



The Relationship between Level of Undergraduates' Awareness of and Involvement in Cybercrime in Southwest, Nigeria.

Professor Osalusi, F.M.
osalusiflo2009@gmail.com

and

Dr Makanjuola, O.

Department of Social Science Education, Faculty of Education,
Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti.

Abstract

There is growing concern on the continuous erosion of societal values among the youths, most especially in the South-western part of Nigeria. This is not unconnected with the level of technological development and civilization that have polluted the attitudes of our youths globally in recent times. The degeneration of social values that is rampant among youths, most especially the undergraduates led to involvement in various vices such as cybercrime. This paper examined the relationship between erosion of societal values and undergraduates involvement in cybercrime. Descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted for the study. Two questions were raised and one hypothesis was formulated for the study. The population consisted of all undergraduates in government owned universities in Southwest, Nigeria. One thousand, seven hundred and thirteen (1,713) respondents were sampled using multistage sampling procedure. An instrument titled: "Societal Values and Cybercrime Questionnaire (SVCQ)" was used to collect data for the study. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The results revealed that there is significant relationship between erosion of societal values and the level of undergraduates involvement in cybercrime in Southwest, Nigeria. The relationship is moderate, positive and statistically significant. It was therefore recommended that parents should intensify efforts to inculcate the right type of societal values in their children to discourage them from involving in cybercrime. School authorities should organise seminars, workshops and sensitization programmes for undergraduates on the need to embrace societal values.

Keywords: Cybercrime, Societal values, Awareness, Societal norms, Undergraduates.

Introduction

The people of Southwest, Nigeria cherished their social and cultural values so much that they aspired religiously to inculcate them into the young members from generation to

generation. They are so valued in the society and upheld by all and sundry. However, the recent deviation from societal norms and values among the youths most especially university undergraduates have been a source of



concern. The series of undesirable attitudes being exhibited by the youths currently are alien to the culture of the people of Southwest, Nigeria. Some of these activities are criminal in nature and practice. They include computer theft, hacking of bank accounts, dishonesty, indecent dressing, insincerity, covetousness, indiscipline, laziness among others. It is observed that some undergraduates in Nigeria with particular reference to Southwest, in recent times display undesirable attitudes that could erode the values of the society. Osalusi (2011) noted that socialization process through poor value orientation and peer interaction on university campuses in Nigeria have affected societal values. Also, the improvement in technology which has integrated the nations of the world in becoming a global village has exposed undergraduates to different values orientations which in turn led to different behavioural patterns of criminal tendency and divergent views. Therefore, technology which is supposed to be a blessing to mankind appears to be jinx.

In the study of Ayodele (2013), he asserted that the abuse of technology, negative orientation of the youths in educational institutions, get-rich-quick syndrome, parents economic background and peer influence were responsible for the erosion of societal values and involvement in criminal activities among undergraduate. Akintayo (2017) also observed that the ratio of involvement in cybercrime among undergraduates in Nigeria is high. There was relationship of

insincerity, dishonesty, immodesty, covetousness, indecency, indiscipline, inability to dedicate themselves to hard work with involvement in cybercrime. Currently, impersonation and sending of fake bulk e-mails is on the increase. It is also observed that some of the undergraduates are criminally inclined with a belief that to succeed in life requires desperation and that it is a matter of survival of the fittest. Hence, undergraduates prefer to source for money at all cost than to concentrate on their studies.

In a study, Abanya (2013) reported that the university undergraduates seem to be faced with challenges of peer group influence and their inordinate wealth inclination is unquantifiable. The desire towards acquisition of wealth by undergraduates through all means possible may informed the involvement or non-involvement in cybercrime. The implication of this assertion is that the tendency to commit cybercrime could be due to the level of societal values the undergraduates acquitted themselves with.

In Southwest, Nigeria, people are noted and respected for contentment on economic and social status. They are not at all 'crazy' about sophisticated life styles. In the past when less was known in area of science and technology, individuals saw domestic products as the ultimate. However, modernisation which is a product of technology has led the youths, especially undergraduates to embrace the use of sophisticated cars, handsets,



home appliances among others. Abanya (2013) was of the opinion that Africa countries have relatively rich body of indigenous knowledge and technology for thousands of years before the coming of the Europeans with which they solve their problems, produce their tools and equipments with great achievements. However, it is sad that people in Nigeria and in extension, Southwest, now rely on western technologies to accelerate their development and that not all of this western technologies are congenial with African world view.

It is observed that most youths these days, love to use modern things and live a modern life, an act which has in turn exposed most of them to be involved in many undesirable behaviours such as cybercrime. Koeng and Burns (2016) posited that when westernisation was imported to Africa, the hidden side of it was materialist interest. It is also noted that the desire to pursue foreign fashions such as clothing style, make up, bangles, expensive cars and luxury have made some undergraduates not to cherish their societal values any longer, leading to involvement in criminality such as cybercrime. Every human being has the right to aspire to be great in life; however, it has to be through diligence and hard work. In the past, Nigerians were celebrated for hard work and the idea of getting rich through dubious means was abhorred. To them, it was business before pleasure. However, the manner at which some undergraduates are bedevilled by 'get rich quick' syndrome

calls for a serious concern in Nigeria and Southwest in particular.

Technology has remarkable benefits towards the development of a nation globally in all ramifications. For instance, Alonge (2016) remarked that technology, computer and internet have a worldwide impact and has become indispensable in areas of education, business and professions. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC (2012) reported that, in early 1970s, computer gadgets and networking were not common, hence, no e-banking, e-commerce, forex trade, e-library in institutions and communication was either through verbal or letter writing. However, from 1989, computer became house-hold tools and ever since then, individual life and that of corporate bodies have been touched in one way or the other. Awe (2009) reported that individual can sit within the closet of their rooms and browse any part of the universe, education and research findings can be assessed, business can be transacted without the buyers and sellers coming into close contact and musical tones are at a finger tips.

The use of computer has myriad of merits, but the abuse among the undergraduates in Southwest, Nigeria to perpetrate computer thefts calls for concern. Cybercrime is a way of using computer and internet to steal money or information and this happens to be the most popular cybercrime. In the study conducted by Thomas (2011), peer pressure was found to be most significant predictor of initiation to



cybercrime. Peer group plays important role in the socialisation process of youths because those involved experience a group consisting of single-aged members for the first time. It is observed that many undergraduates take risks or get involved in illegal activities when they are in the company of their peers than they would do on their own. Undergraduates who are mostly resist peer pressure are those who have strong and positive relationship with parents at home and strong affiliation with their societal values and they are not likely to engage in cybercrime and other social vices.

Statement of the Problem

The current undesirable behaviours being exhibited by undergraduates in Southwest, Nigeria calls for concern. Social Studies as a school discipline emphasised the inculcation of societal values in learners with a view to produce citizens with desirable attitudes and correct vision for national development. The current perception of our youths about the various cherished societal values raised some questions and prepositions: Are the University undergraduates aware of their societal values? Do they know the evil effects of cybercrime? Could the level of erosion of societal values among undergraduates be in Southwest, Nigeria be responsible for their involvement in cybercrime activities?

Purpose of the study

The fact that some parents no longer bother about how their children

acquired huge amount of money spent on exorbitant materials is an indication that our societal values are no more cherished most especially by our youths in Nigeria and specifically Southwest, Nigeria. Therefore, this paper examined issues of societal values and undergraduates involvement in cybercrime in Southwest, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised for the study:

1. What value do undergraduates attached to societal values in order of importance in Southwest, Nigeria?
2. What is the level of undergraduates' involvement in cybercrimes in Southwest, Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis

This hypothesis was formulated for the study:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between the level of undergraduates' awareness of societal values and involvement in cybercrime in Southwest, Nigeria.

Methodology

The research design used in this study was a descriptive research design of the survey type because it described the existing situation and prevailing practices regarding societal values and cybercrime among undergraduates in Southwest, Nigeria. The population consisted of all undergraduates in government owned universities in Southwest geo-political zone of Nigeria. The sample consisted of 1713



undergraduates from government owned universities (Federal and State) selected using Multi-stage sampling procedure. The first stage involved the use of simple random sampling technique to select three states out of the six states in Southwest, Nigeria. The second stage involved the selection of one State and one Federal Universities in each selected States using stratified random sampling technique. The third stage involved the selection of 300 students in each of the selected Universities using stratified random sampling technique with gender as basis for stratification. The sample was made up of 100 level students.

A questionnaire designed by the researcher tagged: "Societal Values and Cybercrime Questionnaire" (SVCQ) was used to collect relevant data for the study. The instrument is made up of four sections: A, B, C, D. Section A elicited the demographic information of the respondents such as age, sex, religion affiliation, family type, parental occupation and educational background. Section B is made up of 13 items to measure the societal values cherished among the people of Southwest, Nigeria. Scoring of this section was done on 4-point rating of 'Very Important', 'Important', 'Not Very Important' and 'Not Important at all'. Section C contained 13 items that sought information on the respondents' level of awareness of cybercrime and the scoring was done using the 2-point rating of 'Aware (2), and 'Not Aware (1)'. Section D contained 39 items that sought

information on undergraduates' level of involvement in cybercrime vis-à-vis how the erosion of societal values contributes to the involvement of undergraduates in cybercrime. Scoring for D was done using the Liker-type rating score: Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1).

Experts in Social Studies and Test and Measurement determined the appropriateness and adequacy of the items to measure what the instrument is to measure. Each item was subjected to correlation analysis with the use of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and items whose total "B" value was less than 50 were removed from the list. The items with difficult index of 30-90 and above were regarded as good and retained. The reliability of the instrument was determined through a field test using 40 undergraduates outside the sample for this research. The instrument was administered once and the scores were subjected to Cronbach Alpha reliability test. The instrument was found reliable with coefficient of 0.82. Data collected were descriptively analysed using simple percentage, mean and standard deviation to answer the research question raised while inferential statistics such as Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis and t-test were used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.



Results:

Research Question 1: What value do undergraduates attached to societal values in order of importance in Southwest, Nigeria?

Table 1: The order of importance of societal values among Undergraduates in Southwest, Nigeria.

Societal Values	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
Honesty	1713	3.90	.420	1 st
Integrity	1713	3.80	.560	2 nd
Contentment	1713	3.77	.614	3 rd
Diligence	1713	3.76	.666	4 th
Modesty	1713	3.76	.623	4 th
Discipline	1713	3.76	.599	4 th
Respect	1708	3.73	.623	7 th
Transparency	1686	3.66	.727	8 th
Self-Reliance	1713	3.66	.695	9 th
Cooperation	1704	3.65	.719	10 th
Tolerance	1701	3.65	.702	11 th
Chastity	1713	3.55	.833	12 th
Secrecy	1693	3.48	.840	13 th

The results in table 1 shows the order of ranking on the importance that undergraduates attached to identified societal values in Southwest, Nigeria. The identified values are: honesty, integrity, contentment, diligence, modesty, discipline, respect, transparency, self-reliance, cooperation, tolerance, chastity and secrecy. Honesty ranked first, followed by integrity, contentment, diligence, modesty and discipline down to the last which is secrecy. This result may be informed by rate of exposure of

undergraduates to modern communication and information strategies that encourage openness in all ramifications and hence, led them to engaging in criminal activities such as cybercrime.

Research Question 2: What is the level of undergraduates' involvement in cybercrime in Southwest, Nigeria?

**Table 2:** Level of undergraduates' involvement in cybercrime in Southwest Nigeria.

Levels of Undergraduates involvement in Cybercrime	Frequency	Percentage
Low (14.00 -21.65)	286	16.69
Moderate (21.66 – 40.57)	1111	64.86
High (40.58 – 56.00)	316	18.45
Total	1713	100.0

The result on table 2 indicated that out of 1,713 sampled, 286 representing 16.69% had low level of involvement. Those who had moderate level of involvement were 1,111 representing 64.86% while 316 representing 18.45% had high level of involvement. The implication of this is that,

undergraduates involvement in cybercrime is moderate.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between erosion of societal values and involvement in cybercrime among undergraduates in Southwest, Nigeria.

Table 3: Erosion of Societal Values and Undergraduates' Involvement in Cybercrime in Southwest, Nigeria.

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	r_{cal}	Sig.
Erosion of Societal Values	1713	75.93	10.829	0.237*	0.000
Involvement in Cybercrime	1713	31.11	9.462		

Table 3 revealed that r_{cal} (0.237) is significant at 0.05 level of significance. This implies that there was significant relationship between erosion of societal values and involvement in cybercrime among undergraduates in Southwest, Nigeria. The relationship was moderate, positive and statistically significant.

Discussion

The study revealed the identified societal values in order of importance among undergraduates in Southwest, Nigeria. The societal values are:

honesty, integrity, contentment, diligence, modesty, discipline, respect, transparency, self-reliance, cooperation, tolerance, chastity and secrecy. Honesty was ranked first as most cherished while secrecy was ranked as the least cherished value by undergraduates in Southwest, Nigeria. The demonstration of appropriate societal values by the youths within the home and the school environment is always applauded by parents and teachers. Youths, especially undergraduates are considered as the leaders of tomorrow who are expected



to preserved the social and cultural heritage of their society. Therefore, undergraduates are expected to be instructed with the precept of good and qualitative mind-set such as virtues of honesty, integrity, decency, diligence and sincerity of purpose. This is in line with the view of Osalusi (2011) that students who are able to exhibit good conduct within the purview of societal values of his/her people are regarded as responsible and of good character.

It is observed that the undergraduates seem to lack some virtues usually derived from the cherished societal values among the people of Southwest, Nigeria. For instance, many of them are found to engage in criminal activities such as cybercrime and other internet fraud. The study revealed that the level of involvement of undergraduates in cybercrime in Southwest, Nigeria was moderate. However, the virtues from societal values were not found to be exhibited by the undergraduates. Larkin (2006) asserted that cybercrime was posing a threat to global wellbeing of the people and make doing business on the internet more risk-pone than dealing with a conventional customer. The love of wealth has taken the centre stage thereby relegating societal values of integrity, honesty, sincerity and contentment to the background. For example, some criminally inclined undergraduates have turned to “Yahoo” boys engaging in fraudulent activities in the internet. Olubunmi (2017) observed that the accessibility to computer and the internet technology created opportunities for the undergraduates to perpetrate crime such as cybercrime.

The test of hypothesis for the study showed that, there was significant relationship between the erosion of societal values and the involvement of undergraduates in cybercrime. The relationship was found to be high, positive at statistically significant level. The implication of this is that, erosion of societal values will lead to corresponding increase in undergraduates' involvement in cybercrime. This view was supported by the finding of Awe (2009), who observed that criminal activities can be faster, easier and more damaging with the use of the internet and that social values of honesty have been seriously eroded through the use of devices such as hand set, computer and networks that came with new technology which has also opened windows to unlawful and criminal activities. In the past in Nigeria, particular Southwest, Nigeria, most people were normally contented with whatever they had. However, currently, the situation is worrisome because dishonesty has brought the image of Nigeria to disrepute. Therefore, the situation calls for serious concern on the part of all stakeholders with interest in nation building.

Conclusion

The study revealed that there is significant relationship between erosion of societal values and the level of undergraduates' involvement in cybercrime in Southwest, Nigeria. The relationship was moderate, positive and statistically significant.



Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Parents should intensify efforts on inculcation of right type of values in their children to discourage them from involving in cybercrimes.
2. Parents should be more concerned about the type of friends their wards relate with both in the school and the community at large.
3. Curriculum planners should formulate programmes that will enhance the development of societal values among undergraduates.

References

- Abanya, N.L. (2013). The effects of western technology on African cultural values. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 8(4), 26-28.
- Alonge, R.A. (2016). An assessment of societal values and sexual morality among Undergraduates in Southwest, Nigeria Universities. An Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti.
- Akintayo, A. (2017). An assessment of societal values exhibited by secondary school students. An Unpublished M.Ed Thesis. Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria.
- Ayodele, J.B. (2013). *Invention, technology and man*. Universal Publishers: Surulere, Lagos.
- Awe, J. (2009). Fighting cybercrime in Nigeria. <http://www.jidaw.com/itsolution/security3.html>.
- Economic and Financial Crimes Commission EFCC (2012). Court jails undergraduate over internet fraud. Retrieved on 15th July, 2012 from <http://www.efcnigeria.org/2012/0402-court-jails.html>
- Koeng, S.K. & Burns, R.G. (2016) An Examination of internal fraud occurrences. Assessed on 15th July, 2016. <http://www.swds.org/swdsio5>.
- Larkin, D. (2006). Fighting online crime, retrieved January 10, 2017, from <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itgic1036/ijge//arkin.htm>.
- Olubunmi, O.A. (2017). Cybercrime Embarrassing for Victims. Retrieved November 20th from <http://www.heraldsun.com>
- Osalusi, F.M. (2011). Topical issues in world problems. A.M.A.C. incorporated: Abuja.
- Thomas, A. M. (2011). Parents and peer influence: their role in predicting adolescents' moral values and delinquent behaviour. An unpublished M.Sc. Thesis, Department of Psychology, University of Pretoria, South Africa.