

CONQUERING CYBERCRIME: THE PLACE OF MASS MEDIA IN GALVANISING THE YOUTH TOWARDS SELF-RELIANCE

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Abstract:

It is no longer a news that cybercrime has become a thing of global concern. As techno advancements come to being, so are their complexities and deformities. The objectives are to assess the effectiveness of mass media campaigns in promoting self-reliance among youth, to explore youth perceptions of mass media's influence on their entrepreneurial mindset and behavior, to identify the key challenges faced by mass media in reaching youth with messages about cybercrime and self-reliance and to determine which types of mass media are most frequently used by youth for learning about cybercrime prevention and entrepreneurship. The tenets of Agenda Setting Theory and Framing Theory provided theoretical background to this study. The survey research was used for this study. A sample of 384 was drawn from a population of 328,394 Lokoja residents using the Australian calculator for sample size determination. Structured Likert scale questionnaire was used to collect data and the data were presented and analyzed using tables, frequency and percentages, mean averages and standard deviation. Findings revealed that mass media campaigns are generally perceived as effective in promoting self-reliance among youth, there is also a positive perception of mass media influence on entrepreneurship. It was also found that respondents perceive significant gaps in the media ability to effectively address cybercrime prevention. It was recommended that mass media campaigns should be designed to engage youth on issues related to cybercrime prevention and self-reliance.

Keywords: cybercrime, empowerment, internet, media messages, self-reliance, technology, youth.

1. INTRODUCTION

The rising rate of cybercrime has become a pressing global issue, with its effects increasingly felt across various sectors of society. Young people, in particular, have emerged as both primary targets and

perpetrators, given their widespread use of digital platforms for communication, education, and entertainment. The prevalence of cybercrime has grown exponentially in recent years, driven by technological

advancements and the increasing digitalization of daily life. Global cybercrime damages are projected to reach \$10.5 trillion annually by 2025, underscoring the urgency of addressing this menace. The societal impacts are far-reaching, with significant economic losses, disruptions to privacy, and a growing sense of insecurity among the youth, who are often vulnerable to online fraud, hacking, and identity theft (Smith, 2020).

Gordon and Ford (2006:12) define cybercrime as "criminal acts where a computer is involved as either an object of the crime, an instrument used to commit a crime or a repository of evidence related to the crime." Computers can be direct targets, where cybercriminals exploit vulnerabilities to steal data or cause disruptions, such as in cases of hacking and data breaches. Second, computers serve as tools in the committing crimes, where individuals may use them to facilitate illegal activities like online fraud, identity theft, or the distribution of illicit content. Finally, computers can also act as repositories of evidence, where digital traces left behind during cybercrimes can be analyzed to identify perpetrators and understand the methods employed. This comprehensive perspective emphasizes the complexity of cybercrime, illustrating how

technology contributes to the perpetration of criminal activities and plays a critical role in their investigation and prosecution.

As cybercrime becomes increasingly prevalent, understanding the psychological and social factors that drive youth involvement is essential. Many young individuals may be drawn to cybercriminal activities due to peer pressure as they seek acceptance or validation within their social circles. The allure of quick financial gain can also be a powerful motivator, especially in contexts where economic opportunities are limited. Hollis (2018) indicates that youths often perceive cybercrime as a low-

means to achieve financial rewards, particularly when they observe peers engaging in such activities without apparent consequences. Additionally, the anonymity provided by the internet can embolden individuals to engage in risky behaviors they might avoid in face-to-face interactions. This false sense of security can lead to underestimating of the legal and personal repercussions of their actions. Consequently, addressing these psychological and social dynamics is critical in developing effective strategies for prevention and intervention.

Mass media plays a crucial role in addressing cybercrime and promoting digital literacy among the youth. Defined as the means of

communication that reach large audiences, mass media encompasses various platforms, including television, radio, print, and digital media. Its functions extend beyond mere information dissemination to include education, awareness-raising, and advocacy. McQuail (2010), defines mass media as "those media that are capable of reaching large audiences simultaneously, characterized by the dissemination of information and entertainment. Baran (2016) also states that mass media "consists of various means of communication that can

reach large audiences, particularly through the distribution of news, information, and entertainment."

The educating role of mass media is fundamental in shaping public knowledge and awareness across diverse societal issues. Mass media serves as a primary source of information, delivering timely news and updates that keep individuals informed about current events. It raises awareness of critical social issues through campaigns, documentaries, and feature stories, prompting advocacy and public engagement. Additionally, media organizations produce educational content, such as instructional programs and tutorials, which enhance public understanding of complex subjects. Mass

media also transmits cultural values and norms, fostering appreciation for diverse cultures. Importantly, it emphasizes critical thinking and media literacy, equipping audiences to evaluate information and discern credible sources. Furthermore, mass media facilitates public discourse by providing platforms for discussion and debate, allowing various perspectives to be shared and examined (Severin & Tankard).

In Nigeria, cybercrime has emerged as a significant challenge, particularly affecting the youth who are often targeted or influenced by such illicit activities. As the digital landscape continues to expand, it is crucial to harness the power of mass media to educate and empower young people, steering them away from cybercrime and toward self-reliance (Uche & Amadi, 2020). Mass media can play a vital role in raising awareness about the dangers of cybercrime, emphasizing the importance of ethical online behavior and the potential consequences of engaging in illegal activities. By disseminating informative content through television, radio, and social media, mass media can highlight the narratives of former cybercriminals who have turned their lives around and pursued legitimate avenues for success. Furthermore, mass media can promote digital literacy and skills

development, equipping youth with the necessary tools to thrive in the digital economy. By showcasing educational programs and online resources focused on technology, entrepreneurship, and cyber security, mass media can inspire young people to acquire valuable skills that enhance their employability (Hollis, 2018).

In advocating for self-reliance, mass media can also facilitate discussions about government policies and programs aimed at combating cybercrime while promoting youth entrepreneurship. By providing platforms for dialogue between young people, policymakers, and industry experts, media can help shape a supportive environment that fosters innovation and entrepreneurship (Ogunleye, 2021). Through these multifaceted strategies, mass media can significantly contribute to galvanizing Nigerian youth toward self-reliance, encouraging them to channel their creativity and energy into productive endeavors while actively combating the challenges posed by cybercrime.

In light of the growing challenges of cybercrime in Nigeria, this study aims to delineate the critical role of mass media in galvanizing young people toward self-reliance (Uche & Amadi, 2020). By examining the various strategies employed

by mass media to educate, inspire, and engage the youth, this research seeks to uncover effective pathways that can empower them to pursue legitimate opportunities and navigate the digital landscape responsibly.

In the digital age, cybercrime has emerged as a significant threat, particularly among the youth in Nigeria, who are increasingly susceptible to online scams and illegal activities. With the rapid growth of internet usage, particularly among young people, the country has witnessed a troubling rise in cybercrime incidents, which not only undermine economic stability but also hinder the potential for self-reliance among the youth. The demographic is often targeted due to a combination of inexperience and economic desperation, emphasizing the urgent need for effective strategies to combat this trend. Adetunji (2021) suggested that in the light of this mass media possesses a unique ability to educate and inform the public about the dangers of cybercrime while promoting ethical online behavior and entrepreneurship.

Despite the critical role that mass media can play in addressing this issue, there is a noticeable gap in research examining how effectively mass media engages youth in combating cybercrime and fostering self-

reliance. Olatunji (2020) notes that while mass media campaigns have been implemented to raise awareness, their effectiveness in shaping youth attitudes toward self-reliance and cyber responsibility remains underexplored. This gap underscores the need for targeted research that investigates the specific strategies employed

2. Mass media, Youth Empowerment, Cybercrime and Self-reliance

In a study by Opara (2019) on "Mass Media as a Tool for Cybercrime Prevention among Nigerian Youths", the study addressed the rising concerns about the increasing involvement of youths in cybercrime and the role of mass media in curbing this trend. The problem statement highlighted the growing rate of cybercrime in Nigeria and its detrimental impact on the youth's development and national security. The study aimed to explore how the mass media can influence youth behavior towards self-reliance and away from cybercrime. The theoretical framework was anchored in the Social Learning Theory, which posits that individuals, especially youths, model their behavior based on media content. The methodology employed was a survey design, where questionnaires were distributed to a

by mass media to galvanize young people toward self-employment and digital responsibility. Against this backdrop, this study seeks to explore the role of mass media in shaping the perceptions and behaviors of Nigerian youth regarding cybercrime and self-reliance.

sample of 500 students from five tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

The findings revealed that exposure to educational programs on cybercrime prevention through the media significantly reduced the likelihood of youth engagement in cyber-related offenses. It was also discovered that positive portrayals of entrepreneurship and self-reliance in the media encouraged youths to explore legitimate means of livelihood. In conclusion, the study posited that the media has the power to shape youth attitudes and behaviors, serving as a crucial tool in the fight against cybercrime. The recommendations included that media outlets should prioritize content that promotes entrepreneurial skills, digital literacy, and ethical online practices. Moreover, collaborations between media organizations and educational institutions were suggested to develop tailored programs that address the

specific needs of young people concerning cybercrime and self-reliance.

Similarly, a study by Abubakar & Iman (2021) "The Role of Mass Communication in Cyber security Awareness among Nigerian Youths", focused on the mass media's impact on cyber security consciousness among youth. The problem statement underlined the insufficient awareness of cyber security threats and how this lack of knowledge contributed to the rise in cybercrime among young individuals. The objective of the study was to assess the effectiveness of mass media campaigns in educating youths on cyber security measures and promoting self-reliance as a strategy to avoid illegal activities. The study employed the Uses and Gratifications Theory, which suggests that audiences actively seek out media content that satisfies their personal needs and motivations. The study used a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative interviews with cyber security experts and quantitative surveys among 400 youths. The findings indicated that youths who consumed mass media content related to cyber security were more likely to take protective measures online and less likely to engage in cybercrime. It also emphasized that mass media campaigns that highlight stories of successful young entrepreneurs significantly

motivated youth towards self-reliance. The conclusion drawn was that mass media serves not only as a source of information but as a motivating factor for youth to avoid cybercrime through self-reliance. The authors recommended that mass media content producers should work closely with cyber security agencies and youth organizations to design more engaging and informative programs. They also advocated for the integration of cyber security education into mass communication curriculum in schools.

However, Okoro & Ibe (2022), in their paper titled "Cybercrime and the Nigerian Youth: Media Intervention Strategies" also investigated the media's role in reducing youth involvement in cybercrime through intervention strategies. The problem statement identified the pervasive influence of the internet on youth, often leading them into fraudulent activities due to the lack of structured media interventions. The study aimed to determine the effectiveness of different media platforms in spreading awareness about cybercrime and encouraging self-reliance. Grounded in the Agenda-Setting Theory, the research argued that media has the power to shape public perception and highlight issues of national importance like cybercrime. The

methodology involved content analysis of media programs on cybercrime aired by five popular television stations and interviews with media producers and cybersecurity professionals. Findings showed that while media efforts were making a difference, there was still a significant gap in addressing the root causes of youth participation in cybercrime, such as unemployment and lack of access to entrepreneurial opportunities. Media interventions were seen to be more successful when they combined awareness with practical solutions for self-reliance, such as showcasing local businesses and providing information on entrepreneurship grants. The study affirmed that while mass media interventions are helpful, they need to be more targeted and consistent to truly galvanize youth towards self-reliance and away from cybercrime. The recommendations were that media houses should engage with government agencies and the private sector to create more holistic and practical intervention strategies that go beyond awareness, providing youth with actual resources to pursue legitimate careers. In the same vein, Adegoke (2020), in his paper on "Media Literacy and Cybercrime: The Role of Nigerian Mass Media in Cybersecurity Education", examined the media's role in enhancing cybersecurity

awareness among Nigerian youths. The problem statement focused on the lack of media literacy among the youth, which makes them vulnerable to both being perpetrators and victims of cybercrime. The study aimed to explore how mass media can contribute to educating the youth on cybersecurity and foster self-reliance. Using the Media Dependency Theory, which suggests that people rely on media for information, the research sought to understand how mass media could influence youth behavior concerning cybercrime. The study adopted a quantitative research method by administering structured questionnaires to 600 youths across six states in Nigeria. The findings indicated that youths who were exposed to media content promoting cybersecurity literacy were more likely to avoid cybercrime activities and lean towards entrepreneurial ventures. The study concluded that media literacy is crucial in combating cybercrime, as informed youths are less likely to participate in fraudulent online activities. The researcher recommended that media outlets should collaborate with cybersecurity experts to design programs that focus on teaching digital literacy and promoting entrepreneurial initiatives as alternatives to cybercrime.

Additionally, Adewale & Femi (2021) titled "Mass Media and the Fight against Cybercrime among Nigerian Youths", the authors explored how mass media campaigns can influence youth attitudes toward cybercrime. The problem statement revolved around the increasing number of youths involved in online fraud despite media efforts to curtail this trend. The objective was to evaluate the effectiveness of mass media in influencing youth behavior and promoting self-reliance as an alternative to cybercrime. The study was based on the Social Responsibility Theory, which posits that the media has an obligation to inform the public and promote the common good. A qualitative approach was used, involving in-depth interviews with 50 media professionals and 20 cybersecurity experts. The findings suggested that while media campaigns are somewhat effective, they need to be more engaging and relatable to youth for a deeper impact. The study concluded that mass media must take a more proactive stance in presenting self-reliance as a viable alternative to cybercrime. The authors recommended that media content should highlight the success stories of young entrepreneurs to inspire youth to pursue legitimate careers. Similarly, Ogunleye (2022), in her paper titled "Cybercrime Prevention through Media

Advocacy: The Role of Nigerian Media in Shaping Youth Behavior", investigated the use of media advocacy as a tool for cybercrime prevention. The problem statement identified the gap in targeted media programs addressing the root causes of cybercrime among Nigerian youths. The study aimed to assess the impact of media advocacy on promoting ethical online behavior and self-reliance. Using the Framing Theory, which argues that the way media presents an issue influences public perception, the research examined how cybercrime was framed in the Nigerian media. The methodology involved a content analysis of cybercrime-related media content across ten television stations and five radio programs. The findings revealed that media framing of cybercrime as a serious societal issue significantly reduced youth involvement in such activities. However, the study also found that more positive portrayals of entrepreneurship and self-reliance were needed to sustain this reduction. In conclusion, the study recommended that media organizations should partner with government agencies and NGOs to produce more programs focusing on entrepreneurship and ethical behavior in the digital age.

Theoretical Framework

This study was based on the tenets of Agenda Setting Theory and the Framing Theory. Agenda-Setting Theory, developed by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1972, posits that the mass media has a significant influence on what issues are considered important by the public. Rather than directly telling people how to think, the theory suggests that media plays a vital role in shaping the issues that people think about by controlling the flow of information and the visibility of certain topics. This influence is exerted through the consistent and prominent coverage of particular issues, which ultimately makes those issues more salient in public consciousness. The media, therefore, has the power to set the public agenda by emphasizing certain topics over others.

The core tenet of Agenda-Setting Theory is that media attention elevates the perceived importance of an issue. If a subject receives more coverage in the media, the public is likely to consider it a high-priority issue, even if other topics may be equally or more important but underreported. For example, during elections, issues such as the economy or healthcare might dominate media coverage, leading the electorate to view these as the most important topics when deciding whom to vote for. Another key aspect of

Agenda-Setting Theory is the "two levels" or phases of agenda-setting:

First-Level Agenda-Setting: This focuses on the salience of topics in the media. It addresses the notion that the more frequently an issue is covered, the more important the public perceives it to be.

Second-Level Agenda-Setting: This extends beyond merely making a topic salient; it involves shaping the attributes of that issue. This phase, closely linked to framing, looks at how specific elements or characteristics of an issue are emphasized to influence how the public understands or evaluates it.

Framing Theory

Framing Theory, pioneered by Erving Goffman in 1974, refers to the process by which the media and other communicators shape and influence how issues are perceived by presenting them in a particular light. Framing goes beyond simply making an issue important (as in agenda-setting) and focuses on how the issue is communicated. This theory posits that the media can affect how people think about an issue by highlighting certain aspects of it, while omitting or downplaying others. In essence, framing involves selecting and emphasizing certain attributes or perspectives of a topic to create

a specific interpretation or understanding in the minds of the audience.

The key tenet of Framing Theory is that the way information is presented affects how people perceive it. For example, a news story about unemployment could be framed as a failure of government policies or as a consequence of global economic conditions. The same event, depending on how it is framed, can be understood very differently. Media outlets decide how to "frame" an issue, and this framing affects public perception, understanding, and emotional responses to the issue.

Framing typically involves two types of framing processes:

Issue Framing: This refers to how the media presents an issue, determining which aspects of the issue are highlighted and which are downplayed. **Attribute Framing:** This focuses on the positive or negative characteristics that are emphasized in relation to the issue. For instance, cybercrime could be framed either as an individual's moral failure or as a consequence of systemic unemployment and a lack of economic opportunities for youth.

The media's agenda-setting function can ensure that cybercrime and its solutions (such as entrepreneurship and ethical digital practices) remain at the forefront of public

discourse, especially among youths. Once these topics are given prominence, Framing Theory becomes essential in determining how the media presents the issues. By framing cybercrime in a negative light and self-reliance in a positive and aspirational light, the media can influence youths to choose legitimate paths over illegal activities. Together, these theories provide a robust framework for understanding how mass media can shape youth attitudes and behaviors, ultimately helping to galvanize them towards self-reliance and away from cybercrime.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employed the quantitative research approach, using the survey design. The population for the study is made up of residents of Lokoja. Lokoja is the capital city of Kogi State, Nigeria. From reports given by the National Population Commission (2006), Lokoja had a population of 196,643 in 2006 which has been projected to 328,394 in 2022 at a growth rate of 3.2%. From this population, a sample of 384 was drawn using the Australian Calculator for Sample Size Determination. Multistage sampling was used to divide the sample across the study area. At the first stage, the city was stratified according to various towns within. The next stage, simple random sampling was used to

select six of the communities. The communities selected are Ganaja, Felele, okongoma, Adankolo, Zango and Kabawa. The sample was divided equally across the six communities ($384 \div 6 = 64$). Thus, purposive sampling was employed to select respondents within the age range of 18-35, specifically targeting youth. This age group was chosen due to their exposure to digital technology and their potential to be influenced by the mass media in relation to cybercrime and self-reliance.

By using purposive sampling, the study ensures that only individuals relevant to the

4. DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The demographic characteristics of respondents in the study reveals an apparent gender disparity with **73.9%** identifying as male and **26.1%** as female. The age distribution shows that the largest group falls within the **22-25** range (**32.3%**), with younger respondents (18-21) at **16.9%** and only **6.8%** aged 36 and above, indicating a dominating youthful participant. In terms of educational level, **39.1%** have attained tertiary education, followed by **33.9%** with

research objectives are included, which enhances the validity and reliability of the findings. Structured Likert scale questionnaire was used as the instrument for collecting data from the respondents. Analysis of the collected data was done using tables and frequencies and percentage, mean averages and standard deviation. A 5-point Likert scale questionnaire was used for the study, where the options carry the following values: strongly agree (5), agree (4), neutral (3), disagree (2), strongly disagree (1).

secondary education, while **5.2%** have primary education, suggesting a generally well-informed group regarding cybercrime issues. Additionally, respondents are evenly distributed across six locations, each representing **16.7%**, enhancing the reliability of the findings by ensuring diverse geographic perspectives. Overall, the demographic data indicate a young, male, and educated cohort, which may significantly influence their perceptions and experiences related to cybercrime, emphasizing the need for targeted educational strategies tailored to this demographic.

Table 1. Effectiveness of Mass Media Campaigns in Promoting Self-Reliance

ITEMS	FREQUENCY					N	X (Mean)	SD	DECISION
	SA	A	N	D	SD				
Mass media campaigns have made me more aware of opportunities for self-reliance.	240	60	20	40	20	384	4.17	1.18	Accepted
I have used information from social media campaigns to become more self-reliant	290	50	10	30	4	384	4.54	0.95	Accepted
Mass media campaigns have motivated me to take steps forward towards entrepreneurship and other self-reliance activities.	200	80	20	50	34	384	3.94	1.37	Accepted
The Mass media effectively communicate practical ways to achieve self-reliance.	150	100	30	54	50	384	3.64	1.44	Accepted
Cumulative Mean							4.10		

The table above presents a Likert-scale analysis of the effectiveness of mass media campaigns in promoting self-reliance among youth. According to the statistical rule that mean scores above 3 should be accepted, all the propositions were accepted. Respondents agreed that mass media campaigns raise awareness of self-reliance opportunities with a mean of 4.17 and motivate them to become more self-reliant, with social media campaigns being particularly impactful with a mean of 4.54. They also accepted that mass media campaigns motivate them to take steps toward entrepreneurship and other self-reliance activities with a mean of 3.94.

However, the communication of practical ways to achieve self-reliance, while accepted with a mean of 3.64, showed room for improvement. Overall, the analysis indicates that mass media campaigns are effective in promoting self-reliance. In summary, with an overall cumulative mean of 4.10, the analysis reveals that mass media campaigns are generally perceived as effective in promoting self-reliance among youth. However, while awareness and motivation are strong, the communication of practical methods for achieving self-reliance could be enhanced for greater impact.

Table 2. Challenges Faced by Mass Media in reaching youth with messages about Cybercrime and Self Reliance

ITEMS	FREQUENCY					N	X (Mean)	SD	DECISION	
	SA	A	N	D	SD					
The media does not provide enough information on cybercrime prevention	80	50	50	150	54	384	2.87	1.38	Rejected	
The messages about cybercrime prevention and self-reliance are not effectively targeted towards youth	70	80	34	100	100	384	2.79	1.48	Rejected	
Media outlets rarely address the connection between cybercrime prevention and youth self-reliance	34	40	10	100	200	384	1.98	1.32	Rejected	
Access to reliable media source is limited	100	150	50	56	28	384	3.63	1.22	Accepted	
Cumulative Mean								2.82		

Table 2 explains the analysis of the perception of media effectiveness in addressing cybercrime prevention among respondents. The findings indicate that respondents rejected most of the propositions related to media effectiveness, including the provision of sufficient information on cybercrime prevention, the targeting of messages towards youth, and the connection

between cybercrime and youth self-reliance. The only accepted proposition was that access to reliable media sources is limited, with a mean score of 3.63. Overall, these results suggest that respondents perceive significant gaps in the media’s ability to effectively address cybercrime prevention, highlighting a need for improved information dissemination and engagement strategies.

Table 3. Types of Mass Media most frequently used for learning about Cybercrime.

ITEMS	FREQUENCY					N	X (Mean)	SD	DECISION	
	SA	A	N	D	SD					
I rely on television programmes to learn about cybercrime prevention and entrepreneurship	280	50	4	30	20	384	4.41	1.17	Accepted	
Social media is my primary source of information about cybercrime prevention and entrepreneurship	150	100	20	70	44	384	3.64	1.44	Accepted	
Radio programmes frequently discuss cybercrime prevention and entrepreneurship topics	70	80	20	130	84	384	2.80	1.45	Rejected	
I often learn about entrepreneurship and cybercrime prevention through online blogs and websites	100	100	50	80	54	384	3.29	1.41	Accepted	
Cumulative Mean								3.54		

Table 3 explains the analysis of the perception of various mass media sources in

educating respondents about cybercrime prevention and entrepreneurship. The

findings indicate that respondents accepted the effectiveness of television programs, which received a high mean score of 4.41, suggesting that it serves as a strong medium for disseminating information. Social media was also accepted, with a mean score of 3.64, though there was notable gap in responses regarding its reliability. The only rejected proposition by respondents was radio, as a medium effective for addressing these topics. Having the mean score of 2.80, it suggests ineffectiveness in addressing these topics.

Discussion of Findings

Objective 1: Extent to which mass media campaigns are effective in promoting self-reliance among youth.

The analysis in Table 1 reveals that mass media campaigns are generally perceived as effective in promoting self-reliance among youth. With a cumulative mean of 4.10, all items, including awareness of opportunities (mean of 4.17) and motivation to pursue self-reliance activities (mean of 3.94), were accepted by the respondents. Social media campaigns were particularly impactful, scoring the highest mean of 4.54. However, while awareness and motivation are strong, the communication of practical strategies for achieving self-reliance showed some room for improvement, with a lower mean of 3.64,

Online blogs and websites received a moderate acceptance with a mean score of 3.29, showing some value but not as strongly as television or social media. Overall, these results suggest that while certain media channels are perceived as effective, significant gaps remain in the broader media landscape's ability to adequately inform the public about cybercrime prevention, highlighting a need for improved information dissemination and engagement strategies.

though it was still accepted. These results suggest that while mass media effectively promotes self-reliance, there is a need to enhance the delivery of practical, actionable information to further support youth in their self-reliance journey.

These findings are in line with a study by Abubakar and Iman (2021), who found that mass media plays a significant role in raising awareness of important social issues among Nigerian youth. Their study on mass communication's role in cybersecurity awareness closely mirrors the current findings on self-reliance, particularly in terms of mass media's strength in awareness-building. Similarly, Okoro and Ibe (2022) found that mass media interventions motivated Nigerian youth to take preventive

actions against cybercrime, a conclusion that resonates with the current study's observation that mass media motivates youth towards self-reliance activities. However, Adegoke (2020) highlights a gap in media communication regarding practical steps, which aligns with the lower mean score for practical self-reliance strategies in this study. The findings of this study can be explained using Agenda Setting Theory and Framing Theory. Agenda Setting Theory suggests that mass media influences public priorities by highlighting certain issues, which is reflected in the respondents' high awareness of self-reliance opportunities (mean of 4.17). This indicates that mass media has successfully made self-reliance an important topic among youth. In the same vein, Framing Theory being another theory used in this paper, focuses on how issues are presented, also applies here; the media has framed self-reliance as a valuable pursuit, as seen in the high motivation scores. However, the lower score for practical strategies (mean of 3.64) suggests that while the media effectively frames self-reliance as important, it could do better in providing clear, actionable guidance. Together, these theories help explain the effectiveness of mass media campaigns in promoting self-reliance while highlighting areas for improvement.

Objective 2: Key challenges do mass media face in reaching youth with messages about cybercrime and self-reliance

The analysis in Table 2 reveals key challenges that mass media face in reaching youth with messages about cybercrime and self-reliance. Respondents largely rejected propositions concerning the media's effectiveness in providing adequate information on cybercrime prevention, targeting youth, and linking cybercrime to self-reliance, with mean scores of 2.87, 2.79, and 1.98, respectively. These results indicate that youth feel the media is not effectively addressing cybercrime prevention. The only accepted proposition was that access to reliable media sources is limited, with a mean score of 3.63, suggesting that this limitation might be one of the reasons why media campaigns are not reaching their intended audience effectively. Overall, the findings highlight significant gaps in information dissemination and the need for improved strategies to engage youth on these critical issues.

Adegoke (2020) aligns with these findings, as his study on media literacy and cybercrime prevention identified similar challenges, particularly the lack of sufficient and targeted information in the media. He observed that media campaigns often fail to connect

cybercrime prevention with youth empowerment and self-reliance, thus limiting their overall effectiveness. However, Ugwunwanyi (2019) offers a contrasting view, suggesting that mass media campaigns can be highly effective in preventing cybercrime when tailored to the audience. His study in Nigerian urban centers found that youth responded well to targeted messages about cybercrime and its implications, which emphasizes the need for more precise targeting and better engagement strategies to replicate such success in other areas like Lokoja.

Agenda Setting Theory is particularly relevant to this discussion. According to the theory, mass media plays a key role in shaping public priorities by deciding which issues to focus on. In this case, the low scores for media effectiveness suggest that cybercrime prevention is not being adequately highlighted in mass media campaigns. The theory posits that if media outlets focused more on the connection between cybercrime prevention and self-reliance, it could raise awareness and encourage action among youth. However, the findings imply that the media is currently failing to set this agenda effectively, resulting in a perception gap among the youth regarding these critical issues. Thus, for mass

media to be more effective, they need to prioritize these topics and frame them in a way that resonates with young audiences.

Objective 3: Types of mass media are most frequently used by youth for learning about cybercrime prevention and entrepreneurship

Table 3 provides insights into the types of mass media most frequently used by youth for learning about cybercrime prevention and entrepreneurship. Television was found to be the most effective medium, with a high mean score of 4.41, indicating that respondents rely heavily on TV for information on these topics. Social media also received acceptance with a mean score of 3.64, though its reliability as a source of information appeared to be inconsistent among respondents. Online blogs and websites were moderately accepted, with a mean score of 3.29, showing that they are somewhat useful but not as popular as television or social media. Radio was the only medium rejected by respondents, with a mean score of 2.80, suggesting that it is seen as ineffective for disseminating information about cybercrime prevention and entrepreneurship. Overall, the findings suggest that while television and social media are perceived as strong channels for information dissemination, gaps remain,

especially in terms of radio's role and the reliability of social media.

Ogunleye (2022) agreed with these findings, as her study on cybercrime prevention through media advocacy identified television and social media as the most effective platforms for reaching youth. Ogunleye highlighted that television provides structured, reliable content that appeals to youth, while social media, though powerful in its reach, struggles with issues of content accuracy and credibility. This mirrors the current study's findings, where respondents expressed reliance on television and a mixed perception of social media. However, Abubakar and Iman (2021) contradict these findings by emphasizing the importance of radio in rural and underserved areas, suggesting that radio campaigns can be just as effective as other media when tailored properly, a view not reflected in this study's rejection of radio as a key medium.

Agenda Setting Theory is particularly relevant here. This theory suggests that the media does not tell people what to think alone, rather what to think about. In this context, the high scores for television and social media suggest that these platforms have succeeded in putting cybercrime prevention and entrepreneurship on the youth's agenda. However, the rejection of

radio indicates that this medium has not effectively set the agenda for these topics among youth. The gaps in the perception of social media's reliability may also point to issues with the framing of information on this platform, as it may lack the depth and credibility needed to shape public opinion consistently. Thus, while television and social media are shaping the youth's focus on these issues, their effectiveness could be enhanced by improving the reliability of content, especially on social media platforms.

5. Conclusion

The research conducted on "Conquering Cybercrime: The Place of Mass Media in Galvanizing the Youth Towards Self-Reliance" highlights the crucial role that mass media plays in shaping the attitudes and behaviors of young people in the face of growing cyber threats. The findings show that mass media campaigns have great potential to effectively raise awareness, inspire entrepreneurial initiatives, and provide important information for self-reliance. However, the study also points out significant gaps in media effectiveness, particularly in addressing the challenges of cybercrime and offering practical skills for youth empowerment. By leveraging the strengths of various media platforms, especially television and social media, and

actively promoting other underused channels, stakeholders can greatly enhance the impact of these campaigns. This approach not only equips young people with the knowledge and skills needed to navigate the digital world safely but also fosters a strong and self-reliant generation ready to tackle cybercrime and pursue entrepreneurial ventures with confidence.

Contribution to knowledge

This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge in terms of how the mass media can be used in controlling social vices in the society, particularly, cybercrime.

Ethical considerations

There is no conflict of interests whatsoever about this study. The data collected and presented in this study are original and all citations are appropriately sorted from original authors. Respondents were made to be aware of the fact that information provided would not be used against them in any way or by any means other than academic purpose. Also, respondents were intimated that their identities would not be published anywhere.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have, therefore, been provided based on these findings:

1. Mass media campaigns should be designed to engage youth on issues

related to cybercrime prevention and self-reliance. This includes creating content that is relatable, informative, and tailored to the interests of young audiences. By utilizing storytelling techniques and relatable scenarios, campaigns can resonate more with youth, encouraging them to adopt positive behaviors and pursue entrepreneurial opportunities.

2. Mass media platforms must enhance their educational content by providing practical skills and resources related to entrepreneurship and self-reliance. This could involve developing workshops, tutorials, and guides that equip youth with the necessary knowledge to start their own businesses or engage in self-reliant activities. Partnering with educational institutions and local businesses can help create valuable content that resonates with youth and fosters a culture of entrepreneurship.
3. To ensure that mass media campaigns are achieving their intended objectives, regular assessments and evaluations should be conducted. Feedback from the target audience can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of various media

channels and content types. These assessments can inform future campaigns, enabling continuous

improvement in messaging and outreach strategies.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTEREST

The authors declare no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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