Possible Reduction Mechanisms of Exam Cheating Practices for First Year Management Regular Students in Human Resource Management Course

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Abstract: Exam cheating practice is one of the most bottlenecks in Ethiopian education system in general and Debre Markos University Burie Campus in particular. Complaints on devastating increase of exam cheating practice has been heard from different corners in the country including the apex of Ministry of Education, which is the core owners, teachers, students and school managers from elementary schools to higher education institutions. As a result, it is necessary to tackle such type of problem in order to improve the quality of education. Hence, an action research was undertaken in 2019 in first year students of management department Human Resource Management course so as to reduce exam cheating problems by identifying the different exam cheating methods, contributing factors for cheating and developing a strategy how to minimize such types of malpractice. The study was conducted by employing purposive sampling technique with well-prepared lakert scale and semi-structured questionnaires for students and the department staff instructors as well. Both primary & secondary data were incorporated. For this study 60 first year management students and 8 instructors were considered as the key respondents. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics after properly encoded by SPSS software. Regarding to the exam cheating prevalence, 73.3% of respondents were confessed that cheating practice was common in first year management students. The major contributing factors that provoked students' academics dishonest were hard exam, fear of failure, time pressure, competition with others, peer pressure, poor understanding of the exam question, demanding high score, high grade and over crowed exam room. Moreover, the study also identified the most frequently cheating strategies of written exam were sheet cribs, writing on their body, looking at another answer sheet, signals/gesture, using unauthorized materials, whisper/undertone and medical reason. In order to reduce exam cheating practice close supervision during the exam process, effective class room management, punishment, ensure effective teaching and learning process, used coded exam type, advise the students properly to use their time effectively, provide clear examination rule and enable them to prepared for exam well were a paramount strategies that will bring an improvement for quality education and cheating reduction..

Keywords: Cheating, Examination, Management, Students, Methods, Strategies

1. Introduction

Higher education institutions are faced with a plethora of problems of which exam cheating is among the one. Exam cheating at university is a common phenomenon among students of all ages and specialties. Nowadays, the widespread use of the technologies i.e. mobile and wireless devices has made it easier for students to reach as well as transmit the information in illegal and dishonest ways. Exam cheating can be defined as the students' use of illegal activities, techniques and forms of fraud during their examination or evaluation processes, usually for the purpose

of achieving better grades. Exam cheating also defined as representing someone else's work as your own. Exam cheating is "intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercises for the sake of achieving better grade". So exam cheating is a real problem boggling in higher education institutions which leads to the effect that students who lack academic ethics will not respect integrity in their professions as well as in their personal relationships [11]. In the literature many types of academic cheating practices have been observed. For example, the collaboration when doing an assignment, completely or partially copying an assignment from another student, submitting the same work for multiple courses, paying someone to do an assignment, using hidden resources during an exam and other forms [14]. Exam cheating is considered as an intended violation of rules in order to acquire illegal advantage or better academic results in exam or similar forms of assessment. This may happen by "stealing" ideas and other material from different sources [6]. There may be several reasons that might encourage a student to engage in exam cheating practices. The primary reason for cheating may be due the toughness of the question paper, allotted less time for many questions, they believed to receive higher salaries from future employers if they have exceptional grades throughout their university life and since students need to acquire the degree for future employment, financial security, and personal reasons [4]. That is why grades are important measures in society, significantly impacting the lives of students; therefore, students are under pressure for exam cheating practices [13] and students are extremely concerned about the grades they receive [4]. Although getting better grades that may seem as the most compelling factors for making students cheat, other less obvious reasons could be peer pressure, playing smart, making fun for the instructors, or just because they can [11].

Hence, exam cheating practice is an institutional and societal problem and is more detrimental to the higher educational community which leads to affect faculty image, students, and administration [17]. For example, [2] explained this issue by stating: exam cheating costs institutions administrative time, loss of integrity within the institution, and student lack of respect for ethics and values which leads failure to pointed out faculty members institutional leadership to establish integrity standards and practices across the higher institution. It is noted that students in general are cheating at an alarming rate, and business school students are cheating even more than others [12]. Scholars of education underscore the students' assessment strategies as a core part in insuring quality. In reality, student assessment should be regarded as a complex, multidimensional activity that requires alignment, balance and rigor in order to assure quality results [9]. To ensure rigorous assessment, exam cheating practice must be minimized. If there are unethical practices, like cheating in the process of administering such kind of tools, the quality of education will be in questioned. A number of studies [1]. It is important if studies might examine students' own motives for engaging in academic

cheating in order to better understand their internalized conceptions of exam cheating [10]. In addition, previous researchers have investigated several reasons students engage in academic cheating practices such as poor academic standards, class sizes, increased competition for jobs, distance learning technologies and access to unlimited resources on the internet [3]. In the Ethiopian context, complaints on devastating increase of academic cheating practice has been heard from different corners in the country including the apex of Ministry of Education, which is the core owner, teachers, students and school managers from elementary schools to higher education institutions. However, with the exception of two studies by [16] on faculties 'response and students' self-reported academic dishonesty at Jemma and Addis Ababa Universities but to the best of our knowledge little or no research was carried out so far in Debre Markos University, Bure campus. So, the research was focused on management department of first year regular students in HRM course since the nature of the course is easy for exam cheating practices, high number of sponsored students joining in the department, exam cheating practice is frequently in the batch and relatively class size is more. Hence, researchers were initiated to conduct this study for the purpose of identifying the techniques used by students in exam cheating practice, to discover the factors that were contributing for students exam cheating practice and in order to explore a reduction mechanisms of exam cheating practice from the perspectives of first year management regular students in human resource management course at, Bure campus.

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Research Design and Approach

Since this research requires intervention, so explanatory research design type was utilized. Both quantitative and qualitative research approaches were conducted for this study. The prepared semi-structured questionnaires were administered in class during students' regularly scheduled class times as well as department staffs. The questionnaire was comprised of students view on methods of exam cheating practice, the crucial factors contributing for exam cheating and strategies for reduction in exam cheating practice was administered to the department staffs as well in order to alleviate such academic dishonest.

2.2. Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Debre Markos University Burie Campus had proceeded teaching learning process by inaugurated 10 programs with total of 1200 students. Among the total population the researchers wanted all first-year management students as representative samples using purposive sampling techniques since more sponsored students are engaged and high-class size in the batch were involved in exceptional case as well as the department staff incorporated their day to day practice as a source of data.

2.3. Sources of Data

Both primary and secondary data were collected and employed from the respective sources. The primary data were collected from first year management students with administered well prepared semi-structured questionnaires, via researchers' observations as well as conducted focus group discussion. The secondary data were collected from the university senate legislation, different published documents as well.

2.4. Method of Data Collection

This study was designed using a student self-report survey questionnaire. Student self-report is the most common method for assessing exam cheating and has been shown to provide reasonably accurate estimates [7]. For this study observation, Focus Group Discussion with size of 8 participants especially how to minimize the exam cheating practice specific objectives and Semi-structured questionnaire were prepared to gather the required primary data from the respective department students as well as course instructors and exam result would be utilized as a means to collect secondary data from first year management department students and published sources.

2.5. Method of Data Analyzing

For this study the collected data were analyzed by employing descriptive statistics like frequency, mean, and percentage as well as bar chart. Research software tools i.e. STATA version 14 and Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 were also employed.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

It was necessary to analyze exam cheating practices by gender in order to know the gender that is most likely to cheat. Table 1 summarizes the descriptive statistics of exam cheating practices by gender. The result shows that about 48.3% of the respondents were female students and the majority 51.7% of the respondents were males' students.

Table 1. Sex of the respondents.

Variables	Items	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	29	48.3
	Male	31	51.7
	Total	60	100.0

Source: Own survey result, 2019.

In terms of management studies, it was important to know the age that is prone to exam cheating practice in order to understand their motivations. Table 2, summarizes the age of the respondents. Fully understanding that age is a continuous variable the researcher decided to take it as a discrete function in order to conform to daily contexts because people use whole numbers to determine their ages rather than

express it in years and months. Using this understanding the mean age of the sample respondent were 21 with the maximum and the minimum age of 34 and 18 years, respectively with a standard deviation of 2.51.

Table 2. Age of the respondents.

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	60	18.00	34.00	20.8833	2.51161

Source: Own survey result, 2019.

3.2. Prevalence of Exam Cheating Practice

In addition, students were asked whether they had been cheated in the human resource management course or not as a result and table 3 shows that the majority of participants (73.3%) admitted that the prevalence of exam cheated had practiced whereas only 26.7% of students asserted that the prevalence of exam cheating had never common. This denotes that cheating practice was predominant among first-year students in the department of management, which needs careful attention and investigation to tackle such types of educational malpractice. The reason of such prevalence were the existence of more sponsored students, large class size, the nature of the course is easy and frequent exam cheating practice in the batch.

Table 3. Prevalence of Cheating.

Variable		Frequency	Percent
Exam cheating practices	No	16	26.7
	Yes	44	73.3
Total		60	100.0

Source: Own survey result, 2019.

3.3. Causes of Exam Cheating Practices

There are different factors that triggered students to lead in written exam cheat practices. It was necessary to analyze the cheats by hard exam in order to determine whether the nature of the exam influence the learners to commit exam cheating or not. As table 4, indicates, students were asked to express their attitude regarding to exam cheating due to hard exam, the majority of the students (53.3%) agreed that they would consider cheating if they encountered a difficult-in hard exam while 46.7% disagreed with the fact that difficult-exams may cause students to cheat. Mostly, the exam was mainly focus on cleaver students without considering medium as well as low achiever students in the class. The result also indicates that there were a strong association between hard exam and exam cheating practice at 5% of level of precision.

It was also necessary to analyze exam cheating practice via fear of failure. As a result, majority of the respondents, 66.67%, agreed that fear to failure can lead students to commit exam cheating practices. Fear of failure in examination forced them to cheat with the hope of achieving a desired goal of passing graduate studies. The result also indicates that there were a strong association between fear of failure and exam cheating practice at 1% of level of

precision. In addition, Table 4 also revealed that from the total sample respondents, 56.7% of the respondents suggest that heavy workload and insufficient study time were identified as a cause of exam cheating practices. The chi-2

result also indicates that there were a strong association between heavy workload and insufficient time with exam cheating practice at 5% of level of precision.

Table 4. A reasons for exam cheating.

Variables	Item	Freq	Percent	χ^2 test
Time pressure and High course load	Agree	34	56.7	0.02
	Disagree	26	43.3	
Hard exam	Agree	32	53.3	0.04
	Disagree	28	46.7	
Competition with others	Agree	29	48.3	
	Disagree	31	51.7	
Punishment is not serious	Agree	21	35	
	Disagree	65	65	
Fear of failure	Agree	40	66.67	0.01
	Disagree	20	33.33	
Peer pressure	Agree	40	66.7	
	Disagree	20	33.3	
To get higher grade	Agree	35	58.3	0.07
	Disagree	25	41.7	
Poor understanding the exam question	Agree	27	45	
	Disagree	33	55	
Overcrowded exam room	Agree	37	61.7	0.01
	Disagree	23	38.3	

Source: Own survey result, 2019.

Another provoking factor that leads students to commit exam cheating practice was peer pressure. From table 4, 66.7% of the respondents have agreed that peer pressure was another motivating factor that triggered students for exam cheating practice. In addition to that, 45% of the respondents agreed that poor understanding of the exam questions was another triggering factor for exam cheating practice. Likewise, overcrowded of exam room was one of the major motivating factors for exam cheating practice (61.7%). The chi-2 result revealed that there were a strong association between exam cheating practices and overcrowded of exam room at 1% level of precision. The test result indicates that as the class room become overcrowded, it created an enabling environment for students in exam cheating practice more. Also, the majority (58.3%) of the respondent agreed that getting higher grade was the major triggered factor for exam cheating practice in written exam and the students were highly intended to score high grade for various reason including parental satisfaction, scholarship and to get better job opportunity in their future career.

3.4. Exam Cheating Strategy Used by the Students

The result of the cheating survey, shown in table 5, indicate that that 46.7% of the students had previously practiced exam cheating via sheet cribs frequently. This strategy includes piece of paper and other unauthorized materials in their hand and pocket while at exam room. Additionally, majority of the respondents (41.7%) said that students used their body as a cheating strategy frequently.

The result also indicates that 55% of the students had previously copied answer from another exam paper frequently. The Chi-2 test also support this argument that there were a strong association between exam cheating practice and writing some piece of information on their body as well as cheating strategy at 1% level of precision.

Another predominant cheating strategy which is frequently used by the student was using signals/gesture and whisper/undertone. Descriptive statistics result in table 5 also indicate that the most cheating strategy frequently employed by the student was using signals (60%) and whisper (53.3%) frequently. Furthermore, table 5 indicate that among the most commonly used cheating strategies students were used, mobile as a cheating strategy sometimes which was minimal (45%).

Other possible media that can be possibly used for exam cheating practice was handling unauthorized materials including, legs, palms and any other places that they think invigilators will not suspect to contain any unauthorized materials. 36.7% of the respondents were strongly agreed that handling unauthorized materials were used as exam cheating strategy by students. This result was in lined with [5] which revealed that the possible exam cheating strategy used by students was smuggle illegal materials into the examination room like clothes and wrist watches.

In addition to the above, using unauthorized materials, 36.7% frequently and medical circumstance, 36.7% rarely were adopted as a cheating strategy by students.

Table 5. Frequency of cheating strategy used by 1st year management students.

Parameters	Frequently (%)	Sometimes (%)	Rarely (%)	Never (%)	χ^2– test
Using sheet cribs	46.7	21.7	15	16.7	
Writing on their body	41.7	33.3	15	10	
Looking at another exam paper	55	26.7	11.7	6.7	***
Using mobile	16.7	45	25	13.3	*
Using signals/gestures	60	23.3	8.3	8.3	*
Using unauthorized materials	36.7	36.7	16.6	10	
Through whisper/undertone	53.3	28.3	13.3	5	**
Using medical circumstance	20	16.7	36.7	26.7	

Source: Own survey result, 2019.

3.5. Examination Cheating Reduction Mechanisms

Cheating during examinations can be curved using different exam cheating reduction strategies simultaneously. To what extent depends on how much the instructor cares whether or not it happens, and on his or her ability to take appropriate action. Several techniques were discussed and presented as follows.

3.5.1. Supervision

Some instructors actually leave the room during the examination, giving the impression that they had total faith in the honesty of the students, or that they could care less whether or not cheating practice occurs. Having more than one in- structure in the room for supervision may be worse than having only one, if all they do is talk. Instructors should make every attempt to be present during exams. Therefore, active supervision of examinations would enable instructors to effectively control written exam cheating practice in the class room. Table 6, indicate that 50% of the respondents had agreed that strict supervision was a possible strategy to minimize exam cheating practice. As the Chi-2 test result indicates that strict supervision is strong association with a possible strategy to minimize exam cheating practice at 5% level of significance. Hence, the more the instructors strictly supervise, the better leads to minimize exam cheating practice in the department.

Table 6. Strategies to minimize exam cheating was teachers always supervise exam strictly.

Variables	Item	Frequency	Percent	Chi-2 test
Supervision	strongly agree	2	25.0	**
	agree	4	50.0	
	disagree	2	25.0	
	Total	8	100.0	

Source: Own survey result, 2019.

3.5.2. Punishment

Another most important cheating reduction mechanism was punishment as per the legislation of Debremarkos university allowed. According to the university senate legislation (2012) article 80 of sub-article 8 in the event that the SC/DC finds a clear case of cheating, it shall decide and inform the instructor of the course that the student should obtains an "F" grade for the course/module. For other disciplinary measures including warning or suspension for at least one semester the case shall be forwarded to students'

discipline committee. In most case, cheating would continue as far as teachers were lassies fairly do not punish cheaters. Most instructors run punishment as the first practical solution that could serve as a discouragement technique for exam cheating practice. In table 7, almost all respondents were agreed that punishment was one of the best instruments to be used as a strategy to reduce exam cheating practice. The chi-2 test result also indicates that there were a strong association between exam cheating reduction strategy and punishment at 5% level of precision.

Table 7. Strategies to minimize exam cheating was punishing exam cheaters harshly.

Variables	Items	Frequency	Percent	χ^2
Punishment	Strongly agree	--	--	
	Agree	7	87.5	**
	Disagree	1	12.5	
	Total	8	100.0	

Source: Own survey result, 2019.

3.5.3. Preparation for Examination

From table 8, 50% of the respondents suggest that well preparation for examination would reduce exam cheating practices. Good preparation plays a significant role in raising academic achievement for the learners. This result findings were also confirmed by [18], insisted that "students who were well prepared for an exam were more likely to do well than those who had not prepared adequately".

Table 8. Strategies to minimize exam cheating was setting quality tests.

variable	Items	Frequency	Percent
Quality test	strongly agree	3	37.5
	Agree	4	50.0
	Disagree	1	12.5
	Total	8	100.0

Source: Own survey result, 2019.

3.5.4. Provide Sufficient Time for Revision

On Table 9, 50% of the respondents strongly agree that revision would facilitates memorization by having students rewrite the information, reorganize it into a more meaningful order, and assimilate the material into their cognitive plans. So, the instructors said that revision would enhance students score so that engagement on cheating practices can be reduced. This finding in lined with [8], reviewing notes was clearly necessary for students to retain information well

enough time to be able to recall it.

Table 9. *Strategies to minimize exam cheating practice was providing sufficient time for revision.*

Variables	Items	Frequency	Percent	Chi-2
Sufficient time for revision	strongly agree	4	50.0	
	Agree	2	25.0	
	Disagree	2	25.0	
	Total	8	100.0	

Source: Own survey result, 2019.

3.5.5. Ensuring Effective Teaching and Learning

Effective teaching and learning were ensuring that the students should possess the subject knowledge as they expected and the teacher should deliver the course matter as he expected so as to achieve good performance of the students. From Table 10, half percent of the respondents suggested that effective teaching and learning should be taken as a pre-requisite strategy for exam cheating reduction mechanisms for furthers ensuring quality graduate professionals.

Table 10. *Strategies to minimize exam cheating was ensuring effective teaching and learning.*

Strategy	Items	Frequency	Percent	Chi-2
Teaching and Learning	strongly agree	1	12.5	
	Agree	4	50.0	
	Disagree	3	37.5	
	Total	8	100.0	

Source: Own survey result, 2019.

3.5.6. Advice Students to Use Their Time Properly

Students were not aware of the importance of time management for examinations. Majority of the students wait until the last minute before studying for major tests and others dig and spend their time on studying and referring other supplementary books which adds value on their grads. Some instructors (25%) were not advise students to use their time properly so as to enable students to score good grade. However, more respondents (37.5%) were strongly agreed that advising students to use their time can be taken as a good exam cheating practice reduction strategy. Student advising is statistically significant for exam cheating reduction mechanism at 10% level of significance. As students well advised, there is a possibility to increase their confidence as well as systematically to read more which leads to improve their academic achievement with their own

Table 11. *Exam cheating strategy by advising students to use their time effectively.*

Variables	Items	Frequency	Percent	Chi-2
Advice students	strongly agree	3	37.5	
	Agree	3	37.5	*
	Disagree	2	25.0	
	Total	8	100.0	

Source: Own survey result, 2019.

3.5.7. Teach Cultural Honesty

Culture of honesty could be preached for the students to

relay on themselves. Once the instructor thought the culture of honesty on the students, the prevalence of exam cheating practice can be minimized. The result of this descriptive statistics (Table 12) revealed that 62.5% of the respondent implied teaching the culture of honesty could be taken as a paramount exam cheating reduction strategy.

Table 12. *Strategies to minimize exam cheating was instill or teach cultural honesty.*

Strategy		Frequency	Percent
Cultural honesty	strongly agree	3	37.5
	Agree	5	62.5
	Disagree	--	--
	Total	8	100.0

Source: Own survey result, 2019.

3.5.8. Providing Clear Rules of Examination

Lack of clarity on exam instruction was one of the potential contributing factors for exam cheating practice. The invigilator needed to provide clear exam instruction before the students began to do the exam. Table 13 indicates that 50% of the respondents strongly agreed that provision of clear examination rule would be a possible strategy to minimize exam cheating practices during written examination in the class room.

Table 13. *Strategies to minimize exam cheating was providing clear examination rules.*

Strategy	Items	Frequency	Percent
Clear rule of exam	strongly agree	3	37.5
	Agree	4	50.0
	Disagree	1	12.5
	Total	8	100.0

Source: Own survey result, 2019.

3.5.9. Avoid Voluntary Absenteeism

Voluntary Absenteeism by the students was a potential source of exam cheating practice. Mostly students try to cheat instructors by providing an authorized medical evidence to take the exam advantage. Mostly such type of medical evidence was where the course instructor was offering the course in the first time. Table 14 indicates that half percent of the respondents strongly agreed that avoiding voluntary absenteeism was a possible strategy to minimize exam cheating practice. Because while the students regularly attended the class, their ability of grasping knowledge as well as confidence of doing independently to score good grade would be enhanced.

Table 14. *Strategies to minimize exam cheating was students to avoid absenteeism.*

Strategy	Items	Frequency	Percent
Avoid absenteeism	strongly agree	4	50.0
	Agree	3	37.5
	Disagree	1	12.5
	Total	8	100.0

Source: Own survey result, 2019.

3.5.10. Preparing Coded Exam Type

The larger promotion of the respondents (75%) make the exam difficult for students to obtain answers from others by varying order of appearance or the choices of the same question. Some instructors (12.5%), are relies on student honest and disagree on exam coded types of prepared questions. However, the majority of the instructors were agreed up on exam coding type helped the instructors in order to reduce exam cheating practices. Those instructors who used the honor code system don't rely on it solely to curb cheating and used other exam cheating reduction strategy as well. The chi-2 test result also indicates that there were a strong association between exam cheating reduction strategy and coded exam type at 1% level of precision.

Table 15. *Strategies to minimize exam cheating was preparing coded exam type questions.*

Strategy	Items	Frequency	Percent	Chi-2
Coded exam type	strongly agree	6	75.0	***
	Agree	1	12.5	
	Disagree	1	12.5	
	Total	8	100.0	

Source: Own survey result, 2019.

3.5.11. Effective Exam Class Room Management

The instructor should give credit for brave students by effective class room management during a written exam class room. They should not feel that the students in the class would feel uncomfortable and untrusted. Those students who were not prepared well had a more difficult time taking advantage of those that were prepared well. So, effective class room management including separation of the student and sat the appropriate spacing between the students was almost mandatory in curbing cheating practice specially when large numbers of students were being taken the exam in one class room. Table 14 indicate that 37.5% of the respondents were strongly agreed that effective exam class room management were taken as a possible strategy to minimize exam cheating practice. The chi-2 test also indicates that there were a strong association between as exam cheating reduction strategy and effective class room management at 5% level of precision.

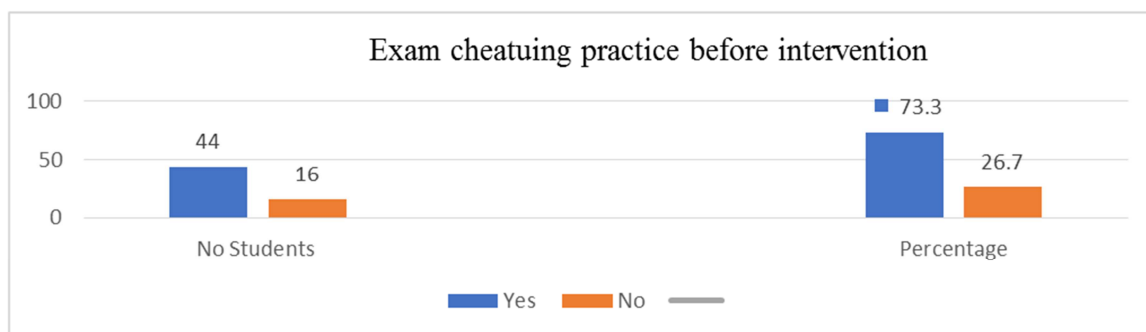**Table 16.** *Strategies to minimize exam cheating is effective class room management.*

Strategy	Items	Frequency	Percent	Chi-2
Effective class room management	strongly agree	3	37.5	**
	Agree	3	37.5	
	Disagree	2	25.0	
	Total	8	100.0	

Source: Own survey result, 2019.
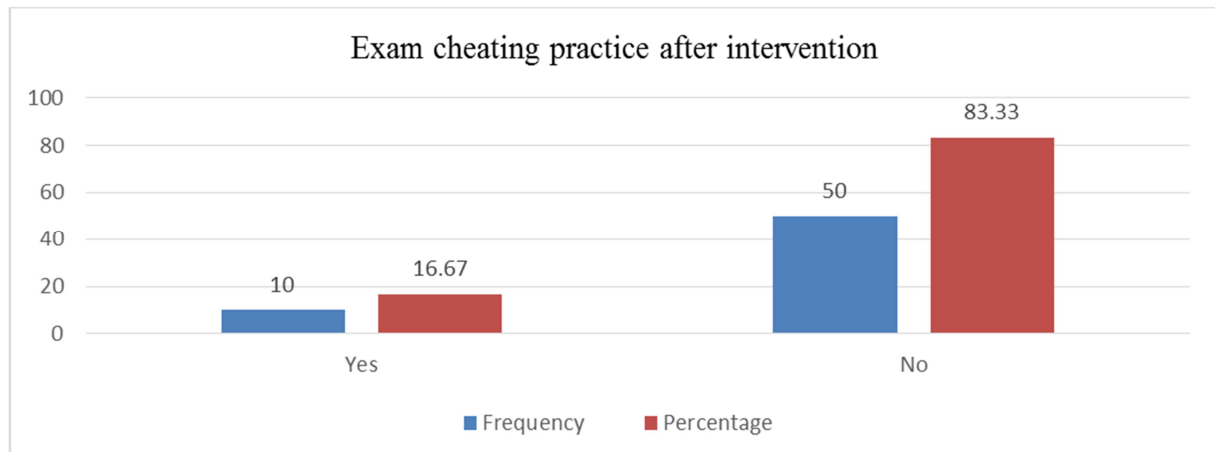
3.6. Intervention

This study had identified most commonly contributing factor for exam cheating practice, exam cheating strategies used by the students and exam cheating reduction mechanisms strategies used by the instructor so as to reduce the prevalence of exam student's dishonesty.

This study had identified several contributing factors for exam cheating practice. Those provoking factors were hard exam, poor supervision, time pressure and high course load, peer pressure, demanding high grade and competition with other students. On the other hand, the study also indented major cheating strategies used by the students. The frequent cheating mechanism employed by the students were sheet cribs, looking at another answer sheet, using signals/gestures and whisper/undertone. After knowing the common cheating strategies, the researchers had prepared exam cheating preventive strategies to control the prevalence of exam cheating practice. Some of the strategy developed by the researchers were ensuring enough space between the students, shaded the answer sheet so as to prevent coping from other exam sheet, providing a clear examination rule like "write the answer only on the answer sheet", assigning two or more than two invigilator in one exam room, strictly control the movement and sign of the students on exam and given a direction for invigilator for effectively hear the whisper/undertone sound of the students. In the intervention phase while students were taking test 1 researchers were observed what looks like the exam cheating practice, in the next test 2 applied the strategies to reduce the exam cheating practice, and finally in the test 3 again administered semi-structured questionnaires then after analyzed the result. Afterall, as a result of the implementation of the selected cheating reduction strategies as an intervention, it was possible to reduce the number of cheaters seized from 44 (73.3%) to 10 (16.67%).

Source: Own computation, 2019.

Figure 1. *Number of students engaged in cheating practice before intervention was made.*

Own computation, 2019.

Figure 2. Number of students engaged in cheating practice after intervention was made.

4. Conclusions

This study was carried out at Debre Markos University first year management students in human resource management course. The study was initiated to conduct the research with a specific objectives of identifying the techniques used by students in exam cheating practice, to discover the factors that were contributing for students exam cheating practice and explore a reduction mechanism of exam cheating practice. The study was employed purposive sampling techniques with quantitative as well as qualitative research approaches. 60 students and 8 instructors were involved in this research as a source of primary data and by employing descriptive statistics the collected data were analyzed. As table 4, indicates that 53.3% agreed that they would consider cheating if they encountered a difficult-in hard exam while 46.7% disagreed with the fact that difficult-exams may cause students to cheat. The major exam cheating strategy used by students were looking at another exam paper, using mobile, using signals / gestures, writing on their body and through whisper/undertone which were statistically significant at 1%, 10% and 5% level of precision. And the major contributing factors for exam cheating practices were time pressure, hard exam, fear of failure, to get high grade, poor understanding of the exam question and overcrowded exam room. 58% of the respondents were agreed that the main triggered factor for exam cheating practice was to get high grade. To alleviate these malpractices the researcher was carried out three tests by applying an exam reduction mechanism which were using the honor of coded exam, strict supervision, punishment, effective exam room management, avoiding class absenteeism, providing clear exam rule and teach the culture of honesty. Therefore, after all, as a result of the implementation of the selected cheating reduction strategies as an intervention, it was possible to reduce the number of cheaters seized from 44 (73.3%) to 10 (16.67%).

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