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Cybercrime Glamorization in Nigerian songs

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Abstract

A survey of literature shows that extant studies in Nigeria have not examined how lyrical constructions can enhance our understanding of the cultural context of cyber-criminality. Using Olu Maintain's Yahooze, Kelly Handsome's Maga Don Pay and Abolore Adigun's Living Thing all of which glamorizes cybercrimes, the study analyses their representations and justification of cybercrimes in Nigeria. All songs provide justification for cybercriminality by constructing it as a 'as a way out of suffering'; 'a game' and 'work' with huge material benefits rather than a crime. Taken together, cybercrime glamorization by popular musicians is dysfunctional to the eradication of cyber-criminality. It is suggested that anti-cybercrime agencies must partner the Nigerian music industry to deglamorise cybercrimes.

Keywords: Cybercrimes, Internet Fraudster, Internet Fraud, Criminology, Victimology.

Introduction

You are an entertainer in a position as a role model to younger ones coming up and in your musical record you are greeting all the yahoo boys, you are greeting all the fraudsters, calling their name personally, hailing them, wire mo *fe cha che*. All this culture you are making the young ones think it's cool to do it. It's not; you are destroying our future (Nigerian Hip-hop Star, Falz de Bahd Guy, The Guardian, June 24, 2017)

The opening excerpt shows a raging concern over the romance between Nigeria music industry and cyber-criminality. This concern is in relation to the negative effects cybercrimes have on individuals, organisations and Nigeria. About N127billion is lost annually to internet fraud/cybercrime representing 0.08percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product. This makes cybercrime a stumbling block to Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and a threat to the socio-economic development of the country. The entertainment industry holds an important position in unveiling the ills and moulding the

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behaviours of its followers in line with what is heard, and/or seen. Nigerian musicians, (in particular the hip-hop genre) enjoy patronage across political, social and economic sectors of the society. Their followership, which undoubtedly tilts in favour of the youths, makes the consumption of their musical lyrics by the same population and the adoption of artistes as role models easy. During the 2015 and 2019 Nigerian General elections, artistes were engaged for political campaigns to reach the largely youthful electorates. It follows therefore that musicians possess the power to mirror society and shape social realities through their lyrical constructions. Viewed as models, consumers of such songs are more likely to see portrayals such as glorification of cybercrimes as desirable and something worth striving for. In other words, lyrical constructions could provide music consumers with the deviant alternatives to making money. This paper explains the glamorization of cybercrimes in select Nigerian songs. Three songs were purposively selected for this purpose based on lyrical centrality to the issue under investigation. I purposively selected *Yahooze* by Olu Maintain which was released on October 27, 2007. Till date, yahooze (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0MW7kcZnaiA>) has over 3.1million viewership on YouTube. In spite of its cybercrime glamorization lyrics, it won two awards in 2008². *Maga Don Pay* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z0N_eFUUsIM) by Orji Kelechi (Kelly Handsome, 2008) celebrates the success of internet fraud while Abolore Adigun's (a.k.a 9ce, 2016) *Living Things* with over 4.7million (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hBRaNVEsft8>) viewership on YouTube is the third song analysed. These songs were selected owing to their bare lyrical embrace of cybercrime and visual dramatization of its endorsement. This study adds to knowledge by showing how hip hop musicians through their lyrical constructs, glamorise, portray and justify cybercrimes.

Review of Related Literature

From its birthing, hip-hop (HH) songs have often been associated with anti-criminal justice system postures with its characteristic lyrics which tend to show a relationship between it and deviance, crime, aggression and unpalatable representations of women (Steinmertz & Henderson, 2012; Bogers & Looserman, 2010). Similarly, videos of hip-hop songs have influenced youth behavior in accepting violence, aggression and harmful gender typecasts (Bogt et.al., 2010; Jackson, Jackson & Gatto, 1995). HH is a medium deployed in communicating common values and entrenched interests, agitations, aspirations from the singer to the communities of consumers nationally and internationally (Steinmertz & Henderson, 2012). Thus, HH is a valued medium to communicate life goals and aspirations cherished and embraced by the singer to the mass of consumers. And since the consumers are likely to pattern their lifestyle along the lines suggested by the hip-hop artiste, they are likely to be influenced. While studies have examined how hip-hop music could be used to understand the hip-hop views of criminal justice system, HH songs are also used to project the embraced values of the singer and associated norms of the target audiences (Tonry, 2011; Steinmertz & Henderson, 2012). This is because the

² Yahooze won The Hottest Single of the Year Award and The Headies Song of the Year award in 2008. The artiste sang the song and brought Collin Powell to the stage when he performed the song.

perceptions of the singers and understanding of the society constitute critical sources of songs composed and released.

Conversely, Mahiri and Conor (2003) found negative outcomes after youths are exposed to hip-hop songs. By this, there is inconclusive firm affirmation of causal link between hip-hop and crime, violence and criminality. Mahiri and Conor (2003) showed how youths deployed their agency in analyzing and processing relayed songs and videos and consequently extracting the positive portions rather than negative messages portrayed. By researching cybercrimes' glamorization in select hip-hop songs in Nigeria, I ask: how do these hip-hop songs portray cybercrimes? I argue that the representation of cybercrimes in the selected songs project the desirability of cybercrimes to the fans as 'business transaction' involving the deployment of mental wit to dispossess the "Other".

Cyber-crime is a major problem in Nigeria. In 2009 Nigeria was listed as third out of the top ten cyber-crime hot spots in the world (National White Collar Crime Centre and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2010). Cybercrimes are defined as: "Offences that are committed against individuals or groups of individuals with a criminal motive to intentionally harm the reputation of the victim or cause physical or mental harm to the victim directly or indirectly, using modern telecommunication networks such as Internet and mobile phones" (Halder & Jaishankar, 2011). Essentially, Cyber-crime is carried out with the aid of a computer system (Hassan, Lass & Makinde, 2012). The description of Internet fraud provided by Tade and Aliyu (2011) summarily categorizes the act as one of the numerous types of Cyber-crime. The Australian Federal Police defined the term 'internet fraud' as referring to any type of fraud scheme that uses email, web sites, chat rooms or message boards to present fraudulent solicitations to prospective victims, to conduct fraudulent transactions or to transmit the proceeds of fraud to financial institutions or to others connected with the scheme.

In the pre-Internet era, 419 or advance fee fraud was popular form of fraud in Nigeria (Falola & Heaton, 2008), with some critics suggesting that the era of military regimes facilitated the activities of '419ers' due to the boom of corruption amid the wealth that oil brought. The number "419" made reference to section 419 of the Nigerian Penal Code, dating from colonial times and later complemented by the "Advance fee fraud and other related offences decree" in 1995 ("decree 13"). Smith (2007) noted that while 419 schemes originally were done through letters; the Babangida administration (1985-1993) and the rise of telephone-based "business centers" caused a soaring in the activities of these criminals, which had notoriously grown so large that even General Sani Abacha's closing down of all business centers did not seem to affect it. The advent of the Internet in the country in the years following led to a new phase of the criminal act, one that is punishable under Section 1(3) of the Advance Fee Fraud and other Fraud Related Offences Act 2006 (Tade & Aliyu, 2011).

Adeniran (2008) and Tade (2019) argue that the advent of the internet technology in Nigeria is the single biggest factor responsible for this modernization of fraud. Hassan, Lass and Makinde (2012) however highlight a number of reasons for the rise of the phenomenon in Nigeria stating that such factors include urbanization, unemployment, quest for wealth, weak Implementation of Cyber Crime Laws and inadequate equipped law enforcement agencies. One factor deemed responsible for increasing crime rates is the hip-hop culture which is due to its influence on young people, and the increased

provision of negative role models. O'Neill (2002) pointed out that a member of the "So Solid Crew" who at the time were role models for many youths had been sentenced for possession of a firearm. Caesar (2007) alleged that in 2006 at the British Society of Magazine Editors, David Cameron had asked a radio station of the BBC if it realized that certain aired songs encouraged unlawful use of weapons. Hallsworth and Silverstone (2009) however sought to suggest without empirical evidence that an individual's style and music bears no influence on the criminal activities they engage in.

Miranda and Claes (2004) observed that a significant relationship existed between rap music and deviant behavior in a study that looked into the relationship between preference of rap genres and self-reported deviant acts such as violence, theft, gang involvement, and drug use. Kubrin (2005) through a content analysis studied American rap songs, and the effect they had on American adolescents. Both studies pointed out that youths influenced by the music they listened to, joined deviant groups in order to acquire status and a social identity.

Tade and Aliyu (2011) in the same vein observed that yahoo-boys in Nigeria enjoy 'big boy' status; as well as social recognition among friends, and other members of the society. They also noted that the flamboyant lifestyles of these Internet fraudsters entice others to desire to belong to the clique. More recent works have investigated cybercrimes from the cause, effects, spiritual, victimisation, the offenders and narratives of the agencies at the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) (Lazarus, 2019; Leukefelt & Holt, 2019; Lazarus & Okolorie, 2019; Tade, 2019) but did not probe music as a sub-culture with potentiality of deepening cybercriminality.

Scholars have noted that music performs both functional and dysfunctional roles; it could be used, for instance as a marker of spaces (territoriality). In his study, Attali (1985) argues that through repetition music can be used to silence those opposed to it. This is because it has three strategic symbolic powers; music to forget, music to believe and the music to silence. The music to believe is crucial for our analysis because of the lyrical dimension of select-songs. Tatum (2010) noted that popular music has been associated with negative influence on adolescent youths. Studies on such lyrics have shown that it causes youth to display anti-social behaviours (Ballard & Coates, 1995; Dyson, 1998). This is because people will select, listen and associate with music which is central to their shared values and lifestyle preferences (Shammas & Sandberg, 2016). According to Binder (1993) censorship of music such as rap was due to its perceived effect on 1), the notion that it corrupts the youths, 2); protection of the youths and the 3); dangerous to the society. It is suggestive of the nature of the music from the perspectives of the society, law and morals that songs which glamorize cybercrimes are morally debasing.

Conversely, scholars such as Taylor and Taylor (2005) note that music could help reduce the activities of criminals and the rise of crime. In fact, Taylor et.al (2005) pointed out that early hip hop helped in the reduction of gang violence by replacing it with dance and graffiti battles. Diamond, et al (2006) further emphasized the importance of promoting positive youth development and learning through music which could help young people develop their phonemic awareness, vocabulary, writing and fluency. On the flip side however, studies have not examined how lyrical constructions could evocatively influence and shape adoptive behaviours of what is portrayed. This observed research lacuna is what this paper fills by analysing some selected Nigeria hip-hop songs with clear lyrical focus on

cybercrimes. In doing this, I content analyse how Nigerian HH lyrics portray internet fraud and their justifications of it.

Social Construction of Cybercrime

Social constructionism has its roots traced from Alfred Schutz's sociological phenomenology (1932/1967) which underscores how everyday human experiences shape social construction of reality to Berger and Luckman's (1966) social construction of reality which stressed that humans lose sight of the role they play in the social construction of reality as well as their ability to change the world. This is because "social reality has no independent existence outside the human mind" (Henry 2009: 269). From this deportment, the central argument of Social constructionism is that humans create social reality and that the reality so created is both a function of power and privileges and individual positions of power and authority within a society. As Quinney (1970, pp. 15–16) asserts:

Crime is a definition of human conduct created by authorized agents in a politically organized society. . . . [It describes] behaviors that conflict with the interests of the segments of society that have the power to shape public policy.

Agreeing with Quinney, Henry (2009) asserts that crime is a behaviour that is defined by individual with power and authority as offensive and that the perpetrators must be punished. Their construction is based on their values, interests and general norms and values of the society. One of the Social Constructionists, Lemert (1967) noted that deviance and crime is a social construction because of its labelling and the amplification of the consequences. In order words, people are cybercriminals by societal reactions and vice versa. Those in positions of power and influence have jointly made laws which prescribe Internet fraud/cybercrimes as criminal and the offenders liable to punishment under the Nigeria Cybercrime Act of 2015. But since the position each individual occupies within the social world are not the same, we are not likely to see the same thing the same way. This makes way for those who construct their involvement in this state negatively sanctioned behaviour 'cybercrime' as 'workers'. As a product of this universe therefore, musicians participate in co-creation of reality and behavioural endorsement and their consequent portrayal of cybercrime as a way of life as contra-distinction from State position. This binary in social construction of reality, in this case, cyber-criminality affirms that individuals do not belong to the same moral community. In this sense, morality in terms of cybercrime construction is subjective. While asserting that there is no real objective construction of social reality, the process of social reality involves the utilisation of values and beliefs of a number of significant people (Legislature, Executive and Judiciary) who have power to shape public policies in labelling behaviours that are normal and those that are harmful for the survival of the society. The danger in this construction as Henry (2009) observes is that a particular behaviour as criminal may embolden adopters of such behaviours into career criminals through the process of identity transformation.

Thus as interacting beings, humans interpret the world in which they live in. They believe that when individuals define situations as real, they are real in their consequences. Realities can therefore be constructed by different groups, individuals and institutions. If

for instance, cybercrime has been defined as criminal and harmful by the constitution of Nigeria, the musical constructions of cybercrime as harmless and work with bountiful gains is also based on their shared values with the group. Such construction can therefore be best appreciated from the context of construction as product value endorsement by a group of individuals. This goes to support the opinion of Henry (2009: 269) who states that “we create the realities that shape our social world and are impacted by the actions of those who put energy into sustaining them as realities, we are also capable of changing our role in their construction.” To him, crime is what “we can collectively construct and deconstruct with a less harmful reality”. In this paper therefore, the analysed ‘yahoo songs’ are viewed as co-creators of social reality in cybercriminality not only by their lyrical embrace of it but in terms of their denunciation of state constructed reality around the same behaviour.

Methods

Exploratory design was employed for this study. Qualitative tool of data collection and analysis was equally employed to explore the social construction of cybercrimes in selected songs. By employing exploratory design, this study generates new insights into how the purposively selected hip-hop songs embraced cybercrimes through their lyrical constructs. To select the three songs of all the songs which glamorise cybercrimes in the hip-hop industry, I purposively selected two songs which could be categorised as pioneer songs on cybercrime. These are Yahooze by Olu Maintain (2007) and Maga don pay by Kelly Hansome (2008). While these two could be considered pioneers songs there are a number of songs which are contemporary variants. This is where Living things (2016) by Abolore Adigun also known as 9ice was selected as the third. To extract data from the sampled songs, I procured the video of the songs, watched the videos of each songs for upward of 15 times to understand how lyrical constructs are conveyed in visual formats. This greatly helped in understanding the interpretation of the lyrics from the eyes of the musicians. Subsequently, the lyrics were transcribed. One, analysis was done around how cybercriminals were constructed as “workers”, ‘hustlers’, ‘brainy’, ‘living things’ among others. Second, I paid attention to the materiality of cybercrimes which the musicians constructed as a fruitful venture. In what follows, I present findings of my analysis.

Findings

1. Olu Maintain: Yahooze

Olu Maintain’s classic hit labeled *Yahoozee* has over three million views on youtube and won multiple awards in 2008. *Yahoozee* provides success story of cybercrimes in that it does not only tell listeners/viewers how busy the routines of a typical cybercriminal is, but also, it portrays cybercriminals as those who are involved in serious life hustle and people who deserve to enjoy the benefit of their ‘hard earned money’ through public show of success.

The song’s video opens with Olumide dressed in a typical cowboy outfit with exotic Hummer Jeeps lined up behind him. Using Hummer Jeep as portrayal of success was contextual in Nigeria at the time the song was released. The lyrics unveiled the spending routine of a typical cybercriminal after a successful defrauding called ‘hammer’. In terms of

what the proceeds of cybercrimes are used for, the song listed the purchase of car (Hummer Jeep in particular), clubbing to drink champagnes, Hennessy, Moets, and womanizing. This post-defrauding expenditure wish-list is unfolded in the following lines:

*If I hammer, first thing na hummer,
1 million dollars,
Elo lo ma je ti n ba se si Naira (How much will 1 million dollars be when
converted to the Nigerian naira?).
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday,
Boys dey hustle.
Friday, Saturday, Sunday,
Gbogbo aye.
Champagne, Hennessy, Moet For everybody;
Ewo awon omoge (Look at the ladies),
dem dey (they) shake their body
(Olu Maintain/Yahoozee/2007)*

The construction justifies the spending of the cybercriminals on these luxury items. It portrays cybercriminals as hard working guys who ‘work’ during weekdays and only have time for socials on weekends. *Yahooze* characterises cybercriminals as using four of the seven days in a week to surf the Internet in order to ensure that victims fall to their duping strategies. Clubbing is a class thing and mostly patronized by youths. At the club successful defrauding is celebrated. Since *yahooboys* (Lazarus, 2019; Tade & Aliyu, 2011; Tade, 2013) have groups, success in fraud is not celebrated in private but through public show and associative spending. Success to cybercriminals is not covertly but overtly celebrated through partying with different yahoo groups or cliques trying to outshine one another. Through this process of outclassing one another, cybercrimes become a thriving business.

Due to the loss of value of the Nigerian Naira, victims are targeted from countries where hard currencies have value and US dollar and Pound³ Sterling can be earned. In *Yahooze*, listeners (viewers) are invited to imagine what duping people of one million dollars can become when converted into Nigerian Naira. It follows therefore that the agency of desire is activated in youths through *Yahooze* as a veritable engagement for reaping huge financial and material benefits.

A typical club scene was shown where the singer and his group of friends popped expensive champagnes, with women dancing to the admiration of cybercriminals who displays Pound sterling and Dollar rather than Naira:

*(Owo n be lapo mi o (there is money in my pocket), Dide ko ba
mi jo (stand up and dance with me. I have dollars and pound
sterling here, stand up and dance with me).*

³ Pound sterling was dubbed as Mama Charlie in the songs. This is talking about the image of Queen Elizabeth on Pounds Sterling.

It shows that the possession of foreign currencies elevate people into a class and accord them respect in the society. The commanding power of possessing dollars and Pound Sterling is edified but all these are achievable through Yahoozee! Further to this, viewers are shown what transformation of ‘hitting-it-big’ through cybercrime can make possible. Among these is being able to afford international travel to any country of choice. This is important in Nigeria where the desire and craving for overseas travel has increased geometrically. Making money through cybercrimes is therefore presented as an option to achieve international travel aspirations. This is what is implied with this line:

*London la mule si (we live in London),
America la ti pawo (we make money in America)
to ba wunmi mo le gba Tokyo lo (if I like I can go to Tokyo),
To ba wunmi ma lo Jamaica o (If I like I can fly to Jamaica)
O le tun wunmi ki n ni mo fe lo Germany o Ki n ni mo fe lo ojo meji pere
(I may also say I want to go to Germany to spend two days)
Owo lo n soro o (This is the power of having money)
(Olu Maintain/Yahoozee/2007)*

Yahooze lyrics embed in it different categorization of human beings and how their life goals limit what they can achieve and who they can be and what they command. Infusing the worldview of the Yoruba of southwest Nigeria into the song, Olu Maintain identified individuals who came to the world only to ‘work’. Since their goal is to work and nothing more, they will be more interested in working and have little or nothing to show in terms of wealth. According to the Yoruba maxim, *ise ko lowo, alubarika loju* (working does not necessarily translate to money, it is blessing that is most important). By implication, a worker may not be able to meet life desires because there is limit to what earned monthly salaries can do. This is why blessing is stressed as important because an individual who is blessed blossoms than the one that is not. Secondly, there are human beings who are in the world for socials. They pursue this vigorously either by finding money to actualize this or by associating with people of influence who can make things happen in their life. This is why parties are usually organised by cybercriminals to accommodate friends who come to drink and enjoy with them. The last category of human being is those that come to the world to “collect money” (*wa gbowo*). This is very instructive as *wa gbowo* (collect money) is different from *wa sise koolowo* (come to work in order to make money). The former character aptly fits the cybercriminal who cons people of their monies while the latter is a person who makes money by working legitimately. At the extreme are those who come to the world to drink; the drunkard.

*Awon kan waye wa sise.
Awon kan waye wa jaye
Awon kan waye wa gbowo.
Awon sere.
Awon kan waye wa saye.
Awon kan waye wa sayo oh.
Yahooze!*

*Some people came to the world to work,
Some people came to the world to enjoy life,
Some people came to the world to collect money,
Some people came to the world to play,
Some people come to the world for sociability,
Some people come to the world to drink (become drunkards).
Yahoozee!
(OluMaintain/Yahoozee/2007)*

By including lyrical constructs in the song, Olu Maintain presents to his fans options to pick from but ended up suggesting yahoozee as the best option. Even though he mentioned those who came to the world to play, he however, would consider them a wasted sojourner to the world while those who came to the world to collect money rank highest.

2. Kelly Handsome (2008)- *Maga don Pay*

Kelly Handsome's *Maga Don Pay* is one song that infuses the worldview of cybercriminals' characterization of their victims as *Maga*. A *Maga* is typically the person (being) duped. In a media interview, Kelly handsome conceives *Maga* as an acronym of Man and God Always (MAGA) (The Guardian, June 24, 2017). To him, "God will use man to bless you, so that man is your maga" (pp.27)⁴. Like Yahoozee, *Maga Don Pay* glamorizes cybercrimes and invokes the supreme-being (God) in celebrating cybercrime success. What does God have to do with this?. In *Maga don Pay*, Kelly Handsome presents us with the lyrical constructs that depicts the Nigeria church setting. In most churches, and to underscore the presence and power of God, a testimony session is allocated enough time in a program. Here, testifiers come out to narrate what the Lord has done for them and they typically invite the congregation to praise God which is usually followed by thunderous Halleluyah response. As a product of the society, *Maga don pay* embellishes this practice in testifying to the viewers and listeners a success story of defrauding and invites them to shout Halleluyah! This shows the instrumentalisation of religion in everyday social relations. In *The Visa God: Would-be migrants and the Instrumentalisation of religion*, Obadare and Adebaniwi (2010) depict how intending Nigerian migrants invoke religion in seeking Visa. They argue that such instrumentalisation of religion in Visa-seeking behaviour makes would-be migrants hang their fate in God.

Variously describing the defrauded as *Maga* and at other time as *Mugun*, Kelly Handsome underscores cybercrimes as a success story.

Too much money, the problem now is how to spend it. Plenty dollar straight to Aboki to change it. I don suffer, everyday and night, our boys dey for system. Now I don hammer.

⁴ Hip Hop singers with controversial lyrics have been several times called to question by the Nigerian society to defend or explain the intendment of the song and or unveil the underlining meaning in it. It shows how despite their seeming receptive nature, the critical public plays the role of reviewer for proper socialisation.

Baba God don bless me, No one can change it. Owo! All of the boys and girls demma like it. Ego! Even the papa and mama dem all of demma want it. Moto! You get them different shape and sizes and colour. Anything you want just name it cos my maga don pay, shout halleluyah. Mugun don pay, shout halleluyah....Moet, champagne, henesy.....too much money! Where are my guys, lets chop some nkwobi. Where are my sexy ladies, let me see you move your bodies. (Kelly Handsome/Maga don Pay/2008)

The lyrics sum the processes of converting received fraud monies to the social organization of its spending. This is because, cybercrime is organized by network of fraudsters and its outcomes are socially spent in the group. ‘*Maga don pay*’ like other songs that glamorize cybercrime illustrate why the crime ought to be seen as a job by embedding the narration of the cybercriminal who is presented to be on his computer every day and night surfing the Internet. By doing this, the viewers are to appreciate the amount of effort put into conning. However, the focus is quickly shifted to the success part and the fact that “*baba God don bless me no one can change it*”. This resonate the happenings within the Nigerian society where the question of accountability is low and anyone with sudden success and display of wealth is celebrated rather than investigated and queried.

Incorporating this into the lyrics imply that a successful cybercrime effort receives the blessing of God. Since blessing is more important than work as encapsulated in Yahooze’s categorization of human beings, no one will be able to change a success story of cybercriminal who has been blessed by ‘God’. This shows how religion is imported by deviants to justify their anti-social behavior.

Maga don Pay further shows the centrality of money in the lives of human beings across life phases. This is fore-grounded by showing how boys, girls, fathers and mothers desire money to fund everyday needs. There is therefore an intermediate agency of desire between not having money and having money after enlisting in cybercrimes. Fundamentally, Kelly Handsome brings the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria to the fore in his song. While the Aboki (Hausa) in Nigeria operates Bureau de Change where foreign currencies are exchanged at a higher rate (black market) than the formal banking system, Handsome further introduces money as *Owo* in Yoruba and *Ego* in Igbo languages thereby appealing to a spectrum of audience and viewers. When this is deployed, the song is able to have far reaching penetrative effects and huge followership. In the song, he invites his friends to celebrate with him by eating the Igbo local delicacy *Nkwobi* while the girls ‘move their bodies’ to get a share of the proceeds.

3. *Abolore Adigun (9ice)-Living thing (2016)*

Abolore Adigun also known as 9ice is among musicians with huge fan base at home and abroad. *Living thing* lyrics was rendered in ‘coded tunes’ utilizing restricted registers of cybercriminals. The song is worth analysing because of the choice of the title ‘Living thing’. As a living thing, human beings have insatiable needs which necessitate competing with others, outsmarting competitors and becoming successful. The cybercriminal here is conceived as a ‘living thing’ with desire to make money by whatever way he/she chooses. It is immaterial as constructed in the song, the manner and modalities used; money is the ultimate aim of all *living thing*. The multifarious utilities of money are what drive the urge

by man as a living thing to hustle and make it. The song's opening lyrics emphasized the indispensability of money in doing anything on earth.

'it is only money that can do it' (owo, owo ni kan lole se o, owo, owo, owo, owo ni kan lole se, kudiratu lai owo),

Money here is conceived as the 'doer' or messenger of man; the vehicle deployed in actualizing life goals of a purpose-driven living thing. The purpose-driven being is interested in being at the peak of everything, engage in multiple ventures and to be in control (in charge). The vitality of money in satisfying set goals and standards may also be seen from the socialization process in Yoruba context. The Yoruba notes that *owo ni koko* (money is vital). By this, it is meant that money mediates man's activities: dressing, eating, marrying, riding cars, accessing good health, attending quality educational institutions, having children and nurturing them. While the Yoruba world view encourages man to work to earn money, this song portrays cybercriminality as work. He neutralises it by stating that duping is not stealing. These views are captured in the following lines:

*As a living thing,
I wanna be on top of things,
I wanna be doing things,
I wanna be controlling things,
I wanna be **tising,
Yeh... ki n sa ti l'owo (i just want to have money),
Ole lob'omo je (only stealing batters good name),
Ki n sa ti l'owo (let me just have money),
Wire wire..., Ki n sa ti l'owo (I just want to have money)
Money order, Ki n sa ti l'owo (let me just have money),
Ole je come and marry
Ki n sa ti l'owo, Ah, ah, ah... (let me just have money)*

One is curious to see the usage of neutralising construct of distancing cybercrime as a non-criminal practise. This aligns with my analysis of the two previous songs. They labelled cybercrime as work or business and not crime. In *Living thing*, 9ice maintained that having money is all that mattered and not how the money was made. Yet he listed available cybercrime duping strategies to include *wire*, *Money order*, and *come and marry* (love scam).

What follows was the total embrace and endorsement of cybercrime by 9ice. He executed this through affinitive construct like *awon temi* (My own people/person). This possessive construct with cybercriminals is indicative of endorsement of what they do. 9ice drew parallel between those who he calls his own (*awon temi*) who 'works' throughout the night surfing 'Google' (search engine) that the lazy who sleeps do not know or cannot do. The reward for such 'hard work' of having sleepless night is successful victimisation (defrauding) which comes with money.

Awon temi sa'se (my own people are working)
Won sa'se !! (they are skimming)
Won sa'se loru moju (they work all through the night)
Won sa'se !! (my people are skimming)
Awon temi sa'se (My own people are working)
Won cha che!!
Lai foju kan'run (without sleeping)
Beeni.. (yes)
Ole sun, ole lagun (the lazy one is sleeping and sweating)
Ole sun, komo google (the lazy one is oblivious of google)
Ole sun, ole hanrun (the lazy one sleeps and snores)
Ole sun, ole o kaku (the lazy is sleeping and not alert to opportunity)
Yeh...
Money no dey fall from heaven
Se you know ooo
God no go come down from heaven
You better know ooo
(9ice/Living things/2016)

Since there is no food for the indolent, 9ice conceives that only the working persons should 'eat'. By placing cybercriminals at the same pedestal with everyday normative working people, 9ice butchers the essence of following approved means to actualise life goals. He recognises the innovative ability and the unrelenting aggression of cybercriminals as living human beings who make money differently.

Human being, human being,
We making money differently, differently.
As a human being, human being, Ojo iku lojo isimi (we only rest when we die)
Ah aha ah aha...
Till date na my pay go, Mo sise mo rere (i have worked and i have gains).
Thank God is Friday,
Kajeye gbagbe osi ooo...(we enjoy and forget poverty),
When you see me coming, Make way, make way, make way. (9ice/Living thing/2016)

By implication, money can be made legitimately and illegitimately. This is the social fact of life that not all human beings will follow the same path to become rich. While the normative and conforming human being will follow societal channels to greatness, the deviant (cybercriminals) praised in this song deploys different approaches to making money. What is important at the end of the day to 9ice is that irrespective of the path chosen to become 'controller in the affairs of men', one commands the respect of others when people 'make way' at the sight of the living thing. Striving to become a living thing is the desire of cybercriminals while those unable to control things and be enterprising are considered dead beings. It follows therefore that to be counted a living thing, 9ice

preaches alternative money making venture for his fan base albeit through the deviant cybercrime option.

Policy implications

The study on the glamorisation of cybercrimes by select Nigerian hip-hop songs has unveiled the importance of context in tackling cybercrimes. Music can be functional and dysfunctional to the construction of reality and musicians possess the power to command huge followership into identifying with their worldview on criminal behaviour which cybercrimes have come to symbolise. But as social constructionism explains, hip-hop musicians' identification with cybercrimes through their lyrical construction (externalisation) may impact the internalisation by those who see them as their idols. Hence, when cybercrime is viewed as work and not as crime, viewers, listeners and other followers are bound to embrace cybercrimes as 'work' with implications for individual, and organisational victimisation and negative image for Nigeria. Hence, it is important for Nigeria government, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and others to partner with the Nigerian music industry on the need for intellectual materials to embrace cybercrime deglamorisation lyrics and relaying the negative consequences of engaging in cybercriminality.

Conclusion

In this study, I examined the lyrical construction of purposively selected hip-hop songs in relation to their bare identification and glamorisation of cybercrime. I argue that because of the relatively youthful population and the huge fan-base which Nigerian hip-hop singers have, they can enhance our understanding of the cultures sustaining cybercrimes in the country. This is because whatever is portrayed as good by them may be embraced by their followers.

By examining these songs which glamorise cybercrimes in Nigeria, the study contributes to existing knowledge on how musicians' are influential in shaping and moulding peoples' behaviour in a particular direction in relation to the way they construct cybercrimes. By engaging their lyrical constructs I have shown how such bare embrace and visual representations (in videos) can shape post viewing behaviours. It goes to show that with the invocation of the God in *Maga Don Pay*, involvement in cybercrime is neutralised. What it does is the connotation that the fraud is successful because it has the backing of God.

All the songs examined here rationalised the cybercrime alternative and presents same to their followers (listeners and viewers). In doing this, they cleverly and sentimentally utilise the context — that Nigeria economy is bad and that people can detour to the deviant alternative since it is constructed as work and not stealing which is associated with physical harm. To do this in meeting their everyday life makes them a functional *Living Thing* which is presented in Abolore Adigun's song. Here, the living thing is painted as someone with the desire to get rich in order to be in the control of things and command societal respect. On the flip side is the 'dead being'; although living but inasmuch as he is unable to 'control things', 'be on top of things', 'command respect in the society' he is literally dead. What this study unveils therefore is that, lyrical construction and endorsement of criminal behaviours by musicians play dysfunctional role of wrong

mentoring of the youths. To reduce the negative embrace of cybercrime as a way of life in Nigeria, government anti-fraud agencies must partner with the Nigerian music industry to deglamorise cybercrimes.

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