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Cyber Deviance, Victimization, Digital Forensics

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Understanding Deviance and Victimization in Cyber Space among Diverse Populations

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Abstract:

Recent years have witnessed a growing academic interest in deviance and victimization in the cyber space. The current issue of the *International Journal of Cybersecurity Intelligence and Cybercrime* features three empirical research articles on online behavior of traditionally under-researched populations and a review of much waited book on digital forensics and investigation. This paper was prepared to introduce these important scholarly works in the context of newly emerging scholarship that focuses on the experiences of diverse subgroups in cyberspace.

Introduction

In the past few decades, there has been a surge of scholarly interest in cybercrime and victimization. As the advances in information technology reach wider regions across the globe, there is a growing awareness of the potential harm and hazards of cybercrime (Choi, 2021). Much attention has devoted to testing criminological theories on cybercrime, examining the profiles of victims and non-victims, and identifying the predictors of cybercrime. As the field of Cyber criminology matures, there needs to be an increased emphasis on the experiences of diverse populations that did not traditionally receive much scholarly recognition.

This issue of the *International Journal of Cybersecurity Intelligence and Cybercrime* (IJCIC) provides a unique and rich illustration of current trends and issues in cybercrime faced by diverse groups around the world. It is now well established that crime does not have equal impacts on members of different demographics and social classes (Cloward & Ohlin, 1960; Cohen, 1955; Hirschi & Gottfredson, 1983; Miller, 1958; Piquero, 2015). In response, the papers in the current issue offer a foundation to better understand whether the impact of cybercrime is experienced differently across diverse populations. In particular, the authors in this issue shed light on the influence of cyber technology on Black college students, older adults, and internet users from Nigeria. Readers will appreciate the findings gained from robust empirical research on valuable data of diverse populations in this issue.

Overview

The first paper “Aggressive Reality Docuseries and Cyberbullying: A Partial Test of Glaser’s Differential Identification Theory” highlighted the media-portrayal of African Americans and its impact on their

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deviant behavior in cyberspace. The authors, J. Ra'Chel Fowler, Darren R. Beneby, and Kenethia L. Fuller (2022, this issue), examined the relevance of social learning process in explaining the association between the exposure to aggressive media content and cyber deviance among historically Black college and university students (n=210). The strength of this research comes from applying Glaser's (1956) differential identification theory, which expanded the concept of social association to non-personal interactions, distinguished from Sutherland's (1947) original definition of intimate interpersonal contact. In addition to demonstrating the relevance of identification and exposure to aggressive media content on cyber deviance, the authors provide an in-depth observation of Black college students' viewing and identifying with violent and aggressive behavior and dialogue featured in Black-focused reality shows and their online behavior. Readers will find this piece especially informative as the authors address the experience of African American women with their unique sample that consisted of 89% Black and 78.6% female. The findings will remind the readers to maintain a critical lens in the impact of media, especially on how African Americans and portrayed on aggressive reality shows and potential impact on antisocial behavior.

Katalin Parti (2022, this issue) examined another under-researched yet important population that warrants more focus --- the elderly. In her paper titled "Elder Scam' Risk Profiles: Individual and Situational Factors of Younger and Older Age Groups' Fraud Victimization," the author offers an in-depth description of the older adults' experiences to the cybercrime literature, which has mostly relied on college and school students (Payne & Hadzhidimova, 2020). By performing a comprehensive theory testing on cyber victimization across different age groups, this piece appeals both to the scholarly readers as well as the policymakers looking to prevent fraud victimization among elderly individuals. This article demonstrates to what extent low self-control and lifestyle-routine activities factors (i.e., exposure to motivated offenders, target suitability, and capable guardianship), are associated with the likelihood of fraud victimization among internet users of the age 55 and above. Another important strength of this study comes from delving into distinctive victimization types that could be categorized as "elder fraud," including private info scams, IT support scams, grandparent scams, or romance scams. Combined, the author provided a strong basis for further investigation and protection of older adults in cyberspace.

The next paper by Ogochukwu Favour Nzeakor, Bonaventure N. Nwokeoma, Ibrahim Muhammad Hassan, Benjamin Okorie Ajah, and John Thomson Okpa focused on the emerging trends in cybercrime awareness in Nigeria. While the trends in cybercrime and victimization are increasingly documented across the globe, this paper makes a valuable addition to the literature on several aspects. The authors painted a rich picture of cybercrime by taking a mixed-method approach to a non-Western sample. With these valuable data, they provide the empirical association between cybercrime awareness and actual victimization experience. In doing so, they contextualize the findings within the framework of routine activities and victim precipitation theories. This study documented the up-to-date trend in cybercrime and information security awareness and victimization and thus will be useful for supporting a more robust education program and dissemination of relevant knowledge to Nigerians.

The book review section features the first edition of *Digital Forensic and Cyber Investigation*, written by Kyung-shick Choi, Sinchul Back, and Marlon Mike Toro-Alvarez. Katalin Parti and colleagues (2022, this issue) nicely outlined the appeal of the new book for the private sector, students, academia, and law enforcement professionals in their review. Readers who want a multi-faceted introduction to cybercrimes and digital forensics are encouraged to refer to this well-written review as well as the newly published book.

Concluding Remarks

One of the distinctive natures of cybercrime is that it transcends geographical limits and thus needs to be understood as a global issue that requires multifaceted, collaborative efforts (Choi & Lee, 2018). Then, it is natural to investigate the dynamics of cybercrime among various subgroups of internet users around the world. Through the featured articles in this issue, the readers will be able to better understand the behaviors of aggressive reality docuseries viewers, victimization patterns of older adults, and awareness of cyber deviance among Nigerians. As the field of cyber criminology and cybersecurity continuously grows and evolves, this collection of well-designed research studies nicely contributes to the current literature as well as urges future researchers to continue investigations on diverse subgroups' experiences in cyberspace.

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