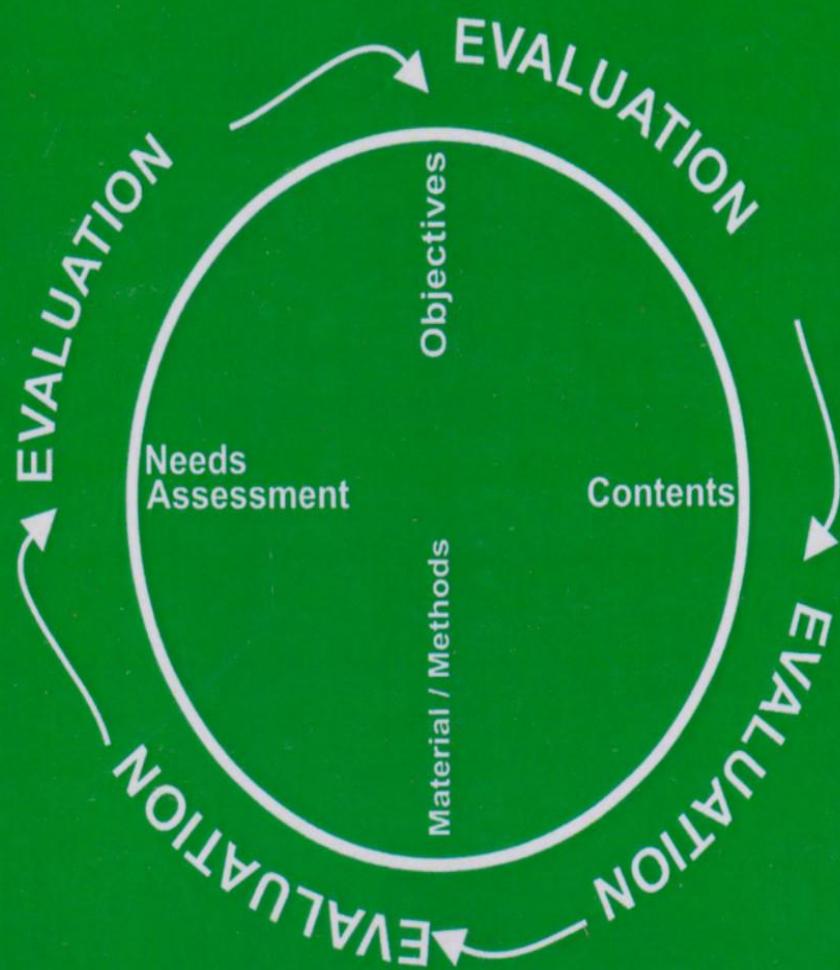


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## **CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES AND STUDENTS' ORIENTATIONS TOWARDS SECURITY RESPONSIBILITY AMONG UNDERGRADUATES IN AKWA IBOM STATE.**

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### ***Abstract***

The study was conducted to determine the relationship between conflict resolution strategies and students' orientations towards security responsibility among undergraduates in Akwa Ibom State. Correlational design was used for the study. The population for the study consisted of the entire undergraduate students higher institutions in Akwa Ibom State during 2022/2023 academic session. Sample size of 300 students was selected through multi-stage and simple random sampling technique for the study. The instrument used was Conflict Resolution Strategies and Students' Orientations towards Security Responsibility Questionnaire (CRSSOSRQ). Face validity and the internal consistency reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha formula and the average coefficients of .81 were obtained. The data collected was analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation to answer the research questions and the r-value was transposed to t-value to test the significant of the null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that social cohesion, cyber-security and social responsibility strategies have a high and significant relationship with students' orientations towards security responsibility among undergraduates in Akwa Ibom State. Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that conflict resolution strategies provide students with valuable tools to address and mitigate conflicts in a constructive manner, promoting communication, understanding, and collaboration. It is recommended, among others, that tertiary institutions should actively promote social cohesion initiatives that foster a sense of belonging and community among students; integrate security education into the curriculum or offer workshops and seminars that focus on security awareness, emergency response, and responsible

behaviour; and encourage peer-to-peer education by having students take an active role in educating their fellow students about security responsibilities and the importance of social cohesion. These initiatives can include group activities, team-building exercises, and events that encourage interaction and collaboration among students from diverse backgrounds.

**Keywords:** Conflict Resolution Strategies, Social Cohesion, Cyber-Security and Social Responsibility and Security Responsibility.

### **Introduction/Background of the Study**

Conflict is an inherent aspect of human interaction, and it permeates all levels of society, including educational institutions. Conflicts in educational settings can disrupt the learning environment, affect academic performance, and have lasting implications for students' personal and social development (Rahim, 2012; Thomas, 2013). In today's globalized world, where safety and security concerns are paramount, addressing conflicts effectively and fostering a sense of security responsibility among students is of utmost importance. As the youth of a nation, students hold the potential to drive positive change, contribute to peace-building efforts, and foster a society that is resilient in the face of conflicts. In the pursuit of national development and social harmony, the integration of conflict resolution skills among students has emerged as a crucial component.

The rapid proliferation of technology and the digitalization of various aspects of our lives have expanded the attack surface for cybercriminals. Cyber threats, including malware, phishing, data breaches, and ransom ware attacks, have become pervasive and increasingly sophisticated (Symantec, 2021). Individuals, whether as employees, consumers, or citizens, are pivotal in the overall cyber-security ecosystem. Their actions and orientations towards security responsibility significantly impact the security posture of organizations and the broader digital community.

Educational institutions serve as microcosms of society, reflecting its challenges and opportunities. Within these institutions, students often encounter diverse perspectives, values, and beliefs, which can lead to interpersonal conflicts (Riggio, 2010). Furthermore, concerns about safety and security in educational settings have grown in response to various incidents of violence, bullying, and harassment (Mayer, 2017; Skiba, Peterson & Williams, 2021). Thus, understanding how students perceive and respond to conflicts and their roles in promoting security is essential for creating safe, conducive learning environments.

At its core, the integration of conflict resolution strategies within the context of national building underscores a profound realization: the youth represent not just the future of a nation but also its present (Rosa, *et. al.*, 2019). Their actions, attitudes, and aptitude for conflict resolution have far-reaching consequences for the state's well-being, stability, and development. By considering the insights into social responsibility, one can gain a comprehensive understanding of why this integration is of utmost significance. Social responsibility is a dynamic and evolving concept, and its interpretation may vary across cultures, industries, and contexts. It emphasizes the importance of actions that go beyond self-interest and contribute to the greater good of society. Organizations and individuals are increasingly recognizing the value of social responsibility in building trust, reputation, and long-term sustainability.

Security in educational settings has gained prominence due to concerns related to various forms of threats and risks. These include incidents of violence, bullying, harassment, cyberbullying, and unauthorized access to information (Brown, 2016; Randa, Mahdy, Hassan & Soliman, 2021). Schools and universities are not immune to such challenges, and ensuring the security of students, faculty, and staff has become a paramount concern.

In an increasingly interconnected and complex world, the concept of security extends beyond traditional notions of physical safety to encompass broader dimensions, including cyber-security, social cohesion, social responsibility and personal well-being. Within educational contexts, students' orientation towards security responsibility plays a vital role in ensuring safe and conducive learning environments (Williams & Davis, 2011). This orientation reflects students' awareness of security issues, their willingness to take proactive measures, and their sense of responsibility in addressing security-related challenges. This study is poised at reviewing some key variables on conflict resolution strategies such as cyber-security, social cohesion and social responsibility their influence on students' orientation towards security responsibility.

### **Social Cohesion**

People are influenced by their social networks and may adopt security-conscious behaviours when these behaviours are endorsed by their peers. Social cohesion is a multifaceted concept encompassing various dimensions such as social bonds, trust, social networks, and a shared sense of identity (Putnam, 2000). High levels of social cohesion are associated with greater cooperation, willingness to assist others, and a heightened sense of belonging (Chandola,

Meltzer & Jenkins, 2018). Social cohesion is seen as the degree of connectedness and solidarity within a community or society, which plays a pivotal role in fostering collective responsibility, particularly in the realm of security. This literature review explores the interplay between social cohesion and individuals' orientations towards security responsibility, shedding light on how a cohesive social fabric influences people's awareness, attitudes, and actions regarding security.

Social cohesion is closely linked to trust and cooperation among community members (Putnam, 2000), and facilitates the flow of information within socially cohesive environments, communities, individuals and are more likely to share security-related information and be aware of potential threats (Kawachi & Berkman, 2020). In close-knit communities, individuals are more likely to take proactive measures and engage in actions that contribute to the security and well-being of all members. Social cohesion fosters a sense of collective responsibility for security (Chandola, *et. al.*, 2018). This mechanism can help prevent security-related disputes from escalating into more significant conflicts. Social cohesion is a crucial factor influencing individuals' orientations towards security responsibility. Cohesive communities tend to exhibit higher levels of trust, cooperation, awareness, and collective action, all of which contribute to a heightened sense of security responsibility. Understanding this relationship can inform policies and interventions aimed at promoting both social cohesion and security consciousness within communities.

## **Cyber-security**

In today's digitally driven world, cyber-security is of paramount importance. With the increasing frequency and sophistication of cyber threats, individuals and organizations are faced with the challenge of safeguarding their digital assets and sensitive information. Cyber-security, encompassing the protection of digital systems, networks, and data from cyber threats, is a critical concern in today's interconnected world. This literature review explores the relationship between cyber-security and individuals' orientations towards security responsibility, examining how awareness, attitudes, and actions related to cyber-security are influenced by factors such as education, organizational culture, and individual behaviours. Effective awareness campaigns and communication efforts are essential in promoting a sense of security responsibility (Lai, Liu & Li, 2015). When individuals are informed about cyber-security risks and their role in mitigating them, they are more likely to take security seriously.

Cyber-security education and an individual's sense of security responsibility provide individuals with knowledge about threats, vulnerabilities, and safe online behaviours enhance their ability to contribute to security. When people perceive threats as high, they are more inclined to engage in protective actions particularly when self-efficacy, or an individual's belief in their ability to perform security-related tasks (Bulgurcu, Cavusoglu & Benbasat, 2010). These individuals feel confident in their cyber-security skills, and become more likely to take proactive measures. Students play a pivotal role in the cyber-security landscape of educational institutions. They are both end-users of digital systems and potential vectors for cyber threats. Students' orientations towards security responsibility are crucial in safeguarding educational data, preserving the integrity of academic processes, and promoting a culture of cyber-security (Hodges, 2018).

### **Social Responsibility**

Social responsibility is a fundamental concept in contemporary society, emphasizing the ethical and moral obligations of individuals and organizations to contribute positively to their communities and address societal issues. The digital age has transformed the way individuals interact, learn, and conduct their daily activities. Educational institutions, like other sectors, have become heavily reliant on technology, with digital systems and data playing a central role in academic processes (Selwyn, 2016). Social responsibility is a broad ethical and moral concept that refers to an individual's or organization's obligation to act in ways that benefit society as a whole. It implies a duty to consider the impact of one's actions on the well-being of others and to make choices that contribute positively to the broader community, environment, and society at large. It requires honesty, integrity, and fairness in dealings with others; minimizing negative impacts on the environment and actively working to protect and preserve natural resources (Carroll & Shabana, 2010); philanthropic activities, volunteerism, and community development initiatives; taking responsibility for one's actions and their consequences; adhering to laws and regulations that promote the common good and protect the rights and well-being of individuals and communities; create value for all stakeholders rather than focusing solely on profit (Crane & Matten, 2016); consider the long-term consequences of their actions on society and the environmental sustainability among others.

Social responsibility is not limited to any specific sector or group; it applies to individuals, businesses, governments, and other organizations. The concept acknowledges that we all share a collective responsibility for the well-

being of our communities and the planet. It encourages actions that go beyond self-interest and contribute to the greater good of all. Conflict resolution strategies are critical tools in managing disputes and fostering positive relationships. Conflict resolution strategies are approaches and techniques used to address and resolve conflicts or disputes between individuals, groups, or organizations. These strategies aim to find mutually acceptable solutions to conflicts, reduce tension, and promote cooperation. Research suggests that students who possess effective conflict resolution skills are better equipped to navigate the challenges of their academic and personal lives (Johnson & Johnson, 1994; Rahim, 2012).

As digital technologies, social cohesion and social responsibility continue to permeate education, understanding how students' orientations towards security responsibility align with their sense of responsibility is critical. This study seeks to contribute to the knowledge base by exploring the factors that influence students' attitudes and behaviours within the context of social responsibility, social cohesion and cyber-security ultimately providing insights to enhance security practices in educational institutions and promote responsible citizenship. While there is a growing body of literature on security in educational settings, however, little is known about the extent to which students are aware of and employs these strategies or how their orientations towards security responsibility influence their conflict resolution approaches.

Understanding these dynamics is crucial for educators, policymakers, and school administrators seeking to create safe and inclusive learning environments where students can thrive academically and personally. By identifying effective strategies for conflict resolution and promoting a sense of security responsibility among students, educational institutions can contribute to the overall well-being and success of their students and foster a culture of peace and cooperation.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study seeks to explore the relationship between conflict resolution strategies and students' orientations towards security responsibility among undergraduates in Akwa Ibom State. Specifically, the study sought to:

- i. Determine the relationship between social cohesion strategy and students' orientations towards security responsibility among undergraduates in Akwa Ibom State.
- ii. Determine the relationship between cyber-security strategy and students' orientations towards security responsibility among undergraduates in

Akwa Ibom State.

iii. Determine the relationship between social responsibility strategy and students' orientations towards security responsibility among undergraduates in Akwa Ibom State.

### **Research Questions**

To guide the researcher to achieve the earlier stated research objectives, the following research questions were posed.

- i. What is the relationship between social cohesion strategy and students' orientations towards security responsibility among undergraduates in Akwa Ibom State?
- ii. What is the relationship between cyber-security strategy and students' orientations towards security responsibility among undergraduates in Akwa Ibom State?
- iii. What is the relationship between social responsibility strategy and students' orientations towards security responsibility among undergraduates in Akwa Ibom State?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study

- i. There is no significant relationship between social cohesion strategy and students' orientations towards security responsibility among undergraduates in Akwa Ibom State.
- ii. There is no significant relationship between cyber-security strategy and students' orientations towards security responsibility among undergraduates in Akwa Ibom State.
- iii. There is no significant relationship between social responsibility strategy and students' orientations towards security responsibility among undergraduates in Akwa Ibom State.

### **Significance of the Study**

The findings will provide valuable insights into the development of educational programs and policies aimed at enhancing conflict resolution skills and promoting security consciousness among students. Conflict resolution strategies teach students valuable interpersonal skills, including communication, active listening, empathy, and compromise. The findings will promote a culture of respect and tolerance, conflict resolution strategies that can help reduce instances of bullying, harassment, and discrimination. The findings will encourage students to think critically and analyze different perspectives and

solutions. This skill is transferable to academic coursework and prepares students for complex problem-solving tasks.

### **Research Methods**

The research design adopted for this study was correlational research design in which questionnaire was used for data collection. According to Neuman (2000), correlational research design is the measurement of two or more factors to determine or estimate the relationship to which the values for the factors are related or changed in an identifiable pattern. The area of study is the Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria. The study is delimited to the higher institutions namely: University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State University, College of Education, Akwa Ibom state Polytechnic and Federal Polytechnic. Undergraduate students from these institutions were used for the study.

The population of the study comprises of all the entire undergraduate students for 2022/2023 academic session. Out of which, 60 students from each of the higher institutions were selected through multi-stage and simple random sampling technique to a sample size of 300 students. A researcher-developed instrument namely Conflict Resolution Strategies and Students' Orientations towards Security Responsibility Questionnaire (CRSSOSRQ) was used. The CRSSOSRQ was face validated by three validators. Cronbach Alpha formula was used to determine the internal consistency reliability where the average reliability coefficient stood at .81. The data collected was analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation to answer the research questions and the PPMC was transposed to t-value to test the significant of the null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance.

### **Data Analysis and Results**

Research questions are answered alongside testing of hypotheses

#### **Testing of Research Hypotheses**

##### **Null Hypothesis 1**

There is no significant relationship between social cohesion strategy and students' orientations towards security responsibility among undergraduates in Akwa Ibom State.

**Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the relationship between social cohesion and students' orientations towards security responsibility.**

Variables	$\Sigma x$	$\Sigma x^2$	$\Sigma xy$	r-cal	t-cal	Decision
	$\Sigma y$	$\Sigma y^2$				
Social Cohesion Strategy (X)	2554	33674	72702	0.75*	19.57*	Rejected
Students' Security Responsibility (Y)	5683	127779				

\*=Significant at 0.05 alpha level; df = 298; r-value = 0.75; N = 300; r-crit = .088; t-crit = 1.96

Result in Table 1 shows that the calculated r-value is 0.75. This indicates a high and positive relationship between social cohesion strategy and students' orientations towards security responsibility among tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State. Also, the calculated r-value of 0.75 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.08 at 0.05 alpha level of significance with 298 degrees of freedom. Also, calculated t-value of 19.57 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 at 0.05 alpha level of significance with 298 degrees of freedom. The null hypothesis that had predicted no significant relationship between social cohesion strategy and students' orientations towards security responsibility among undergraduates in Akwa Ibom State is rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between social cohesion strategy and students' orientations towards security responsibility among undergraduates in Akwa Ibom State. This could be inferred that social cohesion strategy influence students' orientations towards security responsibility among undergraduates in Akwa Ibom State.

## Null Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between cyber-security strategy and students' orientations towards security responsibility among undergraduates in Akwa Ibom State.

**Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the relationship between cyber-security and students' orientations towards security responsibility.**

Variables	$\Sigma x$	$\Sigma x^2$	$\Sigma xy$	r-cal	t-cal	Decision
	$\Sigma y$	$\Sigma y^2$				
Cyber-Security Strategy (X)	2471	31871	71825	0.69*	16.45*	Rejected
Students' Security Responsibility (Y)	5683	127779				

\*=Significant at 0.05 alpha level; df = 298; N = 300; r-value = 0.69; r-crit = .088; t-crit = 1.96

Result in Table 2 shows that the calculated r-value is 0.69. This indicates a high and positive relationship between cyber-security strategy and students' orientations towards security responsibility among tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State. Also, the calculated r-value of 0.69 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.08 at 0.05 alpha level of significance with 298 degrees of freedom. Also, calculated t-value of 16.45 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 at 0.05 alpha level of significance with 298 degrees of freedom. The null hypothesis that had

predicted no significant relationship between cyber-security strategy and students' orientations towards security responsibility among undergraduates in Akwa Ibom State is rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between cyber-security strategy and students' orientations towards security responsibility among undergraduates in Akwa Ibom State. This could be inferred that cyber-security strategy influence students' orientations towards security responsibility among undergraduates in Akwa Ibom State.

**Null Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant relationship between social responsibility strategy and students' orientations towards security responsibility among undergraduates in Akwa Ibom State.

**Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the relationship between social responsibility and students' orientations towards security responsibility.**

Variables	$\Sigma x$	$\Sigma x^2$	$\Sigma xy$	r-cal	t-cal	Decision
	$\Sigma y$	$\Sigma y^2$				
Social Responsibility Strategy (X)	2583	34469	73398	0.72*	17.91*	Rejected
Students' Security Responsibility (Y)	5683	127779				

\*=Significant at 0.05 alpha level; df = 298; N = 300; r-value = 0.72; r-crit = 0.088; t-crit = 1.96

Result in Table 3 shows that the calculated r-value is 0.72. This indicates a high and positive relationship between social responsibility strategy and students' orientations towards security responsibility among tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State. Also, the calculated r-value of 0.69 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.08 at 0.05 alpha level of significance with 298 degrees of freedom. Also, calculated t-value of 17.91 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 at 0.05 alpha level of significance with 298 degrees of freedom. The null hypothesis that had predicted no significant relationship between social responsibility strategy and students' orientations towards security responsibility among undergraduates in Akwa Ibom State is rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between social responsibility strategy and students' orientations towards security responsibility among undergraduates in Akwa Ibom State. This could be inferred that social responsibility strategy influence students' orientations towards security responsibility among undergraduates in Akwa Ibom State.

## Discussion of Findings

The result of the investigation in research question and hypothesis one showed a high and significant relationship between social cohesion strategy and students' orientations towards security responsibility among undergraduates in

Akwa Ibom State. The outcome could be as the result of the fact that high levels of social cohesion are associated with greater cooperation, willingness to assist others, and a heightened sense of belonging. This finding agree with an earlier research carried out by Chandola, *et.al.*, (2018) who stated that in close-knit communities, individuals are more likely to take proactive measures and engage in actions that contribute to the security and well-being of all members. This implies that social cohesion fosters a sense of collective responsibility for security.

The result of the investigation in research question and hypothesis two revealed a high and significant relationship between cyber-security strategy and students' orientations towards security responsibility among undergraduates in Akwa Ibom State. The outcome could be as the result of the fact that when individuals are informed about cyber-security risks and their role in mitigating them, they are more likely to take security seriously. This finding agrees with the earlier research carried out by Bulgurcu, *et. al.*, (2010) asserted that when people perceive threats as high, they are more inclined to engage in protective actions particularly when self-efficacy, or an individual's belief in their ability to perform security-related tasks. This implies that continuous development of support tools and structures to help students recognise, understand and articulate the skills they develop through their participation in work experience and co-curricular activities would boost their enterprise skills.

The result of the investigation in research question and hypothesis three revealed a high and significant relationship between social responsibility strategy and students' orientations towards security responsibility among undergraduates in Akwa Ibom State. The outcome could be as the result of the fact social responsibility emphasized the ethical and moral obligations of individuals and organizations to contribute positively to their communities and address societal issues. This finding agrees with the earlier research carried out by Crane & Matten, 2016) who asserted that adhering to laws and regulations promote the common good and protect the rights and well-being of individuals and communities, and as well create value for all stakeholders rather than focusing solely on profit. This implies social responsibility is not limited to any specific sector or group; it applies to individuals, businesses, governments, and other organizations.

## Conclusion

Conflict resolution strategies and students' orientation towards security responsibility are vital aspects of fostering a safe and harmonious environment

within educational institutions. Conflict resolution strategies provide students with valuable tools to address and mitigate conflicts in a constructive manner, promoting communication, understanding, and collaboration. By teaching conflict resolution skills, educational institutions empower students to navigate disagreements effectively, thus fostering a more peaceful and inclusive learning environment. The study revealed that conflict resolution strategies relate significantly with students' orientation towards security responsibility in the higher educational institutions.

Furthermore, students' orientation towards security responsibility is paramount in ensuring the safety and well-being of everyone on campus. When students are educated about their role in maintaining security, they become active participants in the collective effort to prevent and respond to security threats. This orientation not only enhances safety but also cultivates a sense of community and shared responsibility among students.

## **Recommendations**

On the basis of the findings of the study, it is recommended as follows:

1. To create a truly secure and harmonious educational environment, it is essential for institutions to incorporate conflict resolution training and emphasize security responsibility as integral components of their educational programs. By doing so, they not only equip students with valuable life skills but also contribute to the development of responsible and engaged citizens who can positively impact society beyond the classroom. In this way, conflict resolution and security responsibility become cornerstones in the foundation of a safer and more harmonious educational community.
2. Tertiary institutions should actively promote social cohesion initiatives that foster a sense of belonging and community among students; integrate security education into the curriculum or offer workshops and seminars that focus on security awareness, emergency response, and responsible behaviour; and encourage peer-to-peer education by having students take an active role in educating their fellow students about security responsibilities and the importance of social cohesion. These initiatives can include group activities, team-building exercises, and events that encourage interaction and collaboration among students from diverse backgrounds.
3. Incorporate cyber-security education into the curriculum for all

undergraduates, regardless of their major. Encourage the formation of cyber-security clubs or student organizations where interested students can further their knowledge and collaborate on cyber-security projects. Also, host workshops, seminars, and training sessions on various aspects of cyber-security, such as password management, data protection, safe online practices, and recognizing phishing attempts.

4. The institutions should integrate social responsibility principles into security awareness and training programs; develop and promote community engagement programs that encourage students to take an active role in creating a secure campus environment; and establish or support social initiatives that have a security component, such as campaigns against cyberbullying, online harassment, or identity theft. These initiatives can promote responsible online behaviour and security awareness.

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