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Original Research Report

Lecturers' and Students' Perception on Role of Social Support and Psychological First Aid in Assisting Financial Fraud Victims in South-East, Nigeria

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Abstract: The study ascertained the perception of lecturers and students on the role of social support and psychological first aid in assisting financial fraud victims in South East Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The study was carried out in three Universities in the South East, Nigeria: the University of Nigeria, Nsukka; Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka; and Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. The population comprises of 135 students and 52 lecturers in Home Economics programme of the three Universities, making a total of 187 respondents. The entire population is used as the sample of the study because of the manageable size. A 32-item Questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The instrument is validated by three experts. Data collected is analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer research questions. Decision on research questions is taken based on real limits of numbers. For the test of significance, the probability (p) value is used in comparison with the alpha value of 0.05, and at 90 degree of freedom (df). The study found that social support and psychological first aid can be used to help financial fraud victims by reaching out to them to help them cope with stress and psychological trauma associated with loss of properties. The study recommended that government at all levels should establish social support and psychological first aid units that will help to cater for the emotional, psychological and other needs of financial fraud victims in order to enable them recover efficiently.

Keywords: Financial Fraud, Fraud Victims, Psychological First Aid, Social Support

1. Introduction

Financial frauds are fast becoming common nomenclature around the globe especially in Nigeria. As the scope of fraudulent activities is increasing, to deal with such challenges is becoming so difficult for many business administration and major government of the world. Elumaro and Obamuyi, (2018) defined fraud as the act of gaining a dishonest advantage, often financial, over another person. Fraud entails the act of deliberate deception which results to financial advantage and personal gain. Osmond, Donald, and Akamike, (2023) explains that financial fraud occurs when individuals deprives victims of their hard earned money, capital, and harms their financial health through deception, misleading and other illegal practices. Tade, and Adeniyi, (2017) stated that financial fraud happens when individuals deceive, misrepresent, or manipulate financial information for their own gain. It could be carried out through some methods such as identity theft or investment fraud. Common types of financial fraud include investment fraud, mortgage and lending fraud, mass marketing fraud, accounting fraud, and identity theft. It can also include embezzlement, insider trading, and Ponzi schemes. Financial fraud comprises some wide range of illicit behavior which mainly target to rip individuals of their money and financial resources. Examples of financial fraud schemes include; mortgage fraud, ponzi schemes, credit card theft and advance-fee schemes. All fraudsters make use of deception and tricky tactics to enrich themselves.

Through financial fraud, fraudsters make use of loopholes in financial systems to steal money, and other financial resources from creditors, investors, and stakeholders. They could change financial data or records, or create fake identities to swindle away funds for themselves. Financial fraudsters, are also predatory strangers who find a way to earn their target's trust by promising a future benefit or reward in exchange for money or personal information upfront (Van, 2018). In some cases, they use deception and misrepresentation in conjunction with personal assets and investments such houses, cars, shops and other financial products. Whitty, (2015) reports that financial fraud varies, but similar set of tactics is used to swindle victims of their hard earned money, including: gaining victims' trust and confidence; using false information to induce victims to invest in non-existing ventures; buying of products online that does not exist; and stealing identity information from their victims.

Financial fraud victims comprise of those affected by financial fraud scams and schemes. When someone loses money, entitlement or assets through an organized scheme, then the person is said to be a financial fraud victim. Many times when financial fraud schemes are busted and uncovered, thousands of people lose everything as they realize that they become victim of financial fraud as they had thought that their money was invested in a safe and profitable business. Victims include youths, adolescents, fathers and mothers who are all members of families in the society. Osmond, Donald, and Akamike, (2023) stated that financial frauds cases has increased exponentially in Nigeria and especially in the south-east and have been expanding in recent times to a greater capacity. Some reports show that there is prevalence of financial fraud in south-east Nigeria. Osmond, Donald, and Akamike, (2023) reported that EFCC cases between 2020 and 2022 indicate an increased involvement of bank workers in financial fraud in Abia and Enugu State Nigeria

respectively. In similar fashion, Tade, and Adeniyi, (2017) also reported that there are prevalent cases of land fraud which were increasingly discouraging investments in Enugu State. People were increasingly using land to defraud other people of their hard earned money in Enugu State. Odunsi, (2016) reports that cybercrime is increasing in the Anambra State at an alarming rate. A popular financial fraud case is the one involving one Late Ikechukwu Anajemba from Anambra State. The fraud involved the sum of 242 million US dollars between 2015 and 2016.

Late Ikechukwu Anajemba with some actors sold a dummy of a fake contract in the Nigeria aviation sector to Nelson Sakaguchi of Banco Noroeste of Brazil. He was made to facilitate the execution of the contract by contributing financially as he was also made to believe that he would have a benefit of 10 million dollars' commission from the contract. Sakaguchi fell for the scam as he flew into Nigeria, met some fake CBN and Aviations officials, signed some fake agreements, returned to Brazil and began transferring large sums of money into the bank accounts of the fraudsters. This triggered a chain of criminal investigations in Brazil, Britain, Nigeria, Switzerland and United States respectively. Banco Noroeste eventually collapsed in 2016, due to the fraud, (Nairaland Forum, 2015; Odunsi, 2016). Ijeoma, and Nwufo, (2015) reports that many Nigerians especially in the South-East are susceptible to financial fraud due to the difficult times in the country, plagued by dwindling economy, high unemployment rates and job insecurity. Many people are desperate and are looking to gain high rates on their investment within a short period of time. Thus, such opportunities become very tempting for many people.

Similarly, factors such as globalization of communications, and markets, the easy manipulation through the Internet, creates easy way for financial fraudster as many fraudulent companies do not need to create a physical headquarters in certain countries before they operate. Elumaro, and Obamuyi, (2018) reports that every year, thousands of people in Nigeria and mostly in the south-east are affected by financial fraud and yet their experiences as victims of crime have received limited attention from researchers. Available research about financial fraud victims has suggested that victims experience high levels of self-blame (Say, 2015), fear criticism from family members and the authorities and often they do not report the crimes (Coluccia, 2020). Financial frauds can have a broad impact on the individual, their family, and public trust in institutions. It can also have considerable social and psychological effects on individuals, businesses, family life and society. The moment a victim realizes they have been duped by a scam, a multitude of emotions are triggered. The initial shock is usually replaced by a wave of humiliation, guilt, and embarrassment. This emotional tornado can be so overpowering that it drives victims to withdraw from their families and loved ones, terrified of their reactions (Say, 2015). This fear of judgment can create a ripple effect of isolation and loneliness, further deepening their emotional wounds. In addition to the strain on relationships, victims also endure a severe blow to their self-perception. The act of falling for a scam can shatter their self-confidence, leaving them questioning their ability to make sound decisions. This attack on their self-esteem can have long-term consequences, impacting every aspect of their lives including withdrawal from family life (Coluccia, 2020).

Fraud drains resources, affects public services, and sometimes could even aid in funding

other criminal and terrorist activities. The World Bank (2020) survey on how corruption and fraud affect businesses, investment, and production, indicates that financial fraud have a negative impact on the Nigerian economy. Such negative impacts include; decreased business confidence, limited access to funding and increased production and maintenance costs. The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Annual Reports (2020) on the Nigerian financial industry suggested that the economic consequences of fraudulent behaviors such as insider-trading, money laundering, and cybercrime have grave impact on the Nigerian economy. Widespread financial fraud harms Nigeria's global reputation, impacting foreign direct investment, trade links, and international alliances. Financial fraud, such as bribery and extortion, raise entrance barriers, limit growth prospects, and distort competition, especially for small businesses.

Similarly, fraudulent fund diversion hinders infrastructural investment, restricting economic productivity, inhibiting connectivity, and impeding overall economic development. The Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) of Nigeria is very low and it emphasizes the detrimental effects of corruption and fraud on the economic development, investment climate in the country (Sorell & Whitty, 2019). The CPI Transparency International is an annual assessment that assesses perceived levels of corruption in several nations, including Nigeria. To effectively prevent and combat financial fraud, researchers explore some measures that should be implemented to tackle this issue. Regulatory measures, internal control systems, and fraud risk assessment and detection measures are the key sub-sections that could provide solutions for safeguarding against financial fraud (Dodge, 2016). Sorell and Whitty, (2019) suggests that administration of social support and psychological first aid can help financial fraud victims bounce back and stay up on their feet.

Social support is the care and assistance an individual receives from other people. Social support according to Stensletten, Bruvik, Espehaug and Drageset, (2016) means having supportive friends and other people such as family members, to turn to in times of need or crisis. Social support is the help or support provided to victim by the members of social networks (Haugan, Moksnes & Lohre, 2016). Social support is help rendered on victims to give them broader focus and positive self-image. Support can come from many sources of social networks such as family, friends, pets, neighbors, coworkers, organizations, etc. Social support enhances quality of life and provides a buffer against adverse life events such as financial fraud. Social support can come from a trusted group or valued individual and studies has shown that it helps to reduce the psychological and physiological consequences of stress (Lamas, Bolenius, Sandman, Bergland, Lindkvist & Edvardsson, 2020).

Social supports, whether formal (such as a church or social club) or informal (meeting with friends) can provide a sense of belonging, security, and community to financial fraud victims. Manvelian and Sbarra (2020) suggests that financial fraud victims that are supported by close relationships with friends, family, or fellow members of a church, work, or other support groups could be less vulnerable to psychological trauma, depression, ill health and premature death. Individuals afflicted with leukemia or heart disease have higher survival rates if they have extensive social support (Wang, Mann, Lloyd-Evans & Johnson, 2018). There is also a strong tie between

social support and measures of wellbeing (Manvelian & Sbarra, 2020). Sorcaru, Topliceanu, and Ambrozie, (2020) stated that those who have close personal relationships cope better with various stressors, including bereavement, job loss, rape, and illness. Thus administration of social support on financial fraud victims could help them survive the psychological effect of losing their property. Another type of help that may be very valuable to financial fraud victims is psychological first aid.

Psychological First Aid (PFA) is tactics used to calm and emotionally orient a person who has just experienced a traumatic event. According to the American Psychological Association, PFA is the first response in disaster intervention with a goal of promoting safety, stabilizing survivors of disasters, and connecting the survivors to resources and help. PFA is conducted by mental health professionals and other first responders. The purpose of PFA is to assess the immediate concerns and needs of an individual in the aftermath of a disaster, and not to provide on-site therapy (Diacon, Donici, & Maha, 2013). Most first responders trained in psychological first aid will use the RAPID response. The RAPID response is the list of skills such as: reflective listening, assessment, prioritization, intervention, and disposition (Harvey, Kerr, Keeble, & Nicholls, 2014). In essence, PFA aims to reduce symptoms of stress and encourage healthy recovery following a traumatic event such as a natural disaster, public health emergency, or even personal crisis such as cases of financial fraud. While physical injuries are more obvious, it turns out that far more people will report psychologically-related complaints following a traumatic event such as financial fraud. Physical first aid is used to ease physical discomfort caused by injury, while psychological first aid is used to reduce the painful range of emotions and responses experienced by people who are exposed to high stress situations such as financial fraud. Psychological First Aid differs from traditional therapy because it is not a professional mental health treatment, but instead a strategy to reduce strong emotional reactions to stress. Any first responder can administer PFA because it does not rely on direct services from mental health professionals, but rather on skills that most of us already have.

1.1. Statement of Problem

In an increasingly digital world, scams and frauds have become commonplace, leaving an untold number of victims in their wake. Financial frauds cases have increased exponentially in Nigeria and especially in the south-east and have been expanding to a greater capacity. Some reports show that there is prevalence of financial fraud in south-east Nigeria. Studies reported that EFCC cases between 2020 and 2022 indicate an increased involvement of bank workers in financial fraud in Abia and Enugu State Nigeria respectively. Reports also show that there are prevalent cases of land fraud which were increasingly discouraging investments in Enugu State. People were increasingly using land to defraud other people of their hard earned money in Enugu State. Cybercrime is also increasing in the Anambra State at an alarming rate.

While financial loss is often the primary focus, the psychological impact on victims is an equally alarming issue that requires attention. The emotions attached to being a victim of scams and frauds can be overwhelming, leading to a wide array of mental health problems. The moment a victim realizes they have been duped by a scam, a multitude of emotions are triggered. The initial shock is usually replaced by a wave of humiliation, guilt, and embarrassment. This emotional

tornado can be so overpowering that it drives victims to withdraw from their loved ones, terrified of their reactions. This fear of judgment can create a ripple effect of isolation and loneliness, further deepening their emotional wounds. In addition to the strain on relationships, victims also endure a severe blow to their self-perception. The act of falling for a scam can shatter their self-confidence, leaving them questioning their ability to make sound decisions. This attack on their self-esteem can have long-term consequences, impacting every aspect of their lives. Understanding these impacts is essential to providing the necessary support for victims and raising awareness about these silent but devastating effects. Studies also suggest that administration of a combination of social support and psychological first aid could help financial fraud victims stay up their feet. However, there is limited research to support this notion especially in South East Nigeria. Therefore, the study seeks to find out how the provision of social support and psychological first aid will affect financial fraud victims in South East Nigeria.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this research is to find out the effects of social support and psychological first aid on financial fraud victims in South East Nigeria. Specific purpose is to:

(a) Find out the emotional and psychological trauma which financial fraud victims suffer in South East Nigeria.
(b) Find out how social support can be used to help financial fraud victims in South East Nigeria.
(c) Find out how psychological first aid can be used to help financial fraud victims in South East Nigeria.

1.3. Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

(a) What is the emotional and psychological trauma that financial fraud victims suffer from in South East Nigeria?
(b) In what ways can social support be used to help financial fraud victims in South East Nigeria?
(c) How can psychological first aid be used to help financial fraud victims in South East Nigeria?

1.4. Hypotheses

(a) There is no significant difference in the mean responses of lecturers and students on the emotional and psychological trauma that financial fraud victims suffer from in South East Nigeria.
(b) There is no significant difference in the mean responses of lecturers and students on the ways that social support will be used to help financial fraud victims in South East Nigeria.
(c) There is no significant difference in the mean responses of lecturers and students on how psychological first aid will be used to help financial fraud victims in South East Nigeria.

1.5. Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on the Fraud Triangle theory which was propounded by Donald R. Cressey in 1953. According to Cressey, (1953) there were three factors that encouraged the occurrence of fraud: pressure, rationalization, and opportunity. The pressure, as described by Cressey, refers more to the financial pressures, such as debt, luxurious lifestyle, dependence on drug, and others. Opportunity enables fraud to occur. It is usually caused by the weak internal controls in an

organization, the lack of supervision, and the authority abuse. Among the three elements of fraud triangle, opportunity is the element that most likely to be minimized through the process, procedures, control and early detection efforts against fraud. Rationalization is an important element for the occurrence of fraud, where perpetrator always seeks justification for his action. For example, the perpetrator rationalizes that his action in committing fraud is for the happiness of his family and the people he loves, his working period has been long enough and he feels that he is entitled to get more (in position, salary, promotion), the corporate profit is so large that it does not matter for him to take part of it. Cressey's fundamental study stated that with the financial pressures that cannot be told, the perceived opportunity that the stealing would not be detected, and the rationalization that the acts done is correct, can make professional individuals commit fraud. The evolution of fraud theory describes the evolution of the characteristics of the perpetrators of fraud and the environment in the community. The development of this theory is trying to capture reality and offers an alternative solution to solve the problems of fraud. It requires economic, psychological, sociological, criminological and political approaches in order to be able to capture the fraud phenomenon comprehensively. The theory is related to this study as this study advocates the use of social support and psychological first aid to assist financial fraud victims.

2. Materials and Methods

1.1. Design for the Study

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey research design is used for those studies which aim at collecting data and describing in a systematic manner the characteristics, features or facts about a given population (Nworgu, 2015).

2.1.1. Ethics Statement

This research was ethically cleared by the Research Ethics Committee of the Department of Home Economics and Hospitality Management Education, University of Nigeria, Nigeria. All respondents provided informed consent verbally before completing the study instrument.

2.2. Area of the Study

This study was carried out in three Universities in the South East, Nigeria. These Universities include: the University of Nigeria Nsukka, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka and Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike.

2.3. Population and Sample

The population was made up of 452 lecturers and students in Home Economics Education programme of the three Universities. Simple random sampling was used to select a sample size of 135 respondents which comprises of 32 lecturers and 103 students.

2.4. Instrument for Data Collection and Study Procedure

A 27-item Questionnaire was used in answering research questions. The title of the Questionnaire is: Questionnaire on Effects of Social Support and Psychological First Aid on Financial Fraud Victims (Q.E.S.S.P.F.A.F.F.V). The questionnaire was made up of two parts. Part 1 which elicited information from the respondents on their demographic data, and Part 2 which was made up of three clusters. Clusters A elicited information on the emotional and psychological trauma that financial fraud victims suffer from in South East Nigeria, cluster B elicited information on ways that social support will be used to help financial fraud victims in South East Nigeria while, Section C

sought information on how psychological first aid will be used to help financial fraud victims in South East Nigeria. The clusters were structured on a five point Likert response options of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (UD), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

2.5. Data Collection Technique

The administration and retrieval of the Q.E.S.S.P.F.A.F.F.V questionnaire was carried out by the researcher with the help of two research assistants. One hundred and thirty-five copies of the questionnaires were administered on the Home Economics Education students and lecturers which were retrieved within one week after administration.

2.6. Data Analysis Technique

Data collected was analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer research questions. Decision on research questions were taken based on real limits of numbers. Thus, mean rating of 3.50 and above were considered as agreed, while items with mean rating below 3.50 were considered as disagreed. Consequently, any item with a mean range of 0.50 – 1.49 was interpreted as strongly disagree, any item with a mean value ranging from 1.50-2.49 was regarded as disagree, any item with a mean value ranging from 2.50-3.49 was regarded as agree, while an item with a mean value of 3.50 and above was interpreted as strongly agree. For the test of significance, the probability (p) value was used in comparison with the alpha value of 0.05, and at 90 degree of freedom (df). If any item has a probability value greater than 0.05 (P>0.05) it will be concluded that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of the respondents.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Research Question 1: What are the emotional and psychological traumas that financial fraud victims suffer from in South East Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean responses and t-test analysis of lecturers and students on the emotional and psychological trauma that financial fraud victims suffer from in South East Nigeria.

S/N	Items:	X_G	SD_G	X_1	SD_1	X_2	SD_2	t-cal	Sig (2-Tailed)	Rmks RQ Ho
1	The initial shock of financial fraud can lead to feeling of humiliation.	4.99	1.16	4.99	1.13	4.98	1.19	0.03	A	NS
2	The initial shock of financial fraud can lead to feeling of guilt & embarrassment.	4.13	0.92	4.14	0.91	4.11	0.93	0.13	SA	NS
3	The initial shock of financial fraud can lead to emotional traumas such as depression or suicidal thoughts.	4.44	0.62	4.47	0.60	4.40	0.63	0.46	SA	NS
4	This emotional tornado can be so overpowering that it drives victims to withdraw from their loved ones, terrified of their reactions.	4.49	0.90	4.54	4.44	0.97	0.97	0.48	A	NS
5	Fear of judgment can create a ripple effect of isolation and loneliness,	4.49	0.57	4.49	4.48	0.57	0.57	0.07	A	NS

	further deepening emotional wounds of victims.									
6	In addition to the strain on relationships, victims also endure a severe blow to their self-perception.	4.56	0.50	4.56	4.55	0.50	0.50	0.05	A	NS
7	The act of falling for a scam can shatter their self-confidence, leaving them questioning their ability to make sound decisions.	4.37	0.73	4.38	4.37	0.74	0.74	0.05	SA	NS
8	The trauma from the scam can lead to increased levels of stress, anxiety, and depression.	4.37	0.89	4.40	4.33	0.96	0.96	0.34	SA	NS
9	The financial pressure resulting from the scam, coupled with the emotional betrayal, can disrupt sleep patterns, cause chronic insomnia, & may induce panic attacks.	4.44	0.50	4.43	4.44	0.50	0.50	0.50	SA	NS
10	Such severe distress can also pave the way for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).	4.47	0.76	4.49	4.44	0.80	0.80	0.27	A	NS
	Grand X and SD	4.47	0.77							

Note: X_t= Total mean; SD_t = Standard deviation total; X_1=mean of lecturers; SD_1= Standard deviation of lecturers; X_2 = mean of students; SD_2 =Standard deviation of students; N_1 = Number of lecturers (32); N_2 = Number of students (103).

Table 1 revealed that all the 10 items had their mean values ranging from 4.13 to 4.99, which were above the criterion mean of 3.50. This indicates that the respondents agreed that all the 10 items are the emotional and psychological traumas that financial fraud victims suffer from in South East Nigeria. The t-calculated values of all the items ranged 0.03 to 0.50 which were lower than the t-critical value of 1.96 at an alpha level of 0.05. The result therefore indicated that no significant differences exist in the mean response of two groups of respondents. It was therefore concluded that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of lecturers and students on the emotional and psychological traumas that financial fraud victims suffer from in South East Nigeria. The hypothesis was retained.

The findings of the study in Table 1 revealed the emotional and psychological traumas that financial fraud victims suffer from in South East Nigeria. Some of them includes that the initial shock of financial fraud can lead to emotional traumas such as depression or suicidal thoughts. Fear of judgment can create a ripple effect of isolation and loneliness, further deepening emotional wounds of victims. These findings are in line with Van, (2018) who stated that emotions attached to being a victim of scams and frauds can be overwhelming, leading to a wide array of mental health problems. The initial shock is usually replaced by a wave of humiliation, guilt, and embarrassment. This emotional tornado can be so overpowering that it drives victims to withdraw from their loved ones, terrified of their reactions. This fear of judgment can create a ripple effect of isolation and

loneliness, further deepening their emotional wounds. The study is also similar to Elumaro and Obamuyi, (2018) who stated that the emotional fallout from scams is a complex, multi-layered issue that needs to be addressed with sensitivity and understanding. It is a silent crisis that many victims are grappling with, hidden beneath the surface of their everyday lives. In addition to the strain on relationships, victims also endure a severe blow to their self-perception. The act of falling for a scam can shatter their self-confidence, leaving them questioning their ability to make sound decisions. This attack on their self-esteem can have long-term consequences, impacting every aspect of their lives.

3.2. Research Question 2: In what ways can social support be used to help financial fraud victims in South East Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean Responses and t-test analysis of lecturers and students on ways that social support will be used to help financial fraud victims in South East Nigeria.

S/N	General strategies:	X_G	SD_G	X_1	SD_1	X_2	SD_2	t-cal	Sig (2-Tailed)	Rmks RQ Ho
11	By encouraging victims to speak out to provide a sense of relief, a realization that they are not alone, & their feelings are valid.	4.99	1.16	4.99	1.13	4.98	1.19	0.03	A	NS
12	By encouraging victims to share their experience in a supportive environment which can be incredibly empowering.	4.13	0.92	4.14	0.91	4.11	0.93	0.13	A	NS
13	Creating face-to-face or online support group for victims will create an atmosphere of understanding, empathy, and collective strength.	4.44	0.62	4.47	0.60	4.40	0.63	0.46	SA	NS
14	Helping victims to connect with others who have also been victims of scams can be a source of comfort.	4.49	0.90	4.54	4.44	0.97	0.97	0.48	A	NS
15	Helping victims to connect with others who have been through similar experiences, can offer helpful advice from their own journey of healing.	4.49	0.57	4.49	4.48	0.57	0.57	0.07	A	NS
16	Support groups can offer practical advice, emotional support, & the reassurance that victims are not alone in struggle.	4.41	0.63	4.42	4.40	0.63	0.63	0.09	A	NS
17	Support groups can offer counseling platform that aids in rebuilding victim's self-esteem, & regain faith in their own judgment & abilities.	4.37	0.89	4.40	4.33	0.96	0.96	0.34	SA	NS
18	Support groups should encourage victims to equip themselves with a	4.44	0.50	4.43	4.44	0.50	0.50	0.50	SA	NS

	powerful shield of awareness to guard against future scams.									
19	Victims should be encouraged to monitor trustworthy news outlets, scam watch websites, advisories from financial institutions and law enforcement agencies to provide valuable information about the latest scams in circulation.	4.41	0.63	4.42	4.40	0.63	0.63	0.09	A	NS
	Grand X and SD	4.47	0.77							

Table 2 revealed that all the 9 items had their cluster mean values ranging from 4.99 to 4.13, which were above the criterion mean of 3.50. This indicates that the respondents agreed that all the items are ways to apply social support to help financial fraud victims in South East Nigeria. The grand mean of 4.47 with standard deviation of 0.77 suggested that the items were perceived as highly required by the respondents as ways to apply social support to help financial fraud victims. The t-calculated values of all the items ranged 0.03 to 0.48 were lower than the t-critical value of 1.96 at an alpha level of 0.05. The result therefore indicated that no significant differences exist in the mean responses of two groups of respondents. It was therefore concluded that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of lecturers and students on ways to apply social support to help financial fraud victims. The hypothesis was retained.

The study in table 2, also investigated how social support be used to help financial fraud victims in South East Nigeria. Some of these strategies include that first responders can encourage victims to share their experience in a supportive environment which can be incredibly empowering. First responders can help victims to connect with others who have also been victims of scams. This can be a source of comfort as helping victims to connect with others who have been through similar experiences, can offer helpful advice from their own journey of healing. These findings are in line with Stensletten, Bruvik, Espehaug and Drageset, (2016) who stated that financial fraud victims should be encouraged to Share their experience in a supportive environment. Support groups, whether face-to-face or online, create an atmosphere of understanding, empathy, and collective strength. They serve as a sanctuary for victims to express their feelings openly without fear of judgment. In these groups, victims will find others who have been through similar experiences, understand their struggles, and can offer helpful advice from their own journey of healing.

3.3. Research Question 3: How will psychological first aid be used to help financial fraud victims in South East Nigeria?

Table 3: Mean Responses and t-test analysis of lecturers and students on how psychological first aid will be used to help financial fraud victims in South East Nigeria.

S/N	First responders can administer PFA on financial fraud victim through the following:	X_G	SD_G	X_1	SD_1	X_2	SD_2	t-cal	Sig (2-Tailed)	Rmks RQ Ho
20	Identify the warning signs for someone being disoriented or overwhelmed such as being unresponsive to questions, exhibiting strong emotional responses, searching frantically, or engaging in risky activities.	4.28	0.84	4.31	4.25	0.85	0.85	0.28	A	NS
21	Responders should help fraud victim to locate friends and family for more emotional support to help stabilize the victim.	4.60	0.56	4.61	4.59	0.57	0.57	0.16	SA	NS
22	Remain present and calm, try not to ask too many questions or it could overwhelm the victim & lead to cognitive overload.	4.44	0.62	4.47	0.60	4.40	0.63	0.46	SA	NS
23	Responders should support and help the person focus on specific, manageable feelings and thoughts.	4.49	0.90	4.54	4.44	0.97	0.97	0.48	A	NS
24	Provide information that will help orient the individual to their surroundings.	4.49	0.57	4.49	4.48	0.57	0.57	0.07	A	NS
25	Sit next to the overwhelmed individual in a comfortable position, and encourage them to breathe in and out deeply and slowly.	4.56	0.50	4.56	4.55	0.50	0.50	0.05	A	NS
26	First responders can reduce psychological distress of victims by providing a caring comforting presence, & education on common stress reactions.	4.37	0.73	4.38	4.37	0.74	0.74	0.05	SA	NS
27	First responders can provide victims with connections to natural support networks, and referrals to professional services when needed.	4.37	0.89	4.40	4.33	0.96	0.96	0.34	SA	NS
	Grand X and SD	**4.47**	**0.77**							

Table 3 revealed that all the 8 items had their mean values ranging from 4.28 to 4.60, which were above the criterion mean of 3.50. This indicates that the respondents agreed that all the 8 items are how psychological first aid will be used to help financial fraud victims in South East Nigeria. The t-calculated values of all the items ranged 0.03 to 0.50 which were lower than the t-critical value of

1.96 at an alpha level of 0.05. The result therefore indicated that no significant differences exist in the mean response of two groups of respondents. It was therefore concluded that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of lecturers and students on how psychological first aid will be used to help financial fraud victims in South East Nigeria. The hypothesis was retained.

The study in table 3, also investigated how psychological first aid will be used to help financial fraud victims in South East Nigeria. Some of the strategies are: first responders should identify the warning signs for victims being disoriented or overwhelmed such as looking glassy eyed, being unresponsive to questions, exhibiting strong emotional responses, searching frantically, or engaging in risky activities. Responders should help fraud victim to locate friends and family for more emotional support to help stabilize the victim. The findings are consistent with Wang, Mann, Lloyd-Evans and Johnson, (2018) who suggested that first responders can help victims redirect negative thoughts and self-blame towards healthier, more constructive pathways. Manvelian and Sbarra, (2020) suggests that first responders should help victims to deconstruct the overwhelming wave of emotions and rebuild a stronger, more resilient mindset. Mindfulness techniques, on the other hand, serve as an anchor amidst the storm. By focusing on the present, they help manage the whirlpool of stress and anxiety, teaching victims how to find calm and peace even in the midst of turmoil.

4. Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to find out the effects of social support and psychological first aid on financial fraud victims in South East Nigeria. The high rate of financial fraud and the impact of financial fraud on individuals and the Nigerian economy are immense. Financial fraud impact individual negatively through psychological, emotional stress and trauma such as depression, humiliation, guilt, and embarrassment. Financial fraud is denting the image of Nigeria; which result in foreign investors becoming wary of conducting businesses in Nigeria. Based on the findings of the data analysis, the study finds that social support and psychological first aid can be used to help victims of financial fraud. The study recommends that government at all levels should establish social support and psychological first aid units that will help to cater for the emotional, psychological and other needs of financial fraud victims in order to enable them recover efficiently.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

Author Contributions

Princess Chidinma Nwangwu and Mary Ngozi Eze were responsible for overseeing all aspects of this research project including conceptualization, materials and methods, data collection, data analysis, writing and approval of this article for publication.

Data Availability Statement
The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article. Further inquiries can be directed to author.

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