African Journal of Science, and Technology Education (AJSTME). *12*(6). 111 - 119, Nov., 2026.
ISSN: 2251-0141 (Print), 2971-623 (Online) https://www.ajstme.com.ng

Social Media Celebrities' Lifestyles, Quick Success Syndrome and Cybercrime Involvement among Undergraduates in University of Cross River State

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated social media celebrities' lifestyles, quick success syndrome and cybercrime involvement among undergraduates in university of Cross River State, Nigeria. The study adopted a correlational research design. The population comprised 2,420 second-year (200-level) undergraduates, from which a sample of 243 students was determined using the Taro Yamane sample-size determination formula at a 0.061 (6.1%) level of precision. However, participants were selected using a convenience sampling technique, a non-probability sampling method. Data were collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire titled Social Media Celebrities' Lifestyles, Quick success syndrome and Cybercrime involvement Questionnaire (SMCLQSSCI). Instrument was validated by three experts. A pilot test involving 50 undergraduates at the University of Calabar produced Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients ranging from .71 to .74. Data were analysed using simple linear regression at the .05 level of significance. The findings revealed that social media celebrities' lifestyles ((R=.482, R^2=.232, F=72.858, p<.001)), quick success syndrome ((R=.512, R^2=.262, F=85.622, p<.001)), significantly predicted cybercrime involvement. The study concluded that social media celebrities' lifestyles and quick success syndrome were significant predictors of cybercrime involvement among undergraduates in the study area. The study recommended that university authorities, counsellors and relevant agencies should intensify digital literacy, value reorientation and counselling programmes to discourage the emulation of questionable online lifestyles and the pursuit of wealth through illegal means.

Keywords: social media celebrities' lifestyles, quick success syndrome, cybercrime involvement, undergraduates, public universities.

INTRODUCTION

Cybercrime has become an important social, economic and educational concern as digital technologies increasingly shape communication, financial transactions, learning and social interaction. Cybercrime broadly refers to unlawful activities in which computers, digital devices, networks or online platforms serve as tools, targets or environments for offending. Such activities include online fraud, identity theft, unauthorised access to digital accounts, phishing, impersonation and other forms of technology-enabled deception (Balogun et al., 2024). Although digital technologies provide undergraduates with opportunities for learning, communication and economic participation, they may also expose them to online environments in which criminal activities are promoted, normalised or carried out. In Nigeria, Agara et al. (2021), in a survey of 900 students in Cross River State, found that the use of Facebook, Instagram and Twitter was significantly associated with students' exposure to cybercrime. Their findings indicate that social media use deserves attention when investigating students' encounters with cybercrime, although exposure to cybercrime does not necessarily mean that a student participates in it.

The concern is not just that undergraduates are involved in social media; the concern is that they are potentially engaging in activities which are against the law and which are unethical in order to seek monetary reward, social validation and other personal outcomes. Undergraduates who are involved in cybercrime may impact not only on their education but also on their reputation, the integrity of their university and their future professional career. Balogun et al. (2024) further identified internet crime as a problem on campus as well as consequences, perceived by the participants, which included financial misappropriation, expulsion from university, social disgrace and criminal punishment. This research illustrates the need to explore cybercrime engagement as a problem that not only affects online interaction but also their educational and social life.

However, involvement in cybercrime should not be taken as an accepted fact of that class of people. It is observed that many students use the computer for legitimate reasons. The fact that there is cybercrime in the general computer environment does not necessarily imply that users are committers.

The central concern of this study is to examine whether social media celebrities' lifestyles and quick success syndrome are significantly associated with cybercrime involvement among undergraduates. This is important because involvement in cybercrime should not be used to label or stereotype all young people as delinquents. Rather, research should identify specific factors that may be associated with such involvement and provide evidence for appropriate preventive interventions. Accordingly, this study examines social media

celebrities' lifestyles and quick success syndrome as potential predictors of cybercrime involvement among 200-level undergraduates at the University of Cross River State. The study adopts a cross-sectional correlational survey design to establish the nature and statistical strength of the relationships among these variables.

Social media celebrities' lifestyles constitute the first predictor variable in this study. Social media celebrities are public figures who attract considerable attention and influence through their prominence, content and perceived status on digital media platforms. Their lifestyles are commonly portrayed through online displays of consumption, possessions, leisure activities, social interactions and personal achievements. Such portrayals may include luxury cars, designer clothing, exotic travel, expensive possessions and displays of wealth. However, these online portrayals do not necessarily provide evidence of the celebrities' actual financial circumstances or involvement in criminal activities.

In this study, the focus is on undergraduates' exposure to and emulation of the lifestyles portrayed by social media celebrities. This includes students' engagement with online displays of wealth and luxury, their admiration of such lifestyles and the extent to which they seek to imitate the consumption patterns and status symbols presented by these celebrities. Repeated exposure to such content may be associated with how some students view wealth, success and desirable lifestyles. Therefore, the study examines whether students' exposure to and emulation of social media celebrities' lifestyles are statistically associated with their involvement in cybercrime.

The relevance of celebrity lifestyles may be that such content might be seen by some students as a set of values and expectations that a student should adopt. Where wealth displays are admired and elicit social recognition online, some viewers may learn to equate wealth with achievement and the worth of an individual. Such a view is in line with the concern of

Udechukwu, Udengwu and Ojonta (2026) examined the relationship between social media use and get-rich-quick syndrome, drawing attention to the relevance of online displays of wealth and successful lifestyles to students. Their study provides a basis for examining how social media content may relate to undergraduates' attitudes towards wealth acquisition. However, their findings should not be interpreted as evidence that exposure to celebrity lifestyles leads to cybercrime involvement, since that was not the outcome addressed in their study.

The possible connection between exposure to social media celebrities' lifestyles and cybercrime involvement can also be examined through Social Comparison Theory and Strain Theory. Social Comparison Theory, proposed by Festinger (1954), explains how individuals evaluate themselves by comparing their circumstances and achievements with those of others. In this context, undergraduates who frequently encounter online displays of luxury and wealth may compare their financial circumstances with the lifestyles presented by social media celebrities. Such comparisons may produce admiration, dissatisfaction or pressure to attain similar material standards. However, admiration does not necessarily result in imitation, and exposure to luxury content may simply serve as entertainment.

Strain Theory, developed by Merton (1938), provides another perspective by explaining how pressure to achieve socially valued goals, particularly financial success, may encourage some individuals to consider illegitimate means when legitimate opportunities appear limited. Applied to this study, some undergraduates may respond to financial pressure by pursuing legitimate opportunities such as employment, entrepreneurship and academic development, while others may become attracted to unlawful shortcuts to wealth. This provides a possible theoretical explanation for examining the association between students' exposure to and emulation of celebrity lifestyles and cybercrime involvement. It does not establish that such exposure causes criminal behaviour.

Similarly, Ukam et al. (2024) reported that economic difficulties and peer pressure were among the factors associated with students' involvement in internet fraud. This finding suggests that financial and social circumstances may be relevant when examining cybercrime involvement among undergraduates. Nevertheless, the study's findings should be distinguished from the present research, which examines social media celebrities' lifestyles as a predictor of cybercrime involvement. Therefore, the present study does not assume that admiration of celebrities, exposure to luxury displays or aspirations for material success automatically make undergraduates involved in cybercrime.

The second predictor variable in this study is quick success syndrome. In this study, the term refers to an orientation towards acquiring wealth, material possessions and social status within a short period, with limited consideration for the time, effort and legitimate processes usually required to achieve financial success (Eze, 2015). It reflects a preference for immediate material rewards over gradual achievement and may be expressed through impatience with slow financial progress, excessive concern with material possessions and attraction to opportunities that promise quick financial gains (Onyido, 2018). The concept does not represent a clinical or psychological diagnosis. Rather, it describes an attitude towards wealth acquisition and the pursuit of material success.

The desire to improve one's financial position is not inherently problematic, nor is it limited to undergraduates. The concern of this study is whether a strong orientation towards rapid wealth acquisition is associated with cybercrime involvement among undergraduates (Ngozi, 2016). In particular, the study examines whether students who place greater emphasis on immediate financial success also report higher levels

of cybercrime involvement. This relationship is examined statistically and does not imply that every individual who desires rapid financial success engages in unlawful activities.

Quick success syndrome could have some relevance to the various types of offences committed over the internet, as most of them are packaged by offenders or their accomplices as a means of capturing money rapidly, at times with little work involved. An individual may develop a preference for immediate wealth and material rewards over the patience, discipline and sustained effort required for legitimate financial success. Such an attitude may encourage the pursuit of quick financial gains without adequate consideration of the consequences (Udechukwu et al., 2026; Ukam et al., 2024).

The relationship could also be explained by the way students understand the benefits versus the costs of engaging in cybercrime. If they prioritize fast and easy financial returns over the long-term consequences of illegal behaviour, some students may not fully appreciate the risks of prosecution, expulsion, reputational harm and interference with their studies. Balogun et al. (2024) found that students were aware of a range of consequences of cybercrime, including legal sanctions and loss of future prospects, but being conscious of the risks did not necessarily mean they chose not to participate, especially where the expected benefits appeared to outweigh the costs.

The possible relationship between quick success syndrome and cybercrime involvement can be explained through Rational Choice Theory, which suggests that individuals may consider the potential benefits and risks of an action before deciding whether to engage in it (Cornish & Clarke, 1986). From this perspective, some undergraduates who strongly desire rapid wealth acquisition may view cybercrime as an attractive means of obtaining money when they perceive its immediate rewards to outweigh the possible legal, social and personal consequences. However, the desire for quick wealth does not automatically lead to criminal behaviour, since individuals may pursue legitimate alternatives such as entrepreneurship, employment and other income-generating activities. Other factors, including peer influence, family background, moral development, access to technology and the availability of legitimate income opportunities, may also be associated with cybercrime involvement. Therefore, Rational Choice Theory provides a framework for examining the possible association between quick success syndrome and cybercrime involvement without assuming that the pursuit of wealth necessarily leads to criminal conduct.

Social media celebrities' lifestyles and quick success syndrome may be related, but they represent two distinct constructs in this study. Social media celebrities' lifestyles concern students' exposure to and emulation of the wealth, consumption patterns and social status portrayed by celebrities on digital platforms. In contrast, quick success syndrome refers to an individual's internal orientation towards acquiring wealth, material possessions and social recognition within a short period. While exposure to celebrity lifestyles may provide examples of the material success some students admire, the desire for rapid wealth acquisition may exist independently of social media exposure. Therefore, a student may admire celebrities' luxurious lifestyles without developing a strong desire for quick wealth, while another may have a strong preference for rapid financial success without being influenced by celebrities. Treating these variables as separate constructs allows the study to examine their individual relationships with cybercrime involvement among the sampled undergraduates.

However, celebrity lifestyles may give an example of the type of wealth to which these students respond, and quick success syndrome shows the need to respond to the associated credit status. Such an association is important because celebrity lifestyles do not necessarily require the desire for wealth immediately after exposure, and the rapid desire for popularity may be the same without social media exposure (Udechukwu et al. 2026; Ahmed et al. 2024).

Existing Nigerian studies have examined students' involvement in internet fraud, the prevalence of cybercrime among undergraduates, the effects of internet fraud on academic activities and the relationship between social media use and attitudes towards wealth acquisition. Although these studies provide useful evidence, some important issues remain insufficiently examined. In particular, there is a need to establish whether students' exposure to and emulation of the lifestyles portrayed by social media celebrities and their orientation towards rapid wealth acquisition are independently associated with cybercrime involvement. Examining these two predictors within the same study is important because they represent different but potentially related constructs. The first concerns students' exposure to and emulation of material success displayed on social media, while the second concerns their personal attitudes towards acquiring wealth and social status within a short period.

There is also an empirical gap concerning how these factors relate to cybercrime involvement among undergraduates in Nigerian public universities. Much of the existing discussion considers social media influence, material aspirations and internet fraud separately, making it difficult to determine the individual predictive contribution of each factor when examined within the same research context. Furthermore, the use of a common study population and measurement procedure provides an opportunity to compare the statistical relationships of the two predictors with cybercrime involvement.

The University of Cross River State provides a relevant institutional setting for this investigation because its undergraduates constitute a specific university population whose experiences with social media, material aspirations and cybercrime involvement can be examined empirically. Focusing on its 200-level

students also provides a defined population for the investigation, although the findings will be limited to the students sampled and should not be generalised to all undergraduates. The present study therefore seeks to address the identified empirical gap by examining social media celebrities' lifestyles and quick success syndrome as predictors of cybercrime involvement among 200-level undergraduates at the University of Cross River State.

Cybercrime involvement among undergraduates remains a concern in Nigeria because it poses risks to students' academic progress, reputation and future opportunities. For instance, Balogun, Abdulrahaman and Aka (2024), in a survey of 400 undergraduates at the University of Ilorin, found that 73% of the respondents perceived internet fraud to be prevalent among undergraduates, while 22% were unsure and 5% considered it not prevalent. Although these figures represent students' perceptions of prevalence rather than confirmed personal involvement, they indicate the extent to which internet fraud is recognised as a concern within the university environment. Similarly, Okunade and Makanjuola (2025), in a study involving 1,713 undergraduates in public universities in Southwest Nigeria, reported that 53.76% of the respondents fell within the high category of cybercrime involvement, while 31.82% fell within the moderate category and 14.42% within the low category. These findings provide further evidence of reported cybercrime involvement among university undergraduates in Nigeria.

Studies have linked undergraduate internet fraud to peer influence, economic pressures and the pursuit of financial gain (Ukam et al., 2024; Ahmed et al., 2024; Udechukwu et al., 2026). At the same time, social media exposes students to celebrities who display wealth, luxury and apparent success, potentially shaping their perceptions of achievement and material status. The desire to attain wealth quickly may further encourage some students to consider shortcuts to financial success, although these aspirations do not necessarily lead to criminal behaviour.

Despite the available evidence, the extent to which students' exposure to and emulation of social media celebrities' lifestyles and their quick success orientation are individually associated with cybercrime involvement requires further investigation. In particular, there is insufficient evidence from the present literature to establish these relationships among 200-level undergraduates at the University of Cross River State. This study therefore examines the two variables as potential predictors of cybercrime involvement among the sampled students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Celebrities who use social media frequently post photos, videos and narrative about their lives to demonstrate wealth, luxury and status. Such portrayals might influence students' views of what constitutes success and material success. When students admire their favorite celebrities' lifestyles, they may experience a pressure to emulate them without reflecting on their sources of wealth. Agara et al. (2021) on social media use and students' exposure to cybercrime among 900 students in Cross River State revealed that the students' use of Facebook, Instagram and Twitter exposed them to cybercrime related risks. This research provides local evidence of the importance of social media to cybercrime – but exposure does not necessarily imply participation.

Ahmed, Olley and Akpor (2024) examined Nigerian university students' everyday perceptions of social media, celebrity culture and behaviour at Edo State University, Uzairue. The researchers adopted a quantitative survey approach and administered online questionnaires through Google Forms to 378 students. Their findings showed that students had a high level of engagement with social media, with Facebook emerging as the preferred platform for following celebrities. The study also examined how engagement with celebrity content related to students' perceptions of themselves, other people and their everyday behaviour. These findings establish the relevance of celebrity culture in understanding the social media experiences of Nigerian undergraduates. However, the study did not specifically examine whether exposure to celebrity displays of wealth and luxury was associated with cybercrime involvement. This distinction provides a basis for the present study, which examines social media celebrities' lifestyles as a predictor of cybercrime involvement among 200-level undergraduates at the University of Cross River State.

Nkenchor (2025) researched on social media and get-rich-quick syndrome among 384 youths in Port Harcourt. The study found that social media representations of the "big man" lifestyle linked to preferences for wealth and instant gratification. While the study was on youths not specifically students involved in cybercrime, it could also be used to understand how celebrity-like displays on social media may affect the financial ambitions of students. A study by Atewolara-Odule, Olumuji and Lawal (2026) on social media representations of cybercrime among 397 students from some universities in Ogun State found that students were exposed to cybercrime-related content on social media, and that such representations could influence perceptions of cybercrime. This could be relevant because such representations may undermine the gravity of cybercrime in the minds of some students.

Akinroye and Lawal (2025) examined the relationship between media exposure, subjective norms and cybercrime-related internet behaviour among Nigerian undergraduates. The study adopted a quantitative survey design and administered structured questionnaires to 410 undergraduates selected through stratified sampling. Of the 410 questionnaires distributed, 393 were retrieved and analysed, representing a 95.9% response rate. The findings revealed a significant relationship between media portrayals of cybercrime, peer influence and students'

engagement with internet fraud. Specifically, sensational media portrayals and permissive peer norms were significant predictors of favourable attitudes towards cybercrime. Although this study establishes the relevance of media exposure and social norms in understanding cybercrime-related behaviour, it does not specifically examine students' exposure to and emulation of social media celebrities' lifestyles.

Ukam et al. (2024) studied the factors associated with undergraduate involvement in internet fraud and the impact on their academic activities in Nigeria. Their results demonstrated that peer pressure and deficits of moral and ethical guidance were associated with internet fraud, while suggesting that responses to wealth displays on the internet may be operating in conjunction with peer pressure and value systems.

The current literature thus indicates the need for future research to explore social media content, celebrity image, social norms, as well as cyber crime references. Few studies assesses the potential for a celebrity life-style as a separate predictor of real-life cyber crime involvement. Hence, the present study explores whether a celebrity life-style of social media celebrities significantly predicts cyber crime involvement among undergraduate students of the University of Cross River State.

Quick success syndrome: this is the craving for quick arrival at monetary, fame, without sufficiently respecting the virtue of hard work and patience. For undergraduates, this may translate to a craving for immediate gratification, which could make an undergrads to be lured into the unlawful acquisition of riches. Quick success syndrome is not synonymous with the expression craving for wealth and it does not mean that an individual who craves for wealth is automatically a criminal. Udechukwu, Udengwu and Ojonta (2026) examined social media exposure, youth culture and get-rich-quick syndrome among 203 undergraduates at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The researchers adopted a descriptive survey design, used a structured questionnaire and analysed the data using descriptive statistics and chi-square tests. Their findings revealed that 65.5% of the respondents had high daily exposure to social media, while 83.3% frequently encountered online content promoting quick wealth acquisition. Instagram and TikTok were the dominant platforms through which students encountered such content. The study also established a statistically significant relationship between exposure to quick-wealth content and get-rich-quick syndrome among the respondents, $\chi^2(2) = 42.216$, p less than .001. The authors further identified financial pressure, peer materialism and fear of missing out as factors associated with quick success orientation among the students. The findings are relevant to the present study because they demonstrate an association between social media exposure and students' orientation towards rapid wealth acquisition. However, Udechukwu et al. (2026) examined get-rich-quick syndrome rather than cybercrime involvement as the main outcome. The present study therefore extends the discussion by examining quick success syndrome alongside social media celebrities' lifestyles as predictors of cybercrime involvement among 200-level undergraduates at the University of Cross River State.

Nkenchor (2025) on 384 youths in Port Harcourt investigated social media and get-rich-quick syndrome among youths. The results linked materialistic Facebook displays to instant gratification and warped dreams of riches, which is relevant because students hoping to make easy dollars might fall for sinister opportunities when accepted causes move too slow.

Ekwochi et al. (2025) examined the causes, trends and social impact of cybercrime among youths in South Eastern Nigeria. The researchers adopted a descriptive survey design and collected questionnaire data from 100 students at the Federal University of Technology, Owerri. Their findings identified unemployment, peer influence, the quest for wealth or quick success, poor internet security and inadequate parental supervision as factors associated with cybercrime among youths. In particular, 70% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the quest for wealth and get-rich-quick syndrome contributed to cybercrime, while 80% associated peer pressure with the problem. Although these findings suggest that the desire for rapid wealth acquisition is perceived as a factor associated with cybercrime, the descriptive results do not establish quick success syndrome as an independent statistical predictor. The present study therefore extends the investigation by examining the predictive relationship between quick success syndrome and cybercrime involvement among 200-level undergraduates at the University of Cross River State.

The literature also links desire for quick-wealth to social media influence and youth cybercrime. But there is little concrete evidence to show that quick success syndrome solely predicts cybercrime among undergraduates of the University of Cross River State. The current study tested the influence of quick success syndrome in predicting cybercrime among undergraduates of the University of Cross River State.

Hypotheses

$H0_1$: Social media celebrities' lifestyles do not significantly predict cybercrime involvement among undergraduates in university of Cross River State.

$H0_2$: Quick success syndrome do not significantly predict cybercrime involvement among undergraduates in university of Cross River State.

METHODS

The study was conducted in University of Cross River State. The research adopted a correlation research design. The population comprised 2,420 second-year (200-level) students of the university during the 2024/2025 academic session (Academc Planning Unit 2025). The study focused on 200-level students. This

restriction was intended to ensure that the participants shared a relatively comparable stage of university experience. However, the findings are limited to students at this academic level and should not be generalised to undergraduates in other levels without further evidence. The sample size of 243 undergraduates was determined using the Taro Yamane sample-size determination formula at a precision level of 0.061 (6.1%) (Yamane, 1967). However, participants were selected using **a** convenience sampling technique, a non-probability sampling method. Students who were available and willing to participate during lecture periods in the selected faculties and departments were included in the study until the required sample size was obtained. This approach was adopted based on the accessibility and availability of the students during data collection.

Only 200-level students who were available and attended lectures during the data collection period were selected until the required sample size of 243 was reached. The selection of 200-level students was intended to focus the study on undergraduates at a relatively comparable stage of university education, with some experience of academic routines, course requirements and campus life. This helped reduce variations that could arise from differences in academic level and students' exposure to university experiences. However, restricting the study to 200-level students limits the generalisability of the findings to students in other academic levels, whose academic experiences and adjustment needs may differ.

The instrument used for data collection was a researcher-developed questionnaire titled Social Media Celebrities' Lifestyles, Quick Success Syndrome and Cybercrime Involvement Questionnaire (SMCLQSSCI). The questionnaire was designed to measure social media celebrities' lifestyles, quick success syndrome and cybercrime involvement among undergraduates. Items were developed in line with the research objectives, research questions and relevant literature on the study variables.

The questionnaire consisted of four sections. Section A elicited respondents' demographic information, while Sections B, C and D measured social media celebrities' lifestyles, quick success syndrome and cybercrime involvement, respectively. Section B contained 6 items on social media celebrities' lifestyles, Section C contained 6 items on quick success syndrome, while Section D contained 15 items on cybercrime involvement. The questionnaire adopted a 4 Likert response format. For example, responses were rated as (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree), with scores of (4, 3, 2 and 1), respectively. Positively and negatively worded items were scored appropriately. The total scores obtained from each section represented respondents' levels of the respective variables, with higher scores indicating higher levels of the measured construct. Cybercrime involvement was operationalised through respondents' self-reported participation in specified cyber-related activities. These activities included online impersonation, phishing, identity theft, unauthorised access to accounts, internet fraud or other activities. Respondents indicated their experiences or involvement through the response options provided.

The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by three experts from the University of Calabar. The validators comprised one expert in Measurement and Evaluation, one in Educational Psychology and one in Criminology. They examined the relevance, clarity, adequacy and appropriateness of the questionnaire items in measuring the study variables. Their corrections and recommendations were incorporated into the final version of the instrument before administration.

A trial test was conducted using 50 undergraduates at the University of Calabar who were not part of the main study. The responses obtained were analysed using Cronbach's Alpha reliability method to establish the internal consistency of the questionnaire scales. The coefficients ranged from .71 to .74, indicating varying levels of internal consistency across the three scales. The results were considered adequate for proceeding with the main study, although the scale with the lower coefficient was treated with caution.

The researcher, assisted by two trained research assistants, administered the questionnaires to the selected respondents. The research assistants were briefed on the purpose of the study, the administration procedure and the need to provide uniform instructions to respondents. The questionnaires were distributed to students who met the selection criteria and were available during the data collection period. Completed questionnaires were retrieved by the researcher and research assistants. All 243 distributed questionnaires were returned and found usable, representing a 100 per cent retrieval rate.

The data collected were coded and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages, means and standard deviations, were used to summarise respondents' demographic characteristics and responses to the questionnaire items. Simple linear regression analysis was used to answer the research questions and test the corresponding null hypotheses concerning the relationships between the independent variables and cybercrime involvement. Each independent variable was entered separately into the regression model to determine its predictive contribution to cybercrime involvement.

RESULTS

$H0_1$: Social media celebrities' lifestyles do not significantly predict cybercrime involvement among undergraduates in university of Cross River State.

To test this hypothesis, simple linear regression analysis was applied with social media celebrities' lifestyles as the independent variable and cybercrime involvement as the dependent variable. The results obtained from the

statistical analysis are summarized and presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1: **Regression of cybercrime involvement on social media celebrities' lifestyles (N=243)**

R-value = .482	R Square = .232	Adjusted R Square = .229		Std. Error = 2.29726	
Source of variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-ratio	p-value
Regression	384.5	1	384.5	72.858	.000
Residual	1271.85	241	5.277		
Total	1656.35	242			
Predictor variable	Unstandardized Coeff.		Standardized Coeff.	t-test	p-value
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	10.254	1.198		8.56	.000
Social media celebrities' lifestyles	0.452	0.053	0.482	8.536	.000

*Significant at .05 level (p<.05)

The results in Table 1 show that an R-value of .482 was obtained, indicating a moderate positive relationship between social media celebrities' lifestyles and cybercrime involvement among undergraduates in public universities in Cross River State. The R-square value of .232 indicates that approximately 23.2% of the variation in cybercrime involvement is explained by social media celebrities' lifestyles, while the remaining 76.8% is associated with other factors not included in the regression model. The adjusted R-square value of .229 represents the R-square adjusted for the number of predictors and sample size. Its closeness to the R-square value is expected because the model contains only one predictor. Furthermore, the F-value of 72.858 with a p-value less than .001 indicates that the regression model is statistically significant at the .05 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This suggests that social media celebrities' lifestyles are significantly associated with cybercrime involvement among undergraduates in the study area.

The regression constant (B = 10.254) represents the predicted level of cybercrime involvement when the score for social media celebrities' lifestyles is zero. The unstandardised regression coefficient (B = .452) indicates that a one-unit increase in the score for social media celebrities' lifestyles is associated with a 0.452-unit increase in the predicted cybercrime involvement score. The standardised regression coefficient (β = .482) indicates a positive association between social media celebrities' lifestyles and cybercrime involvement. The relationship was statistically significant, t(241) = 8.54, p less than .001. This suggests that undergraduates who reported greater exposure to or emulation of the lifestyles portrayed by social media celebrities also tended to report higher levels of cybercrime involvement. However, since the study adopted a cross-sectional correlational design, this finding does not establish a cause-and-effect relationship. It is also possible that students already involved in cybercrime may be more attracted to or more likely to emulate the lavish lifestyles portrayed by social media celebrities.

$H0_2$: Quick success syndrome do not significantly predict cybercrime involvement among undergraduates in university of Cross River State.

To test this hypothesis, simple linear regression analysis was applied with quick success syndrome as the independent variable and cybercrime involvement as the dependent variable. The results obtained from the statistical analysis are summarized and presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2: Regression of cybercrime involvement on quick success syndrome (N=243)

R-value = .512	R Square = .262		Adjusted R Square = .259	Std. Error = 2.25192	
Source of variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-ratio	p-value
Regression	434.202	1	434.202	85.622	.000
Residual	1222.148	241	5.071		
Total	1656.350	242			
Predictor variable	Unstandardized Coeff.		Standardized Coeff.	t-test	p-value
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	9.564	0.726		13.176	.000
Quick success	0.464	0.50	0.512	9.253	.000

syndrome				

*Significant at .05 level (p<.05)

The results in Table 2 show that an R-value of .512 was obtained, indicating a moderate positive relationship between quick success syndrome and cybercrime involvement among undergraduates in public universities in Cross River State. The R-square value of .262 indicates that approximately 26.2% of the variation in cybercrime involvement is statistically explained by quick success syndrome, while the remaining 73.8% is associated with other factors not included in the regression model. The adjusted R-square value of .259 represents the R-square adjusted for the number of predictors and sample size. Its closeness to the R-square value is expected because the model contains only one predictor.

The F-value of 85.622 indicates that the regression model is statistically significant, F(1, 241) = 85.622, p less than .001. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that quick success syndrome has a statistically significant relationship with cybercrime involvement among undergraduates in the study area.The regression constant (B = 9.564) represents the predicted cybercrime involvement score when the quick success syndrome score is zero. The unstandardised regression coefficient (B = .464) indicates that a one-unit increase in the quick success syndrome score is associated with a 0.464-unit increase in the predicted cybercrime involvement score. The standardised regression coefficient (β = .512) indicates a positive association between the two variables. This association was statistically significant, t(241) = 9.253, p less than .001. The finding suggests that undergraduates who reported higher quick success syndrome scores also tended to report higher cybercrime involvement scores. However, because the study used a cross-sectional correlational design, the result does not establish causation or determine the direction of the relationship.

Discussions

The first finding that social media celebrities' lifestyles predict cybercrime involvement among undergraduate students in university of Cross River State indicates that students' exposure and perception of celebrity lifestyles may be relevant to students' attitudes towards and cybercrime involvement. Displays of luxury, wealth and status on social media platforms may influence students' motivation and attitude towards material possessions and influence what they expect to achieve from life. Students' behaviours and attitudes towards material possessions and lifestyle may be affected by admiration for such perceived high lifestyles, particularly if the attention given to such celebrities through public commendation can motivate students to seek such status. Despite this, the finding does not imply a cause-effect relationship between the two variables. The finding is related to Agara et al. (2021) who found that the use of Facebook, Instagram and Twitter was significantly associated with students' exposure to cybercrime. Also Ahmed et al. (2024) who agreed that rapid desire for popularity may be the same without social media exposure. This could also be interpreted as a social comparison. For some students, when comparing themselves to the abundance of wealth which is evoked in images of celebrities, the pace and ease in which they should achieve is likely to be beyond their actual attainment. If valid ways of obtaining money are viewed as being too slow, the drive to achieve this status could lead to an interest in illegal avenues.

The second predictor that quick success syndrome is a predictor of cybercrime indicates that when students highly ascribe to wealth and social status accumulation quickly, they also highly subscribe to cybercrime involvement. Since students highly ascribe to immediate rewards, they may become impatient with the slow process that requires studying hard, learn a trade and get a job, and may be disposed to make some of the financial gains they need through 'quick and easy' means. But this does not mean that if every student ascribes to quick success, it would translate to cybercrime involvement; therefore, this result does not deny the existence of other predictors of cybercrime involvement. The result finding is in agreement Ukam et al. (2024) that investigated undergraduate involvement in internet fraud and its implications for academic pursuits in Nigeria. Results also support Ekwochi et al. (2025) who studied the rise, trends, and social impact of cyber crime among students in South Eastern Nigeria and found unemployment, peer pressure, and the desire for wealth and quick success among the predictors of cybercrime.

CONCLUSIONS

The study showed that social media celebrities' lifestyles were a significant predictor of cybercrime involvement among the 200-level undergraduates sampled at the University of Cross River State. This finding suggests that students' exposure to or emulation of the lifestyles portrayed by social media celebrities, particularly their display of wealth, luxury and social status, was positively associated with cybercrime involvement among the sampled undergraduates.

The study also revealed that quick success syndrome was a significant predictor of cybercrime involvement among the 200-level undergraduates sampled at the University of Cross River State. This implies that higher levels of quick success syndrome, reflected in the desire to acquire wealth and attain social status within a short period, were associated with higher levels of cybercrime involvement among the sampled students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. University management should organise digital literacy programmes to help students critically assess social media celebrities' lifestyles and

recognise misleading displays of wealth and success.

2. University counsellors should provide guidance that encourages realistic financial expectations, patience, ethical decision-making and long-term career planning among undergraduates.
3. The university management and relevant security agencies should strengthen cybercrime awareness and prevention programmes. These programmes should educate students on the legal, academic and social consequences of cybercrime involvement and encourage responsible use of digital platforms.
4. Lecturers and academic advisers should incorporate discussions on digital responsibility, financial ethics and legitimate wealth creation into relevant classroom activities and student development programmes. This could help students develop responsible attitudes towards money, online activities and social status.

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