

Prevalence and perceptions of social engineering attacks on Tanzanian law enforcement

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Abstract

This study examines the level of awareness, prevalence and preparedness of police officers toward Social Engineering Attacks (SEAs) in the Oysterbay police district, Kinondoni municipality, Dar es Salaam. Guided by a positivist paradigm the study adopted a quantitative research approach and was anchored in the Human Factor Theory of Information Security (HFTIS). A descriptive cross-sectional design was employed with data collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 162 randomly selected police officers. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics with STATA version 17. The findings indicate that while 95 percent of respondents reported being aware of SEAs only 54.55 percent were able to correctly identify all major types of such attacks with smishing and vishing being the most recognized. Furthermore, institutional preparedness was limited as fewer than 40 percent of officers had received formal training on SEAs and approximately 30 percent were unaware of official reporting procedures. The study highlights gaps in practical knowledge and institutional readiness and emphasizes the importance of strengthening human-centered approaches to information security within police institutions. *The African Conference of Applied Informatics, 2025*

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