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Article Review #2: Exploring the Psychological Profile of Cybercriminals

Relation of the Topic to Social Science Principles

The article by Trinh et al. (2025) examines cybercriminal behavior through a psychological and sociological lens, positioning cybercrime as a social phenomenon influenced by traits, environmental factors, and cultural context. This aligns directly with the principles of social science, which emphasize understanding human behavior, social systems, and societal-level patterns. By integrating psychological theory, criminology, and socio-cultural variables, the authors demonstrate how cybercrime cannot be understood solely as a technical problem; rather, it is rooted in human motivations, personality traits, and social structures. Their findings reinforce the idea that social science contributes essential tools for analyzing deviance, predicting behavior, and designing prevention strategies.

Research Questions, Hypotheses, and Variables

Trinh et al. (2025) conducted a systematic review rather than an empirical study; therefore, they did not test hypotheses directly. However, their review was guided by key research questions, including:

What psychological traits are most associated with cybercriminals?

How do these traits vary by age, type of cybercrime, and cultural background?

How can psychological insights improve cybercrime prevention and legal frameworks?

Because the study is a systematic review, there are no traditional independent or dependent variables. Instead, the authors synthesized variables reported in prior studies, such as narcissism, impulsivity, technical ability, motivation, socio-cultural background, and type of cybercrime committed. These variables help explain behavioral patterns across populations of cyber offenders.

Research Methods

The authors used a systematic review methodology following PRISMA guidelines, which is a rigorous and transparent process for identifying, screening, and evaluating research literature. Their search process included scanning 1,200 studies and applying inclusion and exclusion criteria, resulting in 45 studies selected for analysis (Trinh et al., 2025). This method ensures that the evidence synthesized is high-quality, relevant, and methodologically sound. Systematic reviews are widely used in social science because they reveal broad patterns across multiple studies rather than relying on a single dataset.

Types of Data and Analysis

The authors analyzed qualitative and quantitative findings from previous empirical studies. Data included psychological assessments, case studies, offender profiles, surveys, and law enforcement reports. Because the study was a review, the analysis emphasized comparison,

categorization, and thematic synthesis. Trinh et al. (2025) identified repeated themes such as narcissism, sensation-seeking, impulsivity, and high technical competence. They also distinguished between different categories of cybercriminals, showing that personality traits vary among hackers, fraudsters, and cyber-bullies. The analysis also highlighted gaps in current legal and preventative systems, especially regarding psychological factors that influence cybercrime.

Relation to Course Concepts

The article closely connects concepts covered in class PowerPoints, including routine activity theory, social learning theory, criminological profiling, and the role of socio-technical systems in crime. The emphasis on psychological traits such as impulsivity and narcissism aligns with criminological theories examining internal motivations for deviance. In addition, the authors' discussion of international cooperation and legal frameworks relates to PowerPoint material on global cyber threats, the challenges of digital jurisdiction, and cross-border policing. The study's focus on offender profiling also mirrors course modules addressing how law enforcement agencies categorize and predict criminal behavior using social science insights.

Relation to Challenges and Contributions for Marginalized Groups

Although the article does not directly foreground marginalized populations, its findings have implications for equality and justice. The authors note variations in cybercriminal behavior based on cultural background, suggesting that socio-economic and cultural disparities may influence pathways into cybercrime (Trinh et al., 2025). Marginalized groups, particularly those in under-resourced communities, may face higher exposure to online risks, technological inequalities, and

limited access to cybercrime prevention education. Additionally, policies that fail to consider cultural context may inadvertently disadvantage or mischaracterize individuals from certain populations. Understanding psychological and cultural factors helps prevent biased profiling and supports more equitable crime-prevention strategies.

Contributions of the Study to Society

This study offers valuable contributions to society by highlighting the importance of integrating psychological insights into cybercrime prevention, policy development, and legal frameworks. The authors argue that traditional approaches focusing solely on technology are inadequate (Trinh et al., 2025). Their findings support enhanced offender profiling, improved preventative education, and stronger international cooperation. The study underscores the need for legal and cybersecurity systems that recognize the human factors driving cybercriminal behavior. By providing a comprehensive analysis of research trends, the review helps policymakers, educators, and law enforcement agencies develop more effective and psychologically informed prevention strategies.

Conclusion

Overall, the article by Trinh et al. (2025) makes a significant contribution to understanding the psychological characteristics of cybercriminals and demonstrates how social science principles are essential in addressing cybercrime. Through its systematic review approach, the study synthesizes decades of research and offers insight into how traits such as narcissism, impulsivity, and technical skills intersect with socio-cultural factors. This work supports the development of

more effective prevention strategies and highlights the need for legal frameworks that incorporate psychological theory. The article is highly relevant to the study of cybercrime and provides a strong foundation for future research and policy efforts.

Reference

Trinh, D. T., Dinh, T. C. H., & Tran, T. N. K. (2025). Exploring the psychological profile of cybercriminals: A comprehensive review for improved cybercrime prevention. *International Journal of Cyber Criminology*, 19(1), 114–137. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.47661906>