

Sociological Perceptions of E-Cheating Online Runs Sites and Students Study Habit: Focus on Public Examination Quality in Nigeria

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Abstract

Several studies have emerged on examination misconduct in Nigeria, but e-cheating Online Runs Sites examination malpractice among secondary school students, is a new form of examination fraud yet to be given adequate attention in the literature. These e-cheating Online Runs Sites always have all exam papers solutions too, probably a day or two before the day of public secondary schools examinations in Nigeria. This study is provoked to address this problem in the context of its effects on students study habits, quality of secondary school examinations and gender difference. Using four selected secondary schools in Ojo Local Government Area of Lagos, Nigeria, a sample of 200 students were drawn from the population. A self-developed instrument was developed bothering on the two hypotheses for the study. The instrument was validated through face and construct validity while the Cronbach alpha reliability method was used to obtain a reliability correlation co-efficient of 0.72. Findings from data revealed that hypothesis one has significant value of 0.034 and r level 0.943, the null hypothesis was rejected and alternative indicating is a significant relationship between e-cheating online runs sites and secondary school students study habits was retained. However, hypothesis two with male gender (N=108) and female gender (N=92) revealed a significant difference between gender difference and e-cheating online runs sites. The study finally recommends that the sustenance of qualitative public examination and good study culture in Nigeria calls for urgent attention to incidences of e-cheating online runs site which is becoming a complex digital issue. It is important that the stakeholders of the Nigeria education system such as teachers, parents, governments and policy makers monitor and provide policies that would help the mitigation of the negative uses of ICT among students in Nigeria.

Key Words - Sociological Perceptions, e-cheating Online Runs Sites, Students Study Habit, Gender difference, Examination Malpractices.

I. INTRODUCTION

Every notable invention, inspite of its usefulness, has obvious challenges it portends to diverse areas of human endeavours. Global revolution in Information Communication Technology (ICT) is not an exception. Despite the fact that it has brought about modern communication hardware, internet service and more effective and efficient computer systems for processing information for the betterment of human race (Ramjit & Singh, 2004), ICT associated with internet service has equally resulted in a new wave of cheating in all area of human endeavours. Ill-minded individuals engage in various vices (cyber scam, e-cheating, hijacked e-mails, fake websites, high-tech and computer fraud) through the aid of the internet online business transactions (Chawki, 2009) as cited by (Igwe, 2011). In the country's tertiary institutions, ICT has resulted in high level of examination misconduct, tagged "e-cheating" among students "E-cheating" according to omonijo (2011) is the habit of students engaging ICT devices to indulge in examination misconduct. The menace has now provided a smart way for notorious students to beat the effort of civil society group and well-meaning Nigerians in curtailing examination fraud (Omonijo, 2011)

A complex extension of e-cheating is the evolution of online runs site. These sites always have all examination papers, probably a day or two before the exams, and they have the solutions too. Students typically have access to the solutions a few minutes to the commencement of the examination. The websites as investigated by Punch Newspaper 2018 obtain questions before the start of exams, solve it and sell the answers to senior secondary school students sitting for West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examination Council (NECO) exams. Punch investigation reveals that one of the websites sells answers to Theory and Objective questions for 400 naira, while another sell same for 800 naira. After payment, candidates, who subscribe to the result peddling websites, get the answers to the questions they

request delivered to their phones. These are the five websites that have allegedly been exposed in the exam malpractice scandal.

A. *www.examcrown.com*

This website makes it clear that its administrators are into exam malpractice (runs) business. The information on the websites encourage students who want to do 'runs' to pay a day before their exam and also urges them to invite their friends for better results. The site also boasts that its "RUNS (online examination malpractices) genuine. Examcrown published the answers of some papers on its site days before the exam is written. For instance, Government paper objective and essay are slated to be written on Monday, April 23, 2018, but the answers to the questions were published on the site on Saturday, April 21, 2018.

B. *www.Examsort.com*

This website prides itself as the number one exam runs platform as it sells answers to exam questions in exchange for recharge cards.

C. *www.guruslodge.com*

According to Punch, Guruslodge demands N800 from candidates to send the answers directly to candidates' phones, while others demand N400 MTN recharge cards to send a link to the answers.

D. *www.waecexpo.com*

Waecexpo.com too has been taken down probably because of the allegations against them. Pulse visited the site to get information about how the site peddles exam questions and answers but the site seems to have been taken down as the site links about 'exam expo' leads to a page about money and business.

E. *www.naijaiclass.com*

Naija class describes itself as a Student Comprehensive Online Portal. A visit to the site reveals that the site is temporarily shut down due to system upgrade. In most developing countries like Nigeria, corruption has become a growing phenomenon of grave concern. It is widespread and part of everyday life (Khan, 2006). The education sector is not immune from corrupt practices. Corruption poses a great challenge to curbing both traditional and hi-tech examination malpractices. Students, teachers, officials of Government and examination bodies, and parents are all involved in the web of corruption called online runs site. The students who failed to prepare for examinations and want to have good grades at all cost are the major culprits. Interestingly, some parents provide their children with money to bribe examination officials or patronise online runs site where examination rules and regulations are compromised.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital examination malpractice through e-cheating online run sites has firm grip upon Nigerian educational system because of the various agents that enjoy their patronage (Onuka & Durowoju, 2013). Nwaorgu (2012) states that the graveyard tranquility which characterized exam halls in the good old days has suddenly disappeared, having collected bribes, officials look the other way when students go into examination halls with ICT devices to facilitate e-cheating through online runs sites. Some ladies insert their phones or PDAs (Personal Digital Assistant) in sensitive and private parts of their bodies. It may be difficult and embarrassing especially for a male supervisor to apprehend such ladies, without being accused of and prosecuted for sexual harassment. These patronages of these sites is not limited to the students, they also include all educational stakeholders and those in governance. These sites basically insult Nigeria secondary school examinations. Tella and Akande (2007) argued that students nowadays are more materialistic and create little or no time to go through books, newspapers and magazines. Students' wrong priority is to earn money, at the detriment of knowledge acquisition. Imagine, will they not laugh at the teachers that try to make them study hard when a budget of 4000 naira will get them through ten subjects. These have contributed to learning difficulty together with its attendant negative impacts on the minds of secondary school students (Yusuf, 2007). These negative habits have resulted in slow and gradual decline in students positive learning habits (Olajide, 2008).

Examination as observed by Ifijeh (2015) is an important tool for objective assessment and evaluation of what individuals have achieved after a period of training especially with regards to the formal education system. With e-cheating or e-exam malpractices, definitely, the goals of the educational system would be truncated and the efforts of all stakeholders towards development would be lost in the long run, thus resulting in underdevelopment or at best a development that is not sustainable. In addition, according to Ifijeh (2015), the proper conduct of examination is a critical factor in the realization of educational objectives in any society, and failure to properly conduct examinations portends doom for the future of the citizenry of the nation, because when examinations are not properly conducted, the educational objectives may not be achieved. Online runs sites have created an urgency situation in which students getting 8 distinctions now and scored 300 in UTME yet having no substance in their heads. These ones will gain admissions into university, blocking the chances of the good students who legitimately got their 5 credits and 220 scores in

UTME. This will likely have enormous effect of the quality of Nigerian secondary school examination; this will be reflected in the quality of graduates turn-out from Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Even the annual report of West Africa Examination Council (2009) attested to the fact that teachers, invigilators, supervisors and even proprietors of schools are major participants of examination malpractices. According to the report, in Nigeria, 47.08% of the 100,428 candidates that were involved in various forms of examination malpractice in the May/June 2008 WASSCE were involved in collusion. The 2018 WAEC just released revealed that a total of 786,016 candidates of the 1,572,396 that wrote the examination had five credits and above including English language and Mathematics, indicating a 49.98 percent pass. However the integrity of the grade can be questioned since it cannot be devoid of online runs site influence.

In spite of the above, however, studies on “e-cheating” habit among secondary school students in Nigeria is yet to be given adequate attention in policy, research and literature. The recent study of Adebayo (2011) on “Common Cheating Behaviour among Nigerian University Students” conspicuously omitted the social problem. Although, Adeoye (2010) attempted to address the issue in his “Emerging Communication Technology and Examination Malpractices in Nigeria Educational

Sector” but no attempt was made to establish if a significant difference exists in “e-cheating” habit between ICT-compliant students and other students in programs not Science oriented. Moreover, the study could not determine whether a significant difference exist in “e-cheating” habit between male and female students. Underwood (2006) is of the opinion that while technological solutions can and do support more conventional approaches to reducing academic dishonesty, they are not a total solution, not least because the use of technologies is currently illegal. Thus, the need to make up for these gaps in knowledge in area of education in Nigeria makes this current study very significant. Its findings would further reveal various methods as well as types of ICT tools that students employ in perpetuating examination fraud in Nigerian secondary schools. The problem of e-cheating through online runs site if not properly handled will keep on undermining the quality of secondary schools public examinations integrity or result quality of students admitted to Nigerian tertiary institutions and quality of manpower. It could also question the meaningful contribution of education to national development as well as the integrity of Nigerians in international community. The peculiarity of this study can be represented by this model tagged, Nja (Nigeria) Examination Malpractice e-cheating Online Runs Model.

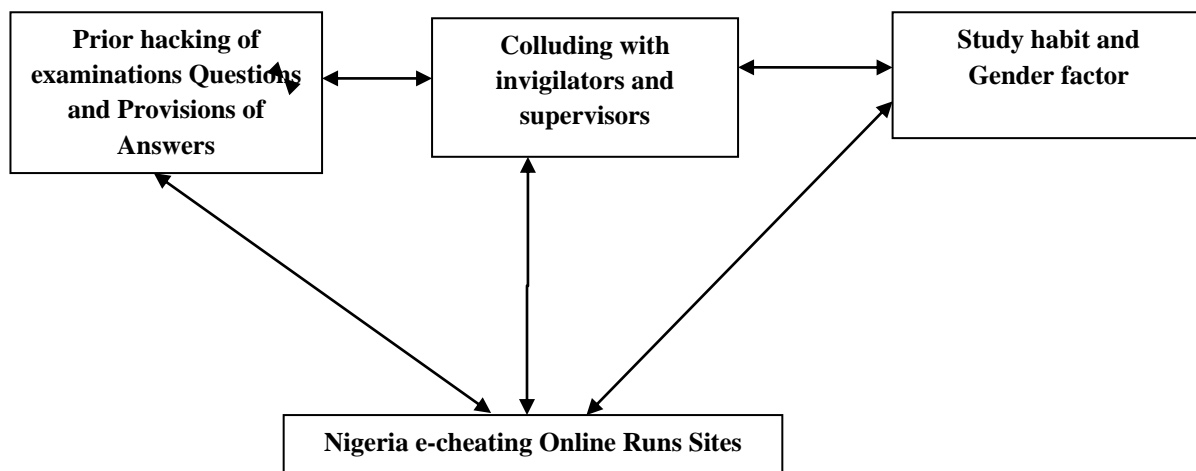


Figure 1: The Proposed Model for Nja (Nigeria) Examination Malpractice e-cheating Online Runs Modelit’s; Implications on Student study Habit and Gender Factor. (Source: The Author)

The challenges encountered in the administration of high stake examinations in Nigeria varies, these ranges from validity and reliability issues, socio-cultural, infrastructure, examination malpractice and other emerging technology related issues that are tangential to the overall examination outcome. However, the model represents a distinct and complex

digital examination malpractice. The implication is quite enormous, based on its adverse effect on the quality of Nigerian public examinations, student study habit and its prevalence on gender factor. The model indicates that e-cheating Online Runs Malpractice is perpetrated by digital hacking and invigilators examination dishonesty. Some fundamental issues

posed by this study bother on what education in our country has been reduced to. Why will our students read when they can pass with 400 naira recharge card?, Why will students not laugh at the teachers that try to make them study hard, when a budget of 4000 naira will get them through ten subjects?, why does everything about this society has to be about making money?. However, Students getting 8 distinctions in Senior Secondary School Examination and scores 300 in Tertiary matriculation examination (UTME) yet having no substance in their heads will gain admissions into university, denying brilliant students who legitimately got their 5 credits and scored 220 in Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME). This fundamental issues formed the basis for this model upon which this study is anchored.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is anchored on sociological view of Emile Durkheim (1982) called Functionalism. In school system, happenings, events, habits and attitudes of mankind in the society are explained or analysed with different paradigms. Functionalism provides a sociological platform for analysing e-cheating online runs sites habit an aspect of crime among secondary school students in Nigeria. Going by the paradigm, crime is regarded as a part of social life that is dysfunctional to the societal well-being. Durkheim, (1982) cited by Omonijo (2008) observed that involvement crime is seen as a means of alternative livelihood for a section of the society, staff of institutions created to checkmate crime in man's society-members of the judiciary, Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), Police, State Security Agents (SSA) are indirectly involved in the vices. It equally provides a means of survival for those who are jobless, underemployed and at times the gainfully employed. Nearly all economic (and non-economic) academic presentations, consider unemployment as an important cause of crime (Saridakis & Spengler, 2012). Employment manifests the opportunity to participate in the legitimate job market and acquisition of legal earnings. Hence, the exclusion from legal income opportunities increases the expected returns from crime. Cases of underemployed and underpaid staff are equally crucial to this discourse. Most people are surviving in Nigeria through corruption caused by economic recession (Omonijo, 2008). In contrary, however, Marxian scholars dismiss functionalist point of view and argue that crime is the end product of exploitation of the proletariat by the bourgeois in capitalist societies. Bourgeois and elites in power are looters of resources meant for national development to their own advantage, and to the detriment of common man (Omonijo, 2008). The

adverse effect of these injustices is the current high level of lawlessness and poverty prevailing across the nation and it could play a cogent role in the escalation of e-cheating online runs sites among Nigerian citizenry.

IV. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The objective this study sets to achieve include to:

- I. Investigate the significant relationship between e-cheating online runs sites and secondary school students study habits.
- II. Examine the significant relationship between e-cheating online runs sites and quality of Nigerian secondary examinations.
- III. Ascertain significant relationship between e-cheating online runs sites and gender involvement.

V. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions are proposed for this study:

- I. What is the significant relationship between e-cheating online runs sites and secondary school students study habits?
- II. What is the significant relationship between e-cheating online runs sites and the quality of Nigerian secondary school examinations?
- III. What is the significant relationship between gender involvement and e-cheating online runs sites?

VI. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

To make these propositions statistically testable, the following null hypotheses were developed for this study:

- I. There is no significant relationship between e-cheating online runs sites and study habit of students in secondary school.
- II. There is no significant gender difference on e-cheating online runs sites.

VII. METHODOLOGY

Survey research was adopted in the study. The basis for the adoption is mainly because it involved sampling moderately large number of the respondents to gather information about a phenomenon. The sample population for the study consisted of senior secondary school students from Four secondary schools in Ojo local LGA, namely Government Secondary School, Ijanikin; Ajangbadi High School, Okokomaiko; Awori College, Ojo and Federal Government College Ijanikin. Using a purposive sampling based on versatility of students' internet usage, 50 students were

selected from each of the selected secondary schools summing the total to 200 students. The table below

presents the distribution of the sample on the basis of gender and institutions.

Table 1: Distribution of sample on the basis of Secondary Schools and gender.

	Government Sec.Sch. Ijanikin.	Ajangbadi Okokomaiko	High Sc	Awori Colleg Ojo.	Federal Govt, College Ijanikin	Total
Gender						
Male	27	29		24	28	108
Female	23	21		26	22	92
Total	50	50		50	50	200

The instrument of study was a self-developed instrument bothering on the two hypotheses for the study. The questionnaire was tagged “Questionnaire on Students Sociological Perception on e-cheating online site” (QSSPEEOS). Section A of the instrument requires the respondents to indicate their bio data such as gender, class and Departments. Section B, of the instrument consists of fifteen items referring to various views on the significant relationship between e-cheating online runs sites, study habits and gender difference among students of secondary schools in Lagos, Nigeria. Using a three Likert scale respondents are required to tick either of the following options provided, Really Obvious, Rarely Obvious and Never.

The instrument was validated using face and content validity approach, of which test and measurement expert in studentmobile internet devices usage was students study habits.

given to ascertain the suitability of the instrument for the study. The instrument was also found reliable at a co-efficient of 0.72 that was obtained using Cronbach alpha method of reliability. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics (Percentages) and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to test for the significant relationship between e-cheating online sites and students study habits, and t- test was used to test for significant gender difference on e-cheating online runs sites.

VIII. RESULTS

Hypothesis 1.

There is no significant relationship between e-cheating online runs sites and secondary school

Table 1. Correlation table showing significant relationship between e-cheating online runs sites and secondary school students study habits.

Variables	N	X	SD	P	r	Sig.	Decision	e-
cheating Online Runs Site	200	12.49	3.42					
Study Habit	200		10.962.64	0.05	0.943	0.034	Significant	

A. Interpretation

Person Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) revealed a strong positive relationship between the two variables identified (0.943); at 0.05 significant level, the significant level was 0.034 depicting that the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative hypothesis which states that there is a significant relation between

e-cheating online runs sites and study habits of secondary school students is suffice.

Hypothesis 2.

There is no significant gender difference on e-cheating online runs sites.

Table 3. Summary of the T-Test Independent Sample Analysis Showing the Difference Between Gender Difference and e-Cheating Online Runs Sites

Gender	NX	SD	DF	Sig. Level	t-Cal.	t-Tab.	Decision	Male
1080.54	7.59							

198	0.05	2.213	1.980	Rejected
Female	92	0.46	6.47	

Level of Significance @0.05

B. Interpretation

The table above shows the male gender N=108 and X= 0.54 compared to the female gender of N=92, X=0.46. When the degree of freedom was 198, t-calculated value was (2.213) and t-table value was (1.980). Therefore, the stated null hypothesis which states that there is no significant gender difference on e-cheating online runs sites is rejected, as the alternative hypothesis is upheld.

IX. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The sociological dynamics of this study revealed that versatility needed by secondary school student to utilize online runs site for examination malpractices has not made these sites to gain much patronage. However, the finding of the study is not devoid of the issues of negative usage of ICT and its impact on students study habits and gender difference. If these social menace is not curbed it may create a shift in paradigm from analogue to a sophisticated digital examination malpractices. These negative sociological Consequences of the negative use of ICT among student is worrisome. These consequences of the negative uses of ICT could be major reason why Olson (2011) stated that secondary schools in Africa such as in Nigeria are underperforming. This supported Alaba (2011) that there is issue of poor ICT such as mobile phone use with respect to phone etiquette which has constituted a social menace in developing countries such as Nigeria. As further corroborated by findings of Ishii (2011) that ICT does more harm to children or rather school students than it does in enhancing educational goals and objectives with respect to students owning them. Asserting that students who use mobile phones are more involved in juvenile delinquency than those who do not use. The findings reported in this research point to the fact that adequate knowledge usage of online runs e-cheating sites could result in students engagement to commit cheating which reduces the quality of examination. This implies that secondary school students in Lagos State perceive the use of online runs e-cheating sites as a short-cut to examination success. The social dysfunctional effect of this finding is students mocking teachers that try to make them study hard since a budget of N400 naira recharge cards paid to online e-cheating runs site guarantee them success in public examinations. Most students who might have gained admission into tertiary institutions through online runs sites may experience difficulty in coping with rigorous academic activities.

Unfortunately brilliant and academically serious students are denied admission into Nigeria tertiary institutions. However, gender difference in e-cheating online runs sites as revealed by male gender (N=108) and female gender (N=92) shows female criminal tendencies is low when compared to the male gender this corroborates the findings of Omonijo (2011). Moreso, Anugwom (2010) conclude that male students undertake science programmes more than their female counterparts. Hence, this could be the main reason while they are more involved in e-cheating habits than their female counterparts. Obviously, the males are more prone to criminal tendency than the male gender. However, Nwaorgu (2012) observed that some ladies insert their phones or PDAs (Private Digital Assistants) in sensitive and private parts of their bodies. It may be difficult and embarrassing especially for a male supervisor to apprehend such ladies, without being accused of and prosecuted for sexual harassment.

X. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The need for stakeholders involvement in monitoring and providing policies to reduce the negative uses of ICT among students is justified by the results of this study. Students have mixed attitudes in the use of ICT as they believe that it can enhance their academic performance and at the same time, ICT is being deployed and used negatively. The sustenance of qualitative public examination and good study culture in Nigeria calls for urgent attention to incidences of e-cheating online runs site which is becoming a complex digital issue. It is important that the stakeholders of the Nigeria education system such as teachers, parents, governments and policy makers monitor and provide policies that would help the mitigation of the negative uses of ICT among students in Nigeria. It is on this premise that this study has sociologically created an awareness of another complex digitalized e-cheating site called online runs sites. To this end, the study recommends that:

- I. Ensuring the security of examination question papers and answer sheets before and after the examination
- II. Disallowing students from bringing in mobile technological devices into examination venues. Installation of jammers in examination halls. Jammers are devices which prevent radio equipment from sending and receiving signals relevant to their function. This will prevent communication between candidates and persons

outside the examination hall. It will also hinder internet browsing during examinations.

- III. Installation of detection devices that could indicate whether a mobile device is being operated within an examination hall.
- IV. Various trainings and workshops should be conducted for teachers to train thoroughly on how to detect students with prepared answers in the examination halls; and how they can use ICT to make class interesting and give students class works and assignments which would make students busy. This would at least curtail the negative uses of ICT among students, enhancing the benefits that ICT could bring to development this time personal, educational and national development.
- V. Finally security should be beefed up to clamp down on the operators of online runs site in Nigeria so as to redirect the drive of students towards effective study habit.

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