

**PARENTS' VARIABLES, AGE AND GENDER AS CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS TO STUDENTS' INVOLVEMENT IN EXAMINATION MALPRACTICES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SOUTH-WEST, NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

*This paper examined the contributions of parents, age and gender to students' involvement in examination malpractices in secondary schools in South-West, Nigeria. Descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted. The population for the study comprised all Secondary School teachers in South-West, Nigeria. The sample for the study consisted of 600 teachers selected from secondary schools in South-West, Nigeria. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 2 Local Governments Areas from each state, making a total of 12 Local Government Areas. Simple random sampling technique was used to select five schools from each Local Government, to make a total of 60 schools. Simple random sampling technique was also applied to select ten teachers from each school to arrive at a total of 600 teachers used for the study. The instrument used for the study was a self-designed questionnaire to sort for the contributions of parents, age and gender to students' involvement in examination malpractices. Validity of the instrument was ascertained through face and content validity procedures. Test-re-test method of reliability was adopted for the questionnaire. Reliability co-efficient of 0.72 was obtained. The data collected were analysed using Correlation statistical tool. It was revealed in the study that parents' variables, age and gender significantly contributed to students' involvement in examination malpractices in South-West, Nigeria. It was therefore recommended that students should imbibe good moral values and that parents should promote trait of hard work and excellence. Parents should avoid indulging their children through bribing of teachers and other examination officials, buying questions, paying for special centres or encouraging impersonation. Government should also de-emphasize the certificate oriented policy and encourage excellence through hard work.*

**Key words:** Examination malpractice, Parents' variables, Quality education, Outrageous scores, Moral values, Unethical act.

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**Introduction**

Education is the best and most sustainable legacy a country can give to her citizens without any prejudice to family background, parents' literacy level, socio-economic status, gender, age and religion. Education, according to Jegede (2013), is the pivot on which the growth and development of any nation depends, and that is the major reason why every nation is struggling to educate her citizens irrespective of age. Ezeuwa (2014) also noted that education is a vital tool for promotion and sustenance of national development. Omole and Onwuka (2015) noted that education is a major indicator of a community social well-being, standard of living and social justice. It is a process whereby a person develops attitudes and abilities that are considered to have value and relevance in the society (Abdu-Raheem, 2015). Education has become a universal cure-all. If taken in regular doses according to standardized prescriptions could solve multitude of national woes and societal challenges (Iyamu and Edozie, 2015).

However, education without quality is dangerous to both the individual, family and the nation at large. The purpose of education from primary to tertiary institutions is to produce quality graduates that will in turn maintain quality control in all facets of government and private establishments for the progress of the nation. Quality education could also promote the country educationally, socially,

economically, politically and technologically. Quality education should be of standard, regular, appropriate and significance in nature. It should be free from all forms of irregularity, indecency, immorality, unfaithfulness, offensiveness, coarseness, crudeness, licentiousness, unsuitability and lewdness. Quality education according to Amaele (2013) deals with standard, efficiency, excellence, relevance, appropriateness and value. Quality education has generally been accepted as one of the leading instrument for achieving economic growth for any country (Nason, 2015).

To maintain standard, examination has been a method used for the past years in education to test the ability or evaluate students by teachers to confirm if learning has taken place. It is a means of assessing the level of achievement or quality of knowledge which students have acquired after teaching /learning process. Obidoa, Onyechi and Okere (2013) defined examination as a process of assessing learning outcomes. Omemu (2015) acknowledged that examination has been generally accepted as the best means of assessment and a formal test of knowledge or ability of examinees. Examination has some ethics formally designed by examination bodies for successful conduct of examinations in Nigeria. Regrettably, the ethics are been violated under the hospices of examination malpractices.

Examination, which can be dated back to the advent of formal education in Nigeria since 1800s, has been facing the challenges of examination malpractices over the years. Examination malpractice is a criminal, illegal and unethical act committed by a student or groups of students. It is a dubious means to get undeserved and unmerited scores. It is an act of abomination, aberration and disgrace to education sector and the nation in general. It is a dangerous act against the quality and standard of education. Examination malpractice has become a cancer spreading deep in the earth and body of Nigeria and the whole world. It has become an endemic and social problem that needs urgent attention owing to the alarming rate of involvement of students, teachers, parents, examination bodies, printers and security agents. Examination malpractice is a long time contagious phenomenon which has become a complex issue at national and global levels.

According to Abdulrazaq and Aminullahi (2006), examination malpractice is one of the greatest problems undermining the foundation of educational practice in Nigeria. It is a global social problem (Jimoh 2009). It has become an annual ritual both in internal and external examinations (Ifeakor & Anekwe, 2010). Ibukun and Oyewole (2011) noted that examination malpractice is one of the greatest social menace and cankerworms that has eaten deep into Nigerian education system. It is a termite destroying the educational set up (Maheshwari, 2011). Nsisong (2013) and Okorodudu (2013) confirmed the prevalence of several ways of cheating in all levels of education and noted a lot of grief it has caused to education stakeholders.

In agreement with the foregoing, Jimoh (2009) posited that the alarming rate of increase examination malpractice is a global issue and not peculiar to Nigeria alone. Jimoh (2009) submitted that examination malpractice has rendered the goal of education invalid. Amaele (2013) noted that examination malpractice is failure to carry out properly and honestly conditions specified by the examination body. Obidoa, Onyechi and Okere (2013) noted that examination malpractice involves actions and behaviours that negate the orderly conduct and procedures of examination and gives a candidate undue advantage over others. Dada (2014) acknowledged that every examination season witnesses new and ingenious method of cheating. Ayinde (2012), Akaranga & Ongoing (2013) and Rotimi & Omonijo (2014) submitted that examination malpractice and other issues associated with juvenile delinquency are global social problems with serious implications.

One major education stakeholder, the family, which is the most important unit of social organization, is being considered as one of the major contributory factors of examination malpractice. In the family set-up, the parents are the closest to their children in terms of feeding, clothing, accommodation, provision of moral, social, cultural, financial, and academic training for their children and wards. The close relationship between the parents and their children gives room for parents to influence their children positively or negatively. Okeke (2009) noted that the initial experience that would mould the child's values, aspiration, emotions, interest and attitudes are offered by the parents/family. Osundeyi (2004) and Lazarus (2015) agreed that family being the first school of the child can encourage or discourage educational aspiration of the children. Unfortunately, most parents have neglected their duties on the children and influenced their children negatively in attempt to make them successful in life without making legitimate efforts.

According to Ajayi and Ekundayo (2010), parents are prepared to spend any amount of money to reimburse the children's way in order to pass examinations at all cost. Ojo (2011) noted that parents, because of familiarity between them and children can provide money for mercenaries, purchase question papers and pay fees for special centers. Cornenius- Ukpepi & Ndifon (2012) revealed that lack of seriousness on the part of the students and undue emphasis on certificates made some parents to bribe their ways through examinations. Ogidefa in Okorodudu (2013) asserted that in an attempt to help the children get credit passes, some parents will go all length to buy live papers or lavish invigilators with gifts. The incidence of examination malpractice has reached frightening dimension since parents give money to their children to buy leaked papers ahead of time (Okorodudu 2013).

Many children grow up to become delinquents and socially maladjusted in the society due to lack of proper care and inadequate provision of moral and spiritual guidance. Salami (2008) acknowledged that parents are failing in their duties on children. He also blamed parents for setting standard for their children. Ojo & Fadugba (2011) confirmed that parents' factor is one of the causes of examination malpractice. They explained further that due to warm supportive relationships between parents and children, they can encourage their children to indulge in examination malpractice. Aderogba (2011) also identified upbringing of the children, parents' issue, family history, poverty

among others as prime factors of problem of examination malpractice. Animasaun (2013) identified lack of maternal or paternal care, misuse of power, wealth and opportunities by parents, poor parenting and over-indulgence of children as some of the factors leading to involvement of students in examination malpractice.

Some parents may not pay school fees or provide learning materials such as textbooks, biros, pencils, uniforms and others for their children may be as a result of poor economic condition or care-free attitude towards the education of their children. Many parents expect good and favourable results/certificates from their children without considering the mode of acquisition of the certificates. Edukugho (2006) observed that parents rejoice when their children or wards come home with unmerited results or certificates. Onuka and Durowoju (2013) asserted that parents believe that government should provide textbooks and other necessary school materials for the students. However, such parents may be nonchalant towards pursue of these materials but instead encourage the children to pass through shut-cut to pass examinations or get certificates by crooked means.

Ogidefa (2008) and Khan & Khan (2011) worked on parents' socio-economic status of students and examination malpractice in secondary schools. They discovered that the rate of involvement of students in examination malpractice does not depend largely on parent's socio-economic status. They stressed further that both children of the rich and the poor engage in the practice. Contrarily, Cornelius-Ukpepi & Ndifon (2012) noted that parental influence on pupils' cheating behaviour has effect on pupils' academic performance. Abdu-Raheem (2015) also reported close relationship between parents' socio-economic status and students' academic performance in Ekiti State secondary schools. She discovered that students from poor socio-economic status performed poorly in examinations because of lack of school material and financial supports from parents.

In further studies, Adesehinwa (2013) found a significant relationship between family structure and students' academic achievement. He discovered a significant relationship in the overall academic achievement of students from monogamous families and those from polygamous families. Lazarus (2015) also discovered a relative significant contribution of family types (monogamy and polygamy) on students' achievement in his study. However, students with financial constraints, inadequate instructional materials and

unfavourable home environment can also be involved in examination malpractice in order to make up from the identified inadequacies.

Furthermost, age can be considered as a major factor influencing examination malpractice. Most Secondary school students can be seen as adolescence with ages ranging between nine and fifteen years. At this crucial stage of life, students spend much time with their colleagues. Their affairs often being directed by their peers and as such they can be influenced positively or negatively towards examination malpractice or other immoral behaviours depending on the type of friends. Students at this level that spend much time with responsible parents may escape being influenced negatively. Sanctrock (2006) referred to adolescence age as the age of identity. Olatunbosun (2009), Wikipedia (2010), Ibukun & Oyewole (2011), Animasaun (2013) and Okorodudu (2013) agreed that peer pressure has both positive and negative influence on students' attitudes towards examination malpractices.

In addition, age may count against students to misbehave in schools. Students that are too young may not be able to cope academically, socially, psychologically and morally. Such students may resort to examination malpractice and other acts of indiscipline like cultism, stealing, rape, disobedience to school authority, absence from classroom and destruction of school property. Olowoniirejuaro and Akande (2005) asserted that age counts in involvement of students in examination malpractices. They observed that parents used lighter discipline and were relaxed with second and later children. They also noted that the last born in the family are over-pampered and assigned to fewer responsibilities than the elderly ones. As a result, there is possibility of students that lack discipline to be involved in examination malpractices. In contrary to the assertion, Dada (2014) discovered no significant relationship between age of students and their involvement in examination malpractice.

Gender is another crucial factor to be considered on the involvement of students in examination malpractice. People normally say that what a boy can do a girl can also do it. This assertion is being considered on the issue of examination malpractice among secondary school students in South-West Nigeria. For instance, Aminullai (2006) confirmed that gender influences examination malpractice. He believed that male students are more involved in examination malpractices than female ones. Omonijo (2011) is in agreement with the position of Aminullai above. Omonijo (2011) discovered that

female students are afraid of been caught for violating the rules and regulations guiding examinations and been punished. Omonijo & Nnedum (2012) also found that male students involve more in examination malpractices than their female counterparts.

However, in the contrary, Rotimi and Omonijo (2014) discovered that female students are more involved in examination malpractice than their male counterparts. In another research, Khan and Khan (2011) reported that there is no significant relationship between gender and involvement of students in examination malpractices. They found that both male and female students involve in examination malpractices on almost equal bases. It is against this backup that this study investigated the contributions of parents, age and gender to students' involvement in examination malpractices in South-west, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Examination malpractice as become a source of worry and grave concern to education stakeholders and patriotic citizens in Nigeria, Africa and the world in general. It has been observed that hardly can any government examination hold in Nigeria and other African countries without having cases of examination malpractices. Ekere (2009) established that despite all measures taken against the menace of examination malpractice, students are becoming more sophisticated in perfecting the act of cheating. Accusing fingers have been pointed to parents, teachers, inadequate teaching /learning resources, laziness on the part of students, corruption of the teachers, invigilators, examination bodies and certificate oriented policy of the government among others as some of the factors responsible for examination malpractices. Therefore, there is need to examine the major factors that could be responsible for examination malpractice among secondary school students in South-West, Nigeria.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The study investigated the contributions of parents' educational status, parents' income, family structure, family settings, age and gender to students' involvement in examination malpractices in secondary schools in South-West, Nigeria.

### **Research Hypotheses**

In view of the foregoing, the following research hypotheses were generated for the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between parent's income and student's involvement in

examination malpractices in South-West, Nigeria.

2. There is no significant relationship between parent's educational status and student's involvement in examination malpractices in South-West, Nigeria.
3. There is no significant relationship between family structure and student's involvement in examination malpractices in South-West, Nigeria.
4. There is no significant relationship between family settings and student's involvement in examination malpractices in South-West, Nigeria.
5. There is no significant relationship between age and student's involvement in examination malpractices in South-West Nigeria.
6. There is no significant relationship between gender and student's involvement in examination malpractices in South-West, Nigeria.

### **Methodology**

This study adopted descriptive research design of the survey type. The population for the study comprised all Secondary school teachers in South-West, Nigeria. The sample for the study consisted of 600 teachers selected from secondary schools in South-West, Nigeria. Simple random sampling technique was used to select two Local Governments areas from each state, making a total of twelve local government areas. Simple random sampling technique was used to select five schools from each Local Government area to make a total of 60 schools. Simple random sampling technique was also used to select ten teachers from each school aimed at 600 teachers used for the study. The instrument for the study was a self-designed questionnaire titled 'Parents' Variables, Age and Gender as Factors to Examination Malpractices Questionnaire' (PVAGFEMQ). The face and content validity of the instrument were ensured by experts in Social Studies, Educational Management and Guidance and Counseling in Ekiti State University. Test-re-test method of reliability was adopted. The reliability coefficient of 0.72 was obtained, which is considered high enough. The data collected were analysed using Correlation statistical tool. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

### **Results**

#### **Hypothesis 1**

There is no significant relationship between parent's income and student's involvement in examination malpractices in South-West, Nigeria.

**Table 1:** Correlation of Parent's Income on Student's Involvement in Examination Malpractices

<i>Variables</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>r<sub>cal</sub></i>	<i>r<sub>table</sub></i>
Parent's Income	600	15.45	3.776	599	.440	0.195
Involvement in Examination Malpractices	600	82.90	9.014			

\*p<0.05

Table 1 shows that  $r_{cal}$  (.440) is greater than  $r_{table}$ (0.195) at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that parental income significantly contribute to the student's involvement in examination malpractices. However, students from parents with is low income involve in examination malpractice in order to make up for the inadequacies. Students from parents with high income also involve in examination malpractices. The parents use the excess money to by life questions, bribe the teachers, invigilators and examiners to score the child higher marks.

**Hypothesis 2**

There is no significant relationship between parent's educational status and student's involvement in examination malpractices in South-West, Nigeria.

**Table 2:** Correlation of Parent's Educational Status on Student's Involvement in Examination Malpractices

<i>Variables</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>r<sub>cal</sub></i>	<i>r<sub>table</sub></i>
Parent's Educational Status	600	16.22	2.254	599	.816*	0.195
Involvement in Examination Malpractices	600	82.90	9.014			

\*p<0.05

Table 2 shows that  $r_{cal}$  (.816) is greater than  $r_{table}$  (0.195) at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that educational status of parents significantly contribute to the involvement of students in examination malpractices. Children from parents without education or with low educational status involve in examination malpractice more than those from high educational status as a result of academic benefits received from the parents. The additional knowledge gained from the parents

boost the academic performance of the children and also made a difference in their moral standard.

**Hypothesis 3**

There is no significant relationship between family structure and student's involvement in examination malpractices in South-West, Nigeria.

**Table 3:** Correlation of Family Structure and Student's Involvement in Examination Malpractices

<i>Variables</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>r<sub>cal</sub></i>	<i>r<sub>table</sub></i>
Family Structure	600	9.44	2.366	599	.830*	0.195
Involvement in Examination Malpractices	600	82.90	9.014			

\*p<0.05

Table 3 shows that  $r_{cal}$  (.830) is greater than  $r_{table}$  (0.195) at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that family structure significantly contribute to the student's involvement in examination malpractices. However, the children from monogamous family because of the attention and encouragement received from the parents enable them to face their studies. Children from polygamous family involved more in examination malpractice. This may be due to a lot of challenges faced at home which affect their academic performance negatively and eventually lead them to be involved in examination malpractice.

**Hypothesis 4**

There is no significant relationship between family settings students' involvement in examination malpractices in South-West, Nigeria.

**Table 4:** Correlation of Family Settings and Students' Involvement in Examination Malpractices

<i>Variables</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>r<sub>cal</sub></i>	<i>r<sub>table</sub></i>
Family Setting	600	4.12	0.995	599	.299*	0.195
Involvement in Examination Malpractices	600	82.90	9.014			

\*p<0.05

Table 4 shows that  $r_{cal}$  (.299) is greater than  $r_{table}$  (0.195) at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, family settings significantly contribute to students' involvement in examination malpractices. Students from intact home are better academically and are less involved in examination malpractice than students from broken homes.

### Hypothesis 5

There is no significant relationship between age and student's involvement in examination malpractices in South-West, Nigeria.

**Table 5:** Correlation of Age and Students' Involvement in Examination Malpractices

<i>Variables</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mea n</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>r<sub>cal</sub></i>	<i>r<sub>table</sub></i>
Age	600	17.22	3.051	599	.313*	0.195
Involvement in Examination Malpractices	600	82.90	9.014			

\* $p < 0.05$

Table 4 shows that  $r_{cal}$  (.313) is greater than  $r_{table}$  (0.195) at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that age significantly contribute to the student's involvement in examination malpractices. Students who are under aged may not be able to cope academically. Most of their activities and programmes are dictated directed and coordinated by their peer groups. Such students with low ages are influenced by elderly and morally bankrupt ones to be involved in examination malpractices.

### Hypothesis 6

There is no significant relationship between gender and student's involvement in examination malpractices in South-West, Nigeria.

**Table 6:** Correlation of Gender and Student's Involvement in Examination Malpractices

<i>Variables</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>r<sub>cal</sub></i>	<i>r<sub>table</sub></i>
Gender	600	17.78	3.265	599	.921*	0.195
Involvement in Examination Malpractices	600	82.90	9.014			

\* $p < 0.05$

Table 6 shows that  $r_{cal}$  (.921) is greater than  $r_{table}$  (0.195) at 0.05 level of significance. The null

hypothesis is rejected. This implies that gender significantly contribute to the students' involvement in examination malpractices. Male students involve more in examination malpractices may be because they are naturally bolder and braver to face challenges than female counterparts.

### Discussion

The study found that there is relationship between parental income and student's involvement in examination malpractices in South-West, Nigeria. The study is in disagreement with Khan and Khan (2011) that discovered that the rate of involvement of students in examination malpractice does not depend largely on parent's income.

The study also discovered that parent's educational status significantly contribute to student's involvement in examination malpractices in South-West, Nigeria. The study is in disagreement with Khan and Khan (2011) who found that there was no relationship between parents' education and students' involvement in examination malpractices.

The study discovered that family structure significantly contribute to students' involvement in examination malpractices in South-West, Nigeria. Adesehinwa (2013) found a significant relationship between family structure and students' academic achievement. Definitely, students with high academic standard could not involve in examination malpractices.

The study discovered that family settings significantly contribute to the student's involvement in examination malpractices in South-West, Nigeria. The work is in line with Animasaun (2013) who found that children from broken homes lack parental care. He stressed further that they are left with the mercy of peer group or environmental influence. Children from such homes mostly involve in examination malpractices due to inadequate care.

The study discovered a significant relationship between age and student's involvement in examination malpractices in South-West Nigeria. The study supported Olowoniirejuaro and Akande (2005) who asserted that age counts in involvement of students in examination malpractices. The study is contrary to Khan and Khan (2011) who found that there was no relationship between students' age and their involvement in examination malpractices.

The study discovered that gender significantly contribute to the student's involvement in examination malpractices in South-West, Nigeria. The study corroborate with that of Aminullai (2006) who confirmed that gender influences examination malpractice. He also found that male students are more involved in examination malpractices than female ones. The study is indifference with Ogunji (2011) who found that female students are awarded marks arbitrarily in exchange for sexual escapades. Rotimi & Omonijo (2014) also discovered that female students are more involved in examination malpractice than their male counterparts.

### Conclusion

The study concluded that parents' income, parents' educational status, Family structure, family settings, age and gender significantly contribute to students' involvement in examination malpractices in South-West, Nigeria.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations have been made:

1. Students should learn and develop act of decency, honesty, obedience to the school constituted authority, discipline, patriotism and hard work.
2. Students should keep away from immoral behaviours such as stealing, cultism, laziness, gambling, indiscipline, dishonesty, indecency, disobedience to constituted authorities, and examination malpractices.
3. Parents should create time for their children and give moral training and spiritual guidance which can assist them to keep away from immoral values such as examination malpractices and other social vices.
4. Parents should endeavour to give maximum financial supports in terms of school fees, uniform and other school materials to their children to enhance their academic performance.
5. Parents who are illiterates and those at low literacy levels should send their children to home lessons after school hours, by weekends and during holidays to enable them attain high educational standard.
6. Parents should not discriminate among their children in terms of age and gender to enable young and old, male and female benefit from moral, spiritual academic and financial supports at home.
7. Parents should promote trait of hard work and excellence, avoid indulgence through bribing of teachers and other examination officials, buying

questions, paying for special centre or encouraging impersonation to make their children pass examinations.

8. Teachers should be encouraged to be more dedicated to their duties by improving on their teaching and always work hard to cover the syllabus.
9. Counseling services should be given to students at all times to keep the innocent ones far from the menace and discourage those involve in examination malpractice from future engagement.
10. Government should provide books, laptops and other educational facilities for schools to enable all students to have equal access to academic facilities. This will bridge the gaps between the rich and the poor students academically.
11. Government should wage war against those involve in examination malpractices without given preferential treatment to anybody or those who are influential in the society.
12. Government should de-emphasize the certificate oriented policy and encourage excellence through hard work.

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