

**A BLOCKCHAIN-BASED MODEL FOR CURBING INSTITUTIONAL
ACADEMIC CERTIFICATE FRAUD**

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DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for academic award in any other university.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my family and friends. A special feeling of gratitude to my loving husband Benard for the great support and encouragement throughout my research. To my children: David, Faith, and Michael for being cooperative. I also dedicate this work to my friend Elizabeth for being there for me. Thanks to all my friends who supported and prayed with me

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENT	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	x
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	xiii
DEFINATION OF KEY TERMS	xiv
ABSTRACT	xv
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Introduction	1
1.2. Background of the Study	2
1.3. Statement of the Problem	6
1.4. Research Objective.....	6
1.4.1.Main Objective	6
1.4.2. Specific Objectives.....	7
1.5. Research Questions.....	7
1.6. Justification of the Study.....	7
1.7. Scope of Study	8
1.8. Assumption of the Study.....	9
1.9. Organization of the Study	9
CHAPTER TWO	10
LITERATURE REVIEW	10
2.1 Introduction	10
2.2 Theoretical Framework.....	10

2.2.1 Fraud Triangle Theory	10
2.2.2 An integrated system theory of information security management	12
2.3 Academic Certificate Fraud	14
2.4 Document Verification.....	16
2.4.1 Manual Authentication techniques	17
2.4.2 Technology-Based Techniques.....	18
2.5 Related Works.....	27
2.5.1 Blockchain models for academic certificate authentication	29
2.5.2 Related Literature Summary and Gap Identification.....	34
2.6 Conceptual Model	38
2.7 Chapter Summary	39
CHAPTER THREE.....	40
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	40
3.1 Introduction	40
3.2 Research Design.....	40
3.2.1 Synopsis of Research Design	42
3.3 Target Population	44
3.4 Sampling Design and Techniques.....	45
3.5 Sample Size	45
3.6 Data Collection Tools.....	46
3.7 Reliability and Validity of Research Instrument	47
3.8 Ethical Issues	47
3.9 Data Analysis.....	48
3.10 Chapter Summary	49
CHAPTER FOUR	50
MODEL FOR CURBING INSTITUTIONAL ACADEMIC CERTIFICATE FRAUD	50

4.1 Introduction	50
4.2 Data Pre-processing and Analysis.....	50
4.2.1 Restricting Response Options	50
4.2.2 Preventing Missing Data.....	50
4.2.3 Proof Reading.....	51
4.2.4 Digitizing Data	51
4.3 Descriptive Results and Findings.....	54
4.3.1 Response Rate.....	54
4.3.2 Demographic characteristics of the sample based on gender.....	55
4.3.3 Demographic distribution based on location	55
4.3.4 Significance of minimum requirements.....	56
4.3.5 Admission Results.....	56
4.3.6 Examination Results.....	57
4.3.7 Originality of exam score	57
4.3.8 Reasons for changing student marks	58
4.3.9 Certification information analysis.....	59
4.3.10 Classification method.....	60
4.3.11 Identifiers of the course structure in universities in Kenya	60
4.4 The BMCIAF Model	61
4.4.1 BMCIAF Model Mapping Structures	61
4.4.2 BMCIAF Model Algorithms.....	66
4.4.3 BMCIAF Model Diagram.....	75
4.4.4 BMCIAF Model Implementation	77
CHAPTER FIVE	78
MODEL VALIDATION AND DISCUSSION	78
5.1 Introduction	78
5.2 Validation Dataset.....	78

5.3 BMCIAF Model Experiments 80

5.4 Discussion90

CHAPTER SIX 93

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS..... 93

6.1 Conclusion.....93

6.2 Recommendation and future work96

REFERENCES..... 97

APPENDICES 104

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1: Related Literature Summary and Gap Identification 1	34
Table 3.2: Characterization of Research Questions	41
Table 4.1: Response Rate 1.....	54
Table 4.3: Responsible for Changing Student Exam Marks 1.....	59
Table 4.4: Variables in Certificate 1.....	59
Table 4.5: Classification Methods 1.....	60
Table 4.6: Course Structure Identifiers 1	61

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Fraud Triangle Theory (Cressey, 1953)	11
Figure 2.2: Academic Fraud Malpractices (Wolf, 2013).....	15
Figure 2.4.2: blockchain Technologies (Swan, 2015)	20
Figure 2.4: Consensus Algorithms (Kiayias et al., 2017)	24
Figure 2.5: Characteristics of Blockchain(Tse et al., 2017).....	27
Figure 2.6: Conceptual Model	38
Table 3.1: Characterization of Research Questions 1	41
Figure 4.1: Admission variable description.....	52
Figure 4.2: Examination Variable description	52
Figure 4.3: Certificate Data Variable Description.....	53
Table 4.1: Response Rate 1.....	54
Figure 4.4: Gender Distribution	55
Figure 4.5: Demographic Distribution.....	55
Figure 4.6: Significance of Minimum Requirements.....	56
Figure 4.7: Admission Information Analysis	56
Figure 4.8: Examination Information Analysis	57
Figure 4.9: Originality of Marks.....	58
Table 4.2: Reasons for Changing Student Exam Mark 1	58
Table 4.3: Responsible for Changing Student Exam Marks 1	59
Table 4.4: Variables in Certificate 1.....	59

Table 4.5: Classification Methods 1.....	60
Table 4.6: Course Structure Identifiers 1	61
Figure 4.10: Admission Data Mapping Structure	63
Figure 4.11: Exam Mapping Structure	65
Figure 1: Examination mapping structure.....	65
Figure 4.12: Admit Student Flowchart	67
Figure 4.13: Admit Student Algorithm.....	68
Figure 4.14: Store Exam Algorithm.....	69
Figure 4.15: Student Progression Flowchart.....	70
Figure 4.16: Student Progression Algorithm	71
Figure 4.17: Student Monitoring Flowchart	72
Figure 4.18: BMCIAF Algorithm.....	73
Figure 4.19: Certificate Verification	74
Figure 4.20: VeryCert Algorithm	74
Figure 4.21: Detailed Model Architecture	75
Figure 5.1: Validation Dataset.....	79
Figure 5.2: Csv File of Validation Data.....	80
Figure 5.3: QR Code Scanner App.....	84
Figure 5.4: Printed Academic Certificate.....	85
Figure 5.5: Successfully Detected Certificate.....	86
Figure 5.6: Certificate with a Fake Code.....	87
Figure 5.7: Results of QR Code Information	88

Figure 5.8: Throughput Performance Analysis	89
Figure 5.9: Latency Performance Analysis	89
Figure 5.10: Gas Usage Analysis	90

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

PoW	Proof of Work
PoS	Proof of Stake
DPoS	Delegated Proof of Stake
PBFT	Practical Byzantine Fault Tolerance
SHA 256	Secure Hash Algorithm
DPBFT	Delegated Practical Fault Tolerance
IPFS	Interplanetary file system
API	Application Programming Interface
BMCIAF	Blockchain-based Model for Curbing Institutional Academic Certificate Fraud

DEFINATION OF KEY TERMS

Hashing:	Hashing is an algorithm that calculates a fixed-size bit string value from a file
Gas:	Gas is a unit of measurement unique to the ethereum blockchain that measures the computational work required to run a transaction
Fraud:	An act of deceiving or misrepresenting
Consensus:	A general agreement about something
Transaction:	A transaction usually means a sequence of information exchange and related work
Blockchain:	A blockchain is a decentralized, distributed and public digital ledger that is used to record transactions across many computers so that the record cannot be altered
Internal fraud:	Occurs when an employee makes a false representation, fails to disclose information, or abuses a position of trust either for personal gain or to cause losses to others.
Smart contracts:	Smart contracts are simply programs stored on a blockchain that run when predetermined conditions are met
Ethical values:	Provide the moral compass by which we live our lives and make decisions.
Multi-signature:	Refers to requiring multiple keys to authorize a transaction

ABSTRACT

There is need for a certificate authentication mechanism in Africa to solve internal academic certificate fraud activities. This is because some fake certificates in circulation appear to be genuine but were obtained illegally from credible learning institutions. This is caused by an assumption that certificates being issued at the university are authentic. While authentication of the final academic certificate was studied in previous research, many researchers focused on securing the final academic certificate and assumed that all certificates issued by institutions were genuine thus creating a loophole for institutional academic certificate fraud. The purpose of this research was to develop a blockchain-based model that curbs institutional academic certificate fraud. The research target population was public universities in Kenya. Sampling was done using simple random sampling to identify universities to participate in the study. Secondary data was used to validate the model while primary data was used to construct the data mapping structure. Primary data was collected from the registry department and examination using questionnaires while secondary data was collected using document review.

Smart contracts were written using the GOLANG and deployed to the hypledger fabric. APIs are used to interact with the model to insert or retrieve data. The model has controls (smart contracts) to ensure a student goes through the entire learning process before he is awarded an academic certificate.

To validate the model, experiments were carried using the secondary data. The results of the experiments shows that the model prevents internal fraud by making sure that only students registered in the blockchain and who completed the academic requirements can receive their academic certificates. Verification of the academic certificate is done by simply scanning a QR Code embedded on the academic certificate using a developed mobile app. The model only validates certificates whose certificate information was generated by the model. Ensuring that certificates originating from universities are authentic will retain or increase the reputation and credibility of the institution. On the other hand, employers and other interested parties will also give jobs to qualified people thus increasing the throughput and general job performance.