THE INFLUENCE OF HIGH STAKE EXAMINATIONS ON IRREGULARITIES AND MALPRACTICES: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

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Malpractices and irregularities in High Stakes examinations have become a common place in the day-to-day talk in Tanzania and elsewhere. This paper sets off in the introduction by defining important terms that frequently appear in the presentation, such as equity in education, High Stakes examinations, and malpractices and irregularities. The aim of this paper is to highlight and present some of the possible reasons that could explain the influence of High Stakes examination on irregularities and malpractices. The paper tries to elucidate how these irregularities and malpractices come about and the possible culprits. Finally it ends with a short reminder of the ‘backwash’ effects of examinations and concludes that ‘backwash effects’ of examinations is the root cause of examination Malpractices and irregularities.
THE INFLUENCE OF HIGH STAKE EXAMINATIONS
ON EXAMINATION IRREGULARITIES:
THE KENYAN EXPERIENCE

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Characteristics of public/national examination systems are well known and well documented. They are described as “fiercely competitive”. The very competitive nature of the public examinations has lead to candidates, schools head teachers, teachers and other stakeholder to engage in unfair practices to enhance their scores during public examinations.

This paper outlines how the purpose of high stake examinations influences the prevalence of examination irregularities in the Kenyan context. The paper then outlines the high stake examination in Kenya and explains how and why such examinations are considered as high stake examinations. The paper goes further to discuss some practices in these high stake examinations that make them susceptible to examination irregularities.

The paper explores the linkage between examination irregularities and what may be described "high stake subjects" by first explaining why some subject could be described as "high stake subjects". Further to this, the paper examines the possibility of how a testing style could lent itself prone to examination irregularities particularly in science practical subjects.

Finally the paper ties all the issues raised in the paper together and makes some recommendations and suggestions on the way forward.
Since all irregularities, including fraudulent certification, have a devastating impact on public confidence in local public examinations, it is vital, that over and above the application of detailed policy, the use of new technologies and information systems should be instrumental in minimizing and even preventing this menace from undermining the credibility of examination authorities.

Examination computer systems should be designed in such a way that it not only supports the administration of examinations, but that it also becomes instrumental as a verification and validation system.

In the South African context, Phambili Information Technologies plays a vital role, as the main service provider of a computerized system for the conduct of public and tertiary examinations. This includes the development and supply of new technologies and/or systems to ensure the credibility of examinations. Some of these technologies are part and parcel of our mainframe systems design, others could form part of new fourth generation applications, such as Biometrics, Internet, and others.

We hope to enlighten you more during the conference!
THE USE OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND THEIR EFFECT IN EXAMINATION IRREGULARITIES
THE KENYAN PERSPECTIVE

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Initially this paper takes a brief look at the Rules, Regulations and Penalties relating to examinations in general.

A further consideration is the outline of the various stages of the National Examinations processes, from the candidates’ registration stage to the final issuing of certificates. In the paper, possible irregularities at each stage are highlighted, while the positive and negative uses of new technologies are discussed.
THE USE OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND THEIR EFFECT IN EXAMINATIONS IRREGULARITIES

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The use of new technologies in the management and administration of examinations in developed countries has been going on for a long time. The employment of such new technologies in examinations management and administration is part and parcel of the strides achieved in the field of science and technology in those countries. In developing countries such technologies have been similarly adopted in varying degrees in various stages of Examinations administration. The aim of employing these new technologies is to streamline the procedures and processes of examinations management and administration.

Examination results in different countries are used for different purposes including selection for further education, employment and even promotion. Normally successful candidates are awarded certificates which depict their academic performance in their final Examinations. In their efforts to obtain high grades candidates find themselves in a cutthroat competition. In this regard, some candidates, parents and business people are notorious perpetrators of examination irregularities, a habit whose net effect is to degrade and negate educational standards nationally and internationally. Hence Examination Boards worldwide are continually working hard to come to grips with this unbecoming phenomenon in every examination season.

Since the ultimate aim of the perpetrators of the examinations irregularities and their accomplices is to secure certificates which display better grades in examination performance, examination papers and certificates become “endangered species” which should be guarded at all costs. The perpetrators of “foul play” in examinations employ some of the new technologies, which are available in our country to achieve their ends.
This paper discusses irregularities commonly associated with formal examinations during and after the examinations process. The magnitude of the vice in Kenya and the mechanisms employed in cheating are highlighted. The paper also looks at some of the reasons why cheating in examinations takes place and recommends possible measures that may be taken to curb the vice. The paper is based on research from media coverage on the release of examinations results of Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) and Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examinations and the findings of the report of the Committee appointed by the Minister of Education to investigate examination irregularities in the 2000 KCSE examinations. Reference to the findings of the Egerton University Vice Chancellor’s Committee on Irregular Admissions into the university’s Diploma Programmes between 1998 and 2000 has also been made.
The issue of examination irregularities is not a new phenomenon. Many Examination Authorities worldwide have experienced it. The incidences of irregularities are attributable to a number of factors among which are deliberate theft and breaches of confidentiality.

It is also widely recognized that when examination irregularities occur they often result in lessening of public faith in examination, lowering the credibility and reputation of the examination authority and adding substantial amounts of operational costs to public expenditure in cases where the irregularities become so rampant that the examination has to be nullified and arrangements for a re-sit devised. Ironically when breaches are detected, they lead to increased vigilance on the part of the authority.

In 1998 Tanzania experienced the most serious leaks ever which resulted into the nullification and re-sit of the Certificate of Secondary Education Examination (CSEE).

The purpose of this paper is to examine the issue pertaining to steps, which were taken by The National Examinations Council of Tanzania (NECTA) in its efforts to prevent further leakages and other forms of irregularities. In doing so, the paper follows sub-theme 3: Experience of Examination Authorities in Controlling Examination irregularities.
EXPERIENCE OF THE EXAMINATION AUTHORITIES IN CONTROLLING EXAMINATION IRREGULARITIES.

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The National Examinations Council of Tanzania (NECTA) like other Examination Authorities in Africa has experienced examination irregularities like leakage of examinations, forgeries of examination results, impersonation and other examination malpractices. There are many causes of examination irregularities such as improper registration, poor teaching, stiff competition in selection of candidates who joins the next level of Education and the need for good results in order to be socially accepted and or compete for scarce places in higher education.

The National Examination Council of Tanzania established by an Act of Parliament in 1973 with the objectives of conducting examinations within the United Republic of Tanzania and issuing certificates, Diplomas etc, has been trying to control these irregularities, which if left uncontrolled will have adverse repercussions on the Nation’s certification function.

This paper discusses the experience of NECTA in controlling examination irregularities, examples of leakages and how they were dealt with. Other issues dealt with are pointing out agents of examination leakages, weakness and hindrances of NECTA’s success in controlling examination irregularities. Finally, suggests some ways and means of combating examination irregularities.
CONTROLLING EXAMINATION MALPRACTICES:
MANEB’S EXPERIENCE

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MALAWI NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS BOARD

Of late examination malpractices in Malawi have not only been of the increase but have also become sophisticated and nasty. Every year the Malawi National Examination Board (MANEB) has had to deal with cases of unscrupulous school administrators, teachers, parents and students involved in examination fraud. Large numbers of students have had their results nullified and some heads of schools and teachers have been taken to court or have lost their jobs for promoting or getting directly involved in cheating. Some schools have had results to all their candidates nullified and the schools themselves deregistered.

The two major challenges have been leakages of ‘live’ question papers and school based cheating. The problem of leakages reached its climax in the 2000 Malawi School Certificate of Education [MSCE] examination when one private school opened examination envelopes and leaked the questions to candidates, and even went on to sell the papers to the public. The government responded by cancelling the whole examination and ordering MANEB to re-do the entire process of developing and administering the examination. This was not only costly to government but also had a devastating effect on the entire school calendar. Furthermore MANEB’s reputation as a credible examining authority was negatively affected.

In response to the escalating incidence of these malpractices MANEB, in collaboration with other concerned stakeholders like the police, the Anti-Corruption Bureau and the parent Ministry of Education, Science and Technology has put in place stringent measures to deal with the problem to the extent that
in the 2001 MSCE examinations there were also no leakages. However, the problem of the school based cheating remains unabated. Another problem that has emerged is the laundering of fake certificates. Here again the Board has put in place measures to ensure maximum security of all certificates it awards.

Since some of these cheats may cross the borders in search of various opportunities using fake certificates, there is need for regional collaboration to deal with the problem. On its part MANEB has established a Security Department to spearhead the battle against cheating in examinations.
Kenya National Examinations Council, like any examination Board in Africa has experienced cases of examination irregularities and malpractices at Primary, Secondary and Post Secondary Education Levels. Examination irregularities have occurred in the form of cheating by candidates and some of the managers and administrators of public examinations. Some examination irregularities have occurred at the Test Development or at the Examination Administration stages where deliberately or otherwise those involved have failed to observe the laid down regulations and procedures governing the management, administration and conduct of examinations including handling of examination materials. The more control efforts are applied by the managers and administrators of public examinations, the more unexpected and complex forms of irregularities arise or are designed and executed by the candidates and those involved. This has not been confined to Primary and Secondary Education Level only, but of late, incidents of cheating and malpractices have crept into the Post Schools Education Level.

This paper highlights the experiences that the public examination managers and administrators have undergone in their efforts to come to terms with the cause and effects of all forms of examination irregularities.

The trends of examination malpractices have been recorded and discussed at various fora in order to find means of containing the situation.

The paper will address price which, we at the Council and the other parties concerned have had to pay for the examination irregularities in terms of:

- Legal tussle involvement, financial drain and loss of credibility.
- Mental anguish, loss of time and money on the part of the candidates involved and their parents, spouses or sponsors.
- Interdiction or dismissal or both interdiction and dismissal on the part of supervisors/invigilators of examinations, teachers and heads of schools and institutions.
- Loss of confidence in the holders of certificates issued for those examinations where such irregularities have been reported.

The Ministry of Education through the Inspectorate of Schools and Technical Training are supplementing the efforts of Kenya National Examinations Council by openly talking to Heads of Schools and Technical Training Institutions about the demerits of getting involved in examination irregularities/malpractices.
Examination irregularities and malpractices have tended to increase in scope and supplication in recent years. Therefore examination authorities need to be very vigilant and proactive in the fight against this menace.

This paper attempts to highlight some of the types of malpractices and irregularities that have been identified by ZIMSEC during the seven years of its existence including the previous years when it was part of the Ministry of Education.

The irregularities are presented in the following broad headings: -

(a) those that are a result of candidates themselves in trying to beat the system to gain advantage;

(b) those that relate to lack of alertness and to laxity on the part of centre supervisors in their management of public examinations and, and very importantly;

(c) those concerning the absence of poor facilities for storage of examination question papers before the examinations are written.

Finally the paper attempts to offer recommendations on how to prevent the occurrence of these irregularities. It also explains what steps have been taken to minimise the occurrence of these irregularities and cases of malpractice.
CONTROLLING EXAMINATION IRREGULARITIES: THE EXPERIENCE OF THE WEST AFRICAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL IN NIGERIA

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The West Examinations Council in Nigeria

Examination irregularities have created such intimidation that the maintenance of standards, validity and reliability of examination procedures, and certification have been undermined leading to loss of confidence in such examination.

The paper focuses on the primary and secondary causes of examination irregularities, types of irregularities; before, during and after the examination. It presents efforts being made by the West African Examinations Council in Nigeria, government and non-governmental organisations, at sensitizing stakeholders in education on the evil of examination malpractices. The various anti-examination malpractice strategies and sanctions for various forms of examination irregularities are presented.

The paper makes fundamental recommendations at stemming the canker worm destroying the very foundation of Nigeria’s education system, some of which include the need to provide conducive environment and facilities for both teaching and learning, provision of adequate number of qualified and well motivated teachers, and the need for reorientation of the moral values of the youth and society.
IRREGULARITIES IN EXAMINATION FOR ADULTS IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Gregory J.Cizek says” As long as there have been tests, there has been cheating. The phenomenon of cheating has been limited mainly to test takers. The problem of cheating has however spread from the examinees to the examiners.”

Examination bodies therefore need to plan and set up clear guidelines and rules with regards to assessment to limit if not eliminate the incidences of these malpractices, for example: Strongly worded codes of ethics which explicitly define the responsibilities and boundaries associated with examinations.

In this paper we will describe our experiences with regards to the exit point examination in Adult Basic Education and Training for the General Education and Training Certificate (GETC) in South Africa. We will highlight the measures put in place to combat irregularities, the incidences of irregularities and how this was dealt with as well as what we have learnt from it.
Examinations are very useful tools for monitoring systems of education and indeed are an integral part of any system of education. When properly used examinations serve as great motivation for learning. But when the system of education becomes examinations driven, the educational objectives may not be achieved. Unfortunately the essence of education in member countries of West African Examinations Council (WAEC) as been narrowed down to passing examinations. Students and even parents and teachers perceive examinations as ‘do and die’ affair. They are ready to do anything fair or foul to ensure success in their examinations. This may be very the underling course of examinations malpractice that WAEC as been persistence confronted with. This paper highlights the various forms of malpractices common in examinations by conducted by WAEC and gives incite into the difficulties WAEC encounters in its resolve to curb to examinations malpractices.
ACADEMIC CHEATING IN PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS IN NIGERIA: AN ANALYSIS OF THE GRADE TWO TEACHERS’ CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

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The major concern of this paper is to discuss the nature and dimensions of examination irregularities in the Teachers’ Grade Two Certificate in Nigeria. It adopts Cizek’s (1999) classification of academic cheating and critically examines the adequacy and utility of theories which conceptualise examination irregularities as Deviant behaviour that can be explained in psychological terms with little reference to the wider political economy of the various nations in which academic cheating has become a serious problem.

The paper’s major claim is that while such theories do provide useful insights on academic cheating, they have failed to provide an adequate theoretical framework that can unveil the deeper underlying causes of the problem.
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CURRICULUM DELIVERY AND EXAMINATIONS IRREGULARITIES

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Curriculum is central to other educational processes including examinations. It is through the curriculum that the country’s philosophy; educational goals and objectives are translated into practice. Assessment is a process of finding out if the country’s philosophy and therefore the goals and objectives of education have been realized. Usually examinations are used as tools for assessing the achievement of the educational goals and objectives.

The relationship between curriculum delivery and examinations cannot be overemphasized. One has to assess what has been learnt. What is learnt mainly depends on the interaction between the learner and the curriculum, the teacher, teaching-learning materials and the classroom environment. Thus if examinations are to fulfill their role, they have to be regular in that they take into consideration all these factors and that they fairly measure the anticipated learning outcomes and according to the set rules and practices.

However, examinations have tended to be irregular in that they have not been consistent with the requirements of the curriculum. In reality, they have been mystified and given undue political recognition and emphasis to the extent that they have created fear among learners, teachers and the community. Teachers have opted to teach for the examinations and learners studying them to pass and not as per curriculum. The growing private tuitioning is a response to this
mystification and fear. There is doubt whether there is any learning taking place in schools.

Examination leakages and thefts of examination papers are still reported. Much of the curriculum components have remained unexamined. Stereotyping in examinations has caused some of our universities to lower entry qualifications while the doubt placed on the national examinations has led to the introduction of matriculation examinations so as to countercheck the authenticity of the examination results and certificates. There is some feeling in the community that the examinations offered are not fair and that they do not address the purposes of the type of education to be offered to their children.

As a matter of urgency, some steps need to be taken to redress the poor relationship between the curriculum practice and the long-standing irregularities in the practice of examination provision in the country. One of these steps would involve designing a strategy where final examinations contribute minimally to the assessment of children’s achievement and instead put more emphasis on continuous assessment.
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CURRICULUM DELIVERY AND EXAMINATION IRREGULARITIES: THE TANZANIA EXPERIENCE

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The aim of this paper is to highlight the relationship between the curriculum delivery and examinations irregularities. It outlines the requirements for good delivery of an educational curriculum. The paper focuses on the weaknesses in delivering the curriculum and how they affect candidates’ performance on examinations. Finally, the paper discusses the different forms of assessment irregularities and how they are related to poor curriculum delivery.
Examination irregularities is a grave matter because of its potential threat to education systems and certification, and the values that education stands for.

This paper examines the gravity of the issue of examination irregularities, the types of irregularities, and their possible causes. The paper also highlights problems of curriculum delivery that exert pressure on both learners and their teachers and which, if not carefully managed, could make the parties easily compromised. An attempt has been made to delve into some of the initiatives that are being taken to improve curriculum delivery and thus, hopefully, reduce the urge to engage in examination malpractice.

Right from the outset the authors have cautioned that in the absence of concrete research findings, the causal relationship between curriculum delivery and examination irregularities could only be speculated. They assert that the field is open for comprehensive research the findings of which would help to invite search for curriculum delivery approaches which would stem the growing tendency by candidates to seek short cuts to good grades in their academic certificates.
Examination irregularities have been a major concern of the examination authorities, the Ministry of Education and Culture and the public in general. Once examination irregularities occur, the examination results become of little value because they do not portray the actual achievement of students. This paper discusses the relationship between curriculum delivery and examination irregularities. While there are many reasons that could lead to examination irregularities, the paper focuses on the learning environment and the facilities available for implementation of curriculum. It is argued that when curriculum is delivered in non-conducive environment, the learning objectives can hardly be achieved. However, the examinations are set on the basis of the learning outcomes as stipulated in the curriculum. The examination results are used for selection and certification purposes and, indirectly, for judging the effectiveness of schools. This creates competitions for limited the opportunities for students to advance. Consequently legal and illegal approaches are used to maximize performance in examinations and opportunities. The paper concludes by showing the need to have conducive environment for curriculum delivery so as to reduce the incidences of examination irregularities.
Debt and globalization of the economy have resulted into the increased marginality of the African countries in general, and Tanzania in particular. As a prerequisite to becoming active players on the stage of the global market, all African countries have to accept some kind of socio-economic and political structural adjustment. In the early 1980’s the Tanzania government, apart from crippling socialist experimentation for many years, came to negotiate with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) leading to the adoption of a series of structural adjustment and economic recovery programmes (SAPs).

Since the implementation of the SAPs there has been a growing interest in the way in which adjustment policies affect the poor in African countries, and how these policies could be modified to provide some protection to the poor. What has emerged is that the implementation of these policies involved cuts in government spending, devaluation, globalization and liberalization of the economy and international trade, and at a large extent, the reduction of available funds for social services including financing education. This resulted into the deterioration of the school system manifested in poor examination results. The demand for highly
qualified candidates for the present highly competitive labour market and the limited places in higher learning institutions made students deregulate the established norms of orderly examination conduct, which have often led to examination irregularities.

Examination irregularities are a serious problem to be solved to ensure that examinations produce the right candidates prepared to take responsibility for their areas of specialization. Deliberate measures must be enhanced as a pre-requisite to discourage and detect malpractices.
The outcome of an examination determines the level of management and administration required. When given externally especially for selection into higher levels, they are prone to irregularities, especially in the third world. Various policies try to intervene, unfortunately, bearing negative side effects.

In Tanzania, the following aspects embody political, social and economic factors with some effects:

- Decentralised primary school examinations and a collaborative setting of public examinations.
- A time tabling that is disrupted by some major national events. Examinations are to take two-weeks/one day only.
- Having private and school candidates concurrently. It leads to overcrowding of centres when issuing numbers.
- **Packaging and distribution of examinations to be done under police escort and reach centres the same days/few days before.**
• Extra local invigilators are to be paid by their schools.
• Marking of scripts to be done at heavily guarded venues and the work
  Completed in limited time.
• Processing to be done at a marking centre and selection at another using
  quota system (Primary VII).
• Release of examination results only for those selected for secondary schools
  and recently, private ones, but performance not publicised. For secondary
  level, results for all candidates by performance but selection later.

Management and administration of public examinations in Tanzania is
disadvantaged by many political, social and economic policy factors. The
following may improve situation, among others:
• Practically terminal primary and secondary level education and continuation
  to higher level as individual initiative;
• Expanded and cheaper continuing education;
• Abolishment of quota system.
This paper dwells on how examination irregularities – seen also as irregular occurrences during the processes of management and administration of public examinations, have impacted on the said processes for the better. In the introductory part, the paper touches on possible causes of examination irregularities.

The paper discusses the evolution of examination irregularities in the Kenyan context and goes further to show how these have been handled and how the KNEC has gone ahead to strengthen the management and administration processes as a result.
The central purpose of public examinations is to enhance transparency, effectiveness, and efficiency in making decisions about people, which may have tremendous implications for their lives. The key decisions made on the basis of examination results are

♦ Placement of people in jobs and training programs
♦ Selection of students for further education and training

Public examinations are legally fortified instruments of the state – by Acts of Parliament, meant to enhance accountability to the taxpayers by educators, and therefore levels of performance are good indicators of how well or badly an education system was functioning. It is therefore fundamental that examination results should reflect the true effort of the students and teachers. It is equally important that the selection and placement decisions made on the basis of examination results are based on a water tight examination system, and thus the results reflect the true picture of the abilities of examinees.

Examination irregularities clearly tampers with examination scores such that the results of public examinations can not be meaningfully interpretable, and thus unusable for accountability to the public or decision making in selection and placement processes. Irregularities are clear manifestations of the competitiveness of the examinations, which induce high anxieties in candidates, declining ethical standards, and erosion of self-efficacy and confidence among examinees and their guardians.
The clear consequence of examination irregularities is that decisions made on the basis of such results will inadvertently to wrong people being selected for further education or training, or placed in employment vacancies while highly deserving and morally up right people get left out because they did not tamper with the system. The universal sine qua non (the necessary and sufficient) conditions for good examinations, i.e., validity and reliability get violated, and when irregularities are discovered the state incurs horrendous expenses for repeat examinations. The loss of confidence in public examination systems due to irregularities may lead to social instabilities and importation of foreign examinations, which further erodes confidence of the people in the state.
The credibility of an education system and its examinations is put in jeopardy whenever the laid down rules and regulations are not adhered to. The regulations are intended to provide an environment of fair play, equal opportunity and validity of the assessment.

Irregularities in public examinations are on the increase; will continue to undermine the reputation of examining bodies and erode public confidence on the education being offered, if left unchecked. Currently, examination security is a major government preoccupation.

Examinations are used as a means of checking abilities possessed; as criteria for promoting students to higher levels; and in selecting who to employ. They have fundamental impact on the individual that drives examinees to flout the regulations to obtain unfair advantage. Irregularities include leakage, cheating, unfaithful supervisors, script setters, markers and officials.

In this paper, the new trends in the management and administration of public examinations, which are influenced by the irregularities, will be discussed.
Examination irregularities can if undetected and unpunished threaten and erode the credibility of an examination body.

The paper will highlight some of the procedures used in the examination process, which make detection of examination irregularities complicated. These will include the use of contracted professionals during most of the crucial stages of the examination process, such as administration and marking of examinations to detect examination irregularities. Sources and forms of examination irregularities encountered during the various stages of the examination process will be addressed.

The paper will particularly focus on the methods used by the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) to detect examination irregularities. These will include:

(i) Statistical Approach Method (The Item Difficulty Profile (IDP) Programme)
In this method, the reliability of the IDP in detecting cases of collusion, and the procedures for detecting patterns of candidate’s responses that are indicative of cheating in the examination will be considered.

(ii) Detection of Cheating During the Administration and Marking of Examinations

The paper will point out how Supervisors, Invigilators, field officers, examiners, and the general public are instructed on how to report cases of
examination irregularities during the field administration and marking of examinations.

Finally, the paper will briefly highlight some of the challenges that the Council encounters in the detection of examination irregularities and make some recommendations.
DETECTION OF EXAMINATION IRREGULARITIES

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The paper begins by defining Examination irregularities first generally, and secondly as has been defined by the National Examinations Council of Tanzania (NECTA) Act 21 Of October 19973 and amended by Act No.4 of 1991.

The paper then highlights some of the regulations specified by NECTA to candidates to highlight what constitutes examinations irregularities and malpractices.

Finally the paper discusses steps taken during the course of the examinations administration in an attempt to detect examination irregularities and ends up by discussing the implications of examination irregularities using examples.
A GENERAL OVERVIEW ON EXAMINATIONS IRREGULARITIES

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Cheating in examinations and other forms of Examination irregularities have for many years posed grave repercussions to many examining authorities the world over. These irregularities are nowadays like a culture that seems to be embedded in the minds of our educational society; and they have indeed become a perennial vice almost in all learning institutions. Many examining authorities are of late discovering many cheating cases in school/national examinations than ever before leave alone many more cases, which sometimes go, undetected.

A variety of reasons account for the occurrence of examination irregularities, the most dominant among them being high stakes of the examinations whereby success in examinations can have profound immediate and long-term impacts on a candidate’s life.

Other reasons leading to examination irregularities are aspirations for teacher and school status uplift where school reputation depends on the success of students in public examinations; inadequate school facilities and teachers; inadequacies in the examinations where the standard aimed to be achieved is too high or obscure; location of examination centres where remote centres tend to receive materials in advance, thus increasing the opportunity of gaining access to examination papers; and low salary levels for teachers coupled with low morality that encourages bribery.
The cheating conduct has not only affected the quality of individuals, education and reputations of examining authorities but has also created a society of cheaters that is full of incompetent professionals who are entrusted to serve and manage the national welfare and resources. This is a serious problem and, if not checked, the country’s development, which is hinged on its professionals, could adversely be affected.

This paper presents a discussion on detection of examination irregularities. The paper first identifies various stages of examination irregularities occurrence such as before the examination paper is written; while the examination paper is being written; while the scripts are being marked; and/or during certification. Finally, it proposes detection mechanisms and strategies to curb/control such malpractices.
DETECTION OF EXAMINATION IRREGULARITIES

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The West African Examinations Council was established with the mandate to determine and conduct examinations in the public interest and award certificates for these examinations on condition that the certificates awarded are of the same standard of attainment as those awarded by other examining boards in the United Kingdom. The Council, in the discharge of its mandate, has evolved new procedures for the conduct of its examinations in order to be responsive to the emerging changes in the educational systems in member countries. However, as a result of the undue premium placed on ‘paper qualification ion’, which has resulted in examination malpractices, the West African Examinations Council has had to grapple with the problem of examination irregularities in our public examinations. The Paper presents an analysis of various forms of examination irregularities in Ghana, their detection and recommendations for curbing them.