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Yahoo-plus in Ibadan: Meaning, Characterization and Strategies

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Abstract

Cybercrime commonly known as yahoo in Nigeria, and some parts of Africa, is one of the most formidable financial and security problems confronting Nigeria and the world today. The problem has become so significant that international organisations- including the United Nations- and developed countries are investing millions of Dollars and researching into understanding its manifestations and dynamics. Of particular concern is that cybercrime is very dynamic. And in places like Nigeria, it has moved from yahoo yahoo to yahoo plus indicating a high level of advancement in criminal activities law enforcement agencies and victims are yet to comprehend. While many previous researches have done much on cybercrime, our data suggest there is a need for more research as cybercrime continues to transform and this transformative innovation have largely made it difficult for significant success to be made in curbing the crime. Although much has been written on cybercrime, more needed to be known about yahoo plus especially the roles of the meaning, characterization and strategies. The empirical bases of this article are in-depth interviews with 15 yahoo boys and 30 community members in Nigeria- Africa's most populous country and one of the poorest countries in the world.

Keywords: Cybercrime, Yahoo-Yahoo, Yahoo-Plus.

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Introduction

Cybercrime is a very popular crime enabled with deep penetration of information technology especially the internet. Cybercrime is the most challenging and dynamic security threats of this generation and may creep into the next without sufficient cyber criminological data and studies. There is thus the need for studies that capture the transmogrifying contours of cybercrime. This is particularly so as cybercrime penetrates countries beyond developed countries. In fact, developing countries are becoming more involved in cybercrime and their countries lack capacity to counteract the problem. Cybercrimes cut across underdeveloped and developing countries (Adeniran, 2008). Different people across the world have different reasons for engaging in cybercrime. For Ibrahim (2016), the interest in cybercrime in Nigeria is often traceable to economic gains rather than tangentially to psychosocial and geopolitical gains. For Akanle, Adesina and Ankarah, (2016) there are those that engage in cybercrime due to unemployment, lack of social support and failed leadership etc. Also, deprived youths in Nigeria reject rules and embrace the illegal means of achieving culturally prescribed goals because of the structural inequality, weak sanctioning system and the wide gap between the haves and the have nots (Adeniran, 2008). Nonetheless, youths in Nigeria engage in cybercrime due to laziness, greed and the urge to live a luxurious lifestyle (Tade, 2013; Akanle, Adesina & Ankarah, 2016).

It has been observed across literature that cybercrimes such as fraudulent sales online, online romance scam, E-commerce fraud, consumer scam and advance fee fraud are prevalent in Nigeria; they are classified under a code name generally known as yahoo-yahoo and the perpetrators are generally referred to as yahoo-boys (Adeniran, 2008; Esharenana, Adomi & Igun, 2008; Aransiola & Asindemade, 2011; Ojedokun & Eraye, 2012; Tade & Aliyu, 2016; Akanle, Adesina & Ankarah, 2016; Ibrahim, 2016; Abdulrasheed, 2017). In explaining the ways to identify yahoo-boys in Nigeria, Aransiola and Asindemade posited that yahoo-boys can be identified by the way they live.

The claim above is supported by the findings of Ojedokun and Eraye, (2012) that yahoo-boys do spend their proceeds extravagantly by throwing parties and clubbing, lodging in expensive hotels, buying exotic cars, flashy phones and living in a well-furnished apartment. Yahoo-boys often enjoy the respect and praises they receive from the members of the society and will go to any length to retain it; they also enjoy the big boy status and are popular among friends and lecturers (Tade, 2013; Tade and Aliyu, 2011).

The Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), police officers, National Cyber Security Division and other government agencies have employed different strategies to combat cybercrimes; they have also spread the awareness and exposed the various tactics used by the cybercriminals which has made their job much more difficult and it has also reduced the chances of successfully defrauding their victims online (Adesina, 2017). The effect of this is that the yahoo-boys will be deprived from the luxurious life style which they hitherto enjoyed, they will be unable to live up to responsibilities and pressures exerted upon them by their peers and lovers and they will be regarded as weak and less manly; they might also suffer all sort of insult and scorn from their romantic partner and peers. In order to avoid this and other similar experiences of being broke, most of the yahoo-boys have turned to various spiritualists for help. With the help of various spiritual ingredients, they can successfully scam their victims by hypnotizing them even though

these victims might be aware of the prevalence of cybercrime; this process is referred to as yahoo-plus (Tade, 2013; Aransiola & Asidemade, 2008).

The use of spiritual power has always been part of Yoruba culture. They make use of spiritual powers to solve various problems in their society such as poverty, barrenness, diseases, love, good and will (Tade 2013). As much as these spiritual powers serve good purposes, they have also been used to do evil such as getting quick wealth, retaining power; snatching people's wife and husbands and so on. These spiritual powers are evident in different areas of the society such as the political, religious social and economic areas. The politicians are known for the practice of oath taking and charms to emerge as winners of elections and also to retain political power (Oviasuyi, Ajagun & Isiraoje, 2011). Pastors and Islamic clerics often make use of spiritual power to improve their ministration and also to heal the sick (Jimoh, 2014). Even, the knowledge and practice of spiritual powers are often acted in local dramas. This explains the exposure of youths to the use of spiritual powers to boost their fraudulent activities online. Research questions this article therefore engages are: what is the meaning of yahoo-plus? Who are involved in yahoo-plus? What are the strategies employed in carrying out yahoo-plus in Ibadan?

Theoretical Orientation

Human action is social so far as the acting individual attaches a subjective meaning to it. Mere behaviour becomes action when it derives dealings with others and when it is meaningful; that is oriented in its course. The basic requirement is that the actor is aware of what he or she is doing which can be analyzed in terms of their intentions, motives and feelings as they are experienced (Riss, 2017). Riss, (2017) explained that it is not possible for human action to be nonsocial while he is in consciousness. Even if one was unconscious, the consequences of his action can be social. The motive for Yahoo-plus in Nigeria is instrumentally rational. It is fair to assume that the youths who practice ordinary yahoo-yahoo still care a little about values even though they go through much stress and receive little reward. They are somewhat concerned with what people will say and how relatives and friends will react if they should add spiritual ingredients to boost their chances of defrauding their victim effectively. However, people that have upgraded to yahoo-plus have thrown away their conscience, they are more concerned with the gain above every other thing and their strategy is structured towards achieving their goal. The involvement and actions of the ladies, policemen etc. in yahoo-plus are instrumentally rational. Yahoo-boys alone do not make up yahoo-plus; it is complex and it involves wide participation of members of the society who are only after the economic gains.

Methodology

The study was conducted in three areas in Ibadan, southwest Nigeria. Ibadan is located in the southwestern part of Nigeria. It is located at 145km north of Lagos; it is a prominent transit point between the coastal region and the areas to the North. Ibadan is located on the longitude 3⁰⁵ of the Greenwich meridian and latitude 7⁰²³ to 7⁰⁵⁵ north of the equator (Oladele & Olademeji, 2017). The areas in Ibadan where the research was conducted include: Apete, Ajibode and Rindroad. These areas were chosen because yahoo boys especially those practicing yahoo plus seldom live in school hostels. They love luxury life styles and hence stay in hotels or rented luxury apartment that are well furnished to

their taste. They love privacy and prefer to live closer to clubs and places that suits their lifestyle; this is because the police are always on their tail so living far away from places, they are addicted to going will be dangerous for them. The three areas that were chosen have the characteristics of the lifestyle mentioned above; most clubs we have in Ibadan are located in Ring road, we also have the presence of Shoprite and they are easily accessible from Apete and Ajibode especially at night. Also, in Apete and Ajibode, there is Ventura mall and a large joint where drugs are being sold; the drug is called “skuchis” (it is the mixture of several hard drugs). All these characteristics made this area suitable for the research study.

This study is exploratory in nature. Not much is known about yahoo-plus due to the dearth of studies in the area. Data was collected through In-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs). 3 FGDs which included five participants in each group, were conducted for the community members in the three areas. FGDs were not conducted for the yahoo-boys because they could not be gathered in one place. They were always on the move for entertainment or busy working. 30 IDIs were conducted- 15 were for yahoo-boys and 15 were for community members. Accidental and purposive sampling was adopted to reach the yahoo-boys and the community members. The yahoo-boys were reached with the help of informant who is well familiar with their activities. The informant sells most of the applications which the yahoo-boys use for their operations. The informant also sells and buys itune cards, gift card and Amazon cards which is a major medium that the yahoo-boys use to collect money from the victim. The availability of the respondents for the study was possible through the snowballing sampling method. The sampling strategy was generally purposive.

Resident of Apete area, Ajibode area and Ring road area and also yahoo-boys in these areas constituted the study population. Three FGD sessions were conducted for the residents of the area to know their reaction towards yahoo-plus. In-depth interview was personally conducted with yahoo-boys in Apete, Ajibode and Ringroad. The aim and purpose of study were explained to them before the interview session. Mostly they preferred to be met in the drug joint (skushis), Ventura mall and various clubs so interview was mostly conducted at night. The IDI contained questions that educed responses from the yahoo-boys on their socio-economic background, the meaning of yahoo plus, the technique of yahoo plus, the role of ladies in yahoo-plus and the obstacle towards curbing yahoo-plus. The sessions were recorded with a cell phone, transcribed and analyzed using manual content analysis and ethnographic summaries. While the content analysis was used to explore and interpret the data collected, ethnographic summaries was used to further enhance data interpretation through the direct quotation of important responses that originated in the course of discussions. In order to guarantee anonymity, personal information that could be used to identify the respondents was not obtained.

Findings and Discussion

1. The Meaning of Yahoo-Plus

All the respondents reported that yahoo-plus is when a yahoo-boy adds anything spiritual to yahoo-yahoo. They explained that it is almost impossible to scam anyone

without the spiritual influence because victims are getting wiser and more familiar with their strategies. A respondent stated that;

Yahoo-plus is when a yahoo-boy added (adds) charm to yahoo-yahoo so that he will be getting plenty mugu (victims) and plenty money. Nowadays, young boy (are) driving big (expensive) cars because of yahoo-plus. It helps them to have plenty money that their parent cannot give them; the bad thing is that they use to die a painful death. (*Female respondent/IDI/35years/Ajibode*).

Another respondent stated that;

Baba the hustle is real, if you no add something, na you go carry last (don't add any spiritual ingredient, you won't get anything). Without any help, you can't collect one dollar from a client. Let's stop deceiving ourselves everybody you see *wey dey make am dey add small jazz* (that is making progress in his work is adding a little of voodoo). It is only a foolish yahoo-boy that will be wasting his strength trying to scam a client without spiritual help. Only the person that has added jazz (has added voodoo) will successfully win a client heart without stress. (*Yahoo plus/IDI/male/26/Ring-road*).

The use of voodoo is now rampant and hardly can you find a yahoo boy that has not added one spiritual ingredient or the other. This finding correlates with the work of (Tade, 2013) that "internet fraudsters are drifting into fusing spirituality with cybercrime to become successful". Quoting a yoruba proverb which states that "*ojuboro o se fi gbomo lowo ekuro*" (casual strategy cannot be used to extract a nut from the kernel), he explained that it is difficult for yahoo boys to thrive without the addition of spiritual ingredients (Tade, 2013). Some respondents explained that doing jazz is more than going to the native doctor as widely assumed by members of the society:

Anything you add to improve yahoo-yahoo in order to improve your chance of getting a client is yahoo-plus. Whether you go to the native doctor or church or mosque or you go to India, or china, so far you have added something spiritual, it is yahoo-plus. Yahoo-plus is not as bad as people paint it and it is not limited to the spiritual influence of a native doctor. (*Yahooplus/IDI/30/Apete; Yahooplus/IDI/male/28/Ring-road; Yahooboy/IDI/male/23/Ajibode*).

From the above, yahoo plus means the addition of any spiritual ingredient (Tade, 2013) and engagement in spiritual activities for the purpose of boosting the chances of a yahoo boy in getting a client online and successfully defrauding the client. Also, for an individual to practice yahoo-plus, he or she must be a yahoo-boy or yahoo girl. Therefore, yahoo plus can be referred to as the advancement of yahoo-yahoo to the spiritual level. In differentiating yahoo-plus from yahoo-yahoo, a respondent stated that:

You can't differentiate between yahoo yahoo and yahoo plus by checking their body (mere looking for signs). It is not as if yahoo plus guys (yahoo boys) involved in yahoo plus are going around putting on rings and you can't conclude that everyone putting on ring is a doing bubble-plus (involved in yahoo plus),

none of them do carry calabash around; some, you can't even find jass (anything fetish in their home) and most of them don't have Gbere (incisions) on their body. The only way to differentiate is the level of their money, cars and mouth (wealth accumulation), their influence and the rate at which they are paid by their maga (victim) (*yahoo boy/ IDI/male/25/Ring-road*).

The difference between yahoo-yahoo and yahoo-plus can be determined by the level of wealth accumulation by those practicing either of them; majority of the respondents reported that the era of rings and incisions are long gone and people have advanced. In fact, one can hardly, physically, distinguish a yahooboy practicing ordinary yahoo-yahoo from those practicing yahoo plus except through their financial status and their influence in the society. This finding resonates with the findings of Tade, (2013) that the dwindling fortunes of yahoo-boys in getting victims due to the increase in awareness of some of their strategies by the police officers and cyber security operatives, have pushed many of them to seeking spiritual help. This means that people involved in yahoo plus are getting spiritual help therefore they are richer than people doing ordinary yahoo-yahoo, hence, a suitable way of distinguishing them.

2. Technique of cybercrime

Money is an object with sacred power which can be used for good and bad purposes; according to Durkheim, "money is revered, feared, worshiped, and treated with the highest respect" (Russel & Melanie, 1990). Desmond captures this by expressing:

To many of us, money is a mystery, a symbol handled mainly by the priests of high finance, and regarded by us with much of the same reverence and awe as the primitive feels toward the sacred relics providing magical potency in a tribal ritual. As if in a higher plane of reality, the symbol seems to operate in an incomprehensible, mystical way, understood and controllable only by the magic of brokers, accountants, lawyers, and financiers. . . . Like spellbound savages in the presence of the holy, we watch in wonder the solemn proceedings, feeling in a vague, somewhat fearful way that our lives and the happiness of our children are at the mercy of mysterious forces beyond our control. Apart from the esoteric rites of high finance, money seems to function in everyday life much like a miraculous talisman, bringing to us the gratification of almost every conceivable desire. Wherever we go, if we have money, people hasten to do our bidding, as if placed under a magical charm ____ Like a magical charm, money brings power, which can be used either for good or bad purposes (Russel & Melanie, 1990).

The importance and value of money is particularly stressed by some Yoruba cultural ideals of money. Yoruba people strongly believe that money is the key, (*owo ni koko*) it is powerful and indispensable (*ko se e mani owo*). In fact, 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).

As much as the Yoruba strongly acknowledge the importance of money, they also hold in high esteem, values such as integrity, honesty and hard work. They believe one should

acquire money in an honest manner (*owo eru kii gb'oro*) and the only way one can achieve this is to work hard as hard work is an antidote for poverty (*ise l'oogun ise*) (Tade, 2013; Falola & Adebayo, 2000). However, the mindset and approach of many youths in Ibadan towards work and money do not measure up to Yoruba's believe in hard work and honesty; rather, they look for short cut to success by engaging in cybercrime which is popularly known in Nigeria as yahoo yahoo. Yahoo yahoo has been lucrative since its inception until recently; it became hard for yahoo-boys to successfully defraud their victim due to the increase in awareness of the tactics used by yahoo-boys and the alarming rate at which youth practice it (Tade, 2013; Arinsola & Asimade 2011). Therefore, it became necessary to look for another means by which they can sustain the crime. Even in Yourba culture it is believed that when a door of opportunity is locked, you either find a new key or break down the door. This means money must be made by whatever means, giving it all it takes. (*oyinbo ti o se pencil lo se eraser*) (Falola & Adebayo, 2000). In the same vein, yahoo boys that are finding it difficult to scam their client with existing strategies are turning towards the use of voodoo to further their course and they named it yahoo-plus (Tade, 2013; Arinsola & Asimade 2011).

The use of charm has always been part of the Yoruba culture. They make use of charm to solve many problems in their society such as poverty, barrenness, diseases, love, good will etc (*fadipe*, 1997 as cited in Tade, 2013); when the charm falls into a wrong hand, it can serve great evil and deadly purposes. In line with this, yahoo boys use charm to hypnotize their victims on the internet and defraud them of huge amount of money. However, the technique of yahoo plus and strategy employed by yahoo boys is beyond mere use of charm. Respondent reported that the use of charm has elevated the crime to a level where it accommodates wide network of influential people who perform different tasks at different levels to ensure the success to its final stage (cashing out the money). In line with this, a yahoo boy explained that:

Yahooplus is more like one big family; no yahooboy can be successful alone. Unlike before, few people actually understand how it works and everybody was a maga (victim) including police men. But now, everybody don wise up (everybody is wise). It is true that charm makes it easy to make your maga accept to send money. Now understand; she has accepted to send money, it is now your job to make sure the money gets to you. Although, not all the money will get to you but you will get something reasonable; that is when your blood (refers to the group of yahoo-boys that work together) comes in. right now, any serious person that wants to start yahoo yahoo, he must have these four people: A spiritual man (herbalist, pastor, Islamic scholars), a picker (someone that is capable of receiving huge amount of money without suspicion), as time goes by, he would need police officers and someone influential; a celeb (celebrity) or a politician. If he has all those then he is ready to hustle. (*Yahoo plus/IDI/30/Apete*).

In line with the above, another yahoo boy stated that:

The problem does not lie with the client because he is the only one you are using the package on (voodoo or charm). *Ogun o kin mu eniyan meta po* (three people can't be hypnotized by your charm at the same time). Your charm cannot catch a

prostitute for you; you need to understand how to persuade her so that she can help you manage your call and nude video especially if you are doing dating (online romance scam) those guys (victims) wants it real mhen (man). You need an app professional, someone that is sure and updated; he will provide all the necessary apps you need. The game is changing constantly, for instance, some app are used to protect your information from the police; some app are used to clone your number; there are plenty apps and I can't be saying them. You can't use charm for police because they don't become *babalawo* (equating police to an herbalist). *Awon olopa n'sin oju* (police men are using charms on their eyes to recognize a yahoo boy by mere looking at people). Also, in dating, your *awure* (good will) does not guarantee that the client will send money to you. Based on passed (past) experience, they are very careful to avoid anything that has to do with cash. So, instead of demanding for cash, we demand for gift card, itunes card, Amazon card...there are different cards sha (and so on). Your client will have to go walmart, get the card you demanded and send them to you or she can snap the card number and send them to you so you need someone that can transform that card into money. Bros, in this journey, no one walks alone, you back are not secure so you need trusted allies to watch your back; people think yahoo plus is easy, and we are facing dangers every day. The hustle is real (*Yahoo plus/IDI/27/Apete*).

From the above, we can infer that the emergence of yahoo plus brought with it a problem that needed solution; a new opportunity for different people to participate indirectly and indirectly. Therefore, their technique is not limited to the services and tasks from the spiritualist³; they need help from variety of people. For instance, yahoo-boys are now trying as much as possible to avoid going to the bank to withdraw their money so they tell their client to turn the money into gift cards and then send the code of the gift card to them after which they can now exchange it into money through the help of people that are involved in the buying and selling of different gift cards in Ibadan. Those that are involved in a more advanced level of yahoo plus do receive extremely large amount of money and they can't use their account to collect it directly to avoid EFCC tailing them; so, they seek for the help of musicians and some influential business men to pick the money for them (receive the money into their account) after which they can share the money based on agreed percentage; this people are called pickers¹.

Some respondents also reported that police officers are constantly doing stop and search for anybody they suspect to be yahoo boy. The process of searching involves checking the smart phone of the yahoo-boy and any electronic device he has with him;

³ "Spiritualists, spiritual practitioners" and/or "mercantile native doctors" are concepts adopted in this article with ethnological and sociological dimensions. These concepts refer to collectivities of people who are believed to have supernatural powers to influence and determine consequences of human actions. Yahoo-plus boys/girls and many Nigeria believe that these people can hypnotize people and charm them to behave in ways they would ordinarily not behave. Thus, they are believed to provide supernatural powers to cyber criminals to defraud unsuspecting victims. This is a major part of Nigerian belief systems particularly in the context of study- Ibadan. "Spiritual powers", "spiritual activities" and "spiritual influence" actually all refer actions, influences and powers believed supernatural to hypnotize people to act against their wishes.

their aim is to find anything that can link the suspected person to the fraudulent act. Therefore, they need the help of top police officers that will keep them out of the troubles of police men. For those that does not have that opportunity, they try as much as possible to hide any information that can give them away, by using upgraded software. This software is often sold by software expert. Therefore, a yahoo-boy needs them desperately or risk being busted by the police officers. After connecting with the right people, a yahooboy can now determine which spiritualist to consult. With the aid of the spiritualist, he can now decide the type of charm he wishes to use. In the course of the interview, respondents pointed out three major spiritualists that help yahoo-boys with spiritual ingredients; Islam scholar, the pastors/ prophets and the native doctor. A yahooboy stated thus:

If you want to do yahooplus, it is either you go to *afà ti o gbona* (a powerful islam scholar), they are plenty in Ilorin. Some of them are hotter than herbalist and you need connection to get to them. You can also go to church especially cele, c and s (white garment church). Those ones can also do it for you, sometimes they can give you candles or some ingredient like oil and you will have to pay them. Finally, you can go to babalawo (native doctor); those ones are many in Ijebu, Ofa, ede, illesha (*yahooboy/IDI/24/Ajibode*)

When asked about the different types of charm and how they can be done, the respondents reported that the numbers of charm cannot be determined. The spiritual doctors give charm according to the victim's request and the after consulting the deity. Although one cannot determine all the types of charms yahooboys use to hypnotize their victim, nonetheless, there are major and common ones mentioned by the respondent according to their level of potency.

A yahoo boy explained that:

I don't do babalawo but I know how the shit works (I know how yahoo plus works); you know the ones you know because they were caught and reported. There are so many despicable things that are being done, unimaginable things; in fact bro the fact that you cannot count the number of unimaginable things in this country that can be done to yourself or to other people, spiritually or physically that same way you can't know the types of charms. In my experience, we can't list them but we can categorize them. We have the extreme dangerous charms that require the death of human or directly using human part once and for all, that is *oshole* (if you do this one, you won't hustle to find client; your client is automatic), the other category is *afose* (yahoo boys don't use that a lot anymore. Afose will never help you to come across a good client, in fact, it is just as if you are doing yahoo without plus. It is only useful if you already have a client who refuses to send you money, then you can use afose to command the money from the person. Guy, nobody is ready to go through that stress of looking for a client and yet fear won't make most people do oshole; so, most of the yahoo plus fall under this third category. In this category, you don't kill people or have anybody's death on your head but you use their *asiki* (glory). This category involves performing various activities as directed by the baba and the power of

your charm is determined by the amount of the money you use to buy it. Therefore, it is in levels which means you can do the one of 1k (one thousand naira) and as high as 200K (two hundred thousand naira). The baba will do some things on you, you might be required to eat some concussions, he can put *gbere* (incisions) on your dick (penis), they might use something to cover you for days in baba's house; anything they do is according to the amount you paid and the level you paid for. When you are done with the ritual processes, some activities will follow; this activity is a sort of activation and it is usually the final stage. You see, every money ritual requires *ajioo* (the human spirit) to become potent. The various activity includes and are more than (the activities include but are not limited to) having sex with a lady, making a woman happy, dashing out money, eating feces of human being, barking like a dog, sleeping with mad women, sleeping with children, sleeping with invalids; it can be *abino*, *abuke* (someone with hunch back), using handkerchief to rub a lady's *punani* (virginal) after sex, have sex with your cousin, sleep with an old woman etc. as I said earlier they are many as much as all the imaginable things you are yet to know, the ones we know are the ones that leaked out through repercussions, girlfriends, family members, friends etc (*Yahoo boy/IDI/male/28/ Ring-road*)

Giving his approach, another yahoo boy stated that:

In yahooplus, my *eleda* and *ori* (my spiritual being and my head) is different from yours and when the *ifa* (oracle or deity) is consulted, it demands different things from different people. There is no limitation to what it can demand. What works for me may not work for another person or may work better for another person. Normally, me I don't do jazz (I don't use voodoo), my own is pure luck and hardwork. But I will tell you something, doing jazz is like trade by batter; there are no rules. As you don't follow a particular pattern to choose and ask for the amount of money and potency you want, that is how there is no rule when something is asked in the exchange for your request. The main types of jazz are *oshole tutu*, *oshole agba*, *Atupa onigun meje*, *Afose*, *Olugbohun*. The jaz are not limited to this but these are the ones we have heard of so far and we have seen them it is just that I no get mind (I am not courageous enough). *Oshole tutu* and *oshole agba*, makes use of human; *oshole tutu* is the most potent as far as I am concerned, *Atupa* makes use of animal concussion and other ingredient, you will be given 7 candles together with the concussion; at night you will surround yourself with the candles and sit in the middle then you will have to eat and finish the concussion before the candle burns out. If you are successful, you will be given other directions to renew your jazz and also things that can spoil it. (*yahooplus/IDI/male/28/Apete*).

From the above we can infer that charms are in different levels and require different things. The categories and types of charms being used is quite broad, it is more than *afose*, *ase*, and *gbere* (Tade 2013; Aransiola & asindemade, 2008), which we have seen in previous literature. The major types of charm they listed are '*Oshole tutu*', '*oshole agba*', '*Atupa onigunmerindin ni ogun*'. They further explained that most yahoo-boy don't necessarily know the name or understand the processes of preparation of the charm that was given to them by the spiritual doctor. They simply call it level (a code name when

discussing about charm among friends) and the reason is because the amount a yahoo boy pays for a particular charm determines the ritual ingredient and the activities needed to activate the charm. Therefore, the types and technique of charms is limited and can't be determined. Also, some respondents explained that a yahoo boy does not always need their victim to be physically present before they can use them for ritual:

There is a new trend on instagram and facebook, where some celebrities and rich people look for ways to dash out money, they can tell you to do some very simple task and they will choose the number of people to dash money for that day, some will dash out money in form of recharge cards; I tell you they are using people's head and glory but since it is on social media, nobody is cautious, they keep worshiping them and following all their post and you know, using people is a very long process and it is not obvious. In fact, you will feel normal but spiritually, you are empty (*Male respondent/IDI/25/Ringroad*).

Using people via social media is possible; just the way the yahoo-boy hypnotize their client online, people are also being used through social media to activate different charms. The yahooboys do this inform of charity and free money. However, some respondents claimed that yahoo-plus is different from blood-money or money-ritual. They explained that any spiritual act that involves death or shedding of blood is not yahoo-plus. Giving his view, a respondent stated that:

Yahoo-plus is yahoo-plus, there is nothing like yahoo plus plus or whatever you call it. Once you kill anyone, you are no longer doing yahoo-plus. People that do blood money are not often paid by real or living client; they don't even hustle like we do. All they do is sit and relax while the spirit of the person they killed will bring money to them. Incidents of money ritual have been known for a very long time but nowadays they disguise as yahoo-boys. (*Yahooplus/IDI/male/28/Ring-road*).

In complement, another respondent asserted thus:

People do talk about oshole and atupa; well some yahoo boys do them but I don't really see those ones as yahoo plus again, I see those ones as ogun owo (blood money/ money ritual). Yahoo plus are not murderer(s), we don't kill people. Even ladies do surrender their selves to be used by their boyfriend because they know that we only use their asiki (good luck). In fact, those people doing jazz like oshole, I can guarantee you that it is not an ordinary client that is wiring money to their account; it is the spirit of the person that they used that will be bringing money for them. All they do is to type anything on their laptop and the spirit will send money them. Often time they receive money from people that does not have a valid picture or history on face book (*Yahoo plus/IDI/male/25/ Ajibode*).

Most of the respondent gave the same explanation and also differentiated yahoo plus from money rituals. They explained that they usually sweat and work hard for the money they get and they interact with the client that is giving them money months before the money is sent unlike those that don't get to interact with any client, rather they receive

money from unknown spirit or turn people into bags of money. In contrast, a respondent that claimed to be involved in yahoo-plus before he repented stated that:

All yahoo plus involve the use of human directly or indirectly, in whole or in part. I have some friends that told me how they used human part for the purpose of jazz and some other people have been caught in the act of using human part for ritual purposes. Most of these yahoo-boys pay for a particular charm but they did not know that some part of human were purchased by the herbalist and was used to prepare the charm and transformed into soap for them. In fact I was told by the herbalist that used to do charm for me that the ring given to me has been soaked in blood for seven days and I must use it to shake my friends in other to use their glory and if I don't do it I will run mad. Most yahoo boys don't get the opportunity to know how their charm was prepared because they follow friends who have done it before and they asked the herbalist to do the same thing for them so, there is no need explaining again. So, most times they are usually ignorant of what they are getting into. Most of the yahoo-plus involves bloodshed (*Male respondent/IDI/27/Ajibode*).

This finding supports the findings of Aransiola and Asindemade 2008 that there are different level of yahoo plus; we have yahoo plus plus which is a higher level and yahoo plus plus plus which involves the shedding of blood for the purpose of ritual and using human part. Also, Jawando and Ademuson, (2018) found out that commercial motorcycle operators in Ibadan are becoming dangerous everyday due to the way they kidnap innocent people for the purpose of money ritual and selling their parts.

3. The Role of Female in Yahoo Plus

In this aspect, there is a large gap left uncovered; so many people have consciously and unconsciously attributed yahoo plus to yahoo-boys alone. They strongly hold on to the false consciousness the name yahooboy have created in their mind ignoring the fact that ladies directly and indirectly play major roles in yahoo plus. It was reported by some of the respondents that ladies serve as partners to yahooboys; they work with yahoo boys especially the ones that are involved in online romance scam to keep the conversation real with the victim until the yahoo boys is able to fully hypnotize the victim. They perform roles like picking voice calls and video calls for the yahoo boys. A respondent said:

Girls are important especially when you are doing dating (online romance scam) and you pretend like a female (take on the role of a female) to deceive your client. You need a lady to appear legit to your client, she will be the one to send pictures to the client, pick his call on your behalf and do video call with him. If you can't find a girl willing to do this, you will keep giving excuses that you can't talk to him and you can't do video calls with him and he will start suspecting you (*yahoo boy/ IDI/male/25/Ring-road*)

Apart from being and partners to yahoo-boys, ladies are important instrument in the process of making different types of charms and activating them. Information gathered during interview with the respondents did not clearly state a concrete reason why girls are always used for making charms. However, some respondent explained that most girls fall

into the hands of yahoo boys because of their insatiable greed and urge to possess material things at the expense of their destiny. Also, the new trick yahoo boys employ to get ladies is giving them roles to play in order to make them feel among. Giving his view, he stated that:

As far as I am concerned, yahoo boys use both male and female; but the fact is that it is easy to get closer romantically to the female and brainwash them. When the specific person the yahoo boy need is a male, he will find a trick but it is often difficult especially for male friends that knows the person is doing yahoo. But just buy few gift (gifts) for the female then she becomes crazy in love. She can even leave her boyfriend because of you. Another trick used to getting the ladies is giving them a role to play while using them secretly. Once you make them feel they are involved and they are working to earn their money, they will trust you and loose guard. Money has a lot of power to get any girl (*yahoo boy/IDI/23/Ajibode*).

Another respondent stated that:

All yahoo boys use human being even though they lie about it. For any spiritual contact to occur there must be blood. The people that produces blood the most are ladies, especially while they are in the menstrual period. Also, yoruba believes that sex has power and during sex, all sort of spiritual things happens and money ritual involves covenant therefore sexual intercourse with ladies are important. There is another popular culture in Yoruba land that the destiny of a man is attached to a woman. Spiritually, a woman can make a man rich or poor. Therefore, ladies are the most important product of charm (*male respondent/IDI/28/Ajibode*)

This above narrative support Tade, (2013) that female companions or girlfriends often volunteer to be used by their boyfriends as a channel in the bewitchment process of the victim. However, not all ladies will agree to be used by their boyfriends but it doesn't change the fact that they are very important in the process of the charm (like an activator of the charm). Therefore, most yahoo boys find other means to get ladies at all cost; the respondents reported ladies are often used as partners in crime to give them the illusion that they are working for the money meanwhile, they are being used indirectly as a catalyst to their various charm. Some respondent also explained that commercial sex workers are the most difficult to use. Due to the nature and risk associated with their business, they are ever prepared to face whatever serves as a threat by protecting themselves with different charms. Therefore, innocent ladies are the ones that usually fall victims for this kind of trick. Ladies are also involved directly in cybercrime; some respondent explained that ladies are mostly involved in online romance scam but they are not sure if they add spiritual ingredient like the yahoo-boys do.

Conclusion

It can be submitted that the technique of yahoo-plus is more than the usage of charms and hypnotizing clients online. Due to the awareness of the activities of yahoo boys and their inability to successfully hypnotize the security operatives, yahoo plus now involves

wide participation of highly skilled people and influential people who plays important roles to ensure the smooth running of their fraudulent activities. These people include but are not limited to: application and software developers, hackers, pickers, Gift card buyers and sellers and so on. It can also be summited that the charms used in yahoo plus are not limited to 'Afose', 'Ase' and 'Gbere'. Some other types of charm were discovered; 'oshole tutu', 'Oshole Agba', 'Atupa Onigun Meje'. Also, it was discovered that one cannot determine the types and names of charm that exists. Therefore, for convenience among themselves, some call it 'level' and some call it 'Ise' (this literally mean work). The potency and the task one will be asked to perform for the Ise or level is equivalent to the amount of money he pays for it.

Yahoo-plus is not limited to male alone; ladies also have roles to perform. Ladies serves as catalyst to various charms due to their spiritual and physical nature. Ladies serve as partners to the yahoo-boys; they help the yahooboys to pick calls, make video calls and manage their fake social media to make it look real. Importantly, ladies are also involved directly in yahoo-yahoo, basically, the online romance scam. However there hasn't been any case where ladies are caught doing yahoo-plus and no respondent reported it.

Areas for Future Research and Limitations

Based on findings from the study that informed this article, future researches should focus more on nationally representative sample. Multicounty studies are also needed as the current study was based on exploratory research design, it is ethnographic, purely qualitative and contextually based on a city's experiences.

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