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PERCEIVED BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF WAEC CBT EXAMINATIONS AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN SOBA TOWN

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the Perceived benefits and challenges of WAEC CBT Examinations among senior secondary school students in Soba Town. The study comprised two objectives and two research questions. The design of the study is descriptive survey research design. The population of the study is 1,833 from four private and public senior secondary schools in Soba Town, The sample of the study is 183 i.e. 10% of the students population selected through simple random and proportionate sampling techniques. The instrument used for data collection was structured questionnaire adapted and comprised 27 items using 4 points likert scale. The reliability of the instrument was established at 0.78. Mean and standard deviation were used in answering all research questions using decision mean of 2.50. Based on the findings of the study, the study conclude that; WAEC CBT Examination curb examination malpractice and is cost effective among others fringe benefits with average mean and standard deviation of 3.21 and 0.66 respectively, and has challenges of lack of adequate ICT facilities, students phobia, network failure among others with average mean and standard deviation of 3.12 and 0.51 respectively. The following recommendations were made; WAEC should continue with the process for the conduct of CBT Examinations in senior secondary schools examinations like JAMB in order to curb examination malpractice and to cut cost for production of booklets, question papers and other logistics. Government and non-Governmental organizations should in providing the necessary ICT facilities to both public and private senior secondary schools and train both teachers and students in the field of ICT periodically for the successful WAEC transition from pen and paper to CBT Examinations among others.

Key Words: Benefits, Challenges. WAEC, CBT and Examinations.

Introduction

West African Examination Council (WAEC) is one of the most widely known Examination body in the entire African countries that has been assessing learning and capability of senior secondary school students in Nigeria and West African Countries. Also, it is an important part of the teaching and learning process of education that allows Examination bodies such as WAEC to evaluate senior secondary school students. Examination is used to determine the extent to which programme objectives are achieved (Abdulkareem & Nathan, 2018). SSCE Examination is a criterion upon which students in senior secondary schools can be properly measured or appraised in the school. Teaching and learning in senior secondary schools can become more efficient when students sit for WAEC Examination in order to measure the extent students have understood the instruction given and also the teacher can as well assess himself or herself based on the performance of the students (Abdulkareem & Nathan, 2018). Numerous ways of examining students include; traditional pen-paper (essay), computer based test (WAEC CBT Examination), quizzes, oral Examinations, multiple choice Examinations among others. According to Ajinaja, (2017) and Abdulkareem & Nathan, (2018), various methods of assessing students are pen pencil-written Examinations, projects, assignments, presentations and oral Examinations.

The West African Examination Council (WAEC) has released the list of ICT-facilities schools must provide as part of preparation for the full transition of the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) to computer-based testing (CBT) by the year 2026, schools are required to provide a minimum of 250 functional laptops with 10 per cent backups, a robust server capable of supporting 250 systems simultaneously, and a Local Area Network (LAN) setup. Other mandatory requirements include: functional air conditioners and lighting, uninterrupted power supply, a backup generator of at least 40kVA, CCTV cameras, and a holding room or reception facility for candidates. (WAEC, 2026).

The House of Representatives directed the Federal Ministry of Education and the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) to suspend the planned full implementation of Computer-Based Testing (CBT) for the 2026 May/June Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE), described the process as premature implementation that could trigger mass failure, depression, and deaths" among senior secondary schools students in Nigeria. Pointed out that over 70 per cent of Nigeria's secondary school students are in rural areas where schools lack functional computers, internet access, constant electricity, and qualified ICT teachers (Lloyd, 2025). The National Assembly urged the Federal Ministry of Education and State Governments to made adequate budgetary provision in the 2026, 2027, 2028 and 2029 budgets for Recruitment of adequate and qualified computer teachers, construction of ICT-compliant examination halls with reliable internet, provision of standby generators and comprehensive assessment of private schools' CBT readiness.

WAEC CBT Examination can be described as the use of computer hardware and software to test senior secondary school students based on the SSCE curriculum. It consists of multiple-choice questions in objective formats. Learners read through a displayed question on screen and expected to select the correct option from a list of displayed options. At the end of the WAEC CBT Examination customized software, the Examiners has the opportunity to select the correct option and determine allotted point upon which is automatically used to assess the learner's performance on submission and this makes it possible for the learner to immediately see his/her results immediately (Abdulkareem & Nathan, 2018). It is a multiple-choice item for examining students with user friendly computer interface (Burns, 2018). According to Ejim, (2018), WAEC CBT Examination has the following benefits; immediate scoring and feedback for multiple choice questions. It allows more innovative and authentic assessments because of the use of technology.

However, some shortcomings when using WAEC CBT Examination need for sufficient facilities, security of software, storage (back-up) procedures should there be technological failure, time for teachers and students to get familiar with new technologies, tools to meet new challenges as they arise compared to conventional practices (Olayiwale, & Babatunde, 2022).

The world has experienced tremendous interest in the use of CBT Examination on students assessment (Ebimgbo, Igwe, & Okafor, 2021). Examination for courses involving large number of students is a major challenge in Nigeria. In the past, the mode of conducting Examination was pen and paper but in recent years most institutions have adopted the use of CBT to examine students in large classes. Studies have shown that there are many challenges which needs to be addressed to maximize the benefits of CBT usage. Oladimeji and Mwuese (2018) revealed that loss of network connection, computer malfunctioning during Examination and insufficient time allocated for CBT Examination as challenges observed in their study. Also, inadequate ICT infrastructure was identified by Okocha, Toluwani, & Owolabi, (2017), in their study of usage in higher institution Musa, Shehu and Lawal (2026), identified unavailability and inadequate ICT for the conduct of WAEC CBT Examination in Kaduna State. In addition, Ebimgbo, Igwe, & Okafor (2021), mentioned insufficient time and system or software failure as observable challenges facing CBT Examination in higher institutions. Ebimgbo, Igwe, & Okafor (2021), during the conduct of CBT Examination in Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo also observed the following challenges: lack of ICT practical knowledge by teachers assigned to supervise CBT Examination, visually impaired students complained of unclear voice, some physically challenged students could not use mouse appropriately, erratic power supply during CBT Examination coupled with the present high cost of diesel for alternate source of power and time duration allotted affect some students who are not that versatile with the use of mouse and keyboard Olayiwale, & Babatunde, (2022).

Consequently, a lot of compounded factors have been concealed to affect the effective integration of ICT into the mainstream of education. These may include; low percentage of teachers who have ICT skills that will match up to the population of the senior secondary school students in the conduct of WAEC CBT Examination; Inaccessibility to ICT infrastructure capable of transporting multimedia messaging; absence of electric power grids in most parts of the country even in cases where there is adequate telecommunication coverage; lack of accessibility to computer equipment and other accessories and lack of motivation from the government to secondary school administrators for proper implementation of WAEC CBT Examination policy. Also, inadequate funding of educational sector from the budgetary allocation may have contributed to the limitation of the full implementation of WAEC CBT Examination policy in Nigeria which in turn affect education Olayiwale, & Babatunde, (2022).

Migration from pen and paper to WAEC CBT Examination would reduce logistics costs, enhance exam security, and widen accessibility. WAEC started with the fourth series of our private candidate Examinations about two years ago, and it was successful. This year's private candidate exam, second series, is fully computer-based with no option for pen and paper. Invariably, next year's school candidate exam will be fully computer-based as well urged senior secondary schools to upgrade their ICT centres, in line with WAEC's standards, stressing that the WAEC CBT Examination model has come to stay. WAEC will not lower the standards. Any school that wants to host the exams within its premises must provide the required equipment and infrastructure. (WAEC, 2026). Based on the above the study assessed the Perceived benefits and challenges of WAEC CBT Examinations among senior secondary school students in Soba Town.

Objectives:

The following objectives were formulated to guide the study:

1. determine the Perceived benefits of WAEC CBT Examination among senior secondary school students in Soba Town and
2. identify the Perceived challenges militating against WAEC CBT Examination among senior secondary school students in Soba Town

Research Questions:

1. What are the Perceived benefits of WAEC CBT Examination among senior secondary school students in Soba Town?
2. What are the Perceived challenges militating against WAEC CBT Examination among senior secondary school students in Soba Town?

Methodology

The study assessed the Perceived benefits and challenges of WAEC CBT Examinations among senior secondary school students in Soba Town. A descriptive survey research design was adopted and two research questions guided the study. The population of the study comprised 1,833 senior secondary school students from four private and public senior secondary school in Soba Town, namely; The Great Seat of Wisdom Academy with 643 students, Government Technical College Soba 232 students, Government Girls Science Secondary School Soba 424 students and Government Secondary School Soba 534 students. Simple random and proportionate sampling techniques were used to for the study to select 10% of the population from each school and 10% of 1,833 is 183, these include; Great Seat of Wisdom Academy with 65 students, Government Technical College Soba 23 students, Government Girls Science Secondary School Soba 42 students and Government Secondary School Soba 53 students, a total of 183 students were selected. The instrument used for data collection was structured questionnaire adapted from Olayiwale, & Babatunde, (2022). The instrument was re-validated by two experts in the field of evaluation and measurement in Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument and it was estimated at 0.78 which was considered reliable enough for the study. The instrument for data collection was a 27-item modified Likert 4-point type of questionnaire (weighted; Strongly Agree (SA) = 4 points, Agree (A) = 3 points, Disagree (D) = 2 points, Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 point). The data generated were collated and tabulated. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation. To answer the research questions, the decision was based on the instrument mean value of 2.50. Any item which is positively constructed with mean of greater or equal to 2.50 was agreed while any mean value below 2.50 was termed to be disagreed.

Results

The findings of this study are presented based on the research questions:

1. **Research Question One**: What are the Perceived benefits of WAEC CBT Examination among senior secondary school students in Soba Town?

Table 1: Perceived Benefits of WAEC CBT Examination among Senior Secondary School Students in Soba Town

S/NO	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	WAEC CBT Examination is one of the recent innovation	3.22	0.76	Agreed
2.	WAEC CBT Examination helps to cover course curriculum	2.79	0.68	Agreed
3.	WAEC CBT Examination gives instant feedback	3.66	0.79	Agreed
4.	WAEC CBT Examination uses immediate scoring method	2.57	0.58	Agreed
5.	WAEC CBT Examination assessment is authentic	3.05	0.64	Agreed
6.	WAEC CBT Examination allows multiple test administration	2.89	0.58	Agreed
7.	WAEC CBT Examination uncovers students thinking	2.67	0.52	Agreed
8.	WAEC CBT Examination allows large number of questions items	3.48	0.69	Agreed
9.	WAEC CBT Examination allows individualized assessments	3.08	0.61	Agreed
10.	WAEC CBT Examination help to reduce Examination malpractice	3.87	0.82	Agreed
11.	WAEC CBT Examination eliminate the stress of scripts marking	3.44	0.68	Agreed
12.	WAEC CBT Examination eliminate missing results in large classes	3.68	0.66	Agreed
13.	WAEC CBT Examination is cost-effective compare to pen-paper	3.48	0.62	Agreed
14.	WAEC CBT Examination scores are accurate	3.02	0.54	Agreed
	Average	**3.21**	**0.66**	**Agreed**

N=183

Table 1 shows that the respondents agreed with all the 14 items, because all the 14 has mean value above the cut off mean of 2.50 and has average mean and standard deviation of 3.21 and 0.66 respectively, this indicates that; all the 14 items according to senior secondary school students in Soba Town have benefits of WAEC CBT Examination on senior secondary school students in Nigeria. The findings from this study revealed the Perceived Benefits of WAEC CBT Examination among Senior Secondary School in Soba Town. This implies that the 14 items according to students responses are all benefits of WAEC CBT among Senior Secondary School in Soba Town.

Research Question Two: What are the Perceived challenges militating against WAEC CBT Examination among senior secondary school students in Soba Town?

Table 2: Perceived Challenges Militating Against WAEC CBT Examination among Senior Secondary School Students in Soba Town

S/No	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	WAEC CBT Examination needs adequate ICT facilities	3.44	0.61	Agreed
2.	WAEC CBT Examination allotted time affects students performance	3.58	0.61	Agreed
3.	Some students have phobia for WAEC CBT Examination	3.31	0.52	Agreed
4.	Network failure can affect students performance in WAEC CBT Examination	3.58	0.59	Agreed
5.	WAEC CBT Examination time on time table can affect students performance	2.51	0.41	Agreed
6.	WAEC CBT Examination batching method can affect students performance	3.32	0.59	Agreed
7.	Irregular power supply can affect students performance	3.01	0.50	Agreed
8.	Poor attitude of some invigilators can affect students performance	2.58	0.39	Agreed
9.	Unqualified ICT personnel in WAEC CBT centre can affect students performance	2.99	0.46	Agreed
10.	Inadequate air conditioners can affect system functionality	2.89	0.42	Agreed
11.	Inadequate training of students for WAEC CBT Exam. can affect performance	3.01	0.53	Agreed
12.	Poorly designed WAEC CBT Examination software can affect performance	2.87	0.49	Agreed
13.	Students health status can affect their WAEC CBT Examination performance	3.44	0.49	Agreed
	Average	**3.12**	**0.51**	**Agreed**

N=183

Table 2 shows that all the 13 items were agreed by the respondents. This implies that; the 13 items agreed according to students are all challenges militating against WAEC CBT Examination among senior secondary school students in Soba Town. The results of each of the 13 items which were all agreed by the respondents because all the 13 has mean value above the cut off mean of 2.50 and above and has average mean and standard deviation of 3.12 and 0.51 respectively.

Discussion

The findings for research question one revealed that; the Perceived Benefits of WAEC CBT Examination among Senior Secondary School Students in Soba Town are: WAEC CBT Examination is one of the recent innovation, it helps to cover course curriculum, it gives instant feedback, it uses immediate scoring method, the assessment is authentic, it allows multiple test administration, it uncovers students thinking, it allows large number of questions items, it allows individualized assessments, it help to reduce Examination malpractice, it eliminate the stress of scripts marking, it eliminate missing results in large classes, is cost-effective compare to pen-paper and scores are accurate. These findings are consistent and in agreement with the findings of Ojerinde, (2015) that CBT Examination can eradicate Examination malpractices, Ejim, (2018), that CBT Examination has many advantages. This implies that the 14 items according to students responses are all benefits of WAEC CBT among Senior Secondary School in Soba Town. The findings support Migration from pen and paper for WAEC CBT Examination to reduce logistics costs, enhance exam security, and widen accessibility. WAEC started with the fourth series of our private candidate Examinations about two years ago, and it was successful. Invariably, next year's school candidate exam will be fully computer-based as well urged senior secondary schools to upgrade their ICT centres, in line with WAEC's standards, the WAEC CBT Examination model has come to stay. WAEC should not lower the standards. Any school that wants to host the exams within its premises must provide the required equipment and infrastructure.

The findings from the research question number two revealed that; Perceived Challenges Militating against WAEC CBT Examination among Senior Secondary School Students in Soba

Town. The challenges are; WAEC CBT Examination needs; adequate ICT facilities, allotted time affects students performance, Some students have phobia, Network failure can affect students performance, time on time table can affect students performance, batching method can affect students performance, Irregular power supply can affect students performance, Poor attitude of some invigilators can affect students performance, Unqualified ICT personnel can affect students performance, Inadequate air conditioners can affect system functionality, Inadequate training of students can affect performance, Poorly designed software can affect performance and Students health status can affect their performance. The findings are in consonant with the findings of Oladimeji, & Mwuese, (2018), that revealed loss of network connection, computer malfunctioning during CBT Examination and insufficient time allocated for WAEC CBT Examination as challenges observed in the conduct of students WAEC CBT Examination. The findings of this study is in consonant with the findings of Ebimgbo, Igwe, & Okafor, (2021), that identified insufficient time and system or software failure as observable challenges facing the use of CBT Examination for examining students in higher institutions in Nigeria. The finding is also in consonant with the findings of Musa, Shehu and Lawal (2026), who identified that ICT facilities were unavailability and inadequate for the conduct of WAEC CBT Examination in Kaduna State. This finding is also in consonant with the findings of Olabode, Alagbe, Aikomo, & Fabowale, (2026) which concluded that ICT integration in Business Education across the studied institutions in Oyo State is at a minimal level While students have access to computer laboratories and desktop computers to some extent, the actual utilization of ICT tools for teaching and learning remains significantly low. This finding is in consonant with the findings of Abdullahi, Abdulrahman, Okogun, & Aliyu, (2026) who concluded that Actual classroom ICT facilities use during teaching was minimal reflecting poor facility integration in Adavi Local Government Area of Kogi State.

ICT facilities that are supposed to be adequate include: minimum of 250 functional laptops with 10 per cent backups, a robust server capable of supporting 250 systems simultaneously, and a Local Area Network (LAN) setup. Other mandatory requirements include functional air conditioners and lighting, uninterrupted power supply, a backup generator of at least 40kVA, CCTV cameras, and a holding room or reception facility for candidates to for the conduct of WAEC computer-based-test in senior school certificate examination. These requirements are currently under legislative suspension as House of Representatives directed the Federal Ministry of Education and the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) to suspend the planned full rollout of Computer-Based Testing (CBT) for the 2026 May/June Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE), warning that premature implementation could trigger “massive failure, depression, and deaths” among students.

Leading the debate, highlighted that over 70 per cent of Nigeria’s secondary school students are in rural areas where schools lack functional computers, internet access, constant electricity, and qualified ICT teachers. (Education, S. 2025). The house urged the Federal Ministry of Education and State Governments to allocate funds in the 2026–2029 budgets for Recruitment of qualified computer teachers, construction of ICT-compliant examination halls with reliable internet, provision of standby generators and comprehensive assessment of private schools’ CBT readiness. The Green Chamber set 2030 as the earliest feasible date for full CBT implementation, allowing a minimum three-year preparatory window. (Education, 2025).

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the study concluded that WAEC CBT Examination for senior secondary school students is a great achievement by the West African Examination Council (WAEC) and Education sector in Nigeria that would benefit all the stake holders when implemented. Again, transition from pen and paper to WAEC CBT Examination for senior secondary school

students has been affected by inadequate ICT facilities and other challenges that required quick interventions.

Recommendations

Based on findings from this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The WAEC should continue with the process for the conduct of CBT Examination in senior secondary schools examinations like JAMB in order to curb examination malpractice and to cut cost for production of booklets and question papers in using paper and pen and other logistics.
2. Teachers to supervise WAEC CBT examination should be practically good in the use of computers in order to be able to attend to minor issues that may arise during the WAEC CBT examination. Teachers should counsel students with phobia periodically to enable the write WAEC CBT examination successfully.
3. School Administrators in conjunction with should update WAEC CBT software developed for CBT examination from time to time based on observable challenges. They should regularly maintained and replace ICT infrastructures every five years. They should adequately train students in ICT prior to WAEC CBT examination in senior secondary schools.
4. Government and non-Governmental Agencies should assist in installation of high capacity solar system because of the erratic power supply in senior secondary schools and high cost of fuel/diesel. They should assist for the procurement of special ICT equipment for the use of students with disabilities in to write WAEC CBT examination in senior secondary schools. They should assist in the employment of software engineer, computer engineer and computer teachers to facilitate the development, usage and maintenance of CBT software for WAEC CBT examination in senior secondary schools.

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