

The Oblique Cord Of Cyber Marauders in Nigeria; Implications for Policy Development

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Abstract

This study investigates nexus between social conformity and cybercrime among residents of Benin City. This study adopted the survey design method and was carried out in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. The study utilized quantitative and qualitative approaches of data collection, while the data were analysed with descriptive statistics and content analysis of the qualitative data. The study adopted a sample size of 410 from a projected population figure of Benin City. The retrieved data were sorted and analysed using descriptive statistics with a criterion mean of 2.5. It was discovered from the study that Nigerian society emphasizes certain goals but does not pay much attention to how the goals are actualized. Hence, people adopt measures within and, in some cases, beyond their reach to achieve their goals, including not conforming to social norms.

Keywords: Cybercrime; Social policy; Development; Internet fraud; Nigeria

1.0 Introduction

The development of the Internet and the increased access to computer technology has created opportunities for labour and business activities necessary to improve work performance globally (Odumesi, 2014). It has revolutionized modern age-long socioeconomic activities by providing real-time communication, speedy growth and development of business/financial transactions, data transfer, and easy access to information (Jegdede, 2015). The Internet's rapid diffusion and digitization of economic activities have also led to the emergence of a new breed of criminals. It provides people who have deviant motives to explore and defraud other unsuspecting internet users with a greater amount of anonymity (Nidaland & Brooks, 2020).

The intentions of internet diffusion lies in the need to promote more authenticated methods of transmitting information that are capable of supporting electronic and commercial issues. Contrary to this general expectation, the medium has become a preferred channel that attracts the daily mass of cybercriminals looking for victims to defraud, as several functionalities of modern-day internet users are not vulnerability proof, thus it exposes an average internet user of becoming victims of cybercrime (Dagaci Aliyu Manbe, Sule, Magaji & Damagun, 2014). In Nigeria, the get-rich syndrome of youths seems to have undermined the values and resulted in the emergence of a new breed of criminals with so much attention paid to the stupendous wealth an individual holds without bothering about the sources of such wealth. This perhaps struck the oblique cord of cyber marauders who lock around for soft targets. A lot of studies have been conducted on

cybercrime from the angle of poverty and its impact on the economy, but none have viewed it from the perspective of rot and decay in the value system in Benin City. Hence, the gaps in knowledge the study aims to fill. This study therefore investigates the nexus between social conformity and cybercrime among residents in Benin City.

2.0 Statement of the Research Problem

Cybercrime are criminal activities perpetuated by people using computers or the internet. It has existed for many years and has become a serious concern for individuals, organizations, and society at large (Riek & Bohme, 2018). Cybercrime is a global trending social issue and it seems that law enforcement agencies are not able to effectively prosecute offenders (Ribadu, 2007).

In recent years, the economic, political, and social impacts of this crime have received considerable attention, yet the problem of cybercrime has remained unabated, particularly in Nigeria (Nigerian Communication Commission, final report, 2024), where it was reported that it has assumed a worrisome dimension and defiled efforts of law enforcement agencies, thereby causing an increase in several cases of a cyber-security violation. This crime is majorly perpetuated by youths within 18-45 years who take advantage of the fast growing information technology to swindle private and public businesses of hard-earned money and valuables. The rate of involvement in these criminal activities among Nigerian youth is very alarming. Nigerian image has continued to be soiled in the international community and listed among top countries with cyber hotspots globally.

In 2009, Nigeria was listed third among the top ten cybercrime hot spots in the world (National White Collar Crime Centre and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2010). In 2015, the Information Security Network Society of Nigeria revealed that about 25% of cybercrime in Nigeria was unresolved, while the Central Bank of Nigeria in 2015 reported that 70% of attempted or successful fraud/forgery cases in the Nigerian banking sector were perpetrated via electronic channel (Awahefeada & Ohwomeregwa, 2020). Earning from cybercrime activities was estimated to exceed one trillion dollars from 2017 to 2020, and the damage cost exceeded six trillion dollars by the end of 2021, and the trend has remained unabated. The provision of the internet for work, business, and leisure without adequate protection of cyberspace further exacerbates the vulnerabilities of users. Sadly, not so many Nigerians are aware that the internet super highway has been invaded by criminals and deviants who lurk around desperately looking for targets. As such, the unguarded, naïve, and casual internet users often fall prey to these fraudsters, thereby increasing the rate of cybercrime and deviant acts in the context especially in Nigeria (Ndubueze, Igbo, & Okoye, 2013). This perhaps is due to poverty, bad governance, high rate of unemployment, erosion of traditional values of integrity, quick-money syndrome, and greed, amongst others (Adejoh et al., 2019).

Poverty in Nigeria, for instance, is a paradox because the country is rich but most of the citizens are abjectly poor (Adesina, 2017). Poverty in Nigeria, like in most developing nations of Africa, is widespread and increases by the day. It is a threat to economic and social stability (Odumosu, 1999). Due to the increase in poverty, many Nigerians have suffered inadequate shelter, lack of remunerative employment, exploitation, and insecurity of life and property. This high level of poverty coupled with a high level of economic and social aspiration perhaps set the stage for criminal activities like cybercrime (Odumosu, 1999). People who are thwarted in attaining desired social and economic goals legally may seek to obtain them illegally. This explains the increase in cybercrime among youth in

Nigeria. Cybercrime is one of the popular forms of deviant acts among young people in Nigeria today (Ojedokun & Eraye, 2012; Tade & Aliyu, 2011). The perpetrators are well-received by people and social institutions when they make illegitimate money; hence, the increasing justification of illegality in this context (Adeniran, 2008; Ninalowo, 2016). The Nigerian society, characterized by a high level of inequality, places much emphasis on social conformity without adequate provision for equal playing ground for all to thrive in achieving the goal. The societal goal is emphasized without adequate attention to the means. The study therefore examines the impact of conformity to social value on cybercrime in Benin City.

3.0 Aims and Objectives of the Study

The main aim of this study was to examine the impact of social conformity on cybercrime in Benin City. The objectives include;

- i. identify the causes of cybercrime in Benin City
- ii. to ascertain the impact of social conformity on cybercrime in Benin City

4.0 Research Questions

The research questions that informed this study were:

- i. What are the causes of cybercrime in Benin City?
- ii. What are the impacts of social conformity on cybercrime in Benin City?

5.0 Literature Review

Technological advancement and socio-political developments in modern society are intricately interwoven with each complementing the other (Jegdede, 2015). The most accessible in recent times lies in the area of internet communication technology aimed at promoting social, economic, industrial, and political growth across the globe. ICT is driven by Internet technologies and provides governments, businesses, and individuals with the services and capabilities necessary to improve work performance. Thus, ICT has revolutionized modern-age socio-political activities by providing real-time communication, speedy growth and development of business and financial transactions, data transfer, as well as easy access to information (Jegdede, 2015). Unfortunately, it also provides individuals with deviant capabilities an avenue to explore and defraud other internet users with a greater amount of anonymity (Nidaland & Brooks, 2020). Cybercrime is fast becoming one of the most prevalent crimes plaguing and devastating Nigeria. Regrettably, Nigeria has a reputation for cybercrime in the international community as one of the hotspots (Abokwara, 2024) and cybercrime in Nigeria could be linked to several factors that include but are not limited to unemployment, poverty, social conformity, and peer influence, amongst others.

Several factors predispose people to partake in the act of crime and this includes push or pulls factors that subject people who might not need crime to crime. There are so many predisposing factors, but in this study, they are grouped into three categories. They are the individualized factor, the family factor, and the societal factor. For example, the quest to get wealth without working for it is a factor that facilitates cybercrime (Ibrahim, 2016).

6.0 Theoretical framework

The study adopted the strain theory to explain the nexus between social conformity and crime among youths in Nigeria. This theory argues that crime occurs because legitimate means of achieving cultural/societal goals are blocked; thus, illegitimate means are used to achieve legitimate goals (Merton, 1956-1968). According to the theory, crime does not occur in isolation; rather, it is facilitated by societal expectations, which most often are not

readily available due to inequality in society. The strain theory opined that crime, and delinquency, occurs as a result of the feelings generated by negative relationships with others. Thus, people engage in delinquent behavior because they experience strains and stressors in an attempt to achieve society's means of achieving set goals. Behavior such as cybercrime is rather corrective actions taken to cope with social and economic demands as well as pressures from the home and society (Nwakanma, 2015). It is the conflict between cultural goals and the availability of using institutional means to achieve the set goals that produce a trend towards anomie. Hence, Robert K. Merton (1968:220) argued that deviance depends on the extent to which society provides the means to achieve cultural goals. For Merton, cybercrime is one of the reactions to the societal roadblocks in achieving socially accepted goals, which many join to alleviate themselves from their economic situations (Nwakanma, 2015). Merton noted that certain goals are strongly emphasized throughout society, for example, financial success.

The society also emphasizes (legitimizes) certain means to reach those goals. And when these goals (like financial success) are too strongly stressed, the stage is set for anomie. Not everyone has equal access to the achievement of legitimate financial success. The lower-class individuals, for example, are often prevented from achieving such goals through legitimate channels (Cullen and Agnew, 1999) and, as a result, may drift to anomie (Odumosu, 1999). Due to social disorganization, the approved means to societal goals are not readily available to certain groups in society, even though the goals are said to apply equally to all. Certain groups of people, like the lower social class and minorities, for instance, may be at a disadvantage in gaining business positions that would allow them to pursue the goal of financial success. When this inequality exists, reflecting the structure of society itself, Merton views the social structure as anomie. Given the evidence that there are several segments of society in which legitimate avenues to success are severely restricted, without a corresponding reduction in the emphasis on achievement, Nigerian society seems to be in a permanent state of anomie. The individuals caught in this web of anomic conditions (largely the lower classes) are then faced with the strain of being unable to reconcile their aspirations with their limited opportunities (Odumosu, 1999).

The theory posited that people who experience strain in meeting societal set goals are likely to feel anomie (normlessness) because the accepted and dominant norms seem not to be taking them anywhere. Society sets cultural goals without equal access to society's institutionalized means, that is, the legitimate means to achieve that goal or success. This inability to achieve the society-set goal of success causes strain or frustrations that motivate the actor to deviate from the existing normative orders. Coser (1997) noted that there is always a gap between what people want and what they can get. Hence, this discrepancy between what people want and what they can get creates social pressures that lead to deviance. That is, the conformity order of behavior loses its force when culturally valued goals (money, material comfort, success) are not compatible with the socially approved means of achieving them. Such as diligence, drift self-discipline, the ideology that everyone can and should succeed by creating equal institutionalized means of success, and undermining the fact that some persons have limited chances of becoming rich. This causes strain, for example, lower classes have few opportunities. The ability to achieve set goals or conformity to societal set goals does not explain in totality why some people commit crimes. This is because not everyone is unable to meet societal goals through legitimate

means of crime. This theory fails to explain this; hence, the control theory of crime covers this aspect. The control theory states that people take to crime not necessarily because they are unable to conform to the set rules of meeting societal goals but rather because of their weak egos.

7.0 Methods

This study adopted the survey design method and was carried out in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. The study utilized quantitative and qualitative approaches of data collection, while the data were analyzed with descriptive statistics and content analysis of the qualitative data. The study adopted a sample size of 410 from a projected population figure of Benin City. Among the total sample size, 400 were used for the quantitative while 10 participants were assigned for the qualitative section. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics with a criterion mean of 2.5. That is, when the grand mean is below the criterion mean of 2.5, the result will be rejected. The descriptive statistics cover the questions that bother with socio-demographic data and the research question. The qualitative (in-depth interviews), on the other hand, were analyzed as content discussion and used to complement the quantitative data. The descriptive data were analyzed using averages.

8.0 Results

Table 1: The Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Socio-demographic profile of respondents	Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex of respondents	Males	192	48.2
	Females	206	51.8
	Total	398	100.0
Age	18-25Years	54	13.6
	26-35years	158	39.7
	36-45years	102	25.6
	46-55years	65	16.3
	56- and above	19	4.8
	Total	398	100.0
Marital Status	Single	122	30.7
	Married	267	67
	Divorced/separated	09	2.3
	Total	398	100.0
Level of education	No formal education	09	2.3
	Primary School	67	16.8
	Secondary school	246	61.8
	University	76	19.1
	Total	398	100.0
Status of Occupational Engagement	Retired	05	1.3
	Non-working	105	26.4
	Employed	288	72.4
	Total	398	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Data in Table 1 show the socio-demographic profile of respondents. It was discovered from the study that the majority of the respondents were females. Respondents between 26 and

35 years old were more followed by those between 36 and 45 years old. It was also discovered from the study that more than half of the respondents were married, and the majority had a secondary school leaving certificate as the highest level of education. The data further revealed that the majority were employed.

Table 2: Causes of cybercrime in Benin City

S/N	Variables	N	Mean (x)	Standard Deviation	Decision
1.	People are into cybercrime because of lack of money and poverty.	398	2.47	0.837	Rejected
2.	Societal expectations push people to crime?	398	4.15	1.398	Accepted
3.	People are into crime because they are trying to measure up with friends/peers influence.	398	3.82	1.517	Accepted
4.	The inability to control one's ego leads to crime?	398	4.08	.950	Accepted
5.	Cybercrime linked to child upbringing?	398	2.59	1.307	Accepted
	Grand Total	398	3.27	1.006	Accepted

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Table 2 shows respondents' responses on the causes of cybercrime in the study area. The data show that respondents identified a number of causes of cybercrime in the study area. A grand mean of 3.27 was obtained for the five items, which are above the criterion mean of 2.5, an indication that the respondents agreed that there are different factors of cybercrime. For example, people are into crime because of the nature of their upbringing, the inability to control their ego, and the tendency to measure up with friends or peers influence.

Table 3: Social conformity and cybercrime- emphasis on end not the means

S/N	Variables	N	Mean (x)	Standard Deviation	Decision
1.	Trying to conform to societal demands makes people commit crime	398	4.08	.950	Accepted
2.	Societal expectation on conformity increases crime	398	4.15	1.398	Accepted
3.	Too much expectation without provision to meet goals increase cybercrime	398	3.82	1.517	Accepted
4.	Drop in emphasis on societal means rather than goal results in cybercrime	398	2.47	0.837	Rejected
5.	people who experience strain in meeting societal set goals results to crime	398	2.59	1.307	Rejected
	Grand Total	398	3.42	1.006	Accepted

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Table 3 shows that a grand mean of 3.27 was obtained for all the four items that are above the criterion mean of 2.5, an indication that the respondents agreed that social conformity

can cause crime. Data revealed a relationship between social conformity and cybercrime. That is, too much emphasis on societal goals without adequate provision to meet the need causes crime among youth.

8.1 Analysis of the in-depth interview

Data from the in-depth interview were analyzed to either collaborate or refute the quantitative data above. The data from the qualitative research were presented in themes and reported verbatim as presented in the rounds of discussion with participants in the separate interview sections. The themes were structured in line with the objectives of the study. The first theme was on the causes of cybercrime from the perspectives of participants, while theme two focused on the nexus between social conformity and cybercrime from the lens of participants in the in-depth interviews.

Theme One: Causes of Cybercrime in Benin City

Cybercrime is widespread and are of different types but this study focuses on the theft aspect. During the discussion sections, series of causes of cybercrime ranging from parental upbringing, peers influence and greed, economic hardship, strain to achieving success, and poverty, among others were identified. They are briefly analysed and reported as follows. Analysis of the qualitative data established that the primary cause of cybercrime can be linked to the type of training a child receives at the reformative age of development. According to Abraham, parental role and upbringing are key determinants of cybercrime. It is the foundation in the developmental process of a child. Once the foundation is faulty, it becomes difficult to have a youth with good morals. According to Mr Taye,

Parental upbringing is a key factor in a child's outcome. The Holy Bible alluded to this when it says, 'Train up a child, the way it should go, that when he is old, he will not depart from it'. Proper training therefore is a sure bet for good moral formation in any society. Proper training most of the of the time is influenced by the lifestyle of parents, which could have a devastating effect on child well-being because children learn from parents through observation. Children observe their parents as they grow. That is why it is often said that you are a product of who raised you, where you were raised, how you were raised, and what the person who raised you knows. The value a child possesses is what the parents cherish or exhibit because we learn through modeling and observation. Children mimic their parents. (*Mr TY, 42, community leader, 2/6/2023*).

This was further supported by Mr Yori. According to him,

'The type of behaviour children possess is a reflection of their parents. That is why it is wrong to allow children to watch certain movies on TV because they will model after them. Some children that behave in certain ways are based on what they learn. A lot of parents do not spend time with their children; they either leave them with people who pay little or no attention to what they are doing or leave them alone to watch TV without spending adequate time to know what they are doing. Children of this nature grow up to model the picture of that TV they see or the people around. If you leave your children outside, their behaviour will follow that of people outside. (*Mr Yori, counsellor, 20/8/2023*).'

The in-depth interview also alluded to the notion that people who experience strain are more likely to drift to crime especially in situation where the society is more interested in the goals not the means to the goal.

According to Mrs. 'Idode', when people are unable to meet certain needs due to hindrance in the physical or social environment, they adopt ways that may not be considered acceptable but can achieve the goal except if they have good morals. For example, when a man who does not have good morals is tempted, he will likely fall. The same thing is likened to cybercrime. Most of the youth are tempted as a result of the strain on legitimate employment. A lot of youths involved in cybercrime are jobless graduates who have come to realize that they can get success through other means, and society will celebrate them. After graduation, society expects a graduate to start working and start a family. How many of these graduates are able to achieve that? These are strains or barriers that push them into crime (*Mrs Idode, 38, civil servant, 2/6/2023*).

This was supported by another interviewee that averred that strain is the major cause of cybercrime. However, other interviewees differ as to whether strain could result to anomie. Madam 'O' was of the opinion that strain is not the cause rather it is greed that brings about the act. She said;

'I do not agree that everyone who experiences strain in meeting society's goal takes to crime to meet it. Not all who experience strain or roadblock in meeting societal goals engage in crime. The level at which you take to crime when the means or channel to achieving it are blocked is the level of societal restraints in us. According to Sigmund Freud, there are three levels or structures of the mind's formation. The 'ID', 'Ego', and 'the superego'. Whether people will take to crime or use illegitimate means to achieve societal goals, especially when the legitimate means are not available, is determined by how solid and well the formation of the mind is. For example, people who have weak egos, which is the moral check of people, are likely to take to crime. While those with strong and well-balanced egos will be restrained to using just the legitimate means even when it is blocked. I will say it is the society in you that determines how well we compromised to societal pressure. (*Madam O, 49, community, 23/8/2023*).

The research participants also averred that cybercrime can also be linked to greed. Greed can be viewed as the inability to be satisfied irrespective of what an individual has in their possession. This might not be far from why even the rich steal or go into crime due to a lack of contentment with their physical possessions or what they have. Some already have wealth in their possession, but greed will make them not to be content. The quests for wealth through any means possible have left many into cybercrime. In the Nigeria case, hunger and greed are major causes of cybercrime. This is the generation of get it as quick as you can, not a generation of patience. Hunger is a factor, but when poverty is used as a factor to influence them, they key into it.

Cybercrime thrives in many societies because of eroding morals, decay, and depletion of morals in the society. Moral decadence is not only expressed and seems among parents but in the macro-society. It is moral decay that makes people in the Nigerian

government act contrary to their sworn oath of duty in office. In a case where you have people who the society generally bestows power on, decided to steal either directly or indirectly their collective patrimony, act contrary to the wishes of the people that brought them into power are evidence of moral decay in government. A politician who decides to amass even when they already have everything to the detriment of the poor masses exhibits bad morals. This is why children of politicians are likely to behave like their parents. Their parents exhibit poor/bad morals. They are well to do, but choose to amass more. Politician children are likely to behave like their parents because their parents are failing. What is the modality society puts in place to create change? Political, social, and religious systems that can create change through punitive measures. Impunity is the major cause of Nigeria's social problems. Our securities are the ones even fostering greed and crime. Security men secure and safe guide the Yahoo boys.

Laziness was also spotted as a cause of cybercrime in Nigeria. Many youth do not want to work. They rather things come very easily or without effort. Even when jobs are available, they choose to remain unemployed. Many have the zeal for wealth without stress. According to Miss R, another participant interviewed said the Nigerian government's inability to do the needful, like creating jobs or the enabling environment for businesses to thrive, is a major driver of cybercrime. According to the participants;

‘Nigeria can be likened to a failed state. This is because rule of law does not work over here. Can’t you see that people are into cybercrime due to the glamour attached to the proceeds from the act? It is very attractive to a lot especially to the younger generation considering the fact that there are no alternative to it. The society rejoices with people who makes material success but relegates to the background those who are contented but unable to make the same financial stride as the corrupted. So crime pays well here because our society places much emphasis on the goal not the channels that begets the goal so long they are not caught or seen doing it (*Mr. Omo, 39, Civil Servant, 1/2/2023*).

One of the participants, Miss Ade, said that parental pressure, laziness, and peer pressure are factors to consider when dealing with cybercrime. For example, when a parent sees that some member of the extended family is doing well and making it, some parents will start comparing their children and luring them into taking to any means that bring them to the limelight, even when it involves cutting corners. This put pressure on children. This was also supported by Master T, another interviewee. According to Master T, societal pressure has a significant role to play in the issue of cybercrime. She averred that

‘Our society has a way of pushing people into crime. This is because our society doesn’t in any way care how people make it but whether they make it. For example, once a young boy graduates from school, the next expectation is for them to start assisting the family financially without considering the availability of a job or the nature of the job. All society cares is that money is flowing. This is why you see so many boys engage in internet fraud because they want to meet up. You see, when a young girl is out of school, the Nigerian society does not care if she is living in peace, but all the society wants is that she is married, whether into a barter union or not. Our society does not care. I can say that the Nigerian society is the culprit in

the matter. It won't be wrong to say societal pressure pushes many into crime.' (*Master T, 29, student, 23/8/2023*).

Theme One: Causes of Cybercrime in Benin City

Data from the in-depth discussion complemented the quantitative data. The data revealed that societal expectation/social conformity increases crime. It is societal expectations that give rise to value systems. That is, what society expects of people. In the case of Nigeria, the societal expectation is centred on the goals, not on the means of achieving the said goals. The society pays less emphasis on how it is gotten. Most of the participants agreed that social conformity instigates crime. For example, in one of the in-depth interviews, Mr. O opined that the family is like a society.

When a mother sees her extended family or polygamous family, comparison will start, and this will make the children go into crime. The Nigerian society respects and values wealth. If you don't have money, nobody will listen to you. It takes a person who has self-value and self-worth to be able to overcome. Those who don't have it don't mind; either they make it or they do whatever it takes to make it. Which most of the of the time are illegitimate prices or means? You will see most of these boys do not put themselves first, but their family will be thinking of the girls to impress.

(*Mr. Ojo, 39, Civil Servant, 1/2/2023*).

This view was further supported by other participants who held that social conformity increases crime. This is because in Nigeria today, people do not care if they are morally right or wrong as long as they achieve societal set goals like success. In many cases, people are seen rationalizing things just to justify their actions without any care about the impact. This seems to increase the crime rate especially cybercrime which is very prominent among youths in Nigeria today. According to Mr Oge,

'children in most cases are pressured into doing certain things without considering the moral implication of the act. For example, in Benin City, there are occasion where parents send their children to learn the act of cybercrime. These parents do not consider the consequence of the action rather the outcome. In some cases, inability to conform to a group norm pushes many into cybercrime just to belong and be respected. When you get the value of what you are earning, it makes and encourages people to work but when it is not, it pushes people out either into crime or relocates (*Mr. Oge, 39, Civil Servant, 1/2/2023*).

Depletion in our value system also causes crime in Nigeria. We have compromised in many ways. In Nigeria, a lot of parents aid and abet crime in many ways although there are still a few homes where good morals are still strictly adhered to. Due to the role some parents play in a child's upbringing, it becomes quite difficult to instill a good value system in our young children due to how things are in the country. The system that operates in Nigeria does not encourage conformity. That accounts for the increase in cybercrime in Nigeria. When hard work is not appreciated, it gives room for people to cut corners. Mrs F averred that the issue of moral decay in Nigeria is all-encompassing. According to her

'As you can see, many doctors can't do yahoo but they prefer to relocate to place where they can work and their value is acknowledged and

rewarded. It is difficult to convince people not do crime in Nigeria because we do not do well (*Mr. F, 39, Civil Servant, 1/2/2023*).

Discussion of Findings

There are various push causal factors of cybercrime. A number of them were reviewed and analyzed in the study. Among the causes identified were financial deprivation and poverty, parental upbringing, peer influence, unemployment, poor educational system, and general strain. The data showed that more than half of the respondents agreed that monetary deprivation; poverty and poor parental upbringing are the leading causes of cybercrime. Several persons commit crimes because they are economically deprived and poor. Many others do it as a result of faulty parental upbringing. Children can learn and relearn at the formative age but little can be unlearned after the formative age. A child that learns good morals will stick to it at any cost but teaching adult morals that he/she fails to learn at the early age of life will be very difficult to assimilate and internalize. As noted by *Gerson and Petry (2008)*, we are born into families. Our first relationship, our first group, our first experience of the world is with and through our families. We develop, grow, and hopefully die in the context of our family. The family serves as a learning field where behaviour is constantly moulded. Parents play major roles in the behavioural modification of children that reflect the outcome in life later. For instance, *Coser (1997)* averred that parents and other family members are the most important agents of socialization in childhood and they often have a significant influence over adult behaviour as well. *Boshier (2011)* alluded to this when he said any society that aims to eliminate crime and criminality, must begin by ensuring children have a positive upbringing.

This is because parents are the basis of a child's knowledge and experiences; their input and guidance mould a child's development and can ultimately determine how the child will behave for the entirety of their life. This is in collaboration with *Blokland, et al (2008)* who identified parenting styles as a key determinant of delinquent behaviour. According to them, parenting styles are collections of behaviour and approaches a parent apply consistently, across all situations to care for and manage their child. The place a child is raised or the environment is a good influence on children's outcome or how the child will become. This supports the findings of (*Gadsden, Ford, and Breiner, 2001*) that averred that held that children from good homes or "a good family environment" were more likely to receive a good-quality parental upbringing than those from a disrupted family environment. Like the in-depth interview conducted, the family style was identified as a key factor that determines cybercrime and strain crime and criminality. *Coser (1997)* also notes that the way children learn is similar but what they learn differs from family to family. The family therefore seems to be the breeding ground for all manner of behaviour exhibited by people at a later age. A child who is left alone will likely bring reproach to the family and society at large.

Conformity to crime and criminals due to pressure stems from several factors. The value system set the stage for the issue of cybercrime and criminality in Nigeria. This collaboration with *Maker (2017)* who opined that the wrong value system has been identified as a key factor encouraging cybercrime in Nigeria and the desire to get rich quickly without working for it. Cybercrime is complex and committed mostly from remote locations making it difficult to police. Values according to *Gambrill (1997)*, state preference regarding certain goals and how to attain them. They are used to support decisions at many different levels a society's values are reflected in the behavioural patterns

and actions. Nigerian society emphasizes certain goals but does not pay much attention to how the goals are attained. Hence, people adopt measures within their reach to achieve their goals.

9.0 Conclusion

Cybercrime is widespread in Nigeria. There are several causes of cybercrime in Nigeria, ranging from parental upbringing, peer influence and greed, economic hardship, strain to achieving success, and poverty. Parental role and upbringing are key determinants of cybercrime. It is the foundation in the developmental process of a child. People who experience strain are more likely to drift to crime, especially in situations where society is more interested in the goals, not the means to the goal. Cybercrime thrives in many societies like Nigeria because of eroding morals, decay, and depletion of morals in the society. Moral decadence is not only expressed and seems among parents but in the macro-society where conformity to rule in achieving goals is not given much attention. Nigerian society emphasizes certain goals but does not pay much attention to how the goals are actualized. Hence, people adopt measures within and, in some cases, beyond their reach to achieve their goals, including not conforming to social norms.

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