

CYBER DEVIANCE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ABIA STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined cyber deviance and academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Abia state. Specifically, the study aimed at determining the impact of cyber deviance on academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Abia state. The study was anchored on social learning theory as propounded by Albert Bandura in 1977. The study utilized qualitative and descriptive research approach where secondary sources of data were used. A sample of 400 students was used, which was derived from the total population of 185, 146 senior secondary school students using Taro Yamane population determination formula. The study revealed that, cyber bullying, cyber stalking, pornography, data piracy, among others are various forms of cyber deviance. The study also revealed that some of the causes of cyber deviance includes; family pattern, peer pressure, excessive use of social media among others and that all impact academic performance negatively, hence, the study recommends that, adequate monitoring of on-line students' activities by parents and proper legislation against the cyber deviance among others should be enacted.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of cyber deviance is relatively a new dimension of deviance which has moved into the classroom activities and academic program in general. This technological construct emanated due to the advent of internet and has not been extensively studied over the past decades. Also, no meaningful attention has been given to it with reference to academic performance. Students today have entangled themselves with online activities which are completely at variance with the main essence of schooling or education. According to the Office for National Statistics (2021), Pew Research Center, (2021) cited in Vigara and Whitten (2023) adolescents represent the greatest proportion of internet users. This has predisposed them to digital delinquency such as cyber bullying, hacking, Digital piracy, illegal downloading among others.

It is believed that the internet will provide a platform for learning and improve academic performance among the students, but the reverse is the case as many students have continued to experience low performance due to unwholesome internet activities which do not promote efficient learning. Deviant behavior using technology is a real concern since our society is rapidly moving from a typographic culture to a post-typographic culture. With this, movement of our society is being transformed by the use of technology because adolescents are now communicating more by instant messages, electronic mails and chat rooms rather than paper printed text or letter writing.

However, despite the good intention of internet usage, many students have taken the opposite direction. According to U.S Department of Justice cited in Annie and Dillard (2005) teens have gone high from old fashion of deviance to Cyber bullying, Cyber-Stalking, Pornographic watching, Digital piracy, Chat room, Text messages and spreading of rumors with the use of technology to antagonize and intimidate others. For instance, in February 2022, a student who was learning in a class was caught watching pornographies and committing other forms of cybercrimes while lessons were in progress in Abia State. This kind of attitude has continued to rear its ugly head in many schools in Abia State.

Similarly, Daily Trust (Tuesday 4, May 2023) reported that, in Nigeria, cyber-crimes have become the order of the day among the youths (Yahoo boys) The pertinent question begging for answer

is, does this cyber deviance impact on academic performance of students? Hence, the main thrust of this study is to examine the impact of cyber deviance on academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools with particular reference to Abia State.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

It is quite disturbing and worrisome that the rate at which cyber deviance among students is astronomically rising since the advent of technology. Many students, instead of engaging in meaningful learning activities are using the internet platform to bully, data pirate, involve in cyber-crime, Pornography, hacking among others. These issues have continued to impact negatively on many students' performance, leading to massive failure among students in public secondary schools. It is saddening that the internet which is supposed to be a blessing is now a curse occasioned by the unrestrained disposition of the students in contemporary times, Hence the need to examine the impact of cyber deviance on academic performance of students in the public secondary schools in Abia state.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

The study aimed at examining the impact of cyber deviance on academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Abia state. Specifically, the objectives of the study are;

To identify various forms of cyber deviance among students in public senior secondary schools in Abia state.

To determine the causes of cyber deviance among students in public senior secondary schools in Abia state.

To ascertain the extent to which cyber deviance impact of cyberbullying on academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Abia state.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the various forms of cyber deviance among students in public senior secondary schools in Abia state?
2. What are the causes of cyber deviance among students in public senior secondary schools in Abia state?
3. To what extent has cyber deviance impact on academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Abia state?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

CYBER DEVIANCE

The concept of cyber deviance is a term related to technology and has been conceptualized differently by various scholars. The concept can be viewed as engaging in deviance or criminal behaviors with the facilitation of technology (www.sciencedirect.com) The definition encompasses many technological-assisted behaviors such as cyber-violence, cyber-bulling, cyber-stalking, cyber-theft, Digital-piracy, online-fraud, identity-theft, cyber-trespass, among others. Cyber deviance is sometimes used interchangeably with cybercrime which is a crime perpetuated using "Information Communication Technology (ICT) to either target network, system, data, websites or technology to facilitate a crime.

In the view of Karl (2022) deviance refers to rule-breaking behaviors of some kind which fails to conform to the norms and expectations of a particular society or social group. Osunade, (2003) observed that for the fact that internet is not owned by anyone, leaves no room for checks or censorship of available information without restriction but the downside is that valued information can be placed into the wrong hands and school children can be unduly exposed to morally damaging information such as pornography. This is to a large extent contribute to cyber deviance among students.

FORMS OF CYBER DEVIANCE

There are various forms of cyber deviance. According to cyber talent.com, the following are the various forms of cyber deviance;

- (a) Cyber bullying.
- (b) Cyber stalking.
- (c) Software piracy.
- (d) Social media fraud.

CYBER BULLYING: This refers to the act of using electronic communication to bully a person, typically by sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature. It is a type of bullying in which one or more individuals use digital technology to intentionally and repeatedly cause harm to another person (www tech target.com).

According to UNICEF as cited in (technology.com /definition.cyber bullying) cyber bullying can have a devastating and long-lasting effect on its victim physically, mentally and emotionally, leaving them feeling afraid, angry, ashamed, tired or experiencing symptoms such as headache or stomach aches. Gassem etal (2023) found in their studies on the prevalence and related risks of cyber bullying and its effects on adolescent that bullied adolescent are likable to miss school, have higher absence rates, dislike school and reports receiving lower grades. In the same vein, Beaty [2008] found out that, the negative effects of school age bullying led to ongoing torment, harassment, and lifelong damage to the victim. Moreover, the environment surrounding the students affects their performance greatly. Beaty (2008) noted that hostile school environment interrupts learning thus, making students perform sub-optimally in academics.

CYBER STALKING: This certainly refers to the use of internet or other electronic means to stalk or harass individuals, groups or organizations. It may include; accusation, monitoring, identity theft, threat (Wikipedia). According to (pubmed.nib.nih.gov) cyber stalking has a lot of serious consequence which includes; increase suicidal ideation, fear, anger, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptomology. The difference between cyber bullying and cyber stalking is that cyber bullying is more direct than cyber stalking.

SOFT-WARE PIRACY: This is a copyright infringement of software that is not properly licensed. This may include; copyright laws or license terms (www.revenera.com). Software piracy generally refers to the practice of making unauthorized copies of software that is either site-licensed or in the public domain (Taylor & shim in Mahbubush etal, 1999). Gary (2018) stated five reasons why we need to rethink software piracy highlighted the following as its consequence.

- (a) It's unethical and creating unfair advantage.
- (b) It costs government, businesses and individuals a lot of money.
- (c) It increases the likelihood of cyber security attacks.
- (d) It makes business less productive.
- (e) Risk costly fines.

Garry (2008) asserted that software piracy can lead to fines of up to \$150.000 per copyright infringements as well as criminal prosecution. These are serious penalties that a student can risk his life when caught and this will affect the student's learning.

SOCIAL MEDIA FRAUD: This is another cyber deviance which many students commit. According to (www.aura.com) social media, frauds or scams are types of fraud that are committed on social networking sites. Scammers often create fake profiles, befriend innocent people and send spam messages or links that lead to malicious websites. Today, many students are seriously involved in this kind of cyber deviance leaving their studies. Adeniyi (2022) explicitly stressed that the involvement of secondary school students on social media contributes to laziness of students because they prefer to spend much time on the social media than reading their books. Maya (2015)

cited in Adeniyi (2022) revealed that media use contributes to lower academic performance, low self-perception and less interests in college-oriented careers. Many students instead of using social media positively to enhance studies have abandoned their studies to indulge in some cyber deviance, such as identity theft, fake contacts which is prevalent today (Folorun etal in Adeniyi, 2022). Some of the social media types according to Adeniyi (2022) includes;

- (i) Social network sites
- (ii) Social review sites
- (iii) Image sharing sites
- (iv) Video hosting sites
- (v) Community blog among others

According to Uriah (2021) through globalization, youths now use the internet for all kinds of fraudulent acts such as hacking into peoples' banking database and financial histories, transferring funds without institutional authorization, in fact, the rising increase of internet fraudsters known as Yahoo Boys in the Nigerian scenario is a clear punctuation of the use of technology (globalization) for ignominious and nefarious activities. Cybercrimes are those crimes committed virtually with the use of computer.

CAUSES OF CYBER DEVIANCE

The causes of cyber deviance are varied. According to (www.research.net) the following have been identified as the causes of online or cyber deviance.

- (1) Family pattern
- (2) Socio-demographic aspects
- (3) Victimization
- (4) School and individual factors
- (5) Internet and computer use.

Similarly (study.com>learn>lesson>deviance) outlined lack of religious morality, broken family and poor socialization, lack of basic facilities, rejection by the society and mass media influence as the causes of cyber deviance. Russell, etal. (2020) identified the following as risk factors causing cyber deviance:

Behavioral functioning risk factor: This involves all the risk pertaining behavioral functioning which affects cyber deviance across nearly all forms. This includes adolescent increased propensity for risk taking, conduct problems, among others.

Parenting Practice risk factors: The parenting practice that could cause cyber deviance includes; higher level of parental autonomy (i.e., adolescents being endowed with greater autonomy)

Higher level of parental discipline: parents favoring strict disciplinary attitudes

The degree of parental supervision: The extent to which their activities are monitored by parents

Exposure risk factors: this involves the type of experience that young people had while on online exposures. All these contribute to cyber deviance which impede the reading culture of learners.

CYBER DEVIANCE AND IMPACT ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE:

The impact of deviant acts on academic performance cannot be over stressed. According to (publication.view.edu.gh>site>file) poor and disruptive behaviors in the class room reduce children's ability to concentrate and absorb information. It also unsettles children and causes immense stress for teachers. Deviant behaviors among students also includes; breaking rules, getting involved in wrong illegal or immoral activities, substance use or abuse, criminal activities and delinquent behavior. Getting involved in any of these disallows students from focusing on academic activities (Oluwaighbohunmi & Olowosile, 2019). Agi (2016) noted that deviant behaviors can affect performance, leads to loss of vital classes among others. Deviance of any

form, whether cyber deviance or not has a great impact on the learner's performance. Cyber deviance can divert attention of students from the classroom activities, reading culture, and other academic works which in turn contributes or impacts on the performance of students. Studies have revealed that cyber deviance which involves cyber bully, internet-based radicalization, online deviance, cyber dating abuse, social spamming among others can contribute to low academic performance due to unnecessary distraction. Supporting the above findings (bmcsychiatry.biomedicinetram.com) maintained that cyber bullying which is an aspect of cyber deviance is likely to make students miss school, have higher absence rates, dislike school and have lower grades. Cyber deviance (bullying) has also been noted to generally manifest psychological problems such as depression, anxiety, loneliness, low self-esteem, social exclusion, school phobias and poor academic performance (www.ncbi.nih.gov) Cyber deviance creates school phobia, steal attention and divert concentration which consequently leads to poor performance of learners.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

This study anchored theoretically on social learning theory which argues that individuals learn to engage in computer crime (deviance) through observing the behavior of others, particularly those who are close to them. They may also be influenced by media portrayals of hackers as glamorous and successful. The social learning theory was put forward by Albert Bandura (1977). However, an America criminologist Ronald Akers (1979) modifies the theory in reference to how crime is committed, hence, argued that people develop motivation to commit crime and skills to commit crime through the people whom they learn new behaviors, values, attitudes by direct experience and observing other people's behavior, through positive or negative stimulus. Akers suggested four processes that need to occur for social learning theory to be present.

- (1) Attention
- (2) Retention
- (3) Reproduction
- (4) Motivation

Therefore, cyber- deviance among secondary schools occurs through interaction and direct experience with those they associate with and negative societal influences.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted qualitative and descriptive approach, in this, secondary sources of data served as main sources of data collection. The collected data were derived from published articles, journals, documents. Also, semi-structured questionnaire and interview were utilized to support the findings. The data collected was analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The population of the study is 185,146 secondary school students in Abia state with sample size of 400 derived through Taro Yamane determination formula. The decision level was 2.50, hence, using modified 4- point Likert scale, any item that has 2.50 above was accepted while below is rejected.

DATA ANALYSIS /DISCUSSION

Research Question 1: What are the various forms of cyber-deviance among students in public senior secondary schools in Abia state?

Table 1: Mean responses on the forms of cyber-Deviance among public senior secondary school students in Abia state.

S/N	ITEM	MEAN	STD	REMARK
1	Cyber bullying	3.83	0.43	VHE
2	Cyber stalking	3.87	0.39	VHE
3	Pornography	3.81	0.49	VHE
4	Identity theft	3.73	0.71	VHE
5	Digital piracy	3.39	0.78	VHE

	Grand means	3.72	0.58	Very High Extent
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N= 400, criterion =2.50

The data in table 1 showed that respondents indicated that cyber-bullying, cyber stalking, pornography, identity theft and digital piracy to a very high extent are various forms of cyber-deviance usually carried out by the students which impact negatively on their performance.

Research question2: what are the causes of cyber-deviance among public senior secondary school students in Abia State

Table 2: means responses on the causes of cyber-deviance among public secondary school students in Abia state.

S/N	ITEM	MEAN	STD	REMARK
1	Family pattern	3.68	0.78	VHE
2	Internet & Computer use	3.66	0.70	VHE
3	Social Media Influence	3.86	0.47	VHE
4	Autonomy	3.70	0.70	VHE
5	Peer pressure	3.61	0.77	VHE
	Grand Mean	3.70	0.68	VHE

N = 400 criterion = 2.50

The data in table 2 revealed that the type of family pattern, internet and computer use, social media influences, high level of autonomy and peer pressure to a very high extent are the causes of cyber-deviance among students and can affect academic performances.

Research Question 3: To what extent has cyber-deviance impacted on academic performance of students in public senior secondary school students in Abia state.

Table 3: mean responses on the impact of cyber-deviance on academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Abia state.

S/N	ITEM	MEAN	STD	REMARK
1	Poor performance	3.90	0.33	VHE
2	Lack of focus	3.67	0.55	VHE
3	Reduces ability	3.81	0.42	VHE
4	Low grade	3.75	0.54	VHE
5	Absence from school	3.80	0.51	VHE
	Grand mean	3.78	0.47	VHE

N=400 Criterion mean = 2.50

The data in table 2 showed that the respondents indicated that cyber-deviance impact negatively to a very high extent on students' performance, focus on studies, ability to learn, low grade and school attendance (absence) which cumulated to contribute to poor performance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Forms of cyber – deviance

The data in table 1; showed that, the various forms of cyber deviance which impacts academic performance includes; cyber bullying, cyber stalking, Pornography watching, identity theft and digital piracy. Cyber bullying which is the act of using electronic communication to bully a person is more common among students. They use electronic platforms to bully other students who are in the same class or school. Most times, they do this during the teaching and learning process

which leads to loss of concentration in the class, and may impact negatively on their learning outcome. This finding revealed with the observation of Gassein et al (2023) that bullied adolescents are likely to miss school, have higher absence rates, dislike school and report receiving lower grades. The finding also aligned with the view of Beaty (2008) that hostile school environment interrupts learning, thus making students perform sub-optimally in academics. Other forms of cyber deviance which the findings revealed includes; software piracy, cyber stalking, pornography watching, social media fraud. All impact negatively on academic performance.

CAUSES OF CYBER-DEVIANCE

The data in table 2 showed that cyber deviance can be attributed to family pattern, internet and computer use, societal influence, high level of autonomy, and peer pressure. This study revealed that the family pattern to a high extent caused cyber deviance among the students. This is in consonance with the findings of Russel et al (2020) that parental practice which involves high level of adolescent autonomy, among others are risk factors of cyber deviance. This finding also aligned with the view of Adeniyi (2022) who explicitly stressed that the involvement of secondary school students on social media increases on daily basis in Nigeria and that the inability of the students to read can be traced to social media. Therefore, they forget reading culture. This can cause low performance among students, since no quality time is spent on meaningful studies.

IMPACT OF CYBER DEVIANCE ON ACADEMICS PERFORMANCE

The table 3 revealed that poor performance, lack of focus, reduction in the ability of students, low grades, absence from schools are all impact of cyber deviance. This is in agreement with the findings of (publication.view.edu.gh>sites) that poor and disruptive behaviour in the classroom reduces children ability to concentrate and absorb information. It further stressed that, deviant behaviour unsettles children and causes immense stress for teachers. In the same vein, Agi (2016) aligned with the findings, when he noted that deviant behaviour can affect performance, leads to loss of vital classes among others.

CONCLUSIONS

Cyber deviance is a relatively new form of deviance which emanated as a result of the advent of technology or internet. This new form of deviance has indeed created colossal problems in education in the areas of classroom activities, performance among others. The study has revealed that this internet-driven deviance has revealed that the internet-driven deviance has varied forms ranging from cyber bullying, cyber stalking, pornography watching, data piracy, etc. The causes of this novel deviance include parental pattern of family upbringing which grant high degree of students' autonomy, influence of social media, influence of pressure group, etc. the study conclusively affirmed from its findings that cyber-deviance impacts on academics performances negatively.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study therefore recommends that;

- (1) In order to prevent students excessive and the abusive use of phone and the other electronic devices, adequate measure should be carried, such as always censoring their on-line activities. For instance, teachers should not allow students any form of electronics usage such as android phones during teaching-learning process unless on any lesson that required its use and which must be regulated and monitor by the teacher.
- (2) There should be adequate legislations (laws) enacted by the government against cyber deviance such as cyber bully, cyber stalking, data piracy, identity theft and host of others against any students caught in the act. Punishment for such offence may range from suspension to outright expulsion from the school to serve as a deterrent to others.

- (3) School authorities should install close circuit television (CCTV) to monitor the activities of students within the school premises.

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