E-Cheating Awareness and Attitudes of Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations' (Ssce) Candidates in Ondo State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: *The study examined the E-cheating awareness and attitudes of senior secondary certificate examination's (SSCE) candidates in Ondo state with the view of proffering solution to reported cases of examination malpractices in the study locate. The sample for the study comprised three hundred and ten (310) candidates selected from five coaching centres through purposive sampling techniques. Two research questions guided the study using two instruments named: Students' E-cheating Awareness Questionnaire (SEAQ) and Students' Attitude to E-cheating Scale (SAES). The instruments were given experts' validation. The results were analyzed using frequency count and mean statistics. The result showed (mean=2.54) indicating that the SSCE candidates were aware that questions and answers were online prior to the day of their examinations and some students have access to SSCE questions and their answers through various websites. Further, the result indicated that larger proportion of the candidates (mean=3.52) had positive attitude to E-cheating with the opinion that cheating in examination was good and helped students to pass. The study found that the respondents were of the notion that since Nigerian leaders were corrupt, nothing is wrong in electronic cheating. It was therefore recommended that integrity clubs should be established in schools to develop in students' examination ethics and help them to acquire the values of handwork that will checkmate their involvement in examination malpractices.*

KEY WORDS: e-cheating, awareness, attitude, examination malpractice

INTRODUCTION

Though examination malpractice is a global phenomenon, the rate at which it is perpetrated in Nigeria is alarming. Reported cases of examination malpractice in Nigeria are on the increase. According to Omemu (2015) despite all the attempts made to stop examination malpractice, the menace is still in the increase in Nigeria**.** Omeri (2012) reported that in 2012, Nigeria was said to occupy number one position in the world examination malpractice index. This unwholesome practice is giving Nigeria a bad image at international level.

One of the major factors responsible for the increase in cases of examination malpractice is the invention of Information Communication Technology (ICT). In recent times, the analogue methods of cheating like smuggling out of paper and smuggling in of answer sheet, leakages,

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impersonation and swapping of script have given way to sophisticated hi-tech cheating method. Sunday (2014) argued that prior to the invention of ICT, cases of examination misconduct were limited to individual instances and to a few known frauds but with the advancement of ICT, students are devising more and more sophisticated means to beat "water tight" security and invigilation during examination.

ICT has taken examination malpractice to a new dimension. It is not unusual to find students with different types of cell phones few hours to the commencement of their examinations. While expressing his concern over the cases of electronic cheating, Victor Brew, head of legal section, West Africa Examination Council, lamented that thought WAEC law anticipated electronic fraud but the scale of its occurrence presently is beyond expectation (Business Ghana, 2019). This study therefore assessed the e-cheating awareness and attitude of Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) candidates in Ondo State. The study examined the extent to which SSCE candidates were aware of social media platform where they could download SSCE questions and answers before and during the examination. The study also examined the attitude of SSCE candidates in Ondo State to e-cheating during Senior Secondary Certificate Examination. Electronic cheating is a relatively new form of cheating in this 21st century. Electronic cheating otherwise known as "e-cheating", digital cheating or internet malpractice has been viewed from different perspectives by various scholars.

E-Cheating, according to Omonijo and Fadugba (2011) is the habit of students engaging Information Communication Technology(ICT) devices to indulge in examination misconduct. ICT devices include the internet, wireless networks, cell planners and other communication mediums. Using any of these medium to obtain information before or during examination is against the ethics of examination.

Adeoye (2010) viewed electronic cheating as the use of ICT to gain an undue advantage in an examination. ICT increases the capacity of cheats to receive answers to question in the examination. This invariably gives room for candidates to obtain score which they are not qualified for. It distorts proper processes of examination, presenting untrue ability of students' knowledge of a particular subject or educational programme

Prior to the invention of ICT, the menace of examination misconduct was a big problem to the nation's education (Ijaya 2006, Olatunbosun, 2009). While still battling with the seemingly insurmountable problem of examination malpractice, the emergence of hi-tech heightened the menace entrenching it in all public examinations in Nigeria. Nweke (2019) described mobile devices as other vital instruments of carrying out examination fraud. The proliferation of mobile phones and other private digital assistant (PDAS) are driving factors for e-cheating. Uwadiae and Oluchi (2014) opined that the various functions of cell phones have made them ready tools for perpetrating malpractice at WASSCE like other examinations. Some of the candidates now use their devices to bring in answers into the examination hall. Many times, students have been caught browsing for information on the internet in examination hall.

Badau and Sakiyo (2011) pointed out that electronic devices have increased the capacity of cheat to obtain help for information in the examination room. In some cases, candidates can even purchase question in advance or have the answers delivered electronically in the examination room. Modern technology has made examination fraud easier to commit. Sunday (2014) argued that with the advancement in information and communication technology, students are devising more and more sophisticated means to beats water-tight security and invigilation during examination.

Folarin (2018) wrote that while some Youths sweat and rack their brains for answers to questions at the WASSCE, other have perfected the art of getting cheap grades through some websites where they access questions before the start of examinations. Folson and Awuah (2014) while explaining how e-cheating takes place said that the whole leaking syndrome starts a couple of weeks before the day of examination. This is usually commenced by advertisements on facebook, twitter and other social media to attract customers mostly heads of schools and proprietors. The leaking cartel is of two types, first-sourced and second-sourced. First sourced cartels allege WAEC officers as their main source of leaked questions, while they send them to second sourced cartels. It is even believed that second-sourced cartels in turn forward them to other interested cartels usually with solution to the leaked question. Anyone who is interested in obtaining the leaked question is expected to pay subscription fee. Payment of subscription fee is done by mobile money transfer and login details are sent to the phone number that transferred the money to them. Between one hour and four hour to the start of each paper, depending on one's source of the leaked question, scanned copies of the examination question paper is posted on a secretly created page on a social media. This has become a booming business and people are making huge sums of money out of it.

In an investigation to discover cases of examination malpractice, a Punch correspondent pretended to be candidate sitting for the WASSCE. He subscribed for answers to commerce (Objective and Theory) from five of the result-peddling websites-naijaclass.com, examcrown.com, examsort.com, waecexpo.com and gurusloge.com. While naijaclass, exam crown, exam sort and Waecexpo demanded ₦400 MTN recharge cards to send a link to the answers of the exam and ₦800 for direct answers to phone, gurulodge demanded ₦800 to send the answers directly to candidates' phones. Having subscribed to the websites, the operators sent links to the answer websites through text messages. While trying to verify the answers to the theory questions at the end of the exam, punch correspondent learnt that WASSCE candidates submitted the question papers with their answer sheets. Punch correspondent however, contacted two candidates who wrote the exam to ascertain the questions asked by the examiners. He compared the questions with him to the one the students said they were asked. A look at the answers provided by the websites showed they had the questions correctly (Folarin, 2018).

The following are the ways through which students carry out e-cheating:

- Storage of coded information in electronic devices which are brought into the examination hall.
- Downloading leaked question papers and answers from websites.

- Exchange of answer among candidates through mobile phones.
- Taking into examination hall cell phones and ipads that contain needed information.
- Using cell phones to take pictures of notes and other examination materials.
- Taking a photo of question papers and sending same to someone outside the examination hall with the answers sent back as images or text messages.
- Using mobile phone to browse for solutions in examination hall or outside the examination hall, with answers sent back as images or text messages.
- Use of programmable calculators to store notes, information and formula for use during examinations.
- Use of cell phones calculators in examination where calculators are not allowed.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design
This research is basically exploratory and descriptive. A survey design was therefore adopted. The study investigated the e-cheating knowledge and attitude of Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) candidates in Ondo State.

Research Questions
The following research question were raised and answered in the study:

Research Question 1: Will SSCE candidates demonstrate high level of e-cheating awareness during Senior Secondary Certificate Examination?

Research Question 2: Will SSCE candidates demonstrate positive attitude to e-cheating during SSCE?

Population for the Study
The population for this study is made up of candidates that had written SSCE in Ondo State.

Sample for the Study
The sample for this study is made up of candidates that had written Senior Secondary Certificate Examination. Candidates that were used for the study were gotten from Jamb coaching centres in Akure and Ondo cities in Ondo State.

Eight (8) Jamb coaching centres in Akure and Ondo cities were purposefully selected for the study. The conditions for the purposive selection were: (i) Willingness of the Jamb coaching administrator to allow the candidates to participate in the study. (ii) Availability of candidates that had written Senior Secondary Certificate examination in the coaching centre.
In all, 310 candidates participated in the study. 185 candidates were from coaching centres in

Akure city and 125 from coaching centres in Ondo city. The breakdown of number of candidates from each coaching centre is given below:

3.3.1. Coaching centres in Akure City

S/No	Name of Coaching Centre	No of Candidates
1	Global Varsity	26
2	Education Centre	33
3	Varsity Gate	69
4	All Mark	57
Total		185

3.3.2. Coaching centres in Ondo City

S/No	Name of Coaching Centre	No of Candidates
1	Christ the Lord	10
2	Raynabel	15
3	Oxford	19
4	Best Brain	81
Total		125

Research Instruments

Two instruments were designed and used for the study. The instruments are:

(i) **Students' E-Cheating Awareness Questionnaire (SEAQ).** This is a 10-item instrument designed to measure the e-cheating knowledge of SSCE candidates. The instrument has two sections: Section A elicits personal information such as sex, age, religion, year of SSCE and town of SSCE. Section B has 10 questions that were aimed at measuring the e-cheating knowledge of SSCE candidates.

(ii) **Students' Attitude to E-Cheating Questionnaire (SAECQ).** This is a 15-item lica scale designed to determine the e-cheating attitude of SSCE candidates. The scale is made up of two sections: Section A elicits personal information such as sex, age, religion, year of SSCE and town of SSCE. Section B has 15 scale questions that were aimed at measuring the e-cheating attitude of SSCE candidates

Validation of Instruments

The research instruments were given expert validation. Two experts in Information Communication Technology (ICT) and assessment procedure from Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo were involved in the validation of the instruments. Initial drafts of the instruments were made by the researcher and given to the experts for necessary corrections. The experts made valuable input and corrections which were effected in the final drafts.

Research Procedure

The researcher contacted the Jamb Coaching Centres to seek permission for their candidates to be involved in the study. She explained the purpose of the research to the Coaching Coordinators. After approval had been granted, the researcher and her research assistant explained the purpose of the study to the candidates. In some centres, the Coaching Coordinators assisted in the

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administration of the instruments. Candidates were thereafter given the instruments. The researcher and the research assistant waited for the candidates to complete the instruments and collected them immediately. Where it was not possible for the candidates to complete the instruments immediately, the researcher went back to collect them from the Coaching Coordinators.

Method of Data Analysis
Descriptive analysis was used to analyze data obtained from the study

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Mean Scores and Standard Deviation were used to provide answers to the research questions that were raised for the study.

Research Questions
Results of the study are presented on the basis of the research questions that were generated for the study.

Research Question 1: Will SSCE candidates score high in e-cheating knowledge test?

Table 1: Summary of the descriptive analysis of e-cheating knowledge of SSCE candidates in Ondo State

S/N	ITEM	Yes %	No %	Mean	Std. Dev	R
1	Are you aware that SSCE questions were online during your SSCE Examination?	188 64.8	102 35.2	2.65	0.48	A
2	Did you have friends or school mate that downloaded SSCE questions before the examination?	120 41.4	170 58.6	2.41	0.49	D
3	Did you have friends or mates that had access to SSCE questions before the examination?	134 46.2	156 53.8	2.46	0.50	D
4	Were you aware that e-cheating is common among SSCE examination?	165 56.9	125 43.1	2.57	0.50	A
5	Are you aware that there are websites/links to access SSCE questions?	177 61.0	113 39.0	2.61	0.49	A
6	Apart from online, are you aware of other means by which students have access to examination before the examination?	115 39.7	175 60.3	2.40	0.49	D
7	Are you aware that students are not allowed to enter examination hall with smart phone?	182 62.8	108 37.2	2.63	0.48	A
8	Are you aware that some students took into the examination hall smart phone?	175 60.3	115 39.7	2.60	0.49	A

Sources: Field Report 2020
Table 1 shows the summary of the descriptive analysis of e-cheating knowledge of SSCE candidates in Ondo State. Highest percentage of the respondents agreed that they were aware that SSCE questions were online during their SSCE examination (Item 1 showed a mean of 2.65 with the std dev of 0.48 which is above the decision point of mean value of 2.50). Also, highest

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percentage of the respondents agreed that they were aware that e-cheating is common among SSCE candidates (Item 4 showed a mean of 2.57 with the std dev of 0.50 which is above the decision point of mean value of 2.50). Moreover, highest percentage of the respondents agreed that they were aware that there were websites/links to access SSCE questions. (Item 5 showed a mean of 2.61 with the std dev of 0.49 which is above the decision point of mean value of 2.50).

The findings further reveal that highest percentage of the respondents agreed that they were aware that candidates were not allowed to enter examination hall with smart phone. (Item 7 showed a mean of 2.63 with the std dev of 0.48 which is above the decision point of mean value of 2.50). However, highest percentage of the respondents agreed that they were aware that some students took into the examination hall smart phone (Item 10 showed a mean of 2.60 with the std dev of 0.49 which is above the decision point of mean value of 2.50).

Research Question 2: Will SSCE candidates demonstrate positive attitude to e-cheating during SSCE?

Table 2: Summary of descriptive analysis of e-cheating attitude of SSCE candidates in Ondo State

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev	A %	D %
1	Cheating during examination is good because it helps students to pass	35	46	84	125	1.97	1.04	30	70
2	Since Nigerian leaders are corrupt, there is nothing wrong in electronic cheat during examination	43	51	118	78	2.20	1.00	32	68
3	All the results of those who cheat in SSCE should not be released	72	120	58	40	2.77	0.98	66	34
4	I preferred to fail than to cheat in SSCE examination	72	90	57	71	2.56	1.11	55.6	44.4
5	I did not participate in cheating but I don't have anything against those who cheated in SSCE	56	101	68	65	2.51	1.04		45.8
6	Candidates should be allowed to take their smart phone into examination center	28	57	104	101	2.04	0.97	29	71
7	E-cheating is not disobedience to examination rules	39	57	139	55	2.28	0.92	33	67
8	All electronic access to SSCE questions should be blocked	62	60	100	68	2.40	1.07	42	58
9	Those who are involved in e-cheating are good citizens	33	27	96	134	1.86	1.00	20.6	79.4
10	Website/link to SSCE questions should be released to all candidates	32	44	104	110	1.99	0.99	26	74
11	One of the advantages of ICT is that it helps students to undertake electronic cheating	80	72	78	60	2.59	1.14	57.6	42.4
12	No candidate should be punished for e-cheating	68	60	68	94	2.35	1.16	44	56
13	e-cheating during SSCE is a corrupt practice	95	80	52	63	2.71	1.14	60	40
14	e-cheating during SSCE should not be allowed at all	80	94	55	61	2.67	1.10	60	40
15	A student that is well prepared for SSCE does not need to look for leaked examination question.	63	111	56	60	2.61	1.04	60	40

Sources: Field Report 2020

Table 2 shows the Summary of descriptive analysis of e-cheating attitude of SSCE candidates in Ondo State. The results show that highest percentage of the respondents disagreed that cheating

during examination is good because it helps students to pass (Item 1 showed a mean of 1.97 with the std dev of 1.04 which is below the decision point of mean value of 2.50). Also, highest percentage of the respondents disagreed that those who are involved in e-cheating are good citizens (Item 9 showed a mean of 1.86 with the std dev of 1.00 which is below the decision point of mean value of 2.50). Furthermore, highest percentage of the respondents agreed that e-cheating during SSCE is a corrupt practice (Item 13 showed a mean of 2.71 with the std dev of 1.14 which is above the decision point of mean value of 2.50). These findings show that SSCE candidates in Ondo state demonstrate negative attitude to e-cheating in SSCE.

However, percentage analysis of data shows that 30% of the candidates responded that cheating during examination is good because it helps students to pass; 32% responded that since Nigerian leaders are corrupt, there is nothing wrong in electronic cheat during examination; 34% responded that all the results of those who cheat in SSCE should be released; 44.4% responded that they preferred to cheat in SSCE examination than to fail; 54.2% responded that though they did not participate in cheating but did not have anything against those who cheated in SSCE; 33% responded that E-cheating is not disobedience to examination rules; 42% responded that electronic access to SSCE questions should not be blocked; 57.6% responded that one of the advantages of ICT is that it helps students to undertake electronic cheating; 44% responded that no candidate should be punished for e-cheating; 40% responded that e-cheating during SSCE is a corrupt practice; 40% responded that e-cheating during SSCE should be allowed.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

E-Cheating Awareness of SSCE Candidates in Ondo State

One of the main concerns of this study is to assess the extent to which SSCE candidates are aware of e-cheating during SSCE in Ondo State. Table 2 of descriptive analysis on the e-cheating awareness of SSCE candidates in Ondo State shows that highest percentage of the respondents revealed that they were aware that SSCE questions were online during their SSCE examination. Item I on Table 2 shows a mean of 2.65 with std dev. of 0.48 which is above the decision point of mean value of 2.50. This implies that the highest percentage of the respondents agreed that they were aware that SSCE questions were online during their SSCE examination. This finding is in agreement with Oyeyemi, Akinola, Mafikuyomi, and Yakubu (2019). They investigated sociological perceptions of E-Cheating online Runs sites and students study habit. They discovered that there are e-cheating online Run sites that always have all examination questions and answers a day or two before the day of SSCE in Nigeria. They further point out that knowledge of online runs e-cheating sites could result in students engagement in cheating during examinations...

E-Cheating Attitude of SSCE Candidates in Ondo State

One of the main concerns of this study is to assess the attitude of SSCE candidates to e-cheating in Ondo State. Table 2 shows the Summary of the descriptive analysis on the e-cheating attitude of candidates in SSCE in Ondo State. These findings show that SSCE candidates in Ondo state demonstrate negative attitude to e-cheating in SSCE.

 Although the descriptive analysis shows that the candidates demonstrated negative attitude to e-cheating during SSCE, but further analysis on percentage reveals that a large proportion of the candidates had positive attitude to e-cheating during SSCE. The results reveal that 30% of the candidates responded that cheating during examination is good because it helped students to pass; 32% responded that since Nigerian leaders were corrupt, there was nothing wrong in electronic cheat during examination; 34% responded that all the results of those who cheated in SSCE should be released; 44.4% responded that they preferred cheating durin SSCE examination than to fail; 54.2% responded that though they did not participate in e-cheating but they did not have anything against those who cheated in SSCE; 33% responded that e-cheating was not disobedience to examination rules; 42% responded that electronic access to SSCE questions should not be blocked; 57.6% responded that one of the advantages of ICT is that it helped students to undertake electronic cheating; 44% responded that no candidate should be punished for e-cheating; 40% responded that e-cheating during SSCE is not a corrupt practice; 40% responded that e-cheating during SSCE should be allowed. These results are in agreement with the conclusion of Oko, Nguwasen and Ajaegbo (2017) that some students do not value hardwork and merit. They belief that one can apply any means to pass examination. Some youths belief that they cannot succeed without malpractice. They have seen malpractice as the right means to achieve academic success (Eneh and Eneh, 2914; Okey and Ewa, 2019).

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the e-cheating awarness, attitude and practice of SSCE candidates in Ondo State. The study aimed at assessing the extent to which SSCE candidates are aware of e-cheating during SSCE; their attitude and involvement in e-cheating during SSCE. The literature review showed that many of the SSCE candidates were aware that SSCE questions and answers were online prior to the day of their examinations. It also revealed some of the websites where SSCE candidates subscribed in order to have access to SSCE questions and answers.

This study revealed that SSCE candidates were aware that SSCE questions and answers were on-line during the period they wrote their SSCE. This study also showed that although SSCE candidates demonstrated negative attitude to e-cheating during SSCE, but further analysis on percentage revealed that a large proportion of the candidates had positive attitude to e-cheating during SSCE. For instance a large number of the candidates responded that cheating during examination was good because it helped students to pass; since Nigerian leaders were corrupt, there was nothing wrong in electronic cheating during examination; they preferred cheating during SSCE examination to failure; e-cheating was not disobedience to examination rules

Recommendations
Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are given so as to curb examination malpractice in Nigeria educational system.
1. Establishment of Integrity Club in schools. Informal clubs like Students' Integrity Club (SIC) and Pupils' Integrity Club (PIC) should be formed in Nigerian secondary and primary schools respectively. The club should be controlled by students and pupils but supervised by the school.

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Students and pupils should be guided to organize the club and develop activities that will promote acquisition of skills and values of hardwork, obedience, justice, fairness, respect and honesty.

2.. Public enlightenment programme. There is the need to embark on grass-root and massive public enlightenment programme on the ills of examination malpractice. Diverse and innovative approaches and channels should be adopted to educate the citizens on the dangers of examination malpractice. Village heads, family heads, traditional rulers, community leaders, religious leaders, electronic and mass media should be used to educate the citizens.

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