



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### PREVALENCE OF CHEATING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF WOLAITA AND DAWRO ZONES, SOUTH ETHIOPIA

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#### ABSTRACT

Cheating in internal and external examination is by now growing at alarming rate. Thus, the main objective of this study is to investigate the cause and techniques of cheating in examinations in the secondary schools of Wolaita and Dawuro zones. To this end, 4 schools, 12 students, 8 teachers 4 principals were selected. All sample respondents were selected by purposive sampling. Interview and documents were data gathering tools employed to solicit the required information from sample respondents. The study identified the cause of cheating as school, student, teacher and social related while the major cheating techniques as traditional and modern. Finally, the study recommended the concerted action of schools, teachers, students, woreda education department, and civic, social and legal organizations to minimize or if possible, to eradicate the act of cheating in examinations.

## INTRODUCTION

Cheating is an act of obtaining or attempting to obtain, or supporting another person to obtain academic credit for work by use of dishonest or deceptive means (Lambert et al., 2003). Cheating during test and examination has become rampant and is by now growing at alarming rate. Cases of cheating are reported every term by teachers who catch students with relevant materials during continuous assessment tests and final examinations (Patton, 2002). Students who cheat are either caught in possession of written materials in the form of crib notes, with written notes on the desks, copying from each other's work, or with formulas written on different materials in examination rooms. There are also other cases of students who are not caught on the spot but reported to the school directors (Braun et al., 2006). Of course, the problem is serious at a time of end of semester and national examinations such as grade eight, GECE and entrance examinations. Students who failed to move to the next higher grade would be made to repeat the class. These consequences make those who are not well prepared to cheat to avoid repetition. Examinations are used to assess and evaluate whether the right knowledge has been acquired or not, through quizzes, tests, semester examinations and national examinations given in a given academic year. MoE (2004) states that the objectives of giving examinations are to aid institutions, organizations or any other interested party in selecting suitable candidates for further studies.

In Ethiopia, at school level, schools are responsible for development, administration, marking and processing of examinations. The schools have rules and regulations, which govern the administration of examinations. The rule against cheating states that, "a candidate who copies from another, communicate with another, is in possession of textbook or material in examination room or receives external assistance without lawful authority shall be disqualified from taking the entire examination, or if the paper has been done, it will be cancelled by the agency" (National Examination Agency, 2012). Despite the efforts exerted by all concerned, the situations still persisted and released every year both by national and regional Examinations authorities. Cheating has become a source of debate everywhere. Warnings are common through media every year in the period before examinations are taken by candidates and reach its peak soon after the examinations results have been made public by the Ministry of Education (MoE, 2006). There are also rumors that examination questions would leak even before they sit for the papers or school principals unethically pervert the normal implementation of examination either by persuading assigned exam centre coordinators and invigilators or deliberately instructing high achieving students to give answers to other candidates. While this study is about cheating in examinations at the secondary schools; the truth is that the problem of cheating in Ethiopia is not only confined to secondary schools and primary schools, but it is also rampant at higher education

institution. It becomes a great concern in many schools, and as a result very crucial to investigate the cause of this widely spread problem (McCabe, 2005).

**Statement of the problem:** This study deals with the problem of cheating in examinations by students of secondary schools in Wolayta and Dawuro Zones. Although the schools have rules and regulations that explain the consequences of cheating during examinations, the act of cheating has become repeatedly occurring problem in the schools. The main goal of education is to shape students to be good citizens by inculcating a good character in them based on morals that will allow them to play a positive role in their society. Nevertheless, this would be futile if cheating in examinations is permitted to occur without serious consequences. Truly speaking cheating would not permit the teacher to identify the gaps the students have in the subject he/she teaches (Whitley and Nelly (2002). Cheating has negative consequences on teaching and learning process as a whole. Moreover, it damages the morale of teachers and students and the social reputation of schools (Anderman, and Westinger, 2004). It also makes school endeavor to achieve the mission and vision it set meaningless and valueless.

Generally, cheating has become a big challenge in many institutions and the problem is that factors causing cheating are not well understood and as such the problem persists. It is therefore necessary to investigate the causes and techniques of cheating with the aim of coming up with remedy for eradicating the problem. In the process this study tried to answer the following basic questions:

What are the causes of cheating in the examinations in secondary schools in wolaita and Dawuro Zones?

- What are the techniques used by students to cheat in the examination?
- How can cheating in the examinations be stopped?

### The objectives of the study

**The main objective of the study:** The main aim of this study is to investigate the cause and techniques of cheating during examinations in the schools

### The specific objectives of the study

- To identify the cause of cheating in examinations in secondary schools in wolaita and Dawuro Zones.
- (b) To examine the techniques employed in cheating in the examinations in secondary schools of Study areas.
- (c) To identify strategies that would help to stop cheating in examinations in secondary schools in wolaita and Dawuro Zones.

**Research design and methodology:** This section deals with research design, sources of data, sample size and sampling techniques, data gathering instruments and method of analysis.

**Research Design:** This study was used qualitative method. It is an inquiry in which researchers collect data face to face by interacting with sample respondents in their natural settings (Creswell, 2012). Qualitative helps the researches how sample respondents define cheating in examinations. Case study was employed as an appropriate research design. This design

enabled the investigators to pick certain case for in depth study and explain educational, social, personal behavior and the environment in which cheating in examination as situation occurs (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). Therefore, it explains through interview the case, techniques and means of minimizing cheating in examinations in secondary schools of study.

**Sources of data:** In this study the respondents were students, teachers and principal. Grade 10 -12 students were chosen because they are supposed to stay for reasonable time in sample schools so that they are familiar with cheating. The teachers were chosen because they are directly involved in teaching, test preparation invigilation of the examinations. The principals were selected in assumption that they are the one who frequently discussed the issue with the staff and had ample data regarding cheating. The participants were accessed at examination months in January, May and June (2015) during end-of-term internal and external examinations. Documents such as minutes, reports and cases were secondary sources of the study.

**Sample size and sampling techniques:** The participants were selected from four schools ( 2 from Wolaita and 2 from Dawro zone ) they were 20 in number (n=20). All respondents were selected by non probability sampling. The respondents comprised of 12 students who knew or involved in cheating. , 4 teachers who are directly involved in examination and 4 principals who had records of cheating in examinations.

### Data gathering instruments

**Interviews:** An interview is a special type of conversation aimed at gathering information. The researchers were conduct face to face interviews with 20 respondents ((McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). One of the good reasons to include interview in this interview in this study was to bring to the surface subjective opinion, perception and beliefs pertaining to research questions (Creswell, 2012). The interviews were non-structured and designed to obtain adequate information on cheating in examinations.

**Document analysis:** In this study documents caught such as text books, crib notes, books and minutes recorded research in staff meetings regarding cheating in examinations were analyzed.

**Methods of data analysis:** Data collected through different tools were analyzed and interpreted qualitatively. The qualitative data obtained through interview and document analysis were first transcribed in to separate topics. After this, raw data were carefully studied for each items, each expression and view obtained from the respondents are categorized. Then, the categories were combined to describe the items as expressed by the respondents and as understood by the researcher.

## DISCUSSIONS AND FINDINGS

**Introduction:** This chapter deals with data that were collected through in depth interviews and document analysis. The data represent the perceptions of the students, teachers and principals who had participated observed, or dealt with cheating during internal and external examinations.

**Demographic Characteristics:** In this study 12(100%) students 8 (66.7%) male and 4 (33.3%) female students, 4 (100%) teachers 3 (75%) male and 1(25%) female teacher and 4(100%) principals ( all are male) were participated as sample respondents. Except one female student, the rest of student respondents aged above 19. All the teachers who interviewed served more than six (6) years. The minimum service year for principals was found to be eight (8) years. From this it is possible to conclude that the respondents could provide adequate and reliable information regarding the prevalence of the problem at hand.

### Cause of cheating

**Student interview:** As threshold in the interview, questions that would help the researchers to determine the seriousness of the problem were asked. These questions were whether examinations are important or not, number of exam they seat, percentage of students involved in the class and whether the interviewee has ever cheated or not. The majority of the students (83%), all the teachers and school directors described that examination helps students check how much they grasp and understand what they have learnt in classroom while it provide for the teacher feedbacks on the effectiveness of their content delivery, assessment techniques and teaching strategies. However one female student said “when I observe what are going on school at present pertaining to examination I wish it would not be given. It is wastage of resources.” The other students question the importance of examination by saying that “it loses its value as long as cheating is there.” In regard to the number of tests and examinations 11 students replied that they took 3-5 tests in each subject and 2 finals at the end of semester in academic year. Grade 12 students also sit for entrance examination. One student answered “I took only one test and one exam”

Responding to the percentage of students involved in the cheating 2 students and one(1) teacher guessed 80- 90%, 7 students and 2 teachers put the percentage between 70-80% and 1 student and 1 teacher guessed it to be 50-60%. In contrast, two students said “all the class, including best students”. The student respondents were asked whether they had ever cheated in tests /examinations. Except one student all (92%) were confessed that they cheated in one way or another in their life as student. In the same way, all teachers and school principals (100%) indicated that they had observed students cheating in examination. One student emotionally stated that “it seems as if it is legally allowed....you know... students see it as their right.” From the above discussion it is evident that cheating is deadly social disease prevalent in schools which needs concerted action of the stakeholders to stop it. The respondents were listed many cause of cheating in examination which is categorized into three topics for the purpose analysis: student related causes, teacher related causes and school related causes.

**Student related causes:** Major causes that were cited by respondents as student related causes are not attending the class properly, poor study and poor preparation, lack of confidence, work burden outside the school time and family support, fear of failure, personal desire to appear as good student, competition, eagerness to join preparatory and university. There is positive correlation between level of student understanding of what they are learned in class and the frequency of their attendance. Poor attendance includes regular

absenteeism, missing particular class while in the school and tardiness. All respondents stated poor attendance as the major cause. One student confirmed that “they are the most observed one in cheating.” One of the teacher said “it is very difficult to judge whether the poor attendance is the cause of cheating or cheating is the cause of poor attendance. Whenever students are properly attending the class and not miss it they understand well and it is less likely to cheat in examinations. All respondents interviewed were responded that poor study culture and preparation can potentially lead to the act of cheating. Four teachers and school directors stated that students have no time tables for their school and out of school tasks. Six students have a notion that even if they have time table they are not serious in realizing it, and may be distracted especially by families who expect them to carry out some tasks at home. One student indicated that “most of the students read the subject they prefer and easiest to understand, and ignore subjects that need much attention, time and energy.” School director explained that “poor study and preparation on the part of students usually make them busy whenever the exam times approach”. From the discussion it is possible to conclude that poor study and inadequate preparation make students unorganized at the time of examination and hence contribute to cheating.

Eleven students, three teachers and all directors interviewed indicated that students opt to cheating when they lack confidence in them in regard to the subject they are going to take. A student did not respond to the question, while one teacher stressed that “even some best student lack confidence in doing examination especially when she/he sit with other best student if she/he thinks better than her/him. Thus, student lack of confidence in doing particular subject and questioning their ability in relation to other found to be a reason to cheating. One of the issues raised by respondents as cause of cheating in examination is work burden outside the school time. Eight students explained that it is common problem around them that students share responsibility in supporting their families. Students spent much of time in executing these responsibilities and may have no time to study. Teachers and school directors have the same opinion as students. When the exam comes they have no alternative except cheating. Three students were not sure and declined to respond. One student said “it is lack of commitment not the work burden”. However, it is obvious that when the lion share of work time spent on the other activities than on education they miss much that could be obtained by further reading. The classroom lesson alone would not help them to do examination. Thus they tend to cheat. The other theme was fear of failure. Out of twelve student respondents, nine students explained that the majority of the students are cheated because they fear repeating class. Supporting students, one teacher said that “at this time the cost of education is getting high. So students do whatever they could to save their families or themselves from additional cost which is inevitable if they repeat the class.” One student said “I do not think that students cheat because the fear failure. This can't be a reason for there is no such thing as repetition. Students cheat simply they do not want to feel the pain of exam stress. Leaders had the same opinion as the students. Therefore if the student perceived that they would fell, they cheat to avoid additional family cost and negative social attitude. Only 30 % (4) of students 25 % (1) teachers and 50% (2) of leaders described that some students want to appear better than others and catch the eyes of the society. The respondents confirmed that these students usually are good at

school subjects. When such ego is developed inside the students they see cheating as shortest path to achieve the goal. The remaining respondents were not sure whether personal desire to appear as good student is the cause for cheating. From the discussion it is possible to say that desire to appear as best student by score high grades may push to cheating. Seven student participants admitted that students besides taking exam to assess whether they acquired knowledge, skill and attitude for given grade, they compete to get a rank from one to third. When the number of students who doing exam well high in a given grade or classroom, some students would pair themselves or form a 'group' to work together in examination and get high score. Five students declined to respond. On the part of the teacher, three teacher stated that sometimes student with high academic achievement tend to cheat when they feel others are also in the same track. This may lead to cheating. One leader explained that "once I came across the case in which two students who ranked second and third in a given grade not only work together but also mischievously helped fourth place student and toppled first ranked one. He was psychologically affected and took him a lot of time to recover.

All respondents explained that cheating become more rampant and chronic and occurs in different way when the exam is an entrance examination for universities. One described the situation by saying that "during entrance examination, cheating involves students, teachers, school principals, officials, parents, the community around the schools, and even sometimes the invigilators." A teacher supported by saying that "if you try to stop them in exam room, they will spoil your name outside the school. It is hard to bear". Students know that the only way out for the future success is joining university. At the same time it is competitive and challenging to get it. The problem is also compounded by pressure from parents and perception of the society. Student eagerness to enter into university, therefore, pushes them to cheating.

**Teacher related causes:** Except one student, all respondents interviewed explained that teachers' poor preparation leave the lesson disorganize and can be the cause of confusion. In this case the students would not be clear about the things they have learnt and inclined to cheating when that part of the lesson is appeared in examination. One school director stated that "from experience I came to believe that student cheat the subject that poorly prepared teachers teach". One student felt that "teacher preparation does not matter as long as the text books are in the hands of students. They can get it from the text." All respondents described that a teacher who frequently absent or comes late to the school will not cover the topic and rush when the semesters end come. This put the student in pressure and reduces the level of understanding. When the exams cover that part of the topic the student would not have the option except cheating. One student supports the idea and stated that "the most cheated subject is the subject taught by absentee teacher. Because the students hate the teacher and hence less committed to the subject" a school director indicated that "high cheating rate is observed if that absentee teacher is especially a teacher of the subjects from hard science field" It is true that teacher presences can augment student effort and commitment and discourage cheating. The other theme was failure to use various teaching strategies by subject teachers. Both school directors and teacher respondents described that the actual learning in a classroom depend up on the degree of interaction between student and teacher. The degree of interaction is the result of teaching strategies that the teacher employed to

convey a lesson. The more diverse techniques the teacher used in teaching her/his subject, the better opportunity the students have to understand. Student participants admitted that if the teacher is monotonous in his /her teaching they become weary and dislike the teacher and there by the teacher. One student described it "boredom will increase hatred to teacher and subject. It negatively influences student motivation to study. I think this situation may contribute to cheating." Out of twelve students interviewed, ten of them felt that the area and the way the exam set could lead to cheating. Some teachers set questions from the topics they do not cover and use difficult language. Exam has its own stress. The stress become more prominent when student face some confusing instruction and new concept put in the examinations. At this juncture they resort to cheating. One student was declined to respond while the other stated that "we should not expect to teach everything in the text. We have to do our part. I do not think that language issue would deter me from doing the exam." School directors and teachers explained the issue as the major factor that lead to increased cheating. One teacher stated "the preparation of examination has its own principles, when principles are violated unwanted and unexpected things may emerge and would affect the entire process. One of unwanted thing is cheating."

Only 58 % of student participants mentioned that unscheduled assessment techniques given by some teachers could cause cheating. Two students were kept silent. The rest student indicated that by now continuous assessment is common in schools and no need of telling the time of tests and exams. They should have to be alert always. The student said "learning is my duty. I should be ready always. I evaluate myself best if the test is given unexpectedly." Supporting the students, teachers said that students should be ready always because the current learning paradigm sees continuous assessment as part of learning. School directors explained that unscheduled examination could be the case for teaching. All participants interviewed responded that poor invigilation in examination is the major reason for cheating in examinations. One student mentioned that some teachers are very serious if the test or the exam is theirs, but are reckless if it is others subject." the other student was also stated "in our school teachers are dichotomized as serious and lenient. Thus leniency on the part of teacher is the case," still the other said "some teachers annoyed me. Because some browse internet, some read books, the other look through the window or walkout of the room or stood on the door. This allows students to cheat." One school director stated "every time when the lists invigilators are posted, some teachers and even student come to the office and asked me to assign additional invigilators in the room they feel the invigilator is not serious" even one teacher was bold in saying that "now everything in school is measured based on student achievement. students want to pass to the next grade, teachers want their performance result to be high, school directors strive to avoid repetition and drop outs, school wants to appear better than the other schools, the same thing in the hierarchy. I think this makes the issue of poor invigilation and cheating in the examinations or test clearer.

**School related causes:** Out of four teacher respondents interviewed, three teacher participants explained that planning which does not reflect the actual situation on the ground can lead to unintended results. One teacher said that "schools implicitly support cheating in order to achieve their goals"

Schools set goals for various subject by taking the average score of a given subject for a given grade level. The goals are cascaded down to students and most of the time unattainable. One student stated that “schools extend enrollment till third month of the year. This student could not cover the lesson they missed and thus see cheating as the only way out. That is why teachers are also less serious when they invigilate.” The school directors were also mentioned that poor planning indirectly led to the cheating. Twelve students described that schools ,especially in grade 10 and 12 national examinations , in the intention of avoiding possible criticism of parents and educational authorities in the area sometimes allow or create favorable ground for cheating to occur. One student respondents confessed that “I saw a ‘well come’ party arranged for invigilators who came from distant area. On the part of teachers, all respondents felt that the present inflation on student scoring might be the result of competition among the schools to secure better place at list in the eyes of stakeholders. One school director mentioned that some schools encourage cheating for very reason mentioned above while two directors were not sure and thus declined to respond. Thus the need to be better than other school could be a reason for cheating.

Both school directors and teacher respondents interviewed described that at present schools tend to be more competitive than cooperative. One teacher stated that “schools would take what so ever mechanism to surpass others. This includes being less serious towards cheating. Almost 70% student explained that the atmosphere of competition, though it serves as motivation, led to a little bit exaggerated school performance and cheating”. Poor resources/facilities in schools would negatively affect the delivery of quality education. All participants were indicted that inadequate resources /facilities such as library, laboratory, pedagogical centers, sport fields, latrine, textbooks, budget, qualified teachers are greatly hampered the effectiveness of the teaching learning process. “I think, said one teacher” in the school where resources /facilities are better students not only get quality of lesson but also have access to variety of sources of knowledge. So there is no need of cheating”. Another respondent mentioned that “where the shortage of resources or facilities is very serious, students’ absenteeism is frequent. These students are the one who involved in cheating in time of examination.

Cheating raises moral issues. It should be eradicated from the minds of youths, need to be boldly condemned as moral corruption. Majority of students mentioned that provision of advice regarding the negative effect of cheating is not persistent and strong. One student supporting the idea said “I thought that they are remembering us about cheating because they tell us about the ‘evil’ when the exam comes or at the time of school meeting.” Another stated that “if we see a school director on the stage at the time of national exam we take it as green light for cheating” school directors’ responses were different. All except one director explained that they had frequently aware student on effect and negative consequences of cheating” Another director indicated that” only few very few directors have a moral strength to denounce cheating in front of students and teacher as well. All know it.” one teacher felt that it is useless to be ruthless in one school, unless all schools all over the country work hard in creating generation who hate cheating.” Both teachers and student respondents explained that students caught cheating were faced minor punishment which would never go beyond the reduction of

score of that particular subject in school exams and cancelling of the result of the subject which the student caught cheating if it is national examinations. That means schools are reluctant in enforcing the existing law. One student mentioned that” the law has no specific and clear measure for those who violate the rule and regulation of the examination. I did not see student caught was punished. So, no need of creating awareness.” Though three directors mention reasons for implementing disciplinary measures one director stated that” the majority of school directors fear the repercussion their decision may ensue outside the school.” This imply that failure to enforce the existing law on the cheaters is exasperated the epidemic. Cheating in examination is positively correlated with the way student and teachers performance are supervised. Directors mentioned that the rate of cheating decreases when supervisory support increases. Supporting this one teacher said “student behavior influenced by what school leaders do or the extent to which they control students’ behavior. Thus where leaders are closer to students they inclined to avoid cheating in examinations.” One student also felt that “if school directors have a culture of close follow up of the performance of teachers and students’ achievement the students could exposed less to the cheating. Cheating is more prevalent where management control is weak.

**Techniques used in cheating:** Cheating in examination takes different forms. All respondent interviewed were indicated that it becomes complex in nature involved different individuals within and without the schools. After the interview the following techniques were identified and categorized as traditional and modern techniques. Traditional techniques comprised of copying from others, writing on the materials in the classroom and body parts, crib notes and exchanging exam papers. In modern techniques mobile phones found to be prominent.

#### Traditional techniques

**Copying from others:** All interviewed respondents explained that copying the answers from others is one of the most common ways of cheating. One student stated “it is marvelous. Some students could see the letter of the answers four desks away.” On the part of the teacher, female teacher said” you can easily locate the best students simply because eyes from every directions stare at him /her. Supporting her one school director mentioned “many of the complaints come to my office is about the students who were caught copying from the others. Sometimes they did it in team”.

**Writing on materials found in exam room:** Tens of twelve students and all the teachers were mentioned that students wrote definitions formulas, scientific names, and figures on the desks, tables, blackboard, and walls. One director explains the situation as follows:”if you enter just now in any classroom you could see on desks, tables, blackboard, and walls notes from different subject. They did it just to pass the exam” Another director also said “every year cleaning them cost us much”

**Writing on body parts:** It is also one of the most commonly used techniques students are employed in cheating examinations. The majority of students indicated that this type of cheating is now common in primary schools than secondary and preparatory schools in classroom examinations than national examinations. One student felt that “so long it

(cheating) is perceived normal why we smear our body with inks.” one teacher interviewed said that “it is usually observed among female than male because they suppose that invigilators do not dare to look to bare body parts when they expose them to fetch things written on.” Supporting this one direct mentioned that “it is there but the least reported”

**Cribs:** Respondents interviewed in this study described that cribs notes are the most widely and indiscriminately used cheating method. One student said “almost all students, including high achievers, smuggled into exam room notes which they shortened from text books or note books.” “crib notes” said one director “are the types of cheating most invigilators complained of” supporting this another student mentioned that “it is the source of conflict between examiner and examinee” students wrote part of the whole concepts, principles, formulas, figures, on small paper so that they hide under the exam paper and copy from it. One side of the teacher, one respondents stated “students who are on top of the rank also use cribs to improve or maintain their position in classroom or in school as a whole.

**Exchanging examination papers:** The other traditional method student used in cheating during examination time is exchanging his/her paper with paper of her/his classroom mate. One student admits that “when I was in grade eight I was not as good as I am now. So that I snatched the exam paper of the nearby students” on the part of teachers, one respondents stated that “I knew female students who came from the back dropped her and took the exam paper of the students in front of me.” Thus when there is no room for other form of cheating and supervision get tougher, some students would resort to exchanging their exam paper with paper of the student whom they think better.

### Modern techniques

**Mobile phone:** Mobile phone is the most widely used modern method of cheating in schools during national examinations. All respondents interviewed mentioned that students are smuggled mobile phone in to schools and exam room in different ways though national examination agency, schools and supervisors are frequently warn that doing so would ensue disqualification. One student stated that “male students bring mobile phone hiding in shoes while females hide in their hair locks to receive answers from outside or inside the schools” another student said “students bury mobile phone a day before the exam started and use it till the exam period come to an end.” One teacher mentioned that “this year when I invigilate entrance exam I had heard unusual sound and went to that direction. It was mobile phone with answers of all codes of the exam. Later it was found out that the answers were sent from unknown source outside the schools. The other interviewed teacher indicated that “in the exam room students are usually receives text messages which are contains answers.” On the part of school directors, one director explained that most of conflicts occurring during the time of the national exams are because candidates came to exam room with mobile phone. There was a time we got two mobile from a candidate.” Supporting the idea one interviewed director felt that “in the future as technology more sophisticated, cheating will become more difficult to deal with.

**Means to minimize cheating:** The most challenging issue is not identifying the case and techniques cheaters in examination

used. At present the main concern of all those who involved in education and human resource development is whether it is possible to stop, If possible or controlling it otherwise. The way out from the vice is of course beyond the recommendations of this study. That is why respondents were interviewed on the strategy how to stop it

**Whether it is possible to stop cheating:** Only 25% of students interviewed perceived that cheating in examination could be controlled if not completely abolished. “Why not” said one student, “cheating is created in the minds of students so that it should be first erased out of the minds of the students before taking the measure in the classrooms.” Another student has different opinion and explained that “cheating will be stopped, if only if examinations cease to exist.” About 50% and 75% of the teacher and school director respondents were respectively explained that cheating can be minimized if concerted and rigorous actions are taken by all actors in education system as a whole. The rest respondents were skeptical about curbing the evil that has been killing the generation. “I think it is too difficult” said one teacher “to determine where and who to start with: with student, teachers, directors, parents, community, officials in all level of hierarchy, Ministry of Education, council of people representatives, legal organization, religious organization ...oh! I am not sure. It may take more than a generation.” Supporting him one director added that “so long as perception of measurement of school performance, teacher performance, criteria for selection of schools, principals and teachers and the way school set goals for their students to achieve in a given subject, social values for high grades and fierce completion among students to join universities are not changing the effort of eradicating cheating will be in vain. All participants in this study were interviewed as to how cheating in examination would be stopped and the following responses obtained. Respondents responses categorized under the theme of what the school, teachers students, community, parents and officials in education system would do in order to eradicate cheating in the study areas.

**School responsibility:** Respondents interviewed in the study explained that schools should have to work actively and persistently on the issues that would reduce cheating from happening. These issues may include ensuring attendance of both teachers and students, planned and selective tutorial and non-delayed make ups, clearing exam rooms, strengthening student organizations and clubs, provision of facilities, effective supervision of the administration and invigilation of examinations, frequent, planned and reliable continuous assessment that facilitate learning who outcomes and well taught and participatory planning and practice evidence based school and teachers performance. 83.3% of students and all teachers and 50% of school directors described that school should prohibit students who did not attend the required percentages of school days and take action on teachers who continuously miss their class. Also mentioned that strict and effective supervision and invigilation of examination, and ensuring the implementation of continuous assessment as per stated in school plan would keep students from cheating. One student indicated that “student who cheated were student who did not attend but allowed to sit for exams. In the same way subject taught by the teacher who frequently miss the class are likely to be exposed for cheating.” “Strict supervision and invigilation” said interviewed school director “before and during examination are undoubtedly reduces the possibility of

cheating. At present we are more inclined to perceive continuous assessment just to assign marks to students but should be seen as part of learning aiding learners in studying. Students who are studied properly would never cheat.” All participants interviewed in this study explained that the school ought to use all available organization to work against cheating. One teacher stated that “when a given issue is continuously and repeatedly denounced through various ways, student would see it as unacceptable behavior and would shun off”. Supporting this one student mentioned that “warning on cheating is common when exam approach, and by director alone. It will be effective if it were given by various ways repeatedly” The other theme was planned and selective tutorials and immediate make ups. Majority of students and teachers described that most of tutorial and make up classes given so far did not focus on student learning rather they are intended for filling teachers’ performance evaluation. One student said “I am sure planned and selective tutorial will enhance understanding of subjects. If learners understood a subject well, no need of cheating. But before this was not the case” Another student mentioned “ I did stop attending tutorials because they were make ups. If teachers are committed to true tutorials and timely make up, cheating will be minimized” one teacher explained that “teachers would not compensate the class they missed immediately. The numbers of teachers who give make up classes increase as exam time approaches. This would lead to confusion, and eventually to cheating.” therefore, timely, planned and selective tutorial and immediate make up can reduce cheating.

Both teachers and school directors critically mentioned that the intervention of various segments of social organizations in the fight against cheating. One teacher felt that “students are part and parcel of social organizations directly and indirectly through their families. They would be heard of and respected, if they are condemned cheating as anti social and corruption act.” On the side of school directors, one director said “much has been done by government to reduce cheating. I think we would be successful if the social organizations are involved. The students hate what the society hates.” It means if the community denounces cheating, students would never dare to commit it. One student stated that religious organization can play a pivotal role than any social organization. They teach stealing is sin. They fear to cheat because cheating is stealing which is a sinful act. All respondents except half of the students described that school must actively work together with legal organization (police and courts) by arranging forums where invited guests discuss cheating from legal perspectives and its consequences. “One thing” said the teacher “why students who cheat persist on doing is that they know that they will never face serious legal punishment. I knew no one.” one student also stated that “ these people may sympathize for student who caught in cheating because they have students in their families as well.” Therefore if the schools do jointly with legal organization and serious measures put in place the spread of the epidemic could be halted.

**Working with parents:** All the teachers and school directors explained that schools have to do with parents if cheating successfully be stopped. Two students were declined to respond. One teacher indicated that “good virtues and acceptable norms start at home. If the parent is repeatedly exhort their children they would reserve from involving in cheating.” Another teacher stated “To be effective in campaign against cheating in examination parents’

involvement is very crucial.” On the part of school directors, one director mentioned that “students are disposed to display home behavior. Parents can stop if they cooperate with schools.” from this we can understand that changing parent perception on cheating and working with them could minimize the vice.

**Working with community:** Six students, three teachers and all directors indicated that working with communities would put in force the struggle against cheating in examination. Communities are made of many personalities who could influence and shape undesirable behaviors. One student mentioned that “especially during national examinations organized cheating takes place near and around schools. Answers sent to candidates through mobile phones or false candidates leave exam room ahead with exam papers and give it to individuals who could do it. If the community were prevented it, I think, it would never happened.” On the side of the directors, one director said “community knows what has been happening in it, bad and good, constructive and destructive, nothing can be hidden thus stop cheating. One teacher stated that “challenging cheating with community is the easiest way to eradicate it.” Hence, cheating in examination would not have fertile ground, if the schools are working with the community.

**Responsibilities of educational officials:** Two students ,three teachers out of four and all the school respondents interviewed described that educational officials at woreda and zonal level can play important role in a sense that they put in place systematic and all inclusive fight to prevent the pandemic. On the side of directors, one director said that “they can organize training in exam supervision and invigilation for teachers, and work with other stakeholders in moral development of students to resist cheating and to expose students who involved in cheating in examinations.” One teacher also felt that “they also motivate those who involved in preventing cheating by distributing information on the status of cheating in schools in their area”. two students and one teacher were declined to respond to the questions.

**Working with local administration:** All respondents described that the local administrators can play a pivotal role in coordinated and leading the fight against the cheating in examinations. The effort can be effective to the extent that they are committed to the case. One of the teacher interviewed mentioned that “these people should be role model in the effort, because the community always put into action what the politician gives attention.” School director said that “They call for all actors for coordinated action particularly during national examinations.” One student felt that “if they are serious they could. Power is in their hand and knows how to control it” Therefore, the school have to collaborate with local political authorities if their effort to curb cheating

## Summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations

### Summary of major findings

**Causes of cheating:** The study has identified the following three causes for cheating in examinations. They are school related causes, Student related causes, and society related causes. Student related causes are not attending the class properly, poor study and poor preparation, lack of confidence, work burden outside the school time and family support , fear of failure, personal desire to appear as good student,



competition, eagerness to join preparatory and university. Teacher related causes include poor preparation, frequent absent, failure to cover the topics assigned for the semester or the year, failure to use various teaching strategies and poor exam preparation, unscheduled assessment and poor invigilation. And school related cause are found to be poor planning, the intention of avoiding possible criticism of parents and educational authorities, undesirable competition, poor resources/facilities in schools, poor and sporadic provision of advice regarding the negative effect of cheating, weak disciplinary measurement and punishment and the way student and teachers performance are supervised and controlled are among others.

**Techniques of cheating:** The response obtained through interview indicated that cheating broadly takes two forms. They are traditional and modern techniques. Under traditional techniques copying from others, writing on the materials in the classroom and body parts, crib notes and exchanging exam papers are the major ones whereas mobile phones found to be prominent in modern techniques.

**Means to minimize cheating:** The study shows that only 25% students, 50% teacher and 75% of school director interviewed were explained that cheating in examination could be controlled if not completely abolished. From this it is possible to say that the fight against cheating is very challenging and demand the organized efforts of all stakeholders in the system. It is found out that the majority of participants in this study felt that cheating in examination could be stopped if the schools, parents, communities, social organization, local administration (political), legal organizations and educational officials are work together. It is also identified that schools must play on their part the role of ensuring attendance of both teachers and students, planned and selective tutorial and non-delayed make ups, clearing exam rooms, strengthening student organizations and clubs, provision of facilities, effective supervision of the administration and invigilation of examinations, frequent, planned and reliable continuous assessment that facilitate learning who outcomes and well taught and participatory planning and practice evidence based school and teachers performance.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study the following conclusions were drawn. The finding of the study revealed that the causes of cheating are not only confined to school premises. poor preparation and administration of exam, poor invigilation and supervision, poor attendance, poor school facilities, failure to cover topic as schedule and unplanned continuous and competition among schools are some of the causes cheating. It is rather involves all stakeholders in education system from the top to grass root levels. The case of cheating is not something that should be left to schools or national examinations agency. If cheating to be abolished, the action should start from family to community then up to government and be coordinated. Moreover, the way the principals and teachers desire their schools appear in the community and in relation to other schools have contributed to prevalence of cheating. External and internal environments have greatly sophisticated the techniques cheaters in examination use. The oldest ways of cheating gave the way to mobile phone technologies, at-the-moment type of cheating to a week –a head- preparation, and individualized and internal cheating changed in to team and

externally organized form of cheating. Thus schools besides being cleaning the classrooms, strengthening and supervising invigilation, maintaining the security of the exams must keep an eye on students' movement in the schools and around schools working together with the community a week before the exam. Each and every member of schools knows that cheating is common during examinations. Thus they can be part of solution to the problem. The findings of the study revealed that unless the fight against it started in the families, in the KG, in religious organization, in social organization, legal organization as a part of corruption, immoral, anti social and sinful act the future human resource productivity would be at risk.

**Recommendation:** The following recommendations were forwarded based on the major findings of the study and conclusions drawn. Cheating in examination is not only the challenge of schools. It is the responsibility of all segments of people in the community. Schools have to work with these segments of people if cheating is to be abated.

## On the part of Schools

- Arrange at least four time (at the beginning of a year and semester, and before semester exams/ national examinations) conferences to discuss with elders, influential individuals, political figures, religious personalities, other civic organizations how cheating would be stopped.
- With the active support and commitment of teachers use student organizations and clubs in the school to fight against the pandemic
- Ensure the effective utilization of academic calendar so that all teachers cover the whole portion of the subject allotted to the year.
- Provide training on effective studying, time management and developing good behavior so that they can improve their achievements
- Strictly supervise whether tutorial and make up classes are devoted to the purpose they designed. Not only tutorial and make ups but also the invigilation of examinations. To do so, schools need to get a commitment and reached at the consensus with teachers and students to expose any sort of misbehaving and act cheating
- Though few paragraphs in civic education dealt with cheating in relation to corruption it is not suffice to bring about the desired change. Therefore, schools should frequently and incessantly aware students on flag ceremonies, students meeting, at the beginning of each subject, through clubs, arranging special days, in parents day, using school mini media, preparing shows and songs or cultural days in other different occasions.
- Use local social media, brochures, leaflets, and other means that discourage cheating
- Refer to the legal organization the case of cheating so that those who plan to cheat would refrain from doing it
- Identify students who have been frequently cheat in exam and provide counseling support
- Invite guests who had experience in fighting cheating as role model
- Strict in correcting and taking measure on teachers who are lenient during invigilation and students who would cause conflict during exam times



- Publicly recognize the student who fight cheaters and expose the acts so that other students would be encouraged to do the same

### On the side of Teachers

- Teaching as profession has its own professional ethics and moral obligations. They ought to committee themselves in teaching, supporting students, implementing school objectives and decisions reached at consensus in school meetings. This should includes cheating
- Strictly follow annual plan that conforms to academic calendar in teaching and learning activities. This helps the teacher to cover his /her subject on time with required breadth and width so that student grasps a given competence comfortably and hence no need of cheating.
- Prepare the same but coded exam
- Teachers' behavior in exam room is not uniform. Some are lenient others are strict. This difference has been a source of cheating and inflated scores. Therefore, they should strictly follow the exam rules and procedures of their schools by visiting the exam rooms before the exam ,checking for crib notes and mobile phone , re arrange sitting, , avoid any thing that distract invigilation.
- Frequently discuss and work with all concerned helping students to denounce the act of cheating.
- On the side of Students
- Committed to their learning and avoid any behavior that would lead them to cheating such as tardiness, poor attendance ,
- Internalize that cheating is socially, morally, religiously and pedagogically an acceptable behavior and condemn it by hating cheating, exposing those who are involved in cheating and exhorting their peers.
- They are the one who knows cheaters well than any other stakeholders in education thus they can play a leading role in the fight against the cheating by criticizing each other through their organizations, identifying and notifying the strategies cheaters used ahead of the examinations and refusing to involve in cheating during the examinations.
- Woreda education Department
- The fight against cheating in examination will be effective if profound and incessant actions are start from pre schooling level. To this end , the woreda education department have to work with woeda, administration, kebele administration, parents, elders of the community, religious and social personalities to play their role using all available means to develop positive behavior in

students of level( pre primary to preparatory ) so that hate and despise cheating and other forms of corruption

- Aware the community around the school and to watch over any signs that would facilitate organized cheating during the time grade ten and entrance examinations, and take serious measures if students or their collaborators are caught.
- Arrange woreda wide forums, conferences or meetings to discuss on the challenges or progress made or share experiences while fighting cheating in examinations. Sharing experiences or information would help to identify the new methods of cheating in use and act accordingly.

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