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Why has it been so difficult to Counteract Cyber Crime in Nigeria? Evidence from an Ethnographic Study

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Abstract

Efforts by governments, over the years, to curb cybercrime- yahoo-yahoo- in Nigeria have not yielded much positive results. The restrictive measures put in place by cyber security operatives, law enforcement agencies and the government have only largely resulted in operational dynamism of cybercriminals including introduction of spiritual/fetish dimensions to cybercrime- yahoo-yahoo- which has come to be known as yahoo-plus. The empirical basis for this paper was from in-depth interviews with 15 yahoo boys and 30 community members in Ajibode, Apete and Ring road regarding the community reactions and obstacles to curbing yahoo plus in Nigeria with Ibadan as case study. Findings suggest that yahoo boys get help from many places to perpetrate their crimes. Sources of help include the families, musicians, celebrities, religious leaders, politicians, police officers and bank officials. These sources of help to yahoo boys are obstacles to curbing yahoo boys- including yahoo plus activities, in Nigeria.

Keywords: Yahoo Plus, Yahoo Boys Security Cybercrime, Ibadan, Nigeria.

Introduction

Since the invention of computer and internet, they have evolved into dynamic, complex and globally challenging digital and information infrastructure (Akanle, Adesina & Ankara, 2016). It has brought remarkable progress and challenges to contemporary

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societies in many ways (Tambe, 2017; Adeniran, 2008). The expansion of communication and information technologies therefore has positive and negative impacts on the economic, political, educational, social and cultural development of African and global societies. In Nigeria, information and communication technologies (ICTs), especially, the use of internet and computer are increasingly expanding into every nook and cranny of the country. ICTs are responsible for shaping the behavior and culture of youths and even adults in Nigeria towards internet mediated crime which is popularly known as cybercrime *yahoo* (Adeniran, 2008; Abdul-rasheed, 2017). *Yahoo*- cybercrime- involves the deployment internet to perpetrate criminal and illegal activities online (Akanle, Adesina & Akarah, 2016). These activities include: identity theft, account hacking and defrauding victims, fake dating relationships, spreading malwares, terrorism and so on (Ibrahim, 2016, Akanle, Adesina & Akarah, 2016).

In Nigeria, cybercrime is generally referred to as *yahoo yahoo* because of the popularity of yahoo as the most popular email accounts and platforms in the country due to its being free and accessible among the poor internet users in the country. The perpetrators of cybercrime are called yahoo-boys (Tade & Aliyu, 2011; Ibrahim, 2016; Adediran, 2008; Akanle, Adesina & Akarah, 2016) in Nigeria even though there some females in the crime. Over the years, the misuse of ICTs and internet in Nigeria has had negative impacts on the development and dignity of the country and the world. This is because while many Nigerians are victims of *yahoo boys*, a lot of their targeted victims are foreign nationals, especially in Europe and America, many of who are unsuspecting and selectively target for foreign exchange earnings (Akanle, Adesina & Akarah, 2016, Ehimen & Bola 2009). *Yahoo yahoo* has negatively affected the image of Nigeria with huge negative business and diplomatic backlashes and it has also made virtual global relations very risky and difficult with huge stress on global security systems. Cybercrime is a not only a national calamity for Nigeria but a global threat that must be better understood and counteracted.

Unfortunately, while global security systems have been trying to manage and counteract cybercrime, the illegality persists and it has, as a matter of fact become more daring, dynamic and more profound. Rather, the restrictive measures put in place by cyber security operatives, law enforcement agencies and the government have resulted into many other dimensions of *yahoo-yahoo*, including the spiritual and fetishistic one popularly known as *yahoo-plus* in Nigeria. *Yahoo-plus* is more dangerous than *yahoo-yahoo*. Tade, (2013) examined the methods of *yahoo-plus* with the theory space transition and discovered that yahoo-boys make use of “charmed rings” (*oruka*), incisions (*gbere*), *afose* (inconvertible order) to surf the net while “*Ijapa*” (spiritual tortoise) is used to navigate the profitable sites in order to discover and defraud unsuspecting victims (vanguard, 2018). Aransiola and Asindemade, (2011) also identified different levels of voodoo among *yahoo-boys* and found out that the highest levels of *yahoo-plus* are those fetishistically involving the use of human parts and kidnapping of humans for rituals.

Nigeria certainly lacks the capacity to tackle the menace of cybercrime and the world has also built partnerships to assist not only Nigeria but identical countries that have become the hubs of cybercriminals. While huge investments have gone into surveillance, sensitization, confiscations of proceeds of cybercrimes, imprisonments of criminals as deterrents and synergies among global security systems, the illegality persists. Why then has

it become nearly impossible to counteract cybercrime and its advancement- *yahoo plus*- in Nigeria, particularly as the hub of cybercrime in Africa and beyond? This is the overarching question this paper answers.

Theoretical Orientation and Methodology

Within Weberian theoretical tradition, primary theoretical attention is on subjective meanings that human actors attach to their actions. Social action may be influenced by the action of past, present and future other actors involved in the counter actions as actors relate within complex web of social realities affecting actions and counteractions. *Yahoo plus* is a conglomeration of social action as *yahoo* boys interpret social values and recreate norms due to their subjective interpretations of norms, values and actions towards goals. It is a result or a modification of some action of other person or persons that cybercrime exists and dynamically subsists. Therefore, social action is possible if there is another human being whose action or behaviour is prompting significant other actors to act in certain ways including in the context of *yahoo plus* (Riss, 2017). The action and inaction of the society towards *yahoo-plus* can directly or indirectly affect the actions and involvement of *yahoo-boys* in the short or long run. Positive reaction from the society towards *yahoo-plus* makes the act to flourish while negative reactions from the society can pose threat to *yahoo-boys* thereby limiting their practices. Different people have different motivations and intentions based on their background, belief systems, conscience and aspirations and goals which ultimately direct their actions. For those that are instrumentally rational, whose sole goal is money, they tend to react positively towards *yahoo boys* and justify the practice. Hence, making it impossible for the crime to be curbed. On the other hand, those whose motivation is value-rational tend to react negatively to any action that is against modal value. Hence, challenging the actions of *yahoo-boys*. Generally, the motivation behind the actions of *yahoo-boys* that are involved in *yahoo-plus* is instrumental rationality and their success or failure depends on the positive or negative reactions of the society at large.

The research that informed this paper conducted in three areas of Ibadan- Apete, Ajibode and Ring road. The research was exploratory in nature and data was collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Three focus group discussions were conducted in the three areas and thirty IDIs were conducted. Accidental and purposive sampling were adopted in accessing the *yahoo-boys* and community members. The sessions were recorded, transcribed and analyzed using content analysis and ethnographic summaries. While the content analysis was used to explore and interpret the data collected, ethnographic summaries were used to further enhance data interpretation and presentation through excerpts that originated in the course of discussions and interviews. In order to guarantee anonymity, personal information that could be used to identify the interviewees were not presented.

Data, Findings and Discussion

1. Community Reaction towards Yahoo Plus

Yahoo-yahoo was more of a cyberspace threat than an offline threat. However, *yahoo-plus* is both an offline threat and an online threat. Victims are being hypnotized online, compelled against their will and defrauded of huge sum of money (Tade, 2013) and other valuables. Innocent victims are being kidnapped and their body parts are being used as sacrifices to ensure the success of those practicing *yahoo-plus* (Aransiola & Asindemade, 2011). A lot of people fall prey without being physically victimized (this is referred to as spiritual victimization). In Yoruba culture, the existence of malevolent forces is widely recognized and can be conjured by the diviner (*babalawo*) for good and bad purposes by offering certain sacrifices (*etutu*) and rituals. In fact, the Yoruba religious belief systems agree to the existence of strong opposition and malevolent forces that are ready to thwart people's journey in life and prevent the actualization of one's destiny (Agwuele, 2012). Having this knowledge, *yahoo-boys*, with the help of the diviner are believed to use the power of the spiritual forces to manipulate the destiny (*ayanmo*) or the inner head (*ori*) of unsuspecting victims for the purpose of fraudulent activities- cybercrime.

Regarding the fact that security operatives have difficulty in curbing *yahoo-yahoo* which is more limited to cyber space, this also applies to *yahoo-plus*. However, with the support of the community members, the security operatives can, normally, have access to relevant information that will help track down the perpetrators. This support however depends greatly on the reaction of the community towards *yahoo-plus* and the people practicing it. Positive reactions towards *yahoo-boys* encourages more people to join the crime and also make those practicing it feel more comfortable while negative reactions can be an obstacle to *yahoo-boys*. Findings from the fieldwork on the community reactions towards *yahoo-plus* reveals that some people believe their reaction towards *yahoo-plus* have no effect. They explained that the situation of corruption in Nigeria does not encourage them to take necessary action against *yahoo boys* and *yahoo plus* According to an interviewee who captured a model perspective:

Personally, I have a negative feeling towards those who do *yahoo-yahoo* and *yahoo-plus*. Some people are like me who have negative feelings towards them but cannot do anything about it. Whether you like them or you hate them, their activity will still continue. If you report them to the police, you might end up in prison because the police officers are not interested in catching them; they are just interested in collecting bribe and victimizing innocent people (*Male interviewee/IDI/27/Apete*).

This finding supports the findings of Oluwaniyi, (2011) that corruption has eaten deep into the security systems of Nigeria and many parts of sub-Saharan Africa. Hence, Oluwaniyi, (2011) found that people will rather prefer to manage and find alternative ways to adapt or find solution to some criminal activities than report them to the police because they have lost confidence in the ability and credibility of the police to counteract criminals. This explains why some people will rather adopt avoidance and carefulness as strategy against *yahoo-plus* rather than reporting them. In other words, most people who

do not support yahoo-plus do *mind their own business* and warn their loved ones to stay away from yahoo boys in order to avoid falling prey or victims. Some interviewees, however, do not have negative reactions towards yahoo plus. They have all sorts of reasons to justify the actions of yahoo boys. To some, yahoo-plus have prevented many unemployed youths from engaging in terrestrial crimes. Some other people believe that the government is responsible for the engagement of youths in cybercrime. They believe that poverty and unemployment are the driving forces behind yahoo-plus. Other justification is that the yahoo-boys do not carry guns and knife and cannot be directly linked to violent crimes. In fact, some people believe that since traditional religion is legal, yahoo-plus is also legal. Giving major perspective, an interviewee stated that:

Christians use Holy-water, anointed oil and Holy Communion to worship God; the Muslim have their own practice to worship Allah; it is not bad for those who believe in different gods to do whatever their religion requires to better their own life. I acknowledge that taking the life of another human is despicable but anything else that is used for the purpose of making the hustle pure is not bad. The major problem we should be facing and the people we should be fighting is the government not yahooboys; if boys are employed yahoo –plus will reduce. I can't say it will end because some yahooboys are in it because they are lazy and greedy (*Male interviewee/IDI/29/Ringroad*).

Another interviewee asserted:

I feel they are good people apart from the ones that do extreme yahoo plus like *chop popo* (eat feces). When they acquire money, they help people, if you go to clubs, you see them tipping poor people outside, they go to the road side and give food to lots of beggars. Apart from those that eat *popo* (eat feces) and those that eat human, I think yahoo-boys are cool; at least those I have dated are cool. Log on Instagram and see what the so-called yahoo boys are doing, Hush puppy dashes out money to more than hundred Nigerians every day. Some other yahoo-boys go around giving food to the beggars and giving people money to start business (*Female interviewee/IDI/21/Ajibode*).

Although Islam and Christianity are dominant in Ibadan, some people still practice traditional religions while some practice syncretism. This supports the statements by some interviewees that traditional practices often adopted by yahoo plus are not criminal since they are part of Yoruba traditional religious practices. The findings above also resonate with the findings of Akanle, Adesina and Akarah, (2016) that failed leadership, unemployment and poverty are the major factors driving yahoo-yahoo in Nigeria. Most of the interviewees believe that it is hard to live in Nigeria without being corrupt in one way or the other. That even the government is the father of corruption. Hence, justification of yahoo-plus by youths as a form of necessary survival. According to Tade, (2013), Nigeria is one of the countries in the world where people's source of wealth is of no significance

and this provide legitimate context for yahoo and yahoo plus. Against Durkheimian tradition, money is revered, feared, worshiped, and treated with the highest respect in Nigeria and it is able to transform good to evil and evil to good (Russel & Melanie, 1990). The importance and value of money is particularly stressed by some Yoruba cultural ideals of money. Yoruba people believe that money is the key, (*owo ni koko*) it is powerful and indispensable (*ko se e mani owo*), age does not determine seniority in Yoruba land; seniority position is attributed to people with money and without money, age brings sadness (*Ibanuje ni ojo ori, owo l'agba*). People don't usually obey and listen to poor people rather they deal with rich people with much respect and obedience (Falola & Adebayo, 2000).

2. Obstacles to Curbing Yahoo-Plus

Apart from the bad image yahoo-plus is giving Nigeria in the outside world, the violation of human dignity and development of our dear country (Akanle, Adeshina & Akarahh, 2016); the ever-increasing number of its perpetrators is worrisome. It is not unusual to see policemen in disguised outfits and 'Micra' car raiding the locations and hideouts of yahoo-boys and arresting them. Surprisingly, it has not curbed or reduced the rate at which youths are initiated into it and also finding it easy to carry out their unscrupulous act of defrauding victims. Data gathered on the obstacles to curbing yahoo plus revealed that yahoo-boys find help *everywhere*. The research subjects identified five basic agents (religious leaders, government, police officers, family, and entertainment industry) as obstacles to curbing yahoo plus.

In explaining religious leaders as one of the basic drivers of yahoo plus, some yahoo boys explained that the traditional diviners are not the only ones who have the power to connect to the spiritual realm. They explained that the Christian and Muslim leaders also assist the yahoo-boys by spiritually empowering them to be able to hypnotize their client and defraud them successfully. Most of the yahoo-boys refrained from associating the word 'charm' to a pastor or Islamic scholar rather they use the word blessing, goodwill, divine help etc. They are prompt to relate yahooplus to people seeking God's grace in their businesses. An interviewee explained that:

High religious leaders in Islam have the knowledge to invoke spiritual powers at will by mastering special verses in the Quran. Most of the time, these powers should be used to make the world a better place but some bad ones use it for their own selfish purpose like helping yahoo boys to get rich. I am talking from experience; my ex-boyfriend is a yahoo boy and the person that does his (*awure*) goodwill charm for him is an *afâ* (*Female interviewee/IDI/27/Ajibode*).

Another yahoo boy from Apete area of Ibadan stated that:

(*olorun ni o da ewe ati egbo ati eranoko*) God created plants and animals for the use of man and those plants and animals are not meant to be eaten alone, they should be used for different purpose like curing sickness and diseases; I don't see it as a bad idea if any *afâ* uses it with the faith in Quran

to replace my bad luck with prosperity and good will. Brother, nobody can boast of having money in this world without a divine help from a pastor and Imam or without a charm from (*a babalawo*) an herbalist. The things we do sometimes brings bad luck, for instance, you can have bad luck by mere sleeping with a prostitute or some of the women in your neighbourhood might be angry with you and they will cast bad luck upon you. So, it is the work of (this religious leader) these religious leaders to free you from whatever spell you are under and make your work prosperous. Yahoo plus is not bad just that people have spoilt the word 'yahooplus' by attaching it only to bad things; my own plus comes from Cele church (Yahoo plus/IDI/male/30/Apete).

From the above, it is observable that some religious leaders serve as one of the major obstacles to curbing yahoo plus because they support yahoo boys. The fact that Islamic and Christian scholars possess various spiritual powers is supported by Jimoh, (2014) who explained that exorcism is usually performed in Muslim and Christian religion; Christians and Muslim alike do mix traditional method with their doctrine such as treated water, oil, soap, sponge (bathing exorcism), black seed, coconut water, bathing by river side, burning of incense etc. He explained that some Muslims are always trained by renowned exorcists who sometimes happen to be their father; also, some people who are not children of an exorcist, do travel out for the purpose; to places like Sudan, India etc. to acquire the knowledge and skill. Some people use this knowledge and skill for their selfish interest and evil deeds. Also, the white Garment churches in Nigeria known as '*Aladura*' do practice exorcism. Apart from the grace to cast out demons, most of them receive further training on deliverance and exorcism procedures (Jimoh, 2014).

While in a focus group discussion with interviewees in Ringroad area of challenge, the interviewees were of the view that religion serves as an obstacle basically because of their doctrine of prosperity. During the interview, they developed a topic (the refined salvation) to explain how religious institutions in Nigeria, especially Christianity (Pentecostal churches), have been an obstacle to curbing corrupt and fraudulent practices by preaching prosperity rather than salvation. Giving his approach, one of the interviewees said:

Prosperity has replaced salvation in churches- pastors preach prosperity rather than salvation, they make you believe by quoting passages in the bible that shows how God cursed the children of Israel with poverty and diseases. Most pastors are stinking (very) rich they drive Rolls Royce (expensive cars) put on latest designer suits and even own private jets. They say poverty is a curse and God is not poor; nowadays, most churches are built like club houses, having blue and red light on the stage while other places are dark, great sound systems, perfectly working air conditionals, some even invite top comedians to make people laugh; imagine, pastors and comedians share microphone on the altar, a sacred place in the church. The church members go to church to flaunt their new clothes and cars. Guess what, churches like this are all over the Nigeria, you see them dealing and commenting on political issues, pastors wearing Gucci and

crazy jeans. The major problem is that the youths that we are concerned about, attend these types of churches, especially the yahoo boys. They fill their head and heart with messages from these pastors and receive necessary help for their fraudulent activities. In turn, they either give the pastors money in form of tithe or they become a permanent member of the church. (*Male interviewee/Ring-road/FGD*).

A major characteristic of Pentecostal churches in Nigeria is the preaching of prosperity (Dada, 2004). Although there are other churches but these Pentecostal churches that the interviewees were referring to share characteristics which are different from other missionary churches such as; transnationalism and internationalism, association with urban areas, preaching of gospel of prosperity, spiritism and association with modernity (Togarasei, 2011). Gifford captures the content of this preaching:

The theme of success is an explicit preaching of a prosperity gospel according to which God has met all the needs of human beings in the suffering and death of Christ, and every Christian should now share in Christ's victory over sin, sickness and poverty—blessings which can be obtained by a confession of faith. This gospel is invariably linked with ideas of "seed faith," or with the biblical image of "sowing and reaping." Tithes and offerings become instruments of prosperity (*as cited in Togarasei, 2011*).

In Yoruba land, money has a prime place for itself in religious expression be it Islam, Christian or traditional; the Yoruba believes that *owo ni keke ihinrere* (meaning money is considered as the vehicle that carries prayers to God and brings good news to the members) (Falola & Adebayo, 2000). Money comes first before prayers and money even determines the kind of prayer one receives. The wealthy people are respected not minding how the wealth was acquired; they are given high positions and made to sit in prominent places in the church. All these preaching about money and positions of money in the church has influenced the faith of the members negatively. Churches and mosques have become a place of oppression and flaunting wealth rather than a place to accommodate variety of people disregarding their economic background. Hence, everyone is looking for every means to get the money at all cost in order to be accepted even if it means engaging in fraudulent activities like yahoo-plus.

3. The Government

Some of the interviewees strongly believe that government also severs as the major driver of yahoo plus. It is the duty of the government to curb yahoo plus but since they are corrupt; it becomes difficult to put an end to fraud. This notion is vividly captured in an interviewee statement:

I don't blame the yahoo-boys; I blame the government of this country. Most people in this country are living in absolute poverty; there are many educated youths especially in Ibadan roaming the street aimlessly with their

certificate. You would agree with me that there are many master's degree holders that are jobless. If you don't know how most people scaled through during the time of recession that the leaders of this country put us through; it is the yahoo-boys. Without them, the recession period would have been worst (worse) than what we experienced. For example, the yahoo boys were the ones popping in clubs (they patronize club owners); they were the ones buy (buying) clothes, going to supermarkets for provisions. Or is it the teachers that hardly receive salary from the government that will do all these things? I don't blame yahoo yahoo boys or whatever means they get their money; I blame the government (*Male interviewee/IDI/25/Ringroad*).

According to smith, "the very expression 'the Nigerian factor' suggests that Nigerians have concluded that corruption is so endemic that it defines the nation' (Uslaner, 2010). Leaders upon leaders in Nigeria have always promised to eradicate corruption but they end up being the most corrupt and they only set bad example for the citizens. An average Nigerian sees corruption as a necessary evil; something that is immoral but you can't do without. Corrupt practices by leaders and citizens has been a bane to of Nigeria's development (Akanle et al., 2016; Ogbeidi, 2012) and one of its major products is wide spread unemployment which has pushed many youths into seeking other means to survive. According to Olushola et al., (2013), the perpetrators of cybercrime are youths and most of them are unemployed.

4. The Family

The nonchalant attitude of some parent towards their children's activity has directly or indirectly made them an obstacle to curbing yahoo plus. Families are meant to be the pillars of the society; a good family environment and a good family personality should serve as a constant reminder to children and prevent them from evil or demeaning practices that will bring shame to the family (Tade 2013; Ibrahim, 2016). However, some of the interviewees, during the course of interview, explained that some parent does not care about the sources of their children's wealth.

Any parent that claims not to know the meaning of yahoo yahoo or yahoo boys is not honest. It is not their fault though; who nor like money? (Who does not like money?) When their children bring expensive things to the house, they don't bother to query them or inquire about how they got the money to purchase (buy) it. I know of a guy in 100 level that bought a brand new Mercedes Benz till today, no one care (cared) to ask him how he got the money or all the other cars and phones he has been having; (subsequent material things he has been acquiring) all they do is sing his praises. All I can say is that lack of supervision, control and support from the family due to single parenting, divorce, poverty and so on, are all obstacles to curbing cybercrime. (*Female interviewee/IDI/25/Apete*)

This finding resonates with Ibrahim, (2016) that family plays important roles in encouraging and discouraging cybercrime among children. When the family environment is not favourable, there is high probability that the children will engage in cybercrime. For instance, children who witness all sorts of family problems like domestic violence, divorce, single parenting, poverty etc. often go morally and mentally astray (Ibrahim, 2016). Lack of control or supervision from the family often leaves the children to confide in their peers and also to engage in unstructured social activities which results to yahoo-plus.

5. The Musicians/Celebrities

Music is more than just the beat; it is deep and powerful. Belk and Wallendorf, (as cited in Russell & Melanie, 1990) realized the power of music and likened it to having sacred power as those associated with god, holy places, and protectors. He explained that collective definitions of what is sacred are not limited to religious contexts in the contemporary western society. Due to the escalating secularization of contemporary western society, sacredness may be experienced through art, sex, music etc., (Russell & Melanie, 1990). Eliot, (as cited in Freeman, 2002) posited that the arts, and particularly music, have creative and critical thinking elements that can help to improve one's health, mind, body and soul. The robust power of music was also expressed by Gorge Eliot in Hus et al, (2015);

I think I should have no other mortal wants, if I could always have plenty of music. It seems to infuse strength into my limbs, and ideas into my brain. Life seems to go on without effort, when I am filled with music. (Eliot as cited in Hsu, Huang, Nordgren, Rucker, & Galinsky, 2015).

Over the years till present, youths in Nigeria have been influenced by the fashion, slangs, and hairdo of their favourite musicians. Also, Companies and brands in Nigeria have long made use of musicians as brand ambassadors in order to promote their product or services. Recently, music has been a tool used for promoting the popular cybercrime subculture (yahoo yahoo). Elaborately, the rich and influential yahoo-boys have been using music and social media to propagate their value and reinforce their position. This has enabled yahoo-boys that were hitherto hiding their identity due to fear of rejection by the society to become fearless and willing to show their identity. It has also given them a form of unconscious acceptance and prestige by the members of the society especially the youths. It has also served as a source of motivation for young Nigerians (graduate and undergraduate) to become yahoo-boys thereby escalating the numbers of yahoo-boys in Nigeria.

Most of the interviewees expressed their views on musicians as one of the major obstacles to curbing yahoo-plus in Nigeria; they explained that musicians made yahoo-yahoo to be popular and they were the founder of yahoo-yahoo. An interviewee observed that:

Yahoo-yahoo came into lime light with the song of Olu maintain (*yahooze*) a popular Nigeria musician, *Osuofia* (I go chop your dollar), Kelly handsome (*maga don pay*). Those musicians introduced yahoo-yahoo to Nigerian youths and ever since then, they have taken it to a higher

level. This higher level called yahoo-plus is also gaining ground because of the new musicians (*Male interviewee/IDI/27/Ajibode*).

Most of the interviewees explained that all songs about yahoo plus fall under the popular *shakushaku* dance (a very popular local variant of pop dance among youths in Nigeria) that was introduced by Olamide (*aka baddoo*). Most of the songs fall under the *shakushaku* theme and they all contain the social media names of the yahoo-boys and their praises. The reason musicians sing about them is because of the wide support they receive from the yahoo boys. The interviewees even reported that the musicians are often called pickers; they protect the yahoo-boys from being tracked by using their own bank account for fraudulent transaction. After the transaction is successful, they will share the money according to agreed percentage. People often listen to these songs and follow those names on social media; in fact, the names become slangs and are often heard and used in various conversations. These slangs are widely used to speak by parents, children, adults, pastors, police officers, religious leaders, teachers etc.; in fact, people often dance the popular *shakushaku* during church service without been sanctioned. Through these slangs, yahoo-plus is gradually becoming a popular culture that is accepted and yahoo-boys are gaining much confidence than before. An interviewee stated that:

Olamide, Davido, Nice, reminisce, rubbylonshi, small doctor, Qdot, mr real, slimcase etc. all these top musicians have sang about yahoo-boys and even created different slangs that promote yahoo-yahoo, drugs, and fornication which you hear in the mouth of almost everybody in Nigeria; you hear them from the youth, children, mothers, fathers, class teachers, professors, taxi drivers, even some religious scholars. Slangs like “Gi! masun” (this is a slang to encourage people to wake up in the middle of the night to work rather than sleep. It is commonly used by yahoo-boys to encourage themselves to sleep less and work more since their act is usually carried out at night when others are sleeping) another common slang ‘oshaprapra’ (oshaprapra means quality or quality lifestyle) slimcase was hailing a yahoo-boy named oshaprapra before people took it up as a slang and now everyone uses the slang (*Male Interviewee/IDI/26/Ringroad*).

Another interviewee during the FGD in Ringroad area of Ibadan added some more popular slang that were used by musicians to hail yahoo-boys which has now been accepted by the community and has been widely used.

The more people use these slangs, the more the head of yahoo-boys are swelling and they feel accepted. In fact, they have turned this slangs to language which they use to communicate with each other comfortably in the presence of people; slangs like ‘awon omo shepeteri’ or “awon omo wobe” (this slangs is used to refer to ladies who loves to give out sex in exchange for money and material things) yahoo-boys often use the destiny of *awon omo shepeteri* to exchange benze and iPhones; ‘Chache’ (Another very popular slang that moved the social media as it was popularized by

different video skits. *Chache* means yahoo-yahoo activities) which started from Qdote “*sashe*” to nice, “*awon temi shashe*” (my guys are working the internet) and also Oladips “*mo n cha che, mo n gbowo*” (I am working the internet continuously and collecting money). Also *oja ti burst* (this is a slang used to say there is an error or an account has been leaked) and “science student” (used to refer to drug addict), “codeine diet” (also used to refer to drug addict), “*sakamanje tulamania*” (this means liar.). (Male interviewee/FGD/Ajibode)

6. Police officials

Most of the interviewees acknowledged that police officers especially the SARs serve as obstacles to curbing yahoo plus due to their high rate of corrupt practices. An interviewee stated that:

Nigerian police is an embarrassment to the law enforcement; especially the SARs, they are the most corrupt unit of the Nigeria police force. It is a cycle of corruption; it begins with the government that refuses to pay them properly so they are hungry and desperate. Therefore, they turned to yahooboy hunters in order to get their daily bread. The problem I have with them is that they are purposely hurting innocent people and letting the bad guys go scot free. I was there when a yahooboy sorted them 250k (two hundred and fifty thousand) and they let him go without any harm but you will often see them arrest innocent people and inflict pain and sometimes those people get killed. (Male Interviewee/IDI/26/Ringroad)

Another yahoo-boy stated that:

Even the SARs are yahoo-boys. They arrested my friend and after we were done with the payment, one of them started to advertise app to us and he even volunteered to take us to the place where we can do correct plus; I was just laughing in my mind. Since the day we started purchasing app from him, we never entered their trouble in that area. I was surprised, because he had a shop and put some guys in charge of it while he hunts down yahoo-boys with his members and then introduce them to the shop latter (Yahooplus/IDI/30/Ringroad).

Ben Nwabuese explained that the duty of the police by law is detection and prevention of crime, apprehension of offenders, preservation of law etc. in order to discharge their duty efficiently, they are given powers to conduct criminal prosecution, arrest persons in certain conditions without warrant, to release on bail, people arrested without warrant and to search suspected person. However, police are using these powers for their corrupt practices; they use the powers to hunt yahoo boys in order to collect bribe from them (Adebayo & Ojo, 2009). Recently, Nigeria youth protested via social media with the popular hash tag EndSARs to demand that the special anti-robbery squad (SARS) should be ended by Nigerian government. Many stories on how SARs abused their power and

victimized innocent youth were shared by Nigerian youths. Some interviewee reported that the police especially the SARs were in search for yahoo-boys because of their selfish interest and personal gain. After they have collected bribe or stuck deals with the yahoo-boys, they will release them again to the society, wiser, bolder and deadlier than what they were before they were apprehended. This also resonate with the finding of Arinsola and Asindemade, (2011) that fraudulent act continues uncurbed in Nigeria because the law enforcement agencies are accomplices; they often served as informants to the yahoo boys.

Conclusion

Three findings emerged from this study/paper. First, a lot of Nigerian youths tend to have more negative reaction towards yahoo-plus that involves the use of human beings/parts and approve of the ones that don't involve human or human part. The interviewees explained that it is legal and part of Yoruba culture to seek traditional powers for the attainment of prosperity and other obstacles that an individual is facing. They believe that the traditional worshippers should seek their god just as the religious worshippers seek theirs. Most of them also attributed the engagement of youth in yahoo-plus to hardship, poverty and unemployment caused by failed leadership, lack of social amenities and high level of corruption by the government. Second, the people that have negative reaction towards yahoo-plus believes that people practice yahoo-plus because of greed and laziness. They believe that all yahoo-plus involve the use of human directly or indirectly. They acknowledge that they do not have the power to fight it and those that are employed to fight cybercrime are highly corrupt and themselves practicing it. Therefore, they adopted being cautious and staying away from yahoo-boys as a strategy to protect themselves and their families from the swindlers.

Third, the interviewees identified five major institutions that serve as major obstacles to curbing yahoo plus in Ibadan: Religious leaders, Government, family, Police officers and Musicians. They reported that some religious leaders do help the yahoo boys with different spiritual ingredients to hypnotize their client. Also, the preaching of prosperity by Christian leaders of Pentecostal churches have been a major hindrance to preventing youths from delving into yahoo-plus in search for prosperity. The corruption of the government officials and the police officers is also a major obstacle to curbing yahoo-plus. The interviewee also explained that most families have thrown away their values and ability to prevent their children from delving into yahoo plus due to hardship, poverty and other family problems.

Finally, the highest number of interviewees explained that musicians are the greatest obstacle to curbing yahoo plus. Different songs and slangs by contemporary musicians are all about yahoo-boys and their activities such as clubbing, drugs, fornication, fraud etc. although most of these songs are often banned, nonetheless, the youths have unlimited access to these songs. Gradually, yahoo-plus is becoming a popular culture as their slangs are being heard and their songs are being heard everywhere (in homes, churches, schools, ceremonies etc.). The community reaction and the obstacles to curbing yahoo-plus in Ibadan echoes instrumental-rational action in social action theory which postulated that individual actions are motivated and directed by goals rather than values. The families, musicians, religious leaders and members, politicians, police officers, bank officials etc. are obstacles to curbing yahoo plus because of the monetary benefit they gain from yahoo-

boys. The implication of this is the high rate of youth delving into it and other social problems that accompanies it.

Limitation and Areas of further Research

This paper was only based on ethnography/qualitative studies, quantitative approach is needed in future on the trajectories of cybercrime and multicounty studies on the problematic will also add to knowledge.

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