

Socio-economic Cybercrime among Nigerian Youths: A Call for Reinstatement of the Theology and Ethic of Work

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Abstract

Cyberspace has made the world a global village as it is a citadel through which information are shared and utilized. The internet is no doubt a medium that has aided human activities and affairs socially, politically academically, financially among others. As benefitting the internet suffices to be, it has also ushered in a wave of criminal behaviors. Through it youths have been identified as a social category that commits socioeconomic cybercrimes in various forms popularly known as “419” or “yahoo yahoo”. There are various factors highlighted as reasons why youths engage in socioeconomic crimes. These ranges from unemployment to poverty, peer pressure, less work-much gain and get rich quick mentality among others. The perpetration of cybercrime is also not without consequences; it has led to financial loss, gives the country a bad image, insecurity of lives and properties and morally degraded society. This paper concludes that the reinstatement of the theology and ethics of work will do a great deal in transforming the mind of the youths towards utilizing their God-given potentials to be productive instead of engaging in crime. This will gradually gravitate their minds towards a holistic perception of work in place of cybercrimes.

Keywords: Socioeconomic, Cybercrime, Youths, Theology, Ethics, Work.

Introduction

The advent of the internet and other activities in the cyberspace has turned the world into a global village where information is disseminated within the shortest frame of time beyond distance barriers. This has sufficed for ease in attaining national development. Ehimen and Bola (2009) comments that the internet has established an algebraic development, has hastened chances for business enterprises and the ejection of economic embargoes hitherto faced by the nations on globe, one can easily attest that it is a significant factor for national development in Nigeria. According to Twomey (2009: 2) “the Internet originated from a relatively basic network set up to share information between trusted people and organizations for military and academic purposes.” Ibekwe (2015: cited in Uzochukwu, Chukwuemeka and Raphael 2019: 131-132) attests that “between 2000 and 2012, the internet expanded at an average rate of 566.4% on a global level, while an estimated 2.4 billion people are on the net. Six trillion web pages are accessible, 2.2 billion Google searches per month and 12% of all global trade happens online”. This has made the cyberspace a reservoir for anything that one intends to search for; contributing immensely to developments in information user-friendliness (Ibikunle and Eweniyi 2013).

Shehu (2014) noted that the union of computing and sharing of information, and the speedy increase of digital expertise have guaranteed the society enormous dividends... however; these dividends also offer greater risks both in national and international levels. Ibikunle and Eweniyi (2013) acknowledges that decades ago, immoral cyberspace users have continuously used the internet to perpetrate crimes; which has resulted into mixed feelings and phobia in internet users alongside an increasing unease concerning the state of the security of the cyberspace. Clarke & Knake (2010: 31) alleges that “systems that people rely upon, from bank to air defense radar, are accessible from cyberspace and can be quickly taken over and knocked out without first defeating a

country's traditional defenses.” Laura (1995) also testifies that despite the benefits of civilization through the emergence of technology, it has also ushered in a new wave of criminal activity called cybercrime. He went further to disambiguate the term cybercrime for easy comprehension. Cybercrime is seen as a criminal activity that engages information technology communications culminating illegal access, illegal interception, data interference, systems interference, and misuse of devices, forgery and electronic fraud (Laura, 1995). While there are variances in the quests of cyber criminals, Smith (2015: 104) reports that “there has been a change in the people who attack computer networks away from the “bragging hacker” towards those driven by monetary motives.”

In a research conducted by Ribadu (2007) findings showcases that the top forms of cybercrime in Nigeria are cloning of websites, false representations, internet purchase and other e – commerce kinds of fraud. In similitude, Olugbodi (2010) also highlights that website cloning, financial fraud also popularly known as *Yahoo-Yahoo*, identity theft, credit card theft, cyber theft, cyber harassment, fraudulent electronic mails, cyber laundering and virus/ worms/ Trojans are all prevalent forms of cybercrimes in Nigeria. Suleiman (2019: 91-92) thus exclusively, expresses that:

Yahoo-yahoo is an illicit transaction of taking valuable asset from the client in a foreign country known as ‘*Maga*’ through the aid of internet. Meanwhile, yahoo-boys are the villain of piece that steal from other people mostly in abroad through fraud deal on internet. In the light of this, the word yahoo-yahoo is a popular term that also has many terminologies such as Yahoo-boys, G-boys, Sakawa, Maga, Mugu client, upload agent, brain box of internet, VIP exporter, silhouetted importer, Bank cleaner, Scammer and many more.

The rate at which cyber security is threatened has become a dilemma and of great concern to all internet users in the world. Ribadu (2007) acknowledges that in global statistics, Nigeria is ranked first in the African region as the target and origin of malicious cyber activities which is also spreading across the West African sub-region. Ibikunle and Eweniyi (2013) identifies that those involved in cybercrimes are youths, young people between 18-25 years. Ibonvbere (1989) corroborates that young individuals are traditionally conceptualized as a social category, whose chronological age falls within youthful years and who also acquire certain distinct psychological and socio-cultural feature and comprise over 20% of the population. The internet has fostered modernizing fraudulent activities among the youths. "Online fraud is seen as the popularly accepted means of economic sustenance by the youths involved" (Ibikunle and Eweniyi 2013: 5).

Poverty and unemployment/underemployment has been identified by researchers as the leading factors for youth engagement in socio-economic cybercrimes. While these factors are undeniably factual, the perpetrations of cybercrimes are not without nemesis. It inhibits nation building and morally degrades the society. Folashade and Abimbola, (2013) highlights that one of the things that hinders the socio-economic development of any country is socioeconomic cybercrimes; this is because it engenders lack of trust and confidence in commercial transactions, enhances rejection of guiltless Nigerians privileges abroad and causes loss of employment and revenue loss among other effects.

Cybercrimes: Trends

Conceptualizing cybercrime suggests two broad descriptions. It could either be criminal activities in which computers or computer networks are used for criminal activity (Das & Nayak, 2013). Twomey (2009: 2) affirms that the internet was created "with no view to the security of the computers

attached to these networks, nor the information stored on these computers” this is speculatively because; there were no intentions that such a good innovation would breed harm. Moses-Oke (2012) corroborates that:

...the oxymoronic nature of the Internet is one of its unforeseen attributes; at its inception, no one, perhaps, could have clearly foreseen that, and how, the Internet would someday become a veritable platform for globalized criminal activities. As has been copiously remarked, the benefits of the Internet have so often been tainted by its versatility for virtual criminal activities that have vastly devastating physical and social impacts.

In the Nigerian Legal system, socioeconomic cybercrime is identified by the “carved niche as the source of what is now generally referred to as “419” mails named after Section 419 of the Nigerian Criminal Code (Capp 777 of 1990) that prohibits advance fee fraud” (Adesina 2017: 23) and are perceived as intentional extortion-based crimes that are computer or/and web-intervened such as internet swindle, romance scam and e-misappropriation. In Nigeria, cybercrime is classified in socioeconomics (Ibrahim, 2016). In research conducted by Ibikunle and Eweniyi (2013) their findings affirms that Nigeria is categorized among the nations where cybercrimes are widespread. Their research also identifies no/low enforcement of national and international laws; poverty rate, corruption and unemployment as challenges that the Nigerian government is facing in attempts to curb cybercrimes, such that in 2007, cybercrime report highlighted Nigeria as the third in terms of the prevalence of cybercrimes amid substantial numbers of youths (Sesan, 2010).

McConnel (2000) affirms that youths are more vulnerable to cybercrimes instead of terrestrial crimes because they vary in four ways which are: They are easy to be taught; they

necessitate little possessions comparative to the probable damage caused and they can be committed in a jurisdiction without being physically present. Okeshola and Adeta (2013: 99) identify that:

In Nigeria, perpetrators of this crime who are usually referred to as “yahoo yahoo boys” are taking advantage of ecommerce system available on the internet to defraud victims who are mostly foreigners in thousands and sometimes millions of dollars. They fraudulently represent themselves as having particular goods to sell or that they are involved in a loan scheme project. They may pose to have financial institution where money can be loaned out to prospective investors. In this regard, so many persons have been duped or fallen victims. But this could not only be the techniques used by these cyber criminals.

Cybercriminals use a variety of methods in manipulating their victims. Victims can be both males and females but most importantly foreigners. “Yahoo boys” pose as spouses seeking for serious relationship with foreign women and subsequently exploit. Perpetrators manipulate their victims to help them procure travel documents and once their aims are achieved they halt communication with their victims and move to another target (Adesina, 2012). Adesina (2017: 23) also points that “in other instances, the scammers use stories of severe life circumstances, tragedies, family deaths, personal injuries or other hardships to keep their victims concerned and involved in their schemes. They also ask victims to send money to help overcome alleged financial hardships.”



Prototype of Yahoo Yahoo operation by youths
Source: Adesina (2017: 24)

Thomas and Loader (2000: 3) conceptualize cybercrime as those “computer-mediated activities which are either illegal or considered illicit by certain parties and which can be conducted through global electronic networks”. Cybercrime has transmogrified into a new phase in recent times, it has graduated into a new phenomenon by cybercriminals which involves incorporating spiritual elements with Internet surfing to heighten cybercrime achievement rates (Tade, 2013). This is usually termed Yahoo plus (+). In this wise, Ibikunle and Eweniyi (2013: 1) laments that “Internet criminals in Nigeria are getting innovative, as new methods of perpetrating Internet crimes are invented on daily basis; this makes it difficult to curb the cyber criminals with existing methods.”

However, the significance of the “plus” added to “Yahoo” revolves around engaging in a fetish sexual intercourse with females, using of materials (clothing) that is not easily found around, bathing of fetish black soaps and applications creams as required by the herbalist consulted. Tade (2013) exclaims that these actions escalated to a degree that girls could no longer spread their inner wears outside for sun drying. Rashid and Mwale (2016) comments that a substantial number of youths schooling youths have had as much as necessary sexual knowledge but still take on risks associated to sex escapades, which make them susceptible to been used as sacrifices for the breakthrough of this Yahoo + boys. Adebayo, Julius and Fasasi (2018:15) explain that:

This may not be unconnected with cultural and personal factors which seem to contradict the whole purpose of sex and sexuality education amongst youngsters, which has ultimately become a tool in the hands of youngsters who engage in ritual killings through initial sexual intercourse with their victims, who may have fallen prey to promise of love or relationship affairs or stealing of female underwear.

They pretend as if they love them, spend money on them, taking them out for shopping and vacations yet on a purpose unknown to their victims. When they are through using their victims they dumb them in search for another prey. Such girls sometimes may die, run mad or may not be able to make anything good out of life. While the quest for the reasons why this cybercriminals resort to spiritual incorporation continues to be a point of ponders about, Tade (2013) in his study reports that “Yahoo boys” resort to spiritual aid is as a result of incessant arrests by the law enforcement agencies that usually arrest them when carrying out their immoral enterprise. He explains further that consistent get tough on by EFCC, SARS among others on “Yahoo Boys” is a major reason why they seek spiritual help (Tade, 2013). Strife, conflicts and

contest of recognition and the highest in status, delayed or little success and victimization against supposed victims were also reported to be part of the motivations of spiritual elements (Tade, 2013). According to Tade (2013) this spiritual strategy is employed to use authoritative and instructional imperatives on targeted victims who would concede through diabolic powers.

On this note, Daramola (*Online*) published that Nigeria annually lost N127 Billion to cyber crime and the mentioned figure culminates 0.8% of the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). He stated further that in 2014, EFCC reveals that customers in Nigeria lost approximately six billion naira to cybercriminals...CBN corroborates this, by reporting that in 2015, 70% of attempted or successful fraud cases in the banking sectors were via electronic channels. Richard (2016) testifies that in the year 2015, there was a high number recorded of phishing emails from supposedly cyber criminals in Nigeria, peaking when the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) announced deadline for Bank Verification Number (BVN). As a result, Daramola (*Online*) corroborates that Nigerian banks were reported to have lost approximately 159 billion naira to electronic frauds and cyber criminals between year 2000 and 2013 and estimated that the implication of this huge figure on the nation's economy is significant.

Considering the aftermaths of cybercrimes in Nigeria, the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) on the 18th of April, 2016 inaugurated a 31-man Cybercrime Advisory Council in the Federal Capital, Abuja in conjunction with the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent and Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), Directorate of State Service (DSS), Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA), Foreign Affairs, Finance, and Justice, Nigeria Stock Exchange, Nigerian Prison Service, Ministries of Trade and Investments, Nigerian Police Force, Galaxy Backbone etc., with the directive to form facilitate environment for awareness, experience and intelligence exchange among members in bid to offer

recommendations for prevention and control of cybercrimes and promotes cyber security in Nigeria (Ewepu, 2016).

However, in combating cybercrime, Mbachu and Nazeef (*Online*) holds that those activities of cybercriminals have resulted to the loss of eighty billion dollars in attempts to combat it worldwide. In similitude, about one hundred and twenty-seven billion Naira was estimated loss to cybercrime in Nigeria between 2015 and 2017 in accordance with the reports of the National Communication Commission (Mbachu and Nazeef, *Online*). However, in bid to continue the fight against cybercrime, it has been estimated that ensuring a credible cyber security spending will require over one trillion dollars from 2017 to 2020 and prevalence damage cost will reach six trillion dollars annually by 2021 (Mbachu and Nazeef, *Online*).

Prevalence among Youths: Factorization

Youths have been identified as the social category that perpetrates cybercrimes as established by many researches; this makes it expedient to access the factors that necessitate this immoral behavior from the Youths.

Unemployment

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (2017) reports that the rate of unemployment in Nigeria has risen from 14.2 percent in Q4 2016 to 16.2 percent in Q2 in 2017 and 18.8 percent in Q3 2017. The implication of this statistics is that the rate of unemployment increases in Nigeria annually. As a result, unemployment has been identified as one of the factors responsible for youth involvement in cybercrime (Ndubueze, 2017). The rate of unemployment makes the youths idle, making them vulnerable to perpetrating crimes to fend for their needs. While the nation keeps urbanizing, Ajaero and Onokala (2013) attests that urbanization is considered as the enormous physical growth of urban areas as a result of rural migration in search for a better life. However, urbanization will

not be beneficial if there are no job creations... because there will be influx of people into urban cities and joblessness will make them resolve to crime to meet up with the standard of the living prevalent therein. In research conducted by Akande (2007) findings showcases that there is invariably no hope of what to do when youths graduate from the university, as a result that resort to criminal behaviors. His research alleges that over 5 million Nigerian university undergraduates have no job placement, yet yearly students keep graduating from tertiary institutions to join the many that are unemployed.

Poverty

The presence of increasing rate of unemployment in Nigeria is one of the leading factors for poverty. It was reported that approximately 77% of the urban and 68% of the rural family is considered poor and the poverty level affects youths negatively in that it leaves them few choices to make; making some of them resort to crimes (Federal Republic of Nigeria FRN, 2013). Averagely, parents are incapable to fend for the needs of their children school which will make them look elsewhere to meet...which some of them will resolve to cybercrime. Most of the “Yahoo boys” perpetrating cybercrimes are poor students whose parents could not cater for their needs.

Peer pressure

The youthful age is a pressure stage where groups of young individuals influence the behavior of each other. In a research carried out by Ibrahim (2016: 6) findings reveal that respondents “indicated that even when young people leave their homes to acquire a university education, they often become vulnerable to university-campus gang membership, the notion being that gang members are most likely to participate in cyber-fraud offences.” The naïve young ones from conservative homes often get carried away by their pairs who lead lives of exuberant spending gotten from crime... this

breeds the tendencies to fall into the temptation of becoming like them.

Less Work – Much Gain and Get rich quick mentality

Youths are becoming very lazy and unready to work hard. Laziness is the order of the day among youths. They want to engage in less work with the intention of gaining much wealth. However, this mentality does not seem to proportionate and as a result, they will engage in criminal activities to make up for their target. Ayofe and Oluwaseyifunmitan (2009: 4) points out that “another cause of cyber-crime is to make quick money this group is greed motivated and is career criminals, who tamper with data on the net or system especially, e-commerce, e-banking data information with the sole aim of committing fraud and swindling money off unsuspecting customers.” The get rich quick mentality is the propelling force for engaging in cybercrimes by youths. They do not want to embrace hard work and at a steady pace pursue their dreams. They want to quickly get rich not minding if it demands perpetrating crime. Iwe (1991:82) observes that the “over-concern with one’s self-importance and pre-occupation with self-aggrandizement naturally lead to total indiscipline or moral decadence from the self to the society.”

Lack of sanctions

Cybercrimes continues to be prevalent because there is compromise among the law enforcement agencies. Due to the corruption of the system, cybercriminals bribe their way out of sanctions which gives them the confidence to continue and encourage others to join them. Laura (2012 cited in Onuora, Uche, Ogunude and Uwazuruike 2017) stated that African nations have been lambasted due to the way they are handling cybercriminal cases as their law enforcement agencies are inadequately equipped in terms of personnel, intelligence, and

infrastructure to curb cybercrime. This calls for a proactive step to be taken by the Government to ensure that law enforcement agents are well equipped with every resource that is instrumental in achieving success in the fight against socioeconomic cybercrimes.

Effects

Financial loss

Socioeconomic cybercrime leads to financial loss of the victims. Funds should have been used for productive things are given away to fraud. Victims may include individual persons or organizations. The results of the research conducted by Maitanmi et al (2013) reveals that cybercrime obstruct socio-economic growth in Nigeria... it frightens both local and foreign investments owing to the lack of trust. Uzochukwu, Chukwuemeka and Raphael (2019: 137) corroborates that “Cybercrimes have caused the crimophobia image of the country before the international community which has scared both foreign and local investors away and limited the interest to invest in the country.” Dr. Bukola Saraki the former Nigeria Senate President in 2017 unveils that the country has lost about N127 billion to cybercrime during the Nigerian First Legislative Stakeholders Conference on Information and Communication Technology and Cyber Security (The Punch, 2017). A study conducted by Institute of Digital Communication, based in South Africa reported that Nigeria is losing about \$80 million yearly to software piracy (Longe and Chiemeké, 2008).

Cybercrime gives the Country a bad image

The continuous perpetration of cybercrime gives the country a bad image. This will make the citizens be looked upon suspiciously. Odey (2001: 64) expresses his own ordeal as a Nigerian citizen:

I had been delayed for not less than two hours. As soon as my interrogators left... the lady on the computer tendered a very polite apology on their behalf... "Sir" she said to me. "Do not be offended. Your people are responsible for all this. We are not. They are terrible people and they have done terrible things in this country. And we want to stop the rot."

Due to the lack of trust, innocent individuals are denied several opportunities abroad. Other effects of cybercrime include:

Insecurity of lives and properties

In instances where the fetishism and spiritual elements are incorporated into enhancing socioeconomic cybercrimes, lives and properties are lost. Most times, perpetrators of socioeconomic crimes (Yahoo+) are obliged to sleep with virgins, young women in order to gain powers to manipulate their victims. The danger in this is that, the quest for these girls may either be achieved consensually or forced. It has been reported several instances where young girls are kidnapped, raped or have parts of their body ripped off for sacrificial purposes. More also, those who are able to lure their sacrifice victims to a mutual consent, after using them make them predispose to abject pain and suffering in their lifetime... some girls have been reported to run mad after affairs with cybercrime perpetrators. More also, with the current trends, specific female clothing material are requested to perform sacrifices towards a positive end of cybercrime. These female clothing materials include pants, bras, shots and the likes.

Morally degraded society

The continuous perpetration of cybercrime in the society gradually makes it morally degraded. Morality is the

wrongness or rightness of an intention and action. Morality is the life wire that binds the society together... the implication of this is that, when a society becomes immoral it dies. Cybercrime is immoral and a cancer eating deep into the body of the nation. Youths who engage in cybercrimes gradually influence others into becoming like them... increase moral depravity in the society. The prevalent perpetration of cybercrimes will corrode the society by shortchanging moral virtues such as hard work, honesty, sincerity, sanctity of life for vices.

Theology and Ethics of Work: A Panacea for Youth Involvement Cybercrime

Religion and religious associations are institutions that influence the moral behavior of people. Among other agents of socialization is the role of the Church to offer prescriptive and proscriptive norms in its theology. Christian theology is the theology of Christian beliefs, practices and tradition. Christian theology is based on the revelation of God in the Testaments of the Bible and Christian tradition. "All Christian theology is based, to one degree or another, on the Bible as the Word of God, and the central place of the Scriptures in theology is readily acknowledged by most African theologians" (Parratt, 1997: 144). Theology however does not exclude the subject of ethics in its formulated doctrines as revealed by God for human behavior.

The subject of ethics is a concern for every human on earth. Donahue (1996: 484) posits that "we are in throes of a giant ethical leap that is essentially embracing all mankind". According to Dopamu and Alana (2004: 155) "by definition, ethics is the science of the morality of human acts; it is the science which deals with morals, moral rules or principles of behavior that govern people or society. Morality itself is the goodness or the badness, the rightness or the wrongness of human acts." In this wise, the concept of work is well established in both the theology and ethics of the Christians

as exemplified in the pages of the bible. Adeniran (2008: 371) posits that “at both household and community levels in Nigeria, respective agents of socialization (such as the church) taught the young ones to value hard work and integrity, but most often it is at variance with what they observe.” The prevalence of cybercrime among youths has revealed that young individuals are not engaging in “work” rather they are resorting to criminal behaviors to make their living which is against God’s revelation for mankind. At this juncture it is expedient to examine the concept of work from God’s perspective.

Work in the bible is portrayed as a virtue that matters to God and modeled by him. The book of Genesis opens with a chronology of the workings of God in creating the world. The scriptures reports that God worked for six days; creating the cosmos and everything therein and then on the seventh day he rested from all His works. Though there are variances in the position theologians hold on the six days creation either as a literal or in terms of progressive epochs and among others... all Scripture-believing Christians affirm that God created the world and its hosts. This suffices to say that work originated with God. Stephens (2006: 5) corroborates that:

When we open the Bible we find God at work, separating...We also find God filling – making the world... The Bible ends with God at work... Renewing everything, including material things... God is working in incredible ways: shaping, modelling, speaking communicating, showing outcomes, destroying, embellishing, making things beautiful, fixing and mending, restoring, designing, keeping things running... That is God at work.

This gives an impression that God was not idle. Idleness in appearance of unemployment has been identified as one of the reasons why young individuals engage in crime. This makes

the maxim that “an idle man’s heart is the devil’s workshop” a truism. This is why Mackay (cited in Fahs, 1907: 96) emphasized that, “... a Christian ought not to be an idle man.” In similitude to God’s working character, Steven (2006: 9) says, “work was given in God’s original design at the beginning so that human beings could function as co-workers and co-creators with God.” Keeley (1982: 297) explains it well when he says, “Work is a fundamental activity for people in every culture.” In the thoughts of Toryough (2010: 2) “it is in trying to make us conform to that image of God (i.e. of a working being), that God categorically charged human beings at the very beginning with the responsibility of working in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:15). Adam and Eve were instructed to till and keep the garden.” While it is easy to cite unemployment as reason for cybercrime, it is not justifiable. This is because, been employed is not the only avenue to engage in work. There are individuals who are unemployed by anyone but are self employed, engaging legal and profitable skills and vocations learnt overtime to make a living. Unemployment fails a reason for involvement in crime according to God’s order. Davis (1988: 728) attests that “the incarnation of God as the Carpenter of Nazareth is the perfect fulfillment of the teaching that work is necessary and good” (Davis 1988:728). Exclusively, Guthrie (1981: 940) observes that:

There is no suggestion of contempt for manual work as amongst the Greeks. Indeed, both Jesus and Paul were craftsmen, following the established tradition that males should learn a trade, even those destined to become rabbis.

More also, men in the Judaic ethics were urged to work continuously in bid to cater for their needs themselves, with the assurance that the rewards from such work were seen as God’s blessing (Ohrenstein 1998: 239-44). Rayburn (2006) avers that work was conceived as holy and did not dichotomize between sacred and mundane, secular and spiritual work. This is because work is seen as a virtue. If work loses its value in the heart of people, human life will lost its value as well. This is because work is seen as life (Volf, 1991). Keeley (1982: 298) avers that:

The biblical doctrine of Creation presents God as an active working deity, who made human beings as workers in his image. This teaching

runs right through the Old Testament and culminates in Jesus; a working man before he became an itinerant preacher. Paul, the greatest missionary in the New Testament after Jesus, combined his apostolic work with his tent making...Work, then, is an integral part of God's design for humanity...

Pertinent to the menace of cybercrime that this paper addresses, in one of the Pauline letters (to the church in Ephesus), he charges that "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Ephesians 4:28 KJV). As against stealing (cybercrime), Paul charges that his recipients must stop stealing, however, he did not stop his admonition there; he charged further that something must be done when one restrain from stealing; this he called, labor. The word translated as labor in Ephesians 4:28 is in the Greek rendition *Kopiao* which means to "labor with wearisome effort" (hard work) within the context of what is "good". By implication, the call to stop stealing is also the charge to engage in good works. The word translated – good is *agathos* which qualifies something upright, honorable, excellent and distinguished. This can be termed Pauline ethic of hard work. The charge to be a hard worker by Paul is more than been initiative but doing a work that meets a quality standard. Larry (1996:144) explains better that "the Conviction of the Christian workman is that every piece of work he produces must be good enough to show to God." Hengel (1974) comments that shame was not a matter to daily work amongst the vast Pauline congregations, ranging from 'manual workers and craftsmen, small businessmen and workers on the land, all of whom had a great respect for honest labor.'

More so, in Paul's admonition for labor, is a plan for poverty alleviation. Poverty has been identified as one of the factors for engaging in cybercrime. Paul charges that the worker should work with his hands so that the worker may have; that is alleviating himself from lack and also been able to help others (Ephesians 4:28). Gotsis and Dodd (2002: 24) affirm "an additional

benefit of labor was the production of surpluses that could be used to support almsgiving. In the epistle to the Ephesians (4:28), the deutero-Pauline writer combines the instruction for labour with the matter of care for the poor and needy.” “An economic surplus in excess of the needs of the Christian should be distributed to the poor and the needy. This is suggested by the urging of the Jerusalem community that Paul should remember the poor (Galatians 2:10)” (Gotsis and Dodd 2002: 25). Ssebugwawo (2003: 36) points to a similar perception from an African perspective by saying, “In African traditional society there was no single person who suffered from unemployment, and everyone was a worker.”

However, Atkinson, et al (2000) posits that by the virtue of the mandate that God saddles man to exercise control and dominion over all creation entails that work comprises of all pieces of human civilization, including the sciences, social affairs, arts, and education. For this reason, intellectual and mental doings and both the manual and physical labor are forms of work. In view of this, Chewning, Eby, and Roels (1975: 171) attests that “All honourable work, paid or unpaid, is part of our calling. The typist, the pastor, the homemaker, or sales manager can all serve God and glorify God by diligently serving those around them. Work is important part of Christian vocation.” According to Haselbarth, (1989: 132) “The reformers understood work as God’s calling...it has sometimes been called a vocation (which) can be attached to any secular profession, be it that of the engineer, farmer, secretary of state, bricklayer or sweeper. In God’s eyes all of them have the same dignity and blessing.”

Conclusion

Socioeconomic cybercrime among youths is a menace plaguing the society. It is a threat to progress and national development. Any society that creates a comfortable system and environment for crime to thrive will not develop. It thus means that proactive steps should be taken to curb the

prevalence of crime. The curbing of crime among the youths will be difficult to achieve; not until there is a transformation of the mindsets of the youths. Some of them actually hold on to the perceived and factual reasons such as unemployment and poverty as a justifiable ground to perpetrate crime; which is not commendable in a morally upright society.

This paper concludes that the reinstatement of the theology and ethics of work will do a great deal in transforming the mind of the youths towards utilizing their God-given potentials to be productive instead of engaging in crime. This will gradually gravitate their minds towards a holistic perception of work in place of cybercrimes. With this ideology, whether they are poor or unemployed they can engage in manual labor, acquire skills and vocations that can help them make a living which is moral and commendable than engaging in cybercrime. It will also motivate the lazy ones to stop being lazy and work with their hands, fending for their needs, doing jobs that are commendable.

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