



**NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY**

**PERSONALITY TRAITS AND PARENTING STYLES AS  
PREDICTORS OF EXAMINATION ANXIETY AMONG  
STUDENTS**

**M.Sc. THESIS**

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**Nicosia**

**February, 2024**

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**February, 2024**

## Approval

We certify that we have read the thesis submitted by **Chinwendu Enechi** titled “**Personality traits and parenting styles as predictors of examination anxiety among students**” and that in our combined opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Social Sciences.

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## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that all information, documents, analysis and results in this thesis have been collected and presented according to the academic rules and ethical guidelines of the Institute of Graduate Studies, Near East University. I also declare that as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced information and data that are not original to this study.

Chinwendu Enechi

19/022024

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**Chinwendu Enechi**

## **Abstract**

### **Personality traits and parenting styles as predictors of examination anxiety among students**

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Examination anxiety is a challenging factor in today's educational system. Although we often ignore this fact but it remains a significant problem that constantly affects academic performance. The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between personality traits, parenting styles and examination anxiety among students. A sample of 400 students were surveyed from Igbariam Nigeria with the convenience sampling technique. Three instruments were used in the study namely; personality inventory scale, parenting style inventory and examination anxiety scale. Results showed that examination anxiety was observed to be negatively correlated with openness to experience, conscientiousness and extraversion, it showed no correlation with agreeableness and neuroticism. Academic performance showed no correlation with examination anxiety while the age of participants showed a negative correlation with examination anxiety. Examination anxiety was negatively correlated with parental responsiveness but it showed a positive correlation with demandingness and autonomy granting. The findings of the study further showed that: factors such as; conscientiousness, parental responsiveness, demandingness, year of study, access to course materials and use of external learning materials were significant predictors of examination anxiety. Conscientiousness was the only significant predictor of academic performance and other personality traits and parenting behaviors did not significantly predict it. The findings emphasize the importance of creating a good learning environment in educational institutions and creating a sense of community among students, educators and parents; because this can greatly contribute to creating a positive atmosphere among students and helping them overcome examination anxiety.

**Keywords:** examination anxiety, parenting styles, personality traits, academic performance, university students.

## Öz

### Öğrencilerde sınav kaygısının yordayıcısı olarak kişilik

#### özellikleri ve ebeveynlik stilleri

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**Şubat 2024, 75 sayfa**

Sınav kaygısı günümüz eğitim sisteminde zorlu bir faktördür. Çoğu zaman göz ardı edilse de akademik performansı sürekli etkileyen önemli bir sorun olmaya devam etmektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı öğrencilerde kişilik özellikleri, ebeveynlik stilleri ve sınav kaygısı arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektir. Bu çalışmada kolayda örnekleme tekniği ile Igbariam Nijerya'dan 400 öğrenciden oluşan bir örnekleme anket uygulaması yapılmıştır. Çalışmada kişilik envanteri, ebeveynlik tarzı envanteri ve sınav kaygısı davranışı olmak üzere üç ölçek kullanılmıştır. Sınav kaygısının deneyime açıklık, sorumluluk ve dışadönüklük ile negatif yönde ilişkili olduğu, uyumluluk ve nevroitiklik ile ise herhangi bir ilişki göstermediği görülmüştür. Akademik performans ile sınav kaygısı arasında herhangi bir ilişki bulunmazken, katılımcıların yaşı ile sınav kaygısı arasında negatif bir ilişki bulunmuştur. Sınav kaygısı ebeveyn duyarlılığı ile negatif yönde ilişkili olduğu ancak talepkarlık ve özerklik verme ile pozitif bir ilişki gösterdiği görülmüştür. Araştırmanın bulgularında sorumluluk, ebeveyn duyarlılığı, talepkarlık, eğitim yılı, ders materyallerine erişim ve harici öğrenme materyallerinin kullanımı sınav kaygısının anlamlı yordayıcısı olduğunu göstermiştir. Sorumluluk, akademik performansın ve diğer kişilik özelliklerinin tek anlamlı yordayıcısı olduğu ve ebeveynlik davranışları bunu anlamlı bir şekilde yordamadığı görülmüştür. Bulgular, eğitim kurumlarında iyi bir öğrenme ortamı yaratmanın ve öğrenciler, eğitimciler ve ebeveynler arasında bir topluluk duygusu yaratmanın önemini vurgulamaktadır; bu sayede öğrenciler arasında olumlu bir atmosfer oluşmasına ve sınav kaygısının üstesinden gelmelerine büyük ölçüde katkıda bulunabilir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** sınav kaygısı, kişilik özellikleri, ebeveynlik stilleri, akademik performans, üniversite öğrencileri

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## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

Examination anxiety, a type of pervasive psychological phenomenon, has been quite a subject of growing concern in educational settings in the world. As students progress and go through their different academic journeys, the pressure which is placed with examinations often manifests as heightened stress and anxiety (Gramstad et al., 2020). This particular phenomenon is not only seen as detrimental to the overall mental well-being of individuals but also has the equality and potentiality to impact performance academically and even goes beyond hindering the learning process. A careful understanding of this multi-dimensional nature of examination anxiety involves actually looking into its underlying symptoms in relation to psychological, cognitive, and physiological dimensions.

The relationship between examination anxiety, parenting styles and personality traits contributes to a functional cognate relationship influencing a student's academic behavior and the influence of parental guidance and individual dispositions becomes a larger factor resulting in a complex process between nature and nurture and in this complex process, the way parents motivate their child's approach to challenges and the unique personality traits that define them create an interesting composition in which the effects of anxiety are experienced alongside the examination hall and home environment (Johnbosco & Sampson, 2021).

The level of stress and anxiety experienced by students before, during or after the examination cannot be over emphasized; in fact, this is the biggest indicator of examination anxiety and this emotional response can hinder cognitive functioning, leading to reduced performance and increased levels of distress (Theobald et al., 2022). The learning environment and teaching methods may contribute to the development of test anxiety in students (Theobald et al., 2022). Additionally, the common significance of addressing examination anxiety becomes providentially established if students' performances are considered. Recent research has shown the various factors contributing to test anxiety and its potential consequences (Cavanagh et al., 2017).

Parenting style is the pattern of behavior and the interaction seen in parents and their children, influencing the various aspects of a child's development, exclusively

including their academic performance and their emotional resilience (Deighton et al., 2018). Parenting behaviors plays a very significant and important role in shaping a child's development, consistently impacting various aspects of their lives, including their performance academically. An increasing outcome of parenting practice can be described as the development of examinations anxiety. (Hale et al., 2006). Inconsistent and harsh parenting practices have been identified as a major contributing factor to examination anxiety among university students (Evans et al., 2020). Hence, the enduring impact of parental practices, characterized by elements such as harsh discipline, parental disharmony, rejection, and insufficient involvement in the student's activities, can effectively contribute to a heightened anxiety levels (Evans et al., 2020). Research studies suggest that a very substantial percentage of university students who experience academic issues come from environments lacking the normal parental love and care. It is further emphasized that providing the right attention, quality love, and affectionate warmth plays a substantial role in actually fostering the mental development and adaptation of university students (Holochwost et al., 2020). Especially during the early life phase in the University, students require all the parental love they can get, absolute care, warmth, and a properly focused attention to enrich great adjustment to the academic environment. Parents actually play important roles in the adjustment processes of university students (Kjeldsen et al., 2021).

According to a study by Cassady and Johnson (2018), the individual differences manifesting in personality traits and cognitive abilities, can easily influence the susceptibility to examination anxiety. The authors highlighted the very need for a more comprehensive understanding of personality traits and their vast contribution to examination anxiety with some proposed strategies for mitigating its effect or impact. However understanding personality traits is important in a variety of fields including psychology itself, education, and clinical practice, as they probably provide insights into how individuals see and react to the world around them.

Ongoing research continues to refine, define and expand our understanding of personality, contributing to a more comprehensive and assessed view of human behavior. Thus, this study aimed to determine the influence of parenting styles and personality traits on examination anxiety among Nigerian Students.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The prospect of examination creates an actual sense of fear and anxiety in students in all age groups and this is a common representation for both a physiological and psychological aspect of the human experience. Many students are prone to nervousness and fear in the face of examinations. In academic settings, anxiety is often present in situations where students are being subjected to assessments such as examinations and presentations (Holochwost et al., 2020). Therefore, this type of anxiety is classified mainly as the anticipatory anxiety, the situational anxiety, or the evaluative anxiety. A mild sense or moderate level of anxiety is associatively characterized as normal and can be equally beneficial in maintaining a positive mental and physical attitude (Holochwost et al., 2020; Theobald et al., 2022). Examination anxiety is relatively the feelings of severe uneasiness about the unknown which are present in experiences of the students as regards examinations before, during or after because of fear of failure. (Driscoll, 2007; Theobald et al., 2022; Cavanagh et al., 2017) This phenomenon can cause physiological, cognitive and emotional characteristics before or after taking the examination. (Sawka-Miller, 2011). Some of these characteristics are; headache, excessive sweating and an intense heartbeat, stress, fearfulness, disappointment, helplessness, negative thinking and difficulty in remembering and concentrating (Latas, Pantić and Obradović, 2010; Asghari et al., 2012; Alghamdi, 2016). Examination anxiety can lead to long lasting harmful effects if they are not addressed properly. Hence, these effects can be both physical and psychological effects such as; depression, digestive issues, academic failure, and others (Theobald et al., 2019).

There is a gradual rise in the attention to examination anxiety and given these concerns about fear, too much worry, depression, academic failures, stress, negative emotions and all the difficulties associated with the cognitive dissonance of examination anxiety; this study is consistently timely and imperative as it is purposeful in investigating the influence of personality traits and parenting styles on examination anxiety among students.

### **Aim of the Study**

The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between parenting styles, personality traits and examination anxiety among students.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the relationship between personality traits, parenting behaviors and examination anxiety among students?
2. To what extent will personality traits, parenting style, academic achievement, age, gender, year of study, access to course material and use of external learning material predict examination anxiety among students?
3. To what extent will personality traits, parenting style, age, gender, year of study, access to course material and use of external learning material predict academic achievement among students?
4. What are the differences in examination anxiety and academic achievement based on parenting style?
5. What are the differences in examination anxiety and academic achievement based access to course material?
6. What are the differences in examination anxiety and academic achievement based on use of external learning material?
7. Are there gender differences in examination anxiety and academic achievement among students?
8. Are there religious differences in examination anxiety and academic achievement among students?

### **Significance of the Study**

Previous empirical studies carefully examined the very effects of parenting styles on examination anxiety (Boulton and Macaulay, 2022), personality traits on the effects of examination anxiety (Gramstad et al., 2020; Kukso and Kukso, 2022) and the very effects of examination anxiety itself (Olanrewaju and Adeoye, 2020). However, none of these studies actually examined parenting styles, personality traits and examination anxiety together. Consequently, the current study attempts to comprehensively examine these variables and establish the relationship between them.

The findings of the research is determined to render help to students so that they can learn about their strengths and weaknesses and how to identify them, identifying these enables them to develop a good learning approach to enable them to understand their studies so that they can overcome examination anxiety and performance better in school. The study benefits educational psychologists in a more

understanding about the student, the student's attitude towards examination and to identify how students can improve their learning capacity. It provides the parents the opportunity for understanding the importance of a good environment for a conducive learning experience in order to reduce exam anxiety. It provides preparation for the teachers to be fully engaged in equipping students for examination.

This study also provides good guidance on how parenting styles and personality traits impacts the student's mental health and examination anxiety. Empirically, the findings of the study show a significant contribution to the scarce recent literatures on parenting styles, personality traits and examination anxiety.

### **Limitations**

- The main weakness of this study is that the data collection method based on convenience sampling approach is not randomly selected from a large population; this is a result of participants not all having an equal chance of being selected, which can introduce sampling bias. Additionally, there is a lack of diversity and generalization, and the sample is not statistically balanced and fully representative causing the sampling process to be unreliable.
- Another disadvantage of the research is that there is no study directly relating personality traits and parenting behaviors to examination anxiety.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Parenting Styles:** Parenting Styles generally include a child-rearing pattern adopted by parents (Darling & Toyokawa, 1997).

**Personality traits:** Personality trait entails the people's actual characteristic method of thinking, people's feelings, and their behaviors (John & Srivastava, 1999).

**Examination Anxiety:** Examination Anxiety involves the feelings of unease or apprehension that a student may experience right before, during or after the examination due to worry or the fear of failure (Driscoll, 2007).

## **CHAPTER II**

### **Literature Review**

The theoretical framework and the related research including their findings as related to the basic subject already existing in the literature are thereby given in this chapter.

#### **Theoretical Framework**

The idea of a framework of theories in this study just as highlighted above gives an insight into the concept, the structure and the nature of all the different factors involved in examination anxiety as it relates to personality traits and examination anxiety.

#### **Examination Anxiety**

The term examination anxiety entails relatively to the feelings of uneasiness or worries about the unknown which are present in experiences of the students as regards examinations before, during or after, due to either high or low level of anxiety or fear of failure, it is a kind of mental or physical condition that induces the stress students go through before or during the examination (Driscoll, 2007; Theobald et al., 2022; Cavanagh et al., 2017). Examination anxiety can also mean the maximum amount of subjective experiences caused by physiological, cognitive and emotional characteristics before or after taking the examination. (Sawka-Miller, 2011).

Examination anxiety involves various aspects which includes affective and behavioral responses occurring within the environment in which examination is conducted before and during the exams. Students who are experiencing this anxiety may however feel some type of physical symptoms in the form of; a mild or severe headache, sweating all over, and an intense heartbeat, accompanied with emotional symptoms such as; stress, fearfulness, disappointment, and sometimes helplessness. Also, the other symptoms of examination in cognitive deficits may manifest in negative thinking and difficulty in remembering and concentrating (Latas, Pantić & Obradović, 2010; Asghari et al., 2012; Alghamdi, 2016).



### **Theories of examination anxiety**

Here, the most common and important theories of examination anxiety as it affects the students are examined, explained and discussed. Firstly, the self-presentational theory as evaluated by (Goffman, 1956) offers a general understanding about the disposition of examination anxiety and according to the theory, individuals are found to have common experiences of anxiety when they are being charged to create an impacting impression and they doubt that they are not capable of doing this. The theory depicts that exam anxiety advances as individuals become more impactful and informed to creating a particular level of impression and forfeiting the required confidence in their ability to actually succeed (Retrieved from Theobald et al., 2022). From the explanations of the self-presentational perspective, the common sense of connection between academic competency and examination anxiety is explained by the agreement that individuals with poor academic competence are more susceptible to doubt their ability to achieve their desired results or perform great academically even as some researchers emphasize extensively a cognitive approach to examination anxiety, stating the underlying concepts or patterns such as increased self-standards or negative self-evaluation (Cavanagh et al., 2017; Deighton et al., 2018; Theobald et al., 2022).

The explicit monitoring theory by Yu (2015) explains why the students are feeling choked up by a lot of pressure in the face of examinations. The findings of (Wine, 1971; Ikeda et al., 1996; Cassady, 2004) highlighted pressure as a factor that induces either loss of focus and concentration or splitting of focus. However, neither two of these factors are directly associated with a positive effect on examination anxiety.

Ng and Lee (2016) emphasized on the attention theory. They agreed that many potential popular opinions are based on attention theories and principles attributing to attention. They go further to discuss that certain aspects of arousal which are induced by the causes of examination anxiety alter performance cognitively. This is to say that this theory exposes even another breach of performance in the academic achievement of the students.

Teigen (1994) also supports this theory in stating that where there may be the possibility of high arousal responses during examination, examination anxiety sets in

and this would greatly reduce the performance level of students, causing academic failure.

### **Factors determining examination anxiety**

Recent research has suggested that there may be some varying factors which are relatively contributing to examination anxiety and its potential consequences (Cavanagh et al., 2017). According to (Minor and Gold, 1985), certain factors act as a catalyst to determine the effectiveness and levels of examination anxiety and some of these factors are; the physiological aspect, cognitive and emotional aspects. (Hembree, 1988; Cassady, 2004 and Smith, 2018) also supports this view. They emphasized on the physiological aspect of examination anxiety as mainly determined by the physical activities involved in relation to the examination, ie to sit for the examination. Mainly they resulted from the physiological aspects as increase in heart rate, feeling of sickness or even panic. They talked about the cognitive aspects as negative or certain derogatory statements that we make to ourselves before we sit for examination. This implies that it is actually the negative thoughts students have about themselves as regards to evaluation; whether they would perform better or worse that leads to this factor arising (Cassady, 2004 & Smith, 2018).

The emotional aspects of examination anxiety were related extensively on the closeness of the examination initiating mainly the fear of worry in students, as to whether they would be able to write the exam, remember the past teaching or lectures, they would perform well or not after the examination or they would even go blank in the examination hall (Putwain, 2007; Dutke & Stöber, 2001; Doctor & Altman, 1969).

Additionally, emotional responses contributes directly towards hindering the cognitive functioning and this can lead to a reduced performance and an increase in levels of anxiety (Theobald et al., 2022). The environment in which the students learn and the various teaching methods employed by the teachers may contribute effectively in the development of examination anxiety in students (Theobald et al., 2022). However, the factors contributing to examination anxiety and its significance become important evidence of students' performances considerably.

### **Effects of examination anxiety**

Research shows that the significant prevalence of examination anxiety varies accurately between the range of 25% and 65% (Alghamdi, 2016; Khoshhal et al., 2017; Tsegay et al., 2019). While almost all of the students experience examination anxiety to a certain extent, for some of the students it can negatively impact their level of motivation, their concentration, the learning structure and their overall performance, which would be leading to the negative potential for dropping out of school (Asghari et al., 2012; Javanbakht and Hadian, 2014). (Tsegay et al., 2019) observed increased examination anxiety as associated with poor study skills and this effectively lowers academic achievement.

Recent findings conducted by Gilavand et al. (2019) shows a high concern for examination anxiety in a range 9.8%, the moderate anxiety in a range of 32.7%, and a virtually mild anxiety in a range of 37.5% in students. Latas et al. (2010) shows a significant moderate range of examination anxiety among students, with the inclusiveness of female students showing a significant increase in their level of anxiety than the male students. Aziz and Serafi's (2017) revealed that up to over a half of female students experience this examination anxiety. Another study conducted in the same region demonstrated this examination anxiety in a range of 65% students, also among female; this is to say that effectively female students are more susceptible to be affected by examination anxiety than male students (Khoshhal et al., 2017). Research by Hadi et al. (2018) established a form of balanced correlation between examination anxiety and level of under performance of students, which shows that effects of examination anxiety imitate a low level of academic performance. The effects of examination anxiety are even a cause of concern as a recent study shows high examination anxiety in over 50% of students (Nazir et al., 2021).

Furthermore, Sansgirx et al. (2005) reports that there is a negative correlation between examination anxiety and the students' cognitive ability to understand the course material, manage the volume of academic loads and be able to prepare effectively for their examination. Examining the effects of examination anxiety and its actual relationship with the demographic variables such as the gender and age, psychological conditions, emotional, cognitive and physical conditions and other variables associated with this in relation to the students holds quite a significant importance because of the increased level and occurrence of examination anxiety and

it's negative impact on the academic performance (Aziz and Serafi, 2017; Nazir et al., 2021). Investigating the common relationship between these demographic and individual factors with examination anxiety can help to determine student who are at a higher risk of experiencing examination anxiety.

### **Causes of examination anxiety**

Examination anxiety entails a significant stress response to the task of assessing students and there are four main areas of reported stresses which can be identified as the causes of examination anxiety: lifestyle issues, studying style, psychological factors and lack of required information (Frischenschlaqer et al., 2005; Von der Embse et al., 2018; Hembree, 1988).

The lifestyle issues causing the examination anxiety include all of the related issues like inadequate time management, no time to rest, insufficiency of physical activity and poor nutritional balance. These are however, some of the most seriously affecting problems that are commonly found among students even as they experience stressors that emerge from these challenges. However other contributing factors leading to examination anxiety as reported by some researchers exposes a student past low performances as an induced lifestyle associated with the stigma of failure and greatly resulting to examination anxiety (Frischenschlaqer et al., 2005; Hembree 1988).

A student's study composure can differ and determine whether a student is capable of good performance or not, even when they are being faced with examination anxiety. This indicates that in the case of such big issues as examination anxiety, the students may or may not be fully equipped for their examinations, they may not have a proper review and full insight to the knowledge of the course material. Some students even forget entirely. Hence, these are more primary factors leading to examination anxiety (Frischenschlaqer et al., 2005; Sommer and Arendasy, 2014).

The level of students psychological factors contribute effectively to examination anxiety; whether in a negative manner or not, even if they are motivated by the feelings of these anxiety (Howard, 2020). Irrational thinking about examinations following the various outcomes and worries uncontrollably over exam situations which can be associated with going blank are substantial factors causing examination anxiety (Sommer & Arendasy, 2014, Howard 2020).

Students' view of a full extensive course load is also disclosed to cause examination anxiety in students (Frischenschlaquer et al., 2005). Examination itself is considered a huge stress for students and sometimes students who may have a good understanding may lack necessary information as regards their course and this makes the examination a test of nerves rather than that of knowledge (Frischenschlaquer et al., 2005). Other factors like the likelihood of students putting themselves into pressure and lots of pressure before the examination can lead to altered outcomes which would induce lack of focus. Thus a lack of focus can cause examination anxiety and outrightly lead to a low performance (Wine, 1971).

Also, some students get a split of focus on either preparing in complexities for examination or reading to just answer the examination questions and this actually takes up a whole working memory of the students (Cassady 2004; Ikeda et al., 1996) implying that students would have to study in a very minimum capacity operating below the actual level and this creates an avenue for examination anxiety, leading to negative performance in their academics (Dutke & Stöber, 2001).

### **Examination anxiety and academic performance**

Can we even discuss examination anxiety without talking about academic achievement? It is almost impossible. Hence, Sommer and Arendasy (2014) stated the significant relationship between academic performance and examination anxiety leads to either a higher level of academic achievement or a lower level as the case may be. Hence, if students experience a high level of anxiety, it affects their performance negatively academically and if the examination anxiety is low, their performance improves (Howard, 2020).

The outstanding relationship between examination anxiety and academic performance links to the academic quality of the students as regards their achievement in school and this even strengthens the reason why both phenomena are important in the education system, examination anxiety as a whole affects students' performance either negatively or positively and this dictates how the grades of these students will be measured; either high or low (Eversin et al., 1989; Musch and Broder 1999). However, Reeve and Bonaccio (2008) in their findings suggest that the higher the level of anxiety in students, the lower the likelihood of lower performance in examination,

so this implies that examination anxiety effectively and outrightly increases poor academic achievement in students.

Furthermore, the investigation done by Everson et al., (1989) promoted the sense that there is a persistent relationship between examination anxiety and a student's performance on a standardized test, which supports the relevance of academic achievement by indicating whether students may perform well or poorly before the examination. Also in the findings of (Vor de Embse et al., 2018; Tobias, 1990), it was evaluated that students who are low performers or considered weaker academically may have a higher tendency to develop examination anxiety.

### **Parenting Styles**

The elements of psychological constructs which generally represents the standardized strategies employed by parents in their child's upbringing can be described as parenting style (Kjeldsen et al., 2021) The mere activity of genuinely spending time with a child is surpassed by the ability to initiate a quality parenting practices (Kjeldsen et al., 2021). For example, a parent may decide that they are spending an entire afternoon with their child but may be busy with an entirely different activity, thereby they may not be engaging with the child or lacking the necessary interest in the child (Kjeldsen et al., 2021). These parenting styles commonly covers the various approaches to responding to individuals and also the ways in which demanding from them is portrayed. They include three main approaches; the authoritative parenting, authoritarian parenting and permissive parenting.

Authoritative parents are often associated with a better understanding of the individual's emotional state, providing authentic insight and guidance to them in controlling their feelings and also finding immediate support, advice and encouragement to help them cope with their problems while providing the sense of independence, authoritative parents also initiate good controls and limitations in actions, thereby maintaining a balance, they practically engage in great verbal communication, creating warmth and good nurture. This style is associated with greater parental responsiveness and demands, tending to create independent and self-reliant individuals (Kjeldsen et al., 2021; Johnson & Smith, 2022).

Authoritarian Parenting in a contrast to authoritative parenting is also demanding but not actually responsive, it is just mostly about totalitarianism (Evans et

al., 2020). This is however a strict style featuring a high expectations for values of conformity, a limited dialogue, and a very punitive approach. Authoritarian parents set a standard or rules even without explaining the rationality involved, thereby they exhibit a low responsiveness to their child's needs. Also, their punishments are very strict, mostly involving corporal punishment and yelling. Individuals who are raised under authoritarian parenting may critically show less competence socially and in formulating insecure and anti-social behavior (Evans et al., 2020; Deighton et al., 2018; Hale et al., 2006).

Permissive Parenting is reflected by responsiveness not necessarily regarding demanding behavior, is also seen as as very lenient and parents in this category are greatly concerned and involved but demonstrate a few expectations on individuals (Holochwost et al., 2020). In the context of nurturing and accepting, the most important aspect is that the permissive parents may not really require individuals regulating their behavior. This can result in impulsive behavior and misconduct in individual behavior as the case may be (Hale et al., 2006). Holochwost et al., 2020 in their findings also suggest that the family's role in the process of shaping a child's personality is important with respect to this parenting style being the key determinant of a child's actual development and behavior.

### ***Theories of parenting styles***

The first parenting style theory widely accepted was extensively developed by Baumrind in the year 1996 and until recent, it covers all aspects of parenting styles, showing the relationship between the parental practices, conduct and the common development of strategic components and the ability to develop manipulative tendencies in the environment in order to achieve certain personal objectives. This theory looks at the two fundamentals, namely; the responsiveness vs unresponsiveness, the demanding vs undemanding, as major contributions to a more successful parenting and from these dimensions, three other factors of parenting styles emerge namely: the authoritative, the authoritarian, and the permissive parenting styles. Baumrind's parenting style theory entails that the authoritative parenting style is mostly associated with a positive outcome in individuals, these outcomes come in the form of an increased self-esteem, better performance towards academics and a good social interaction. Individuals of authoritative parents tend to develop a sense of competence and control for oneself. Authoritative Parenting according to him is

factorized by the feeling of warmth, absolute responsiveness, and very clear expectations and individuals who are raised by authoritative parents are prone to developing a secured emotion which would reduce anxiety. Permissive Parenting on the other hand entails the autonomy and the capacity to be independent in varying degrees and individuals who mostly experience support and encouragement in making decisions are more likely to develop resilience. However, individuals who are resilient tend to be able to cope with stress more effectively, including examination anxiety (Baumrind, 1996).

(Pinquart and Kauser (2018) and Maccoby and Martin (2013) later created an expansion to Baumrind's theory and added a few other factors including; indulgent and neglectfulness, this added a new dimension and strategic importance to the factors of parenting style, making the parenting styles a total of four different aspects (Evans et al., 2020).

Despite the widespread acceptance of Baumrind's approach theoretically to parenting styles, it has actually faced a quite serious criticism from some notable scholars (Wang and Taylor, 2010; Maccoby and Martin, 2013), hence they posited and argued that the styles created by Baumrind were not necessarily identified as a realistic style, following a further interpretation and expansion of the three dimensions of parenting styles which were identified by him, proving that not all the qualities of parenting fit into one of each of the three categories; stating that there may be more about parenting behaviors, they gave an instance for permissive parents who may still make provisions for extensive verbal guidance.

### ***Parenting styles and examination anxiety***

Parenting styles acts as a means of influencing the development of examination anxiety. This simply entails that the practices of parenting can directly affect examination anxiety either negatively or positively. (Boulton and Macaulay, 2022) Other empirical studies carried out previously also attest to this fact even though the effect of the examination anxiety itself (Olanrewaju & Adeoye, 2020).

The term examination anxiety explains a relative approach to the feelings of anxiety or in a simpler sense worry about the unknown circumstances that arise before, during or after an examination, hence; these factors also can be influenced by the kind of parenting practices in which an individual is involved, for instance; an individual



with an authoritative parenting style might act negatively towards examination initiating examination anxiety and so as individuals with permissive and authoritarian parenting styles act either negatively or positively (Driscoll, 2007; Theobald et al., 2022; Cavanagh et al., 2017).

Additionally, examination anxiety on its own is a major concern which when paired side by side with parenting style can measure the actual maximum level of varietal subjective experiences initiating more physiological, cognitive and a more emotional characteristics before or after taking examination, relating these experiences to either authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting style (Sawka-Miller, 2011).

### **Personality Traits**

Personality has multi dimensions in the form of a constructive approach which encompasses an individual's interest, their attitudes, skills, their communication, physical appearances and being able to adapt to the environment (Srivastava, 2008). The significance of personality initiates a sense of variety in the theological, psychological and the sociological context and actually creating a consistent emphasis on the subject of a more complex and static pattern of thinking, feeling and behavioral analysis (Srivastava, 2008 & Alghamdi, 2016).

However, the students who may be experiencing a rather complex pattern in a personality dimension can be linked to specific cognate effects depicting them in a particular mode of behavior such as; negative thoughts, feelings of hopelessness, disappointments, depression, fear, etc; and these behaviors would give rise to a negative attitude towards examination thereby creating examination anxiety (Latas et al., 2010; Asghari et al., 2012; Alghamdi, 2016).

### ***Big five personality models***

The detailed idea of personality gained insight in the 19th century which goes on to leading to a varieties of theories, and one of the most acceptable in defining personality is the big five factor of personality, coming to existence in the year 1930s and 1940s respectively, hence; this method of personality theory from the model of the big five becomes more complex and gained a wide audience, now mostly adopted by personality psychologists since the year 1980s (Köksal et al., 2014). This popular theory of the big five entails that the behaviors of people consistently can be described in a more adjective way and the factor analysis into these very complex patterns

becomes a descriptive measure to a lesser number of personality dimensions and so this model was advanced by Goldberg, (2012).

The idea of the big five personality types comprised of certain characteristics such as; the openness to experience, the extraversion - introversion, the agreeableness and neuroticism in the aspect of stability in emotion (Goldberg, 2012). Increased and decreased scores on these personality traits show descriptive behaviors, the openness to experience entails the ability demonstrated in a view of a high score which is seen in curiosity, imagination, flexibility, creativity, novelty, originality, conservatism and practicality. (Sanatkar & Rubin, 2020).

Conscientiousness shows that the high scores are in terms of a more systematic, efficient, reliable, organized, preserved, more responsible, hardworking, has good disciplines and unlike the low scores which are depicted in areas of disorganization, having no aim, carefree, often late or lazy, neglecting things, and possesses weak attitude towards will (Roberts et al., 2017). Extraversion - introversion depicts generally a high scorers as associated with a more assertive, passionate, sociable and ability to effectively communicate, while the low scorers in other words the introversion are quite associated with the feelings of quietness, passiveness, being reserved, withdrawn, being sober and restrained (Strivastava, 2008). Agreeableness shows that the high scores can generally reflect as the act of being friendly, good in nature, the ability to be liked, kindness, forgiveness, being trusted, cooperative, modesty and generous while the very low scores are seemed to be more rude, cynical in nature, revengeful, critical, unpleasant, suspicious, very critical, irritating and low cooperative behavior (Graziano and Tobin, 2019). In the aspect of neuroticism - emotional stability, the scorers appearing high are usually seen in worry, insecurities, anxiousness, depression, being self conscious, moody, instability and the scores scoring low are seen as being relaxed, low emotional state, usually calm, depicting a comfortable state, contented, easy tempered and more satisfying (Lahey, 2019).

Personality traits in accordance to Big five creates a positive comprehension and the framework for understanding individuals, particularly understanding the differences between the individuals studied, in relationship with various constructs depicting the willingness to effective communication, competency in communication, learning of languages, the emotional and academic capacity and intelligence (Goldberg, 2012; Graziano & Tobin, 2019)

### *Theory of personality traits*

The psychosocial theory of personality is based on the concept developed by Erik Erikson in 1950 which describes individual general development to emerge from the eight stages; infant to adulthood and at each stage he explained the individuals that the individuals look at the psychosocial development involving the relationship of a personal psychological need then the demands of society (Gramstad et al., 2020; Kukso & Kukso, 2022).

According to the findings of Erik Erikson, (1950), the actual initial stage which construes of the trust versus the Mistrust occurs during the infant years, when a child's sense of assimilating trust or mistrust are dependent on the basics of consistent caregiving. Autonomy versus shame and doubt which is the second stage usually occurs from 18 months until the child is 3 years and it focuses on the development and independence process of the child. Initiative versus guilt as the third stage involves clearly the individuals now adjusting themselves and growing into either a complex sense of initiative or guilt and thus is based on their parental responsibility and support. The fourth stage known as the industry versus the Inferiority acts on the ages of a child from 5 years to 12 years and clearly emphasizes the acquiring of more competent approvals from peer groups. The identity versus the role confusion as the fifth stage happens in the adolescence stage of the individual involving the wide forms of personal identities and beliefs which helps to form a sense of better identity. The sixth stage stage here occurs in young adults and it is basically describing the forms of a close relationships. The idea of generatively versus the stagnation which is the seventh stage lays emphasis on the middle adulthood and focusing on the larger picture of the community and creating a more longer impact. The final stage known as the ego integrity versus despair springs from late childhood which is conclusively described as the idea of promoting the individuals to have a reflection on their lives in order to achieve a positive experience and develop wise skills (Retrieved from; Gramstad et al., 2020, Kukso & Kukso, 2022))

The widely accepted Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development entails the stages of human development from the infant to their adult life. However, certain individuals who may not have developed a complete sense of competency and mastery skills may encounter feelings of being inferior when faced with examinations and these are often referred to as a significant challenge, causing these individuals to be more

prone to anxiety and fear of not actually being able to attain a certain expectation or general standards that they have set out themselves and all of these can lead to a higher contribution to examination anxiety.

### ***Personality traits and examination anxiety***

In this present study, the big five dimensions were adopted, discussed and evaluated as the major characteristics and primary factors of personality traits. The five characteristics in the dimensions of the big five personality models goes beyond these five categories, it provides a better understanding and evaluation of individual differences and these individual differences when compared can actually result in finding out an individual's overall behavior towards examination; as to if there is increased or decreased examination anxiety (Goldberg, 2012; Olanrewaju & Adeoye, 2020).

Examination anxiety entails the feelings of worry associated with the closeness of examination, during the examination and even afterwards and this cannot be fully assessed, explained and understood without considering the effects of personality traits on examination anxiety, such as; too much worrying, loss of focus, fear or in positive directives; reserved, preparedness, calm and relaxed (Gramstad et al., 2020; Kukso and Kukso, 2022) and also considering the possible effects of examination anxiety itself (Olanrewaju & Adeoye, 2020).

Erikson's theory also emphasizes the role of societal and parental expectations during each stage of development in personality, ie showing that the individual feel pressured constantly to perform well academically without a positive supportive system either from home or the environment and this creates a sense of belonging, competence that if mounded into personality can determine either a positive or negative attitude towards examination and thereby causing examination anxiety in individuals to be either high or low (Erikson, 1950; Kukso & Kukso, 2022).

### **Related Research**

Karimi et al. (2017) looked at the relationship between the perceived parenting affection, the attachment styles, and test anxiety among 300 students in Khorramabad. The study showed that anxiety and avoidant attachment style, as well as the perception of fatherly love, predicted examination anxiety in both boys and girls.

Kocafe (2017) investigated the actual relationship between the autonomy support by parents, their mindful awareness, and the psychological wellbeing of 130

undergraduates. Results indicated that maternal autonomy support predicted a higher level of mindfulness and psychological well-being and not including stress.

Mishra and Kiran (2018) explored the core impact of parenting styles on the social anxiety among 120 adolescents, collectively identifying a negative correlation between the social anxiety and parenting style. Results indicated that responsiveness in parenting can be correlated negatively with social anxiety.

Doust et al. (2019) assessed the importance and efficacy of the positive parenting approach or program as the case may be, consistently enhancing the parenting methods, addressing the need as associated with the children's behavioral problems, mitigating the mothers' very psychological and marital issues. This study made use of 120 mothers. The study found out that positive parenting approach is positively effective to the reduction of examination anxiety.

Khanjani et al. (2019) conducted a descriptive study that predicted anxiety level and the obsessive compulsive tendencies in young adults to be based on their parents' parenting styles. The study involved a number of 180 male students in Marand, which were selected through a pattern of cluster random sampling. Here, the results reflected the anxiety level in obsessive behavior to be high.

D'souza and Sudhamayi (2019) investigated the connection seen between anxiety levels and depression in individuals who experience some kind of learning disabilities and parenting styles. They used a quasi-experimental design and study did not support the hypothesis of significant differences in the anxiety and depression that is associated or based on parenting styles. The study found that there was indeed a connection between anxiety and depressive symptoms in those individuals who have learning disabilities.

Mohsen and Mansoor (2019) conducted an analysis on the relationship between the gender, age, the academic achievement, or performance, years of study, and examination anxiety using a number of 110 students at Isfahan. Results exclusively included that the female students showed higher examination anxiety, indicating that a negative relationship existed between examination anxiety and the said academic achievement, adding that there was no significant relationship between examination anxiety and years of study.

In 2020, Olanrewaju and Adeoye conducted a survey on the influence of gender and age on examination anxiety among students in Nigeria. He used a

descriptive design and his research consisted of 149 participants randomly selected. The study revealed that there was a significant difference in examination anxiety between the male and female students, showing that the male students exhibited higher anxiety levels than the female students.

Malakar (2020) investigated the core impact of parenting style on anxiety indicating sensitivity and examination anxiety among the eight grade students. The study focused extensively and exclusively on 13 - 14 years students from the Bengali families in Kolkata. Results showed that the anxiety sensitivity and examination anxiety were increasingly common in the demandingness pattern of parenting style without a significant gender difference.

Butnaru (2020) explored the relationship exhibited in the autonomy granting, the demandingness, and the responsiveness parenting styles and school anxiety in a Romanian sample consisting of 183 students. Results showed an effect of autonomy-granting parenting and moderate school anxiety, including the increased mean score in anxiety related to school failure.

Ekechukwu (2020) investigated the correlation seen between self esteem and parenting styles, generally based on social anxiety disorder in secondary school students from Nigeria. The study used a correlational research design which involved 300 students selected through simple random sampling. Results showed that low self-esteem and the autonomy granting or demandingness parenting styles were all significantly predicting social anxiety disorder in individuals.

Prince et al. (2020) investigated the factual correlation regarding neuroticism, the extraversion, and even the onset of anxiety and depressive disorders in individuals. They conducted a systematic 6 year follow up, with 489 students and studying on a self reported personality traits. They used the Eysenck technique. However, the study showed that a high neuroticism in individuals can either be a real or not as regards the individual's anxiety and depressive disorders, while the low extraversion is not necessarily a valid factor for agoraphobia.

Pearson et al. (2020) investigated the common association between the dysfunctional parental personality traits and the offspring self harm, the depression faced and anxiety. Over 8000 parents and children participated in this research. It was reported that the higher levels of very dysfunctional maternal personality traits were

seen to be associated with an increased risks involving self-harm, actual depression, and anxiety associated with offspring.

Alizadeh et al. (2020) looked at the value of personality traits for allowing psychological problems in a large sample consisting Iranian adults. The findings remained consistent and true to the concept and was across all genders, indicating that personality traits are actually a valuable indicator for assessing and controlling the psychological issues of the population.

Johnbosco and Sampson (2021) studied the impact of gender, age differences, the parent's occupation, and the impact of self esteem on examination anxiety in students using a number of 281 participants in Nigeria. The study found that the impact on age and gender were significant contributors to examination anxiety.

Boulton and Macaulay (2022) investigated the primary effects of the potential predictive role of parenting that is as regards to challenges on three effective indicators of a students' well-being including their social anxiety and the process of creating resilient strategies. 836 students took part in the study and they completed a questionnaire that measured the study variables through the process of self report. The findings showed that the parental discussions of challenges were significantly predicting all of the three wellbeing factors with the authentic self-esteem acting as a mediator for these relationships.

In a study by Qiu et al. (2022), the major focus was on the exploration of the interactive effects that are between the parenting style patterns and the common resilience on the basis of anxiety. Here, 2179 Chinese students were sampled and the results showed a quite significant difference in the aspect of anxiety among the students. The findings showed that parents who were negatively impacting associated with the situation and the positively impacting parents were negatively associated

In the study by Kukso and Kukso (2022), students were identified and compared on a functional level using the Robinson index, this assesses the ratio of their overall characteristics and the physiological indicators during examination; relating to the physical stress. 100 students were involved in the analysis. The results showed in the first group that exhibitions of normative behavior were indicators of slow psychological development and also it showed increase in the other group of participants.

Geluk Rouwhorst et al. (2022) looked at the sole characteristics and the impact of a borderline personality symptoms and the persistence of anxiety disorders. Hence, the study revealed that a large number of individuals associated with borderline personality maintains a higher risk for anxiety disorders and has a greater chance of developing examination anxiety.

However, having outlined these findings in different studies and the several theories shown. It became a basic principle in which the variables of this recent study; personality traits, parenting styles and examination anxiety were developed. Based on the variables of the mentioned studies, no particular study was able to create a link between the variables of the current study. Hence, this is the significance of all the related studies.



## **CHAPTER III**

### **Methodology**

This chapter offered a comprehensive explanation of the methodology implemented in the current study, which includes; the research design, the participants/population and sample, data collection tools/materials, data analysis procedures, as well as the study plan. This section also discussed the various statistical approaches utilized in analyzing the data collected.

#### **Research Design**

This research was specifically modeled based on the pattern of quantitative research, which was conducted using a quantitative approach in order to acquire objective data that will not be influenced by personal opinions and perspectives (Williams, 2021). The study adopted a correlational methodology to examine the relationship between parenting styles, personality traits and examination anxiety among University students. The correlation was used as a technique to investigate the variables and evaluated the relationship between them statistically without taking into consideration the influence of any other variable that is not directly related to the study (Carlson and Wu, 2012). The data was distributed and collected at Igbariam Anambra State, Nigeria.

#### **Participants / Population and Sample**

The population of this study were Nigerian university students. Thereafter, a sample was taken from the population through convenience sampling. The convenience sampling method is a basic technique which implies a non-probability sampling process where all of the participants are selected according to ease of access (Saunders et al., 2012). The sample size consists of 400 students which were male and female and were chosen from Igbariam in Anambra State. This sample size was selected because the overall number of the population is unknown. The sample size was determined based on the formulae fit sample size for a population that is unknown. Shete et al. (2020) gave the formulae of an unknown population as follows; The sample size  $385(S) = \frac{(Z\text{-score})^2 \times p \times (1-p)}{(m)^2}$ , hence 385(S) is indicated as the sample size for an infinite population, Z is indicated as the Z-score or a confidence interval, p is standard deviation and m is indicating the margin of error. The descriptive statistics for the demographic variables are presented in the Table 1 below.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics for Demographic variables

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	202	50.5%
Female	198	49.5%
<b>Year of Study</b>		
Undergraduate	318	72.0%
Masters	53	18.3%
PhD	29	10.7%
<b>Religion</b>		
Christian	231	57.8%
Muslim	112	28.0%
Traditional	12	3.0%
Others	45	11.3%
<b>CGPA</b>		
2.00-2.99	129	32.3%
3.00-3.99	251	62.7%
4.00-5.00	20	5%
<b>Age</b>		
<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>
18	41	25.56 ± 6.100

Table 1 above denotes that the participants of the study comprised of 202 (50.5%) males and 198 (49.5%) females. The table also reveals that 318 (72.0%) participants were undergraduate students, while 53 (18.3%) were masters students and 29 (10.7%) were Ph.D. students. Additionally, 231 students were Christians (57.8%), 112 were Muslims (28.0%), 12 students admitted to be traditionalists (3.0%), while 45 students were of other religions (11.3%). It can also be seen from the table that 129 (32.3%) participants reported that they had a CGPA of 1.00-2.99, while majority of the students which made up 251 (62.7%) of the total sample had a CGPA between 3.00-3.99. Also, 20 (5%) students said they have a CGPA of 4.00-5.00. The data above also shows that the minimum age of participants who took part in the study were about

18 years and the maximum age was 41 years. The mean age was 25.56, while the standard deviation for age was 6.100.

### **Data Collection Tools**

Three Instruments were used for the study and they include; the parenting style inventory, the big five inventory and the examination anxiety scale. In the questionnaires demographics other factors such as; age, gender, CGPA, access to course material, use of external learning material, ethnicity and religious group were identified and evaluated.

#### **Parenting Style Inventory (PSI)**

This is an inventory designed by Darling and Tovokawa (1997). It is a 30 item inventory designed to assess the construct of the parenting style. The inventory assessed three dimensions of maternal parenting style which are inclusively: demandingness, emotional responsiveness and psychological autonomy-granting. The scale basically followed a 5-point likert format in the range of strongly agree as "5" to strongly disagree as "1". Darling and Toyokawa (1997) obtained an alpha coefficient reliability of 0.72, 0.74 and 0.75 respectively, for responsiveness, demandingness and autonomy granting (Appendix F).

#### **Big Five Inventory (BFI)**

This instrument was developed by John and Srivastava (1999) to measure the big five traits of personality. The Big Five personality traits is just a suggested taxonomy or a grouping for the personality traits (Appendix F). The inventory assessed five dimensions which are listed as the following; the extroversion, the agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness. The instrument entails a 45 item has five rating point of strongly disagree equals 1, disagree a little equals 2, undecided equals 3, agree a little equals 4 and agree strongly equals 5. John and Srivastava however reported a validity of a 90 and a Cronbach Alpha (CA) of 87 respectively

#### **Examination Anxiety Scale (EAS)**

Examination anxiety scale was created by Spielberg (1980) and was used as a measure of evaluating examination anxiety of the participants (Appendix F). It has no sub scales or dimensions whatsoever. It contains 20 items in the scale with the responses based on four points; the first strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and then strongly disagreed. The scale had a CA of 0.80 (Spielberg, 1980).

### Data Collection Procedure

In order to begin the study specifically, an ethical approval was received from Near East University Social Science Ethical Committee board with the application number (NEU/SS/2023/1698). The data for the research was collected at Igbariam. An informed consent was used, following a briefing and willingness to take part in the research. Confidentiality was provided by writing on the research instrument and then instructing the students not to identify themselves in anyway so that their anonymity is protected. The participants were also informed that the study was for research purposes only. Pen and paper copies of the study questionnaires were administered to the selected students conveniently through the help of research assistants. The data was collected at various popular school routes with an estimated number of 200 - 300 students per day. Popular bookshops, cafes and restaurants were also visited. At the end of the administration, the returned filled questionnaires were used for the analysis.

### Data Analysis Procedure

The data analysis however looked at how the data collected was evaluated, determined, measured and analyzed

**Table 2.** Normality Table

Variable	N	Min	Max.	Mean	Std Dev	Skewness		Kurtosis	
						Stats	Std Error	Stats	Std Error
Personality traits	400	109	169	154.35	13.147	-1.535	0.122	2.533	0.243
Openness	400	20	36	31.34	4.550	-0.997	0.122	-0.011	0.243
Conscientiousness	400	21	39	29.80	5.945	-0.431	0.122	-1.350	0.243
Extraversion	400	19	38	30.73	5.199	-0.010	0.122	-0.730	0.243
Agreeable	400	26	39	31.53	3.452	0.501	0.122	-0.897	0.243
Neurotic	400	22	37	31.00	4.850	-0.326	0.122	-1.254	0.243
Parenting style	400	69	100	86.93	7.421	-0.057	0.122	-0.716	0.243
Responsiveness	400	19	29	23.20	3.121	0.551	0.122	-1.296	0.243
Autonomy	400	15	28	21.95	2.438	0.245	0.122	1.117	0.243
Demandingness	400	16	25	21.21	2.336	0.224	0.122	-0.165	0.243
Exam anxiety	400	17	38	26.51	6.864	0.310	0.122	-1.388	0.243

According to George and Maller's (2010) definition of the term normality, the Skewness and Kurtosis should only be between the range of -2 and +2. and in consideration for this suggestion, the basic values of skewness and kurtosis which were represented in Table 2 above indicate that the data for all the variables are not normally distributed. As a result, the non-parametric tests were employed to determine, evaluate and to analyze the research questions of the study.

Spearman correlation was used to create an accurate establishment on the relationship that exists between personality traits and examination anxiety among students, also the relationship between the age groups and examination anxiety among students. The Kruskal test was used to effectively determine the effect of parenting styles on examination anxiety and the said significant differences in examination anxiety according to parenting styles among students. Mann Whitney U-test was used to assess and establish gender differences in examination anxiety among students. Also, the regression analysis was conducted to determine the predictors of examination anxiety and academic performance.

### Data Analysis Plan

Firstly, in line with the methods, an ethical approval was obtained from Ethics Committee of NEU to begin the study.	December, 2023
Printed questionnaires were distributed to Nigerian students using a convenient sampling system	December 2023
Review of the relevant literature and an analysis of related research as regards the subject of the study.	January, 2024
The information derived from the data collected were used for statistical analysis to determine the finding of the study, stating the results in the discussion,	

literature, great conclusions and relevant recommendations.	January, 2024
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## CHAPTER IV

### Findings and Discussion

This chapter presents the analysis of the data collected from the participants of the study, providing the main findings. The results are however presented in tables and table summaries.

**Table 3.** Spearman Correlation Coefficient Matrix between personality traits, parenting styles, age, CGPA, year of study and examination anxiety

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	1	2
1 Age	1												R
													P
2 CGPA	.08	1											R
	.11												P
3 Year of study	.73**	.03	1										R
	.00	.59											P
4 Openness	.02	.06	-.01	1									R
	.76	.26	.88										P
5 Conscientiousness	.24**	.02	.23**	.54**	1								R
	.00	.77	.00	.00									P
6 Extraversion	-.14**	.01	-.08	-.15**	-.25**	1							R
	.00	.83	.08	.00	.00								P
7 Agreeableness	-.16**	.05	-.03	.30**	.41**	-.13**	1						R
	.001	.312	.460	.000	.000	.008							P
8 Neuroticism	-.03	-.04	-.16**	.50**	.33**	-.40**	.15**	1					R
	.51	.38	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00						P
9 Responsiveness	-.19**	-.08**	-.23**	-.34**	-.30**	-.14**	.12**	-.00	1				R
	.00	.08	.00	.00	.00	.00	.01	.88					P
10 Demandingnes	-.38**	-.11**	-.34**	-.21**	-.27**	.05	.20**	.12**	.39**	1			R
	.00	.02	.00	.00	.00	.30	.00	.01	.00				P
11 Autonomy granting	-.09**	-.05	.03**	.06**	-.14**	-.00	-.10*	.05	.13	.27	1		R
	.00	.09	.00	.00	.00	.06	.00	.14	.21	.10	.00		P
12 Exam anxiety	-.18**	-.06	-.36**	-.25**	-.38**	-.22**	-.05	-.02	-.32**	.30**	.19**	1	R
	.00	.18	.00	.00	.00	.00	.31	.58	.00	.00	.00		P

In the spearman test results, as shown in table 3 above, examination anxiety was negatively correlated with openness to experience ( $R = -0.25$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), conscientiousness ( $R = -0.38$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and extraversion ( $R = -0.22$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Examination anxiety showed no correlation with agreeableness ( $R = -0.05$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) and neuroticism ( $R = -0.02$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ).

However, examination anxiety was negatively correlated with responsiveness ( $R = -0.32$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) while it showed a positive correlation with demandingness ( $R = -0.30$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and autonomy granting ( $R = 0.19$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

CGPA ie the Cumulative Grade Point Average on the other hand, showed no correlation with examination anxiety ( $R = -0.06, p > 0.05$ ). Neuroticism and the responsiveness dimensions of personality trait showed negative correlations with CGPA ( $R = -0.08, p > 0.05$ ) ( $R = -0.04, p > 0.05$ ). Demandingness dimension of parenting style showed a strong negative correlation with CGPA ( $R = -0.11, p < 0.05$ ),

Age actually showed a negative correlation with examination anxiety ( $R = -0.18, p < 0.05$ ). It also showed a significant negative relationship with extraversion ( $R = -0.14, p < 0.05$ ), agreeableness ( $R = -0.16, p < 0.05$ ), responsiveness ( $R = -0.19, p < 0.05$ ), CGPA showed no significant correlation with the year of study ( $R = 0.08, p > 0.05$ ). Year of study revealed a negative correlation with examination anxiety ( $R = -0.36, p < 0.05$ ). Year of study reported a strong positive correlation with age ( $R = 0.73, p < 0.05$ ).

Openness to experience dimension of personality trait showed strong positive correlation with conscientiousness ( $R = 0.54, p < 0.05$ ). Conscientiousness dimension of personality trait showed strong positive correlations with age ( $R = 0.24, p < 0.05$ ), year of study ( $R = 0.21, p < 0.05$ ) and openness to experience ( $R = 0.54, p < 0.05$ ). Extraversion dimension of personality trait showed strong negative correlations with age ( $R = -0.14, p < 0.05$ ), openness to experience ( $R = -0.15, p < 0.05$ ) and conscientiousness ( $R = -0.25, p < 0.05$ ). Agreeableness dimension of personality trait showed strong negative correlations with age ( $R = -0.16, p < 0.05$ ), extraversion ( $R = -0.13, p < 0.05$ ), and a positive relationship with openness to experience ( $R = 0.30, p < 0.05$ ) and conscientiousness ( $R = 0.41, p < 0.05$ ). Neuroticism dimension of personality trait showed strong negative correlation with year of study ( $R = -0.16, p < 0.05$ ), extraversion ( $R = -0.40, p < 0.05$ ) and a positive relationship with openness to experience ( $R = 0.50, p < 0.05$ ), conscientiousness ( $R = 0.33, p < 0.05$ ), and agreeableness ( $R = 0.15, p < 0.05$ ).

Demandingness dimension of parenting style showed a strong negative correlation with age ( $R = -0.38, p < 0.05$ ), CGPA ( $R = -0.11, p < 0.05$ ), year of study ( $R = -0.34, p < 0.05$ ), openness ( $R = -0.21, p < 0.05$ ), conscientiousness ( $R = -0.27, p < 0.05$ ) and a strong positive relationship with agreeableness ( $R = 0.20, p < 0.05$ ), neuroticism ( $R = 0.12, p < 0.05$ ), responsiveness ( $R = 0.39, p < 0.05$ ). Autonomy Granting dimension of parenting style showed a negative correlation with age ( $R = -$



0.09,  $p < 0.05$ ), conscientiousness ( $R = -0.14$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), agreeableness extraversion ( $R = -0.10$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), and a positive correlation with year of study extraversion ( $R = 0.03$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), openness to experience extraversion ( $R = 0.06$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

Responsiveness dimension of parenting style revealed a strong negative correlations with openness ( $R = -0.34$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), conscientiousness ( $R = -0.30$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), extraversion ( $R = -0.14$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and a positive relationship with agreeableness ( $R = 0.12$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Demandingness dimension of parenting style showed a strong negative correlation with openness ( $R = -0.21$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), conscientiousness ( $R = -0.27$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and a strong positive relationship with agreeableness ( $R = 0.20$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and neuroticism ( $R = 0.12$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Autonomy Granting dimension of parenting style showed a negative correlation with conscientiousness ( $R = -0.14$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), extraversion ( $R = -0.10$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), and a positive correlation with openness to experience extraversion ( $R = 0.06$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

**Table 4.** Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables predicting Examination Anxiety

Variables	Model 1 (R <sup>2</sup> =0.227)		Model 2 (R <sup>2</sup> =0.361)			Model 3 (R <sup>2</sup> =0.423)			Model 4 (R <sup>2</sup> =0.536)				
	B	SE	B	B	SE	B	B	SE	B	B	SE	B	
Openness	-0.297	0.088	-0.197*	0.036	0.090	0.024	-0.048	0.088	-0.031	0.021	0.084	0.014	
conscientiousness	-0.421	0.065	-0.365*	-0.335	0.065	-0.290*	-0.315	0.064	-	-0.301	0.058	-0.261*	
Extraversion	0.306	0.065	0.232*	0.313	0.062	0.237*	0.266	0.060	0.202*	-0.015	0.062	-0.012	
Agreeableness	0.296	0.097	0.149*	-0.074	0.103	-0.037	0.171	0.107	0.086	0.136	0.104	0.069	
Neuroticism	0.372	0.079	0.263*	0.218	0.077	0.154*	0.108	0.076	0.077	0.049	0.069	0.034	
Responsiveness				0.542	0.109	0.247*	0.403	0.106	0.183*	0.451	0.106	0.205*	
Demandingness				0.587	0.153	0.200*	0.471	0.152	0.160*	0.320	0.139	0.109*	
autonomy granting				-0.948	0.125	-0.337*	-0.762	0.123	-	-0.608	0.114	-0.216*	
Age							0.272	0.070	0.242*	0.071	0.071	0.063	
Gender							2.182	0.588	0.159*	4.176	0.580	0.305*	
Year of study							-3.087	0.545	-	-1.750	0.577	-0.201*	
CGPA											-0.753	0.442	-0.060
Access to course material											2.894	0.399	0.299*
Use of external learning materials											4.357	0.654	0.317*

Table 4 represents typically an analysis of variables that predict examination anxiety. The first model with personality traits measures accounts for 23% variance in examination anxiety. The five dimensions of personality traits measures; the openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism had a significant beta weight.

Model 2 presented the parenting styles dimensions. The model accounts for 36% variance in examination anxiety. Personality traits dimensions; conscientiousness, extraversion and neuroticism and parenting style dimensions; responsiveness, demandingness and autonomy granting had a significant beta weight.

Model 3 showed the demographic factors (age, gender, year of study). This model accounts for 42% variance in examination anxiety. Personality traits dimensions (conscientiousness and extraversion), parenting styles dimensions (responsiveness, demandingness and autonomy granting), and demographic factors such as the; age, gender, year of study had a significant beta weight.)

Model 4 exhibited CGPA, access to course materials, and use of external learning materials measures. The model accounts for 54% variance in examination anxiety. Conscientiousness personality trait, responsiveness, demandingness and autonomy granting dimensions of parenting styles, gender, year of study, access to course materials and use of external learning materials had a significant beta weight.

**Table 5.** Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables predicting Academic performance (CGPA)

Variables	Model 1 (R <sup>2</sup> =0.012)		Model 2 (R <sup>2</sup> =0.029)			Model 3 (R <sup>2</sup> =0.041)			Model 4 (R <sup>2</sup> =0.051)			
	B	SE	B	B	SE	B	B	SE	B	B	SE	B
Openness	0.013	0.008	0.109	0.006	0.009	0.048	0.006	0.009	0.050	0.009	0.010	0.072
conscientiousness	-0.003	0.006	-0.034	-0.010	0.006	-0.104	-0.011	0.007	-0.123	-0.014	0.007	-0.156*
Extraversion	-0.002	0.006	-0.017	-0.001	0.006	-0.014	-0.001	0.006	-0.005	-0.003	0.007	-0.032
Agreeableness	0.007	0.009	0.045	0.019	0.010	0.116	0.023	0.011	0.144*	0.021	0.012	0.132
Neuroticism	-0.011	0.007	-0.101	-0.005	0.008	-0.041	-0.006	0.008	-0.053	-0.006	0.008	-0.051
Responsiveness				-0.012	0.011	-0.067	-0.014	0.011	-0.078	-0.006	0.012	-0.031
Demandingness				-0.029	0.015	-0.122	-0.027	0.016	-0.114	-0.023	0.016	-0.099
autonomy granting				-0.003	0.012	-0.013	0.002	0.013	0.010	-0.004	0.014	-0.016
Age							0.016	0.007	0.173*	0.013	0.008	0.139
Gender							-0.025	0.061	-0.023	0.027	0.071	0.025
Year of study							-0.093	0.056	-0.133	-0.078	0.067	-0.111
Exam anxiety										-0.010	0.006	-0.124
Access to course materials										0.037	0.049	0.047
Use of external learning materials										0.116	0.079	0.105

Table 5 represents an analysis of variables that predict academic performance through CGPA. The first model with personality traits measures accounts for 1% variance in academic performance. The five dimensions of personality traits measures; openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism had no significant beta weight.

Model 2 presented the parenting styles dimensions. The model accounts for 3% variance in academic performance. Personality traits dimensions (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism) and parenting style dimensions (responsiveness, demandingness and autonomy granting) had no significant beta weight.

Model 3 showed demographic factors (age, gender, year of study). The model accounts for 4% variance in academic performance. agreeableness and age had a significant beta weight.

Model 4 exhibited exam anxiety, access to course materials, and use of external learning materials. The model accounts for a 5% variance in academic performance. Conscientiousness personality trait had a significant beta weight.

**Table 6.** Kruskal Wallis table presenting the differences in exam anxiety and CGPA based on parenting styles

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Access to course materials</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>X<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>P</b>
Exam anxiety	Responsiveness	162	160.71	36.554	2	0.000**
	Demandingness	165	217.19			
	autonomy granting	74	269.43			
CGPA	Responsiveness	162	198.68	0.064	2	0.739
	Demandingness	165	206.03			
	autonomy granting	74	194.27			

p ≤ .05\* p ≤ .01\*\*

The Kruskal Wallis test results shown in table 6 above showed that there are significant differences in exam anxiety based on parenting behaviors (p=0.000). However, the result showed no significant difference in CGPA (academic performance) according to parenting style (p>0.05).

**Table 7.** Kruskal Wallis table presenting the differences in exam anxiety based on exam anxiety and CGPA based on access to course materials

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Access to course materials</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>X<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>P</b>
Exam anxiety	Adequate	172	162.75	42.332	2	0.000**
	Average	168	215.16			
	Poor	60	267.67			
CGPA	Adequate	172	200.73	0.033	2	0.984
	Average	168	201.01			
	Poor	60	198.42			

$p \leq .05^*$   $p \leq .01^{**}$

The Kruskal Wallis test results shown in table 7 above reveals that there are significant differences in access to course materials on examination anxiety ( $p=0.000$ ). However, the result showed no significant difference in access to course materials on CGPA (academic performance) of the students ( $p>0.05$ ).

**Table 8.** Kruskal Wallis table presenting the differences in exam anxiety, personality traits and CGPA based on use of external learning materials

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Access to course materials</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>X<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>P</b>
Exam anxiety	Adequate	186	166.61	30.624	1	0.000**
	Average	214	229.96			
	Poor	0				
CGPA	Adequate	186	189.30	4.535	1	0.033*
	Average	214	210.23			
	Poor	0				

$p \leq .05^*$   $p \leq .01^{**}$

The Kruskal Wallis test results shown in table 8 above reveals that there is a significant difference in the use of external learning materials on examination anxiety ( $p=0.000$ ). The result also showed a significant difference in the use of external learning materials on CGPA (academic performance) of the students ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**Table 9.** Mann Whitney U-test table presenting the differences in exam anxiety and CGPA based on gender

Variables	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Mean Rank	U	P
Exam anxiety	Male	202	183.12	36989.50	16486.500	0.002*
	Female	198	218.23	43210.50		
CGPA	Male	202	205.57	41525.00	18974.000	0.296
	Female	198	195.33	38675.00		

$p \leq .05^*$   $p \leq .01^{**}$

The results of the Mann Whitney U-test in table 9 above shows that there are significant differences in examination anxiety. The female students scored higher in exam anxiety. The result also showed no significant difference in CGPA based on gender ( $p > 0.05$ ).

**Table 10.** Kruskal Wallis table presenting the differences in exam anxiety and CGPA based on Religion

Variables	Access to course materials	N	Mean Rank	X <sup>2</sup>	Df	P
Exam anxiety	Christian	231	152.72	108.428	3	0.000**
	Muslim	112	284.05			
	Traditional	12	169.71			
	Others	45	246.01			
CGPA	Christian	231	204.94	3.501	3	0.321
	Muslim	112	186.16			
	Traditional	12	207.50			
	Others	45	211.56			

$p \leq .05^*$   $p \leq .01^{**}$

The Kruskal Wallis test result shown in table 10 above reveals that there is a significant difference on examination anxiety based on religion ( $p = 0.000$ ). However, the result showed no significant difference on CGPA based on religion ( $p > 0.05$ ). The Muslim students scored higher than other religious groups on examination anxiety.

## CHAPTER V

### Discussion

The aim of the present study is to investigate parenting styles and personality traits as predictors of examination anxiety among university students. This chapter discussed the results according to the related literature.

The findings of this study reveal that examination anxiety was negatively correlated with the personality traits; openness to experience, conscientiousness and extraversion. These results are similar to the findings of Mombini and Kalantari (2022) which shows that there was a significant relationship between openness, conscientiousness, extraversion and examination anxiety. Studies have shown students who are high in openness to experience, conscientiousness and extraversion to be imaginative, creative, more adaptable, flexible and possess potential in reducing anxiety (Gramstad et al., 2020; Boulton and Macaulay, 2022). Extroverts unlike the introverts finds social aspects of examination less anxiety inducing while introverts are more likely to experience high level of examination anxiety (Costa and McCrae, 2012). Individuals with lower levels of openness to experience tend to report higher examination anxiety. Openness to experience is associated with traits such as curiosity and a willingness to embrace new challenges. Therefore, those who are more open to experience approach exams with a positive and exploratory mindset, potentially reducing anxiety (McCrae & Costa, 2007).

Meanwhile, the observed correlations between examination anxiety and parenting behaviors; responsiveness, demandingness, autonomy granting are consistent with the idea that parenting practices influence the development of examination anxiety in students (Darling and Steinberg, 2013). The negative correlation with responsiveness in parenting style suggests that students who perceive their parents as less responsive may experience higher levels of examination anxiety. Responsive parenting, depicted by emotional support, may contribute to a sense of security and a low anxiety levels in stressful situations. (Darling and Steinberg, 2022). The positive correlation with demandingness in parenting style suggests that the higher levels of parental demands may be associated with increased examination anxiety. Demanding parenting may create additional pressure and expectations, leading to elevated anxiety levels during exams (Grolnick and Ryan, 2009). The



positive correlation with autonomy granting in parenting style indicates that individuals who perceive their parents as autonomous and supportive may experience higher exam anxiety. Autonomy-supportive parents foster independence, potentially increasing the anxiety associated with exams (Deci and Ryan, 2010). The negative correlation with responsiveness in parenting style suggests that students who perceive their parents as less responsive may experience higher levels of examination anxiety. This is against the findings that responsiveness parenting is depicted by emotional support, may contribute to a sense of security and lower anxiety levels (Darling & Steinberg, 2013).

Hence, the correlation between personality traits dimensions and parenting styles shows that responsiveness dimension of parenting style revealed a strong negative correlations with openness, conscientiousness and extraversion and a positive relationship with agreeableness. This entails that students who see their parents as more responsive are less likely to be open to new experiences they are less inclined towards conscientiousness and may not be able to exhibit extroverted behaviors unlike other students who are associated with agreeableness, this indicates that the more responsive parents are, the more likely they are to agree and align with situations, in the former students experience more examination anxiety and this is against the findings of Darling and Steinberg (2013), that responsiveness parenting, characterized by emotional support, may contribute to a sense of security and lower anxiety levels. Neuroticism and responsiveness showed a negative correlation with examination anxiety, also demandingness showed a negative correlation with examination anxiety. This could be attributed to factors derived by quick reactions, self reflected anxiety ie worrying too much, anxiety with the home and academic environment due to a lot of demands from parents all leads to increased anxiety level. This is against the findings that students can easily identify themselves by quick reactions, owing sense of competence through self-reflected anxiety and confidence over time towards tackling the challenges of overly complex and demanding parents and helping them cope effectively with examination anxiety (Grolnick & Ryan, 2009).

However, CGPA showed no significant correlation with examination anxiety, this indicates that the academic achievement of students does not determine their

anxiety levels in examination. This finding does not align with the idea that with increased performance, individuals may develop better results and better outcomes in dealing with examination related stress (Roberts et al., 2006).

Therefore, openness to experience showed a strong positive correlation with conscientiousness. This aligns with previous research suggesting that individuals high in openness tend to be more conscientious and organized (McCrae and Costa, 2007; Poropat, 2009). Conscientiousness demonstrated strong positive correlations with openness to experience. Extraversion showed strong negative correlations with openness to experience, and conscientiousness. These findings align with established literature indicating that extroverts tend to be more sociable and less focused on organization and discipline (Costa and McCrae, 2012). The positive correlation between agreeableness, openness and conscientiousness aligns with the understanding that agreeable individuals tend to be cooperative, empathetic, and have positive interpersonal relationships (McCrae and Costa, 2007). Neuroticism shows strong negative correlations with extraversion. However, it has positive relationships with openness to experience, conscientiousness, and agreeableness. These findings align with the understanding that neurotic individuals may experience higher anxiety and emotional instability (Ormel et al., 2013).

The results highlighted significant predictors of exam anxiety as; conscientiousness, responsiveness, demandingness, year of study, access to course materials, and use of external learning materials. Conscientiousness is the only personality traits that predict examination anxiety, suggesting that individuals with higher levels of conscientiousness tend to have a low anxiety and therefore perform better academically. This is because conscientiousness is associated with traits like organization and diligence, which are likely to contribute to effective study habits and academic success (Poropat, 2009). Responsive parents foster a healthy emotional connection and support for their children and this helps to lower anxiety while parents who are too demanding create avenues for increased anxiety (Darling and Steinberg, 2013). The academic related measures initiated an impact on academic performance as regards to examination anxiety and this supports the idea that factors like access to course material and use of external learning material contribute students' psychological well-being and reduce examination anxiety (Deci & Ryan, 2010).

The results also show that only conscientiousness was the only significant predictor of academic performance. Other personality traits and parenting styles had limited explanatory power in predicting academic performance (CGPA). Hence, additional factors such as peer influence or socioeconomic status may play a part in academic achievement (Darling and Steinberg, 2013). Also the demographic age and the parenting behavior agreeableness are significant predictors of academic performance indicating that age has a slight influence on academic performance. This is because the impact of age may be related to maturity, while agreeableness could reflect a positive interpersonal orientation, contributing to better collaboration in academic settings (Roberts et al., 2006).

The results indicated significant differences in examination anxiety based on parenting styles while finding no significant difference in CGPA (academic performance) according to parenting style. The significant differences in exam anxiety suggest that the way individuals were parented, may play a crucial role in shaping their psychological responses to examination. (Deci and Ryan, 2010). The way individuals were raised contributes to their psychological wellbeing and coping mechanisms during stressful situations (Grolnick and Ryan, 2009). This also supports the findings of Malakar (2018) who found that the mean values for both anxiety sensitivity and examination anxiety were higher in the case of authoritarian and authoritative parenting style and the difference between male and female was not significant both for perception of stress and exam anxiety. The lack of significant difference in CGPA based on parenting style suggests that while parenting styles might impact emotional responses to examinations, they may not be the sole determinants of long-term academic success (Poropat, 2009).

The results presented significant differences in examination anxiety based on access to course materials, which suggests that students with more access to course materials ie lesson notes, scheme of work guidelines, previous assignments and exam questions about the course, etc, may experience less anxiety during examinations. The nature of this differences merits further explored to understand how the availability and quality of course materials contribute to examination anxiety. The findings of Fitzpatrick et al., (2020). However, no significant difference was observed in cumulative grade point average (CGPA) based on access to course materials. The lack

of a statistically significant difference in academic performance based on access to course materials suggests that material access may be influencing overall student achievement (Gramstad et al., 2020).

The findings indicated a significant difference in examination anxiety based on the use of external learning materials. This explains that students who utilize external learning materials such as; journals, websites, software, case studies, etc may increase or decrease levels of anxiety during examinations. The findings of (Wang et al., 2021) also compared differences significantly with the use of external learning materials, inducing different levels of anxiety; low or high. As regards CGPA, students who actively engage with external learning resources may exhibit differences in academic performance compared to those who rely solely on institutional materials (Gramstad et al., 2020).

The study showed a significant difference in examination anxiety based on gender, with female students scoring higher, suggests that there may be gender-related factors influencing the experience of exam anxiety. This is consistent with the study of Olanrewaju and Adeoye (2020). Gender differences in examination anxiety may be linked to distinct cognitive appraisal processes and coping mechanisms. For instance, research (Johnbosco and Sampson, 2021) suggested that females might engage in more ruminative thinking, potentially intensifying anxiety, while males may adopt problem-focused coping strategies, mitigating stress. The lack of a significant difference in CGPA based on gender suggests that, on average, academic performance does not differ significantly between male and female students in the studied population. The findings of the study that female students have shown more anxiety than male students contradicts with the result challenging any assumptions about gender-biased disparities in academic achievement, this means that both male and female students perform similarly academically or in their CGPA as the case may be (Johnbosco & Sampson, 2021).

The result also showed the significant differences observed in examination anxiety based on religion, as well as the significant difference in CGPA based on religion. Factors such as religious expectations, cultural norms, or specific educational challenges faced by students might contribute to heightened examination anxiety (Ormel et al., 2013). The lack of a significant difference in CGPA based on religion

suggests that, on average, academic performance does not differ significantly among different religious groups in the studied population. The result states what in as much as there are variations in examination anxiety and personality traits students from different religion achieve similar academic outcomes as measured by CGPA and are not necessarily dependent on the examination anxiety for a particular performance (Omel et al., 2013). However, this finding contradicts the result of the study that Muslims tend to experience higher examination anxiety.

## CHAPTER VI

### Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter presents conclusions based on the research findings according to the objective and sub objective(s) of the research and gives recommendations accordingly. This study provides an overview on the relationship between personality traits and parenting behaviors and how it predicts examination anxiety.

The nature of examination anxiety has been explored through the lenses of personality traits, parenting styles, demographic factors, and gender differences, offering a nuanced understanding of the interconnected influences on students' examination anxiety. Hence; The findings indicate that individuals with lower levels of openness to experience tend to develop more exam anxiety.

Openness is associated with traits such as curiosity and a willingness to embrace new challenges. Therefore, those who are more open may approach exams with a positive and exploratory mindset, potentially reducing anxiety. People who are associated with extraversion indicates extroverts and these group of people unlike introverts find social aspects of examination less anxiety-inducing while introverts are likely to experience high levels of examination anxiety.

Conscientiousness personality trait is the only significant predictor of academic achievement reducing the effect of examination anxiety, this clearly shows that students who have higher levels of contentiousness will experience low level of anxiety and perform better academically. Conscientious is associated with good characteristics such as the ability to organize and also the tendency to be diligent which positively influences students' habits to study and fosters academic success.

Demographic factors, including age, year of study, access to course materials, and external learning materials, have also emerged as influential variables. The negative correlation between age and examination anxiety suggests a developmental aspect, with older individuals exhibiting lower stress levels, possibly due to increased coping mechanisms and academic experience.

### **Recommendations According to Findings**

- It is essential to conduct cross-sectional analysis to track the development of personality traits and their influence on examination anxiety from a variety of populations at specifically a single point in a given time, understanding their prevalence, determinants and features. This approach can provide insights into how these traits evolve and impact examination anxiety responses throughout different stages of academic life in different Universities around the globe.
- Identifying that parenting styles can vary across cultures, the findings of this study were based on Nigerian cultural concepts. Therefore, it is important to undertake cross-cultural investigations to discern how cultural differences may influence the impact of parenting styles on examination anxiety. This would address the limitation of potential cultural bias in the current study.
- While the study considered demographic factors such as age, gender, CGPA, year of study, level of study, access to course materials, use of external learning materials and religion. It is necessary to comprehensively examine a broader range of demographic variables. This may include socioeconomic status, cultural background, and regional differences, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the influence of demographic factors on examination anxiety.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

- According to the result indicating the significant differences in examination anxiety suggesting that the way individuals were parented, may play a crucial role in shaping their psychological responses to examination. There should be a general recommendation and implementation of parental guidance programs aimed at educating parents about the the impact of parenting practices on examination anxiety. Provisions of resources and workshops that will help parents adopt supportive and balanced approaches that will foster resilience and emotional well-being in the students is highly recommended.
- The findings showing that students who employ external learning materials such as; journals, websites, software, case studies, etc may experience increased or decreased levels of anxiety during examination is essential in fostering a positive and inclusive learning environment involving provisions of educational activities and equipment within educational institutions. Encouraging open communication,

collaboration, and a sense of community among students, educators, and parents is also advised. This can contribute to a supportive atmosphere that helps alleviate examination anxiety among students.

- The results suggesting that students with more access to course materials ie lesson notes, scheme of work guidelines, previous assignments and exam questions about the course, etc, may experience less anxiety during examinations is essential in recommendation of equitable access to course materials and even use of external learning materials. Educational institutions should consider initiatives that provide students with the necessary tools and materials to enhance their learning experience. This includes promoting libraries, online resources and extracurricular activities that supplement traditional coursework.

As regards to the findings of the study revealing that students who are well experienced, contentiousness and extroverted are more imaginative, creative, more adaptable, flexible and possesses potential in reducing anxiety unlike the introverts who are more likely to experience high level of examination anxiety and also individuals with lower levels of openness to experience tending to report higher examination anxiety. Educational institutions should employ qualified counseling psychologists to schools who will be saddled with the responsibilities of helping students who are introverted, have low self-esteem and lower level of experience in resolving problems related to examination anxiety among others



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## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Permission Form from Near East University Ethics Committee



01.12.2023

Dear Chinwendu Enechi

Your application titled **“Parenting Styles and Personality Traits as Predictors of Examination Anxiety among Students”** with the application number NEU/SS/2023/1698 has been evaluated by the Scientific Research Ethics Committee and granted approval. You can start your research on the condition that you will abide by the information provided in your application form.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Aşkın KIRAZ'.

Prof. Dr. Aşkın KIRAZ

The Coordinator of the Scientific Research Ethics Committee

## Appendix B

### Permissions Regarding the use of Scales

The Westside Test Anxiety Scale is a brief, ten item instrument designed to identify students with anxiety impairments who could benefit from an anxiety-reduction intervention. The scale items cover self-assessed anxiety impairment and cognitions which can impair performance. Correlations between anxiety-reduction as measured by the scale and improvements in test performance were used as the validation criteria. Subjects were from two diverse samples: 25 anxious college students, many on academic probation, and 34 anxious fifth grade students. Each sample was divided into Intervention and Control groups, with the Intervention groups receiving an anxiety-reduction training. Anxiety scores and test scores were attained prior to the study and after Interventions. Anxiety reduction benefits as measured by the Westside scale correlated .49 and .40 with test gains for the college and fifth grade samples respectively. The average correlation was  $r = .44$ , indicating that changes in the Westside scale accounted for 20% of changes in these objective tests. The solid validation coefficient combined with the replication in two diverse student populations indicate that the Westside scale is a reliable and valid measure of test-anxiety impairment. As the scale is brief and easily administered, is public access and free of charge to schools, and is shown to be a reliable and valid measure, it is recommended that the Westside Test Anxiety Scale be considered by intervention programs to screen for test-anxiety impairments.

Link: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/206447972\\_Westside\\_Test\\_Anxiety\\_Scale\\_Validation](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/206447972_Westside_Test_Anxiety_Scale_Validation)

#### Description

The Parenting Style Inventory (PSI) is a short measure of the construct of 'parenting style', originally described by Baumrind (1966) in terms of authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles. Parenting style refers to the overall emotional climate in which parent-child interactions occur (Darling and Toyokawa, 1997), and the degree of warmth and control that parents use when interacting with their children, such as when responding to bad behaviour. Parenting style is widely acknowledged as being an important input into child development and later wellbeing (Thornton et al., 2016).

The PSI was originally developed by Darling and Steinberg in 1993 for the assessment of maternal parenting style, and was based on previous work by Lamborn et al., 1991 and Steinberg et al., 1992. It was then revised by Darling and Toyokawa as the PSI-II (1997) to improve the internal consistency and variability of the items. The PSI consists of 15 statement format items which assess three dimensions of maternal parenting style: Responsiveness, Demandingness and Autonomy-granting. These three sub-scales are most closely related to the concepts of warmth and control in parenting, which are the dimensions commonly used to categorise parenting styles as authoritarian, authoritative, neglectful or permissive (Thornton et al., 2016).

The PSI is completed by the child-respondent about their parent. It was originally developed for completion by adolescents, but it has been adapted for use with younger children (see Growing Up in Ireland, cited below, for example). The PSI is suitable for use across diverse populations and a relatively large age range. It has been used in many countries including the US, Chile, the Philippines, and Italy, however shorter versions are more appropriate for cross cultural work as the 'demandingness' scale is very sensitive to variance constraints. A Spanish version of the PSI is also available (see References below).

#### Theme

Parenting; Relationships and attachment; Socialization; Wellbeing

#### Subject

Parenting style, parental responsiveness, parental demandingness, child well-being

#### Permission to use

Free to use

#### Where do I get the Big Five Inventory (BFI)?

The Big Five Inventory (BFI) is a self-report inventory designed to measure the Big Five dimensions. It is quite brief for a multidimensional personality inventory (44 items total), and consists of short phrases with relatively accessible vocabulary. A copy of the BFI, with scoring instructions, is reprinted in the [chapter](#) as an appendix (the last 2 pages). It is also available through Oliver John's [lab website](#). No permission is needed to use the BFI for noncommercial research purposes (see below).

Link: <https://psdlab.uoregon.edu/measuring-the-big-five-personality-domains/>

## Appendix C

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## **Appendix D**

### **Data Collection Informed Consent**

#### **Participants Informed Consent Sheet**

Dear Participant,

This questionnaire is part of a research study that we are carrying out in order to understand if parenting styles and personality traits will predict examination anxiety among students. The data collected through this scale will be used to understand how students react to examination anxiety through their parenting styles and personalities. By filling in the following scale, you agree to participate in this study. Please note that your participation in the study is voluntary and whether you agree to participate or not will have no impact on your grades for the courses you are/were enrolled in. Your identity will not be revealed in any case to third parties. The data collected during the course of this study will be used for academic research purposes only and may be presented at national/international academic meetings and/or publications. You may quit participating in this study at any time by contacting us. If you opt out of the study, your data will be deleted from our database and will not be included in any further steps of the study. In case you have any questions or concerns, please contact us using the information below.

Chinwendu Enechi  
Psychology Department,  
Near East University  
E-mail: 20225544@std.neu.edu.tr

#### **Participants Informed Consent Form**

I have read and I understand the provided information and have the opportunity to ask questions. I understand I am free to withdraw without any penalty and without providing any reason and have the data collected to that time destroyed. I understand that the information provided by me will be treated anonymously so that it is impossible to trace this information back to me individually. The data obtained in this study will be used for research purposes only. In accordance with the data protection act. This information may be retained indefinitely, I voluntarily agree to take part, in this study.

If you opt out of the study, your data will be deleted from our database and will not be included in any further steps of the study. In case you have any questions or concerns, please contact us using the information below.

Chinwendu Enechi  
Psychology Department, Near East University  
E-mail: 20225544@std.neu.edu.tr

By signing below, you agree to take part in this study. Full Name:

Signature: .....

Date: .....

**Appendix E**  
**Data Collection Demographics**

1. What is your age? \_\_
2. What is your gender? Male \_\_ Female \_\_
3. What is your year of study? \_\_
4. What is your level of study? \_\_
5. What is your CGPA?
6. Rate your access to course materials? Adequate \_\_ Moderate \_\_ Poor
7. Rate your use of external learning materials? Adequate \_\_ Moderate \_\_ Poor
8. What is your religion? Christianity \_\_ Muslim \_\_ Traditionalist \_\_ Others \_\_

## Appendix F

### Data Collection Tools/Materials

#### WEST SIDE EXAMINATION ANXIETY SCALE

Rate how true each of the following is of you, from extremely or always true, to not at all or never true. Use the following 5 point scale. Tick your answer: 5=extremely always true 4= highly usually true 3= moderately sometimes true 2= slightly seldom true 1= not at all never true.

S/N	ITEMS	5	4	3	2	1
1	The closer I am to a major exam, the harder it is for me to concentrate on the material.					
2	When I study, I worry that I will not remember the material on the exam.					
3	During important exams, I think that I am doing awful or that I may fail.					
4	I lose focus on important exams, and I cannot remember material that I knew before the exam.					

#### BIG FIVE INVENTORY

Instruction: Please tick (√) where appropriate 1= Disagree strongly, 2= Disagree a little, 3= Neither agree nor disagree, 4= Agree a little, 5= Agree strongly.

N/o	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	I see myself as someone who is talkative					

2	I see myself as someone who tends to find fault with others					
3	I see myself as someone who does a thorough job					
4	I see myself as someone who is depressed, blue					

### PARENTING STYLE INVENTORY

Instruction: Please carefully read through these questions and tick ( ) the answers appropriately. 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

S/N	ITEMS	1	2	3	4	5
1	While I was growing up my mother felt that in a well-run home the children should have their way in the family as often as the parents do.					
2	Even if her children didn't agree with her, my mother felt that it was for our own good if we were forced to conform to what she thought was right.					
3	Whenever my mother told me to do something as I was growing up, she expected me to do it immediately without asking any questions.					
4	As I was growing up, once family policy had been established, my mother discussed the reasoning behind the policy with the children in the family.					

## **Appendix G**

### **Curriculum Vitae**

My name is Chinwendu Enechi. A positively dedicated and talented individual with extensive knowledge of psychology and a high level of confidence in undertaking complex tasks and producing good results, seeking to work in organizations to utilize the professional skills developed. I have a methodical, behavioral-focused approach to work and a strong drive to see things to conclusion. Demonstrated good leadership, communication, writing, artistic, vocal, psychological and collaboration skills.

I was born in Ogidi, Anambra State Nigeria. I attended Federal Government College, Nise between (WAEC and Neco; 2010-2013), Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (Bsc Psychology; 2016-2021) and Near East University (MSc General Psychology; 2022-2024).I have worked with Innovators for Public Good (Health officer; 2018-2019), Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (Chairperson ISEC National Association of Psychology Students; 2019-2020), General Hospital Agbani (Anti Retroviral Therapy/drugs Personnel; 2021-2022) and Kurutemizleme/Dry White (Head of Laundry and Hygiene Management; 2022-2024).

I speak Turkish (beginner), English (fluent), and French (basic). I have technical skills in Microsoft Word Office, Excel, feasibility study analysis and graphic designing. I have shown business skills in online marketing, intelligence and strategic planning. My interests are focused on research, consulting, financial services, psychology, visual arts, music, writing, community events mental health awareness, theatre and entrepreneurship. I have been involved in some voluntary activities such as; a school worker at Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (tutorials for level one students) and mental health awareness officer at General Hospital Agbani, Enugu State Nigeria.