

## Chapter One

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

The increasing dependence of our contemporary society (public sector employees in Lagos State inclusive) on computers and computer networks brings to mind the significance of ethical, social and policy challenges of the technology. How best can we handle the unique challenges presented by this innovation? Zwass (2003) declared: "Information technology offers potent tools that can serve to fulfill an individual's life, to further organizational goals, pursue national interest, or support environmentally sustainable regional development".

The ethical aspects of computing have gained increasing attention at the professional level of education in universities, but this has not actually been translated to work place practices. Thus, computer ethics should not be permitted to become mere moral indoctrination. Rose (2007) proposes that personal information is really a public good and should be treated as such.

How often we hear employees complain that their computer system had been infested with virus. They are not too sure of the source of this damage and the extent that their files and documents have been compromised. One needs to find out the categories of employees that are more vulnerable to this issue.

Frequently, third party vendors are engaged to troubleshoot systems for ministries, parastatals and agencies of Government without closed monitoring by the users. In

the process, the vendors are given unrestricted access to the organization database and documents.

Now, the current disposition for government is to get her ministries, parastatals and agencies on both local and wide area network. While this is a laudable development in terms of becoming information and communication technology driven state, the concern here is how secure is the network? What is the strength of the firewall provided by the platform? What is the recovery strategies put in place in the event of disaster on the network? How dependable is the backup infrastructures?

Another dimension of looking at the networking issues is in terms of performance of duty by staff. There ethical issues that will certainly result from this development. For instance, there will be increased collaboration among employees on the network as there will easy access to each other.

Furthermore, the influence of web2.0 on the performance of official task and the effects of collaboration using network infrastructure in the performance of our tasks and responsibilities among public office holders will be scrutinized. Thus, we will investigate how information technology products and services change the way public civil employees interacts with their society, and environment.

In addition, the thesis will be concerned with how information in the various databases are collected, the extend of protection accorded, and the frequent use of such databases without our permission or knowledge; and how information from different databases are combined to build a detailed picture of our political, medical, financial, legal, and personal affairs.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The deployment of information technology products and services in work place has implication for all stakeholders in the society; it is important to intimate users of the consequences of compromising the integrity of their otherwise confidential information. One needs to be able to recognize any form of treat to system validity and the statutory dimension.

## **1.3 Objectives of Research**

The objectives of this study are to:

- a. find out the categories of employees that are more venerable to ethical and social issues among public sector employees
- b. investigate the degree of concern to ethical and social issues among public sector employees in the performance of their duties.
- c. examine the inherent security, risks and compromise resulting from the use of information technology products and services in the public sector.
- d. discuss the appropriate safeguards and measures to curtail abuse of technology product and services in the public service.
- e. examine the compliance level of ethical code of conduct among IT professionals in the public sector.

Given the extant incidence of graft and inefficiency in the Nigerian public service, it becomes imperative to examine the ethical and social issues the usage of

information and technology products and services are impacting on the public services system in Nigeria in general and the Lagos state public service in particular.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

1. What is the relationship between the level of educational qualification of public service workers and their concern for ethical and social issues in the utilization of IT products and services?
2. What are the factors that influence the employees' concern for ethical and social issues in their work place as it relate to copyright infringement of software and file sharing of programmes and document.
3. What are the major premise for sharing information among employees over the internet
4. How do the employees handle the issues of hacking and network security in their networking environment
5. To what extend can the organization entrust their data storage and retrieval to a third party vendor

##### **1.4.1 Hypotheses**

H<sub>1</sub>1: There is no significant relationship between the level of educational attainment of employees and their concern for ethical issues in the utilization of IT products and services.

H<sub>1</sub>2: There is no significant relationship between the status of employees and their concern for ethical issues in the utilization of IT products and services.

H<sub>1</sub>3: There is no significant relationship between the gender of employees and their concern for ethical issues in the utilization of IT products and services.

H<sub>1</sub>4: There is no relationship between the level of educational qualification of employees and their involvement in accessing and forwarding of unsolicited mails on the network.

H<sub>1</sub>5: There is no significant relationship between the level of educational qualification of employees and their tendency to engage in information technology related fraud.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The research work will certainly be of emeses benefit to the employees in the Lagos State who would have opportunity of knowing some of the ethical and social implications of the use of information and communication technology as presented in this work. Also, the vendors and other third parties to Government stand to gain from this work as a stakeholder in the IT industry. In addition, ministries, parastatals

and agencies will be more informed on this core concept as they embrace the IT utilization.

#### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

This research work is targeted at Lagos State Public Sector. The choice of the state is influenced by the fact that of the 36 states in Nigeria, the state has engaged more than any other state in the installation and deployment of IT infrastructures. Also, the state has the highest number of public sector employees relative to other states in the nation.

#### **1.7 Limitations of the Study**

Government bureaucracy remains a major constraint to information gathering and validation in this research work. Other limitations are the poor state of archive, and record management system in the state.