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KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND PRACTICE OF CYBERCRIME AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The Internet, which has opened a vast array of possibilities for the young and the old in the social, economic, education, health and other sectors, has been flawed by the rise in internet crimes regarded as unethical use of the computer and internet which could cripple the nation's economy if not given attention. These include cyber fraud (yahoo-yahoo), plagiarism, pornography, and piracy of software. Reports have shown that perpetrators of these cybercrimes have been assumed to be youths usually within the ages of 15 and 30 years. Despite various efforts put in place to address the menace it appears the unwanted practice still persists. It seems that youngsters enter into the practice ignorantly and with confused attitude to it. Therefore, this paper investigated students' awareness of computer ethics, knowledge, attitude to and practice of computer ethics among Junior Secondary School 3 students in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. The study is a descriptive survey design using with a total of eighty-five (85) participants. The results show that majority of the students were aware of the ethical and unethical use of the computer/internet, few of the respondents are very knowledgeable as regards computer ethics and they have a positive attitude towards computer ethics. Each of the respondents engages in more than two unethical ways of using the computer/internet. The paper concludes that secondary school students engage in unethical use of computer/ internet despite their awareness, knowledge and a show of positive attitude to ethical use of computer/internet. It is recommended that appropriate legal measures should be taken to curb the practice among secondary students in Nigeria.

Keywords: Cybercrime, Cyberethics, Internet, Knowledge, Attitude

Introduction

The twenty-first century has been trademarked with the invention and the use of the internet for virtually everything. The internet is a significant and essential tool in every aspect of human activities; it has turned to an important contrivance that has become a part and parcel of the century. Truly, the internet has assumed a significant part of daily life and has turned to an essential tool for facilitating academic activities in the digital era. The Internet can be regarded as a rich, multidimensional, ever-changing textual environment which provides several opportunities for academics. The internet has transformed the teaching-learning process and also the school academic work. Internet access and use among secondary school students has contributed to their academic work and improves their final grades

(Almasi, Machumu, and Zhu, 2017). The internet is a platform, whereby students learn faster and gain more knowledge. Emeka and Nyeche (2016) posited that the internet today is a worldwide entity whose nature cannot be easily or simply defined. Amaoge and Ejike (2016) believed that the internet has become an unchanging asset in education in terms of learning, teaching and research. By implication, the affordances of the internet have tremendous contributions to the progress experienced in the academia of this century.

In spite of these great benefits of the internet, it has been fouled with an increase in its use for illegal purposes or unethical use, such as; software piracy, hacking, plagiarism, cyber war, flaming, computer viruses, pornography, fraud to mention a few. Okeshola and Adeta (2013) claimed that the information technology revolution connected with

the internet has brought about two edge functions: that is on one hand, it has contributed positive values to the world; while on the other hand, it has produced so many inconsistencies that threaten the order of the society and also producing a new wave of crime to the world. The internet which unites millions of computers in different countries with lots of opportunities to obtain and exchange information is now being used for criminal purposes and financial gains referred to as cybercrimes (Olumoye, 2013).

Cybercrimes are unlawful acts of using the computer and the internet either as a tool for causing havocs, arousing unhealthy passions, or stealing from unsuspecting targeted persons and organisations. These antisocial acts include fraud, forgery, identity theft, phishing scams, spams, junk e-mails, pornography, online gambling, intellectual property crime, cyber defamation, cyber stalking. It also includes unauthorized access to computer networks, electronic information theft, denial of service attacks, use of malware and malicious codes, e-mail bombing, logic bombs, web jacking, internet time theft, Trojan attacks and salami attacks (Kamini, 2011). Salami attacks is a typical cybercrime in which the perpetrator adds a small amount of money to the debt which an account holder would not easily detect but it is credited to the intruder's bank account. The vulnerability of these crimes has plagued our society and the youth has been found to be the main culprits in this menace of unethical way of using computer and the internet. This assertion is in line with the reports of Zero Tolerance (2006) and Omodunbi, Odiase, Olaniyan, Olatayo and Esan (2016) which indicated that perpetrators of these cybercrimes are youths, usually within the ages of 18 and 30 years and they indulge in the crime in order to survive and have a good taste of life. In addition, the commander of the special anti-robbery squad of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja, Nigeria noted that over 90% of crime suspects arrested in Abuja are youths between the ages of 15-25 years. He remarked that increasing criminal activities of these youths pose threat to the security of life and properties as well as the economy (The Punch Newspaper, 2007) cited in (Surajo, 2016).

Thus, it appears that there is a need to address certain factors that might be associated with the menace under discussion. The factors include; students' awareness of computer ethics, and knowledge, attitude to, and practice of unethical

computer and internet practices. According to a study carried out by Oyewole (2017) on the awareness and perception of computer ethics by undergraduates of a Nigerian University, the level of awareness of respondents on issues related to computer ethics was high. Similarly, a study conducted by Adetimirin (2017) on Library and Information Science doctoral students' awareness and knowledge of cyberethics revealed that the level of awareness and knowledge of cyberethics among university of Ibadan and University of Ilorin students were high (>83.4% and >73.5% respectively). The result revealed that University of Ilorin students showed a higher level of awareness and knowledge than university of Ibadan students. In line with the above studies, Maina, Maina, and Jauro, (2014) investigated an ethical issue which is plagiarism from a Northern Nigerian university. The study showed that the proportion of students whose awareness of plagiarism was partial (63%) and those completely unaware (20%) were higher than those who claimed to be aware of it (17%). Similar efforts should be directed towards providing evidence of secondary school students, level of awareness and knowledge of cybercrimes.

In addition, attitude to cybercrime is another factor that should be considered in a bid to tackle the menace in the society. Generally, attitude is defined as an individual's inclination to react to a thing or fact around (Cabi, 2016). It is a psychological construct, a mental and emotional entity that inheres in, or characterizes a person. Research efforts on attitude toward cybercrime or unethical use of the computer/internet include Siegfried (2004) and Acilar & Aydemir (2010) whose works on students' attitude towards software piracy, plagiarism and related issues of computer ethics concluded that unethical behaviour creates serious economic, social and financial damages which have been found to have a significant relationship with students' attitude. It was gathered from the studies that students generally feel that copying commercial software and downloading music from the Internet was acceptable. Students do not see any problem with downloading music over the Internet and to them, unauthorized copying of commercial software is not wrong. These attitudes of students towards computer ethics might have brought about the rise in the practice of cybercrime or unethical use of the computer and the internet. Therefore, it becomes expedient to investigate secondary school students' knowledge,

attitude and practice of unethical use of the computer and the internet.

Statement of the Problem

The Internet, which has opened a vast array of possibilities for the young and the old in the social, economic, education, health and other sectors, has been flawed by the rise in internet crimes. These are regarded as unethical use of the computer and internet which could cripple the nation's economy if not given attention. The perpetrations include cyber fraud (yahoo-yahoo), plagiarism, pornography, and piracy of software. Reports have shown that perpetrators of these cybercrimes have been assumed to be youths usually within the ages of 15 and 30 years. Despite various efforts put in place to address the menace it appears the unwanted practices still persist. Perhaps, the youngsters enter into the practice ignorantly and with mixed attitude. Therefore, this paper investigated students' awareness of computer ethics, knowledge, attitude to and practice of computer ethics among Junior Secondary School 3 students in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. Are students aware of unethical use of computer and the internet?
2. How knowledgeable are students about the unethical use of computer and the internet?
3. What is the students' attitude towards unethical use of computer and the internet?
4. What percentage of students engages in unethical use of computer and the internet?

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey design to investigate the knowledge, attitude and practice of unethical use of computer and the internet among junior secondary school 3 students in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. The purposive sampling technique was used to select two government schools and two private schools from Ibadan North Local Government of the state. The conditions for selection were willingness to participate; permission to distribute questionnaires to their Junior Secondary School 3 students and whose Junior Secondary School 3 students have been

taught the topic "Computer Ethics" either in Junior Secondary School 1 or Junior Secondary School 2. The population for the study was all Junior Secondary School 3 students in Ibadan, Oyo state. A total of eighty-five (85) Junior Secondary School 3 students from four (4) secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State participated in the study.

The study made use of two validated research instruments namely, Students' knowledge on Ethical and Unethical Use of Computer/ Internet (SKEUUCI) and Students Attitude towards Unethical Use of Computer/Internet (SAUUCI) questionnaires. These instruments were subjected to experts' scrutiny regarding content validation. Furthermore,

Students' knowledge of Ethical and Unethical Use of Computer/ Internet (SKEUUCI) was validated using Cronbach alpha at a coefficient of 0.86, while, The Students Attitude towards Unethical Use of Computer/Internet (SAUUCI) questionnaire was while Students Practice of Misuse of Computer/Internet (SAMCI) was 0.88

The study used the following procedure to obtain relevant data:

- Step 1: Researchers visit participating schools for approval and cooperation of the school authority.
- Step 2: Researchers meet respondents and explain purpose of the questionnaire
- Step 3: Researchers administer questionnaire and cybercrime achievement test to participants
- Step 4: Researchers retrieves the questionnaires and test from the respondents

The data for this study were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics.

Results

Research Question 1: Are students aware of the unethical use of computer and the internet?

Figure 1 shows that 7.5% of the participants were not aware of misuse of the computer and internet, 26.7% were not too aware, 32.5% were aware while 33.3% of the participants were very much aware of misuses of computer and internet.



Fig 1: Students' awareness of ethical and unethical use of computer and the Internet.

Research Question 2: How knowledgeable are students about the unethical use of computer and the internet?

The result in the figure 2 shows that 4.7% of the students are not knowledgeable about the ethical

and unethical use of computer and the internet, 35.3% were not too knowledgeable, 52.9% were knowledgeable, while 7.1% were very knowledgeable about the ethical and unethical use of computer and the internet.

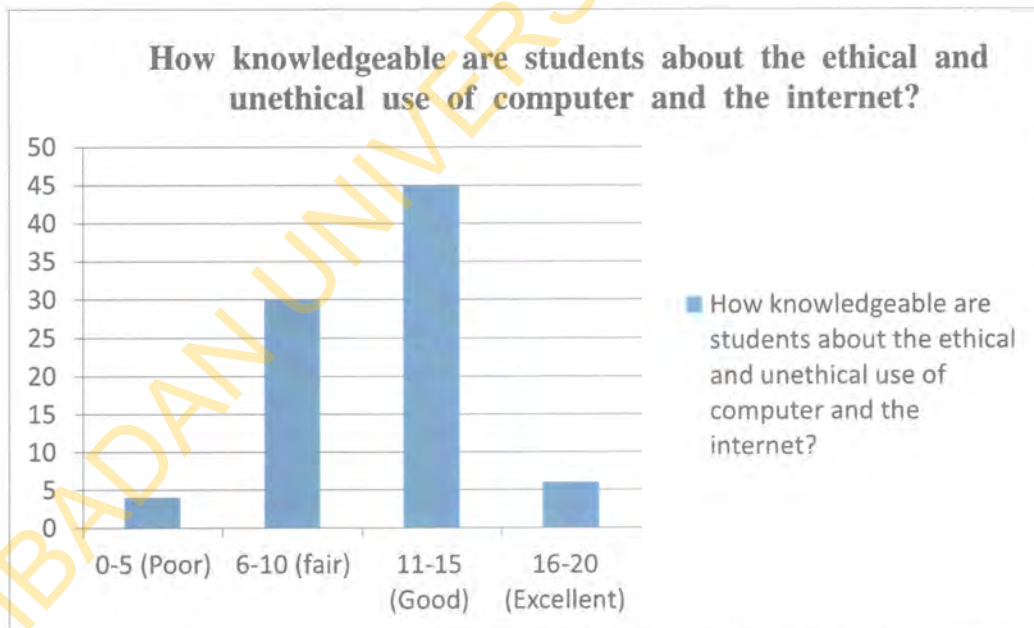


Fig 2: Students knowledgeable about the ethical and unethical use of computer and the internet

Research Question 3: What is the students' attitude towards unethical use of computer and the internet?

Table 1 revealed the responses of the respondent's attitude towards unethical use of computer and the internet that were significant above weighted average. The rating is as follows: I do not like creating codes which might cause disruption to

people's work (3.60); I do not like making copies of audio CDs or video CDs for sale without due permission (3.47), I will like to learn codes that can cause problem to people's system (3.53), I like watching videos of naked people so far it is on the internet (3.48 I like mischievous ways of getting money from people for my benefits (3.16).

Table 1: Students' attitude towards unethical use of computer and the internet

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	STD.D
1	I do not like creating codes which might cause disruption to people's work	51 60.0%	34 40.0%	0	0	3.60	0.493
2	I do not like making copies of audio CDs or video CDs for sale without due permission	44 51.8%	37 43.5%	4 4.7%	0	3.47	0.589
3	I will like to learn codes that can cause problem to people's system	45 51.8%	40 52.9%	0	0	3.53	0.502
4	I like watching videos of naked people so far it is on the internet	45 52.9%	36 42.4%	4 4.7%	0	3.48	0.590
5	I will not mind learning how to get money from people on the web by telling lies	8 9.4%	12 14.1%	61 71.8%	4 4.7%	2.28	0.701
6	I would not like people I am talking with on the internet to know my real Identity	16 18.8%	30 35.3%	31 36.5%	8 9.4%	2.54	1.097
7	I like guessing passwords to open people's phone or laptop	12 14.1%	57 67.1%	12 14.1%	4 4.7%	2.91	0.684
8	I like mischievous ways of getting money from people for my benefits	26 30.6%	47 55.3%	12 14.1%	0	3.16	0.652
9	I like duplicating video CDs or audio CDs without permission from the producer	16 18.8%	65 76.5%	4 4.7%	0	3.14	0.467
10	I do not like copying information from the internet if I do not know the source	51 60.0%	34 40.0%	0	0	3.60	0.493
11	I like using cheat for my computer games for me to get the highest score	44 51.8%	37 43.5%	4 4.7%	0	3.47	0.589
12	I do not like abusing people over the internet	45 52.9%	40 47.1%		0	3.53	0.502
13	I love making two people fight over the internet by telling each one things that can annoy them about each other	45 52.9%	36 42.4%	4 4.7%	0	3.48	0.590
14	I love copying anything from the internet and use them as if it is mine	8 9.4%	12 14.1%	61 71.8%	4 4.7%	2.28	0.701
15	I do not like learning codes that can break people's password	16 18.8%	30 35.3%	31 36.5%	8 9.4%	2.54	1.097
16	I do not like people around me watching naked people's pictures on the internet	12 14.1%	57 67.1%	12 14.1%	4 4.7%	2.91	0.684
17	I like abusing people on any whatsapp group I belong	26 30.6%	47 55.3%	12 14.1%	0	3.16	0.652
18	I do not like getting password to a Wi-Fi I do not know the owner	16 18.8%	65 76.5%	4 4.7%	0	3.14	0.467
19	I hate using the internet for examination malpractice	51 60.0%	34 40.0%	0	0	3.60	0.493
20	I love bullying on people on the social media platforms I am a member	44 51.8%	37 43.5%	4 4.7%	0	3.47	0.589
	Weighted mean	3.16					

In addition, I like duplicating video CDs or audio CDs without permission from the producer (3.14), I do not like copying information from the internet if I do not know the source, (3.60), I like using cheat for my computer games for me to get the highest score (3.47), I do not like abusing people over the internet (3.53), I love making two people fight over the internet by telling each one things that can annoy them about each other (3.48), I like abusing people on any WhatsApp group I belong (3.16), I do not like getting password to a Wi-Fi I do not know the owner (3.14), I hate using the internet for examination malpractice (3.60) and I love bullying on people on the social media platforms I am a member (3.47). Result further revealed a weighted mean of 3.16.

Research Question 4: What percentage of students engages in unethical use of computer and the internet?

Table 2 reveals the percentage of students who engage in unethical use of computer and the internet. The rating is as follows: Computer virus (I write codes to destroy people's computer) (3.60) was ranked highest by the mean scores ratings and was followed by Pornography (I Watch nude pictures or videos on the internet) (3.53), Piracy of software (I duplicate video CDs and Audio CDs) (3.48), Hacking (I open people's phone or laptop by guessing their password) (3.37) and Plagiarism (I copy text from the internet without putting the authors name) (3.16).

Table 2: What percentage of students engages in unethical use of computer and the internet?

S/N	Items	Never	1-5 times	6-10 times	Above 10 times	Mean	STD.D
1	Computer virus (I write codes to destroy people's computer)	0	0	51 60.0%	34 40.0%	3.60	0.493
2	Hacking (I open people's phone or laptop by guessing their password)	0	4 4.7%	37 43.5%	44 51.8%	3.47	0.589
3	Pornography (I Watch nude pictures or videos on the internet)	0	0	45 52.9%	40 47.1%	3.53	0.502
4	Piracy of software (I duplicate video CDs and Audio CDs)	4 4.7%	61 71.8%	12 14.1%	8 9.4%	3.48	0.590
5	Fraud (I chat people to get money by telling lies)	8 9.4%	31 36.5%	30 35.3%	16 18.8%	2.28	0.701
6	Flaming (I abuse on the internet or a WhatsApp group)	4 4.7%	12 14.1%	57 67.1%	12 14.1%	2.54	1.097
7	Cyber-war (I cause fight on the internet or a WhatsApp group)	0	4 4.7%	36 42.4%	45 52.9%	2.91	0.684
8	Plagiarism (I copy text from the internet without putting the authors name)	0	12 14.1%	47 55.3%	26 30.6%	3.16	0.52
	Weighted mean	3.12					

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study indicated that 7.5% of the participants were not aware of misuse of the computer and internet, 26.7% were not too aware, 32.5% were aware while 33.3% of the participant were very much aware of misuse of computer and the internet. This implies that over 50% of the respondents are not very much aware of the ethical and unethical use of the computer and the internet. The study is in line with Maina, Maina, and Jauro (2014) who also investigated the ethical issue of computer in a Northern Nigerian University. Their study showed that the proportion of students whose awareness of plagiarism was partial (63%) and those completely unaware (20%) were higher than those are aware of it (17%). However, the study does not support Oyewole (2017) and Adetimirin (2017) who reported that the level of awareness of respondents on computer ethics was high.

Similarly, findings of this study indicated that 4.7% of the students are not knowledgeable about the ethical and unethical use of computer and the internet, 35.3% were not too knowledgeable, 52.9% were knowledgeable while 7.1% were very knowledgeable about the ethical and unethical use of computer and the internet. The result obtained infers that the 40% of the respondents lack the knowledge of computer ethics while 52.9% of the respondents do not have adequate knowledge of the ethical and unethical use of the computer/Internet. The study also revealed the following significant mean scores of respondents' responses regarding attitude towards unethical use of computer and the internet. The rating is as follows; I do not like creating codes which might cause disruption to people's work (3.60), I do not like making copies of audio CDs or video CDs for sale without due permission (3.47), I will like to learn codes that can cause problem to people's system (3.53), I like watching videos of naked people so far it is on the internet (3.48), I like mischievous ways of getting money from people for my benefits (3.16), I like duplicating video CDs or audio CDs without permission from the producer (3.14), I do not like copying information from the internet if I do not know the source (3.60), I like using cheat for my computer games for me to get the highest score (3.47), I do not like abusing people over the internet (3.53), I love making two people fight over the internet by telling each one things that can annoy them about each other (3.48), I like abusing people on any WhatsApp group I belong (3.16), I

hate using the internet for examination malpractice (3.60) and I love bullying on people on the social media platforms I am a member (3.47). Results further revealed a weighted mean of 3.16, this indicated that, the level of students' attitude towards unethical use of computer and the internet is on the high side.

Finally, results of the study revealed the dimension and direction of students' engagement in unethical use of computer and the internet. The ratings of the items that addressed the issue are as follow; introduction of computer virus (I write codes to destroy people's computer) was ranked highest (3.60) followed by Pornography (I Watch nude pictures or videos on the internet) (3.53), Piracy of software (I duplicate video CDs and Audio CDs) (3.48), Hacking (I open people's phone or laptop by guessing their password) (3.37) and Plagiarism (I copy text from the internet without putting the authors name) (3.16). Interestingly, the study indicated that all the respondents engage in more than two of the unethical practices listed.

Conclusion

This study was designed to investigate students' awareness of computer ethics, knowledge, attitude to and practice of computer ethics among Junior Secondary School 3 students in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. The outcomes of the study showed that majority of the students are very much aware of the ethical and unethical use of the computer/internet, few of the respondents are very knowledgeable of computer ethics. The respondents have a positive attitude towards computer ethics while each one of the respondents engages in more than two unethical ways of using the computer/internet.

Recommendations

In respect of the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Primary and secondary school students should be taught extensively computer ethics
2. Curriculum planners should emphasize attitudinal objectives on ethical use of computer and the internet.
3. Teachers should direct the teaching of related topics on ethical use of computer and the internet towards imbining the right attitude towards the use of computer and the internet.
4. Social media policy and laws should be strictly

adhered to and anyone who violates such should be punished severely.

5. Seminars and workshop programmes aimed at training and re-training on ethical ways to use the computer and the dangers of unethical use of the computer and the internet should be conducted to sensitize on regular basis.
6. Jingles and other advertisements targeted at curbing unethical use of the computer and the internet should be tactically designed and disseminated to the generality of the public.

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