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Section of the Manuscript	Comments and Notes
Title- Abstract- Summary	The title of the article is less interesting because there have been many studies that have raised the similar topic. The abstract substance is incomplete because it does not address the research problem and objectives.
Introduction and Literature Review	Objectives of the research are not clearly stated in the introduction. The signicance of the research is not also listed. It should provide writer's insight and plan to the problem-solving effort as well as some expectations and benefits of the research. The literature review is sufficient but needs to be added to the study of the causes of oral communication apprehension to deepen the analysis of the research problem.

Research Methods	The research design is appropriate but the reason of selecting sample is unclear. The use of the terms 'respondents' and 'participants' should be more consistent.
Research Findings	Data presentation is valid and reasonable provided by tables
Discussion	The findings of the study have not been properly discussed based on the research questions.
Conclusion and Suggestions	Conclusion should address summary of findings, research contributions and implications. In suggestion, research limitation and recommendation for future research should be clearly drawn.
References and Citation	Relevant references but still inadequate in the issue of causes of apprehension
Language	The language is quite clear and understandable.
Other issues	This study is deemed necessary to link the issue of the problem with the causes of the problem so that it can consider the solution models as a part of the research implications

Oral Communication Apprehension among Japanese EFL International Students in a Language Immersion Program in Malaysia

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Japanese EFL international students may experience high levels of apprehension when communicating in English due to their culture, educational background, attitudes towards the role of English in their society, and lack of opportunities to practice speaking in English. Although the students in this study had studied English before joining the English immersion program, their language learning experiences might not have focused on oral communication skills. EFL learners' oral communication apprehension has been examined in various contexts, but the Japanese EFL context has not received adequate attention, especially Japanese EFL international students in Malaysian institutions of tertiary education. Thus, this study examined the levels of oral communication apprehension among Japanese EFL international students in four communication contexts (group discussions, meetings, conversations, and public speaking). The study adopted a quantitative approach, using the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24) to measure oral communication apprehension levels among 23 first-year Japanese EFL students in an immersion program in a Malaysian public university. Data were analyzed using SPSS and Microsoft Excel. The results of this study revealed that most of the Japanese EFL international students exhibited a high level of oral communication apprehension. The study also revealed that the highest levels of apprehension were found in two communication contexts: group discussions and conversation, possibly because oral communication takes place spontaneously in these two communication contexts.

Keywords: oral communication apprehension, Japanese EFL students, Malaysian Public University, prca-24

INTRODUCTION

In foreign language teaching, the development of communication skills is one of the primary concerns (Demir, Mutlu, & Sisman, 2018). Oral communication skills are important in various contexts including tertiary education, postgraduate education, workplace, and business (Crosling & Ward, 2002; Moslehifar & Ibrahim, 2012). In fact, the command of oral communication skills is essential for the development of literacy, thinking, and learning (Radzuan & Kaur, 2010; Turiman, Omar, Daud, & Osman, 2012). Scholars have argued that undergraduate policy and curriculum should address and encompass elements on the development of oral communication skills because undergraduate students' academic progress and future life upon graduation can be determined by the level of their abilities to express themselves efficiently and successfully (Crosling & Ward, 2000). Additionally, undergraduate students' success in their studies depends on their command of oral communication skills (Crosling & Ward, 2000; Kim, 2006). However, the development of oral communication skills should not be perceived as an easy task because learners intending to develop their oral communication skills encounter various difficulties and challenges (Abu Alyan, 2013; Yanagi & Baker, 2016). Previous research focused on discovering factors that affect the development of oral communication (Huang, 2010). One of the variables that has been identified to greatly influence the development of oral communication skills is apprehension.

Research in the field of human communication has shown that one of the most frequently examined variables is communication comprehension (Levine & McCroskey, 1990; Hasni, Ismail, & Abdullah, 2019). Specifically, previous research has revealed that communication apprehension, or fear of communicating, is one the major factors that constrain learners from developing their communication skills effectively (Byrne, Flood, & Shanahan, 2012). According to McCroskey (1977a), communication apprehension refers to the fear or anxiety arising from interacting with others in any context that can be real or imaginary. This concept does not only reflect the state of being anxious while speaking or having audience anxiety. Rather, it refers to a wide range of aspects that are understood and recognized as traits, contexts, and situations (Hsiao, 2010). When oral production and communication apprehension are the concerns in language learning, we get the term 'oral communication apprehension'. Although various authors have offered some definitions of oral communication apprehension, one of the earliest definitions was proposed by McCroskey (1977a) who pointed out that this term refers to "a broad-based apprehension about oral communication, from talking to a single peer to giving a speech on television" (p. 29). According to McCroskey (1984), oral communication apprehension refers to the fear or anxiety associated with situations in which oral communication is required. This has been considered an important conceptualization of oral communication apprehension (Jung & McCroskey, 2004) and has been adopted by several researchers.

With regards to Japanese EFL students, oral communication apprehension and anxiety have been examined in some studies. Overall, most of the studies on oral communication apprehension among Japanese EFL students have reported important

findings (refer to studies reviewed in the next section) and the participants in most of these studies were Japanese EFL students studying in Japan (Klopf & Cambra, 1979; Yamashiro & McLaughlin, 2001; Andrade & Williams, 2009). In other words, oral communication apprehension among Japanese EFL students studying abroad has not been fully considered in previous studies. Furthermore, previous studies have not focused on oral communication apprehension among Japanese university students studying English in Malaysia.

In Japan, English is a classroom subject where students score well in examinations by carefully studying learning materials. In such a context, high levels of apprehension among Japanese EFL have been reported in previous studies. Kitano (2001) examined the sources of foreign language speaking anxiety among 212 students enrolled in Japanese language courses at two major state universities in USA and found a correlation between anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. Kondo and Yang (2003) found in their study of 148 university students in Japan that classroom anxiety was associated with three main factors: fear of negative evaluation by classmates, low proficiency, and speaking activities. Burden (2004) examined the degree of anxiety among 289 Japanese learning English in Okayama Shoka University, Japan and reported that half of the participants showed some level of anxiety. These results are similar to the studies by Klopf and Cambra (1979), McCroskey et al. (1985) and Pribyl et al. (1998) who found that Japanese EFL students reported high levels of communication apprehension. This can be attributed to various factors such as sociocultural variables, students' educational background, and students' lack of opportunities to communicate orally in English.

The students who participated in the current study had studied English before joining the English immersion program, however their previous educational background reflects that they have not received sufficient instruction and practice in English oral communication skills. This is evident in research studies in the Japanese context. For example, Mitchell (2017) showed that English language instruction in Japanese high schools has been highly dominated by a more passive exam-based grammar focused approach where inadequate attention is given to communicative-based approach. However, MacWhinnie and Mitchell (2017) pointed out the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology in Japan has initiated an educational reform to develop upper secondary school students' ability to develop English speaking and communication skills. Commenting on this reform, Mitchell (2017) argued that Japanese students learning English in high school encounter various challenges because they need to study grammar, develop test taking strategies, and focus on developing communication skills.

With regards to the Japanese EFL context, most of the studies on oral communication apprehension among Japanese EFL students were participants studying in Japan (Andrade & Williams, 2009; Klopf & Cambra, 1979; Yamashiro & McLaughlin, 2001). In other words, few studies have focused on communication apprehension among Japanese EFL students who are studying abroad. These studies have shown contradictory findings. For example, Tajima (2002), Matsuda and Gobel (2003), and

Tani-Fukuchi and Sakamoto (2005) reported that Japanese EFL students who studied abroad grew in confidence in their English-speaking skills. However, Yanagi and Baker (2016) revealed that Japanese students in Australian universities encounter difficulty with speaking than with listening and pronunciation. Hence, oral communication apprehension among Japanese EFL students studying abroad, particularly in language immersion programs in an Asian country such as Malaysia, has not been fully considered in previous studies.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine Japanese EFL international students' level of oral communication apprehension and to assess their feelings about communicating in four communication contexts: group discussions, meetings, conversations, and public speaking. According to McCroskey and Richmond (1980), these four communication contexts are the most relevant to communication apprehension and they are representative of common communication situations. Specifically, the current study addressed the following two research questions:

   1.   What are the levels of Japanese EFL international students' oral communication apprehension?
   2.   Which oral communication contexts (group discussions, meetings, conversations, and public speaking) do Japanese EFL international students exhibit apprehension in?

The findings of the current study are significant to the fields of oral communication apprehension and English language teaching in EFL contexts. First, the findings can be useful for English language instructors of immersion programs in Malaysia and overseas because the study can, hopefully, uncover oral communication apprehension levels among Japanese EFL international students. Consequently, the results of the study can reveal important data on Japanese EFL international students' abilities, confidence, frustration and fear when they express themselves in English in formal and informal environments during the immersion program. Second, awareness of students' oral communication apprehension levels can help English language education planning units in Japan in the development of curriculum and materials to build students' self-confidence and speaking skills in English in different communication contexts.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This section encompasses three sub-sections. The first sub-section offers an explanation of the four oral communication contexts that have been examined in the current study. This explanation is done here to guide the analysis of the research problem. The second sub-section presents the causes of communication apprehension based on what has been reported in previous studies. The third section presents an overview of the studies that have examined communication apprehension among Japanese EFL students.

Four Oral Communication Contexts

McCroskey (1984) proposed a taxonomy of four communication contexts that can trigger apprehension. These four communication contexts are group discussions, meetings, conversations, and public speaking. In group discussion, the participants use language to communicate orally or discuss some issues (McCroskey, Richmond, & Davis, 1986). Participants in this communication context may vary in their

communication skills and knowledge about the topic of discussion. Even if the size of a small group may differ from one context to another, 3-15 participants can participate in a group discussion (Myers & Anderson, 2008; Socha, 1997). Effective participation in group discussions can provide members with a better understanding and retention of the concepts and issues that are discussed by members of the group (Young & Henquinet, 2000). Further, group discussion is a good context for creativity where group members engage in idea generation (Sunwolf, 2002). For L2 learners, group discussions can help them improve their communication skills and build self-confidence (Bakar & Latif, 2010).

A meeting is an oral communication context in which participants get together and discuss a problem, issue, or a special matter (Harris & Sherblom, 2018). It has been argued that meetings are effective and important tools in oral communication (Crosling & Ward, 2002). For L2 learners, activities that are similar to the meeting context can enable them to be engaged in face-to-face contact with other students and practice oral communication skills (Sabri & Qin, 2014; Somsai & Intaraprasert, 2011). Among communication contexts, a conversation is one of the most basic and essential one because it helps the participants to share thoughts, opinions, and ideas, and receive them in turn. As the participants talk without prior preparation in conversations, L2 learners may encounter various difficulties and experience high apprehension in this communication context which involves face-to-face spontaneous speaking (Somsai & Intaraprasert, 2011). Thus, L2 learners may require major scaffolding to use these skills effectively and to construct meaning based on their understanding of other participants in the conversation (Zwiers & Crawford, 2009). The fourth communication context in McCroskey's (1984) taxonomy is public speaking, which refers to the oral communication practice in which a speaker shares his/her ideas with an audience (Hostetler & Kahl, 2017). In L2 contexts, learners should be trained on how to carry out public speaking effectively so that they are motivated to develop oral communication skills (Yee & Abidin, 2014).

All these four communication contexts (group discussion, meetings, conversations, and public speaking) can be stressful for learners of English language in any context. Due to the importance of these four communication contexts, various researchers in L2 contexts have measured students' apprehension in these contexts and reported significant findings (e.g., Kitano, 2001; Yanagi & Baker, 2016).

Causes of Communication Apprehension

Previous studies that have examined issues related to oral comprehension apprehension in the Japanese EFL context are also reviewed here. Even though McCroskey (1977b) suggested that it is difficult to get a complete list of sources of communication apprehension, there are some attempts to classify causes of communication apprehension. While some researchers preferred to offer classifications of these causes, other researchers have just listed the causes of communication apprehension. For example, McCroskey (1980) identified seven causes of communication apprehension: low intellectual skills, speech skill deficiencies, voluntary social introversion, social alienation, communication anxiety, low social self-esteem, and ethnic/cultural

divergence in communication norms. McCroskey (1980) connected these factors to children in schools, but these factors can also be the causes of communication apprehension among adult L2 learners. Rojo-Laurilla (2005) believed that causes of communication apprehension can be grouped into two groups: internal factors (such as physiological factors) and external factors (such as the nature of the topic of discussion). Prusank (1987) offered four plausible explanations of the causes of communication apprehension: genetic predispositions, reinforcement, modelling, and learned helplessness. Recent researchers, such as Rimkeeratikul (2016), support the claim that communication apprehension can be explained through genetic and environmental factors. Molnar and Crnjak (2018) explained that while the genetic predisposition refers to the inherited characteristics that may be behind communication apprehension, environmental aspects (such as reinforcement, modelling, and learned helplessness) are factors that an individual has no control over. Yet, McCroskey (1977b) was against this conceptualization of genetic predisposition because he believed that communication apprehension is a learned trait. For him, apprehension is a trait that is associated with the reinforcement of the child's communication behaviors.

For McCroskey (1997), causes of communication apprehension might include: novelty, formality, subordinate status, and degree of attention from others. Further, some other researchers have proposed that factors such as demographic, cultural, and socio-economic factors may be sources of communication apprehension (Alley-Young, 2005; Watson, Monroe, & Atterstrom, 1989). Cultural differences have been reported to cause communication apprehension. For example, Alley-Young (2005) argued that in some cultures, people may prefer direct and verbally active communication, which can create apprehension for others. Hsu (2004) investigated factors that contributed to the differences in communication apprehension between Chinese in Taiwan and Americans. She reported that Taiwan college students reported significantly higher communication apprehension than Americans. She has also highlighted that differences in cultural orientations, personality traits, and communication apprehension components can be the sources of communication apprehension. She further showed that the value of being independent, unique, and direct in communication may be another cause of fear of communicating with people. Further, Hsu (2007) discussed that possible differences in communication between cultures can account for high levels of apprehension. Thaher (2005) listed the following categories of factors of communication apprehension within an EFL classroom: (1) psychological factors, which include emotion, self-esteem, anxiety, attitude, fear, and motivation; (2) instructional factors, which include goals, teachers, methods, texts, time, intensity, and means of evaluation; and (3) sociocultural factors, which include acculturation, social distance, second versus foreign language learning, and culturally accepted thought.

Manjet, David, and Choo (2011) highlighted international undergraduate students' problem of insufficient background knowledge and communicative experience with the English language in their native country during their experience as international students in a Malaysian public university. Class discussions, group discussions and open sharing of ideas on a voluntary basis are part of the requirements for an English course. The researchers used McCroskey's (1970) Personal Report of Communication Apprehension

scale (PRCA-24) to identify oral communication apprehension faced by 17 international university students from China, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia and Thailand. The majority (62.5%) in this group of international students reported high communication apprehension levels in public speaking.

To sum up, it is difficult for researchers to agree on a complete list of causes of communication apprehension because they vary based on the context, age of the users of language, learning environment, and other sociocultural factors.

Oral Communication Apprehension among Japanese EFL Students

This section reviews studies that have measured communication apprehension among Japanese EFL students in their country and abroad. Klopf and Cambra (1979) is one of the early studies that have examined oral communication apprehension among Japanese EFL students. They focused on learners in four countries: the US, Japan, Australia, and Korea. They hypothesized that there would be no differences in oral communication apprehension among learners in these four countries. However, their hypothesis was rejected because variations were detected among the sample taken from these four countries. Another important finding from the study is that Japanese students appeared to be shy, showing unwillingness to communicate orally, especially with those who do not belong to their in-groups.

In another study in the Japanese context, McCroskey, Gudykunst, and Nishida (1985) used PRCA-24 to examine communication apprehension among 209 Japanese students in Nihon University in Japan. The researchers wanted to compare comprehension apprehension among Japanese college students in two language contexts: speaking in English and speaking in Japanese. Although the results showed that Japanese students had a high level of communication apprehension in terms of speaking, the difference for these students speaking in English and in Japanese were not significant. In other words, there was no difference in the levels of oral communication apprehension, whether it is in English or Japanese. Pribyl, Keaten, Sakamoto, and Koshikawa (1998) also used the PRCA-24 to collect data regarding oral communication apprehension from a sample drawn from a major private university in Tokyo. They reported that the means for the PRCA-24 and its sub-dimensions for the Japanese college students were higher. McCroskey et al. (1985) found that Japanese students experienced high communication apprehension when they communicated in Japanese and their second language (L2), English. Yanagi and Baker (2016) used questionnaires and interviews to collect data from 33 undergraduate and postgraduate Japanese students. They reported that the Japanese students in Australian universities had greater difficulty with speaking than with listening and pronunciation.

Some studies have focused on anxiety and its relation to some variables such as proficiency and motivation. Kitano (2001) examined the sources of foreign language speaking anxiety among 212 students enrolled in Japanese language courses at two major state universities in USA. The researcher reported a correlation between anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. The study also revealed a correlation between anxiety and perception of low ability in relation to peers and native speakers. Thus, the study highlighted the importance of giving positive reinforcement to students who have fear of

negative evaluation. Furthermore, the study also recommended interventions by teachers through the design of the classroom environment and the incorporation of pair and group work to create a classroom community where students can be engaged in various oral communication activities. Focusing on the anxiety of 220 Japanese junior college and university students, Yamashiro and McLaughlin (2001) reported that higher levels of anxiety tend to indicate lower levels of proficiency. Their findings also showed that a higher level of motivation may lead to a higher level of anxiety, which in turn may lead to a lower level of proficiency. Kondo and Yang (2003) found in their study of 148 university students in Japan that classroom anxiety was associated with three main factors: fear of negative evaluation by classmates, low proficiency, and speaking activities. Burden (2004) examined the degree of anxiety among 289 Japanese learning English in Okayama Shoka University, Japan. He collected data using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) which was proposed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986). Burden reported that half of the participants revealed some level of anxiety. He suggested that teachers should use communicative strategies that help students to minimize their level of anxiety.

Matsuda and Gobel (2004) focused on Japanese EFL students enrolled in study abroad programs. They investigated the effects of overseas experience on anxiety among Japanese college students majoring in English. They collected data using some instruments including the FLCAS (Horwitz et al., 1986) and reported that the students' overseas experience, which ranged from two weeks to five years, had a significant effect on their responses to the FLCAS. However, there was no correlation between the length of stay in a foreign country and the students' responses to the items of the FLCAS.

Two studies used a qualitative approach to obtain information on factors that cause apprehension. Williams and Andrade (2008) identified the situations that provoked anxiety among Japanese university students in EFL classes by asking 243 students to write and categorize anxiety-provoking situations they had encountered into three stages of the language-learning process: input, output, and processing. Output and processing stages made up 75% of all the anxiety-provoking situations. Half of the students perceived teachers as the source of those anxiety-provoking situations, suggesting the need for considering the improvement of student-teacher relationship. Whilst most students felt frustrated and helpless, the students who were more confident of their English abilities indicated a greater sense of resilience. Based on these findings, the researchers suggested that teachers should be aware of anxiety-provoking situations, take steps to minimize their negative effect, and provide explicit instruction on how to cope with these situations. Further research is also called on the actual effectiveness of these instructional techniques in diverse classroom settings. Matsuoka (2008) interviewed 10 Japanese students and one from Vietnam to examine factors that create communication apprehension. He reported that these factors are competitiveness, perfectionism, face-protecting orientation, and valuing reticence. However, the study did not explain how the eleven participants conceptualized factors generating apprehension. Furthermore, the findings of the study cannot be generalized due to the dependence on qualitative data obtained from a small sample size.

Recently, MacWhinnie and Mitchell (2017) investigated L2 motivational self-system and anxiety exhibited by Japanese undergraduate students towards English language learning. They wanted to know how this correlation can mediate Japanese EFL students' ability to acquire English language skills. They collected data using a questionnaire that encompassed items on motivation, anxiety, intended effort, and English language proficiency items. They reported that the ideal L2 self and L2 learning experiences are correlated with lower anxiety levels and that this correlation, in turn resulted in positive learning results. They also revealed that while the ought-to self was found to be indicative of increased anxiety, the ought-to self was reported to be a strong indicator of motivation overall.

The review of related studies has shown that oral communication apprehension among Japanese students studying abroad has not been fully explored. Although Matsuda and Gobel (2004) focused on Japanese EFL students' overseas experience and anxiety, they did not use the PRCA-24. Additionally, the review of previous studies that examined communication apprehension among Japanese EFL students has revealed gaps in research. First, apart from Matsuda and Gobel (2004) and Yanagi and Baker (2016), no study has examined oral communication apprehension among Japanese EFL international students in overseas contexts. Second, previous studies have not focused on the measurement of communication apprehension among Japanese EFL international students in an Asian university. Thus, the current study was carried out to address these two gaps. The findings of this study can give teachers of English language courses in Malaysian and other Asian higher education institutions a better understanding of how Japanese EFL international students feel towards speaking in English when studying abroad.

METHOD

This study adopts the quantitative paradigm of research, in which a survey instrument was used to collect data (Johnson & Christensen, 2019). In this survey, data were gathered using a questionnaire. In educational research, it is very common to use questionnaires to gather data because they are effective and generally cheaper and quicker than other methods of survey (Babbie, 2013; Larini & Barthes, 2018). Furthermore, in this study a questionnaire was chosen for data collection because it can produce comprehensive responses from the participants within a short time (Cargan, 2007). This study utilizes the PRCA-24 because it is a self-report instrument that measures communication anxiety in different dimensions, such as public speaking, talking in meetings or classes, talking in small groups, and talking in dyads (McCroskey, 1984).

Participants and the Context

The population of this study was 30 Japanese EFL international students who were enrolled in a 3-week immersion program in a public university in Malaysia. The sample of this study consists of first-year Japanese university students who were enrolled in an English for communication course. This course was chosen because the main objective of this course is to help students to improve their oral communication skills in English. Furthermore, in this course the students were given opportunities to engage in oral

communication tasks, such as spoken dialogues with task-related vocabulary and grammar. Dialogues as models were also played to the students as a listening task.

Twenty-three (14 male and 9 female) Japanese EFL international students were selected by employing simple random sampling where all members of the population had an equal and independent chance of being included in the sample (Ary, Jacobs, Irvine, & Walker, 2018). The students' ages ranged between 18 and 19 years old. Slightly more than 50% (n=13) of the students studied English for an average of 6 years, while the rest of the sample studied English for 10 to 16 years. The number of female students (5 out of 8) who had studied English for more than 10 years outnumbered the male students (5 out of 16). These students were purposively selected because they were studying courses that focused on improvement of oral communication skills in English.

Prior to their arrival in Malaysia, the students sat for the International English Language Testing Services test in Japan. 25% of the students scored 6.0-6.5, more than 50% scored 5.0-5.5, while 25% scored as low as 4.5. Mapped against the Common European Framework of Reference, only 25% of the students were categorized at Band B1 or Independent Users, while 75% of the students were at A2 and A1 levels of Basic Users.

Data Collection

In this study, data were collected using the PRCA-24, which is widely accepted as a reliable and valid instrument for measuring communication apprehension. Compared to other rival instruments that measure communication apprehension and anxiety (e.g., FLCAS, PRCA, PRCA10, and PRCA-24B), PRCA-24 has been widely used by several researchers because it is highly reliable and has a very high predictive validity (Chen, 1994). Furthermore, it permits researchers to obtain sub-scores on four communication contexts: group discussions, meetings, conversations, and public speaking (McCroskey, 1982). There are six items for each communication context. The composite score is determined by adding the scores of the 24 items. Additionally, this instrument has a strong face validity and empirical validity and has consistently produced internal reliabilities in the .91 to .96 range. The internal reliability (Cronbach Alpha) in this study was .91.

The PRCA-24 scale measures individuals' propensity to communicate with others (McCroskey, 1982; McCroskey, Beatty, Kearney, & Pax, 1985). The original form of PRCA-24 was developed by McCroskey (1982). It is a Likert scale comprising twenty-four statements and requires the participants to indicate whether they strongly agree (1), agree (2), are undecided (3), disagree (4), or strongly disagree (5) with each statement. A high score indicates comparatively more oral communication apprehension and a low score means less apprehension. An online version of the questionnaire was used to gather the participants demographic data and levels of communication apprehension in different communication contexts (group discussions, meetings, conversations, and public speaking).

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, version 23) and Microsoft Excel. Students' responses to all items of the PRCA-24 were tabulated

and entered into an SPSS file. Table 1 shows how the levels of apprehension were identified. Based on McCroskey et al. (1985), scores of apprehension levels can range from 24-120. Scores below 51 represent people who have very low communication apprehension. Scores between 51 and 80 represent people with average communication apprehension. Scores above 80 represent people who have high levels of communication apprehension. Microsoft Excel was used for summing up scores, calculating percentages, and sorting scores from the highest score to the lowest one for the overall apprehension level and for each communication context. The researchers conferred on several occasions to revise and check the analysis of the data. They ensured that the data were correctly entered into the SPSS file and that the calculation of apprehension levels was accurate.

Table 1
Levels of communication apprehension

Level of apprehension	Scores
High	Scores between 80 and 120 indicate a high level of communication apprehension
Moderate	Scores between 51 and 80 indicate a moderate level of communication apprehension
Low	Scores below 51 indicate a low level of communication apprehension

FINDINGS

Oral Communication Apprehension Levels of Japanese EFL International Students

This section reports the findings to the first research question (What are the levels of Japanese EFL international students' oral communication apprehension?). The results concerning oral communication apprehension of Japanese EFL international students are displayed in Table 2 where the score of apprehension for each participant is reported. The scores are reported in a descending order (from the highest score of apprehension to the lowest one). Furthermore, Table 3 shows the frequencies and percentages of the three levels of oral communication apprehension for the 23 Japanese EFL international students.

Tables 2 and 3 reveal that 14 Japanese EFL students scored a high level of apprehension (61%), eight Japanese EFL students scored a moderate level of apprehension (35%), and only one student had a low level of apprehension. Those who scored high levels of apprehension were 10 male students and four female students. On the other hand, those who had a moderate level of apprehension were four male students and four female students. The only student who had a low level of apprehension was a male student. Thus, the analysis of the data showed that most of the students who participated in this study had a high level of apprehension in oral communication. The results reported in this section have focused on the overall score of apprehension. The following sub-section reports the levels of apprehension in each communication context (group discussions, meetings, conversations, and public speaking).

Table 2
Oral communication apprehension levels of Japanese EFL international students

Participant	Group Discussions	Meetings	Conversations	Public Speaking	Total Scores
M4	30	28	24	26	108
M15	30	25	27	24	106

Participant	Group Discussions	Meetings	Conversations	Public Speaking	Total Scores
M13	30	22	22	20	94
F2	30	18	23	22	93
F8	31	21	30	9	91
M11	27	21	21	19	88
M12	28	22	22	16	88
M10	28	20	21	18	87
M14	23	17	24	23	87
M8	28	20	18	17	83
F7	28	18	23	13	82
M9	27	20	21	14	82
F6	26	17	19	19	81
M2	24	18	21	18	81
M3	26	15	23	11	75
F1	21	18	20	13	72
M7	28	19	18	6	71
F4	24	17	16	13	70
M1	26	12	13	18	69
M6	24	16	18	10	68
F3	25	15	16	6	62
F5	21	7	18	8	54
M5	22	6	10	10	48

Table 3

Frequencies and percentages of oral communication comprehension levels (23 students)

Level of apprehension	Frequency	Percentage
High	14	61%
Moderate	8	35%
Low	1	4%

Communication Apprehension Across Four Communication Contexts

This sub-section reports the findings to the second research question (Which oral communication contexts do EFL Japanese students exhibit apprehension in?). Scores on the four oral communication contexts (group discussions, meetings, conversations, and public speaking) can range from 6 (a low level) to 30 (a high level). Based on McCroskey (1977a), any score above 18 indicates some degree of apprehension. Before reporting the apprehension levels for each of these four communication contexts, Table 4 below provides the overall score of communication apprehension for each communication context. The highest levels of apprehension are in two communication contexts: group discussions (100%) and conversations (83%).

Table 4

Overall frequencies and percentages for four communication contexts

Communication context	Frequency	Percentage
Group discussions	23	100%
Meetings	14	61%
Conversations	19	83%
Public speaking	10	43%

Communication Apprehension Levels in Group Discussions

Table 5 below displays the comprehension levels of the 23 Japanese EFL international students in terms of group discussions. Surprisingly, all the 23 students (100%) showed high levels of apprehension in group discussions. It is a striking result because it reveals that Japanese EFL students exhibit high apprehension of being involved in group discussions, which involves using English orally in discussion with other participants. This reveals that this communication situation (group discussions) is a source of high apprehension among Japanese EFL students. These results indicate that participation in group discussions in English creates fear among Japanese EFL students studying overseas.

Table 5
Communication apprehension in group discussions

Participant	Score of apprehension in group discussions
F8	31
M4	30
M15	30
M13	30
F2	30
M12	28
M10	28
M8	28
F7	28
M7	28
M11	27
M9	27
F6	26
M3	26
M1	26
F3	25
M2	24
F4	24
M6	24
M14	23
M5	22
F1	21
F5	21

Communication Apprehension Levels in Meetings

In the communication context of meetings, Table 6 presents the results in a descending order. As shown in Table 6, 14 out of 23 Japanese EFL students (61%) exhibited a high level of communication apprehension in meetings. Among those who showed high level of apprehension in meetings, 10 are male students (43%) and 4 are female students (17%). These results reveal that most of the participants appeared to be uncomfortable when they participate in a meeting in which English is used.

Table 6
Communication apprehension in meetings

Participant	Score of apprehension in meetings
M4	28
M15	25
M13	22
M12	22
F8	21
M11	21
M10	20
M8	20
M9	20
M7	19
F2	18
F7	18
M2	18
F1	18
M14	17
F6	17
F4	17
M6	16
M3	15
F3	15
M1	12
F5	7
M5	6

Communication Apprehension Levels in Conversations

In the communication context of conversations, Table 7 displays the results in a descending order. As reflected in Table 7, 19 out of 23 Japanese EFL students (83%) exhibited high levels of communication apprehension in conversations. Among those who showed high levels of apprehension in conversations, 13 are male students (57%) and 6 are female students (26%). Based on these results, it can be recognized that most of the participants appear to feel fear when they participate in conversations in English. Furthermore, these results reflect that Japanese EFL international students do not feel relaxed when they engage in English conversations with students in universities overseas.

Table 7
Communication apprehension in conversations

Participant	Score of apprehension in conversations
F8	30
M15	27
M4	24
M14	24
F2	23
F7	23
M3	23
M13	22

Participant	Score of apprehension in conversations
M12	22
M11	21
M10	21
M9	21
M2	21
F1	20
F6	19
M8	18
M7	18
M6	18
F5	18
F4	16
F3	16
M1	13
M5	10

Communication Apprehension Levels in Public Speaking

For the communication context of public speaking, Table 8 shows the results in a descending order whereby the highest levels of apprehension are listed first. As reflected in Table 8, only 10 out of 23 Japanese EFL students (43%) exhibited a high level of communication apprehension in public speaking. Among those who showed high levels of apprehension in public speaking, eight students are male students (35%) and two are female students (9%). These results reveal that most of the participants do not have fear when they are engaged in public speaking. Furthermore, these results can indicate that Japanese EFL students are comfortable in giving a speech in public in English when they study abroad.

Table 8
Communication apprehension in public speaking

Participant	Score of apprehension in public speaking
M4	26
M15	24
M14	23
F2	22
M13	20
M11	19
F6	19
M10	18
M2	18
M1	18
M8	17
M12	16
M9	14
F7	13
F1	13
F4	13
M3	11
M6	10
M5	10

Participant	Score of apprehension in public speaking
F8	9
F5	8
M7	6
F3	6

DISCUSSION

Based on the two research questions addressed in this study, this section discusses the results of the study. First, the levels of Japanese EFL international students' oral communication apprehension are discussed, taking into account what previous studies have reported on communication apprehension among Japanese EFL students. Second, levels of oral communication apprehension of these students are discussed in terms of apprehension in the four communication contexts: group discussion, meetings, conversations, and public speaking.

Japanese EFL International Students' Oral Communication Apprehension Levels

In this section, we discuss the findings that are related to levels of oral communication apprehension among Japanese EFL students who were in a language immersion program at a Malaysian public university. This study reported that these students exhibited high scores of oral communication apprehension. In other words, Japanese EFL students appear to have a high level of fear and anxiety during their involvement in either real or anticipated communication with other persons. The high levels of oral communication apprehension reported in this study support the findings of Manjet et al. (2011) and Kondo and Yang (2003). While Manjet et al. (2011) revealed the presence of high levels of oral communication apprehension among international students in a Malaysian public university, Kondo and Yang (2003) attributed Japanese EFL students' anxiety to fear of negative evaluation by classmates, low proficiency, and the nature of speaking activities employed in their classrooms. The results of our study have revealed that Japanese EFL students viewed themselves as significantly apprehensive in various oral communication contexts. Thus, the results of our study confirm the findings reported in most of the previous studies that examined communication apprehension among Japanese EFL students, either in Japan or when they are international students in other countries.

High levels of oral communication apprehension among Japanese EFL international students can be attributed to their cultural background, difficulties in oral communication in English, attitudes towards the role of English in their society, and educational background. The high level of apprehension among Japanese EFL students can be attributed to their educational environment where little attention is given to the use of communication skills in English. The findings of our study are consistent with the findings of related studies that have focused on oral communication skills among Japanese EFL students. For example, Takanashi (2004) noticed that "Japanese students often feel it is difficult to acquire communicative skills in English" (p. 1). The high level of apprehension among Japanese EFL students in this study may be associated with the educational background of Japanese EFL students where traditional styles of teaching English, with a teacher-centered approach, is a common pedagogical preference (Matsuura, Chiba, & Hilderbrandt, 2001). Furthermore, some researchers have noticed

that Japanese EFL learners' attitude towards the role of English within their society can be one of the causes of communication apprehension. Regarding this, it has been reported that Japanese EFL students may believe that there is no immediate need for English use in their society (Maftoon & Ziafar, 2013). This, in turn, does not help students to be involved in authentic communication where spontaneity plays an important role. Cultural factors may make Japanese EFL students reluctant to communicate orally, leading to high levels of oral communication apprehension. For example, the infrequent use of open and negative expressions in interactions and students' passive responses towards the questioning technique are some of the cultural aspects among Japanese EFL students (Maftoon & Ziafar, 2013). These factors can contribute to the high level of communication apprehension among Japanese EFL international students when they use English for oral communication.

Japanese EFL International Students' Communication Apprehension Across Four Communication Contexts

This section discusses the findings related to Japanese EFL students' communication apprehension across four communication contexts: group discussion meetings, conversations, and public speaking. In fact, this study showed that the levels of apprehension in the four communication contexts were high for Japanese EFL international students. However, the highest levels of apprehension were in two communication contexts: group discussions (100%) and conversations (83%). This can be attributed to the fact that oral communication in group discussions is spontaneous where the participants do not have time to prepare for this oral communication context. Thus, the study revealed that most of the students expressed that they feel uncomfortable participating in group discussions because this communication context makes them tense and nervous. These high levels of apprehension reflected Japanese EFL students' fear of speaking up in English conversations, especially when they have conversations with new acquaintances. The study also showed that Japanese EFL students have communication apprehension in meetings and public speaking. However, higher levels of apprehension were reported in group discussions and conversations. These results can be attributed to the fact that students have time to prepare for what to talk about in meetings and in public speaking.

CONCLUSIONS

The current study examined oral communication apprehension among 23 Japanese EFL international students who were in an English language immersion program in a Malaysian public university. Data were collected using the PRCA-24 instrument and analyzed using SPSS and Microsoft Excel. The study has reported significant findings related to oral communication apprehension among Japanese EFL international students studying English in an immersion program in a Malaysian public university. The findings of this study can be summarized in four main points. First, it is obvious that this high level of communication apprehension among Japanese EFL students reflect that these students have high level of fear and anxiety when they communicate in English with others outside of Japan. Second, Japanese EFL students exhibited the highest level of oral communication apprehension in group discussions. Third, the study also revealed

that Japanese EFL international students have a high level of communication apprehension in English conversations. Fourth, Japanese EFL international students reported communication apprehension in meetings and public speaking, but the levels were lower than the levels of apprehension in group discussions and meetings.

Oral communication apprehension has been of interest to researchers and L2 educators for more than two decades. Research on this psychological construct has shown that communication apprehension can have various negative effects on learners' performance, participation, course grades, cognitive processing, and motivation. One of the major effects of apprehension is the learners' negative perception of their abilities as compared to others.

Japanese EFL international students in this current study exhibited high apprehension levels in oral communication because they might not be equipped with the necessary knowledge of language that covers lexical items, grammatical structures, and phonological units. Although the students in this study had studied English before joining the English immersion program, their previous educational background might not have focused on the communicative aspects of language. Besides, Japanese EFL students' fear of evaluation and inability to apply communication strategies can also explain the level of oral communication apprehension they reported.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Similar to other studies that have been conducted on small scales of participants, the current study has some limitations, which can be utilized as suggestions for future research. One of the limitations of this study is the sample of the study. Generally speaking, the small sample size is considered to be a challenge for researchers because they cannot provide generalizations of their findings. In this study, the small sample size limited us to use inferential statistical analysis where relationship among variables can be measured. Another limitation of this study is that it focused only on exploring oral communication apprehension in four communication contexts. A third limitation of this study is the dependence on only quantitative data. Taking these limitations into consideration, suggestions for future research are given below.

As the participants in this study were 23 Japanese EFL international students in a language immersion program in a Malaysian public university, the findings cannot be generalized to all Japanese EFL students in Malaysia. Future researchers may consider a larger sample of Japanese EFL international students in Malaysian or other Asian institutions of higher education so that the findings can support the findings of the current study. Furthermore, large sample size can help researchers to focus on more than one issue in their studies and offer good and reliable generalizations. Thus, future researchers may focus on the correlation between the overall communication apprehension and other variables. The findings of such studies can provide useful insights on Japanese EFL international students' oral communication apprehension. Some of these variables that can draw future researcher's attention are gender, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and L2 motivational self-system.

Another limitation of this study is that it used only quantitative data to answer the two research questions. Hence, future research may consider the adoption of a mixed methods design in which both quantitative and qualitative data are collected for triangulation purposes or to use the qualitative data to support and explain the quantitative results. Thus, future research may consider the implementation of a sequential mixed-methods design in which quantitative data can be collected using PRCA-24 and analyzed. After that, the results of PRCA-24 can be used to construct interview questions that can be geared towards explaining the levels of apprehension in the four communication contexts of PRCA-24.

Finally, future studies may adopt experimental research designs that examine the effects of an intervention program that targets decreasing oral communication apprehension. After understanding the communication situations in which Japanese EFL international students exhibit high levels of apprehension when they speak in English, it is definitely important to employ instructional strategies that can help students minimize their oral communication apprehension. This can be done through quasi-experimental studies where students' oral communication apprehension can be measured at the beginning and at the end of the intervention program to test whether the intervention can help students reduce their communication apprehension. Such intervention programs may include various instructional activities that can target the improvement of communication skills in the English language.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Based on the findings of the current study, some pedagogical implications can be suggested. As this study showed that Japanese EFL international students have high level of oral communication apprehension, teachers in English immersion programs should consider the instructional design of English classes that can help students to minimize apprehension levels. Although it is natural for anyone to undergo a state of discomfort or anxiety during a conversation with others, particularly when group discussions are involved (Hasni et al., 2019), steps must be taken to reduce communication apprehension among EFL students. Furthermore, teachers need to guide the students on how to minimize the negative effect of high levels of apprehension through direct instruction and training. For example, teachers may need to consider designing learning environments where students enjoy participating in conversations and do not have to fear being a participant in a conversation. More practice in the use of oral skills in conversations in the English language classroom can help students to be relaxed when they start a conversation with a new acquaintance. Another activity that may be used to help students minimize oral communication apprehension is teachers' use of questioning techniques to encourage students to talk in English, either in group discussions or conversations. Teachers can also create discussion and conversation topics where a variety of answers can be accepted. In such situations, the students will not have fear concerning right or wrong answers, which will encourage them to use English freely. Besides, pair work and group tasks may be effective strategies for creating a comfortable classroom environment for students to practice speaking English comfortably.

To help Japanese EFL international students acquire context-based vocabulary, teachers can include language-based activities such as vocabulary worksheet-based tasks, reading resource materials through sequencing activities (e.g., strip texts), information gap listening exercises from dialogues, discussions, and meetings that provide exposure to the English language in daily use.

Based on the results of high apprehension levels in some communication contexts, teachers of oral communication courses can encourage students to participate in oral communication tasks, such as charades for concrete vocabulary items, student-produced role plays, problem-solving discussions, and the production of audio or video programs. Communicative language-based tasks may provide opportunities for Japanese EFL students to develop and practice listening and speaking skills for different contexts in realistic situations they may encounter as international students studying abroad.

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Sincerely yours,
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Title- Abstract- Summary	Title is less interesting, still general and does not reflect the content. Abstract is incomplete as it does not include factual problems and research objectives. The method is not clearly stated, including the research instruments. The results are not presented in a systematic and concise manner. Title and abstract need a thorough revision in terms of academic writing and spelling errors.
Introduction and Literature Review	In introduction, objectives of the research are not clearly mentioned. The significance of the research is not also listed. It should include researchers' insight and plan to solve the problems as well as some benefits of the research. The literature review does not discuss

	relevant studies and has not identified a research gap. The researchers need to place a different position in filling the gap.
Research Methods	The research design is appropriate but the reason of selecting sample is unclear. The use of interviews as a means of collecting qualitative data does not sufficiently meet the trustworthiness of the data obtained.
Research Findings	The statistical meanings of the results should be interpreted. The findings from the interview should be checked first through a triangulation mechanism with other instruments to maintain the trustworthiness of the research data.
Discussion	Due to the unclear sequence of the discussion, the findings have not been thoroughly examined. There should be explanations for such findings. It is suggested that the researchers build a relationship between the data presented earlier and the comments contained in the analysis section in order to encourage critical discussion. As a result, there should be a one-to-one correspondence between the findings and the points of discussion. For explanations, more background information about the participants should be provided.
Conclusion and Suggestions	Summary of findings, research contributions, and implications should all be addressed in the conclusion. Study limitations and recommendations for further research should be explicitly drawn in suggestion. The recommendations should be more practical and based in the research.
References and Citation	In the literature review section, it is suggested that reserachers review recent relevant publications mostly using primary sources from journals to develop a specialty for the current topic. For compliance with APA style, in-text citations should be revised.
Language	Throughout the paper, there are a number of grammatical and spelling errors. The overall impression of the work will undoubtedly be enhanced by attentive reading and editing. It is definitely suggested that you proofread your work.
Other issues	The results of this review indicate that the manuscript does not qualify the standard requirements for writing of the journal.

Exploring National Examination Malpractice Mechanisms and Countermeasures: An Ethiopian Perspective

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Exam malpractice can be found in every nation in the globe. The practice of providing quality examinations in Ethiopian schools has ran into difficulties. The various forms of national examination malpractices, as well as preventative methods, were investigated in this study.A5-point rating scale labelled 'Forms of Examination Malpractices Questionnaire (FEMPQ) was adapted and administered to 1,359 respondents. To supplement the findings, an interview was also conducted with 15 educational officials. While Mean and Standard Deviations were used for quantitative data analysis, narrative analysis was used for qualitative analysis. Among the major forms of malpractices identified are; doing examinations in groups (M = 4.43, SD =.739), collusions (M =3.97, SD =.750), leakages (M = 3.44, SD =.787), and receiving answers through mobile phones (M = 3.73, SD =.711). Findings from interview also revealed; some schools intentionally prepare examination classrooms in the darkest locations, assigning irresponsible invigilators/supervisors, and intentionally misplacing sitting arrangements during examinations. From the findings, the curbing strategies and educational implications are suggested as; schools should work upon students cognitive and moral developments. And, the country needs to establish an independent National Organization of Educational Measurement and Evaluation professionals, and gradually shift from booklet exam formats to online based exam practices.

INTRODUCTION

Individuals can build good habits and create the correct mindset to work and live as good citizens through education (Gbenu, 2012). Thus, school education requires periodic learning and assessment in the form of tests, projects, practicals, or examinations in order to determine the students' level of knowledge and competency.

Exam malpractices, on the other hand, are one of the current issues affecting the educational system.

According to the Ethiopian National Educational Assessment and Examination Agency, the first National Examination was held in 1946 for students who had completed grade 6 (NEAEA,2016). In 1950, the National Examination was changed to grade 8 due to a curriculum change, and in 1954, the Secondary School Leaving Certificate Examination (ESLCE) was created as a higher education entrance exam, with exams developed by subject matter experts at the Haile Selassie I University (HSIU) at the time (Zewudie, 2000). Prior to that, students were required to take a supplementary General Certificate Examination developed by England, which was funded by the government and which they had to pass.

Currently, three types of National Examinations are being given in Ethiopia: Primary school Leaving Certificate Examinations (PSLCE) for students who completed second cycle of primary education, grade 8, which is a mandate of Regional Education Bureaus since 2000 ; Ethiopian General Secondary Education Certificate Examination (EGSECE) given at the end of the first cycle secondary, grade 10, under the mandate of the National Educational Assessment and Examinations Agency (NEAEA) since 2000; Ethiopian University Entrance Examination (EUEE), given at the end of the second cycle of secondary education (preparatory education) developed by Institute of Educational Research (IER) of Addis Ababa University and administered by NEAEA for grade 12, since 2002.

Due to poor examination preparation, administration, and scoring procedures, the quality of examinations in Ethiopian schools has recently been tainted by malpractices, and this has become a major source of concern for relevant authorities. A growing number of stakeholders both inside and outside the academic community are concerned about the rapid deterioration of our educational quality as a result of widespread examination malpractice in the system. As a result, examination malpractice in Ethiopia has been a source of concern not just for teachers and school administrators, but also for a variety of interest groups, concerned citizens, some parents, employers of labour, and international organizations. The image of Ethiopian education has been severely tarnished as a result of exam malpractice, which plagues the country's educational institutions. As a result of widespread social media leaks of examination answers, Somalia cancelled national examinations in 2019, forcing students to repeat exams, resulting in student protests (as reported in African news by Tech Gist in Africa on 05/16/2019).

Similarly, in Ethiopia, the grade 12 National Examination was stolen and released on social media by an anonymous body in 2016, (Reported on Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation, 2016). This unanticipated incidence posed a significant challenge for all students, parents, and stakeholders, resulting in the extension of the exam timetable in anticipation of other exam types around the country. The country was plunged into a psychological, political, and economic crisis as a result of this catastrophic incident, which was termed the year of "the exam under examination." Similarly, the leakage of the same grade 12 National Examination in 2016, followed by unexpected grade

inflations in 2020, was a major roadblock for students, parents, and stakeholders, resulting in the cancellation of some subject scores and the withholding of results from suspected schools and students.

Although large-scale investigations into the prevalence of examination misconduct have not yet been conducted in Ethiopia because to national political concerns, some small-scale research have revealed negative consequences. For example, a survey conducted at Haramaya University by Nelson and Abdulaziz (2012) found that poor assessment systems pose a threat to quality education. According to this study, exams are beginning to resemble group work. They claimed that examination misconduct has resulted in lower educational levels, academic dishonesty, like as cheating and plagiarism, has reached alarming proportions in Ethiopian higher education institutions, as reported in Solomon (2017)'s research at Dire Dawa University. As a result, the significance of this research arises from the alarming rate of EMPs in Ethiopia's educational system, as well as the sophistication of cheating methods used by criminals in recent years. The researchers hoped that the findings of this study would help to bring these undesirable practices to the attention of not only teachers, students, parents, and administrators, but also policymakers, lawyers, and educational institutions at large, so that they could begin to consider remedies to cease them. To meet the aforementioned purpose, the study aimed to answer the following questions: (1) What are the different types of Ethiopian national examination malpractices? and, 2) What are the strategies that may be used to deter Ethiopians from cheating on exams?

Examination in an Educational Context

Education is an effort to prepare children to have the abilities, attitudes, and skills they will need in their everyday life. Educators are supposed to be able to empower the potential of intelligence, emotional attitudes, and skills through the learning process in order to have these qualities (Solichin,M.M.,etal.,2021). As a result, one of the goals of education and training is to impart the value of honesty, integrity, respect for others, and hard effort. In this aspect, quality education contributes to quality workforce output, as opposed to all sorts of disciplinary behaviour, such as examination malpractices. Recent studies, such as Odongo (2014), have shown that malpractice can occur before, during, or after the examination, through teacher or invigilator assistance, smuggling of unauthorized materials, collusion between candidates, and copying by stretching neck to ('griffin') another candidate's work; and also after the examination, through score inflating by markers during script scoring or certificate falsification.

Emaikwu (2012) further on this topic, stating that if an examination is poorly conducted, the results may lead to erroneous conclusions and judgments that will negatively impact the learner, the instructor, the entire educational system, and society, and the sanctity of the examination process has been trivialized by a number of malpractices. In the similar way, the classroom management expert, Hewitt Seymour said:

> ''…*We sometimes forget the seriousness of not preventing and handling cheating in our classrooms. If students can cheat on a test, it sends the message that they do not have to pay attention, do the homework, or study the subject you are working*

so hard to teach. Besides, Seymour says, if cheaters get away with cheating---and get higher grades because they cheat---that sending a de-motivating message to the hard-working students in your class''. (Seymour E., 1997).

The prevalence of examination misconduct has a detrimental impact on exams and diminishes their value. This means that malpractice tends to jeopardize an examination's technical features, such as validity and reliability, and raises questions about the authenticity and trustworthiness of certifications and decisions based on the outcomes of such examinations (Nworgu, Uchekwe, and Nworgu,2013).

Based on how they are administered, examinations are internal and external, as well as school-based and national examinations. Internal examinations are typically prepared and administered by institutions for students who have completed a course of instruction there utilizing teacher-made assessments. External examination, on the other hand, is an examination that is organized by an institution and is open to anybody who meets the entry requirements. National External examinations are often utilized to provide equal chances to all members of society; regardless of the type of education they have received (Ojerinde, 2000). Exam malpractices, on the other hand, are one of the current issues plaguing the global education system. Exam malpractices (EMPs) are described by educators as deliberate violations of official examination standards intended to provide a candidate an undue advantage or disadvantage (Wilayat, 2009).

Assessment and Examination Malpractices

Cheating during an examination is a worrying phenomenon because it will damage the doers. Academically it harms students because the teacher cannot measure their academic abilities accurately, even their standard competency, Davis &Drinan, as cited in (Sugiarti., & Husain, H.,2021). Literature confirms that characters are stronger than they appear. As a result, character education involves more than simply teaching a child what is right and wrong; it also instils the habit of doing good in students who comprehend, can feel, and want to do good. Character education is a mission similar to moral education (Kamaruddin SA., 2012). Furthermore, without character qualities such as honesty, sense of responsibility, kindness, and perseverance in the face of diversity, achievement will be meaningless. Conducting an evaluation that can collect data and offer information that can describe and anticipate the character of both the present and the future is one way to determine the progress of student character behaviour in accordance with the objective of learning. Authentic assessment is one type of assessment that helps with character education. Students are required to complete real-world tasks that demonstrate the application of relevant information and abilities in this style of assessment (Muller, 2005). It helps to measure products and performances that have meaning or value outside of academic accomplishment in this way.

According to studies, performance assessment has a favourable impact on students' intellectual abilities in areas including success, learning attitude, creativity, and questioning ability (Arhin, AK., 2015). Good examination design can promote social cohesion, assist in the fair selection of talents, foster faith in government institutions, and in the overall conduct of the public school system. In support of these, Ethiopia's

Ministry of Education published a curriculum reform in December 2010 that stressed a move from objective-based to competency-based education. Even if the national curriculum shifts to a competency-based one, the national examination system will continue to measure solely cognitive skills. As a result, aligning national assessments with the new curriculum is a challenge. In Ethiopian education, however, quality control is mostly focused on school inspection, monitoring, and control. While such measures are useful for gathering data on policy implementation, strategic planning, and public accountability, they are of limited use when it comes to controlling the classroom and learning process in order to achieve the stated goals.

External examinations, as a standardized assessment, serve as a vital quality assurance tool for curricular effectiveness and instruction, as well as fairness in selection based on educational achievements. When such assessments are poorly designed and prone to errors, they are unfit for their intended function. Better design and more transparency in the process are the solutions. Notably, the Ethiopian Education and Training Policy (TGE, 1994) stated that Continuous Assessment (CA) in academic and practical courses, as well as aptitude exams, would be conducted to ensure the construction of an all-round profile of students at all levels. As a result of this policy, students' learning outcomes in secondary and postsecondary education should be assessed utilizing CA techniques in connection to three core domains: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor (Desalegn, 2004).

METHOD

Scope of the Study

Ethiopia is divided into nine ethnically and federalist regions (Oromia, Amhara, the State of Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples, Tigary, Afar, Somali, Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambela, Harari, and two city councils) on the horn of East Africa (Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa). The study sites were chosen from Ethiopia's Oromia Region, which is geographically the largest and has the country's highest population, out of the country's nine Regional States and two City Administrations.

The Oromia Region is organized into 20 administrative zones, including two special zones (Surrounding Finfinne and Walo Kamise Special Zones), which are further subdivided into local administrative woredas and sub-cities, according to the most recent administrative structure. The Region spans 284,537.83km2 and has a population of 34,622,239 people (CSA, 2020). In Oromia Region, there are now 1,409 secondary and preparatory schools (1,344 public and 65 private) with a total enrolment of 410,349 students and 11,559 teachers in public and private secondary schools (Grades 9-12). (Oromia Education Bureau Annual statistics, 2019).

To keep the research area in the region to a minimum, only secondary schools from the three Oromia Region zones (Central Arsi, East Showa, and West Arsi) were chosen as study sites. The regional official language, Afan Oromo, is also used as a medium of instruction for primary school students (Grades 1-8) in the area and zones. Teachers, school principals, Woreda education experts, Woreda education supervisors, Zonal

education experts, Regional education experts, MoE senior experts, and NEAEA directors were among the participants in the study.

Research Design

Mixed methods research designs were implemented in this study. We used the quantitative and qualitative data resources to validate the findings. In this sense, data collected on the same topic was triangulated so that the credibility and validity of research findings were checked.

Sample and sampling techniques

In this study, the purposive sampling technique was used to pick Oromia Regional State, and cluster sampling procedures were used to select three administrative zones, Central Arsi, East Showa, and West Arsi zones. Following that, 48 secondary schools (38 public and 10 private) were randomly picked using stratified and simple random selection approaches. Because there are more public schools than private schools, the proportion of school types varies, notably in remote administrative areas of the region. The following formula was used to determine the sample size for teachers across strata:

$n_k = (n/N) \, N_k.$

 Note; the sample size for K_{th} strata;

 $N_k =$ the total population of the the Kth strata;

 N=the total population size, and

 n = the total sample size.

As a result, a total of 1,359 participants were included in the study: 1200 teachers, 96 school principals, and 48 Woreda education supervisors for the quantitative study, and 10 woreda education experts, 2 Zonal education experts, 1 Regional education expert, 1 MoE senior expert, and 1 NEAEA director for the qualitative study.

Research Instruments

The quality of a study is mostly considered by the quality of research instruments and data collection tools. This study used data collection instruments in the form of questionnaire for the quantitative data, and interview guides for the qualitative data.

Questionnaire

Because there was no single solid instrument on EMPs, a questionnaire was built utilizing a combination of survey items previously used to investigate the origins, forms, and effects of EMPs committed by students in three separate studies by different researchers (Alutu&Aluede,2006; Akaranga & Ongong 2013; Petters & Okon ,2014). Finally, a questionnaire consisting two parts was developed. Part one (1) is personal data section, was used to collect personal information from the respondents, Part two (2) consists of 21 items used to examine Forms of Examination Malpractices Questionnaire (FEMPQ).

Interview Guides

To collect qualitative data, Woreda and Zonal education experts, Regional education experts, MoE senior experts, and NEAEA directors were given an interview guide. As a result, the researcher developed an Interview guide consisting of semi-structured items to assess the status of EMPs, the mechanisms and their consequences in order to facilitate a detailed discussion of the challenges and forwarded strategies from the perspectives of expertise and triangulate the results obtained from the questionnaire.

Content validation

It is critical to examine the content and face validity of the quantitative questionnaire scales and qualitative open-ended items after the researcher has completed them. Three Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) were contacted as a result of this, two from the measurement and evaluation fields and one from the English Language and Literature department. As a result, two teachers from Arsi University and one from Hawassa University were chosen to engage in the validation activity based on their qualifications, teaching experience, and willingness to participate. The generated questionnaire was emailed in soft copy to the reviewers' addresses, and the overall quality of the items was assessed. Modifications and changes were made based on the feedback received.

Reliability Test

The data collected from the pilot study participants were generally entered into the SPSS 25.0 package in order to compute the cronbach alpha reliability index. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was then calculated for each questionnaire subscale. As a consequence, cronbach's alpha for the FEMPQS was determined to be.73 for the before examination subscale, .86 for the during examination subscale, and.76 for the after examination subscale. The researcher removed items whose item-total correlations were minor (.30) and whose deletion significantly enhanced cronbach's alpha coefficient based on the reliability data. Finally, 21 items were fine-tuned before being used in the study.

Data Analysis

On the statistical program for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25, the quantitative data was examined using mean and standard deviations. Narrative analysis, on the other hand, was used to examine the qualitative data. The researcher recognized themes that arose throughout the discussions during transcribing and emphasized significant topics that the participants addressed several times. Finally, quantitative and qualitative data were synthesized and triangulated.

FINDINGS

Forms of Examination Malpractices

Under the heading of EMPs, the researcher discovered three constructs: before examination, during examination, and post examination malpractices. These constructs have a total of 21 item assertions (BEMPI=7 items, DEMPI=8 items, and AEMPI= 6 items). On a Likert scale ranging from 1 SDA (Strongly Disagree) to 5 SA

(Strongly Agree), the participants (teachers, principals, and supervisors) were requested to demonstrate their level of agreement in the nature of the forms of malpractices. For each construct, the responses were examined using the mean (M), standard deviation (SD), and rank order of the means. The researcher employed an interval classification in such a way that, an item mean of 1.5 to 2.5 was considered disagree (DA), 2.5 to 3.5 undecided (UD), and 3.5 to 4.5 agree. A Strongly disagree (SDA) was defined as a response below 1.5, while strongly agree (SA) was defined as a response above 4.5. Only the five most highly ranked things in the constructs were chosen for study. This was calculated independently for each of the three participant groups, with the final analysis and interpretations based on the average of their mean scores.

Table 1
Malpractices committed before examination as perceived by teachers, principals and supervisors

Item number	Item statement	Teachers		Principals		Supervisors	
		Mean(M)	SD	Mean(M)	SD	Mean(M)	SD
BEMPI-1	Hiring other persons to do on examination. /impersonation	3.82	.853	3.29	.794	3.17	.663
BEMPI-2	Buying or procurement of fake question booklets prior to the Examination	3.76	.873	3.34	.779	3.33	.663
BEMPI-3	Receiving examination papers from examination officials prior to examination	3.64	.882	3.33	.749	3.35	.729
BEMPI-4	Changing the alphabetical order of students' names with the intention of cheating	4.01	.730	3.86	.878	3.37	.703
BEMPI-5	Sitting intentionally wrongly by changing seat arrangement	3.53	.762	3.91	.769	4.08	.647
BEMPI-6	Creation of 'special centres' for collusion of examiners	3.98	.733	3.90	.788	4.02	.729
BEMPI-7	Arranging invitation or hospitality by schools to invigilators/supervisors	4.45	.719	4.55	.752	4.00	.772

Note: BEMPI-Before Examination Malpractices Items

The results in the table 1, show among seven items regarding exam malpractices committed before examination, the perception mean response of the participants show the major forms as; hiring other persons to do on examination/impersonation (M = 4.43, SD = .770), arranging invitation or hospitality by schools to invigilators/supervisors (M = 4.33 , SD = .748), creation of 'special centres' for collusion of examiners (M = 3.97 , SD = .750), sitting intentionally wrongly by changing seat arrangement (M = 3.84 , SD = .726) and changing the alphabetical order of students' names with the intention of cheating (M = 3.75 , SD = .770) respectively. In support of these, reports of the interview informants indicated that, some schools intentionally allocate examination

classrooms and halls in the darkest corridors and locations unsuitable for supervisions and encourage collusions of examiners. Similarly, some teachers and supervisors coordinate students to contribute money for invitation or hospitality and bargaining invigilators and supervisors a head of examination period. The fact that some principals and teachers purposively allow students to change their names completely, or alter its order of alphabets to get advantages of seating plan with cleaver students also increases the rate of crimes. The respondents also added the situation where fake exam answers disclosed on face book mediums and even exam booklets sold at different corridors distorts the quality of exam administration.

Table 2
Malpractices committed during examination as perceived by teachers, principals, and supervisors

Item number	Item statement	Teachers		Principals		Supervisors	
		Mean(M)	SD	Mean(M)	SD	Mean(M)	SD
DUEMPI-1	Exchanging examination booklets with answers written on them	4.43	.690	4.44	.880	4.54	.743
DUEMPI-2	Copying another student's work or answer	4.51	.635	3.90	.814	4.67	.595
DUEMPI-3	Receiving answers through mobile phones	4.02	.622	4.43	.880	4.27	.644
DUEMPI-4	Body writing or tattoo	3.73	.783	2.35	.846	2.52	.684
DUEMPI-5	Receiving prepared answers from invigilators	4.00	.682	3.25	.754	3.94	.697
DUEMPI-6	Getting answers by teachers/ invigilators in exam rooms	3.91	.661	3.88	.798	4.15	.618
DUEMPI-7	Insulting/assaulting supervisors, invigilators and others	4.06	.700	3.93	.785	4.15	.652
DUEMPI-8	Committing mass cheating/doing exams in group	4.39	.739	4.45	.679	4.46	.798

Note: DEMPI- During Examination Malpractices Item

The second category of forms of EMPs is malpractices committed during examinations. As shown in the table 2, there are 8 items listed under this category. Among these 8 items, respondents show their perception as; exchanging examination booklets with answers written on them (M = 4.47, SD =.771), committing mass cheating/doing examination in groups (M = 4.43, SD = .729), copying another students' work or answer (M = 4.36, SD = .681), receiving answers through mobile phones (M = 4.24. SD =.715) and receiving prepared answers from invigilators (M = 4.05, SD = .712) respectively. In supplement of these, the responses of interviewee also identified the malpractices during examinations as; collusion of examiners, mass cheating, receiving answers through mobiles, intentionally misplacing sitting arrangements, and exchanging booklets with answers. There is also a situation where an individual who is not registered as a candidate takes the place of the real student to do on examination.

Table 3
Malpractices committed after examination as perceived by teachers, principals, and supervisors

Item number	Item statement	Teachers		Principals		Supervisors	
		Mean(M)	SD	Mean(M)	SD	Mean(M)	SD
AEMPI-1	Invigilators giving extra time to write examinations	3.95	.732	4.13	.653	3.33	.781
AEMPI-2	Exam officials replacing answer scripts with new ones after examination	3.35	.703	3.39	.773	3.33	.663
AEMPI-3	Exchanging of answer keys by scorers during scoring	3.47	.780	3.32	.733	2.75	.978
AEMPI-4	Altering of marks and grades by scorers during scoring	3.38	.699	2.48	.917	3.23	.592
AEMPI-5	Exam officials wrongly or improperly sealing or packing exam answer forms	2.45	.771	2.49	.833	3.27	.736
AEMPI-6	Misplacing/exchanging of students' results by exam officials during printing certificates	2.13	.715	3.28	.660	2.42	.710

Note: AEMPI-After Examination Malpractices Item

On the third mechanism of cheating, as indicated in the table 3, participants responded the major mechanisms committed after examination as; invigilators giving extra time to written examinations (M = 3.80, SD = .722), exam officials replacing answer scripts with new ones after examination (M = 3.36, SD = .713), exchanging of answer keys by scorers during scoring (M = 3.18, SD = .830), altering marks and grades by scorers during scoring (M = 3.03, SD = .736), and misplacing/exchanging of students' results by exam officials (M = 2.61 SD = .695). Similarly, the informants suggested the malpractices occurring after examinations as; insulting supervisors and invigilators, refusing to return answer sheets at a given time or minutes, mistakenly entering wrong answer keys in to scoring machine, and misplacing students results during printing as a challenges of EMPs in national examinations.

What measures should be taken to mitigate the National Examination Malpractices?

The following is a summary of the interview findings about curbing strategies: To combat the criminality caused by examination malpractices, all educational stakeholders at both the local and national levels must work together. It was also suggested:

'Because EMP is a form of behavioural disorder, schools should not only preach or teach students the subject matter, but also instil moral and ethical values in them. 'Schools should form examination ethical committees that fight against malpractices committed by any proprietors,' it was suggested in this regard.

Again, it was suggested that:

'The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the Federal government, must adopt a clear code of conduct and an EMP Act that would allow concerned bodies to administer appropriate and standard judgments to offenders and perpetrators who directly or indirectly participated in EMPs.

It was also informed:

‘ ‘*Schools should avoid students purposefully changing their names or alphabets during registration for national examinations in order to gain access to seats with smart students, and exam administrators, principals, school committees, and Woreda education experts should assign large classrooms for examination session and choose the best examination centres and locations.*

The informants also indicated the importance of:

‘*Changing the exam system from a booklet-based approach to innovative testing methods such as online testing or Commuter Based Testing (CBT)'.*

Lastly, the informants suggested:

 ‘*a redesigned curriculum with vocational and technical educations, with a lesser emphasis on earning degrees and certificates without the necessary knowledge and skills. Again, institutions should use post- hock entry examinations as a criterion for admitting students to universities and colleges during the application process.*

DISCUSSION

The current study provides some key facts about the types of examination malpractices and how to prevent them in national exams. As a result, quantitative results using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviations reveal the major forms of EMPs committed before examinations, such as hiring other people to do the examination/ impersonation, arranging invitations or hospitality by schools for invigilators/supervisors, the establishment of "special centres" for examiner cooperation, purposely seating incorrectly by changing seat arrangements and changing the alphabetical order of students' names in order to cheat. The findings from the qualitative interview data also highlighted the strategies used prior to the examinations, such as some institutions placing examination classrooms and halls in the darkest corridors and areas unsuited for supervision, and encouraging examiner collaboration. Similarly, some teachers and supervisors organize students to donate money for invitations or hospitality, as well as bargaining invigilators and supervisors, prior to the exam period. Pre-examination malpractices have been detected during the stages of setting items, writing items, printing test formats, packing exam booklets, storing, and transporting booklets to various locations. This means that several bodies are to blame for national examination leaks, and their management has become tedious and dangerous due to security and privacy concerns. Exchanging examination booklets with answers written on them, committing mass cheating/doing examinations in groups, copying another student's work or answer, receiving answers through mobile phones, and receiving prepared answers from invigilators are all examples of EMPs committed during examinations, according to the quantitative data.

In addition, interviewees identified the following malpractices during examinations: examiner collaboration, widespread cheating, obtaining answers via mobile phones, purposely misplacing sitting arrangements, and exchanging booklets with answers. Similarly, the quantitative data from the perceptions of teachers, principals, and supervisors revealed the major forms as invigilators giving extra time to written examinations, exam authorities replacing answer scripts with new ones after the

examination, scorers exchanging answer keys during scoring, scorers altering marks and grades during scoring, and exam officials misplacing/exchanging students' results. Similarly, the informants suggested that EMPS in national examinations face challenges such as insulting supervisors and invigilators, refusing to return answer sheets within a specified time or minutes, entering incorrect answer keys into the scoring machine, and misplacing students' results during printing. Some literatures and earlier study findings provide additional evidence in support of the above findings. For example, current scholars such as Odongo (2014) have shown that malpractice is known to occur before the examination, when a leak occurs; or during the examination, when teachers or invigilators provide assistance, unauthorized materials are smuggled, and candidates collude, replicating ('Giriffin') another candidate's work during the examination, as well as afterward, through score inflating by markers during script scoring or certificate fraud.

Similarly, some dishonest teachers assist students during examinations by bringing worked answers to test items into examination rooms, writing the answers on the boards, and distracting invigilators/supervisors by offering reinforcements to the officials in the teachers' offices during examinations. Students are encouraged to pay 'co-operation' fees for 'setting supervisors and examination officials' to this end. In support of these claims, the current study's findings are consistent with those of earlier studies. Teachers, on the other hand, can play an important role in helping students learn and apply a moral-reasoning process to serve as role models for telling the truth, respecting others, accepting and fulfilling responsibilities, playing fairly, earning and returning trust, and living a moral life, according to Lumokin in Nopemberi, S., &Sugiyam, Y. (2021). In light of the current study, Onyibe et al. (2015) suggested that EMPs can be mitigated by employing persons with strong morality, trustworthiness, and honesty to monitor and invigilate exams. Similarly, according to the findings of a study conducted by Ukpabi (2013), an increase in the number of invigilators present during examinations helped to reduce EMPs in schools, and the number of invigilators assigned to examination rooms should be proportional to the size of the examination rooms.

Leakage, or 'Expo,' is a highly common and most serious kind of EMPs, according to another study by Achio et al. (2012). It can occur at any point of the examination process, including before, during, and after the examination. It usually originates from exam authors, exam officers, exam printers, secretaries, drivers, teachers, principals, custodians, supervisors, and others who have access to the questions and marking schemes. Some of the EMPs commonly noticed after examinations, according to the same study by Achio et al,(2012), include colluding with member(s) of staff to replace the original answered script with a new prepared answer script, changing or swapping answer sheets, inflation of candidates marks, and examiner carelessness in marking or adding marks.

The guilt for the country's high level of EMPs is not one-sided, though; it must be shared. Teachers, students, private business owners, parents, and the government must all create the willpower to address this important issue. The outcomes of earlier studies and literatures on curbing techniques are likewise consistent. For example, according to Gbenda BL. (2008) and Yakubu (2010), examinations are led by a code of ethics, which

is translated into rules and regulations, in order to ensure transparency, honesty, validity, and trustworthiness. Exam malpractices are defined as any unethical conduct that leads to the violation of these laws and regulations, whether it occurs before, during, or after an examination. In this context, ethics in education and the debate of EMPs refers to the behaviour of students, teachers, parents, examiners, and law enforcement officers who must be favourably active in the event of an EMP (Odia Ochuko, 2011). Similarly, fostering a culture of academic honesty and integrity across schools, according to Makaula, F.B., (2018), is critical for instilling students' cognitive and moral development in resisting EMPs. This means that EMP has the potential to cause cultural deterioration, greater criminality, social unfairness, and corruption in society on a larger scale. Furthermore, according to Bitrus (2013), any individual or group of individuals found guilty of indulging in EMPs should be subjected to the full force of the rules and regulations governing examination administration in their respective institutions. Similarly, according to the deterrence principle, specific punishment singled out to offenders will 'deter' or prevent them from committing future crimes, and the fear of punishment will deter others from committing similar crimes (Wright,2010).

In a legal context, deterrence refers to any situation in which a person considers doing a criminal conduct but decides against it or limits it because he or she perceives a risk of legal punishment and is afraid of the consequences (Gibbs, 1986). This means that the harsher the punishment, the more likely a rationally calculated human being will refrain from unlawful conduct. Furthermore, different countries employ diverse measures to combat the occurrence of EMPs, which are ineffective. Another finding by Underwood and Szabo (2004) is that when students believe their teachers are committed and honest, the number of malpractices falls. Furthermore, educators should employ positive reinforcement and encourage pupils to develop a good view on life in order to deter them from cheating (Hulsart and Mccarthy, 2009). Similarly, the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) proposes that cheating occurs as a result of both the opportunity and the purpose to cheat (Bandura, 1997). This means that while a student may have a positive attitude toward cheating and may have friends who do it, the high level of exam monitoring in a particular class may make cheating extremely difficult or impossible. As a result, the Ethiopian Ministry of Education, in partnership with the Federal Government, should draft a clear code of behaviour and legislative directives. It should also be enshrined in EMP Acts and legislation, with every proprietor and offender held accountable for offending throughout the assessment process. Furthermore, the federal government should allocate sufficient funds to all regions based on the present ratio of exam centres or schools, examinees, examiners, supervisors, coordinators, and anyone who are directly or indirectly involved in the examination process. Despite the fact that the National Examination Agency was established by Council of Ministers Regulation No. 260/2012 and an examination administration manual was published, Ethiopia has yet to develop Decrees and Acts on EMPs.

At general, EMPs have been seen in several Ethiopian secondary schools on a regular basis. The consequences of such wrongdoings have far-reaching detrimental implications for society as a whole. As a result, EMPs, which began in Ethiopia as a minor crime, have taken on a frightening dimension and appear to have become a

permanent feature of the Ethiopian educational system. Efforts by governments, examining organizations, institutions, people, and concerned groups to alleviate the problem have yielded no major benefits. The majority of the informants believe that the EMP culture can be ended if and only if everyone avoids and controls academic cheating. In light of this, activities for students, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders should be conducted, such as consistent panels, seminars, and group discussion events on the topic of "examination ethics" and the consequences of cheating on exams. The findings also proposed that technology be used to move national examinations from a booklet method to other techniques such as online testing or computer-based assessment (CBT). Despite the fact that the NEAEA used several booklet coding schemes, this strategy is advised because to an alarming increase in EMPs in the country. In light of this, previous studies by Brew &Sachs (2007) revealed, in some universities, academic dishonesty is widely recognized as a worsening trend, associated with the expansion of the internet.

CONCLUSIONS

The researcher draws the following conclusions based on the aforementioned evaluation of the results. EMPs are no longer seen as evil by many students and instructors, and cheating is becoming the norm in various societies. As a result, EMP is not only ethically reprehensible, but also a criminal conduct that is currently devouring Ethiopia's educational system and threatening to destroy the country's whole society. Because new electronic tools have provided students more inventive ways to cheat on national examinations, the academic society must evolve. Educators must be aware of these techniques and even endeavour to be proactive in all examination processes. This means that other than traditional examinations or paper-and-pencil assessments, there is a need to find new techniques to measure students' abilities. To that purpose, all of our educational institutions, notably secondary and higher education institutions should automate examinations through the use of computers (ICT). At the same time, graduates should be exposed to rigorous assessments while looking for work in order to assess their abilities and to prevent examination malpractice. To this end, several Ethiopian universities, such as Adama and Addis Ababa Science and Technology Universities, hold post-hoc examinations for students seeking admission to higher education institutions. Finally, this study suggested that the Ministry of Education establish an independent National Organization of Educational Measurement and Evaluation professionals to advise the centre on the quality of national examination preparation, implementation, difficulties, and possibilities.

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Regards,

Prof. Asim Ari

Editor in Chief