



The Internet and Emergence of Yahooboy sub-Culture in Nigeria

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Abstract

Despite its function as a significant symbol of modernity, and, indeed, as an engine for economic growth, the Internet equally functions as a potent global destabilizing factor for it facilitates subversion. It hinders official control over what information is exchanged within identifiable territorial jurisdictions. Consequently, it has significantly altered the modes of social relation in Africa since its advent. Specifically, in Nigeria it has enabled the emergence of the infamous 'yahooboy' (cybercrime) sub-culture among the youths. This study therefore aims at understanding the impact of such 'indignant' sub-culture on the development, and future of the youths. Essentially, the methods of survey research and participant observation were utilized as the study's modes of inquiry, while the entire work is situated within the hybrid of "multi-linear evolutionary" and "unintended consequences of purposive social action" postulates. In all, the study unearths that the advent of the internet has not only facilitated the growth of yahooboyism in Nigeria, but has equally enhanced the level of sophistication of related finance-based criminality among the youths.

Keywords: Internet, *yahooboyism*; multi-linear evolutionism; social action postulate;

Introduction

Although the computer technology looms as a remarkable development in human history, there are conspicuous platforms to affirm that it is also a potentially subversive technology. The technology has brought striking changes to (African) cultures, our patterns of socialization, and our social institutions. Its effects are however particularly noteworthy in regard to telecommuting and the Internet.

In Nigeria, youths, especially undergraduates and the unemployed have embraced the ICT inventions e.g. mobile telephony, global telecasts etc. such that the Internet medium now takes larger part of their days when compared to their other daily activities. However, the varieties of application offered by the Net such as, electronic mailing, 'chat' systems and Internet messaging (IM), often serve as veritable grounds for carrying out nefarious 'webonomics' and other fraudulent activities by the youths. This has significantly given birth to the emergence of *yahooboy* sub-culture among the Nigerian youths, particularly in urban centers. Unlike the traditional criminal groups, both sexes are functionally involved in *yahooboyism* in Nigeria with varying specialized functions.

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The culture of fraud and corruption prevalent within larger Nigerian society has facilitated the institutionalization of such a youthful version, as a subset. But such a level of 'modernization of criminality' among the Nigerian youths has been solely operationalized by the intrinsically insecure Internet system – a space in which 'nobody knows you are a dog'. This study investigates the significance of the Internet technology to the emergence of *yahooboy*s (cybercrime) sub-culture among Nigerian youths. Through the Net, it has been observed that the *yahooboy*s do engage in online fraud. For instance, selling of fictitious goods/services, and buying what they will not pay for, or paying in no real value, money laundering, hacking and credit card scam, pornography and unconventional sexuality are all objectionable engagements of the *yahooboy*s.

The anonymity and privacy that the Internet provides to potential users has excessively enhanced the degree of fluidity and structural complexity of the *yahooboy*s' operations in Nigeria. Today, they get access to the Internet without exiting the home. Embezzlements, electronic frauds, fictitious sales of properties and cars are all being carried out without leaving a trace (Reddick & King, 2000). Also, gender switching – a new sense of self that is "decentered and multiple" – has emerged among the *yahooboy*s in Nigeria. This is essentially for the purpose of facilitating their nefarious activities. At a single point in time, an individual could claim to be a "beautiful lady" or a "big man" or a "celebrity", all depending on his/her immediate needs.

Ironically, the criminal applications of the Internet facility by the *yahooboy*s in Nigeria can be directly linked to the failure of a political leadership (Adeniran, 2006). It is a common summation that out-of-school students (due to distortions in school calendar) and unemployed youths constitute a considerable percentage of the *yahooboy*s in Nigeria. Indeed, they do ignorantly, but proudly claim that their involvement in cybercrime is a way of getting back at such unjust social system, in a non-violent way.

Conceptual definitions

Cybercrime is broadly used to describe criminal activity in which computers or networks are a tool, a target or a place of criminal activity. A new type of white-collar crime facilitated by technological advances i.e. a crime actualized through the platform of the Internet (Karofi & Mwanza, 2006).

Telecommuting means working from homes rather than in an outside office; utilizing the Internet platform.

Webonomics refers to buying and selling through the Internet platform. It cuts off intermediaries, and encourages anonymous trading.

Yahoboyism is a coinage by the author to represent the activity of online youth fraudsters in Nigeria.

Youths here represent adolescents and young adults' ages 15 – 35 years (Adalemo 1999).

The Internet

The Internet simply implies a global network of interconnected computers that permits individual users to share information along multiple channels. Functionally, a computer that connects to the Internet can access information from a huge array of available servers, and other computers by moving information from them to the computer's local memory. The same connection allows the computer to send information to servers on the network; that information is reciprocally accessed and potentially modified by a variety of other

interconnected computers. A majority of widely accessible information on the Internet consists of inter-linked hypertext documents and other resources of the World Wide Web (www). While various governments and pro-Internet advocates are often prompt at showcasing the positive impacts of the application of the Internet medium in both the private and the public realms, there have been conspicuous evidences revealing the ills accruable to various societies, courtesy of the Internet (Shapiro 1999: 14-17).

In views of Cooper (1997), there are three major features of the Internet which combine to turbo charge, that is, accelerate and intensify online fraud. These are access, affordability and anonymity. They are jointly referred to as the “Triple A Engine”. The Internet is reputed as the world’s largest computer network with an estimate of 1.1 billion users (Global Reach 2003). Today, virtually anyone can access the Internet with a phone line, a computer, and a modem. As such, Internet technology has created a new form of criminality i.e. ‘cybercrime’. It is now possible to gain access to a computer without leaving home i.e. telecommuting, and to engage in hacking and related electronic frauds without leaving a trace. Schaefer (2005:540) observes that in 2000, cybercrime losses by big businesses in the U.S. alone were estimated at \$10 billion. Also, widespread use of computers has facilitated many new ways of participating in deviant behaviour by youths, for e.g. child pornography, prostitution rings, software piracy etc. (Piller 2000). It is generally accepted; therefore, that cybercrime is a product of advances in Internet technology (Karofi & Mwanza, 2006).

The Cyberspace, Culture and Emergence of Yahooboyism in Nigeria

In spite of being one of the most endowed countries, in terms of human and natural resources on earth, Nigeria has remained one of the poorest nations in the world, where the state of human condition has continued to deteriorate over the years. Unemployment, lack of social support and worsening extent of general deprivation has affected the youth in the country.

However, technological advances, especially in information and communication technology, have brought striking changes to our cultures, our patterns of socialization, our social institutions, and our day-to-day social interactions. Such technological innovations are, in fact, being accepted with remarkable speed by the Nigerian youths, hitherto grossly unengaged at both social and economic spheres. As observed by Adeniran (2006), the Internet has brought an astounding alteration in the behavioural patterns of Nigerian youths. Indeed, *yahooboy* sub-culture has emerged from the consensual acceptance of the Internet technology, especially among the youths, in the country. Though, criminality among youths in Nigeria could be traced to the prevalent corrupt practices in the country, the ‘modernization of criminality’ through the electronic superhighway has been serving as the platform for the emergence and sustenance of *yahooboy* sub-culture in Nigeria.

Ogburn (1922) analyses two aspects of the culture i.e. the technological, which is the material aspect (e.g. inventions) and the ideological /sociological (e.g. norms, beliefs and ideas) which are basically theoretical. According to him, the period of maladjustment when the non-material culture is still struggling to adapt to new material conditions is termed culture lag. In respect to Nigeria, the culture lag created by the introduction of the Internet to our society has provided the platform for emergence of the infamous *yahooboy* sub-culture.

If, as many informed commentators expect, the Internet continues to spread and becomes essentially ubiquitous in economic and social life. Thus the inescapable conclusion is that our societies are going to be increasingly dependent on a fragile and insecure information structure (grc.com/dos/grcdos.htm). Since the cultural patterns of *yahooboyism* are bound to be transmitted across generations, if nothing concrete is done to regulate its spread and usage in our society we will be putting the future of our youths in jeopardy.

The Nigerian Society and Leadership and Corrupt Tendencies

The politics, economy, education and other social institutions, reflect varying degrees of decadence caused by fraudulent acts in Nigeria (Bammeke, 2005, p. 282). In views of Achebe (1983), Nigeria was regarded as one of the most corrupt places in the world due to political recklessness. Decades after, this view is still being revalidated by the yearly *Corruption-Perceptions Index* of the Transparency International on which Nigeria has been occupying one of the lowest positions in Africa and in the world at large.

Indeed, the nation has been described as chaotic, where order is sacrificed and shame no longer exists. Shameful acts are celebrated and success is redefined, as wealth becomes more important than the means of obtaining it (Alder Consulting 2003). Instant wealth is usually celebrated among Nigerian populace regardless of its source. In fact, it is usually equated with smartness and never rebuked where necessary. In Nigeria, corrupt practices are not characteristic of only the political leadership but of leadership at all levels. In this kind of scenario, values of integrity and honesty are despised, as there is total disregard for rules and a non-conformist is more of a marvel (Bammeke 2005). For instance, at both household and community levels in Nigeria, respective agents of socialization taught the young ones to value hard work and integrity, but most often it is at variance with what they observe the elders doing.

Youths and Internet Fraud in Nigeria

It would be inappropriate to describe youths in Nigeria on chronological age because of the multiplicity of opinion on this issue. Meanwhile, the *Social Development Policy* for Nigeria (1980) defines youths as those between ages 12 and 30 years. For the purpose of this study, the term youths will simply refer to adolescents and young adults.

However, the divergence with respect to the age of the youths does not manifest in the description of their characteristics. The Nigerian youths are noted for being idealistic, adventurous, resourceful, inquisitive and proactive (Adalemo, 1999). In the face of proper motivation, the Nigerian youth is prepared to contribute to the development of the nation (Mabogunje, 1998). To Adeniyi (1999), since the youths are taken as the foundation for the future growth and sustainable development of a nation, they are the key agents for social change, economic development and technological innovations. Hence, the failure of leadership at all levels in Nigeria to promote positive values for the youths has often translated into social incongruence.

Every society has norms that define acceptable behaviour, and agents of socialization socially transmit such norms. But what happens when there is a discrepancy between what is taught and what is observed? Can the youth really be expected to eschew fraud when they can see that fraudulent individuals have great affluence and society does not despise them for their questionable wealth? Ninalowo (2004) opines that in societies such as Nigeria with gross structural inequalities, weak sanctioning system and wide gap

between the “haves” and the “have-nots”, there is a tendency for the deprived to reject rules and embrace illegal means of achieving culturally prescribed goals. The involvement of youths in Nigeria in online fraudulent practices cannot be separated from the value that the society places on wealth accumulation. Just recently, a new generation bank operating in Nigeria handed over two secondary school leavers, whose bank accounts were found to contain ₦18.7 million to the operatives of EFCC (www.efccnigeria.org). The youths, who confessed to be unemployed, said they got the monies through the Internet. This is just a reflection of the kind of youths the society would be breeding if moral decadence, such nefarious utilization of the Internet platform, continues to hold sway in the country.

The EFCC’s Crackdown on Yahooboy in Nigeria

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission was established in 2002. However the bill for its establishment i.e. *Advance Fee Fraud Act* was signed into law in June 2006. The agency is primarily saddled with the responsibility of dealing with online fraudsters. It was not surprising that the EFCC followed up immediately by visiting cybercafés in Lagos. Notorious hideouts of online criminals such as Ikeja, Lagos Mainland, Festac Town, and Lagos Island have not been spared. Several cyber crime suspects aged between 18 and 25 years were caught in the act of sending scam mails to Europe, America, among others. Arrested along with them were the owners of the cybercafés and landlords of the buildings in which they were located. A total of 74 computer systems were also confiscated during the raids.

This recent crackdown by the operatives of EFCC on online fraudsters is generally believed to be a good avenue for redeeming the battered image of the country among the global community. Nevertheless, the utilization of the agency as a tool of political persecution, particularly during the last general election of May 2007 has made the agency lose considerable measure of acceptability. However, the jailing for 6 years of popular Lagos fraudster – Ade Bendel by a Lagos court on 13th December 2007 was a clear indication that the fight against *yahooboyism* is attaining a remarkable success in the country (www.efccnigeria.org).

Multi-Linear Evolutionary Theory

Early evolutionists such as August Comte (1798-1857) and Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) essentially saw the process of social change as entailing the movement of the entire society which they likened to a living organism, from a simple state to a more complex form of social organization. However, contemporary evolutionary theorists such as Gerhard Lenski hold that changes in societies are often multi-linear in scope than to rely on the more limited unilinear perspective. Multi-linear evolutionary theory affirms that change can occur in several ways, and does not inevitably lead in the same direction (Haines 1988).

Multi-linear theorists recognize that human culture has evolved along a number of lines (Schaefer 2005: 528). Sociologists today believe that events do not imperatively follow in a single or even several straight lines, but instead are subject to disruptions. In this era of massive socio-economic and technological change, such as, the Internet development, it is becoming increasingly impossible to predict the effects of such innovation on different societies. In Nigeria, the advent of Internet technology has facilitated the growth of ‘yahooboy’ sub-culture (cybercrime), though the invention was never projected to

facilitate such anti-social application. But, the reality is that it has been enhancing the 'modernization of criminality' among the youths.

The Unanticipated Consequences of Purposive Social Action Postulate

Robert Merton emphasizes the causal-cum intentional terminology of intended and unintended consequences view popularly associated with social sciences analysis (Elster, 1990). He identifies several mechanisms through which the actual effects of intentions/inventions could deviate from the intended ones. Although this theory offers limited explanation vis-à-vis the possibility of how others will act, it is generally unambiguous in context. Applying this view to analyse the diversion which the *yahooboy*s in Nigeria has put the Internet platform to the claim of both intended and unintended actions is particularly relevant. Therefore, in this study, this Mertonian view will help to analyse why the intended (manifest) functions of the Internet grossly deviated from the unintended (latent) functions which the 'yahooboy's' in Nigeria have been putting it into.

Theoretical Hybridization

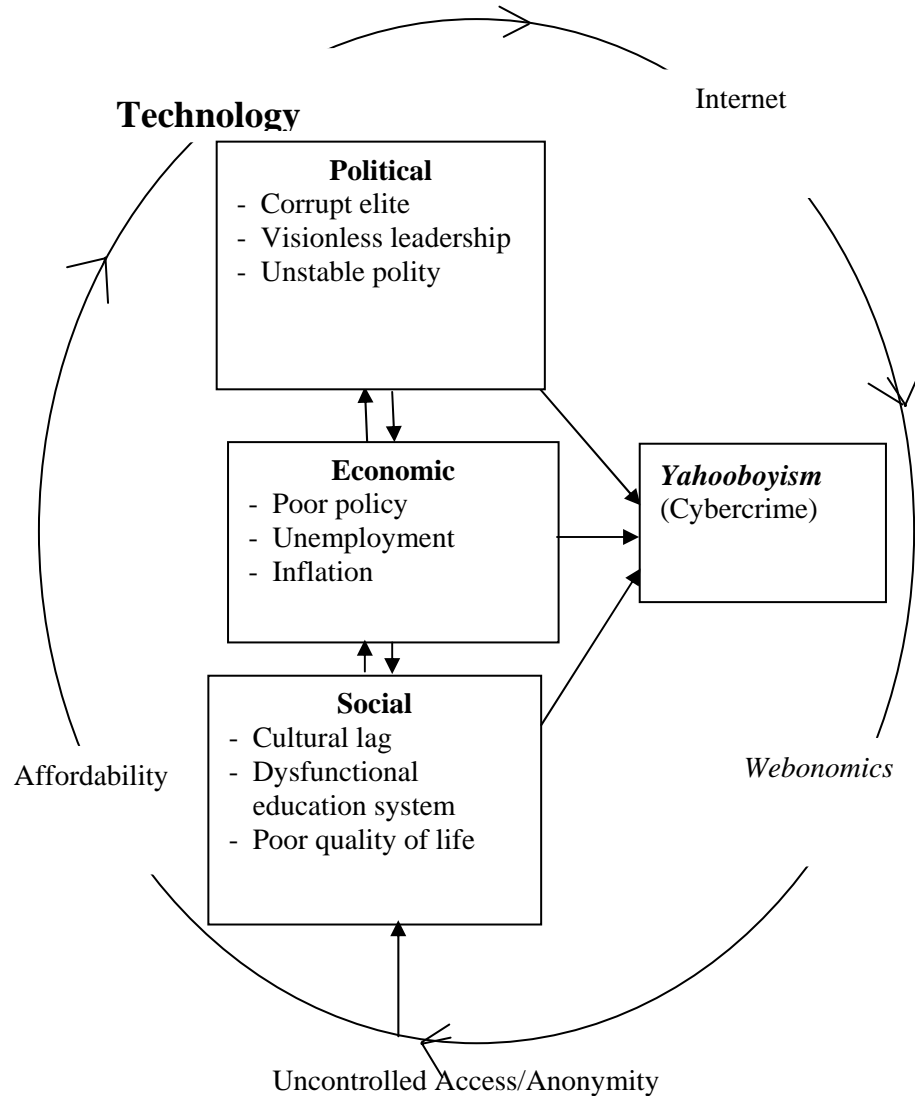
This theoretical synthesis entails the integration of the two applied theories. This is done primarily to ensure that both compliment each other's shortcomings. The result is therefore a hybrid theory with enhanced efficacy. Hence, the study adopts a synthesis of the two perspectives above. While the multi-linear perspective provides a succinct explanation of the multiplier effect nature of the Internet technology, the Mertonian perspective does the explanation of its specific impact over time and space. The Internet is a culturally transferred product, which has shaped mode of social relations among youths in Nigeria significantly.

The Study's Conceptual Framework

Analyzing the relationship between the Internet medium and incidence of *yahooboyism* in Nigeria will require operationalizing a concise definition of such association by way of depiction of a framework that sufficiently links vagaries of both concepts together. **Fig. 1** below explicates a conceptual framework that is useful in understanding such linkage. The conceptual framework has one "**Super determinant**" component and three "**Distinct factors**" contributing to the growth of *yahooboy*s sub-culture in Nigeria. That is:

- The Internet technology – the "Super determinant"
- Political factors
- Economic factors
- Social factors.

Fig 1: Conceptualization of the Relationship between the Internet and *Yahoboyism*



The solitary “**Super determinant**” component is described by vagaries of the Internet platform i.e. an array of applications it has provided for utilization. The “**Distinct factors**” defined by broader political, economic and social context within which the youths (*yahoboyism*) pursue their interests and their ability to take purposeful action. While the “**Super determinant**” component serves as the means, the “**Distinct factors**” functionally affect one another, and in unison they have implications for the menace of *yahoboyism* in Nigeria.

Implications of the Conceptual Framework

Sustained interaction between vagaries of the Internet technology i.e. the “Super determinant” component and relevant “Distinct factors” –political, economic and social, will often lead to the growth of *yahooboyism* syndrome in Nigeria.

The Study Location

The Lagos metropolis is made up of two parts; that is, the Island and the Mainland (further sub-divided into 20 Local Government Areas (LGAs). The choice of Lagos, Nigeria’s commercial capital and former seat of the federal government was predicated on the fact that it serves as home to all Nigerians. Lagos metropolis has nearly 10million inhabitants (see Appendix II) and is the most populous urban center in Nigeria.

Rural-urban migration is estimated at 78% of the metropolitan population growth (Africa Atlas 2002). As such, twelve (12) urban blights where housing condition including refuse disposal, health facilities and access to public utilities are very low have been identified in the metropolis. Transportation disorganization is usually a common feature due to absence of integrated metropolitan transport system. Lagos metropolis has the single largest concentration of Nigeria’s commerce. Its seaports handle more than 80% of Nigeria’s maritime trade, while its airport is the busiest in the country. It has 2 public universities and notable 5-star hotels. The metropolis has an annual population expansion of 5% and is projected to become a mega city with an estimate of 35 million inhabitants by 2020 (UN-HABITAT’s State of the World Cities Report 2006/7).

The Research Design

The design combines two research methods: survey research and participant observation. For the purpose of the survey, a sample size of 400 youths (ages 15 - 35years) is considered appropriate in view of time and financial constraints. A household survey of 400 youth respondents based on existing *National Population Commission* (NPC) Enumeration Areas (EAs) was carried out within the Lagos metropolis. To Blau and Ferber (1986, p. 6) “a household consists of one or more persons living in one dwelling unit and sharing living expenses”.

The respondents were systematically drawn from 4 randomly selected *Local Government Areas* (LGAs) out of the 20 LGAs in Lagos. This assisted the researcher to obtain information on online activities of youths with varying degrees of access to the Internet (i.e. from those who infrequently used the Internet to those who visited the Internet often). However, the sample was drawn, bearing in mind the variables of sex, age, education, residence and occupation within the study population. The *stratified random sampling technique* that combined both randomization and stratification was employed in order to make the sample sufficiently representative of the study population. The applied *research instrument* was the *structured interview schedule*.

The second method incorporated into the design is the observation of information accessible to youths on the Internet. Thus, the researcher explores the possible outcomes of contacts that are made online by youths in Nigeria. This complemented, as well as assisted in cross-checking interviewed users of the Internet.

Analysis of the Study’s Statistics

The results of determining any existing relationship(s) among different variables of interests are presented as follows:

Hypothesis 1(H₁): Nigerian political system enhances the growth of “yahooboy” sub-culture.

Cross-tabulation of Politics and ‘Yahooboy’ sub-Culture

		Yahooboyism		Total
		Yes	No	
Politics	Yes	291 (75.8%)	22(5.7%)	313
	No	52 (13.5%)	19(5.0%)	71
Total		343	41	381

Source: Field Survey, 2008

Measure of Effect of Politics on ‘Yahooboy’ sub-Culture

Political system	fo	fe	fo-fe	(fo-fe) ²	$\frac{(fo-fe)^2}{fe}$
Yes/Implied	291	279.6	11.4	129.96	0.46
No/Implied	22	33.4	-11.4	129.96	3.89
Yes/Not Implied	52	63.4	-11.4	129.96	2.05
No/Not Implied	19	7.6	11.4	129.96	17.1
Total	384	384.0	0		23.5

Source: Field Survey, 2008

Decision Rule:

$X^2_{cal} = 23.5$

Degree of freedom (v) = (R-1) (C-1)
 = (2-1) (2-1)
 = 1

However, at 0.05 level of significance,

$X^2_{tab} = 3.84$

Since $x^2_{cal} > X^2_{tab}$ i.e. $23.5 > 3.84$

Therefore, Hypothesis 1 (H₁) was valid and accepted. Corrupt political leadership was utilized as a measure of persistence of “yahooboy” sub-culture among the youths i.e. ‘yahooboyism’ being a subset of corruption in higher societal realm. The finding equally revalidated aspects of the notion of *Mertonian* perspective in particular and the synthesized theoretical framework as a whole.

Hypothesis II (H_{ii}): Poor economic condition facilitates youths' involvement in fraudulent practices.

Cross-tabulation of Economy and 'Yahooboys' sub-Culture

		Yahooboyism		Total
		Yes	No	
Economy	Yes	230 (66.5%)	43 (12.4%)	273
	No	51 (14.7%)	22 (6.4%)	73
Total		281	65	346

Source: Field Survey, 2008

Measure of Effect of Economy on 'Yahooboys' sub-Culture

Economic condition	fo	fe	fo-fe	(fo-fe) ²	$\frac{(fo-fe)^2}{Fe}$
Yes/Implied	230	221.7	8.3	68.9	0.31
No/Implied	43	51.3	-8.3	68.9	1.34
Yes/Not Implied	51	59.3	-8.3	68.9	1.16
No/Not Implied	22	13.7	8.3	68.9	5.03
Total	346	346.0	0		7.84

Source: Field Survey, 2008

Decision Rule:

$$X^2_{cal} = 7.84$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Degree of freedom (v)} &= (R-1) (C-1) \\ &= (2-1) (2-1) \\ &= 1 \end{aligned}$$

However, at 0.05 level of significance,

$$X^2_{tab} = 3.84$$

Since $X^2_{cal} > X^2_{tab}$ i.e. $7.84 > 3.84$

Therefore, Hypothesis II (H_{ii}) was validly accepted. That is, unfavourable economic condition negatively impacts youth development. As a matter of fact, it encouraged the youths to attempt illicit activities such as 'yahooboyism' for economic survival. This scenario further supported the assertion of the synthesized theoretical platform whereby the medium of the Internet was being used unwholesomely for unintended economic gains.

Hypothesis III (H_{iii}): Decayed value system causes evolution of 'yahooboys' syndrome in Nigeria.

Cross-tabulation of Value System and 'Yahooboys' sub-Culture

		Yahooboyism		Total
		Yes	No	
Value System	Yes	212 (66.9%)	13 (4.1%)	225
	No	62 (19.6%)	30 (9.4%)	92
Total		274	43	317

Source: Field Survey, 2008

Measure of Effect of Value System on ‘Yahooboy’ sub-culture

Value system	fo	fe	fo-fe	(fo-fe) ²	$\frac{(fo-fe)^2}{Fe}$
Yes/Implied	212	194.5	17.5	306.3	1.6
No/Implied	13	30.5	-17.5	306.3	10.6
Yes/ Not Implied	62	79.5	-17.5	306.3	3.9
No/Not Implied	30	12.5	17.5	306.3	245.5
Total	317	317.0	0		40.0

Source: Field Survey, 2008

Decision Rule:

$X^2_{cal} = 40.0$

Degree of freedom (v) = (R-1) (C-1)
 = (2-1) (2-1) = 1

However, at 0.05 level of significance,

$X^2_{tab} = 3.84$

Since $X^2_{cal} > X^2_{tab}$ i.e. $40.0 > 3.84$

Therefore, Hypothesis III (H_{iii}) was relevant because the present value system in Nigeria has laid excessive insistence on riches irrespective of their source. This ultimately encourages sustenance of ‘yahooboy’ sub-culture in the country. Specifically, the multi-linear evolutionary perspective is useful in this regard while the synthesized theoretical platform provides a broader explication of the situation.

Hypothesis IV (Hiv): The EFCC* has been effective in eradicating ‘yahooboyism’ in Nigeria.

Cross-tabulation of EFCC’s Impact and ‘Yahooboy’ sub-Culture

		Yahooboyism		Total
		Yes	No	
EFCC	Yes	178 (57%)	52 (16.7%)	230
	No	33 (10.6%)	49 (15.7%)	82
Total		211	101	312

Source: Field Survey, 2008

Measure of Effect of EFCC’s Impact on Yahooboyism in Nigeria

EFCC	fo	Fe	fo-fe	(fo-fe) ²	$\frac{(fo-fe)^2}{fe}$
Yes/Implied	178	155.5	22.5	506.25	3.3
No/Implied	52	74.5	-22.5	506.25	6.8
Yes/Not Implied	33	55.5	-22.5	506.25	9.1
No/Not Implied	49	26.5	22.5	506.25	19.1
Total	312	312.0	0		38.3

Source: Field Survey, 2008

Decision Rule:

$$X^2_{\text{Cal}} = 38.3$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Degree of freedom (v)} &= (R-1) (C-1) \\ &= (2-1) (2-1) = 1 \end{aligned}$$

★ Economic and Financial Crimes Commission

However, at 0.05 level of significance,

$$X^2_{\text{tab}} = 3.84$$

Since $X^2_{\text{cal}} > X^2_{\text{tab}}$ i.e. $38.3 > 3.84$

Therefore, Hypothesis IV (H_{iv}) was accepted. That is, there was an existence of a relationship between the activities of the EFCC and uncovering of the nefarious activities of 'yahooboy' in Nigeria. Though considerable percentage of total respondents (i.e. 22%) deliberately skipped responses to the EFCC's inquiry ostensibly 'fearful' of possible involvement of the dreaded agency in this study, or being disgruntled with the organization due to its recent involvement in Nigerian political maneuvering. But majority of those who responded (i.e. 57%) affirmed that the agency saddled with the task of eradicating 'yahooboy' and their antics from the country has been functional despite observable deviation from its primary objectives.

Discussion

From the study it can be deduced that the menace of *yahooboyism* in Nigeria has been prominent among the youth, especially those residing in the urban centers. In the light of the results of the study's hypotheses, inactivity on the part of the political leadership, which has failed in giving needed direction and opportunities to the youths in Nigeria, has been the major factor facilitating the unwholesome utilization of the Internet platform in defrauding unsuspecting individuals across the globe. Equally, the extent of anonymity provided by the Internet has been serving as potent impetus for enhanced nefarious application of the medium by Nigerian youths.

Specific Findings of the Study

It was revealed that:

- The advent of the Internet technology in Nigeria has facilitated the 'modernization' of fraudulent practices among the youths.
- Online fraud has been observed as a popularly accepted means of economic sustenance among Nigerian youths, especially the college age ones.
- The corruption of the political leadership has successfully enhanced the growth of 'yahooboy' sub-culture among the youths.
- The value, which the society placed on wealth accumulation, has been a potent determinant of youths' involvement in online fraudulent practices in Nigeria.
- Unemployment was also seen as a crucial factor luring youths to *yahooboyism* in Nigeria.
- And, more importantly, many Nigerian youths are aware of the existence of the EFCC and, indeed, applauded some of its activities. However, its recent use as a political tool by the political class has substantially dented its image, and of course, effectiveness.

Recommendations

On the basis of the study's findings, which emanated from the study's reviewed text, utilized established theories, and the outcomes of the data analyses, the following suggestions are deemed expedient for policy planners in particular, and the entire society in general, to tackle the menace of cyber-related crimes that are now common among youths in Nigeria:

- The use and applications of the Internet technology should attract better official regulations in Nigeria so as to limit the propensity of its unwholesome utilization by the youths.
- Intervening socio-economic measures, such as social benefits for the youths (especially, the unemployed) should be put in place by the government.
- Adequate checks should be engendered to make official corruption unattractive and imperatively eliminated from Nigerian society.
- Meaningful societal value re-orientation should take place, whereby virtues of honesty, selflessness and hard work attributes hitherto associated with the Nigerian traditional society should be made relevant in contemporary Nigeria.
- Pro-active economic policies that could engender employment opportunities for the youths should be encouraged.
- Agencies, such as the EFCC, put in place to eradicate the menace of fraudulent practices should be made truly independent of various political maneuverings in the country in order to enhance their performance.

Conclusion

This research piece has sufficiently linked the acceptance, and prevalence of menace of *yahooboy* sub-culture among youths in Nigeria to the advent and acceptance of the highly unregulated Internet facility in the country. It is, nevertheless, viewed that ending such social incongruence in Nigeria will require a top-down and bottom-up institutional re-appraisal of basic societal structures i.e. the social system; economy and politics. Also, a functional autonomy needs to be granted to established anti-fraud outfits like the EFCC in order to make them more productive and effective in their operations.

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