

African Ethical Theories to Explain or Validate Information Policies

Chukwudebelu Izuchukwu V PhD

Corresponding author: Chukwudebelu I.V.,

E-mail: izuchukwudebelu@yahoo.com

Action Word Educational Services, Lagos, Nigeria

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Abstract: This paper aims to determine what ethical values and norms are of African origin that Africans can accept, adopt, and adapt to. Research has consistently demonstrated that Western ethical theories, particularly those related to information policies, do not align with the values of Africans, including Nigerians. Some traditional Africans accused the theories of being anti-African and encouraging cultural deracination. Consequently, this paper examines ethical values, proverbs, idioms, sayings, and norms that would form African-based theories that could validate or explain information policies. This study takes a holistic look at such values as a sense of communalism, a sense of respect for authorities and elders, a sense of positive human relations, a sense of slowness and carefulness, a sense of conspiracy, a sense of silence avoidance, a sense of being up and doing, and a sense of consequences. In summary, this study briefly examines significant issues that demand African-based information policies, including computer crime, plagiarism, and vendor client fraud, advanced information technology challenges, netiquette and intellectual property rights, societal ramifications, viruses, piracy, and hacking.

Keywords: ethical theories, information policies, communalism, plagiarism

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INTRODUCTION

Ethical theories are basically ethical principles. There are numerous ethical theories that are developed and oriented in the Western world. African culture and values may not always embrace these theories, as some of them contradict our beliefs. In other words, this study aims to explore African cultural values that could potentially serve as ethical theories to explain or validate information policies. Theories are a coherent group of general propositions that serve as explanation principles for a class of phenomena. In this paper, we will suggest Nigerian and African-based ethical values that can be productive and profitable for the formulation of information policies. While several foreign theories, such as deontology, teleology, virtue, and rights, have not adequately aided our information policy makers and owners, this work aims to propose African theories, derived from culture, norms, and values that Africans can understand, accept, and implement.

Explanation of Concepts

Ethics

Ethics is a system of moral principles and rules of conduct recognised with respect to a particular class of

human actions, culture, and dealing with values relating to the rightness and wrongness, goodness and badness of the motives and ends of such actions. Rawls (1971) agrees with this, as he equally saw ethics as a branch of moral philosophy that involves systematising, defending, and recommending concepts of right and wrong behaviour. He identifies the major areas of study in ethics as follows:

- Meta-ethics explores the theoretical significance and application of moral propositions, as well as the determination of their truth values, if any.
- Normative ethics is about the practical means of determining a moral course of action.
- Applied ethics focuses on achieving moral outcomes in particular situations.

Theory

Theory is the branch of science or art that deals with its methods as opposed to its practice. One could also define it as a specific understanding or perspective of a task, a framework of guidelines or principles, or a series of speculations or reflections. Hawking (2008) aligns with this perspective in his work, 'A Brief History of Time'. He posits that 'a theory is a viable theory if it satisfies two

requirements: it must accurately describe a large class of observations on the basis of a model that contains only a few arbitrary elements, and it must make definite predictions about the results of future observations.'

Information

Information refers to data that the message's recipient has interpreted, communicated, and understood. In summary, information refers to knowledge and understanding that the recipient can utilize, which alleviates uncertainty, possesses unexpected value, and imparts knowledge not previously known or predictable. It becomes information when it changes the user's action, decision, and behavior. According to Lucey (1987), management information systems—the concept of information in an organizational sense—are more complex and difficult than the frequent use of the word would suggest. The user determines whether a report or document contains information or just processed data. Information is a technical term that depends on who is holding what. A person's definition of information may differ from another's. It is the user who determines what is data or information.

Policy

A policy is a cause of action adopted and pursued by the government on behalf of its citizens. Opeke (2012) describes policy as a set of interrelated decisions made by a political actor or group of actors regarding the selection of goals or means of achieving them within a specified situation. Typically, we describe a policy as a principle or rule that guides decisions and achieves rational outcomes. The term is not normally used to denote what is actually done; it is typically referred to as either procedure or protocol. Policies are generally adopted by the board or senior governance body within an organization. Policies can assist in both subjective and objective decision-making. Contrarily, operational policies, such as password policies, aid in objective decision-making and can undergo objective testing.

Objectives

1. To examine African-based ethical values and form ethical theories from them that could validate information policies.
2. To prescribe principles or rules that are African-Nigerian-based that shall guide government and information policy makers in making decisions that shall be acceptable and adaptable to African-Nigerians.
3. To suggest African-Nigerian ethical values to information professionals that could be well understood, interpreted, and received by Nigerians, which shall be at home with them and not viewed as cultural deracination theories of the west.

4. To proffer Nigerian moral philosophy that involves concepts of right and wrong behaviour that shall help information policy formulators come up with ethical policies that are no threat to Nigerian cultures.

5. To propose Nigerian and African-based ethical values that shall be productive and profitable for the formulation of information ethical policies that shall serve as bailouts to foreign ethical theories such as deontology, teleology, virtue, and rights that have not helped much in curbing the menace of information property crimes.

6. To recommend to the government, security agencies, and information rights and privileges protectors the African sure ways of arresting information criminals and putting a stop to computer crime, plagiarism, vendor client fraud, e-fraud, piracy, and hacking, among others. Herbert Ogunde's information works remain intact and are considered a no-go area for information criminals due to his unique African approach to insurance

Overview of African Cultural and Ethical Values

1. African Communalism Sense
2. Respect for authorities and elders
3. Sense of Good Human Relations
4. Sense of Slowness and Carefulness
5. Sense of Conspiracy of Silence Avoidance
6. Sense of Being Up and Doing
7. Sense of Consequences

African Communalism Sense

Here, a popular African theory comes to mind to express the African sense of community. It says, 'Go the way that many people go; if you go alone, you will have reason to lament'. The African idea of security and its value depend on personal identification with and within the community. Communalism in Africa is a system that is both suprasensible (being above or beyond perception by the senses) and material in its terms of reference. Both are found in a society that Africans believe was godmade because it transcends the people who live in it now and man-made because it cannot be culturally understood without them. Therefore, the authentic Africans are known and identified within, by, and through their communities.

Africans greatly value the Nigerian Benin proverb 'Ero-rhioḱpa gbaro ghomo', which means 'A child is brought up not just by his parents but also by his whole community'. This proverb means that a child not only learns what his parents teach him, he also learns what he sees other people around him do or say. The proverb also means that when you see a child with excellent manners, you must credit not just his parents but also his community. Equally, if a child has bad manners, the blame should not go to his parents alone; it must also go to his community because they played a role in his

formation. Sociologists frequently explain the societal roots of aberrant conduct.

The community is the custodian of the individual; hence, he must go where the community goes. In another sense, the community offers the Africans psychological and ultimate security, as it gives its members both physical and ideological identity. In the African mentality, the community endures as an entity, whereas individuals, as individuals, come and go. As a result, Africans place a strong emphasis on community life and communalism as a living principle, with community identity as the basic ideology. Its goal is to create and present an individual as a community culture bearer. Culture is community property and must therefore be protected.

As a result, the philosophy behind African communalism ensures individual responsibility within communal ownership and relationships. According to an African adage, the prosperity of a single person does not make a town rich; rather, the prosperity of the town makes people rich. In other words, a person can only be truly safe in a safe community. Biko (1978) observed that poverty was a foreign concept in an African community. Only a specific season's unfavorable climate could truly affect the entire community. It was never considered repugnant to ask one's neighbours for help if one was struggling. In almost all instances, there was help between individuals, tribes, chiefs, and so on, even in spite of war.'

Respect for authorities and elders

In the words of Conton (1966), 'Africans generally have deep and ingrained respect for old age, and even when we can find nothing to admire in an old man, we will not easily forget that his grey hairs have earned him the right to courtesy and politenesses.' Africans naturally respect elders, but this respect can vary depending on what we admire in them. It is true that respect for elders starts within one's immediate family. This is why the Yoruba say 'Obileye', which means, 'Parents have dignity and respect.' Africans respect their elders for a variety of reasons. For example, they are believed to be the teachers and directors of the young. The Efik believe that the wisdom of their elders surpasses the power of amulets, signifying their ability to provide greater protection. In the same way, the Igbo say, 'He who listens to an elder is like one who consults an oracle'. People believe in the infallible truths of oracles, and they also believe in the truthfulness of elders, heeding their words and instructions to promote good behavior among the young.

A typical example of the practical moral effect of the elders' words is contained in this poem by Markwei (1979): 'In our little village, when elders are around, boys must not look at girls, and girls must not look at boys because the elders say, That is not good'. Further, the elders are taken to be the repository of communal wisdom, and therefore they are given leadership in the affairs of the people. One of the reasons for this is the proximity of the elders to their ancestors. And in the

African concept, 'Legitimate power lay in the office sanctioned by ancestral norms, not in the person, and the person lost his right to exact obedience once he abused that office.' But the elders themselves respect authority, hardly abuse it, and are often committed to the demands of their office. The respect given to the elders has a practical effect on the maintenance of custom and tradition.

The young are always looking forward to being elders, and they are often told that if a child respects an elder, he will be respected by the young when he becomes an elder. The care of the elderly, as an African institution, is situated within the family. It is so cherished and so organised that there is no need, in the African setting, for nursing homes for the elderly as they exist today in Europe and America. The idea of an old people's home and its introduction into Africa would lead to the abuse of the African sense of and respect for old age. The elderly are protected by a Yoruba ethical value, 'Ebi System' which means 'being my brother's keeper.' According to Onwubiko (1980), '... respect for elders also has a corresponding responsibility, on the part of the elders attached to it, and the reception of this respect is dependent on the execution of that responsibility; it is based on the reciprocal exercise of duties and rights, based on the old or young relationship.' The adult who does his duty demands this right.

In Igbo symbolism, the socio-political life, within the cultural context, is represented by a drum from which the elders must beat out the music and the pace at which the young must dance. If the elders beat, 'okoro eto', that means, 'May the young never mature'—the young naturally would begin to dance, 'anyi asoghi anya okemmadu', that means, 'we no longer respect the elders.'

But if the elders beat the normal music and, instead, the young dance: 'We no longer respect the elders', the elders automatically begin to beat: 'May the young never mature.' In another symbolism, the elder/young relationship is expressed in the gun/detonator complementarily. The Igbo say, 'Okemmadu wu egbe Okorobia wu igu. Ma igu adighi na egbe o naghiekwu okwu. Ma egbe adighi igu enweghi ebe o ga ano.' That is, the elder is the gun, and the young man is the bullet. If there is no bullet in the gun, it cannot fire or sound. If there is no gun, a bullet would have nowhere to rest, thus becoming useless. This symbolism is concerned with the complementary roles of the old and the young in the lives and affairs of the community.

A sense of good human relations

Life in the African community is based on the philosophy of live-and-let-live. This principle is based on the concept of the 'Clan vital' and applies to a concrete community. According to Onwubiko (1980), 'inter-community relationships realised in the interaction between individuals of different communities are different from the intra-community relationships based on

interpersonal relationships realised in a definite community among its members to express the practical traditional African concept of humane living'. Femesia (1979) sees humane living among African people as a concept that is defined as '...a way of life emphatically centred upon human interests and values; a mode of living evidently characterised by empathy and by consideration and compassion for human beings.' Relationships between individuals recognise their worth as human beings and not only what they possess or what can they do for each other.

However, these can come as secondary considerations, both in terms of reciprocity and in terms of the interpersonal relationship. People help one another without demanding immediate or exact equivalent remuneration. Everyone is mindful that each person has something to contribute to his or her welfare, sometime and somehow. A Hausa proverb illustrates this point clearly. It says, 'Friendship with the ferryman right from the dry season means that when the rains come, you will be the first to cross.' This proverb emphasises constancy in friendship. In it, the worth of the ferryman as a human being is not determined solely by what he can offer during the rains; hence, he must be befriended right from the dry season when his occupation is not in strict demand. The art of dialogue and conversation is a cherished value in African human relations. People freely discuss their problems and look for suggestions and solutions together. The unwillingness to talk to people about either private or public affairs can be interpreted as bad manners or a sign of enmity. Above all, Africans believe that those who discuss their affairs with others rarely run into difficulties or make mistakes in the execution of their plans.

According to the Gokana people of the Rivers State of Nigeria, 'Kola nen ea gbi bula gbo nen, na olo ba m tagan', which means: 'Anyone who seeks public opinion does not enter into trouble.' In the same way, the Igbo of Nigeria also say, 'Ome akara oha oghom anaghi agho ya', which means that he who tells people what he does never suffer mishap. A good human relationship based on interpersonal communication has always been emphasised in the African Community. Biko (1978) observed: 'Ours has always been a man-centred society. Westerners have on many occasions been surprised at the capacity we have for talking to each other, not for the sake of arriving at a particular conclusion but merely to enjoy the communication for its own sake. Intimacy is a term not exclusive to particular friends but applying to a whole group of people who find themselves together, whether through work or residential requirements'. But the discussions must respect individuals' sentiments; hence, conversations that may cause misgivings are avoided. That is why the Yoruba people say, 'The fingers of a man who has only nine are not counted in his presence.'

Hence, in an African community, everyone is accommodated. This African sense of accommodation accounts for why, 'In traditional African culture, the weak and the aged; the incurable, the helpless, and the sick were affectionately taken care of in the comforting family

atmosphere'. It is a system that ultimately rested and still rests on the philosophy of 'live and let live,' otherwise known as 'the eagle and kit' principle. This principle is, according to Onwubiko (1980), 'a principle that defines rights and duties, responsibilities, and obligations towards the less fortunate, those incapacitated in one way or another.' For instance, a man had the obligation to cater for the widows and orphans of his dead relatives. Failure to do this earns him strong public criticism, and as a result, it is difficult to find someone in the community without help. Therefore, no beggars existed!

Again, in many African communities, the killing of a kinsman, in contrast to caring for him, is not only a crime but also an abomination; capital punishment or expulsion from the community, which tantamounts to death, is approved. But if an outsider is killed, the offence takes on a different dimension and is viewed with a lesser degree of gravity. Hence, offences such as adultery, theft, and murder, among others, are judged not in themselves but as they affect or disrupt the peace of a particular community. This is where and how the African sense of community and human relations, when misplaced, promotes 'nepotism.' The African, therefore, should carry the ideals of his community into the wider world—another community. The values cherished in his community should enable him to know that the other man is his brother as a human being.

Therefore, the Igbo proverb, which says, 'Do not laugh at a distant boat being tossed by the waves; your brother may be in it', should now be: 'Don't laugh at a distant boat being tossed by the waves; a human being is in it.'

Sense of Slowness and Carefulness

Tiha ko va pa sisila: 'To run, you have to start slowly, then gain momentum until you are running fast.' This is a proverb by the Ikalanga people of Botswana. It means that to be successful in whatever you are doing, you have to be slow and careful. This proverb is meant to slow down people who want to hurry up and finish whatever they are doing, even prematurely. The proverb is similar to the Ndebele (Zimbabwe) one that says, 'You cannot walk before you crawl.' (Umuntu akasoze a hamba engaka ghaqi). Take one step at a time in whatever you do so that you do not get overwhelmed.

Sense of conspiracy of silence avoidance

A Nigerian Owerri norm, 'Ewu ebeghi akwa, o nwuo n'obu,' which, when translated, means 'A goat who does not cry will die in his sling!' This proverb means that if one has a problem, he or she must tell other people so that they can help him. If the person with a problem keeps quiet, he will not receive any help because no one will know that there is a problem. Imagine that if you are carrying a baby in a sling and the baby is quiet, you will assume that the baby is comfortable. It is when the baby

cries that you will try to adjust the sling to make it comfortable!

Sense of Being up and Doing

There is a Kenyan ethical value (among the Kikuyu) whose English translation is that you cannot expect a person to get you a wife and then to go ahead and have sex with her for you! In African cultures, usually a family member looked for a wife for their son. However, that is all they did; the son, after being handed the wife, had to do the rest himself. Ethics means that when people offer to help you, never expect them to do everything for you. The ethics are related to another Botswana cultural norm that says: Kgomo e ntshiwa mo seretseng fa e ithusa. The literal translation of this proverb is that you can only successfully remove a cow that is stuck in mud if it also helps you to take it out. When people are being helped, they should not just sit and expect those who are helping them to do everything; they should also get up and do something for themselves. Mosele wa pula o epiwa go sa le gale. This is a Botswana norm that means that if you want to dig a trench to hold water, dig it before the rains start. This proverb means that if you want to do something, plan ahead of time. Imagine that if you try to dig a trench while it is raining, the rain will keep on bringing in more mud where you are digging, and you will never finish. Your trench must already be there when the rain starts!

Sense of Consequences

A Nigerian Okija-Anambra custom, 'Onye nuru nwanyi nwere nwa, ga anu ya na nwa ya,' means that when a man marries a woman with a child, he should be prepared to carry her along with her child. Another Nigerian Bini cultural value is 'Okpia ghariokhuo nomwomo ne oghi vivbiere ba-ogho.' 'This means that a man who falls in love with a woman with a child will definitely go home with both her children'. You buy a cow with a calf; you have to take the calf with it so that it can suckle the milk! This proverb was meant to educate men that if they decide to marry women who have children from other relationships, they cannot, after the marriage, start refusing to take responsibility for such children because you must take a cow with its calf. 'In yaro ya jin iyaye Angulu Zai cishi.' This is another Hausa proverb that literally means that 'If a child does not listen to the teachings of his parents, he is going to end up being eaten by the vultures!' The proverb means that any child who does not listen to his parents always ends up in trouble with the outside world. For example, a child who refuses to listen to his parents might end up in prison because he refused to listen to good advice from his parents.

Recommendations

1. African Community Sense Theory

Thus, African communalism could serve as an ethical theory for Africans in information policy formulation. The cultural ethical concept known as African communalism, when adopted as a theory, shall undoubtedly send a signal to information property violators that the government that heads and leads its community shall go full lengths to protect the rights and properties of information and their owners. Further, this theory can equally mean that any individual rights or properties of information stolen or tampered with are also the community that the crime was committed against, for whatever affects the individual inadvertently affects the community. The government or information property protectors should see themselves as community values custodians that must not fold hands and watch their citizens fall victim to information rights thieves and violators.

This theory shall also assist individual information property and rights owners to have confidence in their communal heads, which in this context is the government, that their information properties are protected. Consequently, the government (communal heads) should enact strict policies with stronger consequences for the thieves or violators of information properties so as to ensure absolute compliance, thereby barring the criminals from looting the information rights and privileges of their kinsmen. This theory, when embedded in information ethics and policy, will ensure that an information property owner can rest assured that his labour of information creation will not be wasted by information hackers in his community.

2. Respect for Authority and Elders Theory

Accordingly, respect for authority and elder ethical values could aid Nigerian information ethics and policy formulators in coming up with African-based theories, which Nigerian information property rights owners will greatly benefit from. It is no gainsaying that Nigerians, irrespective of tribe and ethnicity, have commensurate regard and respect for authority and elders. In Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, Ijaw, and others, there are elders' forums that exercise enormous authority and influence over their followers. The likes of Arewa Forum, Egbe Omo Odua, Ohanaeze ndi Igbo, and Ijaw Elders Forum are not pushy when tribal or ethnic issues are in context. Anioma People's Forum was inaugurated on March 22, 2012, with Professor Pat Utomi as the arrowhead. The government and information policy makers therefore should live up to the expectations of the populace and equally see themselves as the authorities and elders of their people.

Most times, Nigerian followers scarcely respect

authority and elders because they are not leading good, exemplary lives worthy of respect. The case of the Nigerian Stock Exchange probe by the National Assembly quickly comes to mind. Mr. Herman Ihembe, a member of the House of Representatives and a 2005 Benue State University graduate who was the probe committee chairman, was alleged to have demanded a forty-four million naira bribe to fund the probe panel and a five million naira bribe for his personal aggrandizement. Miss Aruma Oteh, the Director General of the Nigerian Stock Exchange, a 1984 University of Nigeria Nsukka graduate of Computer Science with First Class honours, did not reserve any regard or respect for him by declaring the panel a 'Kangaroo Court.'

However, if the government and information policy formulators live up to standard, they shall not demand but outrightly command the respect of information thieves. When respect for authority and elders from an African perspective is enshrined in our national information policy, definitely information hackers shall respect the rights and properties of information owners. The onus lies on the government and information policy makers to take the position of authority and elders to the Nigerian people so that Nigerians will prove to them that respect for authority flows in their blood from birth.

3. Sense of Good Human Relations Theory

In line with the African sense of good human relations as observed by most African communities, a policy should be formulated on 'live and let live'. In a Nigerian setting, all ethnic nationalities attach great importance to human relations. Before the incursion of the colonial masters, who introduced human relations as part of a managerial arm or unit, Africans were already practicing human relations in a crude manner. A core Nigerian with a native upbringing knows what human relations is all about? Therefore, when a policy is made in this regard, Nigerians will definitely comply. Further, this policy shall address the evil of inhuman treatment being meted out to information property and rights owners by pirates and the like. When this policy is formulated and enforced, it will send a strong signal to information thieves that it is obligatory to attend to the information properties of their fellow countrymen with the same absolute regard and care as theirs.

It shall equally ensure that business as usual as regards information hacking, stealing, pirating, plagiarism, vendor-client hardware, and software fraud shall be a thing of the past. This policy shall posit that what is good for others to do unto you is equally good if you do it to them, thereby addressing and emphasising the philosophy of the 'live and let live' principle, otherwise known as 'the eagle-and-kit' principle. This principle is, according to Onwubiko (1980), 'a principle that defines rights and duties, responsibilities, and obligations towards the less fortunate, those incapacitated in one way or another.'

The policy shall also pressure the government (being the harbinger of our human relations institution) to

strongly protect the properties and rights of information owners. The policy will finally inculcate a friendship mentality in the owners, stealers, and protectors of information properties. A true friend protects the property of another and cannot bring harm to what his friend laboured to create or own. A friend also shall not look away or pretend not to see the damage being done to the information property of his friend.

4. Sense of Slowness and Carefulness Theory

Heretofore, a policy could be formulated from this ethical theory, which shall be geared towards getting information property and rights thieves to learn to wait for their turn so as to really break through without breaking down as it were. For example, Alaba International Market Traders, who are clear and unhidden information property and rights thieves, could hit as much as ten million naira in profit from a major pirated work by a foremost artist like Akon, P-Square, Tu-Face Idibia, Eddie Murphy, Kirk Franklyn, or Ron Kenoly. The policy shall further inculcate the attitude of waiting for your time, which means to be slow and careful to the average information property stealer. The policy shall altogether aid the information violators in being responsible in developing their information property at a pace that will not generate crises, in the sense that whatever any owner of information property has today, another can develop better tomorrow with the art of patience.

Also, the policy shall help the government, which has the security agencies at their command, to equally engage in diplomacy without making much ado in publicity of the penalties that await information rights and privileges thieves, yet not raise a finger at all against them. If the government takes slow and careful steps without hurrying to attack or arrest these offenders, they will cheaply get at them. We are aware that in Nigeria there is a lot of publicity noise from information-control and security agencies, yet much is not being achieved in dealing with information property thieves. The policy, therefore, shall guide the government to be more secretive in handling the matter rather than making noise, thereby sending the signal prematurely to these offenders, who will in turn strategize on how to beat the government and its ancillaries at it.

5. Sense of conspiracy of silence avoidance theory

Open mouth equals open destiny, while closed mouth equals closed destiny. This sense of openness is an African ethical value that encourages a child to be open to his parents or older siblings about whatever happens to him. In the traditional African setting, Nigeria included, a girl child is usually heavily indoctrinated to always be open to her mother as regards any molestation attempt on her. If this theory is inculcated into information policy, it will persuade and equally give confidence to an information property owner to cry out to security agencies whenever his information rights are violated or stolen.

Over time, information property and rights owners suffer and consequently die in silence because of the fear of what the information criminals could do and the corruption of the security agencies, which collect bribes from the criminals and let them off the hook. Sometime ago, Charles Oputa, aka Charlie Boy, took the Nigerian Television Authority to court for using his music track in one of their productions without his consent. This policy, when formulated, shall give information property owners a voice that cannot be ignored, regardless of the placement and influence of the information criminal.

6. Sense of Being up and Doing Theory

This theory addresses the lackadaisical attitude of information property owners and information property protectors. A policy should be formulated on this premise, which will inevitably make the aforementioned sit up. It is very obvious that both information property owners are too relaxed, thereby giving room to information criminals to have field days. This policy shall address the sit-down and look ineptitude of the information owner. Some information property owners do not register their rights with the appropriate government agencies to ensure protection. Some, even when registered, seldom use strategies to checkmate infiltration and violations of their information rights and privileges.

The government, on the other hand, which serves as information rights and privileges protectors, should equally rise to the task. A situation where information protection agents only put on ties and sit behind the desk in an air-conditioned office between Monday and Friday, waiting to collect salary at the end of the month, whereas the work they were assigned and paid to do suffers. A policy of this sort shall awaken the sleeping information rights protectors to be all out at doing their job by fishing out information offenders and criminals from their hideouts and meeting adequate discipline on them; equally constrain them to pay from their noses the demands of the information property owner due to the damages caused him.

7. Sense of Consequences Theory

The sense of consequences, which highlights cause and effect, is at home with African ethical values. This theory posits that every malady or crime is consequential, delay or distance notwithstanding. An average African fears shrines and earth goddesses because he has been taught that there will always be a nemesis. No wonder Nigerian politicians in the South East and other geopolitical zones take their political godsons to the highly dreaded Okija shrine to take oaths of allegiance and agree to share their loot. Herbert Ogunde's information properties have been very secure and protected, though they are long dead, because he insured them in an African way. Information criminals are wary of his works because they know that Orunmila, Sango, and others will come after them and destroy them without remedy.

Therefore, if a policy is formulated based on this theory, it will make all information property criminals aware that there is no hiding place for them. The policy shall further empower information owners, protectors, and policymakers to pursue and persecute information criminals in an African way, as it should. The policy shall definitely send signals of protection and security to information rights and privileges owners on the safety of their works, which none can infringe and go scot-free. The policy shall also hold information security and protection agencies responsible if information violators escape punishment. It shall equally make information policymakers, security agencies, and protectors of information ownership rights and privileges aware that plea bargains introduced by and for Nigerian corrupt politicians shall not come into play in this regard. Finally, the policy shall ensure that information property thieves are punished by the judiciary in spite of the game of delay by hired corrupt adjudicators, which leads to the eventual denial of justice as is obtainable in Nigerian courts.

Conclusion

As a result, there is an enormous range of ethical issues in information policy; some of these have been discussed in this article, but many are not. These can be broken down into a number of sub-headings, such as computer crime, plagiarism, and vendor client fraud, e-fraud, advanced information technology issues, netiquette and intellectual property rights, social implications, viruses, piracy, and hacking, among others. Some of these can be solved easily, while others may be very difficult to solve with the theoretical recommendations of this work. However, if the information policy makers could adopt the African theories as recommended in this article in the formulation of our national information policy, Nigerians who, from cradle to cradle, have been taught these ethical values reviewed and suggested in this study will definitely embrace them easier than western theories, which an average Nigerian has issues with. We as Nigerians are aware that an average Nigerian who goes to church regularly dreads Okija shrine, Orunmila, Sango, Amadi-Oha, and a host of others more than the bible in his hand. Western ethical theories that affirm gender equality cannot be accepted even by the elite class in Nigeria because no tribe accepts that a man and his wife are equal. Hence, the importance of the adoption of African-based ethical values and theories, as suggested in this paper, must not be overlooked.

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