

**CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY IN HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS
DURING THE ERA OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN KENYA**

BY

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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has never been submitted for an award of any degree in any other university.

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DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to my lovely wife Flosy, my children Christine Murugi & Benedicta Wakio, my brother Abel and Genaro and finally my parents Lucia and Nicasio. I am deeply indebted for the support you have shown me towards achieving this far. Last but not least, my colleagues and friends for always believing in me. I am humbled and God bless you all.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AI- Academic Integrity

ASAL- Arid and Semi-Arid Lands

COVID-19- Corona Virus 2019

ECD- Early Childhood Development

GoK- Government of Kenya

HII- Higher Education Institutions

HIV/AIDs- Human Immune Deficiency Syndrome

ICT- Information Communication Technology

JKUAT- Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

KNEC- Kenya National Examinations Council

MMUST- Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology

MoE - Ministry of Education

SDGs- Sustainable Development Goals

SEKU- South Eastern Kenya University

TVET- Technical and Vocational Education and Training

UNESCO- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

ABSTRACT

Education in Kenya and globally is designed to foster principles and ethics considering they instill a character that develops to a behavior. Education develops capacity and productivity by allowing learners to be innovative through acquisition of skills that help them appreciate the spirited efforts to uphold morals, ethics and building a commitment towards achieving academic integrity. Just like any other scholar the goal in education is to perform excellently. Learning in schools is certainly supported by the institutions policies, strategies and practices. Despite efforts to achieve learning during covid-19, growing concerns of increased academic misconduct arose in the midst of the pandemic, especially with the assimilation of online learning in the system. This being the case, the study sought to understand and investigate on critical analysis of academic integrity in higher learning institutions during the era of covid-19 pandemic in Kenya and considered the following objectives; to analyze the magnitude of academic integrity in education practices (teaching and learning i.e. online platforms, technology, assessment etc.) during covid-19, how education theories adopted academic integrity in education , how education policies ratified academic integrity in education and strategies to enhance academic integrity in education. The study generalized in all learning levels from primary to post-primary level. The study adopted the theories of deterrence theory, rational choice theory and planned behavior theory to help farther understand the influence of covid-19 to academic integrity. The methods of data collection included analytical function, prescriptive function and critical function. Data acquired from the study based on the objectives was analyzed and presented through which the findings indicated that academic policies, practices, strategies and theories had an influence in the achievement of academic integrity and that covid-19 pandemic critically influenced learning. The conclusion drawn from the findings was that despite the incorporation of ICT in the learning system academic integrity implementation faced many challenges. Self-determination theory displayed the ethical considerations of a learner through anonymity, data protection and confidentiality and how they were assumed hence promoting academic misconduct during covid-19. The study recommends that ethical awareness should be created from the lowest level of education, learners be involved in policy making process and given an opportunity to participate on the same. Also close monitoring of learners behavior would help curb dishonesty through close relationship with their teachers.

Keywords: COVID-19 and Academic integrity.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Academic integrity is basically a foundation in development and acquisition of knowledge. In my view and as explained by (Kenny & Eaton, 2022) academic integrity is based on values of honesty, trust, responsibility and respect. In addition, this study understands that meaningful knowledge is established on integrity as it is further discussed whereby values of ethics influence morals. Additionally, Anoop (2019) proceeds and views it as an obligation in expressing honesty and ethical behaviors in an academic setting as is generalized in this study, whereas International Centre for Academic Integrity (2014) generalizes it as a moral code of academia involving commitment to the key values identified by Kenny and Eaton (2022). In moral philosophy, integrity is associated with virtues that constitute to a good person (MacFarlane, Zhang & Pan, 2021) whereas, on the other hand in this study is that there are many unconcluded definitions based on concepts linked to its complexity as explained by (Bretag, 2016), but the goal is guided by principles that form a responsive way of doing things to accomplish ethical decision making and authenticity.

From the profound definitions articulating AI to values guided by principles in this view is that it is significant in education system by constant review of student's behavioral change (Rettinger & Gallant, 2022.). This review further explained what and why learners cheat in their assessments (Barratt, 2013). Considerably from this study, this is a common and distinctive practice in higher learning institutions especially with the aid of technology and as (Bertram, 2008) further explains, he associates it to approaches and dynamics linked to online learning. They are such but not limited to plagiarism, cheating, collusion, laziness in learning, lack or poor ability, poor or lack of awareness, peer influence and accessibility of information (Surah-man and Tzu-Hua, 2022). According to this study, academic integrity was perceived as a critical issue during the pandemic era especially at higher level of education, basically because pursuing through required too much information as a gateway to completion of a course in education.

Finalizing a level in the education system apparently stimulates societal development through promotion of positive change in human behavior (Emelogu *et al.* 2021).

Logically, from this research is that from a societal development aspect, there is promotion of national unity, diversity and human rights awareness through empowerment fostering quality decision making as auxiliary explained by (Ololube *et al.*, 2012). Thoughtfully from this study, is that academic misconduct demoralizes the academic status of institutions and more so the High Learning Institutions (HLI). In addition to that, it leads to the weakening of the reputation of scientists and researchers in the public because the response of prevention and detection of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is complex due to diversity in internet tools and services sites which offer platforms for cheating and breaching of academic integrity policies (Anthea & Tamra *et al.*, 2022). It is palpable that usage of ChatGPT in higher education poses as a serious obliterator of integrity.

As a result of persistence usage of Artificial Intelligence tools such as ChatGPT which is harmful to academic integrity, explains why this research was envisaged to entirely understand ways in which high learning institutions with partnership with the government could address cheating during covid-19. Instructions guided by strategies as understood in this study, support development of academic literacy skills in HLI as it is for instances of supervision and practices that encourage both learners and supervisors flexibility. These strategies additionally, cultivate a culture of academic integrity from (Cutri, *et al.*, 2021) view of academic integrity in education. This study associates excellent character to academic integrity through values of humility and honesty and on top of that linking it to its relation to teaching, research and service delivery from which integrity value is judged. A study by (Kenny & Eaton, 2022) emphasized that dishonesty witnessed in education was accelerated during covid-19 due to the shift from analog way of learning (physical exam cheating and plagiarism) to digital learning (online cheating). In an example, this was witnessed when students outsourced assessable work to freelancers who at times in papers were the ghost writers who impersonated themselves (Clarke & Lancaster, 2006) for a fee or some free depending on the agreement made (Bretage *et al.*, 2018).

As a result of misconduct, AI was faced by skepticism which was overlooked in many decades (Susanna, 2021). From further research it is clear that skepticism is due to lack of evidence caused by limited knowledge on academic misconduct. In addition, covid-19 influenced education especially by manipulating academic integrity from the view by (Comas *et al.*, 2021). This led to the rationality of information provided based on

reasoning and presentation of questions shared as well as the universality to disseminate morals in achieving a certain discipline. This study assumed that stress from workload pressure lead to dishonesty in HLI, influencing morals of individual learners without considering their expected achievements hence doubting the whole aspect of being academically ethical.

As a result of too much workload in academics, learners were denied an opportunity for reasoning resulting to academic misconduct (Park & Jang, 2013). This is linked to quantity working instead of quality, whereby learners put in their effort reading too much and less revision especially for their assessments. This therefore impacts their reasoning during assessments and opt to cheat for good grades. Academic dishonesty conflicts with academic integrity emphasizing that plagiarism is either intentional or unintentional (Fatemi & Saito, 2020) whereby, it is a choice of an individual to either own someone else's work or fail to acknowledge other persons ideas especially through referencing. Falsifying of work is a breach of integrity policies, practices, procedures, and requirements leading to repercussions through warnings, suspension or even punishments to the involved individuals.

Due to repercussions of dishonesty scholars got resentful believing they were being despised hence the autonomy to beliefs supported the element of an obligation to responsibilities, meaning that easing up beliefs should have made those affected less resentful in their attitudes towards punishments (Sharrif & Greene, 2014). All academic stakeholders were therefore reminded and pushed to practice integrity by being impelled on the availability of plagiarism detecting software and also developing moral character building platforms and improve academic integrity awareness in the academic community. This study outwardly explains the identification of philosophical properties, guided on the underlying investigations in academic integrity and shedding light on the issues involved in complex academic integrity, especially those which relate to the question of value on how academic integrity was influenced during the covid-19 pandemic.

From the research on identification of AI, its value is compromised especially in HLI therefore not being reasonable enough as to why dishonesty is increasing by day (Eaton, 2021), causing an alarm on the quality of academic information. Covid-19 accelerated the cases of academic dishonesty (Bajtos, 2021). During this period, adoption of online

learning led to mutating of new ways of cheating. Despite the negatives associated, it was noted that online learning positively aided on timely delivery for continued academic performance. The revelation from this research was that increased misconduct in education system was a result of panic with much time spent away from school.

With the prolonged stay away from school, clearly showed that academic integrity was not a point of concern, therefore went unidentified. This is because those responsible for ensuring integrity either assumed it or did not act as they were supposed to. This study aimed at distinguishing whether it was true covid-19 accelerated the rising number in academic dishonesty or not. In this view the morals were influenced by development of technology as well as diversified access to information. The study educated and reminded all academic stakeholders that contributions by any researcher should act as a reminder to embrace honesty and fulfil trust in all endeavors’.

From the accelerating number of dishonest cases especially during covid-19, were philosophical problems directing on the view of academic integrity in this study based on the nature to which knowledge was limited to, facts behind it and its true condition (Adhamovich, 2022). How much was known of covid-19 from the rate at which it was spread and its originality is not adequately discussed due to the myths associated. The facts behind covid-19 and its influence on education are still not reached at reason being it was still present and the conditions under which it well thrives was not concluded.

With an unclear originality of covid-19 it is a universal problem twisted to whether properties really exist therefore bringing the understanding on the reality by visualizing its existence by critical or logical analysis (Piug et al., 2021). How covid-19 presented itself is unsubstantiated (Varlik, 2020), making adoption of new learning methods challenging to determine leaving inadequacy information about it and how it would influence education. The newly adopted methods of learning in education during the pandemic needed reasoning on whether academic integrity was appreciated, how it was implemented and its practicality because of the various facts presented in it regard and how well it was understood. The period of existence for covid-19 was unknown leaving behind questions that generated diversified activities which still had an influence on academic integrity and led to closure of institutions and adoption of new learning

methods (Beaglehole, 2022). Despite the disruptions, there were no conclusions that only covid-19 had influence on education system but there were other underlying factors such as nature of the education system, resource availability and accessibility among others. The increasing spread of covid-19 only hastened the weakening of the education system hence the effect on education integrity.

Weakening academic integrity systems meant compromising the whole aspect of being honest. It was important to understand academic integrity and compromising factors to its achievements by identifying means of rebuking misconduct in academics (Ferguson *et al.* 2007). Anything that alters propagation or acquisition of knowledge to academicians was deemed dishonest. This posed a question to some ideologies being hidden or rather not well exploited by researchers although over years' detection of fraud had been altered due to its evolution with time. It was important to identify whether service delivery by way of syllabus coverage or assessments was achieved and any gap identified was recognized, evaluated and established to enforce and guarantee academic values through practice to academic stakeholders (Gynnild, Gotschalk & Zuccherro, 2008).

Implementation and upholding of academic integrity values basically guarantees that learners should be held accountable on their integrity ethos in achieving the expectations in education (Tauginiene, 2016). Various questions with no appropriate answers arose on various individuals inclined to academic integrity but the main one, directed to the roles expected to be instituted to help curb dishonesty. Institutions have their vision and mission statements that help them achieve quality education (Aithal, 2016) but unfortunately where did dishonesty come from? It was all rhetorical on how certain practices guided by ethos to uphold academic integrity later on ended up being compromised. This indicated that there were individuals who disregarded their responsibilities therefore creating loopholes for dishonesty through breaches of bribery, coning and corruption without reasoning the consequence.

Procedural activities in identifying any available loopholes, has always been important in establishing academic integrity, especially by identifying and getting conversant with the history of AI, which created a better chance to understand it as well as its repercussions. In a study by (Burgason & Briggs, 2019) expounds on McCabe's voice being the founder of AI in his comprehensive research that denotes that cheating is

prevalent and is increasing over years. This is anchored on techniques established by academicians to aid them in cheating with the assumption to getting prosperous results. Arguably, the reasoning of dishonest learners' reasoning, is relentlessly imbedded to bravery or wisdom especially when it is undetected and no action is taken. Despite McCabe's suggestions on strategies to help curb cheating, it was hard to manage or deal with it completely especially in the technological era which is indomitable.

Probably in this technological era in which IT is highly recommended and seems to take course, then is the same period when dishonesty is rampant. The questions that arises then is how or who imparts or inculcates the values of academic integrity? This remains unsatisfactory mainly because either academicians rarely have the interest or wants to take responsibility on how it is taught or by who hence creating a confused forum of trainers not knowing how to handle integrity policies and its roles. (Zachek, 2020) acknowledges that only McCabe was able to conduct a comprehensive research on academic integrity which counters the current technologically dominated era of AI which needs critical understanding despite having so many reseachers . Critical understanding of AI in the current technological dominated era, helped identify with techniques used in cheating such as mobile phones and other internet connected gadgets that facilitated easy transfer of information during Covid-19.

The domination of technology has made cheating rampant and especially in the 21st century (Anorld et al, 2007) whereby its extensive nature poses a challenge to the education sector (Chace, 2012). Being technically refined, is a positive achievement in improvement of education majorly because advancement were set to fit encountered challenges. But this being the case, innovation is encouraged and expansion of skills identified to fit the mechanical rather than the manual world hence simplifying education but is faced by integrity challenges and especially with the improvement of IT infrastructure that aids cheating

Education is vital for social economic development through skills and knowledge acquisition that encourages information sharing (Astakhova, 2016). In this case various learning levels are adopted in Kenya as stipulated in the Constitution of Kenya, (2010), under article 53(1) that every child has the right to free and compulsory basic education. According to the (Constitution of Kenya, 2010), basic education is the opportunity granted to every citizen both children and adults to fully exploit their full potential in

education. There is the Basic Education Act 2013 emphasizing that basic education is free and compulsory following the outlined legal framework as stipulated in the Act. This therefore grants access to anyone to have the opportunity to get educated without undermining the age or ethnicity. Therefore, for basic education to be actualized and met, academic integrity is crucial as a way to practicing honesty for performance through dedication to work, imparting and studying with integrity in all disciplines and occupations presented through exploitation of hidden knowledge from mastery of concept hence promoting opportunities to practicing and filling professional gaps that eradicated academic transgression.

Subsequently, AI in education was influenced during covid-19 era, by the abrupt shift to digitalized learning. This was followed by a pivotal and challenging adoption time despite being the only alternative in the shortest time. This was as a result on how differently scholars in institutions were hit by the virus and their faculty demands hence the response to the dramatic shift was definitely not the same. In Kenya, adoption of technology in the various learning levels and institutions was differently established with some finding it hard and challenging to adopt distance learning. Academic integrity was influenced by education policies and practices basically because strategies to counter cheating were not propagated. (Melissa, 2020) gives an example of how Washington States University was to teach during the spring semester and in the midst of covid-19. The urgency despite constrained time to offer quality education, unveiled the social stigmatization and harassment from community members but this was countered by fostered togetherness to achieve AI.

From the identified levels of education as indicated in the Kenyan constitution (2010) (Bernard & Spiegel, 2010) also concludes that cheating by secondary level learners is more likely to be rampant in their higher learning levels. As explained further on Kenyan universities by (Starovoytova & Milton, 2017) is that 18% of public university students are those that are aware of cheating techniques but have never cheated and another percentage admits to have cheated under circumstances of maybe peer influence, lack of vigilance and opportunities to cheat in their assessments.

From the researches' identified, this study incorporated logical and critical thinking coupled with cases from literature review to elicit the meaning of the concept of philosophy and its object within the context of AI. The methodology was based on

arguments arising and the proof to the facts presented. These methodologies did not only imply their simplicity but brought out the meaning from the views obtained. By ensuring self-acceptance, awareness on existence of dishonesty was important to make learners understand that ignoring the truth behind academic integrity was punishable. Therefore, it was essential for learners to be knowledgeable and refrain from incidences that altered their integrity and accept the world's diversity and understand they couldn't know everything they aspired to. During covid-19 the exposure to technological way of distance learning was crucial for learners to accept that the knowledge they acquire through various platforms was important for their evaluation rather than become dishonest.

The truth based on findings approach by Karl Popper in the Community of philosophical inquiry refutes that only true beliefs will be accepted based on practices of inquiry and assertion. This means only true statements are important from inquiry and assessment with the information to solve problems for discipline achievement not by science but based on facts (Capps, 2019). In addition, (Proverbs, 2021) affirms that each society has its regime of truths based on findings from inquiry to achieve a conclusion. This means that dishonesty should not be generalized but rather be based on findings of truth.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Institutions can grant opportunities to learners with intellect and of civic behavior and help raise a holistic people in the society. Arguably, dishonesty does not only destruct learning but also lowers growth despite, education being good with integrity and fairness being part of emulated values. Closure of learning institutions in Kenya due to covid-19, led to a shift to distance learning. This influenced learning and especially a certain loss of academic morale, school dropouts and early marriages. Performance and absenteeism compromised the education sector with which the government through the MOE came up with online learning platforms for academic continuity. Adoption of online learning did not guarantee honesty but rather opened an opportunity to cheating by way of plagiarism due to limited monitoring on learners. On the other hand, incorporation of these learning platforms was faced with poor connectivity, expensive purchase of internet, limited resources and technological illiteracy which did not see many people getting conversant with the systems. This gave a chance to

cheating, plagiarizing or even falsifying work without the right ownership creating a gap that this study critically analyzed on academic integrity in education during the covid-19 era.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to critically analyze academic integrity during the covid-19 era.

1.4 Objective of the Study

The study focused on the following objectives:

1. To analyze the magnitude of academic integrity in education practices (teaching and learning i.e. online platforms, technology, assessment etc.) during covid-19.
2. To critique how education theories adopted academic integrity in education in the era of covid-19.
3. To critique how education policies ratified academic integrity in education in the era of covid-19.
4. To propose strategies to enhance academic integrity in education during covid-19 and pandemic eras.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What was the magnitude of academic integrity in education practice during covid-19?
2. How did education theories adopt academic integrity during the era of covid-19?
3. How did education policies ratify academic integrity in education in the era of covid-19?
4. Were there strategies that enhanced academic integrity in education during covid-19 and pandemic eras?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of the study were useful to scholars and researchers for future referencing. There was motivation to the academic community by identifying their own gaps on AI in their line of duty. The MoE was able to identify challenges facing education in the country and through the government help come up with solutions to improving learning infrastructure and provision of learning materials.

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

The study was focused on critical analysis of academic integrity in Kenya during the covid-19 era and the following variables were discussed; education practices, education policies, education theories and strategies adopted.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

First, generalizing on this study meant leaving much more information out without the specific agenda of this study being conducted, the findings just limited to a small size of data collected, quantifiable researches were considered without acknowledging that there would be errors from other researchers. Also, validity of AI was not assured because there was no ability to access the actual academic misconduct taking place hence dishonest was immeasurable. There were other variables that would be considered but the study settled on just a few hence so much was left unattended to. It is recommended that future researchers should consider diversifying variables to get the wide range through which integrity was compromised.

1.9 Assumption of the Study

The assumption was that information collected was true and findings from it would be used to generalize other aspects affecting the AI in the academic system.

1.10 Definition of Significant Terms

The study terms are as explained below;

Critical Analysis- analysis of facts through evidences or observations to create a conclusion.

Academic Integrity-expectations from teachers and learners (education community) to act with honesty, fairness and accountability.

Covic-19 pandemic-it's an outbreak of an infectious disease that causes severe acute respiratory complications.

Education policies- these are guiding principles and laws guiding through the field of education to govern discipline

Education practices- the repetitive strategies put into task to promote learning at each level for mastery of skill

Education theories-sciences identified to describe, understand and prescribe policies and practices.

Strategies – principles and guidelines set to achieve an objective.

1.11 Organization of the Study

Chapter one outlined the background of the study which included the statement of the problem, purpose/objective of the study, significance, limitations/delimitations, assumptions and definition of terms. Chapter two explained more in a deeper perspective through the literature review to enlighten more through the theoretical and conceptual frame works. Chapter three discussed the methodology used in collecting data. Chapter four was the analysis of data collected from chapter three and chapter five gave the conclusions and recommendations of the entire study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provided an extensive literature related to the study and a clear review of different publications on various studies that had been done in respect to AI in the system of education. The publications included books, journals, reports, and websites and helped in getting the literature in line to academic integrity. The focus of the chapter is derived from the objectives summarized as; an analysis of the magnitude of academic integrity in education practices (teaching and learning i.e. online platforms, technology, assessment etc.), a critique of how education theories adopted academic integrity in education, a critique of how education policies ratified academic integrity in education, a proposal of probable strategies to enhance academic integrity in education during pandemic eras.

There was tremendous growth for AI in education research due to the education system globally. Academic satisfaction was centered on ethics of education through policies, strategies, practices and theories established. During covid-19, digital online learning was adopted for continuity of education, because technology eased access of learning by ensuring there was no education system breakdown hindering learners from acquiring knowledge. Among the online methods adopted were webinars, zoom meetings, digital learning applications as well as televisions displayed recorded or ongoing classes. A learner is satisfied when knowledge is passed to them successfully without challenges from their teachers and trainers (Amaiah, 2018). Hence the adoption of online learning supported by IT.

For developing nations such as Kenya, adoption of digital learning had a great challenge since there was little or no exposure to adequate technology hence the hardship in the abrupt shift. (Amaiah, 2018) went ahead and evaluated factors that affected distance learning in Malaysia from which it was understood that user ability, responsibility design and functionality were significant in convincing academicians to adopt online learning despite the challenges in technology. (Macfarlane *et al*, 2014) gave a clear understanding on how increased responsiveness of educational value production was applied resulting to concerns over lack of academic integrity from which this accumulated failure damaged the reputation and credibility of academic institutions

influencing their growth.

In Kenya, the greatest challenge facing online learning, was poor ICT availability due to poor network connectivity/coverage and infrastructure, limiting the number of people willing to undertake the online learning (Shabu, 2023). During Covid-19 in Kenya, the launching of 5g network coverage perceived to be faster and with a huge coverage compared to the 4g that was limited was supposed to take place but took longer thus contributing to the downfall of network availability in most ASAL parts of Kenya. Examinations being mandatory for candidates to graduate to the next level, was faced with several challenges in completion of syllabus and in administration of the examinations by KNEC. Purchase of internet was very expensive and inadequate hence lack of satisfaction contributing to academic dishonesty during examination.

Development of new academic policies, had ensured that all teachers were enrolled for online classes and got enlightened on digital learning. Most teachers were adamant on the policy despite the penalties associated with it since from an investigation conducted showed that their adamancy was due to lack of government sponsorship, unavailability of required resources and materials, poor infrastructure and limited time. A study by (Frances, 2021) showed that many philosophers were cynical about power of philosophy to contradict claims of commonsense.

It was assumed that in the academic institutions, commonsense was embraced to know that academic dishonesty was not allowed. The attempts to judge commonsense on AI was inconclusive and with so many failures but has successful ways against it. AI and culture are affiliated and this makes the learning culture significant to help understand integrity which influences their intellectual production (Alajam, 2020). Culture was defined by institutional practices and had effects on academic integrity hence being sophisticated and habituated (Gu & Brooks, 2008).

2.2. Academic Integrity and Educational Practices during Covid-19

Education practices are basic routine activities in education that instill ethical codes for knowledge acquisition through teaching, assessments and monitoring (Doyle, 2023) therefore non-adherence to practices compromises academic integrity through poor knowledge attainment which consequently is followed by consequences (Bourbour, 2023). Academic practices are an opportunity for equality to those involved. With the adoption of online learning, academicians embrace active learning (Archambault, 2022).

Online teaching and learning practices had been present for long but were scarce in the HLI (Hofer et al., 2021).

New learning environments were initiated during covid-19 to allow new practices of online learning to ensure education continuity (Crawford et al., 2020), thus becoming an alternative to the physical learning. Availability of learning practices had opened an opportunity for learners to learn and collaborate regardless of the challenges encountered in the whole learning system during covid-19. The practices had led to development of new frameworks for analysis of student's behaviors, evaluation and prediction of learner's grades by teachers and comparison of learners' behavior and interaction during the covid-19 era (Hofer & Nistor, 2021).

Education practices helped differentiate between honest and dishonest learners. In contrary it was witnessed that honest students were unnoticed and their reputation ruined same as those caught in the act of cheating. This conveyed discomfort and discouragement when punishment was overlooked and assumed on fellow learners affecting the efficiency and effectiveness of education system in a country. Students' attitude in education was therefore created and differed as studied by (Jan, 2010) where investigations showed that students' attitude on cheating was different in countries and depended on the level of education, and the handling of dishonesty between learners.

Assessment of students by engaging them greatly influenced AI during their assignments and examinations. This aided in creating a good environment followed by satisfaction and improved relationship with teachers. Departmental engagement of students reinforced honesty since learners were able to acquire virtues of academic integrity hence maintaining active learning processes in the faculties. Assessment papers need to be fair and reasonable to reduce instances triggering cheating (Sankaran & Bui, 2003).

Cheating in universities is rampant basically because professors who are highly learned and trained set unrealistic papers which are tough on learners and opting to cheat for performance. Hard assessments lower learners' self-esteem by making them demotivated to undertake the course. To support this, (Sheard, Markham & Dick, 2003) suggested on the need for timely and adequate preparations to allow familiarization with the content to avoid instances of dishonesty. Underperformance in this case was

punishable basically because the goal was for good performance rather than quality delivery for good grades. AI compromised the attainment of education practices which had an influence on the vision, mission and core values of an institution (Gamage & Silva, 2020). In universities for example presentation of plagiarized work was high consequently affecting knowledge delivery in the job markets.

Learning during covid-19 led to implementation of new practices making online learning a norm to be practiced (Gamage et al., 2020). Punctual achievement of digitalized education encountered challenges such as literacy levels as well as willingness to adapt technology (Aguilera, 2020). Non-adherence to online platforms like television, zoom and webinar meetings had affected academic integrity with most learners and trainers left out due to challenges of technology and infrastructure. In this study, Kenyan government was to blame for poor and inadequate ICT infrastructure to ensure successful learning with the adoption of new learning practices. Which would alleviate work, ensure timely delivery and reduction in cost that rendered an opportunity for innovation

2.3. Academic Integrity and Education Theories during Covid-19

Academic integrity influenced the development of academic theories in education despite the challenges associated. For example, the moral theory did not respect integrity because it basically targeted at explaining morally correct actions (Szutta, 2019). Integration of AI helped researchers in acquiring morals and ethics in different situations, in the development of the theories with consistency (Sotiriadou & Guest, 2020). The social theory explains behavior through observations made (Maloku, 2020).

Based on existing academic theories, cheating behavior is associated based on individual and generalized perception (Mathrani, 2021), which resulted to low motivation and especially if cheating was not condemned. To help understand academic integrity, it was important to seek ways to advance knowledge and in a responsive manner (Norgard & Bengtsen, 2016), hence understanding academic theories enlightened on this. In general, theories helped understand by learning and explaining, describing and analyzing in education. Academic theories were informative and brought a reflection of what was predicted or developed more to it. Theories differed with the underlying subject and influenced practices adopted in education. Academic theories were more of facts and assumptions. The theory of planned behavior helped understand students

cheating by use of models and consistency with the subject.

In education therefore, it is important for institutions to come up with their own theories revolving around academic integrity for referencing and understanding an example in the theory of change which fosters change by adopting existing knowledge and ideas thus contributing to forming new ones aimed at achieving meaningful meaning that brings change (Reinholz & Andrews, 2020). Institutionalized theories reduced chances of cheating by adoption of best practices and values making learners responsible and systematically creating an adaptive system to emerging issues like covid-19. Academic theories are important for referencing especially on matters pertaining to academic integrity (Shek *et al.*, 2023). Academicians are encouraged to be more conversant with AI theories in identifying facts and assumptions to identify gaps in education.

2.4. Academic Integrity and Education Policies during Covid-19

Academic integrity and education policies are an integral part in the education system (Hamilton & Wolsky, 2022) and especially the education policies which are governing rules set to ensure discipline (Losen, 2011) guided on achieving ethics. Policies are only effective if they are clear and their need for implementation and especially on academic misconduct (Foltynek & Glendinning, 2015). Academic integrity policies did not only advocate against academic cheating but were also a form of motivation to students hence fostering equality in the system. They did not only apply to students but to the entire academic body starting from the highest level (management and teachers) to the lowest (students). Enforcement of policies was attributed to success, satisfaction and perception creation. Policies differed, therefore clarification on how they were implemented was important to avoid alteration. Integrity played a significant role in ensuring that ethical decision making influencing policies was put into place and adhered to.

A study by (McCabe, Trevino and Butterfield, 2001) clearly showed how students in all levels of universities weren't familiar to the policies regarding academic integrity. The researcher recommended that ethics should not be assumed especially for the governing policies; instead it was important to review and clarify them to learners in order to have a conducive academic environment away from dishonesty. It is easy to understand academic policies only if sensitization is done (Severino *et al.*, 2022). It is assumed in this study, that away from students familiarizing themselves with academic

policies, most institutions in higher learning did not convey the required ethics in time of joining the institutions. It was important for students to seek guidance and clarification in the regulations and procedures outlined in their policy documents. It was assumed that cheating occurred mostly in assignment or homework reason being policies regarding this were not well defined. It was important for institutions to be specific on policies set and penalties associated in case of a misinterpretation of the same.

By enforcing institutional policies an institutional image is created which determines its reputation (Pucciarelli, 2016) and in any case of non-adherence then academic integrity is deemed damaged. In institutions, policies are set in line with teaching, communication, the academic culture initiation, leadership, active programs and the entire faculty and institutional capacity building. Teaching policies were outlined to guide on how teachers or trainers executed their duties by ensuring service delivery, outlined schedules and assessments following student's performances.

Academic integrity helped teachers deliver honestly to the learners by attending to them equally without discrimination of ethnicity, intelligence or their historical background. Teachers were trained to ensure that all students were to be handled with care having to it that they were different. As it was seen, academic policies were very critical for academic integrity and with this followed communication policies which were very important on their implementation. Clear communication of policies brought in understanding and clarity. Communication of institutional values in line with policies to learners followed monitoring them in classrooms and engaging them to help solve problems revolving around academic integrity.

Institutional implementation of policies followed consistency and enforcement to prevent learners from taking them for granted which was dangerous towards growth of the institution. (Simon, 2003) in a study emphasized on institutional confidence in enforcement of academic integrity policies, which supported leadership with its decisions on how to handle academic integrity and how to come up with strict penalties system for punishing learners who practiced academic dishonesty (Park, 2003).

Covid-19 pandemic led to institutions advancing their policies through creation of programs to support academic integrity achievement (Whitley, 2001). The implemented programs was meant to be lively and created a conducive learning environment from which (Robinson, 2004) explained on the need for enjoyable learning and went ahead to

advocate for AI by making it a culture to recruit and get into conversations regarding academic integrity to first time learners as expounded by (Hutton, 2006) to help develop ethics. Institutional leadership was greatly influenced by the presence of academic policies especially regarding academic integrity from which non-compliance to policies of academic integrity was scandalous hence attracting researcher's attention (Kisamore *et al.* 2007).

Academic integrity pushed for boundary creation from the implemented policies bringing guidance through principles for best practices in education (Freeman, 2013). Education policies influenced discipline through observing and achieving values through compliance to the laws and regulations abiding (Northwestern University, 2018). From this study great concern was showed to the rising number of absent learners for physical learning institutions that prompted establishment and development of online learning for learners to fully exploit their learning potential.

2.5. Strategies for Academic Integrity during Pandemic Eras

Several pandemics have been presented globally and had a significant influence on education through deaths, poor health conditions, hard economic times as well as reduction in resource availability all to which influenced academic integrity in various ways and the need for sustaining education emerging. Decision making was key for implementation of alternative learning methods and especially during the covid-19 pandemic (Grajek, 2020). The adoption of online learning was incorporated to both low and high learning levels (UNESCO, 2020) availing an opportunity to scholars to study during the pandemics.

Incorporation of online learning was to curb the spread of covid-19, a strategy that offered temporal flexibility in learning despite facing challenges especially those of confidentiality, technical issues as well as digital equity (James & Sullivan, 2016). Online learning was assumed to be of high integrity with learners' fear of being detected hence did not take the chances to cheat. In physical invigilation of examinations there was surety of integrity because cheating was under control but the truth was that no justifiable efforts were assured rendering invigilation as a breach to academic integrity which was a great challenge in education.

Online and distance learning strategies adopted, ensured continuity of learning in all institutions basically because physical learning was interrupted by challenges during the

period of the pandemic. During many pandemics, strategies set was increase in number of medical schools to help attend to those affected as well as increased number of medical practitioners who worked in research as well as treating those affected which was a significant move to avoid any gaps in education (Andrew & Gulshan, 2019). Gaps identified, were due to poor information dissemination, loss of jobs, deaths, increased mortality rate as well as a strained economy. Covid-19 being a recent and most experienced disease, had caused a great loss to the economy which influenced education through inadequacy of fees and time wastage away from school by most learners.

For covid-19 pandemic, educating and creation of awareness were among the many strategies set to avoid contracting in order to reduce the chances effected on education (Karijo, 2021). Adoption of strategies for distance learning were challenged basically because its accomplishment was not foreseen (Bdair, 2021). Students got an opportunity to cheat in their assessments, poor attendance of online classes, delayed syllabus coverage, absence from duties by teachers and trainers as well as little knowledge of technology use. There was forbidden use of words that were likely to trigger hate or carelessness in the process of trying to curb dishonesty. Therefore it was relevant for academicians to uphold integrity and take the strategies adopted with seriousness to uphold ethos that ensured integrity.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

Various theories as explained by (Bertram, 2017) have been used to actually bring the idea of teaching and learning by view of theories to practice. Research by (DiPietro, 2010) (Briggs, 2013) and (Dewanti, 2020) explain more on academic integrity as discussed;

2.6.1. Deterrence Theory

The deterrence theory, explained how dishonesty is as a result of a consequence in an undertaken event (Zimring & Hawkins, 2010). To curb cheating, it is important to make it clear that there are consequences associated which are punishable. This theory explained that punishment should be given as a consequence of a misconduct to discourage learners against failing their assessments, plagiarism or the general cheating. It is further explained that if the perception of learners on cheating goes unrecognized, the cheating least affects their performance. In other words, if learners

had the ability to cheat, they cheated knowing there is no consequence. This theory suggested that effects of cheating were interconnected to the impact caused by cheating (Ellahi, 2013). This theory suggested a problematic approach, which increasingly dwells on the severity of the consequence. This for example was witnessed when assessors did not follow up on assigning punishments of cheating learners from the board, hence minimum effort was witnessed to curb cheating. Researchers had unveiled that effectiveness and intensity of deterrents varied among cultures. Therefore it was important for academic dishonesty to be dealt with in its culture rather than as a universal problem.

It is observed that introduction of fear to learners is aimed at ensuring they do the best in their personal work hence reducing misconduct behaviour (Scott, 2011). On the contrary, there are some learners who ignorantly engage in academic misconduct and lean on sympathy which later on brings to the attention that misconduct is held responsibly on the individual caught in it. No point of sympathy would be addressed because consequences were clearly stipulated. This theory for AI was significant for each academician knew their role and were answerable to their responsibilities.

Deterrence theory acts a guiding principle in implementing academic integrity for academicians (Green & Dittenber, 2022). Consequences were clear and sure hence no excuses were given. But a main challenge facing this theory affecting AI was that in due of time, trainers or teachers were unable to follow up on instances of misconduct. Following the consequences expected learners' may find it as a space for dishonour and exclusion hence its administration was guided to avoid instances of undermining individual self-esteem.

2.6.2 Rational Choice Theory

The rational choice theory clarified that misconduct was as a result of unfounded verdicts made by some heads of an event (Cornish & Clarke, 1986). The strategy applied was determined by any possible alternative, be it an advantage or disadvantage. For example, if cheating occurred, it was observed from a point of how much cost has been incurred, efforts geared towards cheating, any anticipations of performance on attained improvement, and the parties involved in the act of cheating. This theory supported research on acquaintances of cheating.

Academicians taking cheating as an action from this theory, are well prepared for the pro and cons associated with it based on their choices (Nilson and Miller, 2010). The one caught cheating is taken to account on their actions based on the available information, the likelihood of the event taking place and the benefits associated with the cheating. This theory is significant because no one is held responsible of the other, but rather one is held accountable for the choices they make.

2.6.3 Planned Behaviour Theory

Planned behaviour theory explains cheating as a result from individual intentions or an open opportunity to cheat (Nilson & Miller, 2010) hence efforts should be put in place to ensure vigilance and reduced chances for dishonesty and it is significant enough to frustrate cheating behaviour (Lee, 2022). This in assessment rooms can be done by having adequate spacing from one learner to the other, ensuring no relatable information that can trigger cheating is made available. In short it is depriving the academician the opportunities to be dishonest and giving them a chance to own their work and put as much effort as they should. Trainers and teachers should always be on the forefront to undermine cheating and encourage individual work hence not a single opportunity should be allowed in an exam setting.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a set of broad ideas and principles taken from relevant fields of enquiry and used to structure a subsequent presentation. In conducting the study, a conceptual framework is developed to show the relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable. In this study, the dependent variable was academic integrity in higher learning institutions during the era of covid-19 pandemic in Kenya and the independent variables were; Academic integrity and education practices during covid-19, academic integrity and education theories, academic integrity and education policies and finally strategies for academic integrity during pandemic era. This framework showed the relationships between research variables as illustrated below;

Independent variable

Dependent variables/variable

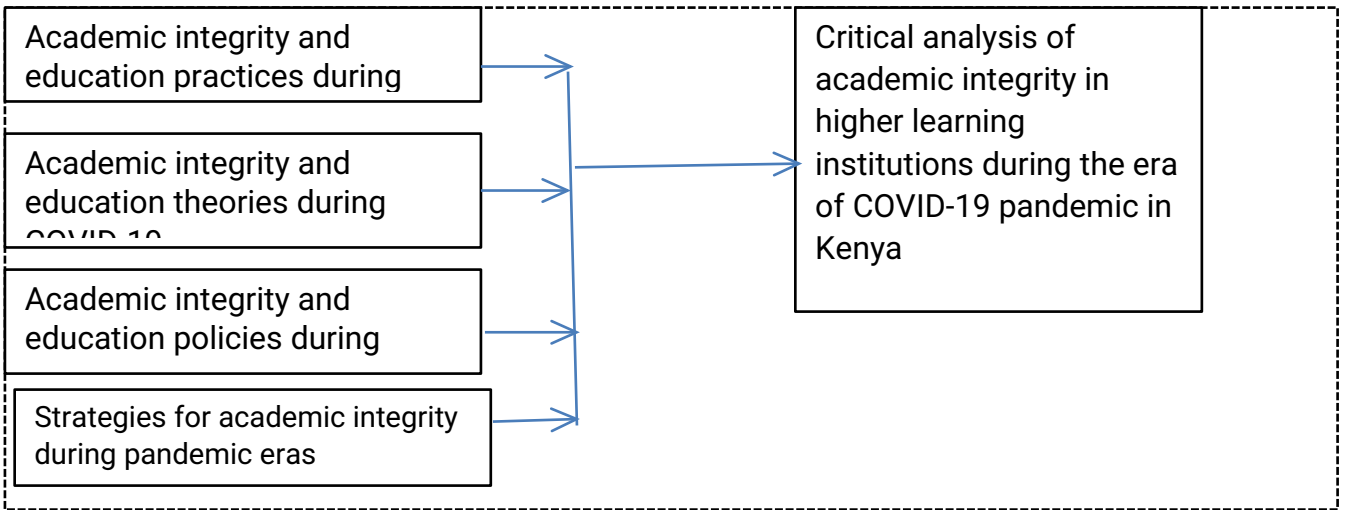


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

2.8 Summary of Identified Gaps

The above theories and conceptual framework brought an understanding of cheating in the education sector (Michele, 2010) yet, these theories hadn't outlined tools to use to counter cheating from which it was clear that most researches were a shortfall from dishonesty and did not fit for academic situations. Most learners did not view cheating as a misconduct but rather as a way to improvement in their assessments, a way to counter failure. Instead they classified cheating with what it constitutes and the severity of the punishment depended on the same therefore the seriousness was not ascertained.

Dishonesty was viewed as ignorance that resulted from unspoken expectations. In this case, students assumed it was allowed to copy without use of actual language which was not the case. Rather it was important for both the instructors and learners to clarify their policies and expectations and the logic associated. Most learners had not attained a clear explanation on the need and importance of academic integrity and the consequences of not upholding it. With the increased level of cheating, it meant that more learners grew from a culture of cheating hence adopted it as a norm finding no problem with it. Most learners cheated under stressful environments with pressures

being raised by expectations from instructors, parents and other stakeholders. This especially occurred to the millennial in the 21st century on acquiring high grades for them to secure job opportunities in the future. With these pressures, they didn't recognize cheating as a misconduct but rather as a survival tactic. Some learners believed that cheating was good for professional development to be in the top tier in acquiring success.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This study was guided by philosophical methods and the prominent methods used included; analytical, critical and prescriptive functions. In this case, analytical function was used to scrutinize the fundamental ideas identified in the study. Similarly, the critical function served as maxim of estimating the logical consistency and prescriptive method guided the process of developing a strategy to guide learning with minimal issues of integrity.

3.2. Analytical Function

This method clearly explained concepts in the context they were being used based on the diversity of ideas (Karimi, 2012). Analysis in general, was an assessment of an idea aimed at revealing it outwardly, majorly raw information critically assessed, in various approaches, to reach an outcome and called for maximum attention. Many questions arose with the need for exclusive thinking and doubt ascended aimed at achieving a certain answer and scrutinizing of the upcoming ideas and thoughts was the whole institute of analyzing.

In the process of analyzing, questions like 'what do you mean? What exactly is the meaning of that?, how did you come up with that?' and so many others of this nature came up, whereby now philosophy was tasked with getting the deeper context to understand and outline the meaning. Analytical function is a methodical and coherent breakdown of a concept (Srigiri & Dombrowsky, 2021) be it a theory, model or even a thought, into easily understandable ideas through comprehensive arguments and scrutiny and with much attention to it, which brought about its clarity as well as displayed meaning.

At times in this method common people found it tedious (Xu, 2023) but philosophers couldn't help but examine and expose a concept which not only involved content but also language that eased the understanding for common people since it was believed to be the foundation of human experiences which increased from unimaginable percentage, assumption, content which later on gave space for drawing conclusions. It was not an easy task though faced by challenges of misunderstanding and complicated matters which had consequences to which solutions were sought. It was important to understand that these clarifications did not always solve the problem at hand but at least they unraveled and eased up complications.

The analytical function of this study was to conceal the existence and functionality of philosophical aspects within academic integrity. Logic reasoning was critical to allow exclusive and inclusive reasoning (Kwangmuang *et al.*, 2021) by breaking down the concept of academic integrity in education into smaller understandable parts. The proposal was important to ensure sustainable and informative skills and subsequent impact on learners in the cases of its sustainable functioning foundations in the education system. Therefore, the analysis helped the study bring in the relevance, functions and existence of academic integrity in education philosophy to learners in the education system.

So many questions arose from this analytical method due to the extent of scrutiny. This method identified uncertainties as well as barriers surrounding academic integrity, and which were causing a setback to the success of academic integrity in education. This method was significant just for scrutiny, instead of performing the philosophical objective which was to bring about practices that education system aimed at achieving academic integrity in various ways within specified terms (Kothari, 2014). Therefore, this incorporated the criteria of critical thinking and with consistent practices which helped justify the necessary discussions based on the study objectives. Through various techniques adopted, analytical method was crucial by initiating and examining previously assumed and left out problems identified under academic integrity in education. This method was suitable for explaining uncertainties that were causing the fall of academic integrity in education hence providing clarity and exposing irrelevant occurrences which were the leading factors to its downfall hence not highly appreciated in the education system.

This study also took the analytical method of data analysis by way of memo writing, which was a process that brought active engagement with data set. It was beneficial because it helped capture thoughts and connections and recognized any incoming in the range of data provided (Charmaz, 2006). In the process of interviewing, memo writing was highly used to come up with interpretations, examinations, meanings and conclusions. This approach brought in several meanings but with an open mind the various meanings were crucial once understood. The strength of analytical method was that it used logic to establish validity of a philosophy through two aspects of linguistic which included analysis of particular words and probing the context to which they were used in a statement.

This basically identified the influence of covid-19 on education by linking its occurrence to many other pandemics that previously influenced education. Abrupt shift to online learning did not have a clear accomplishment because challenges influenced its adoption. The originality of most pandemics is undefined this case covid-19 which conclusively affected learning and gave chances to dishonesty. It is true that little information on the pandemic was availed hence intensified efforts caused an emergency to alter its impact on education. Deaths, lack of morale, limited resources are key challenges to implementation of online learning. Administration of assessments and timely delivery of syllabus was challenged reason being the absence of ICT infrastructure as well as low literacy levels to most scholars in Kenya.

3.3. Critical Function

This method majors on inquisitive and exploratory authenticity of concepts through intensified critical thinking and open discourse to help in resolutions revolving around education (Curren, 2006). The importance of critical analysis was to evaluate and bring final judgment by critically thinking. Critical function methodology provides the in-depth intellectual evaluation to achieve the baseline of the study (Akmaljonovich, 2022). It eased the process by making and coming up with valid and reasonable judgment on issues revolving around the well-being of individuals or the society at large within the study. This method of analysis was suitable for philosophical criticism on academic integrity in the education sector in Kenya. The study incorporated this analysis method which influenced critical thinking as well as presented decisions and answers to the study on academic integrity in education during covid-19 era. This method of analysis

was divided into two based on; the characteristics and the theoretical support of the study.

First, there was logical investigation to be conducted to help justify the arising issues in relation to this study but conclusions of the study were not based on the upcoming findings at this level. This meant that there was need for comprehensive research for the study to really help scrutinize the findings of the study. The questioning technique in judgement helped convey ideas distinguishing them from fictions around the study (McFee, 2011). The critical approach adopted, gave a sense to highlight the difference in the modern preferences and helped bring back a level of dominance to academic integrity in this matter.

This analysis encompassed of the following stages to reach the final decision; first an argument within the study was broken down into easily understandable parts helped bring clear understanding, hence ensuring the originality of the problem without any contradictions. From the argument, various views developed outlining the factual possibilities of an action (Green & Skeet, 2020). Therefore, this study adopted a useful analysis method on academic integrity in the education sector during covid-19 which was examining how academic policies, practices and theories were expressed in academic integrity. This critical method, was preferred because by critiquing the academic integrity, in the education sector during covid-19, helped identify any gaps as well as what was necessary in adopting was well displayed by creating a chance for openness through thinking and reasoning. In this research, examination of theories and practices as well as policies was fundamental in order to keep them in line with the study assumptions and the research questions.

3.4. Prescriptive Function

This method of philosophy goes beyond analysis of concepts like in the analytical method. Prescriptive method tries to get to a point which led through judgment of concepts and ideas and established criteria for evaluating and assessing them, judging conduct and appraising art by examining and proposing the magnitude of morality in a state of conflicting realities. Similarly, it sought to discover and recommend the ideal principles for deciding what actions and qualities were worthwhile and why they would be. Prescription in common understanding was a directive and at time forceful and dictated whether something would be done or not done and with ascertained conditions

for an outcome through which it instilled a certain behavior or character.

Although prescriptive method had been used in other sections of this study, the function was directed more towards the realization of objective whose aim was to propose suitable strategies that were used to provide academic integrity not only during the era of covid-19, but also during the times of other pandemics. This analysis brought forth the recommendations for the future from which data gathered drove the decision making. In the contrary, prescriptive method was not a subjective method but involved systematic imagination of coming up with generalized standards based on facts and beliefs as reference in future (Katerina, 2020). It was a guidance to acting on situations and conveying its conclusions in terms. This was the most sought method by philosophers.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Considerations for ethics are guiding principles to research designs and practices (Perkins, 2023) which are key in implementation and assurance of academic integrity. (Bhandari, 2023) explains them as ethical behavior in education which allows individuals to take up responsibilities for their work hence encouraging originality which leads to creation of a fair and just academic environment. Respecting others in the academic field fostered strong academic relationship and promoted a fulfilling environment and integrity. Reasonable utilization of academic materials was another consideration by avoiding copyrights and plagiarism for self-gain. Time management was key to allow timely completion of tasks to avoid the temptations of cheating to counter time. It was also important for academicians to uphold privacy and confidentiality for security purposes and privacy of their work, which instead promoted accountability and transparency which denied the chances of falsifying work through cheating and copying.

Further (Govil, 2013) highlights other considerations as upholding high levels of professionalism by minding the language adopted as well as the dressing codes and presentation. It was important for academicians to understand plagiarism especially in academic writing. Also, to consider your actions around people surrounding you which called for respect and utmost self-discipline. Academicians were able to avoid unethical behaviours that were unacceptable. Assessment of institutions by MoE through visits or developing questionnaires and inviting the heads to participate in the instilling of integrity in various institutions. Academicians ought to be confident in their academics

by owning their work and especially through research. Once ethical considerations were recognized, upholding of academic values was achieved and embracing it was made easy.

3.5.1 The Issue of Voluntary Consent

Voluntary is willingness to take an action without necessarily being forced. It is influenced by self-determination. The understanding in this research, is that it is willingly availing oneself to undertake an action without expecting a pay or even giving an excuse as why not to take part in it. Consent on the other hand is doing something after seeking permission or an agreement between parties. So to expound more voluntary consent according to (Nelson, 2011) is willingness to do something after consultation. Identifying whether someone has consented can be difficult because some may do it out of manipulation therefore having no other alternative (Maximilian, 2023). In this academic setting, learners are consented as to whether they volunteer to cheat or are forced by factors well known to them, or maybe coerced.

3.5.2 The Element of Anonymity

Anonymity is not knowing the participants of an occurrence to keep their information confidential. Basically it is not in a position to identify someone. Can be hidden personal address, use of unique symbols, alphabets and numeric, distinctive appearances or even categorization (Caplan, 2001). Anonymity is used for privacy purposes. In education, learners engage in cheating anonymously so that their identity is not recognized. They can pretend to use different names, gender, voice or even their general patterns for fear of identification.

3.5.3 The Cause for Confidentiality

Confidentiality is generally being secretive (Ziarat, 2023), with limited availability of the information needed. Confidentiality arises from sharing of private data which caution should be taken to ensure trust between each other for this case between learners and teachers. Members of staff are held responsible for every student's data and the range of sharing it is specified. Once confidentiality is overlooked, then trust is broken (Ordu & Amadi, 2023). This form of data is specifically for the people involved in it and such may cause an altercation if assumed. There are various reasons as to why confidentiality is important in that it promotes trust, confidence, protection of reputation, protection form

disclosure and also it is compliance to the law. Personal data can be sensitive therefore the how confidentiality is handled matters.

3.5.4 The Value of Data Protection

Data protection refers to safeguarding private and important information (Nasution, 2023) from compromise, corruption and loss. Data protection is becoming ever more important in today's data-driven society, as the amount of information created and stored expands year-on-year. Data protection in an academic setting is very important especially for security reasons. There are laws set outlining how data should be protected based on how it is used. Some data may be used to offer justice in instances of judgements, personal data also should be safely secured and in the technological era in computers and protected with passwords, and also the duration its stored should be considered meaning its private for a duration of time. Critically, schools must undertake complex data protection impact assessments when they upgrade or acquire their software, in case of change IT infrastructure, or introduce new technology that deals with personal data. Key principles guiding data protection efficiently are; fairness and transparency which ensures accountability of any data availed lawfully or unlawfully and ensuring protocols to assessing data are systematically followed outlining the purpose and time of data acquisition. Data should only be used on purposes it is specified not anyhow, data collection should be minimal and accurate.

Safety measures should be taken to ensure security of data and any loss of it can severely cause damage to individuals causing penalties and punishments since it's a breach of system management which might have an influence of a schools or individual reputation. Security measures need not be complex but key protection includes use of strong passcodes, data encryption, regular checking of software and limited access to personal data

3.6 Summary

Academic dishonesty is a global phenomenon that accelerated during the covid-19 pandemic (Eaton, 2020) and led to multiple consequences that really needed to be acted upon. Learners who engaged with cheating may have attained high grades but performed poorly in their assigned tasks in the employment field. Institutions reputation is damaged in cases of academic dishonesty (Shersad & Salam, 2020). Implementation of online learning influences the morale of delivery and acquisition of knowledge which

affects the production of civic members to the job markets.

Honesty in education should not only be a policy but rather a main policy. Trainers should not assume that learners know the principles to abide to, but rather should remind, emphasize and encourage them on the key issue which is integrity (Verhoef & Coetser, 2021). They should consider developing a good channel of communication which will ease identifying misconduct and dealing with it soberly without cause humiliation and lowering self-esteem. They should remind each other policies and practices are not only to be written and displayed but should be put into action by the relevant parties.

The relationship between the academic practices, theories, policies and strategies were a clear indicator that these factors influenced integrity a lot and how it was achieved in the education setting (Eaton & Pethrick, 2023). The analytical, critical and prescriptive functions had established that a certain way of thinking influenced a decision which later on led to an intention. It was therefore important to uphold the identified ethical consideration to avoid getting into the temptations of cheating, because these practices helped come up with a routine discipline followed and adhered to.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provided the analysis, presentation and interpretation of data collected for

the study pertaining critical analysis of academic integrity during covid-19 era. Analysis was focused on the study objectives to ratify whether an analysis of the magnitude of academic integrity in education practices (teaching and learning i.e. online platforms, technology, assessment etc.), a critique of how education theories adopted academic integrity in education, a critique of how education policies ratified academic integrity in education, a proposal of probable strategies to enhance academic integrity in education during pandemic eras. The analyzed data was presented and interpreted further, to make it known whether the objectives really influenced academic integrity.

4.2 Academic integrity and education policies

AI required complete institutional and instructed efforts in a vigilant way in all learning processes by emphasizing the upholding of policies to all academicians for fair discipline and research practices (Eke, 2023). Upholding integrity policies reduced chances of cheating thus promoting originality (Chan, 2023). It is important to acknowledge the right thing and giving credit to original ideas from learners and their assessors ensuring equity. Policies had outlined assertions which guided learners through to promote honesty during their education period.

In the education system there was mandatory acquisition of basic education from which all children and youths were subject to experience academic integrity during the education period which was long enough to develop habits as a daily routine in education. These daily behaviors that resulted to habits continued over time. In order for an individual to professionalize themselves there was need for competitiveness from which behavior and personal integrity were key. This brought about the ethical meaning (Bolivar, 2005), which was a requirement for quality education.

Policies outlined in the academic calendar, needed to get in line with the idea that they incorporated academic integrity to instill ethics that brought out the ethical behavior. Once an individual in their studies did not acquire ethics through academic integrity, then this made them more prone to dishonesty in their line of profession (Harding et al. 2004). This resulted to instances of corruption, plagiarism, cheating and so much more. It was important for institutions to ensure all policies were in line to the academic integrity.

Academic integrity policies in most Kenyan institutions entirely ensured that institutions

mission and vision efforts were achieved. This was implemented through learning, assessments, or conducting research based on a certain standard recognized by the education system. AI policies practiced by all stakeholders in the institutions, facilitated on developing guiding principles, ethical developments, fair evaluations and assessments as well as maintaining the reputation of AI policy statement. Commitment is key towards sustainability and culture initiation in recognition of integrity in service delivery through emulating a culture of just and fairness (Malisch, 2020). Policies adopted in education needed to be in line with the Constitution of Kenya 2010, Education Act and subsidiary Legislations towards achieving the GoK vision 2030 that commended education strategies with consistency.

Violations against AI policy as witnessed in South Eastern Kenya University included; cheating, falsification, plagiarism and alterations. These were treated as utmost misrepresentations of integrity, with (SEKU policy, 2018) explaining through a well outline institutional policy to ensure university progress and sustainability of integrity. All levels of violations were identified and consequences discussed to allow visibility and understanding by the entire university fraternity. Disciplining was undertaken based on levels of responsibilities maybe a student, a trainer or any other staff member.

In the anti- plagiarism (2019) JKUAT policy, stated that, the institution was committed to pursuit and maintenance of academic integrity of universal repute. The statement further explained that the institution was focused in promoting honesty in all its undertakings through educating all staff and students on plagiarism, developing plagiarism detecting systems and establishing a guiding handbook on matters academic integrity. All aspects regarding the institutions safety to dishonesty were outlined in the AI policy of the university.

For example, the (TVET, 2014) enforced acquisition of manpower and skills to post schools especially fourth form leavers, through training and development and this was achieved through coordinated efforts from a stipulated framework. This policy had objectives meant to achieve the institutional vision and mission and in regard to the constitution of Kenya on basic education. Availability of this policy, allowed the government through the TVET organization, to promote capacity building, sustainable monetary mechanisms for both ICT infrastructure and training. This policy incorporated integrity as key hence anticipating for increased access to education, equity and quality

among others as the objectives to success. It was very important for graduates to appreciate and uphold the right attitude to assigned tasks followed by integrity and ethics, professionalism and accountability for service delivery.

In Kenya, the pre-primary education was crucial for the growth of a child from the early age hence need for accessible and affordable education (Willoughby & Merseeth, 2019). Education policies governing the pre-primary education work in line with the SDGs which in one of its core mandate advocated for provision of accessible quality education which would enhance the learner's social, moral, spiritual and physical development. The objective was to realize the potential of learners in learning and development. The educational policies under this level category, outlined the roles and responsibilities of the governments (both county and national), parents, teachers and learners to ensure academic integrity is achieved in the institutions. This policy, outlined challenges experienced in achieving and operationalizing the national ECD policy framework (2006), in that it was a counties responsibility to ensure pre-primary education was achieved as indicated in the Constitution of Kenya, 2010.

4.3 Academic integrity and education theories

In a study by (Betram, 2008) new approaches to academic integrity were devolved making the old approaches ineffective. In any case of integrity violation disadvantages academic achievement hence theoretical perspectives incorporation brings understanding and intervention to cheating (Leet *et al.* 2022). These theories explained more about moral competence and reasoning that came up with academic practices and policies that were implemented to uphold integrity.

Cheating was rampant even with assimilation of education theories in education (Zhang, 2018). The theoretical perspectives adopted were the psychological, ethics and management disciplines that enlightened to bring understanding of the whole idea of integrity. In the theory of planned behavior which was one of the major theories in academic integrity, was an identified utility that illustrated three behavioral decisions; attitude towards behavior to whether good or bad, subjective norm which clarified whether in a normal environment a certain behavior was acceptable and perceived behavioral control as to whether it was easy or difficult to uphold a certain behavior. This theory helped predict likely planned behaviors including academic cheating (Armitage & Conner, 2001). Therefore for any planned behavior, it led to a favorable

intention. Other theories of academic integrity indicated the cognitive process of the behavioral decision. This came along with identifying the consequences of cheating with the level of perceived certainty of occurrence.

The idea behind learners' relationship with their teachers on matters academic was clearly explained in the self-determination theory by (Shanda, 2022) which showed that learners needed a little more motivation to remind them that they can. Meaning, it is unnecessary for them to cheat in their assessment but rather be honest in their studies. (Shanda, 2022) goes ahead to explain that, a student revealed to him that cheating was bad hence she needed to learn more for her to avoid such cheating situations but to write down in her papers what she had learnt during her class lessons. This surprised the teacher hearing these words from a learner which was unexpected. This was relatable to the candid talks between the learners and the teacher before or after the lessons which made the teacher available and friendly to his students. The insight created here was that there was motivation and self-determination which raised the level of confidence of the learners which then fostered academic integrity. (Walzer, 2022) expounds on the same, that learners cheat not because they think cheating is good but want to cheat without feeling bad about it.

The self-determination theory had an outward meaning that, any individual has a believe that their choices and ideas are very important in their lives decision making thus fulfilling their psychological needs constituting self-sufficiency, ability and affiliation to their ideas (Cherry, 2021). It further explains that people are self-determined when their needs are fulfilled. This is achieved by extrinsic motivators who in this case are teachers and fellow learners and through positive feedback which boosts ones confidence that increases the intrinsic motivation leading to improved performance and personal growth.

Academic integrity in the institutions can be embraced by adopting self-determination theory (Vansteenkiste *et al.*, 2019), where learners are given the independence to make decisions on courses they want to pursue as well as be flexible on their decisions to avoid rigidity that influences them to be dishonest once courses get tough on them. Learners need to feel connected with others and not grouping them which either demoralizes them or lowers their self-esteem. It's important for them to feel that they belong and are valued by both their fellow learners and their teachers or trainers. The

flexibility between them allows them the opportunity to ask where they do not understand or rather they feel confident and motivated to learn more. This therefore reduces the chances of any learner from participating in the academic misconduct.

4.4 Academic integrity and education practices

Continuously, (Bertram Gallant, 2008) in his argument on adopting new approaches to academic integrity, challenged all education stakeholders to establish integrity practices aimed at improving students learning which shifted learners focus from cheating to owning their work and promoting originality. (Holden, Norris & Kuhlmeier, 2021) made it clear that institutional practices should be made clear to learners to avoid instances of cheating. In the academic set up there were general practices that were guided to ensure best of procedures and ensured academic integrity. Among them, were promoting AI through student motivation through individual and classroom oriented goals. This encouraged mastery of concept rather than just pursue for grades by learners (Anderman & Koenka, 2017) through reduced display of grades, expectations, communication and discussing misconduct openly.

Each individual had a role to ensure practices were achieved to the latter which were; creating timetables, time management, attending classes, planning ahead, following the set rules and regulations as it is in Kenyan primary and secondary schools (Nguyen, 2020). These practices aided with coming up with a routine that in any case they were violated, there was a consequence to it. Once academicians had developed a practice, it was important to insist on its implementation to ensure discipline was attained and by so doing there was minimal attempt to cheat. Practices were executed as indicated for purposes of reminding others of their presence and also allowed one to measure their levels of discipline towards achieving a certain behavior that influenced their intentions.

Academic integrity in Kenyan institutions mainly supports learning opportunities but when instances of cheating through plagiarism or cheating, the prospect of getting feedback for work done is inaccurate (Luck, 2022). This is clear that the full potential of learners had not been exploited hence could not conclude on a learners ability to perform. It was tough on trainers upon knowing that learners cheated during their assessments hence not understanding or getting to know where their learners went wrong from the examined learning areas. This mainly was because they assumed that probably if learners performed well with 'copied work', then they had understood their

course work perfectly and there was no need to revise.

If learners understood that not copying from fellow learners work was respect then it would be clear that the dishonest individual was not of good morals thus making them disrespectful of other people's work. It was unfortunate that learners cheated not knowing that their actions would be accountable in future probably when seeking for employment (Walzer, 2022). If the practices of cheating were rampant in the institutions of learning so that meant that the learner would be an underperformer for not having the right knowledge and information to put to task because of their dishonest behavior from the past. Practices gathered during the learning period, allow for an individual to be self-efficient with their decisions and ideas.

Best educational practices for any institution allow learners to develop a habit from them which determines their behavior (Goodsett, 2020). In the Kenya learning institutions and especially the primary level, were guided through their activities in school by a scheduled time table. This allowed learners and teachers to be disciplined and guided by the timetable. The key thing here was that they were all conversant with it. It gave learners and teachers an opportunity to know the time of arrival and departure from school, breaks in between lessons, cleaning, lesson attendance and so many guiding factors to avoid falling in punitive situation. Institutions were on the forefront to uphold good practices such as those of re-designing assessments to reduce cheating. It was important to develop a risk management for an institution that outlined best action to be taken in instances of dishonesty and especially when it was rampant in an institution. This helped predict the probability of misconduct arising and the causes hence implementation of mitigation or rather the preventive measures.

In a study by (Mailu & Kariuki, 2022) explained on the Meru National Polytechnic strategic plan of 2021 for example was well outlined indicating the requirements of students and staff (teaching and non-teaching), sustainable objectives, resources allocation and expected deliverables in line with the institutional mission, vision and core values that advocated for transparency, integrity, teamwork, accountability and diligence. The educational strategies in the institution were guided by the institutional policies that were in line with achieving the institutional motto, vision and mission.

Learning institutions develop education practices especially through the strategic plan by acknowledging the SWOTs analysis, risk and mitigation, stakeholders' analysis

towards achievement of academic excellence promoting academic integrity (MMUST, 2019). Practices are guided through by strategies adopted and this involved consideration of staff awareness on academic integrity and which allowed sharing of good practices in identifying any academic breaches.

4.5 Summary

Integrity had been researched for years but now a conclusion had been achieved on how cheating was stopped hence need for theories, practices, policies and strategies to help understand academic integrity and its expectations. There were also consequences of different severity that came up with any form of misconduct. It is unfortunate that academic integrity has been majored on as the key factor that is leading to the fall of education in the learning institutions. This being the case the many research conducted based on AI has still been taken for granted and learners have kept on with the habit of misconduct and more so increasingly during the covid-19 era in Kenya. It is important to be keen on emerging new ways of cheating especially promoted by the internet. From the topic discussed it is clear that academic misconduct is more prevalent in HLI and therefore more effort should be put to bring it to a standstill. As (Bretag & Haper, 2017) understand is that there should be no adverts made on contract cheating hence legislations should be set to make it illegal.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter enlightened on the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study from the previous chapters in respect to academic integrity in education during COVID-19 era. The conclusions and recommendations made, were in line with the study objectives summarized as; an analysis of the magnitude of academic integrity in education practices (teaching and learning i.e. online platforms, technology, assessment etc.), a critique of how education theories adopted academic integrity in education, a critique of how education policies ratified academic integrity in education, a proposal of probable strategies to enhance academic integrity in education during pandemic eras.

5.2 Summary

The objective of this study was to establish the critical analysis of academic integrity in higher learning institutions during the era of covid-19 pandemic in Kenya. Actually, from the various researches conducted and findings implicated, the pandemic has greatly influenced learning in institutions based on its effects to physical learning. It is evident that poor infrastructure, illiteracy to technology, limited time and readiness to

impending pandemics is the reason for paralyzed learning during covid-19. Implementation of policies, practices and strategies are vital for academic achievement but any altering to the same deems education to lack integrity. The findings indicated in the methodology was that inadequate monitoring of core values of integrity ruins the whole aspect of honesty because integrity is based on the foundations of ethics. Institutions should learn to enforce changes and ultimately remind the academicians to uphold integrity for the sake of their institutional reputation.

5.2 Conclusion

Academic misconduct is a universal problem that had been dealt with for years but kept evolving with time (Piug et al., 2021). This study emphasizes on upholding ethical considerations and to make academicians understand their importance in order to promote justice and fairness as further explained by (Wangmo, 2019). It was possible to achieve academic discipline once one was ready to uphold individual ethics that later led to a collective change in the academic fraternity. Theories, practices, policies and strategies had been present for many years but it was the responsibility of the education fraternity to upgrade and clearly outline for clarity for each stakeholder to avoid dishonesty and unintended consequences.

In view of this study, it was the responsibility of the GoK especially during covid-19 through the MOE to come up with realistic strategies, policies and practices to reduce or rather bring to an end the cases of misconduct in education. Most learners during that time did not acquire quality education as discussed in the chapters above. With the study bringing the understanding of academic integrity which has remained a myth to many it has been the wish of any researcher to bring change through studies conducted. The evolution of AI was speedy but little was known about it. Therefore it was clear that little information was available in its regard.

It was concluded that learners did not participate in developing of education policies which were to guide them, hence the reason they did not conform to the ones availed to them. Also training on ethics was overlooked by most institutions hence allowing academic misconduct to dominate especially during covid-19 era. The life skills taught in school were just read through for learners but are not instilled in them for them to practice them. Another conclusion is that teachers assume that learners are aware of

policies and practices of academics but in this case they should always sensitize them and remind them on the need to be morally upright. The study concluded that not even the teachers nor the GoK through MoE, had the preparedness to counter any pandemics but it is in the midst of the pandemic solutions were being sought to ensure learning proceeded but unfortunately, it was faced by challenges as explained in the study. The inadequacy of ICT infrastructure was the leading cause of misconduct which made major blow to education basically because few learners' and teachers were conversant with ICT.

5.3 Recommendations

Ethical behaviors should be taught from the lowest level of education to allow all learners regardless of age or culture to be conversant with academic integrity (Ronkainen, 2023). Clarifying the outlined rules/regulations and instructions on the policies and creating an environment that is friendly to all academicians. It is important to ensure fairness and just in administering punishments and clearly understand the root cause of a dishonest behavior.

It's significant to understanding each stakeholder's perspective to help identify upcoming and unnoticed needs. In his study, (Hutton, 2006) recommended that administration in institutions should regularly communicate academic integrity to remind learners of the policies for those who did not understand or hear for clarity. (Gallant, 2006) proposed to the assumption of malpractice being a dictatorial act rather he suggested that cheating should be viewed as a misbehavior not dishonesty and followed by fair punishment.

Those with the responsibility of educating should uphold maturity in their line of duty and reinforce integrity by encouraging learners to view integrity positively. Also it was noted that learners would cheat out of boring assessments and examinations hence recommended to involve them with interesting topics or to ease to hard language for easy understanding to avoid academic cheating. (Hulsart & McCarthy, 2009) recommended that teachers should be clear enough to learners that resistance to cheating is not failure but a courageous move to boost one's self esteem and respect. It was identified that some teachers just leave out some topics for learners to study by themselves hence most do not get conversant with it hence are tempted to cheat if

similar topics appear in their examinations. It's a recommendation that teachers should take up their responsibility to teach and bring clear understanding to the learners and help them out when in need (Badia et al., 2013).

It is important for institutions to come up with committees that evaluate, review and monitor policies in institutions which are guiding principles to ensuring academic integrity (Shah, 2023). Immediate action should always be taken once gaps are identified to avoid downfall of institutions based on dishonest that tampers their reputation. Review of institution policies, practices and strategies should be done periodically to reduce the monotony which leads to reluctance of academicians in an institution. All these policy documents established should be approved by institution board which is held accountable for any misguiding information against the institution.

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