



**Liberalization of Primary Education and Examination Malpractice
in Mbarara City North, Western Uganda.**

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Administration and Management of Bishop
Stuart University**

August, 2024

Declaration

I, Ntare Denis do hereby declare that, this thesis is my original work and it has not been submitted or presented for a similar program in any other University.


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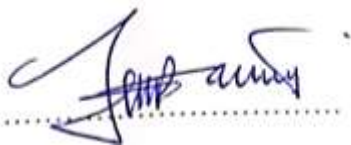
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Approval

This research Thesis titled “*Liberalization of Primary Education and Examination Malpractice in Mbarara City North, Western Uganda*” has been done under our supervision.

Signed



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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation my Wife Medrine Karungi for her financial support, care and moral guidance to accomplish my master's degree.

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List of Acronyms

BSU	Bishop Stuart University
CEO	City Education Officer
CIS	City Inspector of School
CVI	Content Validity Index
DV	Dependent Variable
EM	Examination Malpractice
Htr.	Headteachers
IV	Independent Variable
PLE	Primary Leaving Examinations
REC	Research Ethics Committee
SMC	School Management Committee
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UNEB	Uganda National Examinations Board-
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Abstract

The study examined the relationship between liberalization of primary education and examination mal practice in Mbarara City North. The study was guided by the following objectives; i) to assess the level of liberalization of primary education in primary schools of Mbarara City North. ii) to examine the level of examination Malpractices in primary schools of Mbarara City North. iii) to establish the relationship between liberalization of education and examination mal practice in primary schools of Mbarara City North. This study adopted a correlation research design. The study population comprised of the City Inspector of School, City Education Officer, School Management Committee, Headteachers, Teachers, and p.6 Pupils that sat for p.7 external promotional exams and currently in primary seven. The sample size of 468 was used. Purposive sampling and simple random sampling was employed to sample respondents. Data collection methods were self-administered questionnaires and interview guides. Data was analysed by both qualitative and quantitative data analysis. The findings on objective 1 underscore several factors contributing to the enhancement of the teaching and learning process like quality of the school environment, availability of resources, consistent pupil attendance, and parental contributions all play significant roles in fostering a conducive learning atmosphere. The findings on objective 2 suggest that examination malpractices were prevalent in primary schools in form of examination leakage, external assistance provided to pupils, corrupt practices involving stakeholders and examination officials, hiring others to take exams, invigilators extending extra time, and answer sheet substitution during examinations. These results underscore with substantial agreement that examination leakage, external assistance to pupils, corrupt practices involving stakeholders and officials, hiring proxies for exams, extending extra time, and answer sheet substitution are occurring, it's clear that the integrity of assessments is compromised. Findings on objective 3 revealed a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.234$, $p < 0.01$) between the liberalization of primary education and examination malpractice in Mbarara City North primary schools highlights the importance of a balanced approach to educational reform. Recommendations to the study were Strengthen examination security measures, Promote ethical conduct and integrity, Enhance monitoring and surveillance, Standardize examination procedures, Strengthen accountability mechanisms, Foster a culture of academic integrity, Conduct comprehensive impact assessments, Integrate integrity into reform strategies and Continuous review and adaptation.

Chapter One

Introduction

This chapter introduces the background of the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions and hypothesis, scope of the study, significance of the study and conceptual frame work.

Background of the Study

The background of the study was presented as historical, theoretical, conceptual and contextual perspectives.

Historical Perspective

Over the years, Examination has been looked at as an avenue to ascertain the learners' level of understanding and how much a subject area has been grasped in a particular field. In America, Hornby, (2015) looked at examination in a view of a test of the learner's knowledge in his/her area of study using, questioning and answering method, Balogun, (2019) further looks at examination as an evaluation process, with the aim of drawing conclusion on the extent of knowledge a learner has acquired within a given time frame. Examination can take-on different level; oral, written, practical, including the combination of oral-written, oral-practical and oral written practical examination. A learner can be assessed through examination internally or externally (Adedokun (2013).

One of the social ills threatening the educational sector at all levels is examination malpractice / leakage (Farombi, 2014). One of the objectives of education in Nigeria is to prepare the young ones to face future challenges and develop them to meet the nation's manpower requirements. Farombi, further revealed that schools, therefore, need to conduct and supervise examination as a yardstick for assessment as the most practical way of assessment in education. However, Adewale (2017) Reported that about 20% of parents in Nigeria believe that poor education supervision has led to examination malpractice since education inspectors fail to

supervise the primary school teaching and learning process on claim that time is not enough for visiting schools in a term. The author further added that schools do not complete the syllabus that has made teachers to assist pupils during examination periods.

According to Lungwangwa, (2017), in the fundamental changes in power relations within the education sector in Zambia and causes of examination malpractices. The study revealed that challenges of examination malpractices and leakages were of great concern in primary schools of Zambia. There was an administration challenge for determining policy that external examinations are an unmitigated evil from which pupils in primary schools should be shielded as much as possible. Lungwangwa, (2017), to solve this problem of examination malpractices the government should introduce education policies that can deter learners and teachers to involve themselves in examination malpractices and leakages.

The Liberalization of Primary Education in Uganda marked a significant shift in the country's education policies, aiming to enhance accessibility and quality by encouraging private sector participation in primary education (Mugimu, 2010). However, this transformation has been accompanied by challenges, notably the escalating issue of Examination Malpractice. Examination Malpractice, defined as any irregular behavior that compromises the integrity and fairness of the examination process, has become a pressing concern in the context of liberalized primary education in Uganda (Okanya, 2018). The need for a comprehensive study on this matter arises from the potential negative impact of examination malpractice on the overall effectiveness of the education system, as it undermines the credibility of assessments and hinders the attainment of quality education goals (Kakooza & Onen, 2015). Understanding the dynamics and root causes of examination malpractice in the context of liberalized primary education is imperative for devising effective policy interventions and ensuring the sustained improvement of the education sector in Uganda.

The liberalization of primary education generally refers to the introduction of market-oriented reform in the primary education sector, often involving increased autonomy for schools, competition among educational institutions, and a shift towards private sector involvement. In the context of Mbarara City North, liberalization specifically pertains to the implementation of policies and practices aimed at fostering a more open and competitive primary education system. This may include measures such as decentralization, school choice, and the encouragement of private sector participation in the provision of education services. As education systems evolve, the liberalization of primary education seeks to enhance efficiency, quality, and innovation in the delivery of educational services, with the ultimate goal of improving overall learning outcomes and educational opportunities for pupils in Mbarara City North (Kakooza & Onen, 2015).

The Uganda National Examinations Board- UNEB announced that it had withheld Primary Leaving Examination-PLC results of 155 pupils on allegations of cheating (UNEB, 2018). It was evidenced months after apprehending fraudsters that were hawking Primary Leaving Examination papers in districts such as Kampala, Mukono, Mbarara and Mubende (UNEB, 2018). This raised concern among parents who accuse the headteachers of doing nothing to curb the problem where the good performance of primary schools are overshadowed with cases of exam malpractices. In Mbarara City North, Parents are demanding for an end to the rampant examination malpractices that is common in most private schools (New Vision, Nov 04, 2019), unethical teachers collect large sums of money from parents and pupils with a promise that they would provide UNEB examinations (New Vision, Nov 04, 2019). Therefore, it's from the above background, the researcher intends to conduct a study on how Liberalisation of education has led to examination malpractice in Mbarara City North.

Theoretical Perspective

The study adopted the liberalization theory by Prosser (2000) which is the loosening government controls and relaxation of laws relating to social matters. It refers to reductions in restrictions and often treated as synonymous with the deregulations which is the removal of state restrictions. McGowan, (2000), in principal Liberalisation of education is subject to government regulations like to protect consumers but in practice it is used to refer to freeing of education from state intervention. The theory therefore guided how liberalization of primary education affects examination malpractice.

Conceptual Perspective

Maratho (2017) defined liberalization of education as the provision that allows those with resources to invest in education, however, subject to stipulated rules and regulations. In this way, liberalization contributes to expansion of educational opportunities while protecting the right of parents to send their children to educational institutions of their own choice, be they public private, religious or secular. The study defined liberalization of primary education (IV) as education funding, education management and education supervision.

Funding is a critical aspect of liberalizing primary education. Increased funding from both government and private sources can help improve infrastructure, provide better learning materials, and ensure that schools can attract and retain qualified teachers. According to UNESCO (2015), investment in primary education is essential for achieving sustainable development goals. By allocating more resources to primary education, governments can ensure that all children have access to quality education, regardless of their socio-economic background. Furthermore, private funding and public-private partnerships can also play a significant role in supplementing government efforts, thus broadening the scope and impact of educational initiatives (OECD, 2017).

Education management is another pillar supporting the liberalization of primary education. Effective management practices ensure that schools operate efficiently and that resources are

utilized optimally. Decentralization of education management, where local authorities and school administrators are given more autonomy, can lead to better outcomes as they are more attuned to the needs of their communities (Bray, 2003). Additionally, professional development for school leaders and administrators is crucial in fostering an environment that prioritizes student learning and well-being. Implementing modern management practices and technologies can streamline operations and improve the overall educational experience for students (Bush, 2011).

Education supervision ensures that the standards of education are maintained and that there is accountability within the system. Regular inspections and evaluations help identify areas where schools are excelling and where they need improvement. Effective supervision can also provide support to teachers and administrators, helping them to improve their practices and deliver better educational outcomes. As highlighted by the World Bank (2018), robust supervision mechanisms are vital for maintaining quality and consistency across educational institutions. These mechanisms include regular assessments, feedback systems, and continuous professional development for educators to keep up with the latest pedagogical advancements (UNICEF, 2016).

Examination malpractices are all those illegal and prohibited means which pupils utilize to pass examinations (Sooze, 2014). The study defined examination malpractices (DV) as leakage, external assistance, corrupting examination officials, impersonation and giving more time for exam than allowed.

Contextual Perspective

In Mbarara City North, Examination Malpractice (EM) has been identified as an endemic cause of low quality education during the lockdown with its causes linked to low moral standard in schools, candidates' fear of failure, the learner/student lack of confidence in themselves, inability to understand lessons taught due to poor teaching-learning environment, the teachers' inability to teach effectively / productively including laziness of the learners (UNEB Thesis 2021).

The PLE results of some schools in Mbarara City North were withheld for examination malpractices (New vision, Jul 22, 2021). More so The Bishop of Ankole Diocese, Rt. Rev. Dr. Sheldon Mwesigwa vowed to fire all teachers involved in exam malpractice in schools under the Church of Uganda in the diocese (Orumuri Paper, Nov 12, 2011). More so, some primary schools are reluctant to admit pupils from most private primary schools with a history of examination malpractice since some pupils have failed to sustain performance in primary schools despite having been admitted with excellent grades, (Mbarara City North Inspector of schools Thesis, 2021).

Problem Statement

At the end of each level in education system, there is atleast an examination done. When learners sit exams they expect to obtain their results. However, results of some pupils have been withheld or cancelled due to examination malpractice (UNEB, 2020). The report by Mbarara City North Inspector of schools on Mock exams 2020, “some primary schools had their results cancelled because they got advance information on the content of the exam”. That has affected the learner's academic progress, caused significant stress, anxiety, and embarrassment.

The government of Uganda through the ministry of education and sports put strong fines, long term jail sentences, deploy scouts, invigilators and supervisors during examination periods to control examination malpractices (UNEB, 2020).

The Uganda national examinations board Bill, (2020) has taken steps to protect and promote the sanctity of examinations and academic awards by UNEB so that they are without question, recognized at national, regional and international levels. The oaths of secrecy has been made mandatory for all persons engaged in the examination operations. The involvement of the security personnel in the entire examinations cycle is intended to secure the entire exercise and related matters; and to ensure sanctity of exams conducted and awards ultimately issued to successful candidates. (Thesis of the committee on education and sports on the Uganda national examinations board Act, 2020).

Despite the measures, examination malpractice has persisted and manifested through impersonation, leakage of questions to pupils before the examination, conniving with supervisors and school authorities to cheat, body writing or tattoo in which pupils especially females write on hidden parts of their bodies (Jacob & Lar, 2018).

Therefore this has motivated the researcher to conduct a study on the impact of liberalization of primary education on examination mal practice in Mbarara City North.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to establish the effects of liberalization of primary education on examination mal practice in Mbarara City North.

Research objectives

- i. To assess the levels of liberalization of primary education in primary schools of Mbarara City North.
- ii. To examine the level of examination Malpractices in primary schools of Mbarara City North.
- iii. To establish the relationship between liberalization of education and examination mal practice in primary schools of Mbarara City North.

Research Questions

- i. What is the level of liberalization of primary education in primary schools of Mbarara City North?
- ii. What is the level of examination Malpractices in primary schools of Mbarara City North?

Research Hypothesis

Ho: There is no relationship between liberalization of primary education and examination mal practice in primary schools of Mbarara City North.

Scope of the Study

The scope of the study was categorized as content, geographical and time scope.

Content Scope

The study considered liberalization of primary education as the independent variables in form of Education funding, Education management and Education supervision whereas the study considered examination malpractices in primary schools as the dependent variable that was described as leakage, external assistance, corrupting examination officials, impersonation and giving extra time for exam.

Geographical

The study was conducted in primary schools of Mbarara City North, Western Region of Uganda and the second largest city in Uganda after Kampala. The city is divided into two Divisions Mbarara north and Mbarara south division.

Time Scope

The study considered the period of 2013 to 2022 to relate the data on liberalization of primary education with examination malpractices. This period was selected because more cases of examination malpractices have been reported and level of malpractice have become more sophisticated due to increased use of Internet (UNEB, 2018).

Significance of the Study

The study findings was helpful to the Government of Uganda in solving the escalating problems of examination malpractices at primary education sub sector.

The study will help to provide a guide to school administrators, pupils and the community in Mbarara City North on how to measure challenges relating examination malpractices.

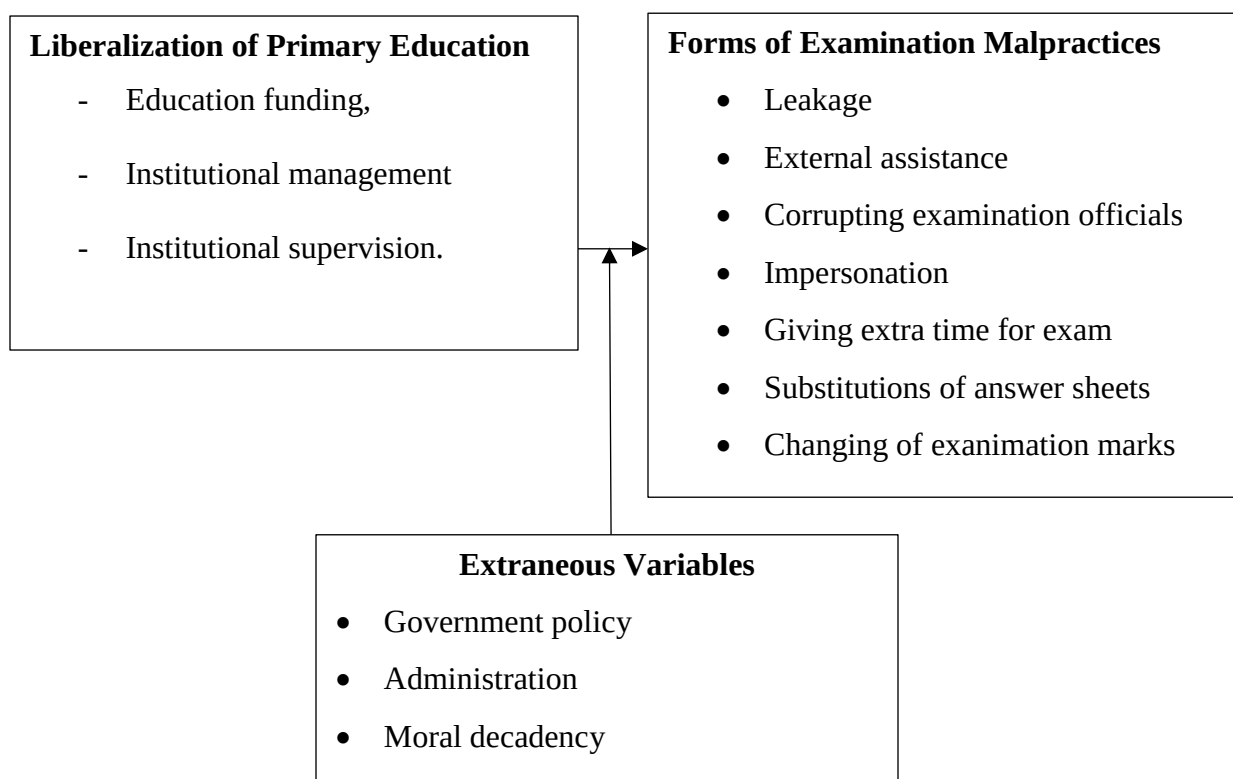
The study will also provide the literature to future academicians on issues relating to the variables, that is Liberalisation of primary education and examination mal practices.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework illustrates the expected relationship between the research variables. It defines the relevant objectives for your research process and maps out how they come together to draw coherent conclusions (Umberto Eco, 2009). The study will consider Liberalization of primary education as the independent variable and Examination malpractices as the dependent variable.

Independent Variable

Dependent Variable



Source: Researcher 2022

The study operationalized liberalization of primary education (Independent variable) as the education funding, institutional management and institutional supervision. The study also considered examination malpractices (Dependent variable) in level of leakage, external assistance, corrupting examination officials, impersonation, giving extra time for exam, substitution of answer sheets and changing of examination marks. The extraneous variables of this study included government policy, administration and moral decadency

Definitions of key terms

Liberalization of education provision entails fundamental changes in power relations within the education sector.

Examination as “a test of knowledge acquired or more generally a means of assessing intellectual capacity or ability (Barnard and Lanwerys 1967).

Examination malpractice is any dishonest, unlawful or unauthorized act or deed performed by a candidate on his own or in collaboration with others before, during or after examination in order to get undeserved and unfair marks or grades (Onuka and Amusan, 2008).

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter presents the literature review in relation to the themes derived from the objectives that is: To assess the level of liberalization of primary education in primary schools of Mbarara City North, To examine the level of examination Malpractices in primary schools of Mbarara City North and To establish the relationship between liberalization of education and examination mal practice in primary schools of Mbarara City North.

The level of Liberalization of primary education

The study focused on the features of liberalization of education as education funding, education management, education supervision and school establishment.

Education Funding

Liberalization of primary education poses an opportunity to have more suppliers provide increased access to education programs or to invest in the infrastructure for education provision Ssegawa, 2017. Although liberalization of education has increased Mobility of teachers, many lack capacity to perform and a few well-qualified professionals are attracted to employment positions in first world schools exposing poorly staffed schools to examination malpractice (Ssegawa, 2017).

Findings revealed that liberalization has lowered the quality of primary education. Studies show that as a result of education liberalization policies, many sub-Saharan African governments are systematically reducing their role to provide education as a social service to their people. Governments have left market access principles to infiltrate and influence the provision of education (Ssegawa, 2017).

UNESCO, (2021) reveal that it has been difficult for governments as well as the private sector to adequately finance education, even when their efforts are combined. Despite the increased demand, education remains in very sad state in sub-Saharan African. Education support materials

like text books, computers, laboratory facilities, and infrastructure are inadequate. The quality of education is further questioned due to the prevailing state of teachers in respect to condition of work and ethics; findings reveal that they are not well-motivated and not facilitated to grow professionally that fuel examination mal practice (Boit et al., 2012).

Government funding on school education is mostly for government schools and a small proportion goes to government-aided schools. Private schools do not receive government funding and receive funds from economically weaker parents in form of school dues. Raising of student fees to enhance parity between the schools revenue and cost of delivering quality education (Kasozi 2019) there is still disparity between the fees charged and the cost of offering quality education (Oyetubo, and Olaiya, 2019).) Outsourcing the delivery of non-academic services to divest responsibility for these services from primary schools management to facilitate pupils to augment the training they receive at school with real-world experiences in work-related settings there are bottlenecks in the facilitation and supervision of teaching and learning programmes that leads examination malpractice (Pulvers & Diekhoff, 2015).

In Sub Saharan Africa countries, government funding of education is often complemented by inputs from external partners, pupils and households, and private entities, (UNESCO 2016). The contribution of households of all education expenditure is the largest private financier. Many countries have abolished fees at primary that has reduce quality education and enrolment in private schools has increased which are better equipped and offer better education that has resulted to competition that cause examination malpractice.

According to a Thesis by UNESCO (2017) showed that on average there are 50% more pupils per teacher in private primary schools compared to the global average; inadequate teaching space; inadequate laboratory facilities and shortage library resources. These are characteristics of falling indicators of academic quality standards. Public schools are neither able to expand their

facilities to support the growing number of pupils nor maintain existing ones, as a result, most public schools in Uganda are characterized by decaying infrastructure and buildings.

Institutional Management

The inception of institutional management in Africa can be traced back to indigenous African education and it was in existence before the coming of the missionaries. This type of education was informal and learners acquired skills through observation and imitation. It comprised oral examination and careful observation through apprenticeship. Its mode of instruction was simple in that knowledge was passed on orally and through practical tests and it was mainly based on experience and practice (Pulvers & Diekhoff, 2015).

This type of education, however, slowly became obsolete with the introduction of western education by the missionaries which came about due to the increase in the number of learners and the availability of written materials. This saw the introduction of tests although the very tests written were of low psychometric properties because of little or no training of the teachers who prepared them (Okwilagwe, 2016). This led into the development of competence examinations in order to overcome the problem of low psychometric tests. The competence examinations have been adopted and are used to evaluate learners and promote them from one level of education into the next. They are also used for certifying candidates at the end of each school term.

The Kenyatta National Examinations Council (2017) describes examinations as an inevitable part and parcel of the education system which are used for among other things to measure the level of the candidates' achievement and certify the candidates' level of education, do training and employment and also provide the basis for evaluating the cost effectiveness of the curriculum both at school and at national level. At policy level, examination results are used to make decisions that have far reaching implications on the lives of learners. Apart from being used for certification and selection, examination results help to measure learning thereby giving some

indication of the successes of the curriculum. The results of the achievement are Reported to government, parents, teachers, curriculum developers and the department of education standards.

Institutional Supervision

According to Matovu (2016) ineffectiveness of decision-making system in private primary schools due to labialization, presents an important problem in a way that it constrains the schools capacity to appropriately adjust its operations to respond to the demands of its transformed operating environment. It is also responsible for the adoption of decisions that have prompted student and staff strikes that have damaged the school's property and resulted into loss of learning that fuels examination mal practice (Okwilagwe, 2016).

In a journal published and titled "Pupils performance in Examination" (Ahusa 2014). He asserted that due to the dwindling economic standard, low income to meet the ever growing human wants, teachers cum supervisors engage in misconduct and examination malpractice - these they do in exchange of money (bribe), gift items, contracts and other mouth-watery offers from either the candidates or their advocates.

Akinyode (2014) agreed with the poverty levels of Nigerians as one of the causes of examination malpractice, he states that the World Bank and the International community's assessment of the poverty level of Nigerians has moved from 40% in 1992 to 70% in 1996. This poverty level had injected almost all civil servants with virus called bribery. Bribery in our educational system has given birth to the monster called malpractices. These monsters are presently destroying our value of education and making nonsense of our certificates. Bribery in our institution of learning be it primary or tertiary produces the best brains in our society.

An article in Vanguard Newspaper (2018) Reported a sketch of examination malpractice that truancy and absenteeism made some pupils to be ill-prepared for examination, not because they absent themselves from schools and classes but they do not know what others have been

taught, some of the pupils are just lazy therefore they had to resort to examination malpractice as alternative therapy in their careers.

Some teachers get involved in examination malpractice because of the financial benefits accruing from such illegal transactions. Sometimes they go as far as asking the pupils to pay a certain amount so that they can assist them to pass examinations. Often times, teachers find it difficult to resist cases of cheating for fear that pupils or their parents confronted them. In order to avoid this confrontation, some teachers all level overlook incidents of academic dishonesty by pupils. At times, they may prefer to leave the examination hall for a while when they are supposed to be supervising the learners. This encourages the learners to do whatever they like (Pulvers & Diekhoff, 2015).

The education system is dependent on examinations as a tool for assessing the skills, knowledge, ability and competencies of the learner. Examinations help in placing value judgment on learners' performance and the outcome of this judgment is often used to diagnose and place learners accordingly. Nevertheless, it is now difficult to place value judgment on examinations because of the occurrence of examination malpractice. Whenever examination malpractice occurs, the validity and the resulting outcome is questionable. Okwilagwe, (2016). Defines examination malpractice "as a deliberate wrong doing contrary to official examination rules".

The rate at which examination malpractice occur in the African education system is quite disturbing, hence it needs urgent attention by all stakeholders. From the study conducted by Onuka and Durowoju (2016) which investigated the perception of teachers and pupils on the causes of examination malpractice, it was discovered that examination malpractice rather than being abated is on the increase in the African education system. The nature of examination malpractice is becoming sophisticated by the day and it is being perceived by pupils in diverse level that requires a study relating to liberalization of primary education and examination malpractice.

The level of examination Malpractices in primary schools

This study considered leakage, external assistance, corrupting examination officials, impersonation, giving extra time for exam, substitutions of answer sheets and changing of examination marks.

Leakage

Examination malpractice could take place before, during and after the examinations by either the candidates or by officials assigned with administrative duties (Adamu, 2018). Different level of examination malpractice have been reported in literature. Common level such as bringing in unauthorized material, writing on currency notes and identity cards, copying from other candidates in examination halls, substitution of answer sheets and change of examination scores or grades (Adamu, 2018). Others include impersonation, leakage of questions to pupils before the examination, conniving with supervisors and school authorities to cheat, body writing or tattoo in which pupils especially females write on hidden parts of their bodies (Jacob & Lar, 2015).

External Assistance

According to Fagbemi (2017), there are different level of examination malpractices which are commonly practiced such as such as bringing of prohibited or unauthorized materials, writing on currency notes and identity cards, cheating from other candidates, exchanging of answer sheets and change of examination scores or grades. Similarly, Jacob and Lar (2015) found that impersonation, leakage of questions to pupils before the examination, conniving with supervisors and school authorities to cheat, body writing or tattoo in which pupils especially females write on hidden parts of their bodies are the different level of examination malpractices.

Emaikwu (2013) established that cheating in examination has become so internalized and legitimized that some people now consider it as a normal process to pass examination. Onuka and Durowoju (2016) found that the nature of examination malpractice consists of lateness of pupils and supervisors to examination halls; cheating; favoritism; leakage of question papers in the

process of setting, printing, packaging, storing and distribution; impersonation; disclosing candidate's identity on answer sheets; and bribing or influencing supervisory staff.

Fagbemi (2015) examinations leakage is a bit different from examinations cheating. In this study, examinations leakage refers to the illegal filtration of an examination question paper from its system or accessing of the examination question paper by a candidate before the paper is officially opened in the examination room. This can occur anywhere between the setting of the examination paper and the opening of the examinations question papers in the presence of the candidates in the examinations rooms. Fagbemi (2015) actions and practices that undermine the credibility of examinations pose a serious threat to the quality of the education system and the attainment of its selective goals. Examination leakages are an example of such actions that threaten the integrity of examinations and damage the authority of those responsible for conducting them. In Zimbabwe, where a centralized examination system is used, examination leakages are a serious problem. It affects candidates in the whole country.

Corrupting Examination

According to the *Zambian Watchdog*, (2013) senior officers at the Examination of Zambia offices have secret codes for examinations storage banks including the website password which contain all grade 7, 9, and 12 examination papers in soft copy. It is alleged that these codes are circulated professionally to some senior officers in the Ministry of Education including some Ministers who print out these examinations for their family members. The *Zambian Watchdog* further claims that these papers are sold off to some members of public in both soft and hard copies. The edition cited an example of the *Zambian Chemistry paper (5124/2)* and *Mathematics syllabus D*, for the 2012 examinations, which were leaked through some senior political officials who managed to buy the papers for their children at *Kabulonga Girls* and *Munali Boys*. It further alleged that general commoners in public schools only get these papers through pupils who seek help from other pupils. One can conclude that technology can also be used to facilitate examinations leakage.

According to Daily Monitor (30 Jan 2021) Thesis of massive leakages of the examination papers in PLE. The Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) Reported that the SST and Science papers were leaked before pupils could sit them. The leakages even circulated on social media as indicated in Amuria District where a Science paper was shared on a WhatsApp group. Such leakages disadvantage candidates that have genuinely written exams. It also undermines the teaching and learning processes. UNEB needs to ask and then answer some pertinent questions regarding this massive leakage because this vice rests squarely at their doorstep.

Examination malpractice is any improper action carried out before, during and after the examination with the intention of cheating or having an advantage (Onuka & Durowoju, 2016). Because of this vice and the highlighted increase in the incidences of examination malpractice, the validity and reliability of the examination system has been questionable (Onuka & Durowoju, 2016). It can also be stressed here that examination malpractice has now become a tradition at all levels of education globally. This has been the case in both internally and externally administered examinations.

Impersonation

Okwilagwe, (2016) corrupting examination officials is another form of malpractice may be used to enhance teacher-student collusion to cheat. It brings in the economic perspectives in examination malpractices. A student may pay an examination official some money not necessarily to buy the question paper, but to be allowed to use illegal materials smuggled into the examination halls or to extend the examination scheduled period. In Nigeria, bribery often referred to as sorting in tertiary institutions is rampant. Male pupils offer money or other valuables while female pupils use money or sex to bargain for “upgrading” of their examination scores. Bribery is common in primary level of education examination.

Giving Extra Time for Exam

Umar (2013) claimed that parents and guardians are equally involved in this shocking and shameful activity, and their children were unable to defend their grades or ended up graduating as half-baked and undeveloped graduates. Samuel (2013) noted that parents and communities are deeply involved in encouraging and abetting examination malpractices by taking care of the supervisory staff and other examination bodies to enable their children to pass examination with no difficulty. Likewise Bolarin (2016) found that school teachers, principals, personnel of public examination boards, security agents and even parents have been accused for planning with pupils to cheat in examinations. Other causes of examination malpractices include over enthusiastic of some school heads to ensure that their schools have better results so as to boost their ego or self-esteem. Lack of security is another cause of examination malpractices. Questions are not carefully handled before examinations and the answer booklets are not at all properly secured after conduction of examinations (Fayombo, 2014).

The causes of examination malpractice are numerous as one encounter examination; different reasons are given to exhaust advocates from these acts. These exhaustions tend to expose the causes of examination malpractice. Maduka (2018) sees undue emphasis placed on certificate as one of the causes of examination malpractice. Maduka opined that the Nigeria society places too much emphasis on certificates obtained and examination passed on its own determinants. He further said that paper qualification and certificates serves as means of getting well paid jobs and achievement of social status.

How liberalization of primary education relates to examination mal practice in primary schools

There are various rules and regulations guiding the administration of examinations. The rules and regulations are usually accompanied by corresponding sanctions which are enlisted by the examination bodies. Candidates, however, go out of their way and break the rules and regulations in order to have access to examination materials (Achio, 2015). One of the contributing

factors to examination malpractice is the quest by candidates to pass the examinations. Other factors that contribute to examination malpractice include lack of confidence, fear of failure or getting low marks, anxiety to get a certificate, high-grade and the emphasis on certificate presentation for a job (Onyechere, 2018). Improper guidance and counselling, truancy, absenteeism and laziness are also amongst the factors that may lead to examination malpractice. Nevertheless, some candidates see themselves in malpractices through ignorance, carelessness, forgetfulness in applying the rules and regulations while others indulge themselves in malpractice due to peer pressure (Onyechere, 2018).

Most of the research on examination malpractice has been in the western countries (particularly America). Murray (2017) conducted a research on examination malpractice in America and Reported that examination room collusion was culturally viewed ‘as helping’ a fellow student or even as an act of altruism. McCabe et al, (2018) also noted the collectivist aspect of Lebanese culture and examination malpractice during examinations was perceived within that cultural framework as being an instance of ‘working together to navigate a difficult task’ concluding that ‘one size does not fit all ‘when it comes to academic integrity.

Unpreparedness of pupils for examinations is one of the causes of examination malpractice. Pupils fail to prepare well for their examinations and generally develop examination fever or tensions. Because of this, they are unable to retain concepts learnt and experience difficulty retrieving it during examinations. Instead of dedicating time to study, they prefer to watch television, play games and engage in one form of social negative vice or another. Thereby losing grip of the most important thing needed for them to be successful in examinations.

Society places a lot of value on paper qualification and this has resulted into persistent occurrence of examination malpractice. The findings in a study conducted by Ekpis (2021) indicated a significant relationship between societal values for paper qualification and pupils involvement in examination malpractice. Societal value on paper qualification is a determinant for

pupils' tendency to cheat. Ekpas further observed that examination malpractice is the product of a society which nurture cheating and turns cheaters into celebrities. Children are simply modeling what they observe in the society, they have observed their parents use money to get admission, a job or high position of the society, hence they do not see anything wrong with examination malpractice. This implies that whenever children witness dishonesty in the environment where they live, they vicariously learn the habit of being dishonest in their dealings.

Research has also shown that fear of failure, craze for certificates, and desire of parents to have pupils in better primary schools as the reason for examination malpractices (Grimes & Rezek, 2015). The emphasis on grades for entry into primary schools has resulted into most learners being more preoccupied with wanting to exhibit academic excellence without regard to moral uprightness, which does not go hand in hand with academic excellence and as such has been linked to malpractices (Jacob & Lar, 2015).

The factors influencing examination malpractice include lack of confidence as a result of inadequate preparation, peer influence, societal influence, parental support, poor facilities in schools, school programs and the teaching/ learning environment (Badmus, 2016). Other causes of examination malpractice include lack of moral strength and the courage to resist the temptation of indulging in immoral and illegal means of passing the examinations, absence of good guidance and counselling in schools, the emphasis that society places on paper qualification as an end to formal school system and the high premium placed on acquired social status and personal achievements.

Hangandu (2015) conducted a study on examination malpractice in Zambia and Reported that some causes of examination malpractice in Zambian primary schools include poor security checks by officials, use of teachers from the same school as examination invigilators, the low salaries and poor conditions for teachers, corruption and nepotism and the emergence of new examination centres.

In a related development, Chileshe, (2015) indicates that an education system which favours an academic approach to learning at the expense of hands on approach also contributes to examination malpractices. This is because such an education system emphasizes passing examinations while those who fail to score the required marks to enable them pass are labelled as failures and are abandoned on the way. Learners did what they can to enable them pass because at the moment there are no programs to cater for the so called failures or dropouts.

Corroborating the above statement, Smith (2015) maintained that the moral climate of the school influences the amount of cheating. Also, Bushway and Nash (2015) said that the moral tone of the school can have a positive effect on the characters of the pupils as well as on the incidence of cheating in the school and that a good emotional tone in the classroom and instruction about not to cheat before taking a test led to less cheating. Smith (2015) found that cheaters generally are people who may have received several punishments or are not punished at all.

Sheriff (2017) acknowledged that marked changes have taken place in the moral education of pupils at all levels during the past decades. The author reiterated that the moral traditional education which emphasis moral tradition has gradually given way to a new morality that is silent about „virtue“. This insinuates that the emphasis placed on moral values in the traditional education in those days is no longer there. There is no provision for moral instruction or values education in schools. Therefore the emergence of a morality without virtue is upheld in schools hence changes in the societal values which is based on unwanted competition and materialism.

Furthermore, Sheriff (2017) opined that the present educational system has kept its distance from traditional virtues. The author maintained that the pupils unencumbered by the „old bag of virtues“, arrive toting a rag bag of virtues whose contents may roughly itemized as follows: Psychological egoism (the belief that the primary motive for actions is selfishness), moral relativism (the doctrine that what is praiseworthy or contemptible is a matter of cultural conditioning), and to be culturally and socially aware is to understand and excuse the punitive

wrong doer). Another item in the bag is the conviction that the seat of moral responsibility is found in the society and its institutions, not in .

Examination malpractice involves various method employed by candidates to cheat during examinations Usman (2014). While Sahma et al (2015) elaborates further and better that malpractice in examination as an unlawful behaviour or activity engaged by pupils to have personal advantage in an examination over their colleagues or mates who are competing in the same examination. Onfechere (2016) accepted this definition by further throwing more light on it illegality that it is an unacceptable equally; an act or any act(s) of misconduct such as leakage, impersonation, writing on hidden part(s) of wares, encoding / decoding of the fingers for objectives tests, exchanges of question papers and answer booklets committed before, during or after the examination by either the pupils taking the examination or by officials assigned with the administration, evaluating or measuring the examination result.

Shonekan (2016) angrily view examination malpractices as act of omission or commission that contravenes those West African Examination Council rules and regulations to the extents of undermining the validity and reliability of the test and ultimately the integrity of the certificates issues by West African Examination Council. Dike (2015) from the psychological view said examination malpractice is all level of cheating which directly or indirectly falsely the ability of the pupils.

Shonekan (2017) inception of registration, he said asserted that manipulation of registration level in order to sit for an examination, which the student is not qualified is also a form of examination malpractice. Others include colluding with a medical doctor in order to obtain dully-medical certificate on grounds of fringed illness producing a fake medical certificate.

Aina (2014) agreed in their various submissions that the desire to pass at all cost is responsible for examination malpractice. The facts remain that Ugandan orientation on education is certificate and high-grade intensiveness, pupils, parents, school management tend to push harder

on wards to get the certificate and good-grade by all means to secure employment, and others prefer to manipulate to be admitted in a choicest higher institution.

All these factors according to Denga (2013) are boiled down to three factors of (i) Psychological factors: this includes all the stress, which is often induced in by parent, the peer pressure groups, and pupils; this they experience enormous stress and anxiety in trying to meet the various demand of subjects significantly. A study conducted by Keller (2014) support this psychological reasons, that stress and anxiety experience by pupils during examination are conspicuous, thus, have been criticized because pupils tend to develop undesirable habit which normally led them to be poorly prepared for examination(s) and subsequently exposed them in engaging in examination malpractice and misconduct. It should also be taken that psychological tremor of failure or scoring low grade promotes their involvement in examination malpractice and misconduct.

Summary

Eradication of examination malpractices is impossible without the collaborative efforts of all the stakeholders of the society. According to Ajayi (2019), examination malpractice cannot be controlled unless the whole society adopts high degree of responsibility, integrity and sincerity and fight against this curse with full strengths and potencies it deserves. The disaster of examination malpractices is not only the destruction that it brings to our educational system but it causes the gradual training of youths into the culture of fraud. Because of malpractices in primary schools, examination results depict a false picture of the state of affairs and therefore majority of school graduates cannot defend their grades (Ada, 2014). Obasi (2019) claimed that the impacts of examination malpractice in the society are disastrous and catastrophic and it affects entire society, the individual, the home, the school, the government, the private organization and the international community negatively.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter presents the research design, study population, research instruments, and research procedures, methods of data analysis, limitations and ethical considerations.

Research Design

Research Design refers to the overall strategy that a researcher chooses to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way, thereby ensuring that the research problem is effectively addressed. It constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data. A well-thought-out research design ensures that the research questions are addressed clearly and that the procedures are replicable. The design outlines how the study will be conducted, the type of data that will be collected, the methods of data analysis, and the approach to interpreting the results.

Research design is crucial because it influences the reliability and validity of the research findings. It determines the choice between qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods, depending on the nature of the research problem and objectives. For example, qualitative designs might involve case studies, ethnography, or grounded theory, aiming to explore deep insights into a phenomenon, while quantitative designs focus on measuring variables and testing hypotheses through structured methodologies like surveys and experiments. A robust research design not only guides the research process but also provides a framework for ensuring the accuracy and credibility of the conclusions drawn.

As put forward by Burns and Grove (2013) a research design is a blueprint for conducting a study with maximum control over factors that may interfere with the validity of findings. This study adopted the correlation research design because it is suitable to implement

and employs quantitative approach where data was collected and form the basis for drawing statistical inferences.

Study Population

Population is as an entire group of people, events or objects having common observable characteristics (Creswell *et al.* 2011). The total population of primary schools in the area of study were 37 government aided primary schools and 24 registered private primary schools totaling to 61 primary schools. The following categories were selected for the study and the inclusion of a diverse population comprising the City Inspector of School, City Education Officer, 61 School Management Committee, 61 Headteachers, 61 Teachers, and 1600 p.7 Pupils that sat for external promotional exams was crucial for a comprehensive study on the liberalization of primary education and examination malpractice. Each stakeholder provided a unique perspective offering invaluable insights into the multifaceted issues at hand. The City Inspector of School and City Education Officer provided overarching administrative viewpoints, while the School Management Committee offered localized perspectives on policy implementation and resource allocation. Headteachers and Teachers possess in-depth knowledge of classroom dynamics, curriculum delivery, and assessment practices, providing essential input on the ground realities of education. Lastly, involving p.7 Pupils ensured inclusion of their voices as they offer firsthand experiences and perceptions that directly impact their learning environment, (Mbarara City North Education Office, 2023).

Sample Size

Sample size is a subset of population selected for investigation purposes. The sample size of 468 was obtained using Morgan and Krejcie table (1970).

Table 3.1: Sample size determination

Category	Target population	Sample size	Sampling
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City Inspector of School	01	01	Purposive sampling
City Education Officer	01	01	Purposive sampling
School Management Committee (SMC)	61	52	Simple random sampling
Headteachers	61	52	Simple random sampling
Teachers	61	52	Simple random sampling
P.6 Pupils that sat p.7 external promotional exams	1600	310	Simple random sampling
Total	1785	468	

Sampling Techniques

Sampling is the process of selecting elements from a population in such a way that the sample elements selected represent the target population. Selecting a sample is a very important step in conducting research, (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2000). For this study, the techniques shown in table 3.1 were used to select sample for each category of the population and are explained below.

Purposive sampling

Utilizing purposive sampling ensures that key stakeholders with in-depth knowledge and decision-making authority are included, allowing for nuanced insights into the implementation and impact of educational policies. Purposive sampling was employed to select the City inspector of schools and City education officer since they hold pivotal roles in overseeing educational policies and practices at the city level.

Simple random sampling

Random sampling technique was used to select the School Management Committee (SMC), Headteachers, Teachers, and Pupils who sat for the P.7 external promotional exams, since they had larger sample sizes that were chosen to capture diverse perspectives and experiences

within these groups. Simple random sampling was employed to ensure fairness and representativeness, as it allows every member of the target population an equal chance of being selected. Furthermore cluster sampling was also employed on respondents school category (private and government aided) and sex (males and females) from these categories, helped the researcher to uncover a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics surrounding Liberalisation of primary education and examination malpractice, from policy formulation to implementation and its effects on various stakeholders, including school management, teaching staff, and pupils.

Data Collection Methods

Data collection methods are used for collecting data. They included self-administered questionnaires and interview guides, (Manfreda, 2008).

Self-Administered Questionnaires

Self- Administered Questionnaire is a set of questions given to a group targeted to obtain data about the problem under the study. The questionnaire method provides a structured framework to collect quantitative data efficiently from a large sample size. This method allows for anonymity, potentially encouraging respondents to express their views candidly, thus offering a broad understanding of the study, (Moser and Kalton, 1979). By distributing questionnaires to a wide range of stakeholders such as teachers and pupils to quantify prevalent attitudes, experiences, and perceptions regarding liberalization of primary education and examination malpractice.

Interview method

An Interview method provides a qualitative richness that questionnaires alone may lack, allowing for the capture of insights and personal narratives. It encourages engaging directly with key stakeholders through interviews, including the City inspector of schools and City education officer, School Management Committee (SMC) and Headteachers that facilitated a deeper understanding of the root causes and potential solutions to examination malpractice amidst the liberalization of primary education.

Data collection instruments

The researcher used the questionnaires and interview guides to obtain information from the respondents.

Questionnaires

The researcher developed a 5 point Likert scale (1-Strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4=Agree, 5-Strongly Agree for the systematic collection of quantitative data, this enabled the researcher to gauge the extent of attitudes, perceptions, and experiences among a large sample of stakeholders, including teachers and pupils. This quantitative data provided valuable insights into the prevailing sentiments towards liberalization of primary education and the nature of examination malpractice, offering a broad perspective on the problem under investigation.

Interview guides

Through open-ended questions, the researcher uncovered the hidden patterns and deeper meanings behind participants' attitudes and behaviors from the qualitative data that was gathered through interviews with the City inspector of schools, City education officer, School Management Committee (SMC) and Headteachers. Interviews helped the researcher to explore individual experiences, beliefs, shedding light on the influence of liberalization of primary education and the prevalence of examination malpractice in primary schools of Mbarara City North.

Data quality control

The reliability and validity of findings on the liberalization of primary education and examination malpractice in Mbarara City North was implemented throughout the research process.

Validity

The validity of research instruments was ensured by assessing the questionnaire items during their construction. The content validity of the questionnaire was determined by giving the research instruments to two university research supervisors from faculty of Education. These

examined the relevance of the questions with the objectives of the study and the content validity index was computed following the formula hereunder.

Content Validity Index (CVI) = $\frac{\text{Number of items rated relevant}}{\text{Total Number of items}}$

Total Number of items

The number of relevant questions from supervisor 1 were 49 out of 57

The number of relevant questions from supervisor 2 were 52 out of 57

$$\text{Therefore the CVI} = \frac{49+52}{57+57} = \frac{101}{114}$$

$$\text{CVI} = 0.88$$

Therefore, the content validity index of 0.88 was obtained basing on the different sections of the data instruments. This was regarded valid for data collection since according to Amin, (2005) the instrument to be regarded valid must be 0.7 and above.

Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistence of the research instruments. A pilot study was conducted in two schools that were not part of the sample and the collected data was coded and entered into the computer using an SPSS program. In order to establish the reliability (consistency) of the items in the research instruments and Cronbach alpha coefficient was used to determine the alpha value as below

Respondent	Scores (%)				Alpha value
First response scores	75	71	72	74	0.78
Second respondent scores	76	78	79	79	0.79
Third respondents scores	88	87	89	86	0.88
Fourth respondent scores	80	85	85	82	0.85
Average Alpha Value =	$\frac{(0.78+0.79+0.88+0.85)}{4}$				

$$\alpha = 0.825$$

Upon entering the responses from the respondents, the alpha value of 0.825 was obtained hence the instruments were considered valid and acceptable since according to Cortina (1993), an alpha of 0.7 is acceptable.

Data Collection Procedure

After the approval of the research Thesis from the BSU Research Ethics Committee, the researcher obtained an introductory letter from the graduate school that was presented to the City education officer Mbarara City North who provided an acceptance letter to allow the researcher conduct the study in selected schools where the researcher explained to each category of respondents the purpose of the study and obtained consent for participation. Finally, the researcher interviewed the City inspector of schools, City education officer, School Management Committee (SMC) and Headteachers while the teachers and pupils were also made to fill the questionnaires.

Data Analysis

Data was analysed by the qualitative and quantitative data analysis

Qualitative Analysis

This study used content analysis to analyze qualitative data into meaningful shorter sentences. This type of analysis was preferred when qualitative data has been collected in textual format such as data collected using interviews as suggested by Sekaran (2009). A thematic approach was used to analyze qualitative data where themes, categories and patterns were identified. The recurrent themes that emerged in relation to each guiding objective from the interviews, was presented in the results, with selected best quotes that was emerged from the City inspector of schools, City education officer, School Management Committee (SMC) and Headteachers.

Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative data was coded and later entered into SPSS for analysis. The relationship between liberalization of primary education and examination malpractice was established using the Pearson correlation co-efficient at the level of significance of 5%.

Limitations and Solutions

The researcher anticipated that some respondents could misinterpret the questions leading to wrong responses. For this matter, the researcher tried as much as possible to make the questionnaires simple.

Time to engage the respondents was hard to schedule since schools had tight schedules and fixed time tables. The researcher approached the school administrators and scheduled appointments to meet respondents during free hours like break, lunch and after lesson in the evening.

Some respondents failed to return the questionnaires. The researcher trained the research assistants to follow up and collect the questionnaires from different schools.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are the norms or standards that are shared by researchers about what is right and wrong when conducting a research inquiry. They help to determine the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviours during research process (Resnik, 2015). This study conform to the standards of conducting research as required by the Research Ethics Committee of Bishop Stuart University.

The participation of respondents was voluntary. All respondents were required to sign an informed consent form to show that their participation was voluntary and were not forced into participating in this study. Respondents were further informed that they can withdraw from the study even after they have signed a consent form.

Even if the respondent accepted to participate in this study, the research could not harm their participation. This study ensured that respondents were not asked to reveal information that

would embarrass them or endanger their home life, friendships or jobs. Since the participants were required to fill in the questionnaire, it was expected that they are not exposed to physical harm.

The researcher held debriefing session with the respondents in each school after filling the questionnaire. This was to ensure that the respondents who could have been emotionally disturbed during the filling of the questionnaire are counseled.

This study also ensured that the identity of respondents and schools that took part in the study remained confidential and anonymous in order to protect them from being easily identified.

The anonymity was achieved by making sure that no identification numbers were put on the questionnaire as they were being distributed to the respondents or being handed in after filling.

Also, the respondents were not required to fill in their names in the questionnaire. The names of teachers and schools taking part in study were not revealed in this study when writing the research Thesis.

Community Engagement Plan

The results of this study was disseminated to the community through distribution of the copies of research findings to the following:

Published copy was made available as a way of disseminating results to the community Library of Bishop Stuart University, Faculty of Education, Arts and Media Studies as reference by pupils.

The Office of the City Education Officer and school administrators of the respective schools in Mbarara City North acted as a reference for further supervision and monitoring.

Results Dissemination Plan

The researcher identified key audiences for the research findings, including the City inspector of schools, City education officer, School Management Committee (SMC) and Headteachers.

The researcher utilized various communication channels such as school meetings, workshops, academic publications, and social media for disseminating results.

The researcher prepared plain language summaries of research findings for easy comprehension by the broader community.

The researcher conducted feedback sessions to present findings to the community and receive input.

Ebola Risk Mitigation

In mitigating the risks associated with Ebola, collaborative efforts with local health authorities and strict adherence to national guidelines was paramount. Implementation of rigorous hygiene practices such as regular handwashing and the use of disinfectants was emphasized.

Furthermore, continuous monitoring of team members for symptoms and the establishment of a protocol for immediate isolation in case of symptoms was essential components of Ebola risk mitigation.

Covid-19 Risk Mitigation

Implementing social distancing measures and mask wearing during data collection and community engagements was crucial.

Preparedness for adapting to evolving Covid-19 circumstances through the formulation of contingency plans was imperative.

Chapter Four

Presentation, Interpretation and Analysis of the Findings

Introduction

This chapter includes the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the findings basing on the study objectives that is: To assess the level of liberalization of primary education in primary schools of Mbarara City North. To examine the level of examination Malpractices in primary schools of Mbarara City North. To establish the relationship between liberalization of education and examination mal practice in primary schools of Mbarara City North.

Response rate

Basing on the instruments that were used for data collection, some were not returned for analysis as illustrated in the table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 Response rate for data instruments

Instruments	Sample size	Returned	Percentage
Interviews	106	80	75.5
Questionnaires	362	352	97.2
Total	468	432	92.3

Source: Field data 2024

The table provides an overview of the response rates for data instruments used in the study on the liberalization of primary education and examination malpractice in Mbarara City North, Western Uganda. It revealed that out of a sample size of 106 for interviews, 80 were returned, indicating a response rate of 75.5%. For questionnaires, out of 362 distributed, 352 were returned, yielding a higher response rate of 97.2%. Overall, considering both instruments, the total response rate stands at 92.3%, with 432 responses out of a total sample size of 468.

The high response rate for data collection instruments suggested a greater willingness among respondents to participate through this medium, potentially indicating the effectiveness of this method in eliciting information for the study compared to interviews.

Background information

The findings include the background information that is gender of respondents as in table below,

Table 4.2 Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	138	31.9
Female	294	68.1
Total	432	100
Level of education		
Primary seven	310	71.8
Certificate	38	8.8
Diploma	22	5.1
Degree	58	13.4
Masters	4	0.9
Total	432	100
Period spent in school		
Less than 2 years	68	15.7
3-6 years	286	66.2
7-10 years	61	14.1
11 and above	17	3.9
Total	432	100
School category		
Government aided schools	366	84.7
Private schools	66	15.3
Total	432	100

Source: Field data 2024

Table 4.2 presents the distribution of respondents based on their gender. Among the 432 respondents, 31.9% identified as male, while the majority, comprising 68.1%, identified as female. This indicates a noticeable gender disparity within the sample, with females being significantly overrepresented compared to males.

Moving on to the level of education, the largest proportion, constituting 310 (71.8%), were in primary seven. 38 (8.8%), indicated having a certificate as their highest educational qualification, followed by 5.1% with a diploma, 13.4% with a degree, and a mere 0.9% with a master's degree. This distribution underscores the prevalence of lower educational attainment within the sample, with a significant portion having completed only primary education.

Regarding the period spent in school, the majority, accounting for 66.2%, reported to have spent between 3 to 6 years in school, 15.7% reported to have spent less than 2 years in school, 14.1% revealed to have spent 7 to 10 years in primary schools, and only 3.9% spent 11 years or more in formal education. This distribution suggests a varied educational background within the sample, with a significant portion having spent a moderate amount of time in school.

Lastly, the data on school category illustrates the types of schools attended by the respondents. The vast majority, comprising 84.7%, reported attending mixed schools, indicating educational institutions that cater to both male and female pupils. In contrast, a smaller proportion, representing 15.3%, reported attending single-sex schools. This distribution highlights the prevalence of mixed-gender educational environments within the sample.

In summary, the findings from Table 4.2 shed light on the gender composition, educational backgrounds, duration of formal education, and schools attended by the respondents. These insights are crucial for understanding the demographic characteristics and educational profiles of the sample population, which can inform future analyses and interventions in the context of education.

The level of Liberalisation of primary education

Where: (1-Strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4=Agree, 5-Strongly Agree

Table 4.3: The level of Liberalisation of primary education

Statements		5	4	3	2	1	Mean
The quality of the school environment favors	F	60	56	76	70	90	2.64
the teaching process	%	17.0	15.9	21.6	19.9	25.6	
The school has resources for teaching and	F	78	71	45	62	96	2.73
learning	%	22.2	20.2	12.8	17.6	27.3	
There is consistency in pupils' attendance in the	F	78	62	48	70	94	3.18
school environment.	%	22.2	17.6	13.6	19.9	26.7	
Parents contribute funds to primary schools	F	110	55	79	42	66	4.16
	%	31.3	15.6	22.4	11.9	18.8	
Schools seek loans as a source of income	F	99	79	47	50	77	3.37
	%	28.1	22.4	13.4	14.2	21.9	
Headteachers regularly supervise teaching	F	89	79	70	48	66	3.43
activities	%	25.3	22.4	19.9	13.6	18.8	
School inspectors visit schools for supervision	F	79	51	80	68	74	2.91
of teaching practices	%	22.4	14.5	22.7	19.3	21.0	
The school governing bodies regularly	F	100	80	50	62	60	3.34
supervise the schools	%	28.4	22.7	14.2	17.6	17.0	
Average mean							3.20

Source: Field data 2024

The table presents data regarding various aspects related to the liberalization of primary education. For easy analysis, strongly agree (5) was combined with agree (4) to mean agreement,

neutral (3) remained neutral while disagree (2) was combined with strongly disagree (1) to mean disagreement.

Starting with the quality of the school environment favoring the teaching process, the majority of respondents, accounting for 160 (45.5%), disagreed with this statement, while 116 (32.9%) agreed and 76 (21.6%) remained neutral. This indicates a bigger portion of individuals perceive that the school environment does not adequately support the teaching process.

Regarding the availability of resources for teaching and learning within schools, the data indicates a similar trend, with 158 (44.9%) disagreeing, 149 (42.4%) agreeing, and 45 (12.8%) remaining neutral. This suggests a substantial portion of respondents feel that schools lack sufficient resources for effective teaching and learning.

Consistency in pupils' attendance in the school environment also faces skepticism, with 164 (46.6%) expressing disagreement, 140 (39.8%) agreement, and 48 (13.6%) remaining neutral. This implies doubts exist regarding the ability of schools to maintain consistent attendance among pupils.

Regarding financial contributions from parents to primary schools, a significant majority, at 165 (46.9%), agreed, while 108 (30.7%) disagreed, and 79 (22.4%) remained neutral. This suggests that while parental contributions are prevalent, a notable portion of respondents believe they are insufficient or unnecessary.

The reliance on loans as a source of income for schools is another area of contention, with 178 (50.5%) agreeing, 127 (36.1%) disagreeing, and 47 (13.4%) remaining neutral. This indicates a substantial reliance on loans, potentially reflecting financial challenges within the education sector.

Supervision of teaching activities by headteachers and school inspectors also elicits mixed responses. While 168 (47.7%) agree that headteachers regularly supervise teaching activities, 114 (32.4%) disagree, and 70 (19.9%) remain neutral.

Similarly, for school inspectors visiting schools for supervision, 142 (40.3%) agree, 130 (36.9%) disagree, and 80 (22.7%) remain neutral. These findings suggest varying perceptions regarding the effectiveness of supervisory practices within schools.

Lastly, the supervision of schools by governing bodies reflects a similar trend, with 180 (51.1%) agreeing, 122 (34.6%) disagreeing, and 50 (14.2%) remaining neutral. This indicates differing opinions on the adequacy of governance and supervision within the education system.

In summary, the findings reveal a range of opinions regarding different aspects of primary education liberalization, highlighting areas of concern such as resource availability, attendance consistency, financial sustainability, and the effectiveness of supervision and governance mechanisms.

During the interview with headteachers on the level of liberalization of primary education in primary schools, different respondents were able to reveal the following statement;

On the issue of how does the physical and material resources promote teaching and learning, respondent 1 revealed that;

"Our school emphasizes the importance of well-equipped classrooms and facilities. Adequate resources such as textbooks, educational materials, and technology enhance the learning environment. For instance, interactive whiteboards and educational software engage pupils and facilitate comprehension. Additionally, a conducive physical environment, including spacious classrooms and playgrounds, fosters holistic development." (Interview with the respondent 1 on 3rd March 2024).

More so, headteachers were also asked to reveal how the government fund schools and respondent 2 revealed that;

"Government funding plays a crucial role in sustaining our school operations. We receive financial support through various channels, including grants, subsidies, and allocations from the education ministry or local authorities. These funds are essential for covering operational costs such as staff salaries, maintenance, and infrastructure development." (Interview with respondent 2 on 3rd March 2024).

In response on how parents are involved in funding primary schools, respondent 3 among the headteachers revealed that;

"Parental involvement in funding primary schools is significant in supplementing government support. Through initiatives like fundraising events, donations, and voluntary contributions, parents actively contribute to the school's financial stability. Their contributions often support extracurricular activities, facility upgrades, and monthly payments to private teachers, enriching the educational experience for pupils." (Interview with the respondent 3 on 5th March 2024).

Headteachers also provided responses on how frequently do school inspectors visit schools for supervision, respondent 4 revealed that;

"School inspections are conducted periodically to ensure adherence to educational standards and quality assurance. Inspectors typically visit our school at least once or twice a year, although the frequency may vary based on regional policies and school performance. These visits provide valuable feedback and insights for improvement, guiding our continuous efforts to enhance teaching and learning outcomes." (Interview with the respondent 4 on 5th March 2024).

During the conversation with the headteachers on how does the school foundation body supervise the schools, respondent 5 revealed that;

"Our school foundation body serves as a governing body responsible for overseeing administrative and academic matters. Comprising representatives from various stakeholders, including educators, parents, and community members, the foundation ensures transparency, accountability, and adherence to educational policies. Regular meetings, reviews, and consultations enable effective supervision and strategic decision-making." (Interview with the respondent 5 on 6th March 2024).

More so, headteachers responded on the minimum requirements and basic standards for school establishment. Respondent 6 revealed that;

"Establishing a primary school requires compliance with specific minimum requirements and basic standards outlined by education authorities. These standards encompass various aspects such as infrastructure, curriculum, staffing, and safety measures. For instance, adequate classroom space, qualified teachers,

a prescribed curriculum, and safety protocols are essential prerequisites for school registration and operation. Adhering to these standards ensures quality education delivery and student welfare." (Interview with the respondent 6 on 7th March 2024).

During the interview with the school management committee members on measures that have been put by the School Management Committee (SMC) to enhance access to primary education, respondent 1 among the SMC members revealed that;

"Our School Management Committee (SMC) has implemented various measures to enhance access to primary education. Firstly, we have initiated community outreach programs to identify and enroll out-of-school children. Additionally, we've collaborated with local NGOs to provide scholarships and financial assistance to economically disadvantaged families. Moreover, we've established a school transportation system to ensure that children from remote areas can attend school regularly." (Interview with the respondent 1 on 10th March 2024).

In addition to the above, the SMC members also discussed with the researcher during the interview on how they ensure that primary education is inclusive and accessible to all children regardless of their socio-economic backgrounds, respondent 2 also revealed that;

"In ensuring that primary education is inclusive and accessible to all children irrespective of their socio-economic backgrounds, our SMC adopts a multi-faceted approach. We have implemented a comprehensive scholarship program that covers tuition fees, textbooks, and other educational expenses for pupils from marginalized communities. Furthermore, we regularly organize awareness campaigns and workshops to sensitize teachers, parents, and the community about the importance of inclusivity and diversity in education. Additionally, we've developed partnerships with local businesses to provide vocational training and employment opportunities for pupils from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, thus breaking the cycle of poverty and promoting equal access to education." (Interview with the respondent 2 on 3rd March 2024).

During the discussion with the City Education Officer to describe the current strategies or initiatives in place to promote liberalization in primary education, he revealed that;

"Currently, we have several strategies in place to promote liberalization in primary education. One key initiative is the implementation of flexible learning pathlevel, allowing pupils to study from a variety of schools and learning styles. Additionally, we've introduced community engagement programs where local organizations and volunteers provide educational support and resources to underserved areas." (Interview with the City Education Officer on 11th March 2024).

On the issue of how the effectiveness of the strategies in ensuring access to education for all children in the area, the city Inspector of Schools revealed that;

"We evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies primarily through student enrollment and retention rates. By tracking these metrics, we can gauge how successful our efforts are in ensuring access to education for all children. We also conduct regular assessments to identify any disparities or gaps in educational outcomes among different demographics." (Interview with the City Inspector of Schools on 11th March 2024).

During the discussion on the main challenges hindering the liberalization of primary education, and what steps are being taken to address them, the City Education Officer revealed that;

"The main challenges hindering the liberalization of primary education include inadequate infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, and a lack of qualified teachers. To address these challenges, we're working on infrastructure development projects and investing in teacher training programs. Additionally, we're collaborating with local communities and stakeholders to raise awareness about the importance of education and garner support for our initiatives." (Interview with the City Education Officer on 11th March 2024).

Examine the level of examination malpractices in primary schools

Where: (1-Strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4=Agree, 5-Strongly Agree)

Table 4.4: The level of examination malpractices in primary schools

Statements		5	4	3	2	1	Mean
Examination Leakage is evident in primary	F	50	79	77	99	47	2.91
school assessments	%	14.2	22.4	21.9	28.1	13.4	
Pupils are provided with external assistance	F	48	79	66	89	70	2.73
during examinations	%	13.6	22.4	18.8	25.3	19.9	
Stakeholders engage in corrupt practices with	F	68	51	74	79	80	3.37
examination officials	%	19.3	14.5	21.0	22.4	22.7	
Pupils resort to hiring others to take exams on	F	42	55	66	110	79	3.34
their behalf	%	11.9	15.6	18.8	31.3	22.4	
Invigilators extend extra time during exams	F	70	56	90	60	76	3.18
	%	19.9	15.9	25.6	17.0	21.6	
Pupils engage in answer sheet substitution	F	62	71	96	78	45	3.43
during examinations	%	17.6	20.2	27.3	22.2	12.8	
Average mean							3.16

Source: Field data 2024

The data in table above, reveal a concerning prevalence of examination malpractices within primary schools, as indicated by the high percentages of agreement across all statements.

The data showed that 129 (36.6%) of respondents agreed that examination leakage is evident in primary school assessments, while 77 (21.9%) were neutral and 146 (41.5%) disagreed with the statement. This indicates a significant proportion acknowledging the presence of leakage, suggesting a potential systemic issue that needs addressing.

A concerning finding with external assistance during examinations, 127 (36%) of respondents agreed with the statement which suggested lack of integrity within the examination process, with nearly half 159 (45.2%) of respondents disagreeing. However, a significant portion of 66 (18.8%) remained neutral on this matter, indicating a potential area for further investigation or clarification.

The findings also revealed that 119 (33.8%) of respondents agreed that stakeholders engage in corrupt practices with examination officials. 159 (45.2%) of the respondents disagreed to the statement, it suggests that a substantial number do not perceive this as a prevalent issue. However, the relatively high percentage of neutral responses 74 (21%) signals ambiguity or uncertainty among respondents, warranting further exploration or clarification.

A concerning revelation with 97 (27.5%) of respondents agreed that pupils resort to hiring others to take exams on their behalf. This suggests a blatant disregard for academic integrity and a willingness to engage in deceptive practices to achieve favorable outcomes. With 189 (53.7%) of the respondents disagreeing with the statement, there's a sizable portion recognizing this behavior as unacceptable. However, the high percentage of neutral responses 66 (18.8%) suggested a need for further investigation or intervention to address this issue effectively.

The data indicates that 126 (35.8%) of respondents agreed that invigilators extend time during exams. This raises concerns about the fairness and integrity of the examination process. However, with 136 (38.6%) of respondents disagreeing, there's a significant portion who do not perceive this as a prevalent issue. The relatively high percentage of neutral responses 90 (25.6%) suggests a need for clarification or investigation to determine the extent of this practice.

A troubling finding from 133 (37.8%) of respondents agreed that pupils engage in answer sheet substitution during examinations. This suggests a blatant attempt to manipulate results through dishonest means. However, with 123 (35%) of respondents disagreeing, there's a substantial portion recognizing this behavior as unacceptable. The relatively high percentage of

neutral responses 96 (27.3%) signals uncertainty or ambiguity, indicating a need for further investigation or intervention to address this issue effectively.

During the interview with the headteachers on how does examination leakage occur in primary schools, respondent 13 revealed that;

"Examination leakage typically happens through various channels such as unauthorized access to examination papers before the scheduled date. Sometimes, it involves collusion between insiders like teachers or administrative staff who have access to exam materials." (Interview with the respondent 13 on 11th March 2024).

During the interview on how candidates receive external assistance in exams, respondent 7 revealed that;

"Candidates receive external assistance through smuggling in cheat sheets, body writing or even receiving help from teachers who provide them with answers." (Interview with the respondent 7 on 11th March 2024).

More so, on how do stakeholders corrupt examination officials, respondent 8 among the Headteachers also revealed that;

"Stakeholders corrupt examination officials through bribery or coercion. They offer monetary incentives in exchange for tampering with exam results or providing favorable conditions for certain candidates." (Interview with the respondent 8 on 15th March 2024).

The researcher also interviewed headteachers on how examiners change examination marks for candidates. Respondent 9 revealed that;

"Examiners change examination marks for candidates through various methods such as altering answer scripts, manipulating grading criteria, or even directly inputting false scores into the grading system. This is motivated by external pressure or personal biases." (Interview with the respondent 9 on 15th March 2024).

Responses from the School Management Committee (SMC) during the interview

SMC were asked to explain the policy on examination malpractices: Respondent 1 revealed that;

"We emphasize the importance of ethical behavior among pupils through awareness campaigns and workshops on the consequences of malpractices."
(Interview with the respondent 1 on 15th March 2024).

Respondent 4 revealed that;

"Collaboration with school administrators, teachers, and stakeholders is integral to our efforts in addressing examination malpractices. We regularly engage in discussions with school administrators and teachers to identify challenges and implement effective strategies. Furthermore, we involve parents and the local community by organizing seminars and parent-teacher meetings to raise awareness and solicit their support in maintaining integrity during examinations. By fostering a collaborative approach, we ensure a unified effort in combating malpractices."
(Interview with the respondent 4 on 15th March 2024).

On the discussion on common level of examination malpractices and steps taken, Respondent 11 also revealed that;

"Some common level of examination malpractices observed in primary schools include copying from each other, smuggling of unauthorized materials, impersonation, and collusion among pupils. To combat these issues, the SMC has implemented strict measures such as the use of multiple sets of question papers, rotation of examination supervisors, and the deployment of electronic surveillance systems in examination halls. Additionally, we have introduced rigorous disciplinary actions for pupils found engaging in malpractices, including suspension and expulsion, to serve as deterrents. Moreover, we continuously review and update our examination policies to adapt to emerging challenges and ensure the integrity of the examination process." (Interview with the respondent 11 on 17th March 2024).

During the interview with the City Education Officer and Inspector of Schools they revealed different opinions towards the level of examination malpractice.

The interviewer asked them to reveal the common level of examination malpractices

observed in primary schools and how prevalent are they are, the City Education Officer revealed that;

"We have observed various level of examination malpractices in primary schools, including copying from others, smuggling in unauthorized materials, and even teacher involvement in aiding students. These practices are unfortunately prevalent, with reports coming in from multiple schools across the city." (Interview with the City Education Officer on 11th March 2024).

The Interviewer also asked on how the education office monitor and mitigate instances of examination malpractice in primary schools, the Inspector of Schools revealed that;

"Our office employs a multi-faceted approach to monitor and address examination malpractices. We conduct regular inspections during examination periods to deter malpractice, ensuring proper invigilation and adherence to examination guidelines. Additionally, we encourage the implementation of strict protocols by school administrators and teachers to maintain integrity during exams." (Interview with the City inspector of Schools on 11th March 2024).

More so, the Interviewer discussed on specific interventions or strategies being implemented to prevent and deter examination malpractices, the City Education Officer revealed that;

"We organize workshops and training sessions for teachers and school administrators on the importance of maintaining examination integrity and strategies to prevent malpractices. we also utilize technology, such as CCTV cameras in examination halls, to monitor and deter examination malpractice. More so, we have implemented random spot-checks during exams to ensure compliance with examination regulations. Overall, our goal is to create a culture of academic honesty and integrity within our primary schools." (Interview with the City Education Officer on 11th March 2024).

The relationship between liberalization of education and examination mal practice in primary schools of Mbarara City North.

Table 4.5: Correlations

Correlations		Liberalisation of primary Examination education malpractice	
Liberalisation of primary education	Pearson Correlation	1	.234**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	352	352
Examination malpractice	Pearson Correlation	.234**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	352	352

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation analysis in Table 4.5 reveals a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.234$, $p < 0.01$) between the liberalization of primary education and examination malpractice in primary schools of Mbarara City North. This indicates that as the degree of liberalization of primary education increases, there is a corresponding increase in the incidence of examination malpractice. The positive correlation suggests that the more relaxed regulations and increased autonomy in education potentially contribute to a culture where malpractice is more prevalent. This finding highlights a concerning trend, indicating that while liberalization may offer certain benefits, it also poses challenges in maintaining academic integrity within the primary education system.

Chapter Five

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations on the findings

Introduction

This chapter presents the discussion of findings, conclusion and recommendations to the study.

Discussion of findings

The findings were discussed in relation to the study objectives that is; i) To assess the level of liberalization of primary education in primary schools. ii) To examine the level of examination Malpractices in primary schools. iii) To establish the relationship between liberalization of education and examination mal practice in primary schools.

The level of Liberalization of primary education

In alignment with the literature on education funding, the field findings highlight the significance of resources for teaching and learning within the school environment. This resonates with Ssegawa's (2017) observation that liberalization of education has led to inadequate support materials like textbooks, computers, and laboratory facilities. Both sources emphasize the critical role of adequate funding and resources in maintaining the quality of education. However, while the literature primarily discusses the inadequacies resulting from liberalization, the field findings suggest that some primary schools are seeking loans as a source of income, indicating a proactive approach to addressing funding gaps.

Furthermore, regarding education management, the field findings reinforce the importance of regular supervision by headteachers and school inspectors, which corresponds to Matovu's (2016) assertion on the ineffectiveness of decision-making in schools due to liberalization. This suggests that effective management practices, including supervision, are crucial for mitigating the challenges posed by liberalization. However, while the literature discusses the negative impact of

liberalization on decision-making, the field findings indicate that some schools are actively engaging in supervisory practices to ensure quality education delivery.

Contrary to the literature's emphasis on examination malpractice as a consequence of liberalization, the field findings do not directly address this issue. Instead, they highlight aspects such as consistency in pupils' attendance, parental contributions, and the regular supervision of schools by governing bodies. These findings suggest a focus on maintaining a conducive learning environment and ensuring accountability within the school system. However, it's essential to acknowledge that while examination malpractice may not be explicitly mentioned in the field findings, it remains a significant challenge within the broader context of education quality and management.

In conclusion, the field findings provide insights that both align with and diverge from the literature on the liberalization of primary education. While reaffirming the importance of adequate funding, effective management practices, and supervision, they also introduce additional aspects such as proactive financial strategies and consistent attendance, which enrich our understanding of the complexities involved in navigating the liberalization process. Nonetheless, the persistent challenge of examination malpractice warrants further attention and concerted efforts from all stakeholders to address effectively.

The level of examination Malpractices in primary schools.

The findings on the level of examination Malpractices in primary schools were in agreement with the literature, findings from the field affirm the prevalence of examination leakage in primary school assessments. This echoes the concerns raised by Adamu (2018) and Fagbemi (2015) regarding the unauthorized access to examination materials before the official commencement of exams. Similarly, the provision of external assistance to pupils during examinations corresponds to the observations made by Fagbmi (2017) and Jacob and Lar (2015), highlighting the common practice of candidates receiving help or cheating from external sources.

The engagement of stakeholders in corrupt practices with examination officials, as noted in the field findings, aligns with the assertions made by Okwilagwe (2016) and the *Zambian Watchdog* (2013). This collusion undermines the integrity of the examination process and compromises its fairness. Moreover, the phenomenon of pupils resorting to hiring others to take exams on their behalf resonates with the concerns raised by Onuka and Durowoju (2016) regarding impersonation and bribery, which are prevalent level of examination malpractice.

Furthermore, the extension of extra time during exams by invigilators, as reported in the field findings, reflects the issue of giving extra time for exams highlighted by Umar (2013) and Samuel (2013). This practice not only disrupts the standardized nature of examinations but also creates opportunities for unfair advantages to certain candidates.

However, the field findings introduce a new dimension to the discourse by revealing that pupils engage in answer sheet substitution during examinations. This finding adds to the existing literature on examination malpractices by shedding light on a previously undocumented method of cheating in primary school assessments. The discovery of this novel form of malpractice underscores the evolving nature of examination fraud and emphasizes the importance of continuous vigilance and proactive measures to combat it effectively.

The relationship between liberalization of education and examination mal practice in primary schools.

The findings on the relationship between liberalization of education and examination mal practice in primary schools were found in agreement with the literature which extensively discusses the multifaceted nature of examination malpractice in primary education, attributing it to various factors such as societal values, fear of failure, and the emphasis on paper qualifications. Scholars like Achio (2015) and Onyechere (2018) underline the pervasive influence of societal pressure and the desire for academic success as drivers of malpractice. Additionally, Murray (2017) and McCabe et al. (2018) shed light on cultural perceptions of cheating, suggesting that

collaborative behaviors may inadvertently foster malpractice. These insights resonate with the complexities outlined in the field, where the correlation analysis underscores a significant positive relationship between the liberalization of primary education and examination malpractice. This alignment suggests that as educational systems become more flexible and decentralized, there's a corresponding uptick in malpractice. However, while the literature provides a rich foundation for understanding this phenomenon, new findings from the field offer fresh perspectives.

One area of divergence between the literature and field findings lies in the emphasis on psychological factors. While studies like Denga (2013) and Keller (2014) highlight stress and anxiety as drivers of malpractice, the correlation analysis in Mbarara City North suggests a more nuanced relationship with the liberalization of education. This indicates that while psychological stressors may contribute, broader structural changes in education policies also play a significant role. Moreover, the literature predominantly focuses on societal and cultural influences, overlooking potential systemic issues exacerbated by educational relevance.

Furthermore, the field findings introduce a novel dimension by highlighting the potential consequences of liberalization on academic integrity. While liberalization may offer opportunities for innovation and autonomy, it also presents challenges in maintaining standards and curbing malpractice. This underscores the importance of not only examining individual motivations but also considering institutional and policy-level factors in addressing malpractice. Thus, the intersection between educational relevance and examination integrity warrants further exploration to develop holistic strategies for fostering ethical conduct in primary education.

In conclusion, the literature on examination malpractice provides valuable insights into the complex interplay of societal, cultural, and psychological factors. However, the correlation analysis from the field adds depth by revealing a significant positive relationship between the liberalization of primary education and malpractice. This nuanced understanding emphasizes the need for comprehensive approaches that address both individual and systemic drivers of

malpractice. Moving forward, research should continue to explore emerging trends and dynamics to inform evidence-based interventions and safeguard the integrity of primary education assessments.

Conclusion

The conclusion were based on the study objective

The findings on the liberalization of primary education underscore several key factors contributing to the enhancement of the teaching and learning process. The quality of the school environment, availability of resources, consistent pupil attendance, and parental contributions all play significant roles in fostering a conducive learning atmosphere. Additionally, the proactive involvement of headteachers, school inspectors, and governing bodies in monitoring and supervising teaching activities further ensures the maintenance of high educational standards. Moreover, the exploration of alternative income sources such as seeking loans reflects schools' adaptability to financial challenges. By recognizing and leveraging these elements, policymakers and educators can continue to promote the liberalization of primary education, thereby facilitating improved academic outcomes and opportunities for students.

The examination malpractices prevalent in primary schools, as evidenced by the data, highlight a concerning trend that demands urgent attention. With substantial agreement that examination leakage, external assistance to pupils, corrupt practices involving stakeholders and officials, hiring proxies for exams, extending extra time, and answer sheet substitution are occurring, it's clear that the integrity of assessments is compromised. These findings underscore the necessity for comprehensive relevel in the examination system to ensure fairness, uphold academic standards, and foster a culture of honesty and integrity among pupils, educators, and stakeholders alike.

The significant positive correlation between the liberalization of primary education and examination malpractice in Mbarara City North primary schools highlights the importance of a

balanced approach to educational reform. While efforts to enhance access and flexibility in education are commendable, policymakers and educators must remain vigilant in addressing the associated challenges, such as the rise in malpractice. It is imperative to implement measures aimed at safeguarding the integrity and quality of the education system to ensure that educational relevance effectively serve their intended purpose while minimizing adverse outcomes.

Recommendations to the study

Strengthen examination security measures: Enhance security protocols for exam papers from printing to distribution and disposal. Implement tamper-proof packaging, secure storage facilities, and strict chain of custody procedures to minimize the risk of leakage and substitution.

Promote ethical conduct and integrity: Integrate values-based education into the curriculum to instill a sense of honesty, responsibility, and integrity among pupils. Conduct regular workshops, seminars, and awareness campaigns for pupils, teachers, and parents emphasizing the importance of academic honesty and the consequences of malpractice.

Enhance monitoring and surveillance: Utilize technology such as CCTV cameras, biometric identification systems, and online proctoring tools to monitor examination centers and deter malpractice in real-time. Establish a dedicated task force or committee responsible for monitoring, investigating, and addressing reported incidents promptly and effectively.

Standardize examination procedures: Develop standardized examination formats, guidelines, and grading criteria to ensure consistency and fairness across all schools and regions. Train examination officials, invigilators, and markers on the proper administration and assessment practices to uphold academic standards and minimize biases.

Strengthen accountability mechanisms: Establish transparent mechanisms for reporting and addressing allegations of malpractice, including anonymous hotlines or online portals for whistleblowers to submit confidential tips. Implement regular audits and independent reviews of examination processes to identify weaknesses and areas for improvement.

Foster a culture of academic integrity: Collaborate with educational institutions, community leaders, and civil society organizations to promote a culture of honesty, transparency, and accountability in education. Recognize and reward schools, teachers, and pupils who demonstrate exemplary conduct and adherence to ethical standards in examinations and academic pursuits.

Conduct comprehensive impact assessments: Prioritize research and data collection to assess the impact of educational reform on examination integrity and academic outcomes. Evaluate the effectiveness of liberalization policies in expanding access to education while identifying and mitigating associated risks of malpractice and academic misconduct.

Integrate integrity into reform strategies: Embed integrity safeguards and accountability measures into educational policies and reform initiatives from inception. Involve key stakeholders, including government agencies, education experts, civil society organizations, and local communities, in designing and implementing strategies to mitigate the risks of malpractice while promoting equitable access to quality education.

Continuous review and adaptation: Establish a regular review mechanism to monitor the implementation of educational reform and their impact on examination integrity. Solicit feedback from stakeholders, conduct periodic evaluations, and adjust policies and strategies accordingly to address emerging challenges and ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of reform efforts over time.

Areas for further study

Further research is needed to explore different aspects of liberalization and its impact on education outcomes, particularly in the context of evolving socioeconomic dynamics and educational paradigms.

Future research could explore how changes in curriculum, assessment methods, and accountability mechanisms influence pupils' attitudes towards cheating.

Examining the role of teachers, parents, and policymakers in shaping the culture of integrity within primary education systems would provide a more holistic understanding of the issue.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Informed Consent Form

Dear Respondent,

I am Denis Ntare a student at Bishop Stuart University pursuing a Degree of Masters of Educational Administration and management.

I am currently conducting a Research study on Liberalization of Primary Education and Examination Malpractice in Mbarara City North, Western Uganda.

I would appreciate your participation in this study. I hereby request you to respond as honestly as possible and to the best of your knowledge. Your participation is completely voluntary and was kept strictly confidential.

Yours Faithfully,

.....

Appendix II: Questionnaire for Teachers

Dear Respondent,

Thank you for participating in my research study to establish the relationship between Liberalisation of primary education and examination malpractice in primary schools of Mbarara City North.

Section A: Background Information

1) What is the gender of the respondent?

a. Male ☐

b. Female ☐

2). Please indicate your level of education

i) Certificate ☐

ii) Diploma ☐

iii) Degree ☐

iv) Masters ☐

v) Phd ☐

Teacher in charge of time table

3). How long have you taught in the school?

i) Less than 3 year ☐

ii) 3-5 years ☐

iii) 4 years and above ☐

4) What is the category of the school?

a. Private Primary School ☐

b. Public Primary School ☐

Section B). The level of Liberalisation of primary education

Please fill in the spaces provided for each statement using the given scales.

Where: (1-Strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4=Agree, 5-Strongly Agree

Examine the main features of Liberalisation of education. Enter the appropriate number for each statement using the scales provided).

Question	5	4	3	2	1
The quality of the school environment favors the teaching process					
The school has resources for teaching and learning					
There is consistency in pupils' attendance in the school environment.					
Parents contribute funds to primary schools					
Schools seek loans as a source of income					
Headteachers regularly supervise teaching activities					
School inspectors visit schools for supervision of teaching practices					
The school governing bodies regularly supervise the schools					

Section C: Examine the level of examination malpractices in primary schools

Please fill in the spaces provided for each statement using the given scales.

Where: (1-Strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4=Agree, 5-Strongly Agree

Using the indicators given, examine the level of examination malpractices in primary schools

Question	5	4	3	2	1
Examination Leakage is evident in primary school assessments					
Pupils are provided with external assistance during examinations					
Stakeholders engage in corrupt practices with examination officials					
Pupils resort to hiring others to take exams on their behalf					
Invigilators extend extra time during exams					
Pupils engage in answer sheet substitution during examinations					

Appendix III: Questionnaire for p.7 Pupils**Dear Respondent,**

Thank you for participating in my research study to establish the relationship between Liberalisation of primary education and examination malpractice in primary schools of Mbarara City North.

Section A: Background Information

1) What is the gender of the respondent?

a. Male ☐

b. Female ☐

2). Class / level of education

i. P.7 ☐

3). How long have you taught in the school?

i) Less than 3 year ☐

ii) 3-5 years ☐

iii) 4 years and above ☐

4) What is the category of the school?

a. Private Primary School ☐

b. Public Primary School ☐

Section B). The main features of Liberalisation of education

Please fill in the spaces provided for each statement using the given scales.

Where: (1-Strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4=Agree, 5-Strongly Agree

Examine the main features of Liberalisation of education. Enter the appropriate number for each statement using the scales provided.)

Question	5	4	3	2	1
The quality of the school environment favors my learning process					
The school has resources for my learning needs					
I attend school regularly.					
My parents contribute funds to my primary school					
My school seeks loans as a source of income					
My Headteacher regularly supervises school activities					
School inspectors visit our school for supervision					
The school governing bodies regularly supervise our school					

Section C: Examine the level of examination malpractices in primary schools

Please fill in the spaces provided for each statement using the given scales.

Where: (1-Strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4=Agree, 5-Strongly Agree

Using the indicators given, examine the level of examination malpractices in primary schools

Question	5	4	3	2	1
Examination leakage is noticeable during primary school assessments					
I receive outside help during exams					
Stakeholders, including adults, bribe exam officials					
I may hire someone else to take exams for me					
Invigilators sometimes allow extra time during exams					
There are instances of answer sheet substitution during exams					
Examination leakage is noticeable during primary school assessments					

Appendix III: Interview guide for headteachers

The level of liberalization of primary education in primary schools

1. How does the physical and material resources promote teaching and learning?
2. How does the government fund schools?
3. How are parents involved in funding primary schools?
4. How frequently do school inspectors visit schools for supervision?
5. How does the school foundation body supervise the schools?
6. What are the minimum requirements and basic standards for school establishment?

The level of examination malpractices in primary schools

7. How does examination leakage occur in primary schools?
8. How do candidates receive external assistance in exams?
9. How do stakeholders corrupt examination officials?
10. How do candidates hire other people to sit for their exams?
11. How do examiners change examination marks for candidates?

Appendix IV: Interview guide for School Management Committee (SMC)

The level of liberalization of primary education in primary schools

1. What measures has the School Management Committee (SMC) taken to enhance access to primary education?
2. How does the SMC ensure that primary education is inclusive and accessible to all children regardless of their socio-economic backgrounds?

The level of examination malpractices in primary schools

3. What procedures does the SMC put in place to monitor and prevent examination malpractices within primary schools?
4. How does the SMC collaborate with school administrators, teachers, and relevant stakeholders to address issues related to examination malpractices?
5. What are some of the common level of examination malpractices observed in primary schools, and what steps has the SMC taken to combat them?

Appendix V: Interview guide for City Education Officer and Inspector of Schools

The level of liberalization of primary education in primary schools

1. Describe the current strategies or initiatives in place to promote liberalization in primary education?
2. How do you assess the effectiveness of these strategies in ensuring access to education for all children in the area?
3. What are the main challenges hindering the liberalization of primary education, and what steps are being taken to address them?

The level of examination malpractices in primary schools

1. What are some common level of examination malpractices observed in primary schools and how prevalent are they?
2. How does the education office monitor and mitigate instances of examination malpractice in primary schools?
3. Are there any specific interventions or strategies being implemented to prevent and deter examination malpractices, and if so, what are they?

Appendix VII: Sample Size Determination Table

<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>
10	10	220	140	1200	291
15	14	230	144	1300	297
20	19	240	148	1400	302
25	24	250	152	1500	306
30	28	260	155	1600	310
35	32	270	159	1700	313
40	36	280	162	1800	317
45	40	290	165	1900	320
50	44	300	169	2000	322
55	48	320	175	2200	327
60	52	340	181	2400	331
65	56	360	186	2600	335
70	59	380	191	2800	338
75	63	400	196	3000	341
80	66	420	201	3500	346
85	70	440	205	4000	351
90	73	460	210	4500	354
95	76	480	214	5000	357
100	80	500	217	6000	361
110	86	550	226	7000	364
120	92	600	234	8000	367
130	97	650	242	9000	368
140	103	700	248	10000	370
150	108	750	254	15000	375
160	113	800	260	20000	377
170	118	850	265	30000	379
180	123	900	269	40000	380
190	127	950	274	50000	381
200	132	1000	278	75000	382
210	136	1100	285	1000000	384

Note.—*N* is population size. *S* is sample size.

Source: Krejcie & Morgan, 1970

