Yahoo Plus and Blood Sacrifice: Its Effects on Criminal Victimization in Kwara State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Globally, development of information and communication technology (ICT) has revealed an ever-expanding knowledge field that seeks to bring global activities to the doorstep of everyone. Apart from facilitating the emergence of a global village, the increased access to the internet has opened a window for both legitimate and illegitimate transactions. The general aim of the study is to assess cybercrime, ritualism, and criminal victimization in the Kwara Central Senatorial District of Kwara State, Nigeria. Two specific objectives were considered, which include the impact of incantation on criminal victimization and the effect of blood sacrifice on criminal victimization. A thematic review of the literature was carried out. The study used Differential Association Theory for its theoretical framework. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design in Kwara Central Senatorial District, using 611 respondents to whom structured questionnaires were administered. All the youths and women leaders from selected wards were engaged in an in-depth interview. The data that was collected was processed using the Statistic Package for Social Sciences and presented in tables. Two hypotheses were tested using anova and coefficient statistics. The result indicated that 27.7% agreed that incantation brings about criminal victimization in Kwara central senatorial district. In line with blood sacrifice in surfing the internet for criminality, the majority of the respondents agreed that blood sacrifice is prominent among cybercrime-ritualists. The study concluded that addressing criminal victimization associated with cybercrime-ritualism required a comprehensive approach, with the recommendation that the Kwara state government should organize an anti-ritual program side by side with an anti-cybercrime program. The findings of this study will be useful for individual researchers, society, and agencies designing for cybercrime in Nigeria.

Keyword: *Cybercrime, Ritualism, Criminal Victimization, Yahoo Plus, Blood Sacrifice.*

Introduction

The development of information and communication technology (ICT) has revealed an ever-expanding knowledge field that seeks to bring global activities to the doorstep of everyone. Apart from facilitating the emergence of a global village, the increased access to the internet has opened a window for both legitimate and illegitimate transactions. In the United States of America, a total of 1,579 data breaches were recorded as of 2017, representing a 44.7 percent increase when compared with what was recorded in 2016 (Identity Theft Resource Center, 2017). Out of these breaches, 8.5 percent occurred in the financial sector, such as banks, credit unions, mortgages, credit card companies, loan brokers, financial services, investment firms and trust companies, payday lenders, and pension funds (Isokova, 2017; Identity Theft Resources Center, 2017). The websites of Bank of America, Pakistan, JPMorgan, US Bancorp, and Wells Jargo were attacked in September 2012. In the following month, the websites of Branch Banking and Trust (BBT), Capital One, Holdings Bank Company (HSBC), Region Financial, and SunTrust were also targeted and disrupted. In the Czech Republic, the websites of the central bank, three large banks, and the stock exchange were targeted on March 6, 2013. However, limited damages of USD 0.5 million were recorded on July 8, 2014, when seven critical financial institutions were targeted and attacked in Norway.

The financial services of these institutions were thwarted during the day. Towards the end of 2014, three banks (Oppohjola Bank, Danske Bank, and Nordea Bank) experienced distributed denial of service (DDOS) attacks in Finland (International Monetary Fund, 2020; British Broadcasting Corporation News, 2016; Isakova, 2017). These attacks rendered their online service unavailable, and some of these banks precluded customers from withdrawing cash and making card payments. This paper, therefore, seeks to investigate cybercrime and how its incorporation with ritual incantations and blood sacrifices have led to criminal victimization among people in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The impact of the Internet on the growth and development of Nigeria has been marred by its criminal business model. On August 23, 2019, for instance, the FBI published the names of 77 Nigerian nationals who stole millions of dollars using a variety of fraud schemes to launder funds through a Los Angeles-based bank (Tunde, 2021). According to the Cyber Security Expert Association of Nigeria (CSEAN, 2017), the internet is now an environment where different forms of criminal activities thrive and the victims suffer great financial, emotional, and mental pains. In Kwara State, cybercrime involving the combination of spiritual elements or ingredients such as incantation and blood sacrifice has been used to trick victims into being more submissive to crime and easily manipulated. Cybercrime-ritualism employs four steps in its activities. The first step involves connecting women or men through the internet. It could also be a Facebook, phone call, or WhatsApp connection. The second step leads to an appointment that results in face-to-face interaction. In the third step, the woman or man is manipulated for ritual purposes using incantation, invocation, or black objects. This is after the woman's pants (private pant wear) or men's manhood have been stolen. In the fourth step, the underwear (pants) or manhood are given to ritualists for money-making purposes. The consequences of cybercrime-ritualism on women and men whose pants or manhood have been used for money-making rituals have been severally explained. Many victims are said to have become emaciated like HIV/AIDS patients (Atolagbe, 2011); others have run mad (Adeniran, 2011; Ayantokun, 2008), while others have lived with fear of that exact untold psychological trauma with a multiplier effect on their lives (Adogame, 2010). However, it is not certain if the above findings are same in Kwara State, hence the need for this study which seeks to investigate cybercrime-ritualism and criminal victimization in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Research Objectives

In order to assess cybercrime-ritualism and criminal victimization in Kwara State, this study was guide by the following specific objectives, which sought:

i. To investigate how incantation lead to criminal victimization in Kwara State.
ii. To identify how blood sacrifice lead to criminal victimization in Kwara State.

Research Hypotheses:

In addition, the following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

Ho: There is no significant relationship between incantation and criminal victimization in Kwara State.

Ho: There is no significant relationship between blood sacrifice and criminal victimization in Kwara State.

Literature Review
Cybercrime

Several researchers have reported that cybercrime involves criminal activities in which a criminal offense is committed with the intent to harm an individual using the contemporary communication systems available in internet services and mobile phones (Wall, 2015). A survey such as that conducted by McGuire & Dowling (2013) showed that cybercrime could be cyber-dependent or cyber-enabled crimes that use computers and their related activities to carry out their illicit dealings. Cyber-dependent crimes rely on computers and their programs to carry out their activities, such as hacking and malware

distribution. In recent years, crime associated with cyber has taken on a new dimension internationally, particularly among students of ungraduated tertiary institutions in Nigeria (Tade & Aliyu, 2011). In 2010, the National White Cybercrime Centre (NWCC) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) reported that Nigeria ranked third in the world with the highest rate of cybercrime, a phenomenon commonly known as yahoo-yahoo (Tade & Aliyu, 2013). Recent evidence suggests that improvements in technology have broadened the scope of communication across nations around the world, primarily using the Internet. Previous studies have reported that widespread adoption of the internet has brought about two different and separate events across the world: first, it has helped in our accessibility, and second, it has increased the rate of ill behaviours or unacceptable social behaviour and crime, particularly among youths. However, the usage (if not overuse) of the Internet has exposed many young people to activities related to cybercrime (for example, yahoo-yahoo), a modern form of theft. It is within these confines that these segments review relevant literature to problematize Yahoo as a distinct form of internet fraud (Okeshola & Adeta, 2018).

Globalization has led to rapid development all over the world; it has reduced stress and made our lives a lot easier. Despite the demerits brought by globalization, it also opens the way for negativity. Internet use is one of the inventions introduced by globalization. The sole aim is to bring the world together and to make the gathering of information very easy and fast. The internet has created unlimited access for both legitimate and illegitimate transactions. Some groups of people harness the positive use of the internet and use it for deceit. This gave birth to the phenomenon called cybercrime. It has become a significant area of interest as perpetrators, victims, and motives vary greatly in cybercriminal activities (Jaishanker, 2017).

Cybercrime is a global phenomenon; the term cybercrime represents offenses capable of producing psychological and geopolitical concerns perpetuated by the usage of computers and the internet (Suleiman, 2016). Cybercrime is not limited to a country, nor is it restricted by geographical boundaries. It has become a worldwide problem that affects both developed and developing nations. Tanenbaum (2001) acknowledges the fact that the function of a computer is the same around the globe; the only difference is the brand and model. Computer technologies have been in existence for a very long time. In their study, McCusker (2006) and Odumesi (2018) reported that, dating back to the 1960s until the present day, cybercrime is gradually updating as technology develops. In 1960, cybercrime focused on the physical destruction of computer system parts and stored data. In the mid-1960s, United States criminal abuse focused on databases and the related risks to privacy. In the 1970s, traditional ways of committing crimes, such as manual stealing, were in place. The computer came into place and modernized ways of stealing. In the 1980s, the number of computer systems increased, thereby creating more potential targets for cybercriminals. However, Yee (2000) suggests that internet access enables cybercriminals to perpetrate crimes through the computer without being present at the crime scene.

Cybercrime-Ritualism: Incantation and Criminal Victimization

Many young Nigerian-based wannabe scammers, known as cybercriminals, are resorting to the use of incantation to charm potential victims into their scams (AbdulRasheed, Lateef, Yinusa, & Abdullateef, 2016). They are usually young men who specialize in various types of cybercrime. Their distinct lifestyles of fast cars, wealth, and ostentation are the envy of many of their agemates. According to Nwolise (2019), the use of incantation for spiritual protection and to charm potential victims is prevalent among cybercriminals in Nigeria. This may involve the use of human parts like finger nails, nails, rings, making incisions, and having sex with ghosts; all this can be done through the process of incantation (Egole & Okamgba, 2023). Many youths get entrapped in the myth of making money through ritual killing and incantation; some abandon their education and pursue wealth with vigor, including killings, incantations, and

other fetish practices that involve human lives (Olaide & Adewole, 2017). The recent involvement of native doctors was believed to make their cybercrime-ritualism activities work by calling the names of their victims a specified number of times and performing incantations before going to them for business or making phone calls. However, many things have been mentioned as the reasons for the craving for wealth by youths; these may include the showy lifestyles of rich individuals in the media, ostentations, the display of wealth by music stars, even that of religious leaders, and the failure of parental control at home (Adesina, 2017).

Some Yahoo boys, referred to as Yahoo Plus Boys, incorporate juju and witchcraft into their cybercrime practices to increase their success in defrauding victims (referred to as 'maga'). Yahoo Plus combines spiritualism, ritual, and technology-mediated crime, where victims are hypnotized through an invocation process enhanced by spiritualism (Lazarus & Okolories, 2019). They use charms such as 'afose', 'orukaere', and 'ijapa', obtained from Yahoo Plus priests, to compel victims to transfer money. Female accomplices, often girlfriends, play a significant role in the fraud, physically deteriorating during the process until success is achieved (Magezi & Magezi, 2017).

Ritualist Black Objects and Criminal Victimization

Yahoo Plus Boys are cybercriminals who combine spiritual rituals, juju, and cybercrime to defraud victims, often referred to as 'maga.' Through the use of charms such as 'afose,' 'orukaere,' and 'ijapa,' obtained from priests, they believe they can manipulate victims to transfer money easily (Lazarus & Okolories, 2019). Women, particularly girlfriends, are exploited in rituals, physically deteriorating as they assist in the fraud (Magezi & Magezi, 2017).

Some researchers note that Yahoo Plus Boys use women's underwear in rituals to enhance their powers. This has led to widespread fear and an increase in underwear theft for ritual purposes (Chukwendi, Oli, & Ohazulike, 2023). These crimes, which now include ritual and spiritual manipulation, have caused growing insecurity in Nigeria, especially with the rise of ritualistic practices involving blood, fluids, and charms (Information Nigeria, 2017). Despite skepticism, studies suggest that traditional crime gangs are adopting rituals and the internet for more effective fraud (Jaishanker, 2017). The belief in juju powers and the desire for quick wealth continue to fuel these practices among Yahoo Plus Boys (Lazarus & Okolories, 2019).

In several studies, exploring the transition of society from primitive society to modern society signifies a paradigm shift in knowledge creation. The criminal business model (CBM) enthroned by the ICT world is fast embracing the principle of rituals and/or vooduism practices. This new CBM is not only encouraging blood rituals but regularly stealing innocent women's underwear, especially pants. A survey conducted by Tade and Aliyu (2011) showed that ritualism with blood sacrifice is widely used by internet fraudsters (also known as Yahoo boys) to defraud unsuspecting victims of their hard-earned money, usually foreigners from developed countries.

Their methods and strategies involved seeking the assistance of native doctors to perform rituals and bless them in order to command their suspicious victims to release money for them (Nwolise, 2019). In business, without ethics, consideration of what is right is relative. Morals are thrown to the dog, and the argument that is valued is that the ends justify the means. In search of success, criminals stopped at nothing to ensure that they won. In Ikoh's (2015) analysis, this is not less expected in a society that celebrates criminals. In a study carried out by Lazarus and Okolories (2019), the scholars found that young people, most of whom are Yahoo Plus boys, don't believe in the small beginning and/or hard. They have lost faith in the country and in their future, and they want to accumulate wealth at any cost, even if it means scavenging women's pants all over the place (Lazarus & Okolories, 2019). The growing wave of insecurity caused by the Yahoo boys has compounded the insecurity in Nigeria and has made the social life in the country on the edge. Hardly a day passes without this new dimension of Yahoo Plus activities making a headline in the Nigeria National Dailies. For instance, some of the headlines are: Yahoo Ritualist caught with 12

soak sanitary pads, female underwear's: fear of ritualists in Delta: Yahoo Boys that have been stealing used female pants and braissers have been caught: Girls run mad and become useless after being used by Yahoo Plus; Yahoo Boys confessed; Stop stealing women's pants; Oba of Benin warns Yahoo Boys (Olubgodi, 2010; Oluwadare, Oluwasinmi, & Igbekoyi, 2018).

Previous studies have reported that women, particularly girls between the ages of 17 and 32, are hot cakes for use by Yahoo Plus ritualists. One pair of pants sells for as much as two hundred and fifty thousand naira. The price can be increased when Yahoo Boys confirm through science that the victims have not had any abortions (Chuks, 2023). In many Nigerian blogs, there are stories of women robbed of their pants or stolen from the clothesline, where they are hung to dry. What happens to the victims of these pants thefts is still unknown, but recent studies report that they end up mentally unstable on the streets (Jegede & Olowookere, 2014).

Theoretical Framework
Differential Association Theory (DAT)

Differential Association Theory (DAT) is a criminological theory developed by Edwin H. Sutherland in the early 20th century. It posits that criminal behaviour is learned through interaction with others. The theory emphasizes the role of socialization in the development of criminal behaviour, arguing that individuals learn the values, attitudes, techniques, and motives for criminal behaviour through their interactions with others. This framework challenges the notion that criminal behavior is inherent or solely the result of individual pathology, instead highlighting the importance of the social environment in shaping behavior (Bossler & Holt 2012).

Edwin H. Sutherland introduced differential association theory in his seminal work "Principles of Criminology" in 1939. Sutherland was influenced by earlier sociological theories that emphasized the impact of the social environment on behavior, particularly the works of Gabriel Tarde and W.I. Thomas. Sutherland's theory was revolutionary because it shifted the focus of criminological study from individual traits and deficiencies to the social contexts in which individuals are embedded. This sociological approach underscored the significance of peer influence and group dynamics in the learning of criminal behavior.

Abimbolar (2014) and Nickerson (2024) highlighted the key principles of differential association theory: which included: *Criminal Behavior is Learned; Learning Occurs through Interaction; Learning is Influenced by Intimate Groups; Learning Includes Techniques and Motivations; The direction of motives and drives is learned from the definitions of legal codes; Excess of Definitions Favorable to Violation of Law; Variety of Associations; Learning Mechanisms are General; and Expression of Needs and Values*.

This theory, which was developed to help explain white-collar crime, fits in well with those who commit cybercrime-ritualism. According to research conducted by Imhof (2010), he states that a lot of system hacking occurs during college. Some of these individuals spend time with people who share similar interests. It is in these groups that the third factor of differential association can be applied, which deals with learning cybercrime behavior as part of a close group. These groups may serve a well-meaning purpose, such as research or the hacking of systems. However, being part of this group may lead a well-intentioned individual to commit cybercrime and then ritualism if they are influenced by other members of their group who are doing so. It is through these groups that an individual will learn the techniques that will help them perfect their craft. It would also be through these means that they would develop a rationalization for illegal compromising systems. In addition, according to the seventh postulation of differential association, the more time an individual spends with members of these groups who are committing illegal acts, the more likely they are to engage in deviant behaviour.

However, differential association theory has its critics. Nickerson (2024) points out that the theory does not explain why criminal behaviour decreases with age, as many young offenders do not continue offending into adulthood. He also notes that the theory is socially sensitive,

potentially leading to the stereotyping of individuals from criminal backgrounds as likely offenders, which could result in denied opportunities and a self-fulfilling prophecy. Abimbola (2014) criticizes the theory for focusing on how individuals learn to become criminals without addressing why they do so. There are additional factors, such as economic, sociopolitical, and cognitive influences, that drive individuals to commit cybercrime. For instance, a well-intentioned person might, through no fault of their own, find themselves in a poor socioeconomic environment surrounded by deviance. Such an individual may be motivated to learn criminal behaviour by associating with cybercriminals, thus becoming a self-motivated and rational actor.

Methodology

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design. The choice of this design was based on the fact that the area to be covered by this study was large; therefore, this method enabled the researcher to use a sample to draw inferences to represent the various elements of the population. Also, a cross-sectional design provided information on the characteristics of the study population at a specified period.

The study area for this research was the Central Senatorial District of Kwara State, which is located at latitudes 8024N and 830N and longitudes 4010E and 403E East. It has a forest area of about 1000 km2 and is situated in the transaction zone between the forest woodland of the south and the savanna of the north in the southwestern part of Nigeria. There are six tertiary institutions in Kwara State capital. These include the University of Ilorin, Al-Hikmah University, Kwara State Polytechnic, Kwara State College of Education, Kinsley College of Education, and Muhyideen College of Education. These institutions, which house youths and students from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, may contribute to the high rate of cybercrime ritualists in the Kwara Central Senatorial District. Politically, Kwara Central Senatorial District is divided into four (4) local government areas (V12: Ilorin West, Ilorin South, Ilorin East, and Asa LGA). Each of the local government areas was further divided into political wards.

Multistage sampling techniques were employed to select respondents for the study. It began with the clustering of the senatorial district into local government areas, political wards, villages, and households. Four (4) local government areas were purposefully selected from the Kwara central senatorial district for study. This is based on the existence of tertiary institutions in the area. Such institutions as the University of Ilorin fall under the Ilorin South Local Government, Kwara State Polytechnic falls under the Ilorin East Local Government, Al-Hikmah University is located in the Ilorin West Local Government, and Kwara State University is located in the Asa Local Government. All these institutions and local government areas fall under the Kwara central senatorial district.

Kwara central senatorial district has fifty-two (52) political wards. Using this criteria, Alanamu ward, Adewole ward, and Ogidi ward (Ilorin West LGA), Oke-ogun ward, Okaka ward, and Balogun Fulani ward (Ilorin South LGA), Are Ward, Sango Ward, and Gambari ward (Ilorin East LGA), and Ogbondoko ward, Aboto ward, and Ote ward (Asa LGA). Were purposefully selected for the study based on researcher personal observation and police periodic patrol and arrest of cybercrime in these wards; moreso, these wards seem to host many students, which may likely be the reason for the increase in cybercrime ritualism in Kwara central senatorial district. Since the projected population of the local government and wards is given, proportional sampling techniques were used to determine the sample size for the selected wards. A simple random sampling technique (using the fish bowel with replacement technique) was used, and three political wards from each LGA were selected for the study. At the ward's level, systematic random sampling techniques were employed to select sample respondents based on the number of samples allocated to each ward from the LGA sample universe. The universe from which the sample size of 600 was drawn represents 33.25% of the total population of the Kwara Central Senatorial District. For qualitative data, forty (40) structured interviews will be conducted.

Participants in the interviews were randomly selected, including community leaders, village heads, youth leaders, and women leaders across the selected wards. The rationale behind this is that the researcher believes that selected people will have adequate knowledge about cybercrime and its rate of occurrence within their community because of their community roles as youth leaders, women leaders, and heads of district in all selected wards. In all, six hundred (600) respondents were selected for the quantitative study, and forty (40) respondents were randomly selected for the qualitative study.

Both questionnaires and in-depth interview methods were used for data collection. The choice of an in-depth interview was to complement the quantitative data. The questionnaire was administered in selected political wards in Kwara Central Senatorial District, while an in-depth interview was used to elicit information from selected members of the political wards. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as simple percentages, tables, and frequencies. At the 0.5 level of significance, multiple linear regression was used to test hypotheses, respectively. The choice of inferential statistics was to determine the extent of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Thematic analysis was used to analyze qualitative data collected via in-depth interviews. Lastly, participation in the study not forced onto anybody. The ethical issues of honesty, objectivity, openness and confidentiality were respected and upheld throughout.

Results and Discussions

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	385	67.4
	Female	186	32.6
Level of Education	Certificate	113	19.8
	Diploma	345	60.4
	Bachelor Degree	57	10.0
	Doctor of Philosophy	34	6.0
	Others	20	3.5
Age	20-25	105	18.4
	26-30	181	31.7
	31-35	45	7.9
	36-40	23	4.0
	41-45	5	0.9
	46-50	86	15.1
	51-55	73	12.8
	55 and above	53	9.3
Marital Status	Single	228	39.9
	Married	180	31.5
	Divorced	73	12.8
	Widowed	49	8.6
	Others,	41	7.2
Occupation	Student	281	49.2
	Civil Servant	179	31-3
	Trader	26	4.6
	Farmer	63	11.0
	Others,	22	3.9
Religion			
	Islam	270	47.3
	Christian	146	25.6
	Traditional Religion	27	4.7
	Others,	128	22.4

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Respondents of diverse socio-demographic backgrounds participated in the study. Table 1 revealed that the majority (67.4%, n = 385) of the participants in the study were males. The age of the respondents showed that more (62.2%, n = 354) of the respondents were between the ages of 20-40. This implies that the participants are still young and believed to have adequate information about cybercrime and other related issues. The respondents between ages 41- 55 accounted for 28.8% (n = 164).

The educational level of the respondents showed that more than half (60.4%, n = 345) had diplomas as their highest level of qualification; those with certificates accounted for 19.8%, n = 133. Similarly, 10.0% (n = 57) and 6.0% (n = 34) had bachelor's and doctor of philosophy degrees, respectively. This implied that the majority of the respondents had a formal education; thus, they may be capable of providing adequate information about cybercrime-ritualism and its prevalence in their community. On the marital status of the respondents, the majority (39.9%, n = 228) of the respondents were single, and the married ones accounted for (31.5%, n = 180); divorcees and widows accounted for 12.8%, n = 73, and 8.6%, n = 49, respectively. This implied that the majority of the respondents were married. On the occupation of respondents, it was demonstrated statistically that the majority (49.2%, n = 281) of the respondents were students. However, civil servants accounted for 31.3% (n = 179), while farmers were 11.0% (n = 63). The table showed that there were more Muslims (47.3%, n = 270) than Christians (25.6%, n = 146) in the study.

Table 2: Incantation and Criminal Victimization Rating of Incantation and Criminal Victimization.

S/N	Incantation	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Std Dev.
1	I am familiar with concept of "incantation" for cybercriminal	49 / 8.6	49 / 8.6	71 / 12.4	274 / 48.3	128 / 22.4	3.6708	1.16536
2	Incantation brings about criminal victimization in kwara central senatorial district	63 / 11.0	157 / 27.5	111 / 19.4	100 / 17.5	140 / 24.5	3.1699	1.35887
3	Using incantation on victims contributes to success in cybercrime	59 / 10.3	86 / 15.1	98 / 17.2	194 / 34.0	134 / 23.5	3.4518	1.28105
4	In some specific places in Ilorin metropolis women are likely used for cybercriminal through incantation	82 / 14.4	42 / 7.4	129 / 22.6	230 / 40.3	88 / 15.4	3.2503	1.24390
5	I have experience a situation in which incantation was used on women by cybercriminal	103 / 18.0	142 / 24.9	140 / 24.5	42 / 7.4	144 / 25.2	2.9685	1.43358
6	Incantation practices often target both male and female victims	98	151	149	92	81	3.3934	1.5965
7	The uses of incantation make victims to be submissive	159 / 27.8	141 / 24.7	98 / 17.2	108 / 18.9	65 / 11.4	3.8643	1.3328

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Table 2 indicates that the incidence of incantation exerts effect on the criminal victimization activities in the study area. This was based on the statistical mean obtained, thus: Mean =3.6708 and SD = 1.16536. However, the mean score of individual variables showed that: incantation brings about criminal victimization in Kwara central senatorial district (Mean = 3.1699, SD = 1.35887); using incantation on persons or victims brings about success in cybercrime (Mean = 3.4518, SD = 1.28105); and in some specific places in Ilorin metropolis, women are likely to be used for cybercrime through incantation (Mean = 3.2503, SD = 1.24390). Also, some have experienced a situation in which incantation was used on women by cybercriminals (Mean = 2.9685, SD = 1.43358), and incantation was mostly targeted at both male and female victims (Mean = 3.3934, SD = 1.5965), while the use of incantation made victims submissive (Mean, 3.8643, SD = 1.3328). Based on the findings in

Table 4.5, incantation activities were statistically significantly associated with criminal victimization in the study area.

Table 3: Blood Sacrifice and Criminal Victimization Rating of Blood Sacrifice and Criminal Victimization.

S/N	Blood Sacrifice	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Std Dev.
1	Victim suffer from shortage of blood	79 / 13.8	186 / 32.6	144 / 25.2	102 / 17.9	60 / 10.5	2.7863	1.19790
2	Blood of the victim is used for sacrifice	85 / 14.9	114 / 20.0	76 / 13.3	238 / 41.7	58 / 10.2	3.1226	1.26728
3	Blood sacrifice is not a common cybercrime-ritualism activity	101 / 17.7	137 / 24.0	99 / 17.3	182 / 31.9	52 / 9.1	2.9072	1.13325
4	Cybercrime-ritualists consider the type blood group of the victim	83 / 14.5	134 / 23.5	216 / 37.8	88 / 15.4	50 / 8.8	2.8039	1.13325
5	Blood sacrifice is prominent among cybercrime-ritualists	231 / 40.5	60 / 10.5	136 / 23.8	90 / 15.8	54 / 9.5	2.4326	1.39306
6	The blood of females is more valued	176 / 30.8	144 / 25.2	131 / 22.9	73 / 12.8	47 / 8.2	3.7865	1.5121
7	After using their blood, victims lost their lives.	139 / 24.3	129 / 22.6	116 / 20.3	98 / 17.2	89 / 15.6	3.9812	1.7356

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Table 3 shows the respondents' ratings of the blood sacrifice and criminal victimization activities in the Kwara Central senatorial district. The result shows that most of the victims of cybercrime-ritualism suffer from a shortage of blood (mean = 2.7863, SD = 1.19790), the major purpose of committing the crime is to use the blood of the victims of cybercrime-ritualism suffer from a shortage of blood (mean = 2.7863, SD = 1.19790), the major purpose of committing crime is to use the blood of the victim for sacrifice (mean = 3.1226, SD = 1.26728), blood sacrifice is not a common cybercrime-ritualism suffer from shortage of blood (Mean = 2.7863, SD = 1.19790), the major purpose of committing crime is to use the blood of the victim for sacrifice (Mean = 3.1226, SD = 1.26728), Blood sacrifice is not a common cybercrime-ritualism in Kwara state (Mean = 2.9072, SD = 1.13325),

Cybercrime-ritualists consider the type blood group of the victim (Mean =2.8039, SD = 1.13325), Blood sacrifice is prominent among cybercrime-ritualists (Mean = 3.67, SD = 1.194), and farming activities (Mean = 3.50, SD = 1.431) are common intercity migration activities in the study area. In addition to weddings, naming, and funeral services (Mean = 2.4326, SD = 1.39306), females are mostly victims of ritual blood sacrifice by cybercriminals (Mean = 3.7865, SD = 1.5121), and most victims used for blood sacrifice usually lose their lives (Mean = 3.9812, SD = 1.7356).

Given standard deviations that ranged from 1.13325 to 1.7356 in all the variables, as seen in Table 4.6, this implies that there was insignificant variation in the opinion of respondents on what constitutes blood sacrifice and criminal victimization activities in the area, as major scores of the standard deviation closely clustered around the mean scores. In this context, there was a high consensus among respondents in the study area on the consequences of blood sacrifice for the victims.

Table 4 indicates that the incidence of cybercriminal victimization in the study area. This was based on the statistical mean obtained, thus: Mean = 2.98771 and SD = 1.22755. However, mean score of individual variables showed that: The number of victims in kwara state is lower compare to other state (Mean = 2.5079, SD = 1.19407), The major victim of Cybercrime-Ritualism were female (Mean = 3.4028, SD = 1.16636), Majority of the Cybercrime-Ritualism in kwara state was said to be from Kwara Central (Mean = 3.6708, SD = 1.16636); many of the respondent said to have encountered many victims of the Cybercrime-Ritualism in their area (Mean = 3.1699, SD = 1.35887) the victims usually lose their mental state (Mean = 2.7632, SD = 1.2176). Based on the findings in Table 4.8, cybercriminal victimization activities which constitute both social and economic activities were statistically significantly affected victims in the study area.

Hypothesis One: H1: There is no significant relationship between incantation and criminal victimization in kwara central senatorial district.

Table 4: Criminal Victimization
Rating of Criminal Victimization

S/N	Criminal Victimization	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Std Dev.
1	Most victim of Cybercrime-Ritualism are male	85 / 14.9	124 / 21.7	129 / 22.6	179 / 31.3	54 / 9.5	2.9877	1.22755
2	The number of victims of cybercrime/incantation in kwara state is relatively low.	119 / 20.8	211 / 37.0	121 / 21.2	72 / 12.6	48 / 8.4	2.5079	1.19407
3	Most victim of Cybercrime-Ritualism are female	58 / 9.8	84 / 14.7	135 / 23.6	166 / 29.1	130 / 22.8	3.4028	1.16636
4	Most of the Cybercrime-Ritualist are from kwara central	49 / 8.6	49 / 8.6	71 / 12.4	274 / 48.0	128 / 22.4	3.6708	1.16636
5	I have encountered many victims of the Cybercrime-Ritualism in my area	65 / 11.0	157 / 27.5	111 / 19.4	100 / 17.5	140 / 24.5	3.1699	1.35887
6	The victims usually become mad	151	126	99	91	104	2.7632	1.2176

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.772a	0.596	0.595	0.47173	1.256

a. Predictors: (Constant), INC

b. Dependent Variable: CRV

The correlation coefficient (R) equal 0.772, indicates a positive relationship between the variables. The R-Squared statistic indicates that the model as fitted explains 77.2% of the variability in criminal victimization in Kwara Central Senatorial District. This established that incantation have effect on the criminal victimization in Kwara Central Senatorial District.

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	186.824	1	186.824	839.541	.000b
	Residual	126.62	569	0.223		
	Total	313.445	570			

a. Dependent Variable: CRV

b. Predictors: (Constant), INC

Also the p-value of (0.000) which is less than the level of significant at the 0.05 indicates that the result is statistically significant; therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant effect of criminal victimization on incantation in Kwara Central Senatorial District.

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1.08	0.074		14.591	0		
	INC	0.622	0.021	0.772	28.975	0	1	1

a. Dependent Variable: CRV

The regression coefficient of the above equation for the model implies that unit change in incantation will exert a positive effect on criminal victimization.

> Quantitative data presented above was buttressed by data from interview. Some of the interviewees stated that:
> Hey, incantation may contribute to criminal victimization in kwara central senatorial duistrict through belief systems and social influences. Exploring these connections is essential for developing effective strategies to combat criminal victimization (Interview, Male, 29, 2023).

Another respondent has this say:

> You this see bah…… incantation can contribute to criminal victimization in kwara central senatorial district by creating a sense of vulnerability and helplessness. When people believe that someone has the power to cause them harm, they may be more likely to be victimized (Interview, Female, 34, 2023)

Some respondents said:

> To us ooo, incantation can create a sense of powerlessness which can make it difficult for people to resist victimization (Interview, Female, 38, 2023)

Based on the interview conducted, incantation, the ritualistic chanting or recitation of words often associated with magical or supernatural practices, is traditionally a spiritual or ceremonial activity. While incantations themselves are not inherently linked to criminal victimization, the intersection of mystical beliefs with criminal activities can lead to indirect consequences, particularly when unscrupulous individuals exploit the perceived power or influence associated with incantations. One way in which incantation may contribute to criminal victimization is through scams or fraudulent schemes that manipulate individuals' beliefs in the supernatural. Criminals present themselves as practitioners of magic or spirituality, claiming to provide special protections, blessings, or supernatural benefits through the performance of specific incantations. In reality, these individuals are engaging in deceptive practices to defraud victims of their money, possessions, or personal information. The exploitation of belief in the efficacy of incantations lead individuals to fall prey to financial scams or other forms of manipulation. This form of exploitation can have profound effects on the emotional well-being and sense of security of those targeted.

Hypothesis Two: H4: There is no significant relationship between blood sacrifice and criminal victimization in Kwara Central Senatorial District.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.341a	0.116	0.115	0.69771	0.856

a. Predictors: (Constant), BLS

b. Dependent Variable: CRV

The correlation coefficient (R) equal 0.341, indicates a positive relationship between the variables. The R-Squared statistic indicates that the model as fitted explains 34.1% of the variability in criminal victimization. This established that blood sacrifice will have effect on the criminal victimization in Kwara Central Senatorial District.

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	36.455	1	36.455	74.886	.000b
	Residual	276.99	569	0.487		
	Total	313.445	570			

a. Dependent Variable: CRV

b. Predictors: (Constant), BLS

Also the p-value of (0.000) which is less than the level of significant at the 0.05 indicates that the result is statistically significant; therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant effect of criminal victimization on blood sacrifice in Kwara Central Senatorial District.

Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	2.122	0.122		17.38	0		
BLS	0.365	0.042	0.341	8.654	0	1	1

a. Dependent Variable: CRV

The regression coefficient of the above equation for the model implies that unit change in blood sacrifice will exert a positive effect on criminal victimization.

Quantitative data presented above was buttressed by data from interview. One of the interviewees state that:

> Hmm…. The effects of blood sacrifice on criminal victimization in kwara central senatorial district is difficult to quantify, as the effects can be both direct and indirect. However, we do know that blood sacrifice can have a profound impact on the psychological well-being of victims and their families (Interview, Male, 34, 2023).

Another respondent has this to say:

> Blood sacrifice can create a sense of fear and anxiety in the community, which can lead to further victimization. In some cases, blood sacrifice has also been linked to violence and other criminal activity (Interview, Male, 28, 2023).

Some respondents said:

> My own observation is that blood sacrifice can have significant effects on criminal victimization in kwara central senatorial district, impacting individuals and communities. Understanding the extent of this influence is crucial for developing comprehensive approaches to address criminal victimization (Interview, Females, 31, 2023).

Based on the interview conducted, blood sacrifice, a ritualistic practice often rooted in cultural or religious traditions, has historically been associated with certain criminal activities in specific contexts. While the act of blood sacrifice itself is not inherently criminal, instances have arisen where criminal victimization becomes entangled with rituals involving the shedding of blood. In some cases, criminal exploitation of deeply held cultural or religious beliefs surrounding blood sacrifice has led to harmful consequences. Individuals with malicious intent manipulate others by convincing them that engaging in criminal activities, such as violence or harm to others, is justified or even necessary within the context of ritualistic practices. This exploitation can result in criminal victimization, as individuals may unknowingly become involved in illegal activities under the guise of adhering to their cultural or spiritual beliefs. Furthermore, certain criminal organizations or cults have been known to adopt ritualistic practices that include blood sacrifice. In these instances, criminal victimization occur within the framework of illegal activities associated with the organization's rituals. The use of blood sacrifice in these contexts serve as a means of control,

intimidation, or initiation, leading to harm inflicted upon individuals within the organization or targeted victims.

Discussion of Findings
Effect of incantation on criminal victimization in Kwara Central Senatorial District.

Cybercrime in Nigeria, like in many other countries, is primarily associated with activities such as online fraud, phishing, identity theft, and hacking. These activities are rooted in technological skills, criminal intent, and the exploitation of vulnerabilities in digital systems. While cultural and religious practices may influence various aspects of life in Nigeria, including ethical considerations, they are not directly linked to cybercrime. Cybercrime is more closely related to technological advancements, socio-economic factors, and the evolving landscape of digital communication and commerce.

The study found that there is no significant relationship between incantation and criminal victimization. The study is supported by Nnam et al. (2019). In reality, the practice of incantation, when coupled with criminal activities, may exacerbate the risk of victimization, exposing individuals to potential harm or exploitation through mystical or ritualistic means. Conversely, the study discovered that incantation may be one of the prominent tools used by cybercriminals in the study area, indicating an issue that needs urgent attention. In Nigeria, incantations are ritualistic spoken words or chants believed to possess magical or spiritual power. They are often recited during religious ceremonies, traditional rituals, or in everyday life to invoke blessings, protection, or influence spiritual forces. Incantations can vary across different ethnic groups and are deeply rooted in the cultural and religious practices of the region. AbdulRasheed et al. (2016) stated that the belief that incantations possess magical powers is rooted in cultural and spiritual traditions rather than empirical evidence. In various cultures, including Nigeria, the power of incantations is often associated with the intent, the energy, and the spiritual connection believed to be established through the spoken words.

To this end, it can be asserted that cybercriminals who perform incantations often believe that certain words or phrases hold inherent spiritual power, and when recited with the right intention and focus, they can influence the spiritual realm. This belief is often tied to cultural and religious practices that attribute significance to the spoken word as a means of connecting with higher powers, spirits, or energies. Concomitantly, Nwolise (2012) opined that the use of incantation for spiritual protection and to charm potential victims is at a high rate among cybercriminals in Nigeria, involving the use of human parts like fingernails, rings, making incisions, and having sex with ghosts. All this can be done through the process of incantation. The belief in the spiritual power of incantations is rooted in cultural and religious perspectives.

In many cultures, including those in Nigeria, the idea is that certain words or phrases have inherent spiritual significance. When spoken with the right intent and focus, and often in a ritualistic context, these words are believed to connect the individual to the spiritual realm. The spiritual power attributed to incantations is often linked to the cultural understanding of the interconnectedness between the physical and spiritual worlds. Cybercriminals who practice incantations may believe that certain words have the ability to resonate with spiritual forces, deities, or energies, influencing the outcome of events, seeking protection, or invoking blessings. It is crucial to recognize that the concept of spiritual power in incantations is a matter of belief and may vary significantly across different cultures and religious traditions.

Effect of blood sacrifice on criminal victimization in Kwara Central Senatorial District

On the effect of blood sacrifice on criminal victimization in Kwara Central Senatorial District, the study found that blood sacrifice is prominent among cybercrime-ritualists, although cybercriminals who engage in such activities do not use their own blood but the blood of others, especially their victims, and do not check for the genotype before usage. The concept of blood sacrifice is rooted in various cultural, religious, and spiritual traditions around the world, including Nigeria. In general, blood sacrifice involves offering the blood of an animal or, in some historical cases, a human, as a symbolic or ritualistic act to appease deities, spirits, or

supernatural forces.

According to Olaide and Adewole (2017), the practice of blood sacrifice by cybercrime ritualists is often tied to the belief that blood is a powerful life force, and by offering it, individuals seek to establish a connection with the divine, express devotion, seek protection, or obtain favor. The sacrifice is typically performed in a ceremonial setting and may involve specific rituals, prayers, and symbols. It is important to note that the practice of blood sacrifice varies widely across cultures and religions. While some societies historically engaged in human sacrifices, many contemporary practices involve the sacrifice of animals as a substitute. Additionally, Nwolise (2012) asserted that views on and acceptance of blood sacrifice differ among different religious and cultural communities. In Nigerian society, the idea of blood sacrifice as a means to success is not universally accepted or practiced. While certain cultural and spiritual beliefs may involve rituals or ceremonies, including symbolic offerings, there is no direct correlation between blood sacrifice and success in a broad societal context. Success in Nigeria, as in any society, is typically achieved through a combination of factors such as education, hard work, skills, opportunities, and networking, although cybercrime rituals and blood sacrifice are also considered alternatives by youths who venture into such acts.

The notion of success is subjective and varies among individuals, and it is not commonly tied to ritualistic practices like blood sacrifice in mainstream or modern Nigerian society. From the discussion herein, it is crucial to approach such topics with sensitivity and respect for diverse cultural beliefs while acknowledging that beliefs and practices can differ widely among individuals and communities within Nigeria. Modern perspectives on success tend to align more with education, innovation, and ethical business practices than ritualistic practices. The concept of using human sacrifice to appease deities is historically found in various cultures, but it is essential to note that this practice is generally considered archaic and is not a widespread or accepted contemporary belief or practice. Many societies have moved away.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study highlights a troubling reality in Kwara Central Senatorial District, where cybercriminals are exploiting cultural and spiritual beliefs, especially incantation and blood sacrifice, to carry out harmful activities. Many respondents shared how these practices increase people's vulnerability, particularly affecting women, who are often the primary targets. The impact goes beyond the immediate harm, causing deep psychological distress and economic hardship for the victims. This research sheds light on how ingrained these practices are and the devastating toll they take on individuals and communities.

Hence, the following recommendations are made based on the findings from the study:

i.   Based on the study findings on the effect of incantation on criminal victimization in Kwara Central Senatorial District, it is recommended that relevant stakeholders promote interfaith dialogues, encompassing representatives from all faiths, i.e., Islam, Christianity, and African Traditional Religion, to address the misuse of religious and spiritual practices for criminal ends and foster understanding and respect for diverse beliefs. Hence, a monitoring system to detect and report misuse of incantations for criminal purposes should be established, and nonconformists should be penalized.

ii. The study more so revealed the prevalent use of blood sacrifice in cybercrime-ritualism, resulting in criminal victimization. In this context, relevant authorities should enact and enforce strict laws against the use of blood or human parts for rituals, with severe penalties for offenders. Also, there should be awareness campaigns to dispel the myth that blood sacrifice leads to success and prosperity and promote alternative paths to achievement. Additionally, there's a need to establish a support system for victims of blood sacrifice and their

families, including counseling and financial assistance.

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