factors towards Examination Malpractice Questionnaire (PFTEMQ) from Badejo and Gandonu (2010). The students' academic success was measured using Examination Malpractice and Academic Achievement (EMAA) questionnaire from Obilor and Ikechukwu, (2020). These

instruments were adopted and modified to suit the research respondents and the environment. The instruments were all constructed using a four-point Likert scale format to assess students' responses for each related section (strongly agree =1, agree =2, disagree =3, strongly disagree =4).

The content and face validity of the questionnaire instrument were determined. The research instrument was given to some experts and professionals in the field of measurement and evaluation to validate. They made the necessary adjustment to ensure that the instrument is valid. Test-retest reliability was used to measure the reliability of the research instrument. The questionnaire was first tested in a group of 30 students and after two weeks, the same questionnaire was still administered to the same group of students before administering them to the sampled participants. Their responses were correlated, and the results analysed showed a high level of consistency. The purpose was to check the validity and reliability of the instruments used. The reliability was assessed by Cronbach's alpha and values which stood at 0.81 for examination malpractice and 0.72 for students' academic success.

Concerning ethical issues, all the required permissions were obtained from the secondary school administrators, principals and discipline masters. The research participants who were students were informed prior to research and their anonymity was respected. The student respondents answered the questionnaires in the classroom settings. They took 10 to 15 minutes to complete a paper-pencil based questionnaire format. Their names and personal information were kept secret to further respect their anonymity. They were not requested by the researcher and the questionnaire were not handed to the researcher directly. They were handed to the school administrators for the researchers to collect. The researcher explained to them the purpose of the study and briefed them on how to fill the questionnaire.

### **3.3 Analysis of data**

Version 27.0 Windows for Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for data analysis. To give meaning to the research data, the various statistical tools: descriptive statistics, mean, standard deviation, Pearson product moment correlation and regression analysis were used to analyse data and test research hypotheses. The results of the correlation and regression analysis were considered statistically significant at 95% confidence level ( $p < 0.05$ ).

## **4. Results and Discussion**

### **4.1 Results**

The verification of research hypotheses using Pearson correlation coefficient and multiple regression are presented on the tables below. We assessed the predictive nature of the students' academic success from examination malpractice in secondary and high schools.

*Table 2: Mean, standard deviation and correlations matrix between the study variables*

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
<b>1.School factors related to examination malpractice</b>	2.259	0.482	1			
<b>2. Teacher factors related to examination malpractice</b>	2.113	0.472	0.440***	1		
<b>3. Students' factors related to examination malpractice</b>	1.921	0.501	0.429***	0.415***	1	
<b>4. Students' Academic Success</b>	1.828	0.473	0.254***	0.350***	0.567***	1

Note: n = 278; \*\*\*p < 0.001

Table 2 above displays the correlation matrix of the research study variables. The results indicate correlations between the study variables, namely between the independent variables (school factors related to examination malpractice, teacher factors related to examination malpractice, students' factors related to examination malpractice) and the dependent variable (students' academic success).

The first research hypothesis was that there is a significant relationship between school factors related to examination malpractice and students' academic success in secondary and high schools. The relationship was positive and statistical significant at  $p < 0.001$ . From the results, we can conclude that the availability of school factors related to examination malpractice significantly correlate students' academic success in secondary and high schools.

The second hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between teacher factors related to examination malpractice and students' academic success in secondary and high schools. The relationship was positive and statistical significant at  $p < 0.001$ . From the results, we can conclude that the availability of teacher factors related to examination malpractice significantly correlate students' academic success in secondary schools.

The last research hypothesis was that there is a significant relationship between students' factors related to examination malpractice and their academic success in secondary and high schools. The relationship was positive and statistical significant at  $p < 0.001$ . From the results, we can conclude that the availability of students' factors related examination malpractice significantly correlate their academic success in secondary and high schools.

Many scholars and researchers emphasized the importance of examination malpractice in relation to students' academic success in secondary and high schools. It is imperative to consider the parameters of the model for students' academic success. A multiple regression was run to predict students' academic success from examination malpractice factors.

*Table 3: Coefficients of the multiple regression model for students' academic success*

Model	B (95% CI for B)	SE	T	p
(Constant)	0.645 (.386 ; .903)	0.131	4.912	0.000



School factors related to examination malpractice	-0.035 (-.145 ; .076)	-0.035	-0.614	0.540
Teacher factors related to examination malpractice	0.150 (.038 ; .263)	0.057	2.632	0.009
Students' factors related to examination malpractice	0.491 (.386 ; .597)	0.053	9.188	0.001
Note: n= 278 ; R = .582 ; R <sup>2</sup> = .339 ; F (3, 274) = 46.806 ; p < .001				

A multiple regression was run to predict students' academic success from school, teacher and students' factors related to examination malpractice. This resulted in a significant model,  $F(3, 274) = 46.806$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ,  $R^2 = 0.339$ . The individual predictors were further examined and indicated that teacher factors related to examination malpractice ( $t = 2.632$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and students factors related to examination malpractice ( $t = 9.188$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) were positive significant predictors but, school factors related to examination malpractice ( $t = 1.16$ ,  $p = 0.135$ ) is not positive significant predictor. In this model,  $R^2 = 0.339$  implies that the predictor variables account for 33.90% of the variance of students' academic success in secondary and high schools.

## 4.2 Discussion

The study assessed the significant relationship between examination malpractice and students' academic success in secondary and high schools in Yaoundé, Cameroon. The findings discovered a positive significant relationship between school factors related to examination malpractice and students' academic success. The involvement of the school in examination malpractice undermines students' success. This implies that the unstable school calendar, inadequate notice to students when to write exams, improper structure of exams timetable, inadequate facilities, poor collaboration between teachers and students, much emphases on mental evaluation, insufficient follow up of teaching activities produce mediocre graduates, mortgage the future of nation and its economy, breed a society that is bereft of people of integrity. This confirmed research by Abdulkadir et al., (2021) who discovered that school administrators and teachers quest to have their school rated high in academic success; teacher's and teacher training strikes, inadequate facilities like textbooks, and frequent closure of schools are common causes of examination misconduct which affect students' academic achievements.

The study found a positive significant relationship between teacher factors related to examination malpractice and students' academic success. The involvement of the teacher in examination malpractice impair or frustrate students' academic success. The poor absences from classes by teachers, frequent strike actions, poor teaching methods and strategies, insufficient teacher-student interaction, sexual harassment, use of students to mark examination questions frustrate the pursuit of merit, competition, and excellence among students. This research is supported by Situma and Wasike (2020), that teachers have been accused of facilitating testing malpractice. They give answers to students in the

examination hall and even solve mathematics problems for students to copy quickly before they are caught. Teachers tend to believe that if the students do not get good marks in examinations, the school administration and community will know that they did not provide effective teaching.

The research discovered a positive significant relationship between students factors related to examination malpractice and their academic success. The involvement of the students in examination malpractice wreck or weaken their academic success. The poor attendance of classes by students, insufficient preparation for examination, inability to obtain study materials, lack of confidence, anxiety, laziness on the part of some students, the mass rush to obtain certificate, negative influence by peer groups, too much involvement of students in social activities facilitate examination malpractice which destroy students' academic achievement. This confirmed research by Makaula (2018) that the causes of examination malpractice are undisciplined students, insufficient preparation for the examination by students, the desire to pass the examination at all cost, lack of good study habits, lack of positive self-concept, laziness and lack of teaching and learning materials. Examination malpractice destroys the value of work, honesty, discipline, reduce student enrolment in schools and unhealthy competition among students, creates lack of trust in the educational system, causes cancellation of students results, leads to ineffective study habits among students, gives false impression of students' capabilities and competencies and dismissal from schools. This corroborated research by Obilor and Ikechukwu (2020), that the consequences of examination malpractices on academic achievement of students include that exams malpractice undermines the value of work, honesty and discipline. The finding is also in line with the findings of Uzoamaka et al. (2021) that certificates graduate produce are half baked, low standard of education, reluctance of students to study for examination and their academic achievement will decrease which are the effects of examination malpractice on students' academic achievement in secondary schools. Ariba (2011) further confirmed this finding as he opined that the consequences of engaging in examination malpractices have a holistic effect on the economy, progress and moral integrity of citizens in the nation.

### **4.3 Conclusion**

Examination malpractice in the Cameroon educational system was widely assessed and discussed. This is a cancer that poses a great threat to the classroom continuous assessment, promotion examinations and the graduates' qualifications in the certificates obtained in secondary and high schools. Examination misconduct is a major challenge to the parents, students, teachers, schools administrators and examination bodies like the General Certificate of Education Board (GCEB). If the general aim of education is to ensure the physical, intellectual, civic and moral development of the child as well as socio-cultural, economic, political and moral integration in the society as stated in Article 4 of the 1998 law to lay down guidelines for education in Cameroon, then examinations

should test the development of these abilities and qualities in the students. The organized relevant curriculum and goals of education can be achieved only if there is proper provision made for accurate evaluation of students' learning.

#### **4.4 Recommendations**

For recommendations, there should be continuous assessment during teaching and learning process to permit students make good use of their study time and it reduces anxiety associated with promotion and end of study General Certificate Examination (GCE). Continuous assessment aids teachers to appraise their teaching methods and strategies. There should be continuous checking of students thoroughly to avoid the entry of foreign materials into the examination halls, sitting positions and arrangements, verification of students' identification documents, banning the use mobile phones during exams, effective surprise inspections by examination officers from the exam body like the General Certificate Examination Board and school administration during the writing of certificate and promotion examinations. Security officials should be involved to secure examination centres and secure examination materials. Secondary and high schools should be provided with adequate physical, human and financial resources and students with enough didactic materials to promote effective teaching and learning. Teachers should be objective in setting questions, marking scripts and grading students. Administrators, teachers and students caught in examination malpractice should be adequately sanctioned.

Co-curricular activities organised by educational instructions should be well followed up and monitored to reduce too much involvement of students in social activities. There should be effective implementation of the competence based curriculum to integrate cognitive mental evaluation with attitude and skills. The conduct and administration of examinations like the promotion and General Certificate of Education (GCE) should be handled by teachers and officials with integrity and morality. Guidance and counselling services should be adopted in secondary and high schools for students involved in examination malpractice. Each child has his or her own individual capability and should not be pressurised for distinction marks during evaluation in the teaching learning process.

#### **4.5 Suggestions for Further Studies**

- The study adopted a descriptive survey research design with questionnaire as instrument for data collection. Similar study can be carried out using different methodology and research design.
- Another research can be carried out in other regions of the country to verify if the findings of this research could be generalized to all the regions in Cameroon

- The same study can also be carried out in other sectors of education like primary schools and higher institutions of learning in Cameroon
- A study can be carried out to examine the relationship between parents, society factors related to examination malpractice and students' academic success in secondary and high schools

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