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ASSESSMENT OF THE PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF CYBERCRIME ON SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ABAKALIKI EDUCATION ZONE OF EBONYI STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study was carried out to assess the perceived influence of cybercrime on senior secondary school students in Abakalik Education Zone of Ebonyi State, Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised of 15349 senior secondary school co-education schools in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State. The sample size consists of 329 students. Two research questions guided the study. Perceived Influence of Cybercrime Questionnaire (PICQ) which was adapted from Abdul-Rahim Mohammed Hardi Perceptions of Cybercrime Questionnaire (ARMHPCQ) was used to collect the data. Three experts validated the instrument thus Cronbach alpha was used to determine the reliability coefficient of PICQ which was found to be 89. Percentage % was used to answer the research questions. The findings of the study revealed that senior secondary school students in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State are very knowledgeable in cybercrime/yahoo activities and factors from tabulated questionnaire influences the students that practice cybercrime activisties in Abakailiki Education Zone. From the findings, conclusion and recommendations were made.

Keywords: Technology, Internet and Cybercrime

Introduction

The technological revolution in the 21st century is not without bleak consequences which involves modern communication devices. Such modern communication devices are cellular phones, computers, Smart phones, tablets, laptops etc. All these are parts of advent in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for the past decades and have brought massive improvement in all spheres of human endeavours. It is regarded as a major

component of globalization which connect the world with a much diversified ownership otherwise known as internet (Hassan, A. B., Lass F. D. & Makinde J. (2012). The internet offers school children with many prospects such as easy access to information and also enables them to connect to the global world. These boost their cognitive and social development (Lakshmi &Ishwarya, 2015). The degree of cybercrime which is the use a computer or its related device as an instrument to further illegal ends, such as committing fraud, trafficking in child pornography and intellectual property, stealing identities, or violating privacy has increased significantly in the last decade since the commencement of the internet and digital revolution in Nigeria. In about two decades ago, the internet has grown so large and become part and parcel of life of millions of people across the globe (Maitanmi, O. Ogunlere, S. &Ayinde S., 2013).

Accessibility and effective internet bandwidth in Senior Secondary School (SSS) is considered as huge advantage for students as it improve their level of comprehension, reading skills and improve their academic performance through browsing the World Wide Web. However, if this is left unsupervised it could lead students to internet crime (Singh &Bala, 2014). They further stressed that unrestricted and constant use of cyberspace by young students if not checked could also lead to decrease in their level of output in class. The undesirable connection between the academic performance of young students and excessive online internet usage is detrimental to their academic progress and could lead them to become cybercriminals. It takes away their precious time which could have been used to study for better grades. Barfi, O., Opesade, O. &Afolayan, O. (2018) reported that most students among the senior secondary schools in Nigeria and other West African countries have ample understanding and awareness of cybercrime. They further indicated that senior secondary school students are more familiar with the four main forms of cybercrime which are hacking, credit card fraud, software piracy and cyber identity theft. Igba, et al (2018) stated that the internet has great effect on educational system and the advancement of every country. This has inspired people, establishments and other entities to establish cyber café which can give people easy access to current updates across the globe through the internet. This has given many opportunities to schools and other organizations to build their physical and intellectual properties to enable graduates to be useful to themselves and the society at large. However, some people tend to use this innovation wrongly and abuse the rich resources the internet can offer leading to fraud or cybercrime.

Michael et. al. (2014) noted that the infiltration and diffusion of information and communication technologies (ICT) in Sub-Saharan Africa has fueled and injected new dimension of life style across all sectors of our daily transactions from education, entertainment, trades and businesses. These are ICT oriented businesses and services such as e-learning, e-banking, telemedicine, e-commerce, tele democracy. Ndible (2016)

further stressed that, this new level of development has come with a high cost and burden of new criminal activities known as cybercrime. Igba et. al. (2018) discovered that children under secondary school level use the internet to commit various acts of crimes. These crimes include using other people credit cards and identities to steal money and buy goods online, send emails to foreign companies to steal dollars and pounds to the neglect of their studies. These school children also watch pornography and pictures to defraud people through the internet online dating sites. Basically, accessibility and use of internet and some other online resources in some parts of Sub-Saharan African countries largely depends on cybercafés. However, countries like Ghana, Cameroon and Nigeria have well established mobile internet facilities through satellite connections and other fiber optic cables which facilitate their online service provisions to their citizen (Singh &Bala, 2014). Okeshola and Adeta (2013) explained that the Africa sub region which was always describe as the backward and Dark Continent in the world has jumped into the ICT world with overwhelming consequences. This swift and fast rate of cybercrime in the African continent has been a very worrying situation and a call for concern by all stakeholders within the Sub-Sharan African. This situation even gets more worrisome by literature revelation that in the world top ten countries of high level of cybercrime dominance four of those countries come from Sub-Saharan African (Nigeria, Cameroon, Ghana and South Africa).

Ndible (2016) averred that Nigeria occupies the first position in Africa where cybercrime is being committed. Ndible (2016) further asserted that over 50% of Nigeria youths who use the internet more especially in high schools and universities involved in cyber crime of phishing, data theft, BVN scam, stalking and plagiarism. More so, Omodunbi et. al. (2016) asserted that from 2010 to 2016 most Nigeria youths more especially university and secondary school students involved in cybercrime activities like phishing 88%, data theft 81%, BVN scam 65%, stalking 34% and plagiarism 28% especially among secondary school students in Niger Delta in Asaba metropolis. Omodunbi et. al. (2016) further stated that in the next ten years if cautions where not taken the data may increase.

Mohammed (2022) averred in his study that 99% of these cyber-crimes may increase in near future because high number of students in secondary schools in Nigeria are knowledgeable, have access on usage of internet. Due to availability of the internets in schools especially in secondary schools in Nigeria and usage of internet accessible mobile phones this has lead secondary school students to browse Facebook making them vulnerable to many forms of internet crimes instead of studies to better lives for future (Igba et al.,2018). In contrary assertion, opined that majority of secondary school students browse the internet mainly for studies not minding things that may influence them in using it wrongly.

Olasunkanmi and Adebayo (2020) reported that many things can influence

students into engaging in cybercrime activities. The authors further asserted that causes and consequences of cybercrime in tertiary institutions in Nigeria is mostly poverty. Olasunkanmi and Adebayo concluded in their study to say that 87% respondents giving their questionnaire agreed that poverty is a major cause while 86% of the respondents admitted that peer group is the cause of cybercrime in Nigeria tertiary institutions. This may be the reason why Adeola et.al. (2021) opined that poor children are more into cybercrime than the rich children in Nigeria secondary schools.

In a related development, Mohammed (2022) was of the view that most school children involvement in computer crime emanates from curiosity and inquisitives to know. The researcher further stated that students want to be creative thinkers and always want to demonstrate that they are the best amongst their colleagues in use of internet thereby getting involved in cybercrime activities.

Problem of Stavtement

Cybercrime in Nigeria is no longer news. Research conducted by Adeola et.al. (2021) showed that 88% Nigeria youths who use internet regularly are involved in phishing, 81% involves in data theft, 65% involves in Bank Verification number (BVN) scam, 34% involved in stalking and 28% involved in plagiarism. All these and many more are cybercrime activities being practice in senior secondary school in Nigeria. From the background, it was also revealed that most secondary school students in Niger Delta especially in Asaba metropolis used smart phone and other computer gadgets in a very abusive manner because they use them in cybercrime activities. With all these assertions from the researches which are done in Nigeria, none has been reported in the location of the present study. This accounts for the reason for this study which focused on assessment of perceived influence of Cybercrime on senior secondary school students in Abakaliki education zone. This is to determine the true position of Abakaliki Education Zone Senior Secondary Students with regards to Cybercrime.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate and asses the perceived influence of Cybercrime on senior secondary school students in Abakaliki Education Zone. Specifically, the study sought to :

Assess the knowledge level of students on cybercrime in senior secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone.

Identify factors that influence students into cybercrime in senior secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. What are the knowledge levels of students on cybercrime in senior secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone?
2. What are the factors that influence students into cybercrime in senior secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone?

Methodology

The design of the study was a descriptive survey research design. The study was carried out in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State. The population for the study consisted of 5,349 senior secondary school students in Abakaliki Education Zone (Secondary Education Board, 2022). The sample size comprised of 329 senior secondary school students from Abakaliki Education Zone. To get the sample size, the entire population of the students were placed on five different stratum based on local government that made up of the education zone. Using Yamane (1967) table which stated that a sample size of ± 0.05% of 2000 is 333, simple random sampling was used to draw 2000 students from the levels of Senior secondary school students in order to obtain sample size in line with the standard table. Hence a total of 333 questionnaires was distributed but four were discarded because they were not appropriately completed (i e students omitted some item statements). Therefore, number of students who participated in the study 329.

Instrument

The instrument for data collection was named Perceived Influence Cybercrime Questionnaire (PICQ) which was adapted from Abdul-Rahim Mohammed Hardi Perceptions of Cybercrime Questionnaire (ARMHPCQ) developed in year 2021. To ensure the reliability of ARMHPCQ, the instrument was administered to a group of twenty students in Awka education zone which is out the place of study. The result obtained was .70 using Cronbach alpha indicating that the instrument was reliable. Data collected in the study were analyzed using weighted percentage.

Presentation of Results

The result of this study was presented in line with the research questions

Research Question 1: What are the knowledge levels of students on cybercrime in senior secondary schools in Abakailiki Education Zone?

Table 1: Three Point Percentage Scale of Knowledge Level of Students on Cybercrime In Senior Secondary Schools In Abakailiki Education Zone

Mode of Operation	No of students	Good (%)	Fair	Poor	Total	(%)
Upload female pictures without their consent to deceive people online	329	94.5%	5.5%		0%	100
Hack into people's personal and sensitive information in internet	329	10.0%	61.4%	28.6%		100
Asking people to invest in						

a non-existent business on-line (Business Fraud)	329	26.1%	51.4%	22.5%	100	
Stealing a trade secret, supplier agreement, personal records, and research documents for financial gain (Industrial espionage)	329	70.2%	29.2%	0.6%	100	
The use of another person's name and social security number to obtain goods and services (identity theft)	329	50.2%	45.3%	4.6%	100	
The act of sending an e mail to internet users falsely claiming to be an established legitimate enterprise in an attempt to scam the users in to surrendering private information that will be used for identity theft (phishing)	329	28.9%	55.7%	15.4%	100	
Practice of deceiving and manipulating investors resulting in theft of capital (investment fraud)	329	42.6%	55.6%	1.8%	100	
Creation and distribution of computer viruses	329	36.1%	7.3%	56.6%	100	
Cybercrime with direct contact through phone call (social engineering)	329	79.9%	20.1%	0%	100	
Hacking of organizational account	329	46.5%	52.6%	0.9%	100	

Source: field survey 2022

Table 1 shows the knowledge levels of students on cybercrime in senior secondary schools in Abakaliki education zone. The result showed that stealing a trade

secret, supplier agreement, personal records, and research documents for financial gain (Industrial espionage); majority of respondents 231 representing 70.2% had good knowledge, followed by 96 respondents representing 29.2% had fair knowledge and 2 respondents representing 0.6% answered poor. The use of another person's name and social security number to obtain goods and services (identity theft); most of the respondents 165 representing 50.2% had good knowledge, 149 respondents representing 45.3% had fair knowledge aninternetd 15 respondents 4.6% poor knowledge. The act of sending an e mail to users falsely claiming to be an established legitimate enterprise in an attempt to scam the users in to surrendering private information that will be used for identity theft (phishing); 181 respondents representing 55.7% had fair knowledge, 94 respondents representing 28.9% said good and 50 representing 15.4% had poor knowledge.

Practice of deceiving and manipulating investors resulting in theft of capital (investment fraud); a majority 183 respondent which is 55.6% had fair knowledge, 140 respondents representing 42.6% said good and 6 respondents representing 1.8% said poor. Creation and distribution of computer viruses; more than half of the respondents 185 representing 56.2% said poor, 118 respondents representing 35.9% answered good and 24 respondents which is 7.3% said fair. Cybercrime with direct contact through phone call (social engineering); majority of respondents 263 representing 79.9% had good knowledge whilst 66 respondents representing 20.1% had fair knowledge and zero for poor knowledge. Hacking of organizational account; more than half of respondents173 representing 52.6% had fair knowledge followed by 153 respondents which is 46.5% had good knowledge whilst 3 respondents representing 0.9% had poor knowledge.

Research Question 2: What are the factors that influence students into cybercrime in senior secondary schools in Abakailiki Education Zone?

Table 2: Five Point Percentage Scale of Factors That Influence Students into Cybercrime in Senior Secondary Schools In Abakailiki Education Zone

Causes of cyber Crime	No of Student	SA	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Total (%)	(%)
Pressure from Friends, Relatives, School mates, Colleagues in my area	329	31.6%	51.4%	15.5%	1.5%	0%	100	
Get-Rich-Quick								

Syndrome	329	59.2%	34.0%	6.7%	0%	0%	100
Poverty	329	31.9%	48.0%	20.1%	0%	0%	100
Fame (Societal Recognition)	329	49.5%	38.6%	11.9%	0%	0%	100
Knowledge of internet literacy	329	46.5%	44.1%	9.4%	0%	0%	100
Students sees Cyber crime/yahoo as creating thinking	329	22.2%	60.2%	17.6%	0%	0%	100
Students sees Cybe crime as a Place of employment	329	36.5%	56.5%	6.4%	0%	0.6%	100
Poor parenting	329	39.2%	50.8%	9.1%	0%	0.9%	100
Instant wealth	329	40.7%	49.5%	9.7%	0%	0%	100
Attitude of leaders towards wealth	329	51.1%	35.0%	10.0%	0%	4.0%	100
Students sees Cyber crime/yahoo As a means to Pay back white man For taking their fathers as Slaves and stealing resources From Africa	329	73.6%	24.0%	2.4%	0%	0%	100
Because it easier To practice and difficult To be identify Cyber crime	329	48.9%	43.8%	6.7%	0%	0.6%	100
Victims mostlty Go unpunished	329	28.6%	50.5%	18.5%	1.8%	0.6%	100

Source: 2022 field survey

Table 2 above covers the result of the responses on the factors that influence students into cybercrime in senior secondary schools in Abakailiki Education Zone. The table showed that respondents strongly agreed that students who are engaged in cybercrime do the following: Students sent e-mails to impersonate credible institutions to steal personal or financial information via a contaminated link; majority 159 of respondents representing a percentage of 48.3% strongly agreed that some students use the credit card of other people illegally to goods and services online, 155 respondents which is 47.1% agreed and 2 respondents representing 0.6% strongly disagreed. Students deceive and manipulate investors resulting in stealing of capital through fake documentation, more than half of the respondents 222 representing 67.5% agreed to this practice, 34 representing 10.3% strongly agreed, meanwhile 65 respondents representing 19.8% were neutral and 8 respondents representing 2.4% strongly disagreed.

Students steal trade secret, suppliers' agreement, personal records, research documents, to order for goods and services online; 143 respondents representing 43.5% strongly agreed, majority of respondents 147 representing 44.7% agreed, 36 respondents representing 10.9% were neutral, whereas 2 and 1 respondents representing 0.6 and 0.3% strongly disagree and disagreed, respectively. Students do send email to internet users portraying themselves as legitimate business owners to scam users into giving out private information that will be used for identity theft; more than half the respondents 192 representing 58.4% agreed, 95 respondents representing 28.9% strongly agreed, 34 respondents representing 10.3% were neutral whereas 8 respondents representing 2.4% strongly disagree. Students use special hacking software to infiltrate financial institutions records on the internet; more than half (198, 60.2%) of the responded agreed and 113 respondents representing 34.3% were neutral. Students buy goods and services online without paying; majority of respondents (169, 51.4%) agreed and 96 respondents representing 29.2% strongly agreed whereas 64 respondents representing 19.5% said neutral. Students use international money transfer agencies (that is western union and money gram) to carry out a scheme to defraud people; 144 respondents which represents 43.8% agreed while 118 respondents representing 35.9% strongly agreed whereas 61 respondents which represents 18.5% were neutral and 6 respondents representing 1.8% disagree. Students persuade people to invest in a non-existent business on the internet, example gold; greater proportion of respondents 138 representing 41.9% agreed. Meanwhile, 119 respondents which represent 36.2% strongly agreed and 48 respondents representing 14.6% were neutral whereas 24 respondents representing 7.3% disagreed. Students use dating sites to deceive and manipulate people resulting in stealing of capital; majority 128 respondents representing 38.9% strongly agreed while 124 respondents representing 37.7% agreed, whereas 73 respondents

representing 22.2% strongly disagree whilst 4 respondents showing 1.2% disagreed.

Discussion of the findings

Knowledge levels of students on cybercrime in senior secondary

The study revealed that nearly all of respondents said they have the knowledge of cybercrime and they are using internet. This study conforms to Mohammed (2022) result of 99%, on access and usage of internet by students in Nigeria . Having greater percentage of respondents having good knowledge in upload female pictures Without their consent personal and sensitive stealing a trade secret, supplier agreement, personal records, and research documents for financial gain (Industrial espionage), The use of another person's name and social security number to obtaingoods and services (identity theft), cybercrime with direct contact through phone call (social engineering) and hacking of organizational account. More than half of the respondents have fair knowledge hack into people's information in internet to deceive people online, asking people to invest in a non-existent business on-line (Business Fraud), have the act of sending an email to internet users falsely claiming to be an established legitimate enterprise in an attempt to scam the users in to surrendering private information that will be used for identity theft (phishing), practice of deceiving and manipulating investors resulting in theft of capital (investment fraud). The respondents only had poor knowledge on creation and distribution of computer viruses. However, Igba et. al. (2018) who disclosed that internet and access to technology lead secondary school students to browse Facebook making them vulnerable to many forms of internet crimes instead of studies to better lives for future.

Factors that influence students into cybercrime in senior secondary schools

In this part, efforts are made to investigate the factors, causes and inspiring elements which drive Senior Secondary School Students to cybercrime or yahoo practice. Pressure from friends, school mates and colleagues in my area; more than half of the respondents have agreed to this and poverty. These two conforms to Olasunkanmi and Adebayo (2020) findings on the nature, causes and consequences of cybercrime in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. They concluded that 87% were of the opinion that poverty is a major cause whilst 86% of the respondents admitted that peer group is the cause of cybercrime in Nigeria tertiary institutions. Universally, poverty appears to be places where is crime. Confirmation provided by Adeola et.al. (2021) shown that, poor people are more into cybercrime than the rich people.

Other causes identified includes, Get-Rich-Quick syndrome; majority of respondents strongly agreed. Fame (societal recognition) and knowledge of internet literacy almost half of respondents strongly agreed. Olasunkanmi and Adebayo (2020) agreed with 55% confirmation that get rich quick and societal recognition (fame) are some of the factors that pushed youths into cybercrime. People want to start making

money as soon as possible forgetting the approved means to riches. Students see cyber fraud as creative thinking and cybercrime as a place to deploy their knowledge, more than half of the respondents agreed. These two agrees with Mohammed (2022) findings which stated that most school children involvement in computer crime emanates from curiosity and inquisitives to know. Students want to be creative thinkers and always want to demonstrate that they are the best amongst their colleagues.

Poor parenting, half of the respondents agreed. Parenting is very important in guiding and shaping children through the right direction. Where there is poor parenting children adopt some life styles which do not conform to societal norms and good morals which often lead children to delinquencies. This confirm the central theme of Merton's social theory that societal structures could lead (pull and/or push) people into social vices like crime. Mohammed (2022) concluded that 85% of cybercriminals are generally young or youth who may be exposed to the internet earlier without proper parenting. Instant wealth is equated with smartness; almost half of the respondents agreed. Attitude of leaders towards wealth, majority of respondents strongly agreed. Students see cybercrime/ yahoo as a means to payback the white man for taking their forefathers as slaves and stealing resource from Africa; more than half of the respondents strongly agreed. Majority of respondents representing strongly agreed that it is easy to practice and difficult to be identified. Majority of the respondents agreed that cybercrime victims mostly go unpunished. These compliment findings of Igba et. al. (2018) that declared that factors that inspire young people into cybercrime vary based on multiple reasons such as monetary gains, fame, easy to escape from conviction due to weak law enforcement, easy to execute, vengeance and to be recognised as smart and intelligent. This could be the reason why secondary school students in Ogidi education zone know more and seems to involved in cybercrime/yahoo activities.

Conclusion

The study concluded that:

Senior secondary school students in Abakailiki Education Zone of Ebonyi State are knowledgeable in some cybercrime/ yahoo activities as mentioned in table 1

Factors that influence senior secondary school students in Abakailiki Education Zone in involvement into cybercrime/yahoo activities are outlined in table 2.

Recommendation

The followings are therefore recommended:

There is need for secondary school students in Abakailiki Education Zone to be aware of dangers in involving in cybercrime/yahoo activities. For this reasons, seminar and workshop should be organized to inform the students on social norms.

Government in all level should put restrictions to all extravagant life styles in schools and colleges to help coattail the

activities of cyber crime in secondary schools.

Parents should monitor their children especially those ones in primary, secondary and tertiary institution to know the kind of life style their leave socially and the kind of friends they keep.

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