

Stakeholders' Perceptions of Male Teenagers' Involvement in Cybercrime in the Ido Community, Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The rapid rise of cybercrime has become a major societal concern, with male teenagers increasingly drawn into its web. This study examined stakeholders' perceptions of the causes, consequences, and possible solutions to cybercrime among male teenagers in the Ido Community. The research was anchored on the Broken Window Theory and Structural Functionalism, employing an exploratory design. Primary data were gathered through interviews with parents, religious leaders, youth leaders, police officers, cybercafé owners, and scholars of Criminology and Security Studies. Secondary data were sourced from books, journal articles, online materials, and unpublished works. Additionally, a focus group discussion involving eight married women from Ido Community was conducted. Data collected were analyzed using a narrative content analysis approach. Findings revealed that peer pressure, ignorance of the legal consequences, and the desire for quick wealth are major factors driving male teenagers' involvement in cybercrime. The consequences identified include poor academic performance, financial losses, reputational damage, weakened online trust, and strain on law enforcement resources. Stakeholders proposed several measures for mitigation, including employment creation, promotion of positive role models, religious sensitization, effective policing, educational advocacy programs, and increased parental involvement. The study concludes that tackling cybercrime among male teenagers in Ido Community should not be left solely to the government. Rather, community stakeholders must collaborate with authorities through strategic social and educational interventions to curb this growing menace.

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1. Introduction

The rapid advancement of technology has transformed the world from an analog to a digital age, revolutionizing nearly every aspect of human endeavor. Business transactions, education, healthcare, agriculture, and aviation have all been reshaped by digital technologies. While these innovations have brought immense benefits, they have also introduced new risks most notably, cybercrime.

Cybercrime refers to unlawful activities carried out using computers, networks, or the internet. Such crimes include fraud, identity theft, hacking, phishing, and other malicious activities that exploit digital systems (National Bureau of Statistics, 2010). Hacking involves unauthorized access to computer systems or networks, while identity theft entails the use of another person's personal information — such as name, date of birth, or identification number for fraudulent purposes. Phishing uses deceptive emails, websites, or messages to obtain sensitive information, such as passwords or banking details. Nkanga (2008) identified various techniques employed by cybercriminals, including social engineering, which manipulates individuals into revealing confidential information, and malware attacks, which use malicious software such as viruses, worms, or Trojan horses to compromise systems. Other methods include Distributed Denial of

Service (DDoS) attacks, which flood servers with traffic to cause system crashes, and insider threats, where privileged users misuse confidential information.

Globally, the economic and social impacts of cybercrime have been staggering. Lewis et al. (2005) reported that suspected internet crimes in the United States resulted in losses exceeding \$4.2 billion in 2020, based on 791,790 complaints filed with the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center. Similarly, Hassan et al. (2012) projected that cybercrime-related losses could reach \$10.5 trillion by 2025. In 2020, the average cost of a data breach was \$3.86 million (Ibikunle, 2013). Across Asia, India recorded a 37% surge in cyberattacks, while Japan's National Police Agency documented 10,918 cybercrime cases, marking a record high (Adesina, 2017). In Europe, cybercrime is considered the most significant criminal threat (Europol, 2020). McAfee estimated annual losses at approximately €600 billion (\$712 billion). Africa is not exempt: Serianu (2020) reported losses of \$2.2 billion, with South Africa, Kenya, and Nigeria being the most affected countries.

In Nigeria alone, the Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) recorded 11,785 cybercrime incidents in 2020. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) estimated losses exceeding \$1.17 billion, placing Nigeria third among the most impacted African nations (Meke, 2012). These figures underscore the urgency of enhancing cybersecurity awareness and protection. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2022) reported that 80% of cybercrimes are orchestrated by organized criminal networks, often operating transnationally. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI, 2021), most cybercriminals fall between the ages of 14 and 35, indicating significant youth involvement. In Nigeria, high unemployment and economic hardship have driven many young people into cybercrime, largely motivated by financial gain (Adesina, 2017).

Cybercrime has become a way of life for some Nigerian youths, yielding illicit wealth for a few whiles damaging the nation's economy and reputation (Adesina, 2017). The Central Bank of Nigeria reported that ₦7.2 billion was lost to online fraud in the banking sector (Lewis et al., 2005). Such losses not only weaken Nigeria's economy but also undermine trust in legitimate online businesses (Kshetri, 2019). While crime is not inherently gender-specific, global statistics from the Uniform Crime Report (UCR, 2019) indicate that males commit approximately 82% of crimes, including cybercrimes, compared to 18% committed by females. Against this background, this study focuses on male teenagers' involvement in cybercrime within the Ido Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria, exploring the perceptions of community stakeholders regarding this phenomenon.

2. Statement of the Problem

Cybercrime has emerged as one of the most pressing global concerns of the digital age, drawing increasing scholarly attention due to its social, economic, and moral consequences. Das et al. (2013) observed that adolescents' engagement in cybercrime often disrupts their educational ambitions and fosters negative perceptions toward formal education, a mindset locally expressed through the popular phrase "*school na scam.*" Similarly, Adesina (2017) revealed that many teenagers who acquire sudden wealth through illicit online activities tend to lose interest in legitimate work, thereby promoting laziness, moral decline, and a weakened national workforce. Lewis (2005) attributed the growing involvement of young Nigerians in cybercrime to the desire for quick wealth and social recognition, while Kshetri (2019) identified widespread poverty and unemployment as central motivating factors. Matusitz (2005) also linked cybercrime to poor self-

control and peer influence, asserting that adolescents who associate with deviant peers are more likely to engage in unlawful online behavior. Furthermore, Meke (2012) highlighted the necessity for Nigeria to strengthen its collaboration with international partners to effectively combat cybercrime, while Longe (2008) emphasized the importance of preventive strategies such as public awareness and responsible internet practices.

Despite these scholarly contributions, a significant gap remains in understanding the perceptions of community stakeholders regarding male teenagers' involvement in cybercrime, particularly within local contexts such as the Ido Local Government Area of Oyo State. While previous studies have explored the causes, patterns, and consequences of cybercrime on a national or global scale, few have examined how community members parents, educators, religious leaders, and law enforcement agents interpret and respond to this phenomenon at the grassroots level.

This study therefore seeks to bridge that gap by investigating the perceptions of stakeholders in the Ido Community concerning male teenagers' engagement in cybercrime. It aims to understand the underlying factors that lead male teenagers in the community to participate in cybercrime, to assess the ways in which such involvement has impacted the social and economic life of the Ido Community, and to explore the measures that can be taken to curb the growing menace among male youths. By addressing these issues, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the localized dimensions of cybercrime and provides practical insights for policy formulation, community intervention, and youth rehabilitation in Nigeria.

3. Literature Review

Causes of Cybercrime Among Youths

Studies show that youth involvement in cybercrime stems from a mix of social, economic, and psychological factors. Aransiola (2011) and Olayemi (2020) identify unsupervised and early internet access as a major trigger, noting that many teenagers exploit digital skills without proper guidance. Nkanga (2008) and Adebusuyi (2008) add that idleness and the quest for quick wealth encourage misuse of technology for fraud and hacking.

Economic hardship remains a dominant cause. Aghatise (2008) and Ajibike (2019) link cybercrime to poverty and income inequality, while Ibikunle (2020) observes that Nigeria's rising poverty rate pushes many youths toward illegal online earnings. Matusitz (2005) further connects the problem to unemployment and weak education systems, stressing that economic frustration and underemployment drive technological deviance. Peer influence is another consistent predictor. Bossler (2019) and Olumide et al. (2010) find that adolescents with delinquent friends are far more likely to engage in cybercrime. Matusitz (2005) confirms that low self-control, reinforced by deviant peer networks, strongly correlates with digital offenses.

Institutional weaknesses and poor parental supervision aggravate the trend. NPF (2018) and Aghatise (2008) point to weak law enforcement and poor policy implementation, while Asinmade (2011) blames ineffective parenting and the influence of negative role models. Adesina (2017) adds that excessive online time and lack of discipline expose teenagers to cyber-offending behavior. Overall, existing literature attributes youth cybercrime to poverty, unemployment, peer pressure, weak regulation, and low self-control factors that interact within Nigeria's socio-economic context to sustain this growing menace.

Effects of Cybercrime

Cybercrime has far-reaching social and economic consequences for individuals, organizations, and nations. According to the National Security Council (NCS, 2010), cybercrime causes both qualitative and quantitative damage, including financial losses, productivity decline, and reputational harm. Organizations spend heavily on cybersecurity infrastructure, software, and personnel to mitigate attacks, diverting resources that could have been used for development and innovation. Financially, the losses are staggering. NCS (2010) reported that global cybercrime costs exceeded \$559 million annually, with firms experiencing up to a 10% decline in stock value following major breaches. Denial-of-Service (DoS) attacks, such as the 2000 Yahoo incident, caused an estimated \$500,000 loss in just two hours of downtime. Beyond direct costs, countries also lose tax revenues through intellectual property theft and digital fraud.

Cybercrime also undermines national productivity and public trust. Stassman (2009) and Sylvester (2001) observed that organizations spend increasing time and money resolving cyberattacks, with average recovery costs exceeding \$1 million per incident. Hassan (2012) found that by 2016, the average annualized cost per corporation was \$11.56 million, particularly affecting the defense, financial, and energy sectors. These attacks disrupt operations, compromise data, and diminish investor confidence.

At the macro level, Ajibike (2019) estimated that cybercrime and cyberespionage cost the U.S. economy \$100 billion annually, while global losses approach \$300 billion, contributing to job losses and reduced technological competitiveness. Intellectual property theft and identity fraud erode nations' economic advantages and global reputations. Prominent global cases highlight the scale of the problem. Corporations such as Sony Pictures, Royal Dutch Shell, JP Morgan Chase, Yahoo, and Amazon have all suffered costly data breaches or ransomware attacks, resulting in financial losses, legal liabilities, and reputational damage. The 2017 WannaCry ransomware attack alone forced China National Petroleum Corporation to shut down operations at over 20,000 service stations. Ultimately, cybercrime weakens economic stability, discourages foreign investment, and undermines trust in digital systems. For countries like Nigeria, where digital infrastructure is expanding rapidly, the cumulative effects threaten both national development and global reputation.

Prevention of Cybercrime

Cybercrime has become a major global concern as digital technologies expand. It involves criminal activities executed through computers and networks, including hacking, phishing, and identity theft. According to Cochran (2010), effective prevention requires international cooperation among governments, law enforcement agencies, and the private sector to share intelligence and best practices across borders. Bossler et al. (2019) emphasize that capacity building is key: law enforcement officers and prosecutors must be trained and equipped to investigate cybercrime, while organizations should invest in staff education and cybersecurity awareness. Public campaigns on password safety, phishing, and social engineering are also vital.

In Nigeria, the Nigeria Communications Commission (NCC, 2018) reported over 16,000 cybercrime incidents in 2020, including online fraud and hacking. The Cybercrime (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act of 2015 was a major legal milestone, but experts note that laws must be updated to address emerging threats like ransomware and cyberbullying. The NCC recommends strengthening legal frameworks, investing in forensic capacity, and fostering collaboration between the public and private sectors to share threat intelligence. Matusitz (2005) further argue

that Nigeria should align with global efforts such as the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime and invest in secure digital infrastructure to improve detection and response.

At the individual and organizational levels, scholars such as Meke (2012) and Nkanga (2008) highlight preventive security practices strong authentication, regular password changes, smart-card use, and encryption to reduce victimization. Aghatise (2006, 2008) recommends using network scanning tools, VPNs, open-source software, and firewalls to secure data systems. Regular software updates, antivirus protection, data backups, and cautious sharing of personal information remain essential preventive measures. Thus, preventing cybercrime requires a multi-layered strategy: strong legislation, public education, cross-sector collaboration, and international partnership. As Aghatise (2008) concludes, proactive prevention is far more effective than attempting to remedy the damage after an attack.

Gaps in the Literature

The reviewed literature confirms that cybercrime is a global phenomenon affecting individuals, businesses, and national economies. Existing studies have extensively examined the causes of youth involvement in cybercrime, including poverty, unemployment, peer influence, and weak institutional frameworks. The implications of cybercrime ranging from financial losses and damaged national reputation to reduced foreign investment and public distrust are also well documented. Furthermore, several scholars have proposed strategies for prevention and control, emphasizing legal reforms, capacity building, and public awareness.

However, a critical gap remains in the existing body of research. Few, if any, empirical studies have specifically explored the perceptions of stakeholders regarding male teenagers' participation in cybercrime within the Ido Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. This absence of localized research limits understanding of the contextual factors driving cybercrime in peri-urban communities like Ido, and underscores the need for this present study.

4. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This study is anchored on two sociological theories: The Structural Functionalism Theory and the Broken Windows Theory, both of which provide valuable insights into understanding the issue of male teenagers' participation in cybercrime within the Ido community.

The Structural Functionalism Theory views society as a complex system composed of interdependent parts that work together to maintain stability and social order. Each institution such as the family, the school, the economy, religion, and the community play a distinct role in ensuring that the social system functions smoothly. When one part of this structure fails to perform its function effectively, the equilibrium of the entire system is threatened, leading to social problems and deviant behavior. In the context of this study, the rising involvement of male teenagers in cybercrime can be interpreted as a symptom of dysfunction within social institutions. Weak family structures, ineffective moral and civic education, and limited community engagement may all contribute to the emergence of deviant online activities. Structural Functionalism, therefore, helps to explain how institutional breakdowns and failures in social control mechanisms create conditions that encourage deviant behaviors such as cybercrime.

Complementing this is the Broken Windows Theory, which emphasizes the significance of maintaining order and addressing minor signs of deviance to prevent more serious crimes. The theory, initially developed by Wilson and Kelling (1982) and based on Zimbardo's earlier experiments, suggests that visible signs of neglect or disorder such as vandalism, truancy, or

disrespect for social norms—can create an environment that fosters more serious criminal acts. When minor misbehaviors are ignored or tolerated, they may send a signal that deviance is acceptable or that authorities are indifferent. Applied to this study, the theory implies that when small forms of misconduct among teenagers, such as internet fraud jokes or minor acts of deceit, are left unchecked, they may escalate into full involvement in cybercrime. The perception of leniency or weak enforcement within the community can, therefore, perpetuate this cycle of deviance.

Together, these two theories provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. The Structural Functionalism Theory explains the systemic and institutional roots of the problem how family, educational, and community structures influence teenagers' behavior while the Broken Windows Theory explains how the neglect of small issues can escalate into major social problems. Both theories emphasize the importance of collective responsibility, institutional functionality, and proactive community involvement in maintaining social order and preventing deviance.

Conceptually, the study assumes that the participation of male teenagers in cybercrime is influenced by a combination of socioeconomic, institutional, and community factors. These include poverty, unemployment, peer influence, weak parental supervision, ineffective school systems, moral decline, and the general tolerance of deviant behavior within the community. The perception of stakeholders—such as parents, educators, law enforcement agents, and community leaders plays a crucial role in shaping the community's response to these challenges. When stakeholders perceive cybercrime as a minor or socially acceptable act, it further reinforces the behavior among young males.

In summary, the theoretical and conceptual framework of this study suggests that cybercrime among male teenagers in the Ido community results from the interplay between institutional weaknesses and community neglect. Strengthening family values, improving educational and moral instruction, ensuring effective law enforcement, and fostering a sense of collective responsibility among stakeholders are therefore essential strategies for curbing cybercrime in the community.

5. Methodology

This study adopted a case study design to allow for an in-depth exploration of stakeholders' perceptions of male teenagers' participation in cybercrime in Ido Community. The case study approach was considered appropriate because it enabled a detailed examination of the phenomenon within its natural context and from diverse perspectives.

The research was carried out in Ido Community, located in the Ido Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. The community lies on the north-western edge of Ibadan between longitudes 7°02' and 7°04' east of Greenwich and latitudes 3°35' and 4°10' north of the equator. Historically established by Yoruba warlords in the fifteenth century, Ido occupies about 1,016.95 square kilometres of fertile derived-savanna land. Farming remains the major occupation, engaging about 65 percent of the population, while others are artisans, traders, and small-scale manufacturers. Although the 2006 census recorded about 1,765 residents, the population has grown rapidly due to its closeness to Ibadan.

The study population included male teenagers and key community stakeholders such as parents, youth leaders, religious leaders, political leaders, cyber-café owners, police officers, opinion

leaders, and scholars of criminology and security studies. From these groups, thirty-five respondents were purposively selected because of their relevance to the study. They comprised parents, Christian and Islamic leaders, traditional and political leaders, youth leaders, cyber-café owners, police officers, an opinion leader, and a criminology scholar. In addition, a focus group discussion consisting of eight women was organized to capture gender perspectives on teenage involvement in cybercrime.

Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained through in-depth and key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and archival materials from religious and local government records. Secondary data were derived from books, journals, theses, and credible online publications related to the study. The interviews and discussions were guided by open-ended questions developed in line with the research objectives. The process was flexible, allowing respondents to express their views freely while enabling deeper probing when necessary. All interviews and discussions were recorded, with participants' consent, using an Android recording device to ensure accuracy during transcription.

The collected data were analysed qualitatively through content analysis. The transcribed responses were organized into themes and subthemes reflecting the research questions. A deductive approach guided interpretation, linking field findings with theoretical insights and relevant literature. Descriptive narratives and illustrative quotations from respondents were used to present the findings clearly and meaningfully.

The fieldwork encountered certain challenges, particularly in logistics and scheduling. The wide spatial spread of respondents across the local government area made mobility demanding. Moreover, the period of data collection coincided with the 2023 general elections, which made it difficult to reach some participants such as government officials and police officers who were engaged in electoral duties. Nonetheless, through persistence and flexibility, the data collection process was successfully completed.

6. Presentation and Data Analysis

R.Q.1: Factors Leading Teenagers in Ido Local Government Area to Engage in Cybercrime Findings

Findings from the study reveal multiple interrelated factors driving male teenagers in Ido Local Government Area toward cybercrime. These factors span technological exposure, social and moral influences, economic hardship, and environmental conditions. Respondents across all categories — parents, religious leaders, police officers, and opinion leaders — identified the following as key determinants.

Easy Access to Technology

The first and most dominant factor is **easy access to technology**. Many households in Ido now own internet-enabled devices such as smartphones and computers, giving teenagers unsupervised access to the online space. *As Mrs. Balogun (Respondent 1, Category 1) observed:*

Many households in Ido Local Government Area have access to computers, smartphones, and the internet. This easy access enables teenagers to explore and exploit various online platforms for illegal activities, including hacking, fraud, and online harassment (personal communication, 11 February 2023).

Religious leaders, Rev. Oluborode and Imam Waris, also emphasized that unrestricted internet use exposes children to negative social influences. They recalled that before the spread of GSM technology, youth in Ido were known for hard work and moral uprightness, but the availability of digital tools has increased opportunities for online fraud. *Mr. Kolawole* further noted that “many parents do not have the technical knowledge of the internet, and this reduces their capacity to adequately monitor their children (personal communication, 19 February 2023)”.

These findings corroborate *Meke* (2012) and *Adesina* (2017), who assert that unsupervised internet access encourages cybercrime. Applying the **Broken Window Theory**, such unmonitored technological exposure represents a neglected “broken window” an unchecked minor issue that escalates into serious deviant behavior.

Laziness and the Quest for Quick Wealth

Another recurring theme is laziness, which respondents linked to a lack of diligence and the pursuit of quick wealth. According to Miss Teju (Respondent 2, Category 1):

Teenage boys nowadays are very lazy and do not want to work. They always find the easy way to success, which is the reason why most of them usually do Yahoo Yahoo and even end up engaging in ritual activities with the hope of getting money (personal communication, 17 February 2023).

This aligns with the Broken Window Theory, which holds that when small acts of indiscipline such as idleness are ignored, they evolve into larger social problems like theft and cybercrime. Laziness therefore serves as an early indicator of potential criminal behaviour among male teenagers.

Poverty and Economic Hardship

Poverty also emerged as a major propelling factor. Economic hardship pushes many teenagers toward illegal online activities in search of financial relief. Emmanuel Ebube (Respondent 3, Category 2) noted: “The level of poverty is one of the reasons teenage boys do Yahoo Yahoo. They want to live a better life but cannot cope with the economic hardship in the country (personal communication, 12 March 2023)”. This finding corresponds with Adebusuyi (2008) and Longe (2008), who argue that limited economic opportunities contribute to cybercrime. In line with the Broken Window Theory, poverty itself becomes a form of social disorder that increases vulnerability to crime, particularly among young males seeking economic relevance.

Peer Pressure

Closely related is peer pressure, which respondents identified as a powerful motivator for teenage involvement in cybercrime. Mr. Ope, a secondary school teacher, explained:

Our male teenagers are getting involved in cybercrime as a result of peer pressures. They see how some of their friends are spending money and living large... even boys from good homes are victims of peer pressure (personal communication, 14 February 2023).

This finding aligns with *Adesina* (2017) and *Acquisti* (2009), who note that social influence and the desire for validation drive youths toward cybercrime. Within the lens of the Broken Window

Theory, when cybercriminal lifestyles are glamorized without visible consequences, such behavior becomes normalized, encouraging others to imitate it.

Lack of Proper Home Training

Another significant contributor is lack of proper home training. Many respondents linked moral decline among male teenagers to parental neglect. Mr. Ibrahim (Respondent 8, Category 3), a Muslim cleric, observed:

Many teenage boys who are engaged in cybercrime do not have proper home training. Parents no longer have time for their children and leave their upbringing to house helps or relatives (personal communication, 16 February 2023).

Mr. Johnson (Respondent 10, Category 1), a church elder, added:

Many parents have failed in their primary responsibility of bringing up their children with sound moral and spiritual standards. In Ido, parents focus more on the girls in terms of upbringing (personal communication, 18 February 2023).

This finding reinforces Das (2013), who emphasized that parental negligence leads to deviant behaviors, and resonates with Structural Functionalism, which views the family as a stabilizing institution. When parents fail in moral training, the social fabric weakens, increasing the likelihood of criminality. The Broken Window Theory also applies here, as unchecked moral neglect within homes leads to broader social decay.

Influence of Online Content

The influence of online content further reinforces deviant behavior. Respondents noted that social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook promote materialism and sometimes glorify fraudulent success. Mr. Akin (Respondent 1, Category 3) explained:

There are bad contents online, especially on TikTok. Many producers pose with expensive cars and houses, claiming to have cashed out from Yahoo Yahoo, which propels our boys to imitate them (personal communication, 20 February 2023).

Similarly, Mr. David (Respondent 1, Category 1) stated: "Most of the things people post on social media are the reason many engage in Yahoo Yahoo (personal communication, 12 February 2023)". This finding supports Cooper et al. (2000) and Ibikunle (2013), who observed that the internet can encourage criminal tendencies through exposure to illegal content. The Broken Window Theory suggests that failure to regulate such content allows deviance to spread, while Structural Functionalism views it as a dysfunction within the digital system meant to serve societal progress.

Social Acceptance of Cybercrime

The study also found that social acceptance of cybercrime has made the issue more entrenched.

Mr. Ajani Khoyum (Respondent 9, Category 3), a police officer, lamented:

Most members of the community do not see anything wrong with cybercrime. Even some elders encourage it because of its financial benefits. Parents often defend their children when we make arrests (personal communication, 22 February 2023).

This aligns with Meke (2012), Matusitz (2005), and Nkanga (2008), who note that the romanticization of cybercriminals fosters societal tolerance. From a Structural Functionalist perspective, a society that normalizes such behavior undermines its own moral order and institutional integrity.

Parental Illiteracy and Digital Ignorance

Lastly, illiteracy, particularly among parents, emerged as a significant enabler of cybercrime. Mr. Joel Ayomide (Respondent 13, Category 2), a police officer, remarked:

One of the reasons our males are engaged in cybercrime is because their parents are not technologically savvy. As a result, they cannot properly guide their teenage males who are desperately adventurous (personal communication, 16 February 2023).

This observation reflects the Broken Window Theory, where ignorance and lack of digital literacy within households create disorder that fosters deviant behavior. It also supports Olumide (2010) and Reddick et al. (2000), who assert that parental ignorance contributes to rising cybercrime. Within the framework of Structural Functionalism, digitally literate parents strengthen the family's socializing function, helping to maintain order and discipline.

In summary, teenage male involvement in cybercrime in Ido Local Government Area results from the convergence of technological exposure, poor parental supervision, moral decay, poverty, peer influence, societal acceptance, and digital illiteracy. These factors collectively reflect the interplay between individual behaviour and structural conditions, as explained by both the Broken Window Theory and Structural Functionalism. The findings emphasize that neglect, disorder, and weakened social institutions reinforce the cycle of cybercrime among male teenagers. Addressing these root causes requires strengthening family systems, improving digital literacy, and reestablishing moral and social order within the community.

RQ2: The Impact of Male Teenagers' Involvement in Cybercrime in Ido Community

The study reveals that the participation of male teenagers in cybercrime within the Ido Community has far-reaching consequences that extend beyond the individual offenders to affect families, institutions, and the broader community. These effects manifest through legal, educational, economic, and social dimensions, affirming both the Broken Window Theory that unchecked deviance escalates into greater disorder and Structural Functionalism, which argues that dysfunction in one social subsystem weakens the stability of the whole.

Legal Consequences

Findings show that teenage engagement in cybercrime exposes offenders to severe legal repercussions. Respondents explained that several boys in Ido Community have faced arrest, prosecution, or imprisonment for their involvement. Mr. Lateef (Respondent 2, Category 1), a teacher, revealed that "some male teenagers are in juvenile courts for cybercrime cases. I know

students who no longer attend classes because of court appearances (personal communication, 24 February 2023)”. This view aligns with Lewis et al. (2005), who maintains that offenders must face the legal consequences of cybercrime, and Matusitz (2005), who adds that such encounters can ruin future opportunities. Similarly, Hassan (2012) notes that legal entanglements result in loss of respect and reputation. In line with the Broken Window Theory, these outcomes reflect the escalation of deviance when minor misconducts go unchecked.

Negative Impact on Education

Cybercrime among teenage boys has led to poor academic performance and school dropouts. Mr. Friday (Respondent 4, Category 3), a teacher, observed that “once boys in our community start Yahoo, they begin to drop out of school, saying school is a scam (personal communication, 13 February 2023)”. This aligns with Ebeleogu et al. (2019), who argue that cybercrime distracts students from academics, and Bossler et al. (2019), who associate the trend with the declining standard of education in Nigeria. From a Structural Functionalist perspective, education as a core societal function becomes destabilized when youth prioritize fraudulent activities over learning, weakening the intellectual base of the community.

Undermining Online Safety and Public Confidence

The study reveals that the involvement of teenagers in cybercrime has eroded public trust in online transactions. Mr. Johnson (Respondent 3, Category 1), an undergraduate, explained that “Yahoo Yahoo has caused a lot of damage because people no longer trust any online economic idea; they assume it’s another scam (personal communication, 23 February 2023)”. This finding supports Das (2013), who observed that cyber fraud discourages people from engaging in online financial activities, leading them to prefer physical transactions. The Broken Window Theory helps explain this erosion of digital trust when cyber deviance is left unaddressed, it escalates into widespread fear and suspicion of legitimate online interactions.

Strain on Law Enforcement Resources

Respondents agreed that the constant policing of cybercrime has diverted attention from other critical security issues. Mr. Samuel (Respondent 3, Category 3), a community youth leader, stated that “Yahoo boys are causing serious problems in this community, and police officers are always after them while pressing issues like robbery and theft are neglected (personal communication, 26 February 2023)”. This submission corresponds with Acquisti et al. (2009), who argue that the fight against cybercrime drains security agencies and limits their effectiveness in other areas. From a Structural Functionalist lens, this imbalance weakens institutional efficiency and disrupts the equilibrium of the community’s social structure.

Financial Loss

Financial loss is one of the most direct consequences of cybercrime in Ido Community. Mr. Kolawole (Respondent 6, Category 2), a landlord, reported losing ₦150,000 through a fraudulent call impersonating a bank official (personal communication, 19 February 2023). He added that “these Yahoo boys steal from anyone, even from their own people, leaving them in hardship and debt.” This finding echoes Adesina (2017), who noted that cybercrime causes significant financial hardship for victims and businesses, and Ajibike (2019), who affirmed that such losses affect community and national economies. According to the Broken Window Theory, unchecked cybercrime results in larger economic damage, while Structural Functionalism emphasizes how financial instability threatens overall social balance.

Damage to Reputation

Engaging in cybercrime damages the personal and communal reputation of offenders. *Mr. Aderibigbe* (Respondent 3, Category 1), a parent, observed that “many of these boys don’t realize that once they are caught and prosecuted, no employer or community member will trust or recommend them again” (personal communication, 14 February 2023). This is consistent with *Bossler et al. (2019)*, who argue that criminal records limit future opportunities, and *Tamar (2019)*, who emphasizes that employers conduct background checks to avoid hiring individuals with criminal pasts. Furthermore, the community’s image suffers collective damage, as cybercrime activity brands Ido as a hub for fraud. The Broken Window Theory explains this as a social contagion: visible disorder tarnishes the community’s moral image and external reputation.

Hindrance to Online Business Growth

Cybercrime has hindered the expansion of digital entrepreneurship and e-commerce in the community. *Mr. Delight* (Respondent 1, Category 2), a graduate, noted that “fear of cyber-attacks discourages investors from starting online businesses in our community” (personal communication, 18 February 2023). This aligns with *Kshetri (2019)*, who reported that insecurity in cyberspace suppresses innovation and entrepreneurship, and *Olumide et al. (2010)*, who estimated global economic losses of over \$3 billion annually due to cybercrime. Under the Structural Functionalism framework, this decline in online ventures disrupts one of the modern society’s vital economic systems, reducing both employment opportunities and communal development.

Negative Influence on Others

Teenage cybercriminals serve as negative role models to their peers. *Mrs. Adeshupo* (Respondent 4, Category 3), a parent, explained that “Yahoo boys flaunt their illegally acquired wealth, deceiving younger ones that fraud pays” (personal communication, 14 March 2023). This finding aligns with *Nkanga (2008)*, who argues that glorifying cybercrime inspires impressionable youths to emulate criminal lifestyles. The Broken Window Theory explains this social contagion: visible deviant success normalizes criminality, spreading it to others if not immediately corrected.

Loss of Trust and Social Cohesion

Finally, respondents identified the loss of trust as one of the most damaging outcomes of cybercrime. *Mr. Olapeju Kolawole* (Respondent 3, Category 4), a youth, noted that “people no longer trust Yahoo boys; even after seeing proof of payment, we still doubt them” (personal communication, 11 March 2023). This view supports *Adeniran (2008)*, who states that cybercrime erodes confidence in young people, and *Longe (2008)* and *Kshetri (2019)*, who argue that offenders face social exclusion and suspicion. Within the Broken Window Theory, such distrust reflects deepening disorder—once trust is broken, community cohesion weakens. This outcome also confirms Structural Functionalism, which posits that when mutual trust erodes, social systems lose their integrative function, leading to fragmentation.

The participation of male teenagers in cybercrime within Ido Community produces multifaceted negative outcomes—legal troubles, academic disruption, economic losses, erosion of moral values, and communal distrust. These consequences validate both the Broken Window Theory, showing how neglected deviance escalates into systemic disorder, and Structural Functionalism,

which highlights how dysfunction within the family, education, and economy undermines societal harmony. The findings underscore the urgent need for parental vigilance, community sensitization, and effective policy interventions to restore moral order and rebuild trust in the Ido Community.

R.Q.3: How Can Cybercrime Among Male Teenagers Be Curbed in the Ido Local Government Area?

Provision of Employment Opportunities

Respondents identified unemployment as one of the major drivers of cybercrime in the Ido Community. They believe that creating employment opportunities will help tackle the root causes of cybercrime by providing teenagers with legitimate means of livelihood and productive engagement. According to *Mr. Samuel* (Respondent 3, Category 1), a local youth leader:

“The reason why you see our male teenagers and youth involving themselves in cybercrime is because there are limited job opportunities in this community. Imagine a graduate with First-Class Honours without gainful employment! If the government can provide employment opportunities for our youth and teenagers, the rate at which they involve themselves in Yahoo Yahoo will reduce drastically.” (*Mr. Samuel 2023, personal communication, 15 March*).

This submission supports the Broken Window Theory, as addressing small economic frustrations like unemployment helps to prevent larger societal crimes such as cybercrime. *Ibikunle and Eweniyi (2013)* concur that societies with greater employment opportunities tend to record lower crime rates, while *Ajibike (2019)* reinforces that economic empowerment diverts young people from criminal activity. This finding also aligns with Structural Functionalism, which posits that a society that adequately provides for its members reduces deviant tendencies and ensures stability.

Positive Role Models

The influence of positive role models was also highlighted as a key strategy in preventing cybercrime among teenagers. Respondents believe that when teenagers are surrounded by people who exemplify integrity and success through legitimate means, they are less likely to be drawn into fraudulent activities. As *Mr. Olugbenga* (Respondent 3, Category 2), a pastor at Winners Chapel, stated:

“The Bible says, ‘Show me your friend and I will tell you who you are.’ Who you follow determines the outcome of your life. Our male teenagers should be encouraged to make friends with positive role models in society. When they do, they will be less motivated to engage in Yahoo Yahoo.” (*Mr. Olugbenga 2023, personal communication, 12 February*).

This finding aligns with *Olumide (2010)* and *Kshetri (2019)*, who argue that mentorship and positive examples can significantly reduce juvenile delinquency and cybercrime. The view also affirms Structural Functionalism, as role models serve as social agents that reinforce moral order and societal cohesion.

Role of Religious Clerics

Religious clerics play a significant role in moral education and social control. Through sermons and teachings, they can raise awareness about the ethical and spiritual implications of cybercrime. They can promote values such as honesty, integrity, and respect for others, thereby discouraging deviant behavior.

As *Mrs. Lawrence* (Respondent 2, Category 2), a deaconess, remarked:

“Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. If it is constantly emphasized by our clerics that shortcuts do not pay, our boys will be restrained from engaging in Yahoo Yahoo. By reinforcing values of hard work and honesty, the activities of Yahoo boys will greatly reduce.”
(*Mrs. Lawrence 2023, personal communication, 16 March*).

This finding supports the Broken Window Theory, where moral instruction serves as an early check against deviant conduct. It also aligns with *Adesina* (2017), who maintains that religion remains a strong mechanism for social control capable of deterring criminal behaviour. Within the framework of Structural Functionalism, religion functions as a stabilizing institution that maintains moral order and prevents societal dysfunction.

Effective Policing

Respondents emphasized that effective policing and law enforcement are central to curbing cybercrime in the Ido Community. Establishing specialized units within security agencies to monitor and prosecute cyber-related offenses can deter potential offenders.

Mr. Bamidele (Respondent 4, Category 1), Divisional Police Officer of Ido, explained:

“We are working hard to ensure the reduction of cybercrime in this community. Anytime we want to make arrests, we don’t just arrest the teenagers alone — we arrest their parents too. This strategy deters others and makes parents put pressure on their children to desist from committing such crimes.”(*Mr. Bamidele 2023, personal communication, 18 February*).

This response supports the Broken Window Theory, which posits that addressing minor offenses promptly prevents major crimes. Similarly, *Adeniran* (2008) and *Aghatise* (2006) assert that effective policing helps to uphold law and order, thereby ensuring the smooth functioning of society. This is consistent with Structural Functionalism, where the police represent a critical institution responsible for maintaining societal equilibrium.

Educational Advocacy Programmes

Respondents unanimously agreed that educational advocacy programmes could play a transformative role in reducing cybercrime. Awareness campaigns, school programmes, and community outreach can promote ethical digital behaviour and discourage online fraud.

According to *Miss Teju* (Respondent 3, Category 1), a teacher:

“By educating the community through advocacy programmes about the consequences of cybercrime, we can reduce it. Courses on ethics should be reinforced in the curriculum right from

kindergarten to help the male child develop positive digital behaviour.”
(*Miss Teju 2023, personal communication, 14 March*).

This aligns with Structural Functionalism, as education is seen as a key institution for transmitting social values and maintaining order. The Broken Window Theory also applies here—minor moral deviations corrected early through education prevent larger social crimes.

Kshetri (2019) and *Ajibike (2019)* affirm that educational sensitization can shape digital ethics among youth. Similarly, *Miss Dupe* (Respondent 3, Category 1) observed that: “Schools should introduce programmes that teach the negative impact of cybercrime and its consequences. Many teenagers learn deviant behaviour from peers, so teaching them early will help.” (*Miss Dupe 2023, personal communication, 11 March*). This aligns with *Bossler et al. (2019)*, who assert that schools, as agents of socialization, are instrumental in shaping responsible citizens. Furthermore, *Atanda Blessed* (Respondent 5, Category 3) suggested that the media could also support these programmes by broadcasting messages that discourage cybercrime, consistent with *Adebusuyi (2008)* and *Jude (2020)* who emphasize media’s power to shape public morality.

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement was repeatedly identified as a cornerstone in the fight against cybercrime. Parents are expected to monitor, discipline, and guide their children toward acceptable moral behaviour. *Pastor Gideon* (Respondent 5, Category 4) emphasized:

“The Bible says, ‘Spare the rod and spoil the child.’ It falls back to parents to ensure that their children don’t bring shame. I discipline my children and monitor everything they do online. Once I smell foul play, that’s the last time they will see that phone.”
(*Pastor Gideon 2023, personal communication, 13 February*).

This aligns with the Broken Window Theory, as active parenting prevents small moral cracks from expanding into serious criminal conduct. *Ebeleogu et al. (2019)* and *Kshetri (2019)* both affirm that parents play a crucial role in determining whether children become responsible citizens or delinquents. From the Structural Functionalist perspective, the family is the first social institution responsible for instilling discipline and ensuring moral continuity within society.

Summary

The study reveals that curbing cybercrime among male teenagers in Ido Local Government requires a multi-dimensional approach. Employment opportunities, mentorship through positive role models, religious and moral guidance, effective policing, educational advocacy, and parental involvement collectively form a robust framework for prevention.

When these social institutions—family, religion, education, and law enforcement—function effectively, they uphold the principles of Structural Functionalism, ensuring societal balance. Similarly, by addressing small moral and social failings before they escalate, the Broken Window Theory provides a practical framework for preventing cybercrime and fostering a disciplined, responsible, and morally upright generation in the Ido Community.

Conclusion

The study established that cybercrime has evolved into a serious global concern, posing threats to individuals, corporations, and governments as societies become more technologically dependent. Across the world, the participation of male teenagers in cybercrime has drawn significant scholarly and policy attention. Researchers and institutions such as Interpol and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) have repeatedly emphasized that young males are increasingly becoming active agents in the digital crime landscape due to factors such as unemployment, peer influence, exposure to deviant online cultures, and a general decline in moral and social values. This study contributes to that global conversation by situating the phenomenon within the specific social, cultural, and economic realities of the Ido Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria.

Findings from this research reveal that the engagement of male teenagers in cybercrime within the Ido community mirrors broader global patterns. The study identified poverty, peer pressure, parental neglect, lack of digital literacy, and easy access to unregulated internet spaces as major causes. These factors align with international literature that highlights similar root causes across both developing and developed societies. The findings also show that moral laxity, societal tolerance, and the normalization of illicit digital gains have further deepened the problem. Respondents pointed out that the erosion of family values and weak institutional oversight have made many teenagers more vulnerable to online deviance. This reflects the central argument of the Structural Functionalism theory, which posits that when key social institutions such as the family, religion, and education fail to perform their stabilizing functions, societal imbalance and deviant behaviours emerge. Similarly, the Broken Window Theory was affirmed through evidence that small acts of negligence, such as poor parental monitoring or tolerating minor misbehaviours, can gradually escalate into more serious crimes like online fraud.

The study's insights resonate with global debates that frame teenage male cybercrime not merely as a technological issue but as a social and moral challenge shaped by structural inequalities, economic instability, and digital exposure. Scholars such as Holt, Bossler, and Seigfried-Spellar (2018) argue that young men across various societies are disproportionately represented in cybercrime due to cultural expectations of masculinity, risk-taking, and the quest for financial independence. The findings from Ido Community validate these arguments, revealing how similar dynamics play out at the local level. Moreover, the social media culture that glorifies wealth, irrespective of its source, mirrors the global narrative where online spaces contribute to the construction and celebration of criminal identities.

The consequences of this trend are far-reaching, both locally and globally. Within Ido, the prevalence of cybercrime among male teenagers has led to economic losses, reputational damage, strained law enforcement resources, and diminished public trust in online transactions. At a global level, such patterns contribute to economic instability, cross-border cyber fraud, and international concerns about digital safety and governance. Therefore, addressing teenage male involvement in cybercrime requires a multidimensional approach that goes beyond punitive measures to include prevention, education, and rehabilitation.

The study concludes that reducing cybercrime among male teenagers in Ido Community—and by extension in similar societies—demands a holistic response grounded in community collaboration, social reorientation, and socioeconomic empowerment. Strengthening digital

literacy programs, especially among parents and young people, will help to bridge the knowledge gap that currently enables cyber offences. Promoting parental engagement and moral education will reinforce the family's stabilizing role, while mentorship and advocacy programs can counteract the negative influence of peer groups and social media. Creating employment and vocational opportunities will provide legitimate avenues for young men to pursue financial stability, thereby addressing one of the root causes of their involvement in cybercrime.

Furthermore, collaboration between schools, law enforcement agencies, religious institutions, and the private sector is essential. Such partnerships can enhance monitoring, raise awareness, and provide early interventions before deviant behaviours escalate. Rehabilitation and reintegration initiatives should also be developed to support those already involved in cybercrime, helping them to reform and reintegrate productively into society.

In essence, the fight against teenage male involvement in cybercrime in Ido Community reflects a microcosm of the broader global challenge of managing youth behaviour in the digital age. It connects local experiences with international debates on social control, technological ethics, and digital inclusion. Aligning these findings with global objectives such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals—particularly Goal 4 on quality education, Goal 8 on decent work, and Goal 16 on peace and strong institutions—demonstrates that tackling youth cybercrime is not only a matter of law enforcement but also of social justice and sustainable development. Therefore, a balanced strategy that combines economic empowerment, moral reawakening, and digital education remains the most effective pathway toward reducing cybercrime among male teenagers and securing a safer digital future for all.

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