



**IMPACT OF CHEATING UNIVERSITY
EXAMINATION ON QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN KENYA:
A CASE OF UMMA UNIVERSITY, KENYA**

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Abstract:

There is adequate consensus among researchers that cheating is widely practiced by students and poses a serious problem across college campuses. Previous studies of academic dishonesty have systematically identified the psychological and social variables correlated to cheating, but how students actually cheat has often been overlooked. Using in-depth narratives from 60 students enrolled in certificate, diploma and undergraduate in university class, this paper examines the variety of creative tactics that students use to cheat during end semester and continuous examinations. Findings indicate that students manipulate variables such as the psychological and behavioral profiles of their lecturers, unwitting accomplices, technology, peers, spatial environments, and their own bodies, to negotiate the contingent of academic dishonesty. University lecturers also contribute in one way or other when they fail to covered syllabus on required time, students may cheat in exams. The exam environment also plays a major part in malpractice when you take students to overcrowded classrooms there is likelihood for them to copy from each other. Exam cheating is rampant in both colleges and universities since most of students are adults and others are engaged in part-time work they may have limited time to study and concentrate in academic work, others may have financial challenges, the whole semester may end while they are looking for fees. This may distract them from attending lectures and when exam time arrives they may resort on how to pass the exam .When such students graduate from university using that short cut to success they may not fit in market It is common to find a university graduate who cannot innovate simple idea. In light of the above, this research was done to analyze the Impact of cheating university examination on quality of education in Kenya. The main objective was to find out the impact of cheating university examination on the quality of education in Kenya. The findings of the research is that exam cheating is rampant in both colleges and universities since most of students are adults and others are engaged in part-time work they may have limited time to study and concentrate in academic work, others may have financial challenges, the whole semester may end while they are looking for fees.

Students also engage in various techniques of cheating exams, some of the sophisticated. Strict university policies should be structured and implementations assured. In future, Kenya needs to come up with university central examination board that regulates examinations in Kenyan universities.

Keywords: cheating university examination, quality of education, Kenya

1. Introduction

In one of his quotes, Mahatma Gandhi quotes *“Satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment. Full effort is full victory.”*

In recent years due to technological development and other myriad factors students had no time for their academic work and therefore when exam time arrives they device other means of excelling in exams other than studying and revising their books, these resulted in poor quality of education and university producing a chunk of students who are half-baked, these on other hand had negative impact on economic development of the country which had invested heavily in their education, in 2016 the government of Kenya under the watch of ministry of education Dr. Matiangi the exam cheating cases dropped drastically following introduction of strict measures, including but not limited to school heads being responsible in collection of exam scripts from county Education offices to actual examination centers, in relation to above stated problem the study would like established the methods and ways students cheat, and how to overcome the problem.

The research was done at Umma University, Garissa learning center with a sample of 60 students from different levels of studies. Age, sex and experience were considered while selecting the sample population. The main objective of the study was to understand the impact of cheating university examination on the quality of education in Kenya. The study sought to also understand the various contributors of examination cheating in Kenyan universities.

2. Literature Review

Cheating habits among college students develop prior to arriving at college, more than 2/3 of college students report in engaging in some form of cheating, cheating is rampant in professional schools, a major shift has occurred in cheating related attitudes, individual and contextual factors influence academic cheating and integrity including peer behavior and ethical environments, and a deeply embedded honors code can play a key role in creating an ethical environment (McCabe et al., 2012). For purposes of their research, the authors defined cheating as copying material without proper citation, padding bibliographies, getting exam questions in advance, collaborative homework, turning in paper done by others, and using notes during exams.

According to this scholar cheating is vice which gives a particular candidate undue advantage over others, he further emphasize that cheating can take in forms like

copying academic papers without proper citations, gaining access to exam materials in advance, creating unethical cheating environment by encouraging students to cheat. He further noted even doing homework in cooperative groups as also form of cheating. In addition to that the scholars emphasize that students do cheat because their peers do it, I concur with scholars regarding cheating being rampant in colleges and professionals schools, since most colleges students are in mid-twenties they waste more time on social media and other social platforms such things normally distract them from studying and doing beneficial work. This forms basis of examination irregularities.

Donald L. McCabe and Kenneth D. Butterfield (1944–2016) today's students are tomorrow's leaders, and the college years are a critical period for their development of ethical standards. *Cheating in College* explores how and why students cheat and what policies, practices, and participation may be useful in promoting academic integrity and reducing cheating.

The authors investigate trends over time, including internet-based cheating. They consider personal and situational explanations, such as the culture of groups in which dishonesty is more common (such as business majors) and social settings that support cheating (such as fraternities and sororities). They also focus on how faculty and administrators are increasing their efforts to promote academic honesty among students. Orientation and training sessions, information on college and university websites, student handbooks that describe codes of conduct, honor codes, and course syllabi all define cheating and establish the consequences.

Based on the authors' multiyear, multisite surveys, *cheating in College* quantifies and analyzes student cheating to demonstrate why academic integrity is important and to describe the cultural efforts that are effective in restoring it.

The scholar describes the importance of academic honesty whereby he encourages the departments concern to orient students well in advance during orientation and introduction of fresher's to colleges by giving them necessary guidelines and penalties associated with academic dishonesty, giving them handbooks that describes codes of conducts during examinations.

As Drake (1941) pointed out, cheating can be frustrating to the instructors, who may "*interpret such behaviour as a direct affront to themselves.*" When Johnston (1991) found out that students had cheated she felt betrayed: "*how could they do this to me?*". While this may explain better than genuine arguments why teachers dislike cheating it does not show that cheating is wrong. It is interesting to note that this is generally not offered as an argument in articles looking at cheating in a 'cold' objective way but can be found in more personal papers, such as that of Johnston. This seems to acknowledge that this is both a real reaction of the 'victims' of cheaters and not perceived as a valid argument against cheating.

The research on cheating is empirical and focuses on quantification and correlations; yet finding out how many and which students cheat is of importance only if cheating itself is important. And cheating is important only if it is wrong. Since everything else depends on it, the question of the wrongness of cheating is the most important question. It is the object of this article.

Passow et al. (2006) argue that “acts of academic dishonesty undermine the validity of measures of student learning”. If teachers do not know that there is something the students do not understand (if they cheat it may seem that they understand) then it is impossible for them to know whether to accelerate or slow down, on what to focus, or how to re-design their lectures next year — in the long term, cheating hurts the students. It also prevents teachers from providing students with relevant feedback.

The main purpose of evaluations or examinations is to find out the level of understanding of students a particular concept or skill, so by encouraging cheating, it is difficult to understand topics or areas which requires remedial learning or placing students in their right groups e.g. slow learners, fast learners and gifted students, it will be also difficult to show how effective was a particular method applied by the instructor.

Jensen et al. (2002) quote a high school student: “I’m a dedicated student, but when my history teacher bombards me with 50 questions due tomorrow or when a teacher gives me a fill-in-the-blanks worksheet on a night when I have swim practice, church, aerobics —and other homework— I’m going to copy from a friend!”. Similarly, Cole and Kiss (2000) found that “students are most likely to cheat when they think their assignments are pointless, and less likely to cheat when they admire and respect their teachers and are excited about what they are learning”

According to Jensen, teachers may contribute to academic dishonesty by overloading their students with questions with limited time. The tutors should discourage too much workload to students since this will form a basis for irregularities to happen, when an instructor gives over 50 questions to students and set deadline the students may panicked and sort external assistance.

Cheating, similar to committing a crime, is a function of opportunity. Research indicates that the threat of severe punishment is an effective deterrent to student cheating (Houston, 1983), as is arranging seats far apart, and the presence of highly vigilant instructors. (Genereaux and McCleod, 1995) However, when other methods of cheating are delimited as a function of aforementioned environmental factors, students resort to a different—innovative—method of collaborative cheating:

Every time we would took a test somehow we find a way to cheat. The most frequent cheating method we would use was the distraction method. One of us would go to the front and distract the teacher, while the others would get the notes out of their book sacks. Each one of us would go up to distract the teacher, to make sure everybody had the right answers.

Colluding with one's peers has a clear advantage over solitary cheating in that by distracting the professor, a student has ample time and opportunity to retrieve and place the crib notes in a strategic location without the fear of surveillance and detection. By distraction, we refer to cases where students walk up to the professor during an exam and ask questions about the questions, seeking clarification on a ridiculously obvious point, and feigning confusion about the wording of questions/answers etc.

According to the (McCleod 1995 and Houston 1983), students will innovate new techniques if the previous methods fails to work, they may collude or plan before hand

on B plan if plan A fails to work. They may also do collaborative dishonesty whereby one deliberately distracts the examination invigilators or supervisor so that colleagues may assess their materials.

2. Methodology

2.1. Sampling

Sampling is a vital step in data gathering. It is concerned with the selection of observation with the objective of obtaining a well-planned conclusion. It helps in achieving objectives set for a research. 60 respondents were carefully selected for this study. Sex, age and level of study were the important parameters considered in the sample selection.

2.2. Sources of Data Collection

- a) Primary sources: A well planned and structured questionnaire was presented to the sample selected. Data confidentiality well considered.
- b) Secondary sources: Relevant information from past records, newspapers, journals, articles and booklets were collected and reviewed.

2.3. Tools and Techniques for Data Collection

Observation, interviews and questionnaire were the main tools used for collecting data. Relevant books, periodicals, reports and articles which were seen vital for the research were studied and reviewed.

2.4. Plan of Analysis

Tabulation was done on the data obtained. Corresponding percentages were also given. Bar graphs were used for analysis and to get accurate interpretation. Wrong, dishonest and in accurate responses were discarded.

3. Findings and analysis

3.1. Level of study in university

Table 1: Level of study of students

Level of study	Frequency	Percentage %
Certificate	04	6.6
Diploma	16	26.7
Degree	40	66.7
Others	0	0
Total	60	100

3.1.1 Analysis

As shown above, most of my respondents were undergraduates thus 66.7%, they were followed by diploma students which made up of 26.7% and lastly certificate students were 10%.

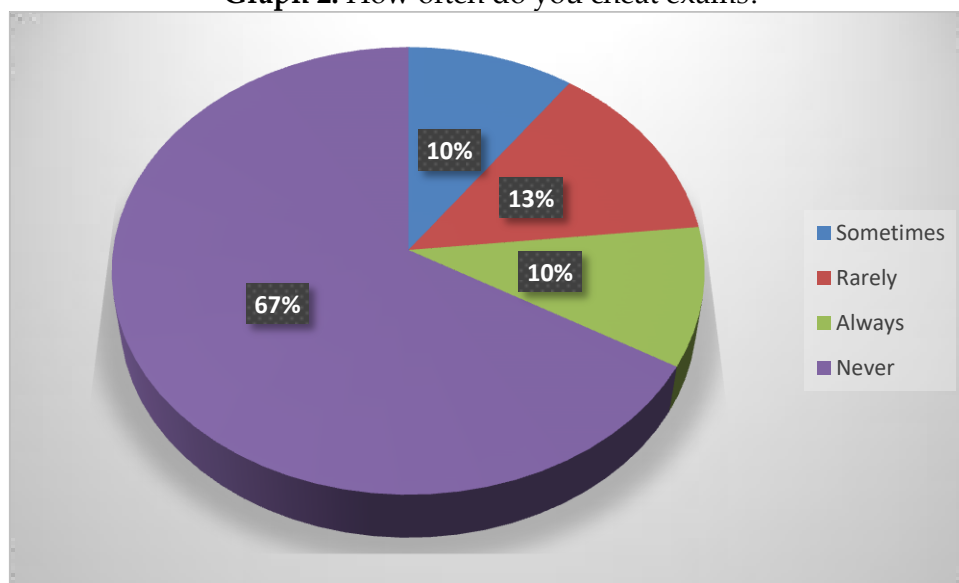
3.2. How often do you cheat in exams?

Table 2: How often exams are cheated in universities

Exam cheat	Frequency	Percentage%
Sometimes	06	10
Rarely	08	13.3
Always	06	10
Never	40	66.7
Total	60	100

From the above data we can establish that most respondents deny in involving any exam malpractice thus 67% of respondents say they that have never involve in cheating, while 10%of respondents said they cheat sometimes, another 10%responded that they cheat always,13% Of respondents said they cheat rarely.

Graph 2: How often do you cheat exams?



This variations may be as a result of couple of factors like some students may be good at some subjects while they may have difficulties in other areas thus cheating those subjects that they are not good at, another aspect may be supervision some invigilator’s may be strict giving no chance for cheating to occur, or due to lack of coverage of syllabus in plan timeline this will give students chance to justified exam cheating, others may due to teaching methods used by lecturers,

3.3. Why do you think students cheat in exams?

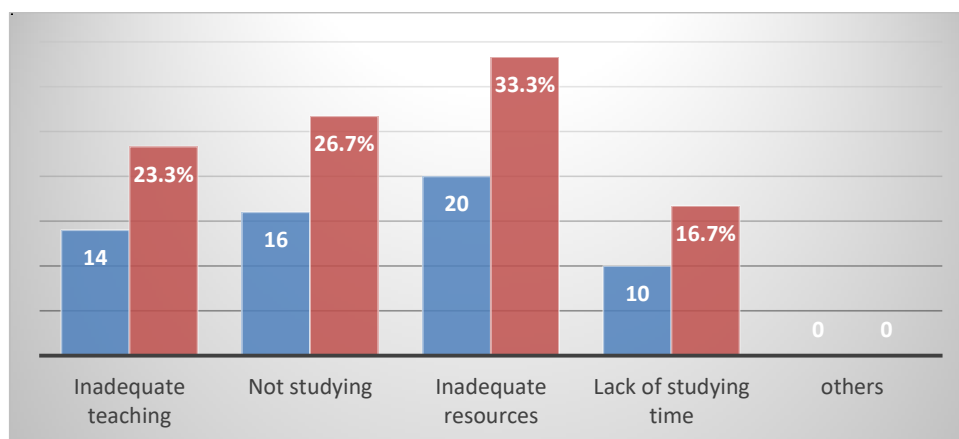
Table 3: Reasons why students cheat in exams

Reason for exam cheating	Frequency	Percentage %
Inadequate teaching	14	23.3
Not studying	16	26.7
Inadequate resources	20	33.3
Lack of studying time	10	16.7
others	0	0
Total	60	100

3.3.1 Analysis

The respondents gave various views regarding on reasons for cheating exams 23.3% respondents said it is because of inadequate teaching, 26.7% said it is because of not studying in advance for the exams, 33.3% responded that there is no adequate resources to read, 16.7% responded that it is due to lack of studying time.

Graph 3: Why do you think students cheat in exams?



Due to information technology and coming of smart phones most of the time is wasted on social media that is reflected by students responding to lack of studying time. Secondly, due to limited resources since university was established recently teaching, learning and reference materials may not enough henceforth students resort to cheating during exam period. Lecturer may contribute by not covering syllabus on time this is another predisposing factor for exam cheating to happen. On other hand, the blame can be squarely on the side of students by not being serious with their studies.

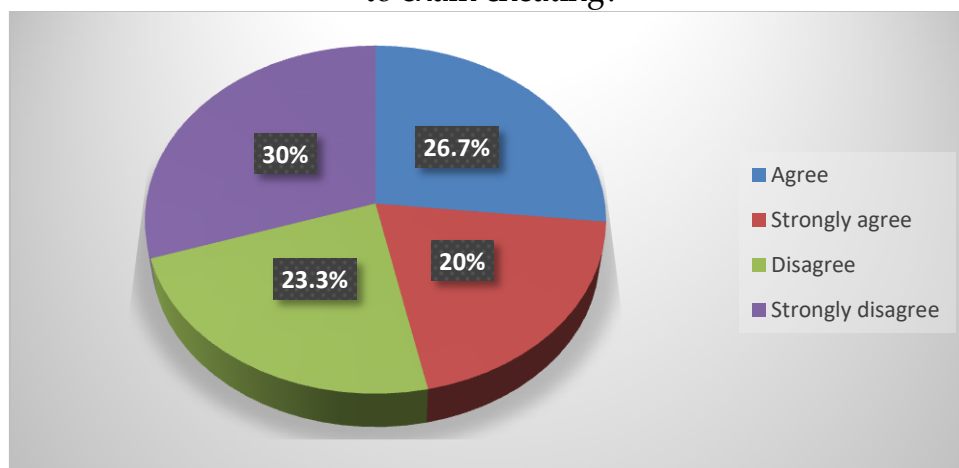
3.4. Do you agree that exam environment is factor that contributes to exam cheating?

As to whether exam environment contributes to exam cheating the student responded with different opinions 26.7% agreed, 20% strongly agreed, 23.3% disagreed while 30% strongly disagreed.

Table 4: Table showing if environment is a factor in exam cheating

Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agree	16	26.7
Strongly agree	12	20
Disagree	14	23.3
Strongly disagree	18	30
Total	60	100

Graph 4: Do you agree that exam environment is a factor that contributes to exam cheating?



3.4.1 Interpretation

Exam environment can be various things like sitting arrangements, nearness to busy places like markets, un-fenced compound's etc. From the above it shows that, exam environment plays a critical role in curbing exam cheating, because by making exam Centre no-go zone to intruders it will ensure minimizing irregularities.

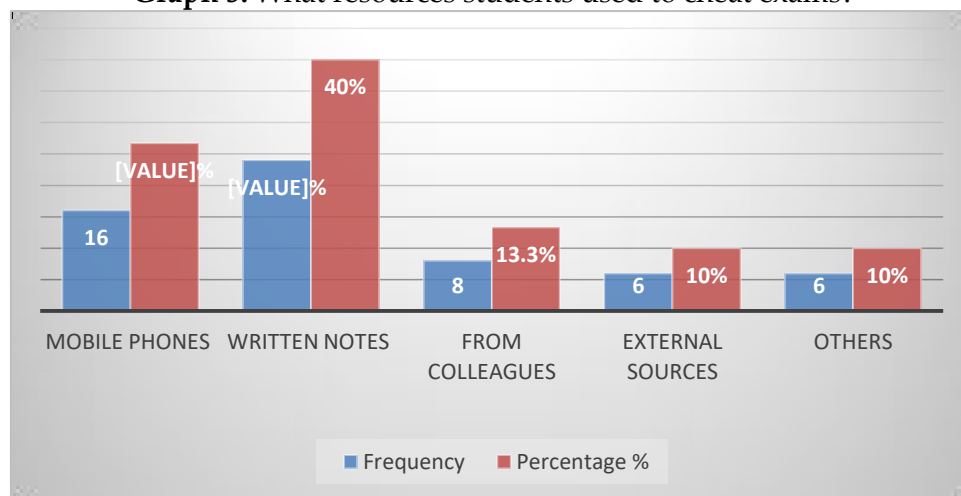
3.5. What resources students use to cheat exam?

Table 5: Resources used by students to cheat exams

Resources used	Frequency	Percentage %
Mobile phones	16	26.7
Written notes	24	40
From colleagues	08	13.3
External sources	06	10
others	06	10
Total	60	100

Students device various techniques to cheat in exams, 26.7% used mobile phones, while 40% used short notes, 13.3% cheat from colleagues, 10% use external sources like text books or class notes, 10% use other methods like impersonation.

Graph 5: What resources students used to cheat exams?



From the above graph, it's clear that most students use written notes with percentage of 40%, this may be as result of lecturers examining students on what was covered in the class.in other reasons may be due to students not assessing mobile phones during exam period.

26.7% said they use mobile phones this be due lack of strict supervision and allowing students to have phones during exam time. 13.3% of students copy from their colleague's this may be as a result of poor sitting arrangement or cooperative cheating. 10% of students use external sources e.g. text books, this is because of allowing students to carry their textbooks into exam rooms or inappropriate manning of examination. 10% other methods to cheat this may due collusion between students and examination officers.

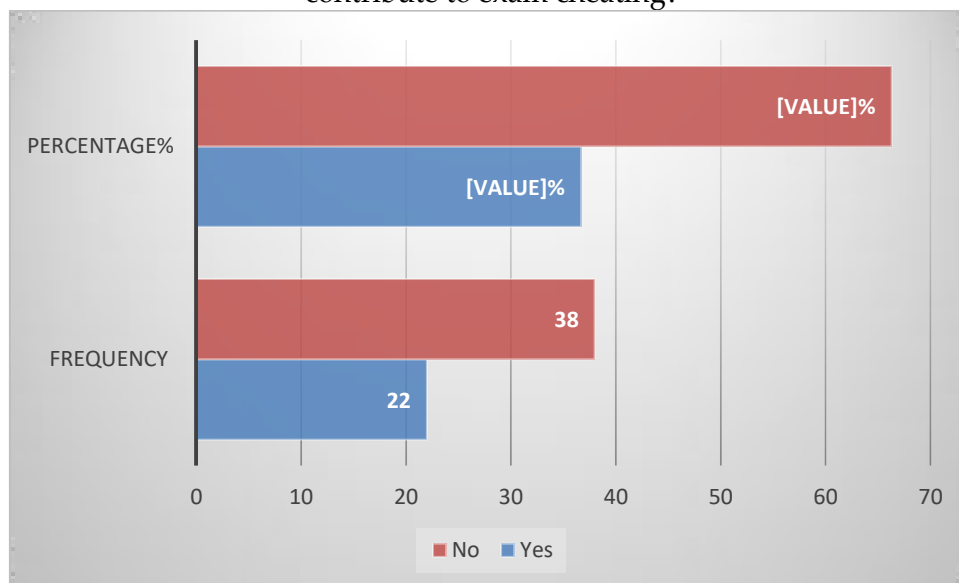
3.6 Do you think teaching methods used by different tutors contribute to exam cheating?

Table 6: Table showing if tutors teaching methodology contributes to exam cheating

Teaching methods	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	22	36.7
No	38	66.3
Total	60	100

66.3% of the respondents said that there were no any correlation between the exam cheating and methods of teaching while 36.7% said the teaching methods used by lecturers contribute to cheating in examinations.

Graph 6: Do you think teaching methods used by different tutors contribute to exam cheating?



Of as to whether different teaching methods used by lecturers contribute to exam cheating the responses as follows:

66.3% of the respondents said that there were no any correlation between the exam cheat and methods of teaching while 26.7% of idea that both go hand in hand. In first case 66.3% they are justifying that lecturers teach well but the problem is from their part since they are not serious with their academic work. 33.3% were of idea that methods lecturers applied was ineffective and it encourage them to cheat in exams.

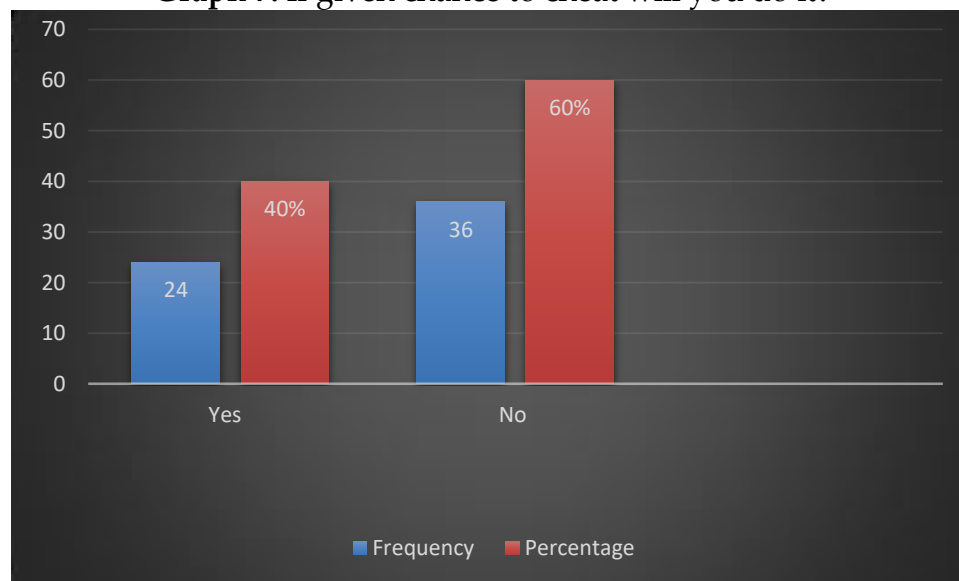
3.7. If given chance to cheat, will you do it?

Table 7: Attitude of students regarding cheating

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	24	40
No	36	60
Total	60	100

40% of students were of idea that if they were given chance to cheat they will do it. 60% were against exam cheating if they were given opportunity to do so.

Graph 7: If given chance to cheat will you do it?



From analysis, it shows importance of giving exam supervision much emphasis, the university and department concern should invest heavily on manpower to minimize such cases of giving students chance to cheat exams.

On other hand 60% of students responded that they will not do it, for fear of repercussion like expelling from university or suspension most students said they will not cheat if given opportunity to do it.

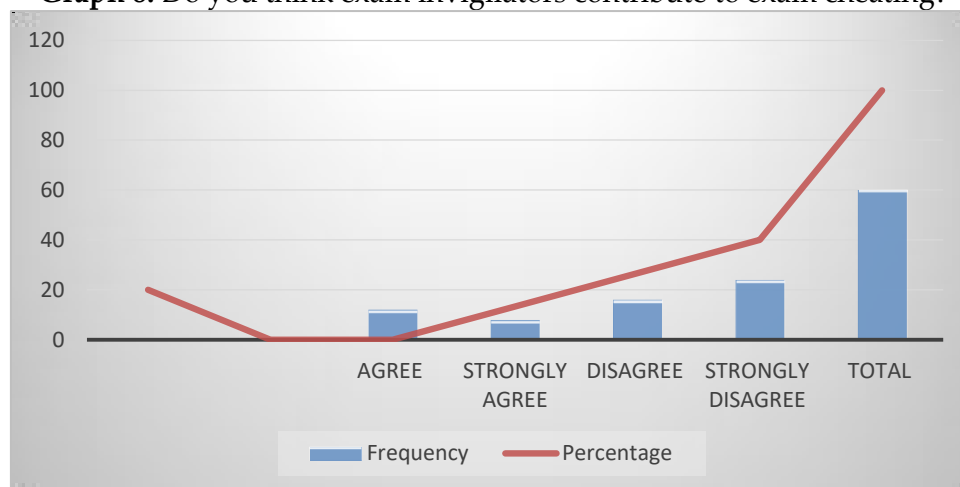
3.8. Do you think exam invigilators contribute to exam cheating?

Table 8: Exam invigilators contribution on exam cheating

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	12	20
Strongly agree	08	13.3
Disagree	16	26.7
Strongly disagree	24	40
Total	60	100

As whether the exam invigilators contribute to exam cheating 20% of respondents were of idea that they contribute to exam cheat. 13.3% respondents gave their views that they strongly believed that invigilators contribute to exam cheating. 26.7% said that they disagree, they viewed that there is no relation between invigilators and exam cheat 40% strongly opposed to invigilators contribution to academic dishonesty.

Graph 8: Do you think exam invigilators contribute to exam cheating?



From above information, the researcher can conclude that invigilators may contribute to exam cheating, if the invigilator is not keen observant or sleeps during exam session he/she may give room for cheating to occur. On other hand a good number of respondent disagreed with their colleagues, they based their argument that a professionally trained teacher will not encourage cheating; it is students who innovate methods that invigilator cannot reveal or suspect easily.

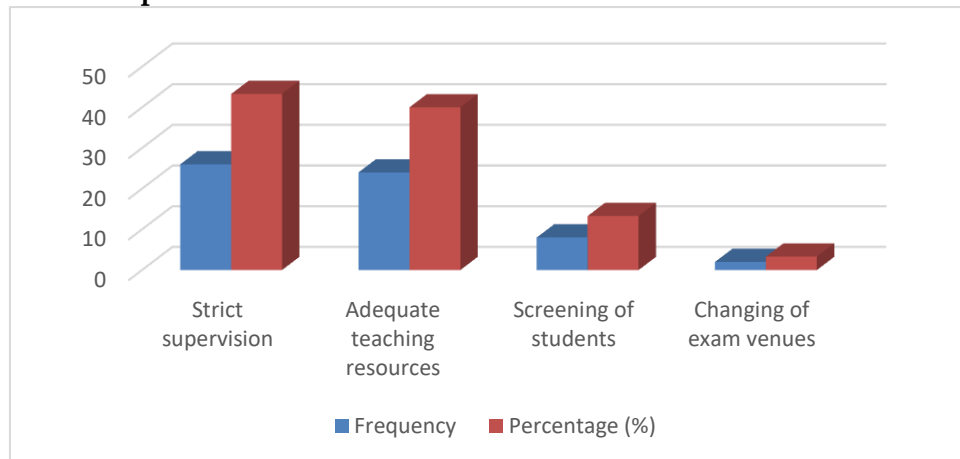
3.9. Where do students hide materials to cheat in exams?

Table 9: Places where cheating material is hidden

Items	Frequency	Percentage
In their pockets	28	46.6
In their seats	06	10
Clothes, sleeves, underwear's.	04	6.7
Exam scripts	08	13.3
None of above	14	23.3
Total	60	100

46.6% students responded that they hide their materials in their pockets while 10% said they keep their materials in seats, 6.7% said they hide their materials in clothes, sleeves and underwear's. While 13.3% responded that they keep inside the exam scripts and 23.3% said that they use other methods to cheat in exams.

Graph 9: Where do students hide materials to cheat in exams?



This variation of responses on where students keep materials to cheat in exam, may be as result cultural aspects the male lecturer may not be able to screen a Muslim female students .on other hand you cannot tell a student to removed his clothes while screening him/her .some students are also so clever they write short notes in keep inside the exam scripts.

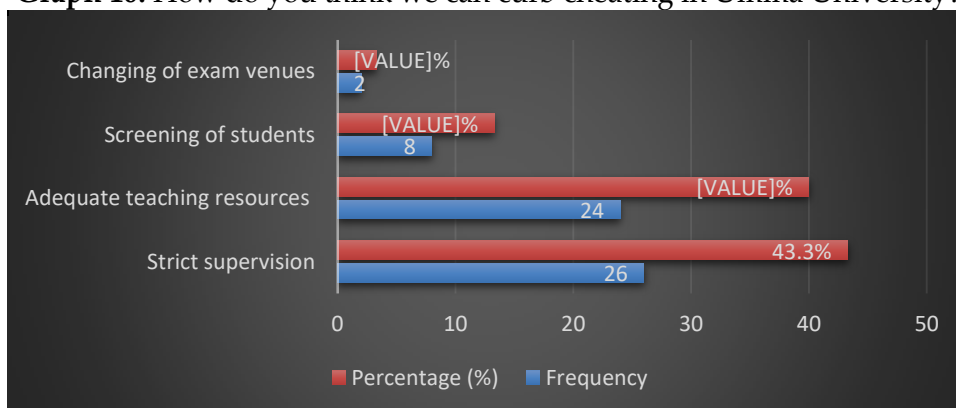
3.10. How do you think we can curb exam cheating in Umma University?

Table 10: Potential solutions for curbing exam cheating

Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strict supervision	26	43.3
Adequate teaching resources	24	40
Screening of students	08	13.3
Changing of exam venues	02	3.3
Total	60	100

43.3% of respondents of an idea that strict supervision should be done, 13.3% of students said screening of students to be done and 3.3% students suggested changing of exam venues.

Graph 10: How do you think we can curb cheating in Umma University?



43.3% of respondents were of idea that exam supervision should done on strict environment, the exam officials ought to be briefed and told how they are supposed to handle irregularities. 40% give views that the main factor to curb exam cheating was provide adequate resource's whereby students can refer during their free time. 13.3% were of the idea that screening of students to be done prior to going to exam rooms ,if possible female students to be screen by female lecturers while male students to be screened male lecturers. 3.3% of respondents suggested that the exam venue to be changed, although it may be expensive but it may minimize exam cheating.

4. Conclusion

Exam cheating is rampant in both colleges and universities since most of students are adults and others are engaged in part-time work they may have limited time to study and concentrate in academic work, others may have financial challenges, the whole semester may end while they are looking for fees. This may distract them from attending lectures and when exam time arrives they may resort on how to pass the exam .when such students graduate from university using that short cut to success they may not fit in market It is common to find a university graduate who cannot innovate simple idea.in addition academic dishonesty has rampantly affected the quality of education in the country, when students fail in exam the lecturers may re-engineer new techniques or methods of improving their methods but when students cheat and performs well the teacher cannot evaluate his methods of teaching.

4.1 Recommendations

The research recommends the following;

1. All Departments should brief the students on exam rules and regulations before exams start.
2. Central examination board should be created and empowered
3. The lecturers should cover the syllabus on time to avoid student becoming confused.
4. Exam environment should be well set to avoid giving students undue advantage. The university should provide scholarships and loans to students from poor families so that to minimize being absent from lectures.
5. Honesty should be emphasized and taught in universities.
6. Students found guilty of cheating should be suspended, discontinued to serve as an example to others.

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