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Teachers' Perception Regarding Malpractices used in Examinations in Urban areas of District Peshawar

Iqbal Khan* , Muhammad Jahanzeb Khan** and Jangraiz Khan***

Abstract

The study aimed at investigating factors associated with malpractices used in Secondary School Certificate Examination in the Urban Areas of District Peshawar. The main objectives of the study were to gather information from teachers about various cheating techniques used in examinations and know main factors that force students to cheat in examinations. Twenty (20) educational institutions for boys, including public and private, were purposively selected from urban areas of District Peshawar for the data collection. Questionnaires were distributed among 60 teachers of sampled High and Higher Secondary Schools in order to collect data. Majority of the respondents agreed to the fact that students usually use small chits as cheating technique in S.S.C. examination as they considered it safer and easier to hide from the examination conducting staff. The study further showed that the board officials, colleagues of the duty staff (examination conducting staff), fear of stopping of annual increments, pressure from the higher authority, poor standard of teaching, parents, and well reputation of institutions were key factors responsible for cheating in Secondary School Certificate Examination in urban areas of district Peshawar. An encouraging aspect of the study is also that the principals of the institutions were not involved in this unfair activity.

Key words: *Malpractices, Examination*

Education has five major components i.e. management, teacher training, curriculum, research, and examinations (Iqbal, 1997). Examinations serve as a basis for promotion from one grade to the other, and help in assessing whether pre-set educational objectives have been achieved or not, and if achieved, to what extent (Malik, 1987). The main functions and purposes of examinations are selection, certification, control, motivation, and monitoring (World Bank, 2001)

Examinations have an important place in educational set up in Pakistan (Amin, 2004). At school level examinations are generally held annually and are used to promote the students to higher classes or to retain them in the same class. In primary classes, concerned schools conduct examinations; however, at the end of the fifth year of the primary stage, examinations are conducted by the middle and high schools. Similarly the concerned schools held the examinations in middle schools but at the end of the eight years of middle stage, examinations are conducted by the high / higher secondary schools (Iqbal, 1997).

In Pakistan, the first public examinations are held at Grade IX and X levels called Secondary School Certificate Examination. Various Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education conduct these examinations annually (Crighton, Arain, and Beltel, 1995). These examinations

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are sole determinants of students' future career in pursuing further or higher education or getting into the job market (Gipps, 1996). Teachers, head masters and principals of various institutions usually outside the district are appointed by the controller of the examinations for the conduction of these examinations in order to check the malpractices. But unfortunately the malpractices in SSC examinations could not be eliminated completely and they continue still in one way or other way. It is for this reason that a number of educationists and researchers have criticized the public examination system in Pakistan (Warwick and Reamers, 1995., Greaney and Hasan, 1995., Mirza, 1999).

Examination malpractices are defined as “an illegal way which a student devices to pass an examination” (Soeze, 2003). This could be in the form of bringing in note books to examination halls; cheating during examination, copying form friends, paying another person to help in attempting the papers, another way is to have foreknowledge of questions before the examinations. Eight major types of malpractices have been identified in Uganda i.e leakage, external assistance, smuggling of unauthorized material, copying from a nearby candidate, collusion, substitution of scripts, collusion of school administrator or the examination board officials, and irregularity in the examinations (Ongons, 1990). Rote memorization, subjectivity, poor content coverage, and administrative shortcomings are considered to be the main drawbacks of the examination system in Pakistan (Khushk and Charistie, 2004).

This study is an effort to know factors associated with malpractices used in examinations. The study is significant because cheating is a cause, which has grown to unprecedented proportion in all forms of examinations and foreignness have taken it for granted that cheating is very common in every examination in Pakistan, and no examination can be held in a free and fair manner (Rizwan, 1994). “Cheating in examinations is as normal as eating and drinking for students today” (Shafi, 2004). The study in hand is expected to highlight the major factors of malpractices in examinations at school level and will enable educational officers to think and take steps to stop this unfair game of examination malpractices. It will also draw the attention of teachers, parents, the administrators and the nation towards these undesirable practices in examinations and suggest remedies to eradicate them.

Objectives of the Study

Objectives of the study were;

- i. To gather information from teachers about various cheating techniques used in examinations.
- ii. To know main factors that force students to cheat in examinations.

METHOD

Sample

The study was conducted for Secondary School Certificate (SSC) Examination only. The population of the study consisted of all the teachers of all high and higher secondary schools of District Peshawar. Sixty (60) teachers all high and higher secondary schools were included in the sample. Sample of the teachers consisted of thirteen (13) certified Teachers (C.T), Thirty Six (36) Senior English Teachers (S.E.T) and eleven (11) Subject specialists (S.S). Three (03) strata

City, Cantonment and Hayatabad were formed in the whole urban areas of District Peshawar. Data was collected from the teachers of twenty (20) educational institutions for boys, including public (14) and private (6) which were purposively selected because these institutions were the main centres of SSC examination. Since there was different number of respondents in each stratum, so following formula was used to collect data from the respondents to have a proportionate number of the respondents;

$$n_i = \frac{N_i \cdot n}{N}$$

Where n_i = sample size of ith stratum

n = Total sample size

N_i = population of ith stratum

N = Total population

Instrument

Questionnaire was devised to collect primary data from the respondents which aimed at collecting information about educational level, professional qualification, experience, their perception about cheating techniques used by the students in SSC examination and various factors associated with cheating in SSC examination. Almost all of the questions were closed ended but few questions were open ended.

Procedure

Appropriate tabulation and percentages were used for the interpretation of collected data.

General Characteristics of the respondents

This section includes sampled teachers designation, length of teaching experience in years, their academic and professional qualification. The data show that the sample consisted of majority of Senior English Teachers i.e. 60.00 %. Majority of the respondents (i.e 38.40 %) were those teachers who had more than 15 years teaching experience. As for as the academic qualification is concerned 76.67 % of the total respondents had master degree (16 years of education) whereas 46.67 % possessed Master in Education degree i.e M.Ed which is the professional degree.

Results and Discussion

The results and discussion have been given in this section. Perceptions of the respondents have been expressed in terms of percentages.

Teachers' Perception Regarding Preferred Mode of Cheating and Factors Responsible for Cheating

Teachers are directly associated with students and are, therefore, aware of the academic activities of each other. An inquiry was made from the sampled teachers about the process, procedure and techniques used by the students during cheating. It was also investigated that who

were involved directly or indirectly in this negative activity. This section highlights in detail the perception of teachers sampled in this regard. This section contains the techniques used by the students for cheating, involvement of board officials cheating, colleagues (local teachers) and invigilators, leakage of question papers, stopping of annual increments, standard of teaching, involvement of parents, teaching incomplete prescribed course, well-reputation of the institutions and heads/principals of the institutions responsible for cheating in S.S.C. examinations.

Table 1 Cheating Techniques Used by the Students During S.S.C Examination

Cheating Techniques	C.T	S.E.T	S.S.	Total
Small chits	06 (46.15)	19 (52.78)	07 (63.64)	32 (53.33)
Electric gadgets such as watch, mobile, calculators etc	00.(0.00)	01 (2.78)	03 (27.27)	04 (6.67)
Textbooks/Guides	05 (38.46)	13 (36.11)	00 (0.00)	18 (30.00)
Material supplied from outside the examination hall	02 (15.39)	02 (5.55)	00.(0.00)	04 (6.67)
Any other	00 (0.00)	01 (2.78)	01 (9.09)	02 (3.33)
Total	13 (100.00)	36 (100.00)	11 (100.00)	60 (100.00)

Note: Percentages have been given in parentheses.

Any other includes cheating from one another and examination conducting staff.

It is a common observation that students use different techniques and tactics for cheating in S.S.C examination in order to get through the examination. Data related to this aspect is shown in the table 1. The data in the above table shows that nearly more than half of the respondents (i.e. 53.34%) agreed to the fact that students usually used small chits as cheating technique in S.S.C. examination as they considered it more safer and easier to hide the small chits from the examination conducting staff, whereas a very less number of the respondents (i.e. 6.67%) told that students store relevant information in their data bank watches and other electronic devices. It was not in the knowledge of any C.T. teacher that students used electric gadgets for cheating in the examination. No S.S teacher observed the use of textbooks/guides and materials supplied from outside the examination hall as cheating techniques during the S.S.C examination. Only a few number of the respondents (i.e. 3.33%) told that the students cheated in the S.S.C. examination from one another and sought the help of the examination conducting staff.

Table 2 Involvement of Board Officials in Cheating

Teachers' Responses	C.T	S.E.T	S.S	Total
Yes	06 (46.15)	26 (72.22)	10 (90.91)	42 (70.00)
No	07 (53.9)	10 (27.78)	01 (9.09)	18 (30.00)
Total	13 (100.00)	36 (100.00)	11 (100.00)	60 (100.00)

Note: Percentages have been given in parentheses.

It is commonly heard in day to day life that board officials are involved in cheating during S.S.C examination in one way or another. Data about the involvement of board officials in cheating is presented in the table 2. The data in the above table shows that majority of the teachers sampled (i.e. 70%) were of the view that the board officials were involved in

cheating in S.S.C examination. Majority of the two categories (S.E.T and S.S) considered the involvement of the board officials in cheating in S.S.C examination, whereas majority of the C.T. teachers (i.e. 53.85%) excluded the involvement of board officials in cheating in S.S.C examination.

Table 3 Involvement of Colleagues (Local Staff) in Cheating

Respondents' Perception	C.T	S.E.T	S.S	Total
No	04 (30.77)	05 (13.89)	02 (18.18)	11 (18.33)
Some	06 (46.15)	24 (66.67)	09 (81.82)	39 (65.00)
More	02 (15.290)	04 (11.11)	00 (0.00)	04 (6.67)
Much	01 (7.69)	03 (8.33)	00 (0.00)	04 (6.67)
Total	13 (100.00)	36 (100.00)	11 (100.00)	60 (100.00)

Note: Percentages have been given in parentheses.

Usually the examination conducting staff has friends in the schools where the examinations take place. These colleagues (Local staff) take the advantage of their friendship and compel the staff for malpractices in S.S.C examinations. Teachers' perception regarding the involvement of colleagues who compel the teachers (staff) for malpractices is given in the table 2.iii. The data reveal that majority of the respondents (i.e. 65.00%) were sure that colleagues compelled the duty staff (examination conducting staff) to some extent for malpractices in the S.S.C examinations whereas a small number of the respondent (i.e.6.67%) strongly recognized that colleagues played much role to enhance the cheating in S.S.C. examination. A large group of the respondents (i.e. 18.33%) did not agree with the involvement of the colleagues in this negative activity.

Table 4 Involvement of Invigilators in Cheating

Factors	C.T	S.E.T	S.S	Total
None	06 (46.15)	08 (22.22)	04 (36.37)	18 (30.00)
Low payment	03 (23.08)	20 (55.56)	04 (36.37)	27 (45.00)
Pressure from the higher authorities	04 (30.77)	06 (16.67)	03 (27.26)	13 (21.67)
Any other	00 (00.00)	02 (5.55)	00 (00.00)	02 (3.33)
Total	13 (100.00)	36 (100.00)	11 (100.00)	60 (100.00)

Note: Percentages have been given in parentheses.

Any other: includes get financial aid and to earn extra income.

It is believed that invigilators get involved in cheating in S.S.C. examination for certain reasons. Data related to the factors which compel the invigilators to encourage the students to cheat in S.S.C. examination is provided in the table 4. The above table clearly states that majority of the respondents (i.e.45.00%) observed that due to low payment made by the boards of intermediate and secondary education, the invigilators helped the students in cheating during S.S.C. examination whereas a very small number of the respondents (i.e.21.67%) accepted the fact that pressure from the higher authority played an important role in this unfair game. A large

group of the respondents (i.e. 30.00%) disagreed with the involvement of the invigilators in cheating in S.S.C. examination. Only two (02) respondents claimed that invigilators helped the students in cheating in S.S.C. examination in order to earn extra income and get financial benefit.

Table 5 Leakage of Question Papers

Teachers' Responses	C.T.	S.E.T	S.S.	Total
Yes	09 (69.23)	25 (69.44)	09 (81.82)	43 (71.67)
No	04 (30.77)	11 (30.56)	02 (18.18)	17 (28.33)
Total	13 (100.00)	36 (100.00)	11(100.00)	60 (100.00)

Note: Percentages have been given in parentheses.

It is observed that every year the question papers are available before the commencing of the S.S.C examinations..It is clear from the data shown by the above table that all the categories of the sampled teachers (i.e.71.67%) agreed to the fact that leaked question papers usually were available before the examinations well in time, so that the students might either learn the answers quickly or write them at appropriate places for cheating, whereas a very small group of the respondents (i.e. 28.33%) rejected the leakage of question papers being a cause of cheating in S.S.C. examination.

Table 6 Stopping Annual Increments as Factor Responsible for Cheating

Teacher's Response	C.T.	S.E.T	S.S	Total
Yes	08 (61.54)	20 (55.56)	09 (81.82)	37 (61.67)
No	05 (38.46)	16 (44.44)	02 (18.18)	23 (38.33)
Total	13 (100.00)	36 (100.00)	11 (100.00)	60 (100.00)

Note: Percentages have been given-in parentheses.

It is usually stated that the fear of stopping annual increments of the teachers is a major cause for cheating in S.S.C. examination. Data regarding this aspect is presented in the table 2.vi.It can be seen from the above table that majority of all the categories of the sampled teachers (i.e.61.67%) were unanimous in their view that the fear of stopping of annual increments compelled the teachers to encourage their students to use malpractices in S.S.C. examination, whereas only few respondents (i.e.38.33%) did not consider this factor responsible for cheating in S.S.C. examination.

Table 7 Involvement of private Institutions in Cheating

Causes	C.T.	S.E.T	S.S.	Total
No Response	3 (23.08)	13 (36.11)	04 (36.36)	20 (33.33)
To increase their enrolment	00 (0.00)	09 (25.00)	02 (18.18)	11 (18.33)
To get financial benefit	03 (23.08)	04 (11.11)	00.(0.00)	07 (11.67)
To make their institutions Popular	07 (53.85)	10 (27.78)	05 (45.46)	22 (36.67)
Total	13 (100.00)	36 (100.00)	11 (100.00)	60 (100.00)

Note: Percentages have been given in parentheses.

There are various reasons due to which private institutions encourage their students for cheating in S.S.C. examination. Data about few causes is provided in the table7.The above table explains respondents' points of view about factors responsible for the involvement of private institutions in cheating in S.S.C examination. The data from the table shows that majority of the sample teachers (i.e.36.67%) were of the view that private institutions were involved in this unfair game in order to gain popularity of their institutions, whereas only few respondents (i.e.11.67%) considered the involvement of these institutions in cheating to get financial benefit. A large number of the respondents (i.e.33.33%) rejected the involvement of the private

institutions in this unwanted activity. Majority of the respondents of the two categories (C.T. and S.S) replied that private institutions encouraged cheating in S.S.C. examination in order to make their institutions popular while a large number of S.E.T. teachers also considered the same factor for the involvement of private institutions to encourage cheating in S.S.C examinations. All the C.T. teacher rejected the role of private institutions to encourage cheating during S.S.C. examination to increase their enrolment whereas no S.S. teacher considered private institutions for the involvement in cheating in S.S.C. examination to get financial benefit.

Table 8 Reasons for Involvement of Public Institutions in Cheating

Causes	C.T.	S.E.T	S.S.	Total
No Response	03 (23.08)	13 (36.11)	04 (36.36)	20 (33.33)
Stopping annual increments	00 (0.00)	14 (38.89)	00 (0.00)	14 (23.33)
Promotion of the staff	03 (23.08)	04 (11.11)	00 (0.00)	07 (11.67)
Pressure from the higher authority	07 (53.84)	05 (13.89)	05 (45.46)	17 (28.33)
Any other	00 (0.00)	00 (0.00)	02 (18.18)	02 (3.34)
Total	13 (100.00)	36 (100.00)	11 (100.00)	60 (100.00)

Note: Percentages have been given in parentheses.

Any other: includes make popular their institutions and pressure from the friends.

It is believed that there are certain causes due to which public institutions promote cheating in S.S.C. examination. Teacher's perception regarding some causes responsible for the involvement of public institutions in cheating is given in the table 8. The above table shows that majority of the respondents (i.e. 33.33%) did not mention any factor responsible for cheating in S.S.C examination in public institutions whereas only 3.34% teachers told that public institutions encouraged their students for cheating in S.S.C examination in order to make their institutions popular and due to the pressure from the friends. 38.89% S.E.T. teachers told that public institutions were involved in this negative activity because the teachers felt fear of stopping their annual increments. The data in the above table gives an idea that 53.84% C.T. teachers mention that the higher authority put pressure upon the teachers to show good results so they encouraged the students to cheat in the examination. According to the data available from the above table, 23.08% of C.T. teachers were of the view that promotion of the teachers compelled the teachers of the public institutions to help their students in cheating in the examination.

Table 9 Teaching Standards as a Cause for Involvement in Malpractices

Teacher's Response	C.T.	S.E.T	S.S	Total
No	01 (7.69)	06 (16.67)	02 (18.18)	09 (15.00)
Some	10 (76.92)	11 (30.55)	03 (27.27)	24 (40.00)
Much	02 (15.39)	19 (52.78)	06 (54.55)	27 (45.00)
Total	13 (100.00)	36 (100.00)	11 (100.00)	60 (100.00)

Note: Percentages have been given in parentheses.

It is observed that poor standard of teaching plays a key role in the promotion of cheating in S.S.C examinations. Data related to this aspect is provided in the table 9. The above table shows that majority of the respondents (i.e. 45.00%) agreed to the fact that standard of teaching was much responsible for cheating in SSC examinations whereas minority of the respondents (i.e. 15.00%) disagreed with the fact that standard of teaching played a key role in malpractices in SSC examination. However, 76.92% of Certified Teachers (C.T.) told that to some extent this factor was involved in this unfair activity whereas majority of the other two categories (S.E.T

and S.S.) did consider much responsible teaching standard as a cause for malpractices in S.S.C examination.

Table 10 Reasons for Parents' Involvement in Cheating

Teacher's Perception	C.T.	S.E.T	S.S	Total
No response	02 (15.38)	05 (13.89)	02 (18.18)	09 (15.00)
Well reputation of the family	01(7.70)	01 (2.78)	01 (9.09)	03 (5.00)
To admit their children in well reputed institutions	08 (61.54)	23 (63.89)	06 (54.55)	37 (61.67)
To provide their children a good job	02 (15.38)	07 (19.44)	02 (18.18)	11 (18.33)
Total	13 (100.00)	36 (100.00)	11 (100.00)	60 (100.00)

Note: Percentages have been given in parentheses.

It is believed that parents are involved in cheating in S.S.C examination for different reasons. Data regarding reasons due to which parents help their children in cheating in SSC examination is shown in the table10. The above table clearly states that majority of the respondents (i.e. 61.67%) were of the view that parents encouraged their children to cheat in SSC examination so that they got admitted their children in well reputed institutions, whereas only 5.00% respondents were of the view that due to the well reputation of the family parents got involved in this unfair game.

Table 11 Teaching Incomplete Courses as a Cause for Involvement in Cheating

Teacher's Perception	C.T.	S.E.T	S.S	Total
No response	05 (38.46)	16 (44.44)	05 (45.45)	26 (43.33)
Little	04 (30.77)	07 (19.44)	01 (9.09)	12 (20.00)
somewhat	04 (30.77)	07 (19.44)	04 (36.27)	15 (25.00)
Large	00 (00.00)	06 (16.68)	01 (9.09)	07 (11.67)
Total	13 (100.00)	36 (100.00)	11 (100.00)	60 (100.00)

Note: Percentages have been given in parentheses.

It is generally considered that teaching incomplete courses is responsible for cheating in SSC examination. Data related to this aspect is given in the table11. The above table indicates that a major portion of the respondents (i.e. 43.33%) rejected the teaching incomplete prescribed course responsible for cheating in SSC examination. However, a small number of the respondents (i.e. 11.67%) told that teaching incomplete the prescribed course by the teachers is responsible to a large extent for malpractices in SSC examination.

Table 12 Reputation of the Institutions and Cheating

Teacher's Perception	C.T.	S.E.T	S.S.	Total
Yes	09 (69.23)	26 (72.22)	09 (81.82)	44 (73.33)
No	04 (30.77)	10 (27.78)	02 (18.18)	16 (26.67)
Total	13 (100.00)	36 (100.00)	11 (100.00)	60 (100.00)

Note: Percentages have been given in parentheses.

It is assumed that good reputation of the institutions is a key factor responsible for malpractices used in the SSC examination. Data about this perception is presented in the table 2.xii. The above table shows that all the categories of the teachers (i.e. 73.33%) were unanimous in their view that well reputation of institutions was attached with the result which led to malpractices in SSC examinations, whereas a less number of the respondents (26.67%) did not consider the reputation of the institutions responsible for cheating in SSC examination.

Table 13 Causes for Principals' Involvement in Cheating

Teacher's Perception	C.T.	S.E.T	S.S.	Total
No response	07 (53.85)	16 (44.44)	10 (90.91)	33 (55.00)
Pressure from the higher authorities	01 (7.69)	02 (5.56)	00 (0.00)	03 (5.00)
Pressure from the community	02 (15.38)	05 (13.89)	00 (0.00)	07 (11.67)
Good reputation of the institution	03 (28.08)	11 (30.55)	01 (9.09)	15 (25.00)
Any other	00 (0.00)	02 (5.56)	00 (0.00)	02 (3.33)
Total	13 (100.00)	36 (100.00)	11 (100.00)	60 (100.00)

Note: Percentages have been given in parentheses.

Any other: Includes obtain better results and to make money.

It is commonly believed that heads/principals of the institutions are involved in cheating in SSC examination due to certain causes. Data related to this issue is provided in the table 2. Xiii. The data in table witnesses that all the categories of the respondents (i.e. 55.00%) were unanimous in their opinion that principals of the institutions were not involved in cheating in SSC examination. However, 25.00% respondents believed that principals of the institutions were involved in cheating in SSC examination for the good reputation of their institutions. 'Only 3.33% of the respondents were of the view that principals were involved in this unfair game to obtain better results and to get financial benefit.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that nearly more than half of the respondents (i.e. 53.34%) agreed to the fact that students usually used small chits as cheating technique in S.S.C. examination as they considered it safer and easier to hide the small chits from the examination conducting staff. It was found from the study that the board officials, colleagues of the duty staff (examination conducting staff), fear of stopping of annual increments, pressure from the higher authority, poor standard of teaching, parents, and well reputation of institutions were key factors responsible for cheating in Secondary School Certificate Examination in urban areas of district Peshawar. An encouraging aspect of the study is also that the principals of the institutions were not involved in this unfair activity.

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