



ISSN 2278 – 0211 (Online)

## Age, Sex and Test Anxiety as Predictors to Examination Malpractice among Secondary School Students in Akoko South West Local Government Area in Ondo State, Nigeria

**Dr. Olowolabi Segun**

Lecturer, Department of Guidance and Counseling,  
AdekunleAjasin University, AkungbaAkoko, Ondo State, Nigeria

### **Abstract:**

*This study was carried out mainly on age, test and test anxiety as a predictor of examination malpractice among secondary school student. Questionnaire was used to obtain data. The sample consisted of 200 students from four schools in AKOKO SOUTH WEST local Government area of Ondo State. Data collected was analyzed using descriptive and chi-square analysis. This was used purposely to test the relationship that exists between the variables. The result revealed that the predictive combined factors of age, sex and test anxiety influence students' participation in examination malpractice. Based on the findings, adequate counselling assistance should be given to students to shun examination malpractices, and further research should be carried out on the other predictive factors that make students to engage in examination malpractices aside age, sex and test anxiety.*

**Keywords:** Age, sex, test, anxiety, examination, malpractices

### **1. Introduction**

According to Ololade (2016) the variables of age, sex in combination with test anxiety on the nature of examination malpractices among secondary school students have been found to correlate to certain degree. To many researchers, age of the learner determines the variation in the speed at which he learns and at the rate at which he engages in examination malpractices. Others have attached sex the learner as factor for examination malpractices. For instance, in tracing the mode of examination malpractice between the sexes, Ololade (2016) argued empirically that girls find it easy to inscribe information on any part of their body like thighs, baby pampers, purses and palms than their male counterpart. Apart from this, other scholars have identified test anxiety as the main cause of examination malpractices. According to Ibitola (2015) academic success usually depend upon students' ability to adapt to academic situation. He argued that students who feel competent will not be much threatened by stressful academic demands but to one's surprise, students are generally anxious over examination, which invariably leads some of them to engage in examination malpractice.

One of the objectives of education in Nigeria is to prepare the youth to become self-sufficient in order to meet the nation's manpower requirements. Schools need to conduct examinations purposely to assess the cognitive ability of the student. It follows then that examination is very paramount in the placement of students. Examination, according to Molade (2014) 'can be seen as a way to ascertain how much of a subject matter in a particular field of study the candidate has mastered.' In other words, it is a process through which studies are evaluated or tested to find out the quality of knowledge students have acquired within a specific period.

Examinations could be oral, written or both. However, examination malpractice is any wrong doing before, during or after any examination. To Samuel (2014), Examination malpractice is an illegal means that students use to pass examinations. Omoegun (2015) is of the opinion that when a student receives or acquires foreign aid in an attempt to pass examination, it is called examination malpractice.

The various dimensions of examination malpractice includes bringing of foreign materials into the examination hall, colliding with supervisors to cheat, receiving help from other candidates, impersonation, insult or assault on examination officials, electronically assisted malpractices, mass cheating, and changing of scores by examiners for candidates.

Studies on the causes of examination malpractice reveals that low morality, poor school facilities, inadequacy of trained teachers and corrupt nature of WAEC and NECO officials and desire to succeed at all cost by the students are the common reasons why students engage in examination malpractices (Idemodia, 2015).

Sex, according to Cambridge Dictionary is the state of being a male or female. Different views exist as to which sex involves most in examination malpractices. Lucky and Levton (2016) argue that more males engage in examination malpractices than the females while Johnson (2015) believes that there is more female involvement in examination malpractice than male.

The absence of significance difference between the anxiety levels of males and female most especially prior to examination could be attributed to many factors. Both students must have familiarized themselves with the academic environment and the females, thinking that they can always find themselves through by any means, write on parts of their body with the aim of engaging in examination malpractice. Boys have been found to partake in examination malpractice especially when they have fear of failing in difficult subjects. Based on this finding, sex as a variable will receive serious attention as predictor of examination malpractices.

Age, in education, is a level of development equivalent to that of an average person of a particular age. As already noted, the variable of age in combination with biological, cognitive, affective and psychological dimensions upon students' examination malpractice seems to be one of the main factors determining students' participation in examination malpractice. Amaderson (2013) observed that maturation of the learner and exposure to different situations is a determining factor whether the student will involve himself or herself in examination malpractice. However, it still remains open to question whether a particular age group is more prone to examination malpractice. In some respect, all age group engage in examination malpractice and this is where the research will focus attention.

Test anxiety is another major factor that leads students to engage in examination malpractices. Olusade (2013) defines anxiety as the chronic fear that occurs when a threatened event is in the offing but is unpredictable. In a similar way, May (2017) in Ibitola (2015), viewed anxiety as a maladjusted behaviour. On the other hand, test can be seen as a series of questions, problems, or practical tasks to gauge somebody's knowledge, ability, or experience (Edward, 2017). In other words, it is the exams designed to objectively measure the academic aptitude of students from varying social backgrounds and with different educational experience. Test anxiety therefore to the fear a student exhibits before, during or after writing a test. According to Ibitola (2015) several factors account for test anxiety among secondary school students leading some of them into examination malpractices.

Considering the problem of examination malpractices, the rate at which students faint or fall sick during examination, and many other anxiety related problems in schools, it becomes necessary to find out the age and sex of the students and look at their anxiety levels.

With the embarrassing situation examination malpractice has caused the nation, this made the Federal Government in 1984 to promulgate Decree 20 to punish offenders. Part of the Decree reads thus:

*'any person who fraudulently or with intent to cheat or secure any unfair advantage to himself or any other person or in abuse of his office, produces, sells or buys or otherwise deals with any question paper intended for the examination of persons at any examination or commits any of the offences in specified section 3 (27) © of this Decree shall be guilty of an offence and on conviction be sentenced to 21 years imprisonment. (Fagbemi, 1998), p 17).*

Despite this attempt to curb examination malpractice, it has been on the increase. It therefore becomes imperative for policy makers to understand the age factor, sex factor and test anxiety factor as a predictor of examination malpractice, which presently, little is known about.

### 1.1. Research Questions

The research will answer the question:

- Is there any significant difference between age of the student and examination malpractice?
- Is there any significant difference between sex of the student and examination malpractice?
- Is there any significant difference between test anxiety and examination malpractice?
- Is there any significant difference between test anxiety and academic performance of the student?

### 1.2. Research Hypotheses

- There is significant difference between age of the student and examination malpractice
- There is significant difference between sex of the student and examination malpractice
- There is significant difference between test anxiety and examination malpractice
- There is significant difference between test anxiety and academic performance of the student

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Administration of the Instrument

The questionnaire was administered on respondents at selected schools. The researcher sort permission of whom it may concern, before the questionnaire was given to the student. However, before the questionnaires were administered, necessary precautions were taken by the researcher, as the researcher assured the respondents of utmost confidentiality in order to avoid anxiety or subjectivity on the part of the respondents.

### 2.2. Data Analysis

Data collected through administering of questionnaires were analyzed with the aid of descriptive and chi-square ( $X^2$ ) analysis. The hypotheses formulated were tested at 0.05 significant level.

### 3. Results and Discussions

#### 3.1. Results

##### 3.1.1. Section A: Personal Data

S/N	Age Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	10-18	122	61
2	19-25	78	39

Table 1: Distribution of Respondent According to Age

Table 1 depicts the distribution of respondent according to their age, it shows that 61% of the respondent fail within the age of 10 to 18, and 39 % within the age of 19-25.

S/N	Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	MALE	112	56
2	FEMALE	88	44

Table 2: Distribution of Respondent According Tosex

The tables 2 shows that 56 % of the respondents are male while the remain 44 % of the respondents are female. In the sense that 112 of the respondents are male while the remain 88 are female.

#### Testing of Hypothesis/Answer to Research Questions

This section presents the testing of the hypothesis.

- $H_{i1}$ : There is significant difference between age of the student and examination malpractice

S/N	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL	X <sup>2</sup> CAL	DF	X <sup>2</sup> TAB	DECISION
1	38	45	61	56	200	21.18	12	21.02	Reject $H_0$
2	40	41	66	53	200				
3	35	40	64	61	200				
4	41	43	57	59	200				
5	67	36	51	46	200				
6	Σ221	Σ205	Σ299	Σ275	Σ1000				

Table 3

Source: Researcher computation

The calculated Chi-square is greater ( $X^2_{cal}$ ) is greater than the value from the Chi-square table (21.02) which indicates that there is significant difference between age of the student and examination malpractice. The result shows that age does determine examination malpractice. The  $X^2$  calculated value is 21.18 and the  $X^2$  table value to be 21.02 at degree of freedom 12 at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

- $H_{i2}$ : There is significant difference between sex of the student and examination malpractice.

S/N	SA	A	D	SD	TOT	X <sup>2</sup> CAL	DF	X <sup>2</sup> TAB	DECISION
					AL	CAL		TAB	
1	48	61	52	39	200				
2	53	41	48	58	200				
3	49	59	49	43	200	36.04	12	21.02	REJECT $H_0$
4	57	42	52	49	200				
5	61	43	58	38	200				
6	Σ207	Σ246	Σ259	Σ227	Σ1000				

Table 4

Source: Researcher Computation

The table 4 shows the significant difference between sex of the student and examination malpractice, it shows that there is significant difference between sex and examination malpractice. The calculated Chi-square is 36.04 and the  $X^2$  from the table is 21.02 at degree of freedom of 12 at 0.05 alpha level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected which indicates that there is significant difference between sex of the student and examination malpractice.

- $H_{i3}$ : There is significant difference between test anxiety and examination malpractice

S/N	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL	X <sup>2</sup> CAL	DF	X <sup>2</sup> TAB	DECISION
1	52	53	58	37	200	14.93	12	21.02	ACCEPT Ho
2	48	52	49	51	200				
3	62	46	48	44	200				
4	39	58	53	50	200				
5	49	63	40	48	200				
6	Σ250	Σ272	Σ248	Σ230	Σ1000				

Table 5

Source: Researcher Computation

Table 5 shows that there is no significant difference between test anxiety and examination malpractice. Since the calculated Chi-square (14.93) above is less than the table Chi-square (21.02) it shows that there is enough evidence that shows that there is no significant difference between test anxiety and examination malpractice.

- Hi<sub>4</sub>: There is significant difference between test anxiety and academic performance of the students

S/N	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL	X <sup>2</sup> CAL	DF	X <sup>2</sup> TAB	DECISION
1	50	59	48	43	200				
2	50	52	62	36	200				
3	58	56	40	46	200				
						15.402	12	21.02	ACCEPT
4	60	56	40	44	200				HO
5	40	51	63	46	200				
6	Σ258	Σ274	Σ253	Σ215	Σ1000				

Table 6

The table 6 above shows that Ho is accepted since the value of Chi-square from the table is greater than the calculated value, it shows that there exists no significant difference between test anxiety and academic performance. At 0.05 level it indicates that the value of Chi-square from the table is 21.02 while that of calculated Chi-square is 15.402, it shows that no difference exists between the two variables.

## 4. Discussion

### 4.1. Hypothesis I

There is significant difference between age of the student and examination malpractice. Findings indicated that there is a significant combined influence of age, sex and test anxiety on examination malpractice of the participants. It also indicates that age, sex and test anxiety jointly contributed examination malpractice of the student.

This finding supports Idahosa (2005) who investigated the factors responsible for examination malpractices by looking at the people between the ages of 18 and 35 years. Although he did not focus on secondary school students, his findings shows that students between 18 and 36 years engage more in examination malpractices than students whose age group is lower than 18 years.

In addition, the research conducted by the WAEC and NECO officials on the predominant group that engage mostly in examination malpractices as presented by Idahosa (2005) shows that students in SS3 whose age falls between 16 and 19 years engage in examination malpractices more than others in Junior class.

### 4.2. Hypothesis II

There is significant difference between sex of the student and examination malpractices. The findings indicated that sex of the student is the most potent contributor to the prediction of examination malpractice.

Owolabi (2002) investigated the sexes that partake most in examination malpractices. He established his findings based on a data obtained from 300 students (males 130 and females 170). He found out that 92.4% of male in the population of the study engaged in examination malpractices while 64% of the female were involved in examination malpractices. The reason for this difference, according to Oduwaiye (2005) is based on their peer group influence and unpreparedness of the male for the examination.

### 4.3. Hypothesis III

There is significant difference between test anxiety and examination malpractice. The findings indicated that there is positive correlation of test anxiety to the prediction of examination malpractice.

Ibrahim (2004) studied the correlation between test anxiety and examination malpractice using two types of instruments: Manifest Anxiety scale and Achievement Anxiety Scale. He found out that there is a positive relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice.

#### 4.4. Hypothesis IV

There is significant difference between test anxiety and academic performance of the student. The findings indicated that test anxiety has low influence on examination malpractice. Therefore the result is rejected.

Olusade (2004) remarked that test anxiety and the fear of failing an examination led students to engage in examination malpractice. She identified several factors responsible for this correlation between test anxiety and fear of failing an examination such as stress, anxiousness and focusing on the bad things that could happen after the examination.

Many researches has been conducted to determine the influence and effects of anxiety on academic performance, result has indicated that high level anxious students engage in more problem behavior, are more disliked by peers, have poor self -concepts and have lower school achievement and aptitude as compared with less anxious students (Phillips, 1998), Johnson (1999) observed that between 10% and 30% of school children have been found to experience anxiety severe enough to impair poor performance while low levels of anxiety enhance awareness and performance, high levels contribute to variety of psycho-social problem among students.

### 5. Conclusion and Recommendation

#### 5.1. Conclusion

This research has been proved that age, sex and test anxiety are the cogent factors that contribute to examination malpractice because the school children have been found to experience.

Anxiety severe enough to impair performance while the low levels of anxiety enhance awareness and performance, high levels contribute to variety of psycho-social problem among students. School administrators, teachers, parents and school counsellors should organize programmes among the age groups, sexes not to have anxiety towards test or examination because it can lead to low academic performance and examination malpractice. That is, educational bodies should made awareness to the students that high level of anxiety contribute to poor academic performance and embrace examination malpractice. This research has been able to prove that test anxiety is a co-agent factor of examination malpractice.

The researcher encourages all the training teachers, counsellors, parents, and school administrators to organize programmes among age groups and the sexes not to have anxiety towards test or examination malpractice.

#### 5.2. Recommendations

If the points discussed below are taken into consideration, it will reduce the rate of examination malpractices among the students'.

Firstly, parents must provide the basic essential and supplementary facilities needed by the student in the school. Many parents see the need to send their children to school but often so not see the need to provide facilities to support their learning.

Asuru (1996) discovered that 86% of children described by teachers a lazy and unwilling to work were children whose parents or guardian expressed no desire for them to try new things. Availability and provision of supportive learning materials (textbooks, notebook, biro and so on) promote readiness of a student to try out new things and this will help student to gain insight into a concept or problem and this lead to the solution of the problem.

Secondly, government at all level must provide conducive classroom and necessary laboratory equipment for each school. This will help learning to be effective. There is need for provision of a conducive environment for counselling rooms, staff rooms and salary of the teacher should be paid regularly.

Student should endeavor to update their knowledge and sharpen their skill in the classroom. The teachers are regarded as a mother of all profession and master of all because they are the one that will teach doctor, lawyer, president, governor, nurses and so on. In the view of this, teacher should update his/her knowledge to new method of teaching the student and make use of instructional materials to the student in order to enhance effective learning. Teachers should endeavor to introduce aspect of discussion within the classroom, through this, students will be able to gain from their peers, it can be done by grouping the students into various groups and there will be group leader in each group.

Finally, government needs to devote more money on education because students today will become great leader tomorrow, and government should provide qualified teacher to various schools.

Government and its agencies should ensure that teacher in-training are given allowance and paid promptly. This will serve as a motivational factor to the teacher in training and it will make their teaching to be effective.

### 6. References

- i. Adekunle, S. O. (2013). Correlation between academic cheating behavior and achievement motivation. *Nature and Science*, 8(12), 130 – 134.
- ii. Afolabi, S. O. (2016). Examination malpractices and its effect on academic performance. Lagos, Johnson Press.
- iii. Alabi, S.O (2014). *The University environment and examination*. A Paper presented at a seminar on examination ethics held at the University of Maiduguri.
- iv. Amaderson, I.M. (2013). Causes and Consequences of Examination malpractice unpublished B.Ed. Project, University of Calabar.
- v. Balogun, J.Q.(2014). *Towards Minimizing Examination Misconducts in the Nigeria school system*. A paper presented at the school of Education seminar on towards improving the qualities of Education in Nigeria F.C.E. Panksbin

- vi. BeekerMcgregor (2015). 'Eradicating Examination Malpractices: A Macro Theoretical framework option. *Nigeria Journal of Development Issues: SPED*.
- vii. David O. (2015). ). 'Examination Phobia and Anxiety: A Lecture Note for Education Students. *University of Jos*.
- viii. Edward.I.M (2017). *Examination malpractices and quality of education, paper presented at Government College, LEvans and Craig. (2014). Principles and Practice of Education* London Longman Group Ltd.
- ix. Femson and Holland. (2014). *Assessment and Education Malpractices*, Proceeding of the 16th annual congress of the Nigerian Academy of Education, Held in the University of Jos.
- x. Federal Republic of Nigeria (1998). National Policy on Education, 3rd Edition. Yaba Lagos, Nigeria. NERDC Press.
- xi. Ibitola, A.I. (2015) *Changes in Level of Anxiety and Academic Performance of College Students*. Published by Kwara State College of Education.
- xii. Idemodia M.C. (2015) *Perceived Causes of Malpractice inPublic Examinationsby Students of St. Augustine College of Education, Akoka,Lagos*. Published by the Department of Religious Studies, St. Augustine College of Education, Akoka.
- xiii. Ilapo, N.Y.S (2013). 'Agents of Examination Malpractices in Nigeria: Who is the Strongest Link?' Paper presented at the 7<sup>th</sup>National Conference of the National Association of Educational Researchers and Evaluators. (NAERE) held at Unilag.