



# Knowledge and Implementation of Cyber Crime Act 2015 to Check Cyberbullying Among Secondary School Students in Port Harcourt, Rivers State

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## Abstract

This study investigated knowledge and implementation of cyber crime Act 2015 to check cyber bullying among secondary school students in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Two objectives and two research questions were formulated to guide the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study was 7,739 students in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt, Rivers state. A sample of 380 respondents was determined using Taro Yamane's formula. The instrument for the study was a questionnaire titled "Knowledge and Implementation of cyber crime Act 2015 to Check Cyberbullying Questionnaire (KICACCQ)" designed by the researchers. The instrument was structured on modified four-point Likert scale of Very High Extent (VHE) = 4, High Extent (HE) = 3, Low Extent (LE) = 2 and Very Low Extent (VLE) = 1. The validity of the instrument was ensured. Cronbach Alpha statistic was used to compute the reliability index of 0.87. Mean scores and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that students lack sufficient knowledge of the cyber crime Act 2015 to check cyber bullying, and there are no specific policies for checking cyberbullying in secondary schools in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that improving students' knowledge of cyber crime Act 2015 will help in preventing cyber bullying among students in secondary schools in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Keywords: Cyber Crime, Cyber Crime Act, Cyber bullying, Secondary school, Students, State

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## INTRODUCTION

Cyber is a word that is used to refer to electronic or digital communications network, such as the Internet. Crime is an illegal act which results to an offence punishable by an established law. Cybercrime therefore is an offence committed using digital communications network (the internet) against an individual or group of individuals. Ajayi (2016) defines cybercrime as an offence that is committed by the use of computer and internet or other forms of information and communication technologies (ICT). The offender uses electronic or digital communication devices as tool to perpetrate a crime. This could be in the form of spamming, harassing, phishing, password sniffing, cybersquatting, cyberterrorism, cyberstalking, child pornography, cyber bullying, copyright infringement, social engineering, among others.

The invention of digital communication technologies has given birth to the use of modern communication networks such as internet to send text messages, e-mail, images, videos through the use smart phones, tablets, computers and other devices. Sunder (2018) asserts that the increasing use of digital communication technologies is improving our ways of communication but has also introduced a number of dangerous problems due to the unawareness of cybercrime by users. In recent time, digital technologies are not only used for communication, but also as a means of searching for new knowledge and skills. Besides, young users have created new challenges as well as negative behaviours. Adibe and Udeogu (2017) state that it has become a common practice for users of the internet to ridicule, harass or insult those who disagree with their points of view, and for exploitation or malicious purposes.

The concept ‘bullying’ is an aggressive behaviour that violates individual’s right to personal dignity, or harassment with an intention to harm or hurt the person. Cyberbullying is the use of digital communication devices and internet to send text messages, e-mail, images, videos that tend to harass or harm the reputation of the recipient. Kyriacov and Zuin (2016) define cyberbullying as a means of bullying through the use of the internet, interactive and digital technologies, computers, smart phones or other mobile electronic devices. Cyberbullying is occurring in our everyday life among users of computer networks (the internet) and smart phones, tablets, apps and other social networks sites like Facebook, WhatsApp, blogs, chat room, e-mail, Instagram among others. Abraham (2016) notes that cyber-bullying is another term for ‘online bullying’.

The Cybercrime Act 2015 signed into law on the 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2015 by the former president, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, seeks to provide an effective, unified and comprehensive legal regulatory and institutional framework for prohibition, prevention, prosecution and punishment of cybercrime in Nigeria. The Act prohibits cyberstalking in order to effectively regulate the spread of false stories, harassment and indecent posting of images online. Section 15 (1a) of the Act states that any person who knowingly or intentionally sends a message or other matter by means of computer networks that “is grossly offensive, or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character or causes any such message or matter to be sent” has committed an offence under the Act and shall be liable for prosecution. Section 15 (1b) provides that any person who knowingly or intentionally sends a message or other matter by means of computer networks that “he knows to be false, for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety to another or causes such a message to be sent is liable for prosecution under this Act.

Also, section 15 (2a) provides that anyone who knowingly or intentionally through the use of information and communication technologies by means of computer networks or causes the transmission of any communication“ with intent to bully, threaten or harass another person,

where such communication places another in fear of death, violence or personal bodily injury or to another person” is liable for prosecution under this Act. Section 15 (2b) provides that anyone who knowingly or intentionally through the use of information and communication technologies by means of computer networks or causes the transmission of any communication “containing any threat to kidnap any person or any threat to injure the person of another, any demand or request for a ransom for the release of any kidnapped person with intent to extort any person, firm, association or corporation, any money or other things of value” is liable for prosecution under this Act. Section 15 (2c) provides that anyone who knowingly or intentionally through the use of information and communication technologies by means of computer networks or causes the transmission of any communication “ containing any threat to injure the property or reputation of the addressee or of another or the reputation of a deceased person or any threat to accuse the addressee or any person of a crime, with intent to extort from any person, association, or corporation, any money or other thing of value” is liable for persecution under this Act.

Section 42 which is interpretation defines cyberstalking to include (i) the use of internet or other electronic means to stalk or harass an individual, or a group of individuals or an organization, it may include false accusations, monitoring, making threat, identify theft, damage to data or equipment, the solicitation of a minor for sex or gathering information in order to harass (ii) sending multiple e-mails, often on a systematic basis to annoy, embarrass, intimidate, or threaten a person or to make the person fearful that she or a member of her family or household will be harmed.

However, to check cyber bullying among students requires to a very large extent the knowledge and implementation of cyber crime Act 2015 in secondary schools across the country. Sukanya and Raji (2017) found that lack of knowledge of the legal precautions in the cybercrime Act, psychological problems of individuals are the reasons for committing cyber crimes to a moderate level. More so, regular reminder of students on the legal implications of their action while using the internet could go a long way in curtailing cyber bullying. Abraham (2016) reiterates that cyber-bullying, like traditional (physical) bullying is harmful because of its effects on the victims’ mental health.

Kyobe, Oosterwyk and Kabiame (2016) see cyberbullying as "an aggression conducted by people on various electronic devices. Cyberbullying tends to leave victims emotionally tortured because sometimes the bullies are often unknown, unlike physical bullies. Kraft and Wang (2009) opine that making rules against cyber bullying, educating students in assemblies, setting up policies will effectively reduce cyber bullying among students. Kritzinger (2017) identified that issues relating to cyber-space awareness in education system to include access to ICT, language barriers and overall lack of educational material dealing with cyber-safety. He further asserts that teachers need some level of training to have proper skills, knowledge and expertise to identify cyber-risks and handle cyber incidents when they occur. This implies that there is a growing need for schools to ensure that plans are in place to guarantee a safe cyber environment.

This is what bordered the researchers to investigate the knowledge and implementation of cyber crime Act 2015 to check cyber bullying among secondary school students in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The use of the internet and other digital communications networks has transformed the way we communicate with others. Today, smart phones, tablets and personal computers are used by individuals to communicate through communication networks sites. This advancement in technologies has made individuals remain connected with each others. Besides, the internet world leaves many negative consequences due to unscripted activities of some young users, using the internet as a means of perpetrating crime by posting false, abusive, threatening, offensive, obscene, humiliating, shameful or otherwise harmful content notably through social networks websites, such as Facebook, Twitter or YouTube. This has created new challenges as well as negative behaviour among users into new means of bullying. This study seeks to investigate the knowledge and implementation of cyber crime Act 2015 to check cyber bullying among secondary school students in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

## **AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The aim of the study was to investigate the knowledge and implementation of cybercrime Act 2015 to check cyberbullying among secondary school students in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. In specific terms, the study sought to:

- Verify the extent of the knowledge of cybercrime Act 2015 to check cyberbullying among secondary school students in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.
- Ascertain the extent of the implementation of cybercrime Act 2015 to check cyberbullying among secondary school students in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following research questions guided the study:

- What is the extent of the knowledge of cybercrime Act 2015 to check cyberbullying among secondary school students in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?
- What is the extent of the implementation of cybercrime Act 2015 to check cyberbullying among secondary school students in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?

## **RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

The following null hypotheses were statistically tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- There is no significant difference between mean scores of male and female students on extent of the knowledge of cybercrime Act 2015 to check cyberbullying among secondary school students in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.
- There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female students on the extent of the implementation of cybercrime Act 2015 to check cyberbullying among secondary school students in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

## METHODOLOGY

The study employed the descriptive and survey research design. This design is appropriate because the researchers quantitatively collected data that yielded desirable information that were systematically described and interpreted the variables of interest. The population comprised all the students in the fifteen (15) public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt city Local Government Area of Rivers State. There are three thousand, eight hundred and sixteen (3,816) male students and three thousand, nine hundred and twenty three (3,923) female students in the fifteen senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State. The population of the study therefore is seven thousand, seven hundred and thirty nine (7,739) students in all public secondary schools in Port Harcourt city, Rivers State. (Planning, Research & Statistics; Department, Rivers State Senior Secondary Schools Board, 2018).

A sample size of 380 respondents (students) was drawn from the population using Taro Yamane's formula. The instrument for the study was a self-structured questionnaire titled "Knowledge and Implementation of Cybercrime Act 2015 to Check Cyberbullying Questionnaire (KICACCQ)". There were 25 items in the questionnaire. Part A elicits personal data from the correspondents, while part B is made of items that elicited responses for the study. The instrument was structured on modified four point Likert scale of Very High Extent (VHE) = 4, High Extent (HE) = 3, Low Extent (LE)= 2 and Very Low Extent (VLE) = 1. The instrument was given to two experts to validate; one in Educational Management, and another in Measurement and Evaluation to ascertain its content and face validity. Comments of the experts were incorporated into the final draft of the instrument. A reliability index of 0.87 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha Statistic. Mean scores and standard deviation were used in answering the research questions, while z-test statistic was used in testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

### Answers to Research Questions

**Research Question One:** What is the extent of the knowledge of cyber crime Act 2015 to check cyber bullying among secondary school students in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean scores and standard deviation of teachers on how digital information competence relates to the improvement of teacher's effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers State

S/N	Knowledge of cyber crime Act 2015 to check cyber bullying among students	Male $\bar{x}_1$	SD <sub>1</sub>	Female $\bar{x}_2$	SD <sub>2</sub>	Weighted Mean Score ( $\bar{xx}$ )	Remarks
1.	Does intentionally sending a message or other matter that is grossly offensive a publishable offence under the cyber crime Act 2015	2.46	0.50	2.23	0.60	2.35	Disagreed
2.	I know that if by the means of public electronic communications network, I intentionally send a message or other matter that is obscene or menacing character, I am liable for prosecution under the cyber crime Act 2015	2.55	1.07	2.51	1.06	2.53	Agreed
3.	I know that if by the means of public electronic communications network, I intentionally send a message or other matter that I know to be false, I am liable for prosecution under the cyber crime Act 2015.	2.68	1.04	2.53	1.08	2.61	Agreed
4.	I know that if by the means of public electronic communications network, I intentionally send a message or other matter that I know to be causing annoyance, I am liable for prosecution under the cyber crime Act 2015.	2.08	1.12	2.24	1.10	2.16	Disagreed
5.	I know that if by the means of public electronic communications network, I intentionally send a message or other matter that I know to inconvenience another person, I am liable for prosecution under the cyber crime Act 2015.	2.05	1.04	2.14	1.02	2.10	Disagreed
6.	I know that if by the means of public electronic communications network, I intentionally send a message with the intent to bully another person, I am liable for prosecution under the cyber crime Act 2015.	2.58	1.13	2.63	1.15	2.61	Agreed
7.	I know that if by the means of public electronic communications network, I intentionally send a message with the intent to threaten another person, I am	2.56	0.94	2.69	0.98	2.63	Agreed

	liable for prosecution under the cyber crime Act 2015.						
8.	I know that if by the means of public electronic communications network, I intentionally send a message with the intent to harass another person, I am liable for prosecution under the cyber crime Act 2015.	2.82	0.98	2.74	0.94	2.78	Agreed
9.	I know that if by the means of public electronic communications network, I intentionally send a message or matter with the intent to place fear of death to another person, I am liable for prosecution under the cyber crime Act 2015.	2.67	0.96	2.53	0.83	2.60	Agreed
10.	I know that if by the means of public electronic communications network, I intentionally send a message or matter with the intent to cause violence, I am liable for prosecution under the cyber crime Act 2015.	2.87	1.04	2.61	1.12	2.74	Agreed
11.	I know that if by the means of public electronic communications, I intentionally send a message or other matter containing threat to kidnap a person, I am liable for prosecution under the cyber crime Act 2015.	2.98	1.13	2.64	1.08	2.81	Agreed
12.	I know that if by the means of public electronic communications, I intentionally send a message or other matter containing threat to injure the person of another, I am liable for prosecution under the cyber crime Act 2015.	2.70	1.03	2.66	1.15	2.68	Agreed
13.	I know that if by the means of public electronic communications, I intentionally send a message or other matter containing threat to demands or request for a ransom for the release of any kidnapped person, I am liable for prosecution under the cyber crime Act 2015.	2.90	1.05	2.55	1.12	2.73	Agreed
14.	I know that if by the means of public electronic communications, I intentionally send a message containing any threat to injure the property of the addressee, I am liable for prosecution under the cyber crime Act 2015.	1.80	0.87	2.00	0.63	1.90	Disagreed
15.	I know that if by the means of public electronic communications, I intentionally send a message containing any threat to the reputation of a deceased person, I am liable for prosecution under the cyber crime Act 2015.	1.32	0.68	1.47	0.43	1.40	Disagreed
16.	I know that if by the means of public	1.41	0.67	1.88	0.63	1.65	Disagreed

	electronic communications, I intentionally send a message containing any threat to cause the addressee or any other person to commit crime, I am liable for prosecution under the cyber crime Act 2015.						
17.	I know that if by the means of public electronic communications, I intentionally send a message containing any threat with intent to extort from any person, firm, association or corporation, any money or other thing of value, I am liable for prosecution under the cyber crime Act 2015.	2.82	0.98	2.69	1.00	2.76	Disagreed
18.	I am aware of the existence of the cyber crime Act 2015	1.57	0.47	1.49	0.53	1.53	Disagreed
	<b>Aggregate Mean (<math>\bar{x}</math>)</b>	<b>2.38</b>	<b>0.93</b>	<b>2.35</b>	<b>0.91</b>	<b>2.37</b>	Disagreed

**Legend:**

$\bar{X}$  : Mean  
SD : Standard Deviation

**Scale:**

1.00 – 2.49 : Disagreed  
2.50 – 4.00 : Agreed

Data on Table 1 show that item (1) had mean score below the criterion mean of 2.50 and were disagreed on the extent of the knowledge of cyber crime Act 2015 to check cyber bullying among secondary school students in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Items (2-3) mean scores were above the criterion mean of 2.50 and were agreed on the extent of the knowledge of cyber crime Act 2015 to check cyber bullying among secondary school students in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Items (4-5) mean scores were below the criterion mean of 2.50 and were disagreed on the extent of the knowledge of cyber crime Act 2015 to check cyber bullying among secondary school students in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Items (6-13) were mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50 and were agreed on the extent of the knowledge of cyber crime Act 2015 to check cyber bullying among secondary school students in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Items (14-18) mean scores were below the criterion mean of 2.50 and were disagreed on the extent of the knowledge of cyber crime Act 2015 to check cyber bullying among secondary school students in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. In summary, with an aggregate mean score of 2.37 below the criterion mean of 2.50, the male and female students disagreed on the extent of the knowledge of cyber crime Act 2015 to check cyber bullying among secondary school students in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

**Research Question Two:** What is the extent of the implementation of cyber crime Act 2015 to check cyber bullying among secondary school students in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?



Table 2: Mean scores and standard deviation of students on the extent of the implementation of cyber crime Act 2015 to check cyber bullying among secondary school students in Port Harcourt, Rivers State

S/N	Implementation of cyber crime Act 2015 to check cyber bullying among students	Male $\bar{x}_1$	SD <sub>1</sub>	Female $\bar{x}_2$	SD <sub>2</sub>	Weighed Mean Scores ( $\bar{x}\bar{x}$ )	Remarks
19.	There are policies in my school to check cyber bullying among students	1.67	0.61	1.53	0.46	1.60	Disagreed
20.	There are training programmes for teachers and principals on how to recognize signs of cyber bullying among students	1.96	0.56	1.71	0.74	1.84	Disagreed
21.	There are means of informing the school principal about a reasonable suspicion of cyber bullying among students	1.88	0.48	1.95	0.83	1.92	Disagreed
22.	School principal takes prompt disciplinary actions in response to check cyber bullying confirmed through investigation	1.97	0.57	1.82	0.70	1.90	Disagreed
23.	Appropriate disciplinary actions are taken on the confirmed cyber bullying students which may include, counselling, mediation and others that is consistent with the legal rights of the involved students.	1.89	0.61	1.94	0.57	1.92	Disagreed
24.	The cyber crime Act 2015 is used in my school to check cyber bullying among students	1.82	0.54	1.77	0.78	1.80	Disagreed
25.	There has been sensitization of the school community about cyber crime Act 2015 for checking cyber bullying.	1.27	0.59	1.47	0.92	1.37	Disagreed
	<b>Aggregate Mean</b>	<b>1.76</b>	<b>0.57</b>	<b>1.74</b>	<b>0.71</b>	<b>1.75</b>	<b>Disagreed</b>

**Legend and scale for table 1 apply.**

Data on table 2 shows that items (19-22) had mean scores below the criterion mean of 2.50 and were disagreed on the extent of implementation of cyber crime Act 2015 to check cyber bullying among secondary school students in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. In summary, with an aggregate mean score of 1.75 below the criterion mean of 2.50, the male and female students disagreed on extent of implementation of cyber crime Act 2015 to check cyber bullying among secondary school students in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

**TEST OF HYPOTHESES**

**Hypothesis One:** There is no significant difference between mean scores of male and female students on extent of the knowledge of cyber crime Act 2015 to check cyber bullying among secondary school students in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Table 3: Summary of z-test analysis on the difference between the mean scores of male and female students on the extent of the knowledge of cyber crime Act 2015 to check cyber bullying among secondary school students in Port Harcourt, Rivers State

Variables	n	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	S. D	z-cal.	df	z-crit.	Decision	Remarks
Male Students	187	2.38	0.93	0.32	356	$\pm 1.96$	$H_{01}$ : Accepted	Not Significant
Female Students	193	2.35	0.91					

**Legend**

**n:** Number of respondents

**S.D :** Standard Deviation

**z-.cal.:** Calculated z-value

**z-crit. :** Critical z-value

**df :** Degree of freedom

Data on Table 3 show the summary of z-test analysis on the difference between the mean ratings of male and female students on the extent of the knowledge of cyber crime Act 2015 to check cyber bullying among secondary school students in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The result shows that the z-calculated value of 0.32 is less than the z-critical value of  $\pm 1.96$  to 0.05 significant level; hence the null hypothesis in accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference between mean scores of male and female students on extent of the knowledge of cyber crime Act 2015 to check cyber bullying among secondary school students in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

**Hypothesis Two:** There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female students on the extent of the implementation of cyber crime Act 2015 to check cyber bullying among secondary school students in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Table 4: Summary z-test analysis on the difference between the mean scores of male and female students on the extent of the implementation of cyber crime Act 2015 to check cyber bullying among secondary school students in Port Harcourt, Rivers State

Variables	n	Mean	S.D	z-cal.	df	z-tab.	Decision	Remarks
MaleStudents	187	1.76	0.57	0.30	356	$\pm 1.96$	$H_{01}$ : Accepted	Not Significant
Female Students	193	1.74	0.71					

Legend for Table 3 apply

Data on Table 4 shows the summary of z-test analysis on the difference between the mean ratings of male and female students on the extent of the implementation of cyber crime Act 2015 to check cyber bullying among secondary school students in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The result shows that the z-calculated value of 0.30 is less than the z-critical value of  $\pm 1.96$  to at 0.05 level of significance, hence the null hypothesis in accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female students on the extent of the

implementation of cyber crime Act 2015 to check cyber bullying among secondary school students in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The findings of this study in research question one revealed that the students disagreed on the knowledge of cyber crime Act 2015 to check cyber bullying among secondary school students in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. This is in line with the findings of Sukanya and Raji (2017) that lack of knowledge of the legal precautions in the cyber crime Act, and psychological problems of individuals are the reasons for committing cyber crimes. Again, Kritzinger (2017) asserted that teachers need some level of training to have proper skills, knowledge and expertise to identify cyber-risks and handle cyber incidents when they occur.

In research question two, the findings revealed that the students disagreed on the extent of implementation of cyber crime Act 2015 to check cyber bullying among secondary school students in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. This is in line with the findings of Kritzinger (2017) who identified that issues relating to cyber-space awareness in education system to include access to ICT, language barriers and overall lack of educational material dealing with cyber-safety. Again, Kraft and Wang (2009) opine that making rules against cyber bullying, educating students in assemblies, setting up policies will effectively reduce cyber bullying among students.

## **CONCLUSION**

Cyber bullying is among the prevalent problems facing adolescents today. It is the duty of the school teachers to protect students against the negative consequences of cyber bullying. Although, cyber crime Act 2015 has a place to protect students against cyber bullying, the findings of the study show that students lack sufficient knowledge of the cyber crime Act 2015 to check cyber bullying and there are no specific policies for checking cyberbullying in secondary schools in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following are recommended:

- Improving students' knowledge of cyber crime Act 2015 will help in preventing cyber bullying among students in secondary schools in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.
- Students should be sensitized on the harmful effects of using communications networks without sufficient knowledge of the legal precautions in secondary schools in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.
- Teachers should teach students moral instructions during assemblies on the effects of cyber bullying in their future behaviour in secondary schools in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.
- The school administrators should set up policies for the regulation of cyber bullying among students in secondary schools in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

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