
A Theoretical Perspective on the Effect of Communication on Cybercrimes in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

As the Internet came into widespread commercial use, the nature of computer crimes began to shift. 'While in some crimes, one component of the crime may have been committed using an electronic instrument, in other crimes, the crime as a whole is committed in the online or electronic environment. These crimes, known as cybercrimes, generally occur in the virtual community of the Internet or in cyberspace. As a result of this, all innocent internet users should inculcate the habit of continuously updating their knowledge about the ever changing nature of information technologies. This will enable them to be familiar with any form of internet scam targeted at them. To achieve the aim of the study, survey research method using questionnaire as the major instrument was distributed to the study population. Samples were selected using the systematic random sampling techniques. Chi-square and simple percentage were used in analyzing the data. The study therefore, exposes various cybercrimes in the country as well as the causes, effects and possible solutions to the menace of these various cybercrimes.

Keywords: Cyber-crime, Countermeasures, Fraud, Cyber Criminals, Cyber Space

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1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The Nigerian society which comprises the audience together with other systems such as the political structure, the economic structure etc. is equally in a dependency relationship with the internet. Obviously for economic sustenance the internet as a form of new media need the society, and to satisfy its communication needs – information, education, and entertainment, the society depends on the internet. Consequently it would be ironical if any society, Nigerian society inclusive, would stand aloof and pretend to be totally dissociated from the impact of communication. Irrespective of what we would like to believe, the fact remains that the influence of Communication on nearly every facet of the Nigerian society and culture is monumental. The focus of this study is to observe through some human specimens the double-edged effect of communication on cybercrimes and weigh which impact supersedes the other: the positive or negative influences; and based on the findings to suggest ways to play down on the negative and emphasize the positive impact.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theory adopted for this study is the Media Systems Dependency Theory. This theory was first propounded by Sandra Ball- Rokeach and Melvin DeFleur in 1976. The basic assumption of the theory is that the media, audience and society are believed to have dependency relationships with one another. Each of these three system components depends on the other components in the system by drawing on their resources in order to satisfy its goals. Consequently, in the context of this study, the society depends on the internet and the audience to satisfy its goals, just as the internet depends on the society and the audience to satisfy its goals and visions. According to Ball- Rokeach and DeFleur, as observed by (Miller et al, 2012), dependency is understood as a “relationship in which the satisfaction of needs or the attainment of goals by one party is contingent upon the resources of another party.” Therefore, drawing from the media systems dependency theory, what exists between Communication in the internet and the Nigerian society like any other society is a dependency relationship. The Nigerian society depends on communication in the internet for its goal realization and vice versa. And one of these goals that could be realized through the internet which is part of modern media is creating cultural awareness and development. We seem to be more at home with audience-internet dependencies. Yet it goes deeper than that.

3. METHODOLOGY

This section covers the methods used to address the objectives of the study. The section discusses the research design, research population and sampling technique, the instrument for data collection, the method of data analysis and the analytical software used for the study.

3.1 Research Design

In this study, a survey research design is adopted. Survey is chosen based on the objective of the study. Survey is defined according to Nworgu (2015) a survey studies the sampling of individual units from an already known population and its associated survey data collection techniques, such as questionnaire construction and methods for improving the number and accuracy of responses to survey.

3.2 Population Of The Study

The population of this study comprises all the young adults and the middle adults in some selected local government areas in Lagos state.

3.3 Sampling And Sampling Technique

A sample is a group of unit selected from a larger group (the population). By studying the sample, it is hoped to draw valid conclusions about the larger group (Arsham, 2009: 8). Thus, the researcher adopted random sampling. This is because of the researcher’s belief of its suitability for this very work and the fact that all the respondents are exposed to issues under investigation. A simple random sampling technique will be used to select 100 respondents from the population.

3.4 Method Of Data Collection

The study made use of primary source of data. Concerning the primary source, questionnaire was used to gather the data. The questionnaire was a four-point rating scale (Likert scale), starting from strongly agreed (SA), agreed (A), disagreed (d), and strongly disagreed (SD). The questionnaire was designed in such a way that every question in the questionnaire was related to the research questions and hypothesis of the study. Also the result was used to answer the research questions and test the relevant hypotheses.

3.5 Validity And Reliability Of The Instrument

The instrument was face validated by three experts in the field of measurement and evaluation and research.

3.6 Method Of Data Analysis

The statistical model to be employed for the purpose of this research is chi-square (X^2) test statistics. Chi-square analysis is used to test hypothesis. The choice of chi-square analysis for the study is based on statistics as a test of goodness of fit. It is a measure of the discrepancy existing between observed and expected frequencies. According to Koutsoyannis (2017: 345) the x^2 statistics that is computed must be compared with the critical value to determine whether it falls in the critical region of the chi-square sampling distribution. To investigate the agreement between observed and expected frequencies, the statistics is computed using the formulae:

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(o_i - e_i)^2}{e_i} \dots\dots\dots(1)$$

Where:

- O_i = observed frequency
- e_i = expected frequency
- x^2 = the value of chi-square

A mean score rating method was used to analyse the data based on the 2.5 acceptance region format to answer the research question, while to address the research hypotheses, the chi-square was used.

3.7 Operational Measures Of Variables

Variables are conditions or characteristics that the researcher manipulated control to obtain data. The researcher intends to measure the positive and negative responses together with dependent variables. Independent variables are the cases or the antecedent of the dependence variables. In other words, the only variables available to the researcher are x and y variables.

H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between cybercrime and the economic development in Nigeria
 “X” is an independent variable represents Computer crimes while “Y” is a dependent variable represents significantly affect economic performance in Nigeria.

H_{02} : There is no significant influence of cybercrime on Nigeria’s foreign policy
 “X” is an independent variable represents Countermeasures while “Y” is a dependent variable represents significantly reduced the volume of computer crimes in the Nigerian economy

4. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

This section presents the results of the field study; it shows the descriptive information of the respondents, the results of each of the research questions and the test of hypotheses.

4.1 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

Table 4.1: Distribution of the Respondents based on their Gender

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	50	50.0	50.0	50.0
Valid Female	50	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The table above indicates the distribution of the respondents for this study based on the gender of the respondents. The table showed that the respondents for the study are equally distributed between male and women, as each of the sexes make up of 50% of the total respondents. This is to ensure gender balance in the responses that is sought for in the study.

Table 4.2: Distribution of the Respondents based on their Marital Status

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Married	50	50.0	50.0	50.0
Valid Single	25	25.0	25.0	75.0
Valid Widow	15	15.0	15.0	90.0
Valid Separated	5	5.0	5.0	95.0
Valid Divorced	5	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The tables 4.2 above revealed that majority of the respondents for this study are married as indicated by about 50 percent of the total respondents. The table also shows that about 25 percent of the respondents are single, while the about 15 percent are widows. This indicates that majority of the respondents are with family and children with the attendant responsibilities and maturity that comes with family and children.

Table 4.3: Distribution of the Respondents based on their Age

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Below 20 years	20	20.0	20.0	20.0
Valid 21 -30 years	40	40.0	40.0	60.0
Valid 31-40 years	30	30.0	30.0	90.0
Valid 41 years and above	10	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The table 4.3 above indicates the distribution of the respondents based on their age, the table shows that about 90 percent of the respondents used in this study are less than 40 years of age and this indicates the youthfulness in the category of the respondents used in this study. An indication that they are current with the happenings in the area.

Table 4.4: Distribution of the Respondents based on their Religion

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Christianity	55	55.0	55.0	55.0
Islam	30	30.0	30.0	85.0
Others	15	15.0	15.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The table 4.4 above displays the distribution of the respondents for this study based on their religion, the table indicates that majority of the respondents approximately 55 percent of them are Christians, while about 30 percent are Muslim. This shows that there is a significant number of the Muslims living in the state.

4.2 Answers from the Research Questions

Research Question One: What is the level of cybercrime in Nigeria?

Table 4.5: Responses of the respondents on the level of cybercrime in Nigeria

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid High	75	75.0	75.0	75.0
Moderate	25	25.0	25.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

From the responses of the respondents as indicated on table 4.5 above, we can infer that the level of cybercrime in Nigeria is high. This is owing to the fact that about 75 percent of the total respondents affirm to the assertion as indicated on the table. However, about 25 percent of the respondents failed to agree with the assertion.

Research Question Two: What are the reasons for cybercrime in Nigeria?

Table 4.6: Responses of the respondents on the reasons for cybercrime in Nigeria

S/N	Decision	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
1	Poor cyber security	100	2.6324	1.36330	Accepted
2	Poverty	100	2.8213	.75210	Accepted
3	economic hardship	100	2.1233	.98473	Rejected
4	corruption in the system	100	3.1234	.89893	Accepted
5	high unemployment rate	100	2.6453	1.20605	Accepted
6	Greediness	100	1.8122	.40202	Rejected
7	lack of self-control	100	2.6324	.36440	Accepted
8	poor societal and moral values	100	2.1213	.78210	Rejected
	Valid N (listwise)	100			

From the responses of the respondents as indicated on 4.6 above, it can be inferred that the reasons for cybercrime in Nigeria include but not limited to poor cyber security; poverty, corruption in the system; high unemployment rate and lack of self-control. All these are as agreed by the majority of the respondents.

Research Question Three: How can the government curb cybercrime in Nigeria?

Table 4.7: Responses of the respondents on how government can curb cybercrime in Nigeria

S/N	Decision	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
1	by improving the economic condition of the masses	100	2.6324	1.36330	Accepted
2	by poverty reduction	100	2.8213	.75210	Accepted
3	equipping the law enforcement agencies for effectiveness	100	2.1233	.98473	Rejected
4	by reducing the level of corruption in the system	100	3.1234	.89893	Accepted
5	by creating more jobs	100	2.6453	1.20605	Accepted
6	value reorientation	100	2.8122	.40202	Accepted
7	ensuring cyber security	100	2.6324	.36440	Accepted
	Valid N (listwise)	100			

From the responses of the respondents and based on the mean score averages, we can infer that the government can curb cybercrime in Nigeria by improving the economic condition of the masses; by reduction in the level of poverty; by reducing the level of corruption in the system; by creating more jobs for the youths; by value reorientation and by ensuring cyber security.

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

HYPOTHESIS ONE

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between cybercrime and the economic development in Nigeria

Decision rule: Reject the null hypothesis if the Asymp level of significant is less than 0.05. Otherwise, do not reject the null hypothesis.

Table 4.8 Test of hypothesis table one

Test Statistics

	there is no significant relationship between cybercrime and the economic development in Nigeria
Chi-Square	23.876 ^a
Df	3
Asymp. Sig.	.030

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 25.0.

Conclusion

Since the Asymp Sig. level of this the test is 0.030 which is far much lower than the 0.05 acceptance region, we therefore reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant relationship between cybercrime and the economic development in Nigeria.

HYPOTHESIS TWO

Ho₂: There is no significant influence of cybercrime on Nigeria's foreign policy

Decision rule: Reject the null hypothesis if the Asymp level of significant is less than 0.05. Otherwise, do not reject the null hypothesis.

Table 4.8 Test of hypothesis table one

Test Statistics

	There is no significant influence of cybercrime on Nigeria's foreign policy
Chi-Square	23.876 ^a
df	3
Asymp. Sig.	.030

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 25.0.

Conclusion

Since the Asymp Sig. level of this the test is 0.030 which is far much lower than the 0.05 acceptance region, we therefore reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant influence of cybercrime on Nigeria's foreign policy.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study focused on the impact of cybercrime in Nigeria (a case study of Lagos state). The study was set to address three objectives which include:

- i) To inquire the level of cybercrimes in Nigeria.
- ii) To establish the reasons for cybercrime in Nigeria.
- iii) To evaluate how the government curb cybercrime in Nigeria.

Based on the above stated objectives and the study carried out, the following findings were made:

- i. That the level of cybercrime in Nigeria is high.
- ii. That the reasons for cybercrime in Nigeria include but not limited to poor cyber security; poverty, corruption in the system; high unemployment rate and lack of self-control.
- iii. That the government can curb cybercrime in Nigeria by improving the economic condition of the masses; by reduction in the level of poverty; by reducing the level of corruption in the system; by creating more jobs for the youths; by value reorientation and by ensuring cyber security.
- iv. That there is a significant relationship between cybercrime and the economic development in Nigeria.
- v. That there is a significant influence of cybercrime on Nigeria's foreign policy.

The main purpose of this study was to assess the impact of cybercrime in Nigeria (a case study of Lagos state). All the young adults and the middle adults in some selected local government areas in Lagos state were selected for the study. Three research questions guided the study with two research hypotheses.

In this study, a survey research design was adopted, the population comprises the young adults and the middle adults in some selected local government areas in Lagos state, a simple random sampling technique was used to select 100 respondents from the population and a questionnaire was the instrument for data collection. Relevant literatures were reviewed which guided the objectives and methodology of this study. As result of the field study and analysis of results, the following findings were made:

- i. That the level of cybercrime in Nigeria is high.
- ii. That the reasons for cybercrime in Nigeria include but not limited to poor cyber security; poverty, corruption in the system; high unemployment rate and lack of self-control.
- iii. that the government can curb cybercrime in Nigeria by improving the economic condition of the masses; by reduction in the level of poverty; by reducing the level of corruption in the system; by creating more jobs for the youths; by value reorientation and by ensuring cyber security.
- iv. That there is a significant relationship between cybercrime and the economic development in Nigeria.
- v. That there is a significant influence of cybercrime on Nigeria's foreign policy.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- i. This study recommends that cyber security should be beefed up across cyber cafes in Nigeria and Lagos state in particular. A body should be set up to carry out close inspection on cyber owners and users; to monitor what people upload and download from the internet.
- ii. The government should provide jobs and skill acquisition centers for teeming Nigerian youths as a way of reducing unemployment and getting them meaningfully engaged to their advantage and that of the society at large.
- vi. Just as revealed in the study, the government can curb cybercrime in Nigeria by improving the economic condition of the masses; by reduction in the level of poverty; by reducing the level of corruption in the system; by creating more jobs for the youths; by value reorientation and by ensuring cyber security.
- vii. Schools, churches and the media should help preach against cybercrime. They should expose its effects to individuals and society at large.
- viii. Similarly, parents have a role to play in curbing cybercrime. They should duly inform their wards against it.

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APPENDIX QUESTIONNAIRE

Instruction: Please tick (√) in the boxes provided answers precisely where written answer is needed.

SECTION A (PERSONAL DATA)

1. Gender
 - a. Male [] Female []
2. Marital Status
 - a. Single () b. Married ()
3. An advertising practitioner:
 - a. Yes [] No []
4. Age:
 - a. 18-25 [] 26-40 [] 41-60 []
 - b.

SECTION B (THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS)

What is the level of cybercrime in Nigeria?

High [] Moderate [] Low []

What are the reasons for cybercrime in Nigeria?

S/N	Statements	SD	D	A	SA
1	Poor cyber security				
2	Poverty				
3	economic hardship				
4	corruption in the system				
5	high unemployment rate				
6	Greediness				
7	lack of self-control				
8	poor societal and moral values				

How can the government curb cybercrime in Nigeria?

S/N	Statements	SD	D	A	SA
1	by improving the economic condition of the masses				
2	by poverty reduction				
3	equipping the law enforcement agencies for effectiveness				
4	by reducing the level of corruption in the system				
5	by creating more jobs				
6	value reorientation				
7	ensuring cyber security				

Thank you.