

Academic Integrity and Exam Invigilation/Proctoring Risks: A Chief Examiner's Storied Experiences at a University in Ghana

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Abstract

Examinations play an important role in many educational systems towards fairness, validity, and reliability of the results produced, and vigilant invigilators are invaluable in preventing cheating by enforcing the rules. However, in certain contexts, enforcing the rules and guidelines of examinations puts invigilators/proctors at risk of emotional, mental, and physical harm. This study employs a Narrative Inquiry approach to interpret and understand the meanings that a chief examination officer makes of the physical and emotional risks experienced in their role. The lived experiences shared revealed blackmail, intimidation, and even physical harm as some of the risks invigilators navigate in their role. This study builds on the chief invigilator's experiences and recommendations to underscore the necessity for educational institutions to enhance invigilator safety. Examination threats can undermine the credibility of certificates and the integrity of awarding institutions. Additionally, the study calls for further research to explore these risks more broadly across universities in Ghana, Africa, and globally.

Keywords

Examination, Higher Education, Academic Integrity, Invigilation/Proctors, Risks, Examination Policy, Ghana, Narrative Inquiry

1. Introduction

Students are being educated to provide them with the skills, attitudes, and abilities they will require in everyday life, and it is through education that values are

transferred from one generation to the next (Solichin et al., 2021; Sugiarti & Husain, 2021). The Ministry of Education in Ghana hopes to foster the development of young people into decent, creative, and responsible adults (NaCCA, 2018). The ministry exposes the young adults to various programmes based on their choices and gifts. At the heart of the curriculum is the belief in nurturing honest, creative, and responsible citizens who have respect for the nation of Ghana, its institutions, laws, and culture, as well as respect among Ghana's citizens and friends. They are expected to be men and women of truth and integrity, who are prepared to tell the truth irrespective of the consequences. They are to become morally upright, with the attitude of doing the right thing even when no one is watching. They should be true to themselves and willing to live the values of honesty and compassion (Ibid.). These values, among others, are expected to be inculcated in the young people, irrespective of their chosen careers (Chala & Agago, 2022).

At the various stages till the completion of the programmes, there is the need to judge the learning capability of the students as they make progress to ascertain their readiness to take up responsibilities in society (Guangul et al., 2020). According to Chala & Agago (2022), quality education is equivalent to a quality workforce, hence, there is a need for examinations at various stages, both for the award of certificates and for recruitment into the world of employment. The examinations could be written in a traditional environment in physical locations or online (Sharmeen et al., 2022). Online examinations, on the one hand, are likely to be available, economical, usable, updatable, resource-efficient, and accessible, but there are serious problems with authentication and hacking of exam materials either before or during the exam (Hoque et al., 2020). On the other hand, because students, examination questions, and staff are all present together in a closed environment during traditional examinations, security threats are thought to be reduced (Hoque et al., 2020). That is, it eliminates any potential for impersonation that would arise during an online assessment, but the cost is higher. Whichever choice is made by the institution, there are risks associated with conducting examinations (Peters et al., 2019). Studies (Sugiarti & Husain, 2021) have shown that examination malpractice, which is one of the issues plaguing the global education system, is a worrying phenomenon that can occur before, during, or after the examination. The rapid deterioration of the quality of our educational system as a result of widespread examination malpractice is a cankerworm that poses malicious attacks on the moral values and integrity of our institutions (Bright & Gladys, 2018; Damare & Kawugana, 2021; Khan et al., 2022, Nganchi & Charlotte, 2020; Udim, Abubakar, & Essien, 2018).

Among the risks associated with conducting face-to-face examinations are invigilation risks. Invigilation is the act of supervising, monitoring, or watching students during a test or an examination. When students have an undue advantage during examinations, the results from such examinations are unfit for their intended function. The threats to examinations, whatever forms they take, can have a detrimental impact on the credibility of the certificate awarded and the integrity

of the awarding institutions—a perspective that is supported by [Kyei-Badu et al. \(2022\)](#). Beyond this issue of integrity, is the risk invigilators face when they have to address incidents of examination malpractices. Thus, the purpose of this study is to unearth the physical and emotional risks that some invigilators experience through the lens of a chief invigilator at a University in Ghana.

This study's significance also stems from its capacity to inform both potential and current invigilators on the value of security awareness while also advising the institution on further preventative steps to keep invigilators safe while they carry out their jobs. Additionally, the findings and recommendations have the potential to influence a university-wide study on the issues, policy change and implementation across various universities in the country. It is important to note that while the experiences shared come from an individual, the outcomes and recommendations have the potential to inform all universities in running of authentic examinations, free of malpractice while ensuring the safety of all involved, particularly, invigilators. Finally, bringing the issue of invigilation risks to the fore would engender an open space for other invigilators and universities to engage in conversations on best practices. Ultimately, this study can lead to the development of a body on literature on such experiences toward the development of a community of practice.

2. Statement of the Problem

The world is full of negative attitudes and behaviour that show themselves in almost every human endeavour and examination settings are not an exception. The role of invigilators is to ensure the conduct of free and fair examinations. Achieving this aim means identifying and penalising candidates who are found cheating during the exams. However, when done well and according to the rules and guidelines of examinations, invigilators run the risks of being threatened through blackmail, intimidation, and even physical abuse. This phenomenon has a lot of implications for how invigilators conduct themselves in examination centres and highlights the need to put stringent measures in place to protect invigilators from attacks.

3. Objectives of the Study

This study shares and discusses the lived and observed experiences of a chief invigilator at a university in Ghana to draw the attention of university management towards an evaluation of examination policy, structure and implementation. Specifically, this study sets out to achieve the following objectives:

- Sharing the experiences of invigilators as told by a chief invigilator.
- Discuss the support systems that were not available to examination invigilators in the experiences shared.
- Recommend possible measures to safeguard invigilators against the risks associated with examination invigilation.

The risks associated with examination malpractice have a high potential to lead

to humiliation, intimidation, blackmailing, hatred, etc., which may not attract people of integrity to be part of the invigilation. Thus, through the experience of one chief invigilator, the study iterates the need for all stakeholders to create a secure and comfortable environment for all invigilators by raising awareness of the risks that examination invigilators face.

4. Conceptual Framework

When cheating is permissible or goes unpunished, it violates several principles within assessment theories, particularly those related to fairness, validity, and reliability (Getachew et al., 2023). Fairness dictates that all students should have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills (American Educational Research Association et al., 2014). Thus, cheating undermines the fairness of assessment systems. When cheating occurs, it gives an unfair advantage to those who cheat over those who do not, thereby violating the principle of fairness (Dyer et al., 2020).

Validity refers to the extent to which an assessment accurately measures what it is intended to measure (American Educational Research Association et al., 2014; Getachew et al., 2023). Therefore, cheating compromises the validity of assessments because it provides inaccurate representations of students' actual abilities (Wollack & Cizek, 2017). Instead of assessing genuine learning and understanding, cheating reflects the ability to deceive or manipulate the system (American Educational Research Association et al., 2014).

Reliability pertains to the consistency and stability of assessment results (Getachew et al., 2023; American Educational Research Association et al., 2014). Cheating introduces variability into assessment outcomes because it introduces factors beyond students' actual knowledge and skills. This undermines the reliability of assessments by making it difficult to trust the consistency of results. Cheating also violates ethical principles related to integrity, honesty, and academic integrity (Waweru, 2020). It rewards dishonest behaviour and undermines the values of education that emphasise the importance of learning, personal development, and intellectual honesty.

These three principles of assessment inform the conceptual foundation for this study in understanding the experiences of a chief invigilator. This is because risks associated with invigilation have the potential to prevent invigilators/proctors from being vigilant and active in preventing examination malpractices and cheating (Attoh Odongo et al., 2021; Cameron et al., 2022; Feng & Ouyang, 2021). Ultimately, when cheating is permissible or goes unpunished, it undermines the principles of fairness, validity, reliability, and ethical conduct within assessment theories. Instead of accurately assessing students' knowledge and skills, it distorts assessment outcomes and rewards dishonest behaviour, ultimately eroding the integrity of educational systems. What this study does, is to uncover some of the experiences that invigilators may encounter that can affect their ability to ensure fairness, validity and reliability.

5. Methodology

The qualitative research design is appropriate and adopted for this research as the focus is not only on the events and behaviour of both students and invigilators but also on how our participant makes sense of the events and how their understanding influences their behaviour (Maxwell, 2012). To better understand the experiences of our participant and how that experience informs the authenticity of examination processes on the university campus, the narrative inquiry approach was utilised. Narrative inquiry is also apt as it acknowledges the dynamism in lived experiences (Lemley & Mitchell, 2012; Wang & Geale, 2015). Additionally, “narratives and stories have [the] capacity to accomplish things in that they can be strategic, functional and purposeful” (Griffin & May, 2012 cited in (O’Toole, 2018)). This study employs research as strategic in expanding the conversation on examinations and its processes towards authenticity. In its functional sense, the stories shared will expose challenges associated with efficiency and effectiveness, while engendering transformative practice in examinations.

5.1. The Storyteller

Exam King (Pseudonym) is a chief invigilator of a centre in a university in Ghana. They started their career at the university in Ghana in 2005 and that was when they began their work as invigilator. It would take about six to eight years for them to become a chief invigilator. They learned by observing other chief examiners and they incorporated the good they experienced with those chiefs while discarding negatives with strategies for mitigation. Their experiences are crucial to achieving the aims of the study. Thus, in this research, we share stories reflective of King’s interactions with other invigilators, students and management. Stories were gathered through two-hour conversation with King once a week for three weeks. These conversations were guided by the main objectives of this study which are to highlight the possible risks associated with invigilation, the lack or inadequate support for invigilators and to recommend measures towards safeguarding the invigilators. Researchers became the audience of King as they narrated various experiences and happenings at their centre. These stories were recorded and transcribed. Additionally, stories were constructed to reflect the storytelling environment and also create opportunities to engage King’s native language and cultural views that are eminent in the telling and the meanings they are making of their experiences (Osei-Tutu, 2021a, 2022). The constructed stories were then shared with King for verification before they were finalised for the study.

5.2. Storying as Analysis

The main approach to analysis in this study is storying. As Connelly & Clandinin (2006) attest, “story is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made meaningful” (p. 477). O’Toole (2018) emphasises that stories generate in-depth understanding of peoples’ experiences at both the institutional and personal levels as exemplified in this

study. In that light, storytelling is employed both as a method (source of information or data) and as analysis or meaning making (Osei-Tutu, 2021b). In understanding the nature of examinations and the risks associated with the conduction of examinations, the stories shared by King will not only make visible the issue at hand, but also show at various levels the dangers that invigilators and students encounter in a practice that is so mundane in the academic space. Stories are written in a different font in order to distinguish them from the discussions that ensue. Additionally, a thematic analysis approach will be utilised where necessary to connect the experiences and the meanings that King is making of these experiences. The thematic approach provides the avenue to identify recurrent meanings (Vaismoradi et al., 2013) or specific meanings that are important in addressing the objectives of the study. In this light, thematic analysis is used in the sense that the essence of a story shared provides areas of focus that have implications for examination authenticity and effectiveness instead of the domains of data (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

The risk associated with participating in this study is minimal. COVID-19 risks were mitigated through strict observance of all COVID-19 protocols (wearing of face masks, sanitizing hands with alcohol-based sanitizers, and social distancing at 2 feet apart). Some chats were conducted virtually via Zoom to minimize face-to-face exposure. Additionally, potential risks for Exam King as a participant in this study are also mitigated, as all stories shared were treated confidentially and used anonymously as evident in the use of the pseudonym. Gender-neutral pronouns are also used to further de-identify King. All information provided was protected according to research and ethical practices. Exam King had the opportunity to view the written stories to ensure that they were a true representation of the experiences shared.

6. Telling the Risks

Five stories are shared using both narrative and oral storytelling techniques centered within the Akan oral storytelling culture. These stories share the experiences of Exam King and their colleagues.

6.1. Bleeding for the Rules

Recently, I had a very terrible incident in one of my centres where I confiscated a student's phone after I had given several announcements for such items to be removed from the examination hall. It was a beautiful Tuesday afternoon. We had already completed the first set of examinations without incident, which is rare. With the morning experience in mind, we were looking forward to a successful mid-morning paper. All the students came to the exam centre on time, found their index numbers and proceeded to take their seats. Everything seemed to be in order and as Chief, I gave the go ahead for each room to begin the exams. Invigilators in the other exam rooms were all going through the regular checks. Usually, when I go round, I check the

pockets and if you have a phone, it would be bulging. I ask you to show me what is in there and it is usually a phone, and that goes against the rules and regulations of exams at the university. The room was beginning to get quiet as students settled down for the exam to begin. The announcements were made: students should have ID cards placed on their tables—this means that students without IDs will not be allowed to write the exams; students should have all materials needed for the exam as there will be no opportunity for sharing, and finally, students should not have any unauthorised material in the form of pieces of paper, cellular phones, books or bags.

A few minutes after the start of the exams, I give the students the opportunity to voluntarily submit their phones if they still have them without consequences as the exam is still in its early stages. When this was done, I began my regular checks. So, as I was going round, I found a student who had a phone. They didn't seem that worried that I had found them out or that I was going to take the phone away from them, together with their student ID. Thus, by policy, I take the phone from the student, including their ID and then I give the required form to the student to fill after the exam and return it to me.

The rest of the exam was uneventful. Everyone did their part and students were all quiet and focused on what their tasks were for the period. The exam was over, and we had quite a number of students with mobile phones in the exam room. This meant we had to process all the students after they returned the filled form. As I was processing the forms, it got to their turn (Let's call the student ST). ST submitted the filled form, and I gave them their ID back. ST then asked for their phone, and I told them that the phone was evidence, they were only going to get it back after the investigations had been completed. Their response was the proverbial smoke that warns of a raging fire. But we didn't make much of it. We are used to the smoke, it starts slithering its way from the source and expands as it joins the life of the air, in a short while it dissipates... following the wind on their journey to Nowhere and Everywhere. The little fire dies a natural death because at the source, it is contained... no air to stoke it. But this time, this fire... was already stoked.

ST: No, I don't understand what you are saying. I want my phone back.

We were in front of the exam hall where students turned in their papers and incident forms. On the table were collected exam scripts, attendance sheets, other report related documents, the incident report forms that students were submitting and the confiscated phones. The forms are placed together with the phones in order to make the completion of the report easier.

Without a thought to it, ST picked up their phone from the table after I had explicitly told them that it was not going to happen. As they reached over the table to pick up the phone, an assistant invigilator by me made efforts to stop them from picking it up...

Blood, blood dripping from the assistant invigilator's arm... what had just

occurred? There is a quick exchange between myself and the assistant invigilator. Was it their nail, or pen, or...a sharp instrument? Shocked. Staring at the blood that continued to drip. We all turn to look at ST, who at this point is heading for the exit after throwing the form at me and muttering:

ST: You can take the university

Immediately, I called the security to come and handle the situation as things had become violent. ST struggled with the security. They pushed, shoved, resisted, refused to give the phone back. Security was overwhelmed at this point. ST seemed to have gathered Azuma's or Klottey's boxing strengths. Security needed reinforcement and so two more came to see if ST can be contained. This smoke did not dissipate like the rest. Its flames lighted trying to raise down everything in its path. ST kicked, shoved, struggled...possessed? Like every fire that is out of control, lots of water was needed. And the security doubled, retrieved the phone and the student seemed to have calmed down. The phone was the power...We all watched as she was led away by the security...

As I tell the story, I do not know what happened to ST. What were the consequences for their actions? Was the assistant invigilator compensated? How about the security, who at the end of the incident, had bleeding scratches all over their arms? Who bears the cost for any treatment needed? And why should invigilators endure these dangers?

ST was first taken to the Academic Affairs Directorate for counseling by the head of the examination unit. Like all examination malpractice cases, they were supposed to meet the examination malpractice committee for interrogation and determination of the appropriate sanction. This was done. They met with the committee, but the outcome of the meeting was never known. Recently, the outcome of the committee was published by the university. Typically, the meeting's decision or outcome is made public after a year. Sanctions for examination malpractice were published, spelling out the general examination offense, the specific examination offense, the sanctions, a description of the sanctions, and the total number of students sanctioned. There were no details of the offenses committed, and the sanctions melted on the individual involved. Furthermore, chiefs are not copied in the cases in which they were directly involved. This might serve as a source of encouragement for invigilators concerned and as a deterrent for other students. Hence, the chief has no way of knowing the outcome of the cases they reported.

ST put fear and panic among the invigilators so much that some of the invigilators indicated their decision not to continue with the examination invigilation because they have a name and dignity to protect. If any of the invigilators attempted to resist their action, their aggression could have escalated into more serious injury, such as exposing someone's nakedness, stabbing, blunt force trauma or even death. This direction of thought came about because it took the young security men about 15 minutes before they could bring ST under submission.

Their action could set a bad precedent for other students and bring the university to disrepute. Therefore, the university must take the incident very seriously and begin to develop measures that would prevent the future occurrence of any form of such violent behaviour. In a civilized society or institution, there are always appropriate means of addressing any issue, and students must be sensitised about these appropriate means and encouraged to use them.

Nobody compensated the security guard and the assistant invigilator who were injured. However, because they were registered staff of the university, they could access the university hospital without paying. Hence, they were sent to the hospital without paying. Unfortunately, those who were traumatized and those who were injured did not receive any psychological healing because none of the people involved, especially the invigilators, suspected such aggressive and terrifying events to happen. It was too shocking. This indeed was a serious and terrifying experience for all observers, and the university must do something to ensure there is no repetition or future occurrence of such.

6.2. Seeing through the Broken Shield

Dr. Abɔglass checked the car registration number to make sure they had not just tried to open someone else's car. They took a second look at the windshield. "Gyama m'ani so biri me". Wondering what was happening or had happened, Dr. Abɔglass started looking around. Hoping that he might find someone or something to explain why his windshield was the way it was. Strange. Very strange. They went back round to check the number plate—it was their car alright. So, who might have done this? They take their time to examine the shield. The dip of the shatter was right in the middle of the windshield, sending ripples of cracked glass about an inch from the dip—creating a flowery circular look of cracks. From the north, a thin line of crack begins from the roof of the car (where the shield meets it) to meet the flowery dip in the middle and continues to the bottom where the shield meets the bonnet. As if to make sure that it had covered all the four points of the compass, a thin line crosses from the left side of the shield to meet the flowery dip through to the right side. This was a painful site to see for Dr. Abɔglass, after spending all day in the exam room making sure that students did not cheat. He remembered his engagement with some students in one exam hall who were bent on cheating their way to success and thought "was this their handy work? How did they know this was my car?" Who is going to be held responsible for this damage? Who will pay for the repairs? Unlike the crack that went in all directions of the compass, there was no camera to cover all directions of the exam hall area to help identify the culprits.

Yes. The chief was attacked in this manner because he was strict in enforcing the rules and regulations, but the candidates believed they shared something in common that the chief should have considered, been liberal with, and allowed them to cheat. Because the candidates were disappointed with the chief, who

allowed a free and fair atmosphere for the examination, the aggrieved students decided to punish him by damaging his windscreen. However, they were not bold enough to do it in the presence of the chief. Thus, while he was busy putting the scripts in order in the examination centre, some of the candidates broke his windscreen. The chief least expected such an action, and that explained why he could not even believe that was his car with a broken windscreen. He never maltreated any candidate. He only created a conducive atmosphere for the candidate to write the examination, but unfortunately, the candidates understood otherwise. Candidates must be educated so that chiefs can create a conducive environment and strictly enforce examination rules and regulations. They are not their adversaries, but rather their supporters. In an event where the chief compromises and it becomes clear that the candidates were copying, that examination can be cancelled, and the students involved sanctioned.

In any examination, candidates are prevented from entering the examination hall in the absence of the invigilators. In this case, the candidates would be loitering around the building, and as a result, any person who enters the compound or comes into the vicinity of the examination hall can be identified or seen by the students. Usually, the chief parks his car closer to the examination hall so that he can easily offload his examination materials. That includes the scripts, and the question papers to be administered. In this case, students can easily identify the car of the chief invigilator. Furthermore, in a situation where the chief is at the centre for more than one day, candidates are likely to identify the car used by the chief invigilator and accordingly attack it without any error. Hence, what happened to the chief in question happened after the last paper at the centre so that the aggrieved candidates who misbehaved would be gone and never come back to be suspected.

Ideally, the university should have taken care of the repairs, but the university always encourages the staff to obtain comprehensive insurance coverage that in this case would have been responsible for fixing the damage. Even though the damage would be covered by insurance, the chief should drive the car with the broken windscreen from the center to his designated location.

We suggest that, because there was a precedent like this, during invigilation a CCTV camera should be mounted around the examination hall so that offenders like this could be caught. With the CCTV camera, candidates would not attempt to misbehave in such a manner out of the fear of being caught by the camera. It is expected that security would be stationed around the examination hall until the exam was completed. Furthermore, security men are always employed to be around the facilities of the university. In this case, it is expected that the security guard could be held accountable for the damage if he claims that he doesn't have any ideas or clues about the people who caused the damage.

6.3. In the Quiet of the Night

It was around 7 pm on a Wednesday evening. I am usually in the office at

this time to take care of either a research paper or report that needs to be submitted. Sometimes, that is the only time I use to attend to other activities that should have been done during the day. The office building is almost shaped like a horseshoe, but a lot straighter. Think of it as what we term compound houses. It has offices on each side of the building with an open garden in the middle. My office is in the middle portion of the rectangular compound house-horseshoe. About 15 minutes into my work, I heard footsteps outside. I figured it was probably one of my colleagues coming in to work as well, so I did not make much of it. As the footsteps got closer, I could hear murmuring, this is the office. I think this is the office and you can tell that he is in. It was clear as the steps got closer and stopped at my door, that they were coming to me. When you have to take a bath early in the morning on a harmattan day, the anticipation of the cold water hitting your body and causing shivers right from your head to the tip of your toes is what I felt. I was not expecting any students. I had no plans of meeting anyone. To have footsteps about three pairs just stop at my door was frightening. As I contemplated these things, I wondered who they could be and why they'd be at my office at that odd hour. The campus was almost deserted as there were just a few days left for exams to be over. I was startled out of my thoughts by the knocks on the door.

3 Aggrieved Students: *Dr. King! Dr. King! We know you are here. Open the door.*

Dr. King: *Who are you? I am not expecting any students.*

3 Aggrieved Students: *We wrote an exam at your centre earlier today. We would like to ask about our phones.*

Dr. King: *I hesitated, thinking about the time, how they got to know my office, and also knew that I would be there at this particular time, and what was potentially waiting for me outside my door. But I opened the door, just to hear them out. Coming, give me a second. I looked around the room for something to protect myself just in case they were armed and wanted to hurt me. I landed on a 3-inch long stick that I use to hold my door open, not much of a weapon but it made me feel a bit safe. Until I opened the door.*

At the door were three young men. From the look of things, only one of them was a student. The student was wearing a light blue shirt with a skull on it, and tattered blue jeans. The other two had on singlets or something similar that revealed their carefully carved muscles and arms. Clearly, they were bodybuilders, quite tall and intimidating for someone who is about 5.5 inches tall and stout. It became clear that they were there to take matters into their own hands. I had to choose my words carefully in order to ensure my safety. I took the time to explain the reason why the young man's phone was taken, the opportunities provided for that to have been avoided and the next steps involved before he would get his phone back. We reached an understanding, and they left my office in a good mood. At least no harm had come

to me, and they were also safe. But...the possibilities were endless. I could have been hurt, fatally harmed or wounded or even killed that night, and the probability that they would find the perpetrators? Well...one in a million. There are no after-exam safety measures in place for invigilators and this looming danger could pose a threat to the authenticity of examinations.

The chief should not carry seized items with them in their cars or to the office but rather send them to academic affairs after each examination session. This is to prevent people from breaking into the car or the office in search of the seized items. The staff at the Academic Affairs Directorate, or more precisely, the Examination Unit, must be available until all the examinations for the day are over. The chief should be careful where they visit after invigilating for the day. They should avoid quiet and deserted environments.

Security personnel should be encouraged to do random and regular patrols in and around offices, especially during the examination period, so as to curtail any attempt to attack an individual. The university should ensure that the CCTV cameras at each of the examination centres work properly. Functional CCTV camera would not only help produce evidence of what transpired at the examination centres but would help to identify the culprit who may attack in case any such event takes place. It is important that the CCTV cameras are made to work throughout the examination period so as to capture anything that happens at the centre during and after the examinations, until all invigilators have left the centre. Even though this may require large data storage. The videos should be stored for future use, should the need arise.

Angry students whose phones or valuable items are seized during the examinations in the isolated place could do anything in an effort to retrieve the items or as a form of retaliation. In this vein, the chief and the invigilators should learn how to disarm the candidates by letting them know that their actions were not meant to harm them but to transform them and that all hope is not lost regarding the retrieval of the items. They should take the opportunity to establish a good rapport or friendship with the candidates and educate them on the way forward as they prepare to meet the committee or as they continue to pursue their programme of study. They should let them understand that they acted only by the rules that were put in place to train and prepare them for effective leadership and good citizenship in the future. Candidates should be encouraged to listen to instructions when announced during any examination to prevent getting into avoidable problems.

6.4. Looming Danger

It always baffles me when students do not seem to understand the rules and regulations governing exams, even though they have been writing exams for years. Particularly, the stress and grind associated with having to explain consistently to students that when your mobile phone is confiscated during the exams period, you do not get it back until investigations have been completed.

This lack of understanding leads to friction, anger, and physical risk to invigilators and the Chief invigilator.

It is 6:00pm. The final paper for the day had been completed. As invigilators, we had to make sure that all the scripts were accounted for, all reports had been completed before leaving the exam centre for the day. At this point, the security personnel for the day had left, the electrician, and the ICT in charge of the CCTV camera had also left. Most of the students were also gone—or so I thought.

The exam area was almost completely deserted. The darkness was gradually stealing its way across the light that illuminated the day. The wind blew cool air across my face, reminding me of the rest ahead of me on my favourite sofa. With thoughts of rest and the wonderful dinner waiting at home, I headed out the door of the exam room. As I waited anxiously for the last examiner to pick their scripts, I walked towards my car, I saw a group of students hanging around the centre. Obviously waiting for me. I hesitated. What do these students want? If I go near my car, they can take down the information and track my movement. But at this point the security is also gone, so what do I do? Against my better judgment, I decided to just wait for them to approach, and also wait for them to leave before I go to my car.

King: *Can I help you? Exams are over for the day, and you shouldn't be here.*

ST ALL: *Well Sir, we were hanging around because of our phones. You took them from us during the exam and we want them back.*

King: *As I explained in the exam hall, when these phones are seized, you do not get them back until investigations are completed. That is part of the major reason why I gave you a lot of opportunities to remove the items yourselves, but you failed to do so. Ye tu wo fo na w'antie a, wo kɔ ante ade. So, no. You do not get your phones back. I decided to just find out whose phone was confiscated because there were six of them. Two young ladies, dressed in blue jeans and African print tops exposing their cleavages. Then, there were the four young men, all dressed in some form of tattered-designed blue jeans. It seemed to me that they were there for the girls. Seemed like the girls' phones were the ones confiscated and they were there to either speak for the girls or maybe attack me for the girls to get their phones.*

So, unfortunately, there's nothing I can do. You'll have to wait until everything is resolved. Then the phones will be returned to you.

ST ALL: *Aaah thank you sir...*

I watched them as they walked away. This story could have been different. A life on the line. And in our kind of space, it would be near impossible to find out who had done the harm. There are no CCTV cameras to record the incident and even for centres that have it, they are sometimes turned off. No one knows why.

Security should always be available until the chief leaves the examination centre

to avoid unforeseen and unpalatable incidents. In this situation, the chief is compelled to stay because they have to make sure they put all the scripts together and get the correct number, as well as wait for the examiners to come for their scripts. While waiting for the examiners, most of the invigilators leave after putting the script together, thereby leaving the chief invigilator alone. The other supportive staff, such as the electricians, security personnel, and ICT personnel in charge of the CCTV cameras, should be around till the chief leaves the examination centre. Since it is not safe for examination scripts to be in the custody of the chief after the examination, it is advisable that the examiners report early, possibly 10 minutes before the end of the examination, to fill up the necessary documentation so that the chief and other supporting staff are not unduly kept at the examination centre. In the situation where the examiner may not be able to pick up the scripts, the chief must be notified early enough and possible arrangements made for the collection of the script later. When the necessity arises, the chief should be able to verbally disarm candidates by informing them that their actions were not intended to harm them but to convert them, and that all hope for the retrieval of the items is not lost. The CCTV cameras must be configured to operate continuously during the examination period to record everything that occurs at the examination location before, during, and after the examinations—until the chief and their team have departed the location.

6.5. Losing the Tail

One of the assistant invigilators in the car drew my attention to a car behind us. It seems like that car has been following us since we left the exam centre. Hahaahaha...are you serious? I don't think so. Maybe we are all just going in the same direction. After about fifteen more minutes of driving, the car was still following us. I changed lanes two or three times just to dispel their suspicions. But immediately I made the first lane change, the car following did the same. It did the same for the second lane change. It was clear now. We had a tail. A tail that we must lose. A tail that needs to be removed for our safety. Why were they following us? Who might they be? I went into crazy-safe driving mode. Changed a few more lanes, this time a lot quicker than I did before. Praying that we do not crash into something or someone or cause an accident. With the lane changes and the darkness drawing on us, we looked forward to losing our tail. It was especially imperative that we lose them before we got to the secluded short-cut route that would lead us to the main campus. The possibility of an attack was more imminent in such a secluded environment than it was on the main-open-road. Then it occurred to me, you can swing by a police station just to get them off. But that was not an option that we took. I still don't remember why that decision was ignored. The chase continued for about fifteen more minutes. Finally, with a swift change of direction, and lanes and the blessing of a red light after we passed, we managed to lose them.

*No more tail
 No more tail
 The calm
 The peace
 Knowing. Safety.
 On campus.
 Nsɔhwe*

It was dusk. The day's work had been completed. All papers accounted for, all reports completed, and confiscated items documented for further investigations and decisions. We noticed a group of students around my car while the final processes were being completed. However, they were all gone when we were ready to head back to the main campus. But for a car that was still parked, the parking lot was empty. It seemed strange that students would still be around. We didn't think much of it. We sat in my car, set off on our journey, only to see that car following. We recognised one of the students. His phone had been confiscated during the final exam period. So, in the dusk, they followed...hence the tail...

The chief must be security conscious. They should endeavour not to travel alone after the day's paper, especially when there are incidents, and the examination takes place outside the main campus. There should be some kind of symposium to educate students that whenever there are issues regarding either examination malpractice or seized items, the chiefs are only performing their legitimate duty and are accountable to the university authority. Hence, their grievances, if any, should be channelled to the appropriate authority for redress instead of taking the law into their own hands or misbehaving.

The university could make a policy that is similar to the policy on sexual harassment in that candidates with problems during examinations must not visit the invigilators in any other place apart from the examination hall so that invigilators may not be influenced to compromise their integrity and promote corruption. Furthermore, the influence of the "big guns" or "the powers that be" can lead to invigilators compromising their stands, who either out of fear of intimidation or financial benefit may decide not to process the candidate or twist the information to favour the candidate.

7. The Way Forward

Examinations play an important role in many educational systems and contexts. However, as told through the stories and discussions, there are challenges associated with running examinations that pose risks to invigilators. A major risk permeating all the stories shared is related to security. While the examinations are in progress, security personnel usually sit somewhere outside the examination hall. As soon as the word "stop writing" is mentioned, the scripts are collected, and the students start leaving the examination hall, security personnel assume that their duty is done until the next paper is about to start. However, the activities at the

collation centres could last for the next 45 minutes after the “stop writing” pronouncement. This involves counting the scripts, and making sure the number of scripts collected corresponds with the number of students who wrote the papers. In some centres, about 5 to 6 different examinations could take place simultaneously, and all these need to be sorted out for the various examiners. Sometimes there are anomalies that may take time for the team to reconcile; it is during this same period that the students whose items were collected surround the chief to fill out the forms and make excuses for their misdeeds, as was the case of ST in *Bleeding for the Rules*. In some cases, the chief may have to wait an extra 10 to 15 minutes for some examiners who may not report for the collection of their scripts on time. The challenge here is that all these activities are not protected by security. It is necessary for some of the security personnel to shift their focus to the collation centre for any emergency that may arise. For instance, had there been security, maybe the situation with ST could have been averted or in the case of Dr. Aboglass the presence of security at the parking lot could have prevented disgruntled students from vandalising invigilators’ cars. Then again, a CCTV camera would have led to the apprehension of the culprit.

Another security risk for invigilators is related to Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV). There is a need to strengthen policy around security and CCTV (Hoque et al., 2020). The CCTV camera mounted in and around the examination hall should cover every activity that has to do with examinations until the halls are under lock and key so that the account of what transpired at every minute could be documented. This will help in the identification of offenders towards prosecution/consequences, which will serve as a deterrent to students from taking the law into their own hands. Furthermore, there should be CCTV cameras around the main entrances to the departments to protect lecturers from avoidable attacks from disgruntled students for faithfully doing their jobs according to the established rules/guidelines set up by the examination committee (Minott, 2020). This is particularly important when one reflects on the possible outcomes of Dr. King’s experience in *In the Quiet of the Night*. Although some innovative exam invigilation models have been proposed by researchers to aid traditional examinations, many of them failed to achieve examination malpractice-free results (Wahid et al., 2015; Ahmed et al., 2020; Chen & Liu, 2014; Ahmed et al., 2018; Hoque et al., 2020). However, Hoque et al. (2020) demonstrated the effectiveness of the automation of traditional exam invigilation using CCTV and biometrics in their research. Examinees are observed and managed remotely throughout the examination by an invigilator using 360-degree Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras, ultra-high sensitive microphones, and speakers. Here, microphones are employed to regulate examinee voice misconduct while CCTV cameras are used to monitor examinee physical misconduct. With this technique, there is just one invigilator needed for several test rooms. At both the exam rooms and the invigilator’s office, microphones and speakers can be used to facilitate communication between the students and the invigilator. Exam fraud will be eliminated using this

model. It will replace the convoluted old exam invigilation procedure in a way that is affordable, straightforward, and secure.

Additionally, measures should be put in place to support the mental health of invigilators, students and security personnel particularly after traumatic or violent incidents occur at examination centres. Thus, the services of professional counsellors should be employed to counsel the culprits of examination malpractices as well as those who bore the brunt of such practices, that is, the injured invigilators, security personnel, etc., when necessary. Such would have been very helpful to injured invigilators and security personnel in *Bleeding for the Rules* and *Losing the Tail*. Such measures will encourage all stakeholders to be sensitive to such occurrences towards change instead of apathy or nonchalance. Closely related to this is the need to develop some kind of protection policy for invigilators to ensure their privacy and safety. This may include some compensation or repair for damaged property during examinations, such as cars, as was the case in *Seeing through the broken shield*, and some support systems to ease their emotional torture whenever they bear physical pains, in addition to the medical assistance that is already in operation.

In situations where examinations take place outside the main university campus, as reported in *Losing the Tail*, invigilators should be transported or escorted to and from the campus. Examiners should be encouraged to come to the collation centre about 15 minutes before the examination's closure to avoid the extra waiting time by the invigilators at the centres after the completion of the examinations. Some security could also be put on patrol around the examination centre to oversee possible signs of danger against the lecturers, as was the case in *Looming Danger*. There could be some hotlines made available and distributed to lecturers with the benefit of rapid response to address issues of urgency.

It is better to have preventative measures in place in order to safeguard invigilators. With the attention given to the affective domain of learning, which focuses on instilling moral values, attitudes, and skills in the next generation of leaders, this is expected to develop them into responsible citizens who have respect for the nation of Ghana, its institutions, laws, and culture, as well as respect among Ghana's citizens and friends. There is a need to educate students about examination rules and punishments for malpractice. This could be done twice in a semester. At the beginning to help them plan for the semester and at the end to caution them against any temptation to be involved in malpractice.

There is a need to adopt the principle of name and shame to make examination malpractice unattractive to students. The release of detailed results of investigations to chiefs, invigilators, and students concerned may help in this regard. In addition, some of the cases could be discussed during the seminar organised to educate students on examination malpractice, a view that is highlighted by Ryznar (2023). Finally, in this era of Artificial Intelligence, students should be searched before entering the examination hall to be sure that they have no phones in their possession (Guangul et al., 2020). This sanctity of examinations and the originality

of students' work are particularly important in this age of AI tools such as ChatGPT. [Susnjak & McIntosh \(2024\)](#) finds that even within online examination spaces, tools such as ChatGPT have the potential to threaten the integrity of online exams, particularly in tertiary education settings where such exams are becoming more prevalent. [Susnjak & McIntosh \(2024\)](#) and [Ryznar \(2023\)](#) explain that returning to the traditional examination/invigilation, and/or oral exams could constitute a part of the solution, together with advanced proctoring/invigilation techniques. Notwithstanding the direction educational institutions are headed, the findings and recommendations from this study are timely since examination fairness, validity, reliability and integrity cannot be ensured if invigilators/proctors do not feel safe executing their roles.

8. Implications and Recommendations

Dr. King's experiences and the associated challenges have implications on current efforts toward attaining sustainable development goals, particularly SDG 4, Quality Education. In the era where education is geared toward responding to economic, sociocultural, political challenges and developing critical thinkers, problem solvers, equity and socially just minded citizens ([Bourn et al., 2017](#); [Pârgaru, 2019](#); [Szymkowiak et al., 2021](#)) it is important that assessments and examinations ensure that the products of higher education truly have the requisite knowledge to contribute to development. Therefore, the organization and running of an authentic, free and fair examination impacts the quality of learners that graduate from the university. Additionally, the implications of this study on higher educational examination policy in Ghana, the continent and worldwide cannot be over-emphasised even though the study covers the experiences of one senior invigilator.

Thus, the authors note that a university-wide study with more chief invigilators across the various examination centres will provide a more holistic overview of the situation. However, the chief's experiences and perspectives on how these risks should be addressed inform the following recommendations:

- There is a need for cases to be handled as soon as possible so that the candidates get the final verdict.
- Furthermore, opportunities and policies should be put in place to provide counselling for culprits to ensure positive perceptions about examinations and invigilators' roles.
- The final verdict should be published and circulated within the university to deter others from committing similar offenses.
- The students should have a lot of seminars in connection with examination malpractice and the consequences associated with it. At the seminars, records of examination malpractice and the nature of the malpractice should be clearly highlighted for the students.
- There should be a policy in place that addresses the safety (physical, psychological, property) of invigilators and all stakeholders at the examination

centres. This policy should also address the issue of compensation and medical care for invigilators who may need it.

- Universities could also engage the police service in the area to attend to criminal offenses, such as vandalism.
- While this recommendation is costly, researchers encourage universities to research and invest in the automation of traditional exam invigilation using CCTV and Bio-Metric.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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