

Unhu/Ubuntu and examination malpractice in Zimbabwe: Perceptions of selected stakeholders from Masvingo urban secondary schools

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Abstract

National and international examination boards are an epitome of any sound education system. The running of examinations before, during and after each seating is a cause for concern in Zimbabwean secondary schools as cases of cheating seem to be rampant. For this reason the Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council (ZIMSEC), the board that runs examinations in Zimbabwe, has come under scrutiny. This paper sought to establish how examination malpractices could be curbed. Researchers interviewed five teachers, two school heads and twenty-five learners from five secondary schools in Masvingo urban, on their perceptions on the prevalence of examination cheating and analysed their views on unhu/ubuntu education and examination practices. Using the analytical lenses of Unhu/Ubuntu philosophy whose virtues and tenets resonate with humanness, the study established that examination cheating epitomises immorality. Examination cheating negates the unhu/ubuntu values, the latter of which, amongst others, foster honesty, hard work and responsibility, and instill self-control, trustworthiness, obedience, integrity and truth telling. Thus, the paper concludes that lack of unhu/ubuntu values among some Zimbabwean teachers and students could negatively affect the integrity of the whole examination processes in most schools in Zimbabwe. The paper recommends serious teaching of unhu/ubuntu education in Zimbabwean secondary schools and teacher training institutions so that students and teachers, respectively, shun corrupt practices that may compromise the quality of examinations.

Keywords: *Unhu/Ubuntu; Examination malpractice; Zimbabwe School Examinations Council; Zimbabwean secondary schools.*

Introduction and Background

Examination malpractice has become a cause for concern not only in Zimbabwe but in and outside Africa. Research has shown that in some countries such as Nigeria, the practice has become a threat to the education systems (Nyamwange, Ondima & Onderi, 2013; Onah, 2013). Examination boards and governments have been on the lookout for incidents of malpractice in the assessment process but with little success and effect. As for Zimbabwe, it seems like each and every examination session is characterised by examination cheating. Cheating seems to be prevalent at all educational levels, from primary school, through secondary school to tertiary education. The malpractices appear to be uniform throughout all examination systems. These range from premature access to examination papers, individual or mass cheating during the examination, cheating during examination processing and forging

of results. Commenting on examination cheating, Mashanyare and Chinamasa (2014:48) echoed that this is mainly because “success in a public examination can have profound, immediate and long-term impact on a candidate’s life.” Some candidates therefore cannot watch themselves fail the examination, hence may engage in corrupt practices to make sure they sail through.

Zimbabwean examinations have been modeled on the British system up until 2002 when primary and secondary school examinations became fully localised under the Zimbabwe School Examinations Council (ZIMSEC) (Mashanyare & Chinamasa, 2014). The ZIMSEC board is now responsible for “setting, distribution, training of markers, security of examinations and marking of school examinations” (Mashanyare & Chinamasa, 2014: 48). Whilst ZIMSEC runs examinations in the public schools, tertiary institutions have been entrusted with the running of their examinations. Reports in the national media (Herald, Zimbabwe), however, have indicated that both ZIMSEC and tertiary institutions have failed to guard against cheating before, during and after examinations.

ZIMSEC has called for vigilance in examinations administration in the secondary schools. In October 2016, the council publicly accepted that examination malpractice in Zimbabwean secondary schools had become uncontrollable. They appealed to all stakeholders to be vigilant and watch out for those who violate examination regulations and to report them to either the police or ZIMSEC (The Herald, Zimbabwe, 25 October 2016). Vigilance included: ZIMSEC increasing security at examination centers and being watchful for culprits who prematurely open question papers and coach students using leaked question papers; students and parents not entertaining people who sell examination questions, and candidates not participating in any form of examination malpractice (The Herald, 2016). The Zimbabwe Government through ZIMSEC has put in place penalties for examination fraudsters (Herald, 2016). These include:

- cancellation of examination results and two years suspension from taking ZIMSEC examinations for candidates who cheat.
- exclusion from the system of professionals for those who facilitate cheating.
- cancellation without replacement of the whole center’s results when implicated in examination cheating
- arrest and imprisonment of students, teachers, schoolheads, administrators and members of the public who breach the security of the examination.

Despite all these measures coupled with examination regulations, members of society “have become less afraid of indulging in malpractice, a sure sign of an ailing society” (*The Herald Zimbabwe*, April 11, 2016). Newspapers have made several reports on cheating practices in Zimbabwe. *The Zimbabwe Herald* (November 30, 2015) reported eighteen students from Chitungwiza high schools who smuggled handwritten answer sheets that had been prepared by their tutor for the ZIMSEC ‘O’ level Mathematics Paper 2 examination. The paper had been leaked by employees from ZIMSEC and Fidelity Printers (the company that is contracted to print and safeguard ZIMSEC examination papers). The same paper, *The Herald, Zimbabwe*, of 14 November 2016 reported that “A teacher at Glen Forest Development Center writes ‘O’ level Mathematics Paper 2 on behalf of a candidate”. Similarly, *Pindula News* (8 June 2017) reported that a male tutor dressed like a woman had written a ZIMSEC examination for a student. *The Herald* also reported that an eighteen year old man had tried to enroll for Lower Sixth at Goromonzi High school using a forged ZIMSEC ‘O’ level result slip (*The Herald, Zimbabwe* March 1 2017). On 8 February 2018, *The Herald* again reported that the year 2017 had witnessed a national disaster in examination leakage which resulted in the nullification of O’ level English Paper 2 results for **all** candidates, pointing to the fact that almost every candidate had accessed the examination prior to writing. Four teachers, together with their partners, were reported to have been involved in an examination scandal in the November 2019 ‘O’ Level examinations (*NewsdzeZimbabwe*, 9 November 2019). These few examples indicate that examination cheating is prevalent in Zimbabwean secondary schools and throughout the examination process.

Tambawal (2013); Onah (2013); Furo (2015); Chaminuka and Ndudzo (2014) concur that the diverse forms of examination malpractices in Nigeria and Zimbabwe include the following: leakage, external assistance, impersonation, smuggling of foreign material, copying, collusion, intimidation, substitution of answer scripts, change of examination grades, bribing of supervisors/invigilators, copying from one another during the examination, body writing and tattooing on hidden parts (e.g. palms and thighs), smuggling out question papers, writing outside the examination venue, writing on question paper and making an exchange of answer scripts, obstruction of supervision and forgery of results slips. In addition, Mashanyare and Chinamasa (2014) add that malpractice includes the leaking of both soft and hard copies of examination question papers in Zimbabwe. All these forms of malpractices are indicative of an ailing generation that no longer hesitates to violate societal standards and expectations.

ZIMSEC e-Newsletter (2015) has however, shifted the blame to all members of society who they say have lost the responsibility of socialising their children according to societal expectations. The ZIMSEC board has appealed for the cooperation of parents, teachers and relatives in molding a candidate that would defeat the repugnant vice of examination malpractice (ZIMSEC e-Newsletter, 2015). According to ZIMSEC the apparent loss of societal ethics in the school going generation has contributed towards the prevalent academic fraud. On their part, the researchers recognise that it has become necessary to borrow *unhu/ubuntu* values from the traditional education to curb examination malpractice.

Research has shown that examination malpractice is prevalent in many education systems though varying in degree. Shariffuddin and Holmes (2009:99) found that in Malaysia academic cheating was prevalent in colleges and was difficult to eradicate “even if preventive measures are taken.” Tambawal (2013) established high levels of examination malpractice in the whole Nigerian education system which he said were undermining the credibility of the examination system. In the same country, Onah (2013) also found examination malpractice as a serious problem that was threatening the whole Nigerian education system. Adeyemi (2010) adds that the malpractices were prevalent in both public and private Nigerian secondary schools.

Nyamwange, Ondima and Onderi (2013) carried out a study in Kenya, in which they observed that examination cheating was a reality and was on the rise in Kenyan secondary schools and colleges with over 60% of the students admitting to have cheated. Their study showed that more girls than boys cheat. They also observed that students, teachers, school administrators and the society at large, all contribute in varying degrees to examination cheating. In Zimbabwe, examination malpractice has been noted to be a serious problem in secondary schools. Mashanyare and Chinamasa (2014:47) focused on examination leakages and observed that they now “threaten the integrity of examinations and damage the authority of those responsible for conducting them”. Whilst the above studies pointed out the extent of examination cheating, gender and examination malpractice, and to a certain extent, the effects of examination cheating on the authorities particularly, very few have studied examination cheating from a philosophical perspective. Sigauke (2004) posits that examination malpractice in Zimbabwean secondary schools has become a disgrace to the nation and a reflection of immorality in society. Against this background, the paper found it pertinent to explore the phenomenon from an *ubuntu* perspective. Our study attempts to proffer solutions to curb examination malpractices from an *unhu/ubuntu*-Afro-centric perspective. ‘We are

because you are' and honesty, integrity and responsibility are the bedrock of *unhuism/ubuntuism*.

Unhu/Ubuntu defines who we are as African scholars from Zimbabwe, or what one is in an African society. It defines our thoughts, actions and way of life as Africans. Thus, *unhu/ubuntu* was central in the teaching and learning of African traditional education. The teaching of *unhu/ubuntu* was a collective effort involving the society as one's existence was to contribute to the well-being of the society one lived in. Hence, in Mpondi's (2004:30) words, "...it took a whole village to raise a child." Sifuna and Otiende (2006) argue that the teaching of *unhu* values to generations was meant for the success of the society. An individual who was a product of this curriculum possessed "attitudes and habits considered necessary for participation and intervention in one's historical process" (Mpondi, 2004: 30). Thus, in all their experiences, Africans would apply *unhu/ubuntu* and be guided by its dictates.

Mpondi (2004) views *unhu/ubuntu* education as that education that started as soon as a child was considered able to understand the importance of functioning in both the physical and social environment. It was the role of every community elder to impart *unhu* to every village child (Mpondi, 2004). The society emphasised on virtues of *unhu* such as endurance, courage, honesty, obedience, respect, integrity and bravery which, we, as the researchers, believe are important to an individual's decision to shun examination cheating.

Under traditional African education rare cases of undesirable behaviour such as disobedience, telling lies, thefts and selfishness were witnessed and were immediately followed by corrective punishment (Sifuna & Otiende, 2006). Such a curriculum which sought to "train the youth for adulthood, instil the accepted standards and beliefs governing good behaviour, create unity and consensus and encourage competition in intellectual and practical matters in children" should have been upheld (Sifuna & Otiende, 2006:130). That curriculum teaches children how to live in harmony with community members and to perform acceptable actions in the social, economic, political and religious spheres of life. Hence, if effectively implemented in the curriculum, *unhu/ubuntu* could be a panacea to the current challenge of examination malpractice. The major question to be addressed by our study was; how can the philosophy of *unhu/ubuntu* be exploited to curb examination malpractice?

Statement of the Problem

Despite the enforcement of stringent measures to curb examination malpractice in Zimbabwean secondary schools by the country's Examinations Council, examination

cheating has become prevalent in all examination sessions. The practice has been observed to involve key players in all the examination processes in Zimbabwe. This suggests a gap in the literature on the ways to curb the practice. Thus, this study sought to analyse how teachers and learners perceived examination cheating in light of *unhu/ubuntu* values.

Objectives

The study sought to:

1. Establish the nature and prevalence of examination cheating in Zimbabwean Secondary schools.
2. Examine perceptions of teachers and learners on examination malpractice and *unhu/ubuntu*.
3. Suggest how *unhu/ubuntu* could be incorporated to curb examination malpractice

Theoretical Framework

The study draws from the *unhu/ubuntu* philosophy. *Unhu/Ubuntu* is a traditional African philosophy that is known by different names in the continent. The names include *botho* (Botswana), *bomoto* (Congo), *gimuntu* (Angola), *umundu* (Kenya), *vumunhu* (Mozambique), *obuntu* (Uganda) and *unhu/ubuntu* (Zimbabwe). In all the societies, this African worldview thrives on molding “a perfect and virtuous individual - an individual who upholds the cultural values and norms of a true African society” (Sibanda, 2014: 26). This means that an individual with *unhu/ubuntu* respects and lives the African way. *Unhu/Ubuntu* therefore, defines “cultural standards, expectations, values and norms” that should be upheld in order to keep the African identity (ibid). These standards should be maintained at individual, family and societal levels. This means that *unhu/ubuntu* is the “ethical benchmark of African societies that provides a guide to the African man and woman in whatever setting they are” (Mangena & Chitando, 2011: 83). Thus, *unhu/ubuntu* can be explained as “a bundle of cherished values in African societies” (Ndondo & Mhlanga, 2014:3). These values include responsibility, honesty, justice, trustworthiness, hard work, integrity, a cooperative spirit, solidarity and devotion to family and the welfare of the community which are necessary in curbing examination malpractice. Individuals are expected to act according to the dictates of this philosophy of life, so, they are nurtured into individuals with *unhu/ubuntu* through various methods and stages. *Unhu* is indeed a process towards achieving humanness, personhood, humanity and morality (Dolamo, 2013). Thus, *unhu/ubuntu* was used in this study as the lens through which examination malpractices could be analysed. The basic principle of *unhu* is that “You are because I am and I am because you are”. Whilst

malpractices can involve cases where others sit examination for others, one can still question the spirit of *unhu/ubuntu*. Is it in the spirit of *unhu/ubuntu* to connive for something bad though it may benefit someone positively? Can someone be justified in the spirit of *unhu/ubuntu* to leak a paper in order to assist someone who would have desperately attempted to pass O' Level English, Mathematics or Science? The philosophy of *unhu/ubuntu* can be used to answer the what, why and how questions about examination malpractices and solutions or ways to mitigate the rampant malpractices. The paper argues that with effective teaching of *unhu/ubuntu* in schools, social ills such as exam cheating can be minimized.

Literature Review

The phenomenon of examination malpractice has of late gained a lot of attention. As such, plenty of research work has been done on the prevalence, forms, causes, effects and solutions to the problem. The current researchers benefited from these earlier research findings and gained knowledge on the subject, thereby identifying the gap for the study. For instance, Nyamwange et al. (2013) noticed inadequate preparation, performance pressure, stiff competition, poor invigilation, lack of facilities and anxiety as factors that contribute to examination malpractice in Kenyan secondary schools. Adeyemi (2010) noticed that in Nigerian secondary schools there was indiscipline among students, non-implementation of decrees on examination malpractices as well as lack of effective supervision of students during examinations. Chaminuka and Ndudzo (2014) found out that fear of failure, inadequate teaching and learning materials and inadequate preparation for examinations are the major causes of examination malpractice in Zimbabwe. While these scholars identified these various reasons behind cheating, before, during and after examinations, this paper argues that the apparent degradation of societal ethics has been the major cause of examination malpractice and could be meaningfully controlled through *unhu/ubuntu* education.

Phiri and Nakamba (2015) present the effects of examination malpractice on pupils' academic performance in Zambian secondary schools. The following negative effects were found: absenteeism, laziness, loss of focus on education or lack of concentration, low academic standards, lack of confidence, panic, poor academic performance, half-baked citizens produced, disadvantaging hard working pupils, low national academic standards, failure to perform in future endeavors, weak minded students, society deprived of critical thinkers, less literate learners, incompetent workers, and results do not portray reality. Above

all, Phiri and Nakamba (2015) see the production of corrupt immoral citizens as the worst effect. They argued that if examination malpractices in Zambia went unchecked, the society could stoop into an abyss of immorality. They therefore call for support from every Zambian in curbing examination cheating and recommend examination malpractice issue to be integrated into the school curriculum so that learners are aware. Concerning Zimbabwean institutions of higher learning Chaminuka and Ndudzo (2014) noticed increased incidences of malpractice such as production of half-baked graduates, lowering of academic standards, breeding a generation of fraudsters and other social vices and the discouragement of hard work among students. Both researches show that effects of examination malpractice are not welcome to the society. Hence, this paper explains societal values that can be taught to retain normalcy to learner assessment in Zimbabwe.

A study by Nyamwange et al. (2013) shows the following measures employed in Kenya to curb examination cheating. These are: punishment (cancellation of examination results, suspension of cheating students), teaching examination taking skills, counseling, imparting reading culture, boosting students' self-confidence, campaign against cheating in examination and encouraging students to work hard. In Nigeria, Adeyemi (2010) proposes penalties, and an improvement of student discipline through counseling. Chaminuka and Ndudzo (2014:88) are of the view that examination malpractice in Zimbabwean universities could be curbed if there was emphasis on "the inculcation of work ethics." Thus, this paper argues that the teaching of ethical values in secondary schools could curb similar malpractices.

Of greater interest is Beets and Louw's (2005:187) research on *ubuntu* in South African education transformation and assessment. They argue that *ubuntu* principles should be taught to all learners and all teachers should adhere to them (principles) for malpractice free assessment. Beet and Louw (2005:157) believe that;

Humanness (warmth, tolerance, understanding, peace, humanity) and caring (empathy, sympathy, helpfulness and friendliness) capture the spirit in which assessment should be conducted ..., humanness towards and caring unconditionally for the learner constitutes the foundation for effective teaching and learning. Learners experience assessment as positive only when they are sure that the teacher who guides the learning process is a humane and caring person.

The above scholars also see assessment demanding "respect (dignity, obedience, order and transparency), sharing (giving unconditionally, redistribution) and compassion (love, cohesion, informality, forgiving spontaneity)" (ibid: 188). They regard these as African

qualities that all teachers should have and as necessary for quality teaching and learning through assessment. While they concentrate on engagement of *ubuntu* principles in assessment on the part of the teacher, this paper tries to establish how *unhu/ubuntu* values could curb malpractices by both teachers and learners as key players in educational assessment.

Methodology

The study adopted a qualitative approach in which ZIMSEC was used as a case in point since there has been much concern about how examinations that this Board administers are run. Cognisant of the fact that examination malpractices are rampant across different levels, the researchers decided to focus on the examinations that ZIMSEC runs in order to have a better and deeper understanding of how schools perceive examination cheating, as almost all the schools in the selected district take ZIMSEC examinations. The researchers interviewed five secondary school teachers and two secondary school heads in Masvingo urban district on the motives behind and how teaching *unhu/ubuntu* could help curtail or minimise such malpractices. The district was selected because of its accessibility to the researchers. Sampling was basically purposive in which one teacher each from each of the five secondary schools in the district that take the ZIMSEC examinations was selected. The two heads were randomly selected from those schools. Considering that most examinations cheating was prevalent at 'O' and 'A' level centres, the study thus targeted secondary school teachers. Purposive sampling has the advantage of getting information from rich sources (Yin, 2003). Five learners from each school were also interviewed in groups on the phenomenon and how they perceived it in light of *unhu/ubuntu*. All participants registered their consent to participate in the study upon being assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Data from the interviews were presented in themes for analysis. Thick descriptions of interview excerpts were provided to authenticate the findings and corroborated with literature for credibility. To safeguard confidentiality, pseudonyms were used in the discussion.

Findings

Participants gave varied and interesting views on examinations cheating. Findings from participants were presented under the following themes: nature and causes of examination malpractice, teachers' conceptualization of *unhu/ubuntu*, and how *unhu/ubuntu* could help stop examination malpractice. Pseudonyms are used throughout the presentation and discussion so as to safeguard confidentiality and anonymity.

Nature and causes of examination malpractice

Participants were asked to state the common examination malpractices associated with ZIMSEC examinations and suggest the general causes of these. Both teacher and learner participants divulged shocking forms of malpractices by teachers and ZIMSEC staff. Three major malpractices were identified, namely; copying, faking identification or impersonation, leaking of papers by ZIMSEC officials and printers. Participants were asked to elaborate on these malpractices. Zuze reported on behalf of School B that:

Some teachers at examination centers connive with candidates. These candidates could be their relatives or could have paid them some money for the deal. So the candidate would come on the exam date but the teacher will pull out the candidate's scripts after the examination and replace them with the ones which he will have written. This is done by teachers who are in charge of the examination papers. We have Mr....who has actually done it for several desperate people in this area and some of them are now in college.

Vudhle, another learner participant from School E group had this to say, *It is very common for someone to sit for another at a center where the candidate is not known. What it means is that a relative or husband would sit for his wife's examination at a center far from where the two are known.*

Participants revealed that these forms of malpractice have been most common with 'O' Level English and Mathematics. The fact that the two subjects are required as entry requirements at colleges or universities causes candidates to be so desperate that they end up engaging in these malpractices, especially after one has made several attempts of the paper. Teacher A had this to say: *Munhu anopedzisira atsvaga anomunyorera avona kuti ochembera, chirungu kana masvomhu achiramba kubuda* (one would end up engaging someone else after one would have sat without any success for Maths or English)

Another examination malpractice was cheating in the examination room. This was confessed by Teacher C who said:

Candidates get into the exam room with answers to a full leaked paper. They may have written the answers on papers, their thighs or palms. Ladies normally write on thighs or papers which they hide in their pants and bras. Some can write on the inside seams of their skirts. These practices totally reduce your status and hunhu. Usually, the invigilators may not be vigilant enough while others may actually sleep on duty,

leaving room for these unscrupulous practices. Sometimes one invigilator maybe assigned to man a big room alone.

Teacher B added that leaking papers facilitates candidates' cheating or copying in the room. He went further to say:

Usually, the teachers connive with the ZIMSEC officials. We don't know how they do this but papers will be sold by these unscrupulous teachers. Most of these teachers offer private lessons. So they coach their candidates overnight. Come exam day the candidates go with some of the material in the exam room.

Asked how the candidates will go about this in the examination room, learners from School C agreed that most invigilators were not vigilant enough and they could sometimes leave the candidates unattended and that gave the candidates the opportunity to copy from their coached material. The candidates cited examples of such centres that use large venues for examinations. One of the candidates, Memory, said:

For instance ...where you write in a big hall, the lady invigilators don't move. They will always be glued to their seats and it's common for them to sleep on duty. The same situation happens at ... school. One invigilator is left to man an exam room alone and when he/she goes out there is a lot that candidates can do. When the situation seems tight you ask to go to the toilet where in the toilet you read your loot. The system is lax.

The excerpts above demonstrate the different forms of examination malpractice. The teachers, learners and school administration have their own share of blame. Participants gave varied reasons and excuses to explain why the cheats engage in such misdemeanor. One of the learner participants from School A had this to say, *kunombaiva kupererwa chaiko. Unenge washaya kuti wodii apauchida kupasa. Pamwe murume anenge ati ukafoira woona zvokuita*(Sometimes it will be out of desperation particularly for married women. Some would have been given ultimatums by their husbands that if they fail that would be the end of the marriage.)

The other participant, Head of School C, commented that: *There is no excuse for that. It's mere laziness on the part of the learners. And for the teachers they want fame and incentives for producing 'A's at some schools. Sometimes nyaya yemabottom ten iyi*(the issue of ranking schools according to exam performance which results in the bottom ten is detrimental to good examination practice as schools and teacher strive not to be in the bottom list)

Researchers also interviewed the Head of School E, a prominent school in the district who had this to say:

We hear of such stories of malpractice from the newspapers, even about this school. But how can I do such a thing which can cost my life, my profession? They (ZIMSEC) sometimes withhold some of our exam results pending investigations but they have gotten nothing. Sometimes the lazy ones are quick to say there is cheating. We have our own work culture and this combined with our hardworking staff produce the envied results. Panoshandiwa pano kwete zvokutamba (The staff at this school work very hard to produce the good result. They are workaholics)

Participants' perceptions of examination malpractices and *unhu/ubuntu*

From the above quotes we discerned interesting explanations for the examination malpractices. We also sought to establish how participants viewed these malpractices in light of the issue of *Unhu/Ubuntu*. There was unanimity that engaging in these malpractices was *zvinhu zvisina Unhu/Ubuntu, that is, inhumane*-. Teacher E reported, *Hazvina hunhu izvo, munhuanofanirakuzvishandira. Vanavamazuvanovavaneusimbezvinopaunyopeneumbavha.*

Kubaka uku. Munhu unodya cheziya (That's inhumane, children these days don't want to work. They are too lazy to work hence resort to stealing. Human beings should work!)

Similarly, Teacher D said, *Exam malpractice is a violation of the principle of Unhu/Ubuntu. It's a clear sign of dishonesty, robbery and academic thievery...malpractices will violate societal ethics across generations...*

These excerpts view malpractices as a sign of lack of *Unhu/Ubuntu*, whose principles include amongst others, honesty, hard work, trustworthiness and responsibility (Ndondo & Mhlanga, 2014:3).

How *unhu/ubuntu* can mitigate examination malpractices

Asked on how these malpractices could be curtailed, Head of School E expressed the following sentiments, *It calls for everyone to conform to our good African ethics. The teaching of these values and ethics should be for all. Mwana haasi wemunhu umwe (A child does not belong to one person). This should not be left to teachers alone.* Considering that *unhu/ubuntu* is one of the cross-cutting philosophies in the Zimbabwean school's curriculum, the researchers sought to establish participants' understanding of *unhu/ubuntu*. There were some perceptions that *unhu* should be a stand-alone subject, just like Maths and English. However, participants could not explain the details of this position. Others felt that *unhu/ubuntu* should be taught just like Guidance and Counselling. A few participants felt that

teachers should teach *unhu* across the curriculum. *Unhu/Ubuntu* teaching should be part and parcel of every lesson. Teacher A had this to say:

Teachers should emphasise the teaching of unhu in their everyday lessons. Whether in Maths or Science it should be emphasised. It should be well known that you cannot steal with a pen in accounting. Teachers should use tsumo, ngano,(proverbs and folk stories) which promote unhu/ubuntu when teaching. Vana ngavango dzidziswa unhu zvisinei kuti zvinhu zvakaoma(Children should just be taught unhu regardless of the life challenges).

A learner from School D could not spare his words:

Schools and teachers in particular should be exemplary. How can they expect learners to exhibit unhu ivo vasina hunhu hwacho (whilst they are not exemplary).They should walk the talk so that learners can take a leaf from them. The issue of exam malpractice is just one but a few of the cases of lack of hunhu. Adults need to be exemplary in all respect. Just imagine the way Tr ... was demanding money from his students to discuss a leaked paper. Kutoita sokuti zvakana uye zvine hunhu(as if it's good and is humane). No wonder the law doesn't take its own course. Navaberekwiwo vanofanira kutaridza nokukurudzira hunhu (Even parents need to encourage and be exemplary in unhu behaviour) because they can't pay for such unscrupulous practices.

These excerpts indicate the seriousness with which the issue of *unhu/ubuntu* is considered in education. Teachers should be exemplary.

Discussion

Findings from the study revealed that teachers and learners, including ZIMSEC officials, are involved in examination scandals and malpractices. The common practices were impersonation, whereby one sat for another candidate in an examination. For instance, one might sit for the examination for a relative who has no capacity or potential to pass. Another practice was cheating by bringing in notes or answers to some examination questions. This included candidates writing answers on their thighs or palms. These practices were also noted and acknowledged by Tambawal (2013); Onah (2013); Furo (2015) and Chaminuka and Ndudzo (2014). Whilst participants expressed different views on the reasons for such practices, the common feeling was that the practices were against the African ethics of *unhu/ubuntu*. The action remains inhumane whether it is performed by a desperate husband whose wife had failed the examination perennially or a teacher assisting a relative-candidate

to pass. A complete human being should always distinguish between good and bad action, or practice. Bad acts and laziness are despised no matter the outcome. Rukuni (2007: 95) argues that “what is important in life is not what you have or what you achieve, but rather how you achieve it. Life is about ‘how’ not ‘what’.” *Unhu* values the process not the outcome. *unhu/ubuntu* should guide us on how we think and act. As one participant put it, “*Vana ngavangodzidziswa hunhu kunyange zvinhu zvakaoma sei* (children should always be taught *unhu/ubuntu* no matter how difficult the situation might be)”

It is important to realise that the African culture and wisdom cherish hard work. Working hard is crucial in curbing laziness which causes inadequate preparation, performance pressure and poor invigilation. These problems may, in turn, lead to examination cheating in schools (Nyamwange et al., 2013). Teachers and learners need to be hard working as suggested in *unhu/ubuntu* ethics so that they appreciate that cheating is a fruit of laziness. Both teachers and learners need to thoroughly prepare for examinations and desist from cheating. The opportunity to learn should be utilised and no time should be wasted. The *unhu* worldview instills hard work ethics in generations by encouraging community members to;

...know where you are going and fulfill the gifts that your God bestowed on you... work hard at any opportunity that comes your way, and use the best talents that have been bestowed on you by your ancestors and God (Rukuni, 2007: 8).

These are some of the rich sayings which encourage Africans to work hard and yearn for something good. People, both adults and children, should lead a purposeful life in order to achieve great things in life as happiness can never be achieved through cheating. African wisdom, which imbeds our humanness (*Unhu*) such as is expressed in the idiom ‘*sango rinopa waneta*’, loosely translated to ‘forests will only reward a hunter after he gets tired.’ or ‘*kufuma ishungu*’, which means true wealth lies in passion, encourages African people to work hard. In the African culture, one has to work hard so that one may be rewarded by the ancestors for the hard work (Rukuni, 2007:94).

In African culture and wisdom, hard work requires passion. *Unhu/Ubuntu* teaches that whatever you do, do it wholeheartedly, with all your strength and courage. This is the only way to build real world. Working hard and acting out one’s intentions and desires is the most important thing towards reaching important achievements in life. Incidences where ZIMSEC officials leak papers and where invigilators sleep on duty typify a very sad example of lack of humanness. These officials are equally to blame together with their accomplices. *Unhu/Ubuntu* ethos hold that *pabasa hapararwi* [You don’t sleep on duty].

Whilst findings show that examination cheating is totally antithetic to *unhu/ubuntu*, suggestions indicate that teaching *unhu/ubuntu* to children can be the best stop gap measure. Teachers should be good ambassadors of *unhu/ubuntu*. It was revealed that through effective teaching of *unhu*, learners can conform to good *unhu/ubuntu* principles. Acknowledging that the Zimbabwean school curriculum considers *unhu/ubuntu* as a cross cutting philosophy, it should be the duty of each and every teacher to inculcate values of *unhu/ubuntu* into the learners. This can be done through the use of proverbs and/or folk tales/stories. Rewarding of well-behaved and upright teachers and learners should be encouraged by schools. Bad behavior should be strictly condemned and punished. *Unhu/Ubuntu* should inform the ZIMSEC guidelines and procedures right from setting, distribution, storage, writing and marking of examinations together with the publication of examination results. Teachers as assessors are expected to exhibit humanness and care, which are key principles of *unhu/ubuntu*. It is only when *unhu/ubuntu* qualities are realised in a teacher by learners that they (learners) trust and accept the performance measurement outcome.

Findings also revealed that teachers and other community member sought to be exemplary and also role models of *unhu/ubuntu*. One participant said that, “they should walk the talk”. This implies that in order for learners to have *unhu/ubuntu* teachers and the generality of the adults should be exemplary as well. It was pleasing to note that one school head actually impressed upon that teachers at his school were workaholics, and, as such, the school has been producing good results. This upholds Rukuni’s (2007) view that *unhu/ubuntu* should be one’s way of life. By so doing, teachers and learners can “establish right from wrong, good and appropriate from bad and inappropriate behaviour in every situation that they face” (Kazembe, 2009: 55). Examinations can be one way to building Zimbabwe, if teachers and learners possess *unhu/ubuntu-the stop gap to malpractice*. This research believes that if Zimbabwe is to curb examination malpractices, the initiative should be in the school. If the key players shun cheating, then other stakeholders may find it difficult to involve them.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper concludes that examination malpractices involve a wide spectrum of members including teachers, learners, ZIMSEC officials and to some extent, parents who pay for such malpractices. These malpractices are a negation of the African values of *unhu/ubuntu*. *Munhu*[moral person] has principles of honesty, hard work, love and integrity amongst others. Examination cheats and/ or those engaging in the malpractices fall short of the criteria

of *munhu/umuntu*. Despite the challenges or difficult circumstances one can find oneself the principles of honesty, hard work and fairness should be the guiding principles. Thus, the teaching of these values can bring solutions to examination malpractices. If *unhu/ubuntu* becomes the guiding principle and way of life of an individual, corrupt tendencies and activities including examination, cheating might be shunned. In light of the findings and conclusion, the paper recommends the following:

- That there is need for effective teaching of *unhu/ubuntu* to help teachers build learners personality and character.
- Teachers be in-serviced on the interpretation of Zimbabwe's updated curriculum.
- Schools and colleges to consider strict reports on the exit profiles of learners. These profiles should be part of a learner's assessment report on how he/she behaves during his/her school life. Integration of '*unhu/ubuntu* and assessment issues' in the curriculum.
- Teachers and parents to be good ambassadors and role models of *unhu/ubuntu*.
- ZIMSEC improves its examination administration and storage of raw examinations(Exam bank)

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