



SOCIETAL VALUES AND CYBERCRIME AMONG UNDERGRADUATES IN SOUTHWEST, NIGERIA

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Abstract

There is a growing concern on the erosion of societal values owing to technology and civilization. This has reflected on the degeneration of social values which is rampant among Nigerians, mostly undergraduates. This study therefore examined societal values and cybercrime among undergraduates in Southwest, Nigeria. Descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted for the study. The population consisted of all the 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 designed by the researcher titled 'Societal Values and Cybercrime Questionnaire (SVCQ)' was used to generate data for the study. The validity of the instrument was established through face and content validity while the reliability was established through Cronbach-Alpha method and a reliability coefficient of 0.89 was obtained. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics of simple percentage, mean score, and standard deviation were used to answer the research question raised while inferential statistics of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis was used to test the hypotheses formulated. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The result revealed that the level of undergraduates' involvement in cybercrime was high. It was also revealed that there was correlation between the tested variables and involvement of undergraduates in cybercrime except indolence. Based on the findings, it was recommended that school authorities should organise seminars, workshops and sensitization programmes for undergraduates on the need to embrace societal values. The parents should also intensify efforts to inculcate the right type of personal and societal values in their wards to avoid involving in cybercrime.

Keywords: Value, Societal value, Undergraduates, Cybercrime, Decency

Introduction

The National Policy on Education, published in 2014 fundamentally was to build in the society educational opportunities for all citizens of the nation at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels both inside and outside the formal school system. It emphasized the inculcation of national consciousness, national unity, right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual; the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around as well as the acquisition of appropriate skills abilities and competencies. However, the societal values such as honesty, diligence and contentment appear to have been jettisoned, perhaps due to westernization, cultural diffusion, coupled with improved technology that "gave birth" to computer and networking.

The present value system of undergraduates in Southwest, Nigeria is indicating that the growth and progress of the society can be retarded in many aspects because of materialism tendency. Undergraduates oftentimes display undesirable attitudes that tend to portray erosion of societal

values. Oluwagbohunmi (2017), described societal values as beliefs and part of the concept thought in the school and that idealized way of living and acting are the best way for the society. Oludayo and Ibrahim (2011) observed that many undergraduates in Nigerian Universities are aware and have now embraced internet fraud as a way of life. Worthy of note are behavioural patterns that are related to crime being perpetrated with the use of computer and networking known as cybercrime. Examples can be seen in the opinion of Hassan and Lass (2012) that Cybercrime "housed" child pornography, computer bullying or computer harassment, phishing, machine spoofing, cyber extortion, piracy, spamming, computer espionage, computer hacking and computer theft.

Students that grew up in different places, exposed to different training values orientation, institutions and upbringing found themselves within the same four walls of a university. This appears to have resulted into different behavioural patterns such as, criminal tendency and divergent views among



undergraduates. The improvement in technology which has integrated nations of the world to become a global village is another factor. For example, the economy of most nations appears to be accessible with the aid of electronic devices via the internet. Remarking on the agents of change in African society and by extension in Southwest, Nigeria, Osalusi (2011) was of the view that social change denotes some observed differences at two points in time in the life of one or more societies and that change are in the structure, institutions and habits of the people. She went further to say that in the past few years, the rate of change in Nigeria society is immense due to interactions with Europeans, which happened to be the most remarkable agents of change in African through western education and recently enhanced by internet. Hence the influence of western education is reflected in changes in the various aspects of Nigeria society and technology played a significant role in this respect. However, technology which is supposed to be a blessing to mankind appears to be a jinx.

Cybercrime is one of the contemporary crimes that are giving all stakeholders in this country sleepless nights most especially the government. Cybercrime refers to criminal activities conducted via the internet, including fraud, identity theft, and hacking (Choi, 2018). Ridgeway, (2020) opined that Nigeria has witnessed a significant rise in these activities, driven by a youthful population and high unemployment rates. The clash between traditional values and modern digital temptations creates a fertile ground for cybercriminal behavior.

Larkin (2006) noted that computer theft has pose a threat to global wellbeing and has made doing business on the internet more risk-prone than dealing with a conventional customer. Ribadu (2007) observed that the prominent forms of cybercrime in Nigeria encompass cloning of website, false representation, internet purchase and e-mail commerce kinds of frauds. Some criminally inclined undergraduates' mails contain the need to move money out of one country to another country, usually the recovery of contractual funds, crude oil shipment or over-invoiced payment, which in actual fact does not exist. These are evidences that the love of wealth has taken the center stage thereby relegating societal values of honesty, diligence and contentment to the background. For instance, dishonesty and insincerity were aberration and thus not celebrated in Yoruba land. People see dishonest and insincere persons as outcast and not reliable, thus, disassociate themselves from them.

Accumulation of wealth without a well-established source and venture was seen as taboo, hence, anybody amassing wealth which source could not be ascertained is subjected to suspicion, and

people disassociates themselves from controversial rich men. Individuals to a large extent were contented with their limited resources. It is disheartening that these noble societal values appeared to have been eroded. The societal values of contentment and decency have been degenerated by negative use of computer by youths. Many of the female undergraduates tend to engage in campus prostitution out of covetousness and indecency. The societal values of decency, contentment and the others frown at this, and regarded it as aberration. Alonge (2016) believed that the method of operation in many of these indecent acts vary from campus and from individual to another.

Purpose of the Study

This study examined the relationship between societal values and cybercrime among undergraduates in Southwest, Nigeria. Specifically, this study examined level of involvement of university undergraduates in cybercrime in Southwest, Nigeria as well as the relationship between dishonesty, indolence, covetousness and involvement of undergraduates in cybercrime.

Research Question

1. What is the level of involvement of university undergraduates in cybercrime in Southwest, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between dishonesty and undergraduates' involvement in cybercrime.
2. There is no significant relationship between indolence and cybercrime involvement among undergraduates.
3. There is no significant relationship between covetousness and cybercrime involvement among undergraduates in Southwest, Nigeria.

Delimitation of the Study

This study was delimited to investigating the relationship between societal values and cybercrime among university undergraduates in Southwest geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The study covered the public universities (Federal and State). It was also delimited to the societal values that are expected of undergraduates such as diligence, honesty and contentment.

Methodology

This study adopted descriptive survey research design with the population comprising all university undergraduates in the six states that make up the

Southwest geo-political zone of Nigeria. The sample for this study consisted of 1,713 undergraduates in government owned Universities (Federal and State) selected using multistage sampling procedures. The first stage involved the use of simple random sampling technique to select three states out of the six states that make up Southwest zone of Nigeria. The second stage involved the selection of one State and one Federal University in each of the selected States using stratified random sampling technique while the third stage involved the selection of 300 students in each of the selected Universities using simple random sampling technique.

A questionnaire designed by the researcher titled: "Societal Values and Cybercrime Questionnaire (SVCQ)" was used to collect data for the study. The instrument was made up of two sections: A and B. Section A elicited the demographic information of the respondents such as age, sex, religion affiliation, family type, parental occupation and educational background. Section B was made up of 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 this section was rated on a 4-point Likert-type rating scale: Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). The questionnaire was subjected to face and content validity through a thorough scrutiny by experts in Social Studies, Tests and Measurement as well as Guidance and Counseling. The reliability of the instrument was established through a trial test that was carried out on 40 undergraduates outside the sampled university. The instrument was administered once and the data obtained from the trial were subjected to Cronbach Alpha reliability testing method. The instrument was found reliable with reliability coefficient of 0.89.

The researcher and six trained research assistants administered the instrument on the respondents. The researcher and the research assistants established rapport with the respondents assuring them that the purpose of the questionnaire was mainly for academic and has nothing to do with their personality. The questionnaires were administered on the respondents in their various campuses and collected immediately after completion. Out of 1,800 copies of questionnaires, 1,713 were properly filled and returned. This gives 95.20% return rate and this was used as sample for the analysis. The data generated were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as simple percentage, mean, standard deviation and histogram were used to answer the research questions raised while inferential statistics of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis was used to test all

formulated hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Question 1: What is the level of involvement of university undergraduates in cybercrime in Southwest, Nigeria?

To determine the low, moderate, and high level of involvement of university undergraduates in cybercrime in Southwest, Nigeria, respondents who scored below the mean score (22.37) were categorized into low level. Those who scored above the mean score were categorized into high level while those who scored around the mean score were grouped as moderate level. The level of involvement of university undergraduates in cybercrime in Southwest, Nigeria is presented in table 1 and figure i

Table 1: Level of involvement of university undergraduates in cybercrime in Southwest, Nigeria

Levels of Undergraduates' Involvement in Cybercrime	Frequency	Percentage
Low (13.00 – 17.91)	247	14.42
Moderate (17.92 – 23.37)	545	31.82
High (23.38 – 26.00)	921	53.76
Total	1713	100.0

Table 1 showed that out of 1713 respondents sampled, 247 representing 14.42% had low level of involvement. Those who had moderate level of involvement were 545 representing 31.82% while those with high level of involvement were 921 representing 53.76%. This showed that the level of involvement of university undergraduates in cybercrime in Southwest, Nigeria was high. The figure below further presents the level of involvement of university undergraduates in cybercrime in Southwest, Nigeria.

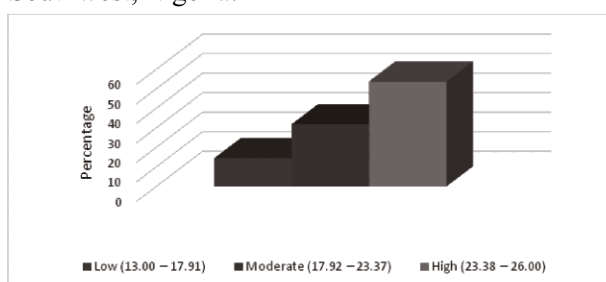


Figure i: Histogram Showing Level of involvement of university undergraduates in cybercrime in Southwest, Nigeria.

Hypotheses 1: There is no significant relationship between dishonesty and undergraduates' involvement in cybercrime.

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation of dishonesty and Undergraduates' Involvement in Cybercrime in Southwest, Nigeria



Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev	r _{cal}	Sig.
Dishonesty	1713	16.20	2.760	0.049*	0.044
Involvement in Cybercrime	1713	31.11	9.462		

* $p < 0.05$

Information in Table 2 revealed that $r_{cal}(0.049)$ was significant at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was not accepted. This implies that there was significant relationship between dishonesty and involvement of undergraduates in cybercrime. The relationship between dishonesty and involvement of undergraduates in cybercrime was positive and statistically significant.

Hypotheses 2: There is no significant relationship between indolence and cybercrime involvement among undergraduates.

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation of Indolence and Undergraduates' Involvement in Cybercrime in Southwest, Nigeria

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev	r _{cal}	Sig.
Indolence	1713	16.09	3.243	-0.045	0.064
Involvement in Cybercrime	1713	31.11	9.462		

$p > 0.05$

Table 9 revealed that $r_{cal} (-0.045)$ was not significant at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was accepted. This implies that there was no significant relationship between indolence and involvement of undergraduates in cybercrime. The relationship between indolence and involvement of undergraduates in cybercrime was low, negative and statistically not significant.

Hypotheses 3: There is no significant relationship between covetousness and cybercrime involvement among undergraduates in Southwest, Nigeria.

Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation of covetousness and Undergraduates' Involvement in Cybercrime in Southwest, Nigeria

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev	r _{cal}	Sig.
Covetousness	1713	16.92	3.804	0.072*	0.003
Involvement in Cybercrime	1713	31.11	9.462		

* $p < 0.05$

Table 4 revealed that $r_{cal}(0.072)$ was significant at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was not accepted. This implies that there was significant relationship between covetousness and involvement of undergraduates in cybercrime. The relationship between covetousness and involvement of undergraduates in cybercrime was high, positive and statistically significant. This implies that increase in covetousness will lead to corresponding increase in undergraduates' involvement in cybercrime.

Discussion

The finding of this study revealed that the level of involvement of undergraduates in cybercrime in Southwest, Nigeria was high. This corroborated the finding of Oludayo and Ibrahim (2011) that many undergraduates in Nigerian universities are aware and have now embraced internet fraud as a way of life. Again, Olubunmi, (2017) posited that the development of the internet and the accessibility to computer technology both created new window of opportunities for work and business activities, as well as undergraduates who used both computer and network to perpetrate crime, known as cybercrime.

There was a significant relationship between dishonesty and involvement of undergraduates in cybercrime. The relationship between dishonesty and involvement of undergraduates in cybercrime was high, positive and statistically significant. This implies that increase in dishonesty will lead to corresponding increase in undergraduates' involvement in cybercrime. Cybercrime which encourage dishonesty and insincerity are denting the image of the Nation and eroding confidence in genuine societal values. This is in line with the study of Awe (2009) 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 and that those devices such as hand set, computer and networks that come with new technology are open windows to unlawful/criminal activities.

It was also found that the relationship between covetousness and involvement of undergraduates in cybercrime was found to be high, positive and statistically significant. This implies that increase in covetousness will lead to corresponding increase in undergraduates' involvement in cybercrime. Most youths in the past were known to be satisfied with whatever they had. One dare not touch what did not legitimately belong to him / her. In recent times however, lack of contentment among youths has brought the image of Nigeria to disrepute. This finding is related to that of Alonge (2016) who posited that covetousness has led to different methods of operation and vary from campus to campus and from individual to another.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the involvement of university undergraduates in cybercrime was high and that dishonesty as well as lack of contentment contributed significantly to this.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion, this study recommends that school authorities should organise periodic

seminars, workshops and sensitization programmes for undergraduates on the need to embrace societal values. Also, parents should intensify efforts in inculcating the right type of personal and societal values in their wards to avoid involving in cybercrime.

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