Forms of cybercrimes perpetrated by Undergraduates in Selected Public and Private Tertiary Institutions in Anambra State, South-East, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined forms of cybercrimes perpetrated by undergraduates in selected public and private tertiary institutions in Anambra State, South-East, Nigeria. The study adopted mixed methods research design. The area of study comprised of public and private universities in Anambra State. The scope of the study is on investigating perception of undergraduates' involvement in cybercrimes in selected universities in Anambra State, South-East, Nigeria. The target population was 40,092 undergraduate regular students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Paul University Awka, Tansian University, Umunya and Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam who were 16 years and above. The sample size for this study was 1,083 undergraduates was generated using Taro Yamane statistical method of sample size determination, while 20 participants were selected through purposive and snowball sampling techniques for the In-Depth Interview (IDI) session. The research used both probability and non-probability sampling methods in the selection of respondents. Multi-stage sampling procedure which involved the use of different sampling techniques in the selection of respondents was employed in the study. Questionnaire and IDI guide were the quantitative and qualitative instruments used for data collection in the study, respectively. Data collected through quantitative instrument were processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 2.0 software. Also, descriptive statistics such as frequency tables, simple percentages and graphic illustrations were used to analyse the quantitative data and research questions. The qualitative data collected from the IDIs were analysed using Nivivio analytical software. Four hypotheses were tested using Chi-square (X^2). Findings in the study showed that hacking and credit card frauds are the commonest types of cybercrimes perpetuated by undergraduates of universities in Anambra State. Therefore, the study recommends that the government and the university managements should introduce regular campaigns and orientation exercises on the dangers inherent in cybercrimes. Also, the needs for proper parental guidance which will help ensure eradication of cybercrime in our university's system.

Keywords: cybercrimes, hacking, phishing, spamming, yahoo-plus.

Introduction

The concept of cybercrimes is any crime or illegal online activity committed with the aid of internet-enabled electronic gadget such as mobile phones, laptop or desktop computers, etc. Internet-based crime refers to the act of performing criminal acts using cyberspace as the communication medium (Harpreet, 2013). In 1989, the internet was first introduced in the United States of America and in 1996 seven years after the introduction in the United States of America, internet was also introduced in Nigeria and with it came amenities, job opportunities and the emergence of network providers. The public is now capable of doing things that were not imaginable years ago. The internet has enabled the use of website communication, email and a lot of anything anywhere; it offers solutions for the betterment of humankind (Kamini, 2011). Since the advent of the internet, the youth has dominated the internet space as they use the internet more than any age group. Thus, the internet is a global system of interconnected computer network that has revolutionized nearly every aspect of human lives.

In recent years, computers and the internet have opened possibilities for the young and the old in the international community to have access to the world from their homes, offices, cyber cafes and so on. This has benefited the world over, including Africa. There is also another method of cybercrimes known as Phishing (Identity Theft). Phishing according to Wisdom, Ajayi, Hamza and Odewale (2019) involves stealing personal information from unsuspecting users. It is an act of fraud against the authentic, authorized businesses and financial institutions that are victimized. Phishing scams are universal and are exponentially increasing. It has become one of the fastest growing cybercrimes in Nigeria. In this jet age of technology, cyber criminals subscribe to a plethora of sites using their email addresses and are therefore expecting to receive mails of updates of their membership or subscription. So it seems natural when users get regular mails from such organizations. Likewise fraudsters have also devised a means to mimic authorized organizations and retrieve confidential information from clients. In Phishing mail messages, the fraudsters try to find a way to convince and gain the trust of users. In Nigeria, phishing mails are mostly carried out on bank customers either through spam mails, text messages or phone calls requesting individual bank information for the purpose of criminal activity aimed at defrauding the unsuspecting bank customers. In some cases, social media platforms like whatsapp, instagram, twitter, facebook, etc are used to initiate communication just to establish trust and confidence, there by exploiting individuals for the said motive.   While the escalation of cybercrimes among students in tertiary institutions could not be curtailed adequately by law enforcement agencies, the effects continue to hit and bite hard on the nation's economy, both locally and internationally. Nevertheless, cybercrimes have become a terrifying situation for law enforcement agencies to control its prevalence among students in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Conclusively, numerous crimes of varying dimensions are committed daily on the internet worldwide, such criminal activities are spamming, phishing, Automated Teller Machine

(ATM) frauds, identity theft and a blossoming haven for cyber criminal miscreants to perpetuate their insidious acts (Frank & Odunayo, 2013). It is unfortunate that many youths go beyond the benefit the internet offers to using the internet as a medium of committing crime. This however accounts for the reason they are carried out in various forms. Hence, there is a gap in knowledge on the theme of this study within the context of this present study area. It is against this backdrop that this study is positioned to examine the forms of cybercrimes perpetrated by undergraduates in selected public and private tertiary institutions in Anambra State, South-East, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Today, cybercrime has developed into a new form of crime and also exists in Nigerian tertiary institutions which is now denting and drilling holes in the economy of the nation. Ribadu (2007) stated that most internet crimes in Nigeria were committed by youths between the ages of 20 and 35 years in the Southern part of Nigeria. A study conducted by Internet Organized Crime Threat Assessment (IOCTA) and was cited in Wainwright (2017) indicated that North America alone has 88% of internet penetration and 86% of Internet users are the core targets for financially motivated cybercrime. This part of the globe is host to 37% of business email frauds, 49% of global data breaches, a top target for ransom ware with 34% of all ransom ware detection, a top target for banking malware, host to 50% of world phishing sites, 39% of global bonnet control serves, and primary origin of child abuse imagery (Wainwright, 2017). This shows that cybercrime comes in different forms and targets anyone, hence the need to examine this social reality. Cybercrime has become a global threat from Europe to America, Africa to Asia and the other parts of the world.
Cybercrimes are social problems and have been in existence since 1980s and they have grown worldwide within the prospect of corrupt dealings in foreign exchange and transfer of all illegal money obtained through foreign businesses and enterprises (Egbue, 2009). Cybercrimes have done incalculable damages to Nigeria and by extension, to the world at large. The scam perpetrated by Nigerians has cost the British economy over £27 billion per annum (O'driscoll, 2023).Cyber crime is a national-scale issue. The cost to the economy, estimated at £27bn, is significant and likely to be growing. The ease of access to and relative anonymity provided by ICT lowers the risk of being caught while making crimes straightforward to conduct. However, the cost goes beyond just losing money as some victims attempted suicide, while many marriages crashed and their businesses were bankrupt. Also, some countries lose at least $ 36 million a month to Nigeria of which at least 80% were related to cybercrime (Ayub & Akor, 2022). This practice is not limited to the male alone as some ladies are also into the act of using the internet to defraud people. Females do this by sending their nude pictures to unsuspecting victims, which later developed to Advance Fee Fraud (Rotimi, 2015).This they do by convincing their unsuspecting victims to invest in their crypto and afterwards, they move same deposits from their victims into a hidden crypto purse, convert same to any country's currency of

their choice, usually naira, then contact their bank to credit their local account with such money which they have successfully converted to naira. Though most online investors are now smart and weary of these scammers, especially the investors from the western hemisphere like USA, UK, Australia, etc.; but notwithstanding, these internet fraudsters still upgrade their mode of operation by going spiritually diabolic about the business. These internet scammers now employ the use of voodoo, ritual killings, animal sacrifices, etc. They consult witch doctors to prepare potent charms that aide their internet scam through ensuring conformity of their clients to invest with them online.

Ngozi (2016) submitted that the rate at which Nigerian youths are involving in one form of cybercrime or the other calls for urgent concern. With each passing day, we witness more and more alarming cases of internet-based crimes. Earlier than now, cybercrimes like financial fraud through the internet was more prevalent among youths, regardless of educational level. However, in recent times, it has graduated into a new phenomenon which involves incorporating spiritual elements with internet surfing to boost cybercrime success rates (Tade, 2013). According to Tade (2013), spiritual aspect of the Yahoo-Plus revolves around the use of materials easily found around or others, not necessarily human sacrifice as it is done by the perpetrators in recent times. It has skyrocketed to an extent that females cannot spread their inner wears outside anymore due to the activities of Yahoo-Plus boys. Certain perpetrators even step further by killing their close female friends or lovers, and ultimately removing essential organs from the bodies of their victims after the horrendous killing for ritual purposes. This incidence has attracted the attention of governments at all levels, but little has been done to stem the unwholesome trend amongst young adults, particularly, those in secondary and tertiary institutions (Tade, 2013).

It is envisaged in this study that a way of averting this ugly crime is to scientifically examine its prevalence particularly among the undergraduate students of universities in Anambra State. This is due to the fact that, enough research efforts have not been made to focus on this area of research interest, particularly within the context of the Universities in Anambra State, Nigeria. In view of the afore-mentioned problems, this study examines the forms of cybercrimes perpetrated by undergraduates in selected public and private tertiary institutions in Anambra State, South-East, Nigeria**.**

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study;

1. What are the various forms of cybercrimes involving undergraduates of public and private tertiary institutions in Anambra State, South-East, Nigeria?

2. What are the spiritual dimensions employed by undergraduates who engage in cybercrimes in public and private tertiary institutions in Anambra State, South-East, Nigeria?

Various Forms of Cybercrimes involving Undergraduates

Okeshola and Adeta (2013) conducted a study titled "The Nature, Causes and Consequences of Cybercrime in Tertiary Institutions in Zaria-Kaduna State, Nigeria". The study adopted the use of mixed methods design in the collection of data. It was a quantitative study that used both non-probability and probability sampling methods to select respondents from three categories. Firstly, from students across four selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria, secondly from lecturers of computer science in selected universities in Nigeria and thirdly, from cyber cafe operators. In all, a total of 400 copies of questionnaire were administered and 12 key informants were interviewed. Findings reveal that hacking, credit card frauds, malicious program/virus dissemination and cyber stalking are the commonest types of cybercrimes perpetrated by the students in tertiary institutions in Zaria, Nigeria. Findings from the in-depth interviews with key informants also indicated other types of cybercrime common in the study area. A lecturer stated that the most common cyber crimes in Zaria are pin fraud, cheque fraud, theft of identity, phishing and economic fraud.

A descriptive survey research was carried out by Oluwadare, Oluwasnmi, and Igbekoyi (2018), on the Prevalence and Forms of Cybercrime Perpetrated by Students in Public Tertiary Institutions in Ekiti State. The research employed the use of qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection for both primary and secondary data. The aim was to enhance the explanation on the prevalence and forms of cybercrime perpetrated by students in public tertiary institutions in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Three hundred and ninety-two (392) copies of questionnaire were administered to students and eleven (11) in-depth interviews were conducted to complement the questionnaire. The data from questionnaire were processed with the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 2.0 software. The study found that most of the respondents believed that advance-fee-fraud through online romance scam is the commonest type of cybercrimes perpetrated by students in public tertiary institutions in the State.

In a related study, Abanikannda (2019) carried out a descriptive research which examined the awareness and impact of cybercrime among selected undergraduates of tertiary institutions in Osun State, Nigeria. The study used a systematic sampling technique to select 250 undergraduates across five tertiary institutions in the State. The research shows popular forms of cybercrime among undergraduates of tertiary institutions in Osun State. The samples drawn from the study were processed using SPSS (version 2.5). The study found that online fraud, yahoo boyism, online gambling, plagiarism of online articles and

the use of computer in forging of documents/certificates were the major forms of cybercrimes perpetrated by undergraduate students of tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Also, in a study conducted by Udelue and Mathias (2019) titled "Prevalence of Cybercrimes among Youths in Onitsha South Local Government Area of Anambra State, Nigeria". The mixed methods research design was used in the study. This involved the use of a researcher-developed questionnaire to collect the quantitative data; and In-Depth Interview (IDI) to collect the qualitative data using a sample of five hundred and twenty-seven (527) households. Quantitative data collected were processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 2.0 software while data generated through qualitative instrument were transcribed, translated and analysed using manual content analysis. The study found that majority of the respondents in this study perceived cybercrime as being prevalent among the youths within the study area and this trend was most prevalent among youths between the ages of 24 – 29 years. The study found that among the different forms of cybercrime, website hacking, advance fee fraud, identity theft and cyber terrorism were the most prevalent forms of cybercrime in the study area.

Spiritual Dimensions Employed by Undergraduates who Engage in Cybercrimes

Warner (2011) also conducted a study in Accra, Ghana titled "Understanding Cyber-Crime in Ghana: A View from Below". The study investigated the attitudes of youths in Accra towards the growing trend of cybercrimes, such as cyber fraud. The survey elicited data from 1000 respondents of youthful population, through multi-stage sampling procedure, Questionnaire, FGDs and IDIs were instruments for data collection used in the study. Information from FGDs and In-depth interviews were used to support data elicited through the survey. The data were processed using SPSS. The results of the study show that, most of the respondents do not see internet fraud as crime but a redemptive project of social justice against the western world's colonisation of their forefathers. It is rational for them to use charms or spiritual elements since it aids faster fraud returns unlike pure internet surfing which relies on employment of deception strategies which may not work with all potential victims. Some other respondents attested to the effectiveness of infusion of fetishism in cybercrimes, which they believe is the faster and most efficient means of acquiring wealth from '*Maga*' foreigners. This works to hypnotise victims and make them give anything to the yahoo plus boys without question.

In another empirical study conducted by Tade (2013) in University of Ibadan, using an exploratory research design, a snowball sampling technique was used to select respondents and Key Informant Interview (KII) guide was used, where five key informants were used in the study. The interview guide was structured and each interview lasted about forty minutes. The study found that a lot of undergraduates involved in internet

fraud have begun to take dimensions which have not only become inimical to the financial security of victims, but also the lives of strangers, relations and intimate partners. Most of the interviewees admitted to the use of mystical, spiritual and supernatural powers by yahoo boys (cyber criminals) to cast a spell on their victims using *ase* or *mayehun* (incontrovertible order), charmed or magical rings (*oruka-ere*), incisions around their wrists and *ijapa* (tortoise) while navigating profitable sites.

Theoretical Framework

Routine activity theory and Marxian theory were used as the theoretical framework for this study. Routine activity theory was developed by Cohen and Felson (1979) which revolves around three things: a "potential offender, a suitable target, and the absence of a capable guardian" (Bottoms & Wiles, 1997: 320). All three must come together in order for criminal activity to be realized. Routine activity theory relies on the same rational choice methodology as situational crime prevention techniques. Routine activity theory is a crime of opportunity theory that focuses on the features of the physical and social environment in determining the availability of criminal opportunities and the eventual occurrence of crime. It was developed by Marcus Felson and Lawrence Cohen in 1979. In the present research, routine activities theory proved valuable to the development of our thesis statements. This criminological theory embraces and supports the premise that crime is a function of individual choice shaped heavily by environmental factors. This is evident in the biting and crunching economic hardship orchestrated by series of economic free fall and recession in the country. This is toppled by failure in the family system, which has neglected the inculcation of proper morals, norms, values and mores in children/wards by their parents/guardians; the negligence which has gone a long way in destroying the moral fabrics of these young people, who grow up to become perpetrators of cybercrimes.

The proponent of Marxian theory was a German scholar named Karl Marx in 1857 (Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2014). The theory has its major thrust on the argument that deviance could be traced to real structure of capitalism. The structure of capitalism is designed in such a way that the economy is the infrastructure upon which the rest of the superstructures are built. This infrastructure, Marx refers to as the economic institution, while the superstructure refers to other institutions like health, education, legal, political, religious institutions, etc. which forms the building blocks upon which human society is formed. This theory states that the posture of the economy of every society determines the workability and continuous existence of other institutions as a component whole (Marx, 1857; Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2014). The key insight into the theory is that crime is a natural outgrowth of capitalism, which views human society as constantly changing in response to social inequality and social conflict. Capitalism as an economic system is based on the private ownership of property with personal gain rather than collective well-being is encouraged. The Marxian theory is relevant to this study because it provides a significant understanding of why people especially unemployed youths engage in crime. Given the level of political

and economic instability as well as corruption in Nigeria, it is no surprise that cybercrimes are rampant in the country. Due to the oppression, exploitation and alienation of the majority for the benefits of the elites; a segment of disadvantaged citizens who are in the majority have taken to alternative means to survive. Such alternative means include prostitution, armed robbery, cybercrimes. It can be seen that crimes in Nigeria have been influenced by monumental poverty, relative social deprivation, rampant corruption, excessive greed and materialism, amongst others.

Materials and Methods

This paper adopted mixed methods research design, which allowed the use of quantitative and qualitative techniques in gathering information. The design allowed the researcher to collect data on a one time basis from respondents with the purpose of providing answers to the study research questions, objectives and hypotheses. The quantitative method of data collection was adopted in order to draw information from a relatively large sample; while the qualitative design was employed in order to help the researcher gain deeper insight on the problem under study. This research was conducted in Anambra State, specifically at Nnamdi Azikiwe University (NAU), Awka; Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU), Igbariam; Tansian University (TANU), Umunya and Paul University (PU), Awka. Thus, the justification for choice of the study areas (NAU, PUA, COOU and TANU) for this study is because there have been several incidences of cybercrimes among undergraduates of universities in Anambra State, South-East geo-political zone in particular and Nigeria in general. The population of the study is 40,092 undergraduates while the sample size is 1,083. This was generated using Taro Yamane (1967) formula for sample size determination. The multi-stage sampling procedure which involved successive sampling of probability and non-probability methods were used in selecting study participants. This involved the application of different sampling techniques like balloting, cluster, stratified proportionate and simple random sampling techniques at various stages. However, snowball and purposive sampling technique of non-probability sampling method were employed in selecting five students which include one yahoo-boy and four students who were knowledgeable of cybercrimes from each of the schools selected for the study. Data were collected using questionnaire and In-Depth Interview (IDI) guide. The researcher through the help of two research assistants used self-administered questionnaire; out of which 1020 copies were correctly filled, retrieved and used for analysis. The data were processed with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 2.0 software and analysed using frequency distribution tables, percentages, mean ratings and graphic illustrations. The qualitative data were analysed thematically using quotes extracted from the interviews.

Findings and Results

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

This section dealt with the analysis of socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents such as gender, age, marital status, religious affiliation, place of residence, parental/guardian academic qualification and parental/guardian occupation.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents (n = 1020)

Variables	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	302	29.6
Female	718	70.4
Total	**1020**	**100.0**
Age		
16-20	334	32.7
21-25	525	51.5
26-30	108	10.6
31 and above	53	5.2
Total	**1020**	**100.0**
Marital Status		
Single	970	95.11
Married	24	2.35
Divorced	8	0.78
Separated	10	0.98
Widowed	8	0.78
Total	**1020**	**100.0**
Religion		
Christianity	854	83.7
Muslim	24	2.4
African Traditional religion	78	7.6
Others	64	6.3
Total	**1020**	**100.0**
Place of permanent residence		
Urban	928	91
Rural	92	9
Total	**1020**	**100.0**
Parental academic qualification		
None formal education	82	8
FSLC	68	6.7
SSCE/GCE	56	5.5
OND/NCE	256	25.1
HND/B.Sc.	512	50.2

M.Sc./Ph.D.	46	4.5
Total	**1020**	**100.0**
Parents'/guardians occupation		
Civil servant	286	28
Public servant	180	17.6
Artisan	118	11.6
Trading/Business	390	38.2
Farming	46	4.5
Total	**1020**	**100.0**
Academic level		
100 level	132	12.9
200 level	286	28.9
300 level	420	41.2
400 level	130	12.7
500 level	52	5.1
Total	**1020**	**100.0**

Field Survey, 2023

Table 1 above presented the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. It shows that 26.6% of the total respondents were males while 70.4% were females. This implies that the number of female respondents exceeds the number of male respondents. This may be attributed to the fact that males are no longer interested in education, but are more interesting in heinous and unconventional means to amass wealth at ease; while their female counterparts prefer to acquire formal education to empower themselves. Majority (32.7%) of the respondents fall within the age bracket of 16-20 years, while the least number (5.2%) of the respondents were within the age bracket of 30 years and above. The mean age of respondents was 21.37 years. This implies that majority of them are between the ages of 16-20 years. This is not strange since this is the age bracket for people to gain admission and graduate from the universities. Majority (95.1%) of the respondents were single while the least number (0.78%) of the respondents were either widowed or divorced. This implies that majority of them are single. This is as a result of the fact that they are majorly young adults and still of university age. Hence, they are not expected to be married at such young age. Majority (83.7%) of the respondents were Christians while the least number (2.4%) of the respondents were Muslims. This is not surprising because the study location is in Anambra State, South-East Nigeria dominated by Christians. Similarly, the majority (91%) of the respondents reside in urban areas, while the least number (0.9%) of the respondents reside in rural areas. This implies that most of the respondents live in urban centres which accounts for their level of knowledge and awareness of the use of internet and the perpetration of cybercrimes. Majority (50.2%) of the respondents reported that their parents had HND/B.Sc., while the least number (4.5%) reported that their parents had M.Sc./Ph.D. Majority (28%) of their parents were civil servants while the least number of them (4.5%) were farmers. This implies that their parental academic

qualifications and occupation, most of the respondents' parents/guardians are educated up to Bachelor's level and Higher National Diploma but are mostly into self-employment or private businesses which account for the reason why they are usually preoccupied with their businesses and pay less attention to what their children/wards do on the internet while at home, as well as the kind of friends they keep at home and on campus. Majority (41.2) of the respondents were in 300 level while the least number (5.1%) were in 500 level. Thus, the academic levels of the respondents showed that majority of them are in their penultimate year in school, which makes them more informed about the activities of some students who are involved in the internet scam and other forms of cybercrimes. This is due to the fact that, with the number of years they have spent on campus, they can easily identify some yahoo boys and girls among them, as well as their mode of operations.

What are the various forms of cybercrimes involving undergraduates of universities in Anambra State, South-East Nigeria? Questionnaire items 18 and 19 were designed to answer research question 1. The findings are shown in fig 1 and table 3 below.
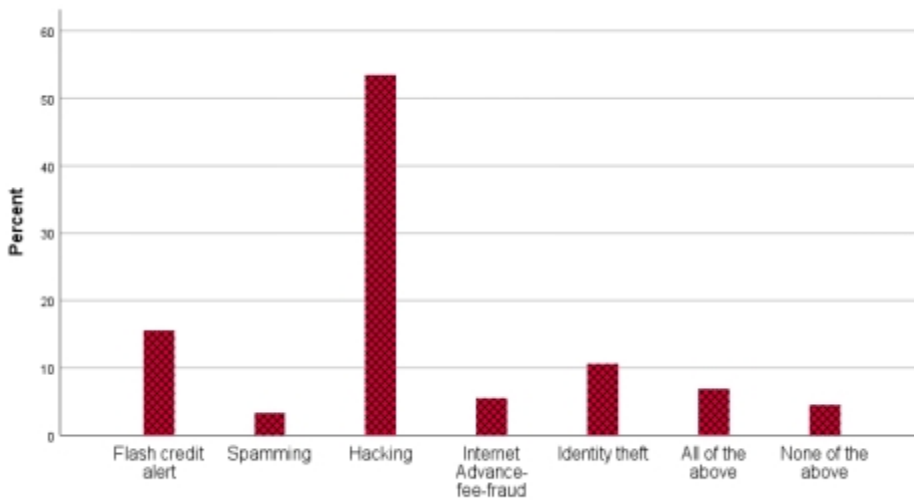

Fig. 1: Respondents' views on the types of cybercrimes indulged in by undergraduates of universities in Anambra State.

Field Survey, 2023

Fig. 1 shows that the majority (53.5%) of the respondents said that hacking was the major type of cybercrime indulged by universities undergraduates, while the least number (4.51%) of the respondents said that none of the above options were types of cybercrimes indulged in by undergraduates of universities in Anambra State. Thus, the responses given by the respondents which indicate that web hacking is the major type of cybercrime indulged in by undergraduates of universities in Anambra State. This finding corroborated

with the view of an IDI participant, who stated thus; "*There are different types of cybercrime perpetuated by the undergraduates in university, but the prevalent amongst the students is web hacking, identity theft which I have been a victim and ATM/ Bank fraud*" (Female, 22 years, 400 Level Student, Banking and Finance Department, TANU, Umunya).

Also, another IDI participant maintains thus:

> The most prevalent type of cybercrime that is very common among us as undergraduates is romance scam. Most of the yahoo boys on campus have accounts with different relationship and dating sites based in the United States. So, it makes it easier for us to meet and mingle with white women, using fake profile information called catfish. So, we combine catfishing with romance in order to scam white women. While some of us use fake black ebony ladies pictures to pose as female in order to scam white men, because we noticed that they mostly like black ladies from this part of the world (Male, 23 years, 400 Level Student, Philosophy Department, NAU, Awka).

Furthermore, another interviewee also admitted thus:

> There is this other form of scam currently en vogue known as flash credit alert. It is seriously gaining ground among students on campus nowadays, due to the current hardship. It is a situation where someone buys something and pays for what he/she bought or service rendered to him/her using a fake credit alert to send money to the vendor, thereby defrauding them. This is another new way of scamming people in the street nowadays. It is not gender based because both guys and girls engage in the act (Male, 24 years, 300 Level Student, Accountancy Department, COOU, Igbariam).

Table 2: Respondents' views on the major type of cybercrimes prevalent amongst undergraduates of universities in Anambra State

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Hacking	345	33.8
E-mail scam and spam	95	9.3
Identity theft	4	.4
Flash alert	189	18.5
Wired Fraud	31	3.0
ATM fraud	143	14.0
All of the above	44	4.3
None of the above	14	1.4

Total	1020	100.0

Field Survey, 2023

Table 2 that majority (33.8%) of the respondents reported that the major type of cybercrime committed by undergraduates is hacking while the least number (0.4%) of the respondents reported that the major type of cybercrimes perpetrated by undergraduates is identity theft. This, however, indicated that hacking is the major type of cybercrime that is prevalent amongst undergraduates of universities in Anambra State.

What are the spiritual dimensions employed by undergraduates who engage in cybercrimes in universities in Anambra State, South-East, Nigeria?
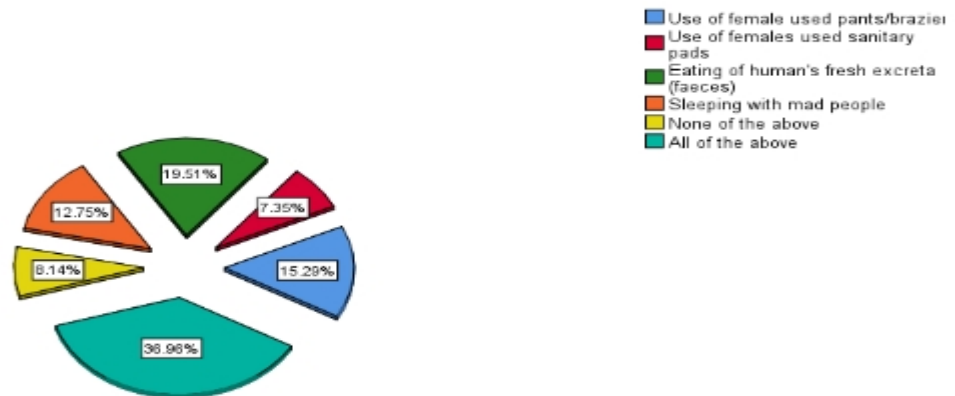

Fig. 2: Respondents' views on the spiritual dimensions employed by undergraduates who engage in cybercrimes in universities in Anambra State.

Field Survey, 2023

Figure 6 shows a graphic illustration of responses from the respondents on the spiritual measures used by undergraduates involved in cybercrimes in universities in Anambra State. It was observed that majority (37.0%) of the respondents admitted that all of the above spiritual measures, which include use of female used pants, used sanitary pads, eating of fresh excreta, sleeping with mad females are the most common types of cybercrime indulged in by universities undergraduates who are into yahoo-plus, while the least number (7.4%) of the respondents reported that the use of female used sanitary pads is the major type of spiritual measure used by undergraduates indulging in cybercrimes. This finding corroborated with the views of an IDI interviewee, who stated thus;

> Anytime people hear the word yahoo-plus, they believe that it involves the use of charms which we usually call jazz to exploit the white people on the internet. It also means using spiritual power created through body

incisions in palms and tongues to induce mind control on our victims, so that whatever we say to our victims, they obey us without questioning. I know someone who also goes as far as using menstrual blood from women's sanitary pads to fortify his jazz. He usually cash out more than some of us (Male, 23 years, Yahoo Boy, 200 Level Student, Accountancy Department, COOU, Igbariam).

Another IDI interviewee stated thus:

The spiritual measures in yahoo are what makes yahoo to have a plus. So, the diabolism in it gave it the name, Yahoo-plus. Is an advancement of yahoo-yahoo otherwise known as internet fraud. Those engaged in the practice go to the extent of visiting native doctors or witch doctor (*Eze Nwanyi*) to collect charms and body incisions, which give them commanding power to make their internet victims do their biddings online. Some are given fetish handkerchiefs, which they use to clean their iphones or laptops cameras during their conversation with their victims online. Some native doctors order the yahoo boys to eat fresh human faeces and giving them some concoctions to drink. Then assure them that, those are the instruction they must obey for the charm to become potent (Male, 25 years, Yahoo Boy, 300 Level Student, Electronic and Computer Engineering Department, NAU, Awka).
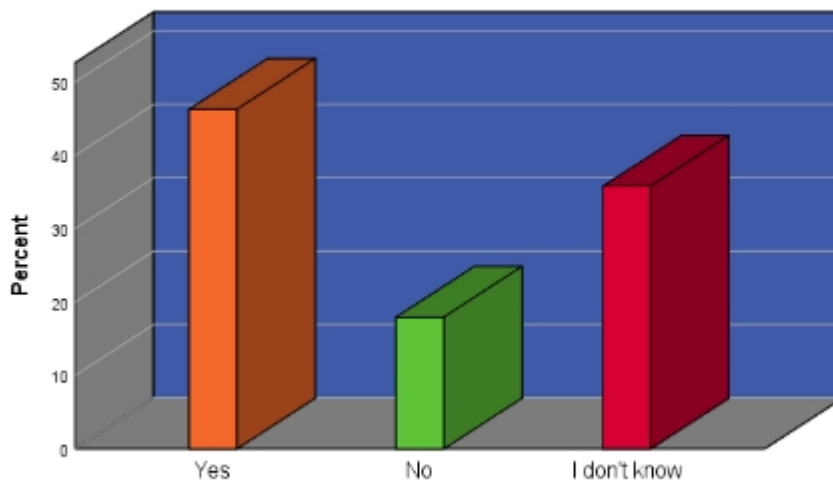

Fig. 3: Respondents' views on whether undergraduates who use spiritual means in cybercrime are more financially-successful than their counterparts.

Field Survey, 2023

Fig 3 shows a graphical representation of respondents' views on whether undergraduates who use spiritual means to achieve in cybercrime are more financially-successful than their counterparts who do not employ spiritual means in achieving economic success in cybercrimes. It was observed from the graph above that majority (46.3%) of the respondents reported that undergraduates who use spiritual means achieve in cybercrime are more financially-successful than their counterparts who do not while the least number (17.9%) of them stated that they have no idea on that. This indicates that the perception of spiritual dimensions employed in cybercrime is quite prevalent among undergraduates of universities in Anambra State. This finding corroborated with the view of an IDI interviewee, who stated thus;

> It is a faster means of acquiring wealth from online foreigners known as *Maga*. Yahoo plus acquires money in only a short period of time while yahoo-yahoo takes a longer period of time for the desired aim to be achieved. Success, in yahoo-yahoo terms, is achieved probably once in a year. Yahoo-plus uses spiritual means to enhance defrauding on the internet. This works to hypnotise victims and make them give anything to the yahoo-plus boys without question (Male, 23 years, Yahoo Boy, 300 Level Student, Accountancy Department, COOU, Igbariam).

Also another IDI participant stated thus:

> Yahoo-yahoo doesn't pay as much as yahoo-plus. Yahoo-plus could be viewed as a higher level of yahoo-yahoo because the perpetrators are known for making more money. Nowadays, ordinary yahoo-yahoo does not hit much money again, because foreigners online are now being more careful than before. That is why guys have to upgrade to the level of yahoo-plus. Yahoo-plus implies the use of traditional charms or what is known as jazz hypnotise the foreigners online to obey them (Male, 23 years, yahoo boy, 300 Level Student, Accountancy Department, COOU, Igbariam).

Table 3: Respondents' views on the spiritual measures that undergraduates who engaged in cybercrimes use

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Ritual murder	32	3.1
Voodoo/Animal Sacrifice	390	38.2
Use of female's blood	326	32.0
Spiritually initiated temporal madness	170	16.7
Others, please specify	102	10.0
Total	1020	100.0

Field Survey, 2023

Table 3 shows respondents' views on the spiritual measures that they think undergraduates who engaged in cybercrimes use. It was observed from the table that majority (38.2%) of the respondents held the view that the spiritual measure undergraduates use in cybercrime is voodoo/animal sacrifice while the least number (3.1%) of them admitted that they used ritual murder. This indicates that the most spiritual measure used in cybercrime by undergraduates is voodoo/animal sacrifice. This finding corroborated with the view of an IDI interviewee, who stated thus;

> Yahoo-plus involves a lot of fetish procedures which include visiting a spiritualist or shrine, for *Oke-Ite* or *Nne-Ite*. Is an advancement of yahoo-yahoo otherwise known as internet fraud. Those engaged in the practice go to the extent of visiting native doctors or chief priest in a shrine, where they are given a calabash or earthen pot prepared with concocted unclean animal parts, blood, roots and herbs. While in the extreme form human parts and blood are involved. This has more potence to give wealth, but not without price. The price ranges from regular killings of goats, rams, cows and humans for ritual sacrifices to fortify and revive the spirit of money. Failure to do so can cause the death of the owner's loved ones or even his own death at last (Male, 25 years, Yahoo boy, 300 Level Student, Electronic and Computer Engineering Department, NAU, Awka).

Yet another IDI participant stated thus:

> Yahoo-plus is the current trend now, which is the shortest and surest means of picking money in the street nowadays. If you dey street, you'll understand better. *Ordinary yahoo no dey pay again, ogwu ka ana-agwo zi o.* So, it is all about getting the right native doctor to do the charm, you'll pay him cash to help you look for and buy the animals to be used for the preparation of the charm, if you don't know where to get those animal requirements. This is called Oke-ite and it is consulted anytime a yahoo-boy wants to go into work online. It helps him to hammer more money

more than anyone doing his own without jazz (Male, 23 years, 400 Level Student, Philosophy Department, NAU, Awka).

Discussion of Findings

The study found that there are various forms of cybercrimes that are more prevalent amongst undergraduates in universities in Anambra State. Majority of the respondents indicated that hacking is the most prevalent form of cybercrime amongst undergraduates of universities in Anambra State; whereas identity theft, ATM Fraud, Illegal lottery scam and E-mail scam and spam are also among the prevalent forms of cybercrimes amongst the undergraduates of universities in Anambra State. This is in corroboration with the findings of Okeshola and Adeta (2013) which indicated that hacking and credit card frauds are the commonest types of cybercrimes.

In addition, the study found that cybercrimes have taken a new dimension which involves diabolic means in achieving desired results by the perpetrators. This finding corroborates the finding made by Tade (2013) where he found that, cybercrimes have taken a fresh twist which now involves the infusion of fetishism and ritual sacrifices, which has resulted in high rate of ritual killings and sacrifices among students on campus and have increased the erosion in moral values and ethos. This finding further revealed that some of the consequences of cybercrimes among the undergraduates of universities in Anambra State include the high rate of killing of female students on campus, psychological trauma and emotional harm to victims, hike in price of goods around the campus and destruction of moral values and etiquette. Morality is no longer *en vogue* because the cybercriminals are now proud to show off their ill-gotten wealth through the widely display of luxurious lifestyle in and around the university milieu.

Conclusion

Undergraduates across universities have turned cybercrimes into source of livelihood. Resulting from this study, it is clear that undergraduates of tertiary institutions in Anambra State are becoming deeply involved in acts of cybercrimes and some of them do not even know the gravity of the offenses but rather take it to be part of hustling for survival while some others know. However, the Nigerian environment is an enabling haven for cybercrime to thrive. This is due to the fact that there are broad band internet network and services nationwide which are uncontrolled and unmonitored. The cyber security checks and monitoring in the Nigerian banking system is equally porous. In addition, the heightened impacts of the technology inertia demonstrated by the relevant law enforcement agencies who ought to be adequately informed and equipped for effective discharge of their duties is an impediment to effective curbing of activities of cyber

criminals in Nigeria. This has become evident in their unprofessional ineptitude in handling cybercrimes phenomena in Nigeria. Thus, there is a pertinent need for the universities management to brace up the challenge of cybercrimes on campus by regular orientation and reorientation of their undergraduates on the dangers of cybercrimes. Also, the need for the federal government to pass a legislation or law providing custodial punishment of maximum prison sentence to convicted cyber criminals, this will help deter Nigeria youth including the undergraduates from all forms of cybercrimes.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made for possible implementation.

1. There should be adequate technological trainings and re-trainings of the law enforcement agents in forensic department and ICT unit. This will help them to be updated and knowledgeable in tackling the new technological innovations that could be deployed by the internet fraudsters. Nevertheless, in the process of recruiting law enforcement agents, emphasis should be laid on computer literacy as well as proficiency in ICT.
2. Nigerian security agencies combating internet crimes, as well as the judiciary should put in additional efforts repealing the plea bargain/out of court settlement they usually opt out for during trials of cyber fraudsters and replace such with a custodial punishment without an option of fine thus, publicising the prosecution of such cybercriminals will send strong message that will deter internet fraudsters at large and potential cybercriminals.
3. There is need for the federal government to pass a legislation/law providing custodial punishment of maximum prison sentence to convicted cyber criminals; as well as confiscation of luxurious property belonging to the convicts without an option of fine or enter into plea bargain with the court; this will help deter Nigeria youth including the undergraduates from all forms of cybercrimes.
4. The government and the society should emphasize merit above material wealth as the basis for social recognition, political appointment and honorary award and recommend promotion in national service on excellent standard performance. This positive step in a right direction will produce in the society genuine social development with lasting positive social impact.
5. Lastly, children, students and adults need to be enriched with the power of the teaching of distinguishing right from wrong. All schools should return to the teaching of moral education in order to empower all students with the spirit of stewardship while adults should live exemplary life, reflecting truth, kindness, dignity of labour and integrity. With all hands-on deck, the evil of corruptible acts like cybercrimes in the minds of our youth will change for positive behaviour.

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