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Socio-Economic And Political Determinants of Yahoo Criminality in Imo State, Nigeria

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Abstract
Cybercrime, popularly known as Yahoo in Nigeria, has become a major socio-economic, political, and security concern, particularly among youths in Imo State. Despite government efforts and the enactment of cybercrime legislation, youth involvement in internet fraud remains a persistent challenge. This study examines the socio-economic and political factors influencing youth participation in Yahoo criminality in Imo State, South-Eastern Nigeria. Specifically, it explores the effects of unemployment, poverty, inequality, limited economic opportunities, peer influence, materialism, and the desire for quick wealth on youth involvement in cybercrime. It also investigates how poor governance, corruption, weak institutions, inadequate law enforcement, and perceived injustice may contribute to the persistence of this criminal activity. Anchored on the strain theory, the study explain how structural inequalities, societal expectations, and individual assessments of risks and benefits may influence youths' decisions to engage in cybercrime. Using a qualitative research method, the study highlights the need to address both the structural conditions and social influences associated with Yahoo criminality. It recommends sustainable youth employment, vocational and digital skills development, improved governance, institutional accountability, effective and impartial law enforcement, and value reorientation through families, schools, religious organizations, and community groups. The study argues that a comprehensive approach combining preventive and enforcement measures is essential to reducing youth involvement in cybercrime and promoting sustainable socio-economic development in Imo State.

Keywords: Cybercrime, Youth Unemployment, Political Factors, Governance, Yahoo Plus

I. Introduction

Internet has made it easy for people to communicate with each other, trade, learn, transact business and even develop relationship. With this convenience it also became easy for people to defraud others through online scam, identity theft, hacking, and phishing among others. Internet fraud in Nigeria is often linked to youths which has given rise to concern of how this will impact the society value, economy, country image and safety. There have been studies linking unemployment, poverty, friends, easy money and availability of internet to youths engaging in cybercrime (Nwokoro et al., 2022; Ojolo & Singh, 2023). However, youth engagement in cybercrime can't be seen as bad character of individuals as they exist in an economic system of unemployment, poverty and inequality. Ewuzie et al. (2023) states that youh unemployment is one of the factors that causes cybercrime in Nigeria.

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While Anyanwu (2024) states that there may be goals that a society want to achieve and some of the ways to get there are not achievable for the individual so they will go against the law to reach those goals. With the new mindset of being rich and show off wealth cybercrime may become appealing to youths. Studies in Imo state revealed that youth engaging in Yahoo-Yahoo was caused by unemployment, no source of income, friends, corrupt friends and the ability to make quick money (Nwokoro et al., 2022). The politics in Nigeria may play a role in why youths commit cybercrime. Poor governance and failure to enforce laws could lead to more criminals as people will believe that they won't face any consequences. Nigeria has put into place cybercrime act and recently amended it in 2024 but until there is more effort to enforce the Act, we can expect cybercrime to continue growing in Nigeria (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2015, 2024).

This study will try to understand how socio-economic factors such as unemployment, poverty and inequality and political issues like bad governance and failure of institutions and enforcement of laws contribute to youth involvement in Yahoo criminality. Along with these factors will look at how friends and new ideas of being rich contribute to cybercrime. The study aims to provide different viewpoints on why youth engage in cybercrime using strain theory and rational choice theory. Ways to curb cybercrime through jobs, better governance and institution will be discussed.

Statement of the Problem

Youth cybercrime commonly referred to as Yahoo-Yahoo is increasing day by day in Imo state. It has become a major socio economic political and security issue. Although various laws have been enacted by the government to curb cybercrime and law enforcement agencies are working hard to stop cybercrime but we continue to witness youths being involved in Internet fraud. More especially in the urban areas of Owerri. Previous works have tried to associate cybercrime to lack of employment, poverty, peer pressure, materialism and desire for quick money. There is little or no reference made on the political situation that contributes to the high number of youth cybercrime. Lack of proper law enforcement, corruption, poor sense of justice and accountability among others. All which could have helped reduce youth cybercrime. It's important to find out why cybercrime continues to thrive in spite of the economic condition of these youths. Social networks that promote yahoo and people who make unaccounted money also play a huge role. Hence the need to investigate into what factors cause youth cybercrime in Imo state and how best to curb this trend.

Aim of the Study

This study attempts to look at Socio-economic and Political factors that contribute to the participation of youths into Cybercrime (Yahoo Yahoo) in Imo State, South-Eastern Nigeria. By looking at the effects of unemployment, poverty, inequality and lack of better opportunities on youth participation in cybercrime; Determine the effect of bad governance, poor institutions, corruption, poor law enforcement agency and lack of justice on the increase of Yahoo Yahoo activity; Analyze how friends, exposure to technology, love for material things and acceptance of ill-gotten wealth affect youth's decision to participate in cybercrime. How socio-economic and political factors influence youth's decision to be involved in cybercrime. This study will provide solutions on how to create jobs, better governance and institution building and reorienting values and proper law enforcement against cybercrime.

Research Method

This will involve using qualitative techniques of in-depth interview to identify what makes youths to be involved in yahoo-yahoo in Imo state. The youths will be purposively sampled along with some key informants from the communities, law enforcement agencies and others. Some key areas to be discussed during the interviews include but not limited to: unemployment, poverty, association, materialism, politics and patronage, corruption, law enforcement, weak institutions and perception on justice. All interviewees will give informed consent before the interviews will be taped, transcribed and analysed thematically. The results from the qualitative analysis will add value to the findings obtained from the quantitative analysis.

II. Literature Review

Concept of Cybercrime

Due to humans becoming more reliant on computer and digital technologies. Cybercrime has been widely studied within fields of Criminology, sociology, economics and security. Cybercrime does not have a clear-cut definition but can be defined as any form of crime where a computer or device, network or Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) are used to commit the crime. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2023) defines cybercrime into cyber-dependent and cyber-enabled crimes. Cyber dependent crimes are those that are committed

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through the use of computers. These include Malware, hacking, ransom ware and disruption of computer systems. Cyber enabled crimes are offences that can be done traditionally but use ICTs to increase its capability to reach more people faster. They include fraud, identity theft and harassment to name a few.

Unlike traditional crimes such as robbery, burglary, assault and other types of crime that require you to be near your victim. Cybercrime involves technology and can be done far away from your victims. A perpetrator can commit a crime and affect multiple people at once while not exposing themselves. Cybercrime makes it difficult for law enforcement to catch criminals because criminals can be anywhere in the world as well as their victims and banks (UNODC, 2019). Another reason cybercrime is on the rise is because of advances in technology which allows more opportunities to commit crime. Not just hacking but phishing, identity theft, credit card fraud, romance scams, Business Email Compromise, stalking and distributing malware and scamming online.

Yahoo Yahoo has become one of the popular forms of cybercrime that are committed by Nigerian Youths. According to Ayandele & Popoola (2022) Yahoo Yahoo can be classed as a cyber-enabled crime. Many youths get involved in internet fraud due to lack of jobs, being poor and peer pressure (Adeyinka et al., 2023). Therefore, for this research cybercrime will be defined as a crime that uses technology and or the internet to commit the offence. Because yahoo yahoo is considered a cybercrime since they are using technology to defraud people.

The Concept of Yahoo

Yahoo refers to an Internet based scam or any person who engages in different kinds of Internet based fraud. While there is no official crime classified as yahoo-yahoo it has come to be associated with many crimes committed on the internet. It is usually done by Nigerian youths and can involve the use of any internet skills to scam or defraud victims of their money. According to Ayandele & Popoola (2022) Yahoo is described as cyber-enabled criminality which involves the use of internet skills to scam victims of their money. They that engage in this crime are called "Yahoo boys". This can be said to be one of the many ways cybercrimes has evolved over time.

There are some similarities between yahoo boy's and what we call 419 scams. Once internet was introduced people started using these techniques to defraud others. Using internet-based methods such as Emails, Social-media pages, dating sites and chats they can target victims and scam them. There are many things that Yahoo boys can do to scam someone they can romance someone online and scam them, they can defraud people through advance fee fraud. Phishing and identity theft are other common things yahoo boys can do. They can sell fake products online, steal credit card information, pretend to be someone and more. (Ayandele & Popoola, 2022)

As mentioned previously this type of criminality can develop into a social culture. As stated by Adejoh et al. (2019) the interaction that occurs between Yahoo boys and younger persons can lead to more people becoming involved in cyber-crime. In Nwokoro et al. 's (2022) study they identified Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram and Twitter as social media used by youth in Owerri Municipal to commit internet fraud. Other things that were linked to this crime were unemployment, lack of means to earn money, friends that engage in crime and the want of quick money. Yahoo will be defined for the purpose of this study as a social based cyber-enabled criminality that is influenced by the need to earn money. The definition can also be expanded to include friends and social status as well. This will allow us to learn more about why people continue to participate in this crime despite it being illegal.

Youth and Cybercrime

There have been many works discussing youth cybercrime. The reason being that majority of internet users are youths who may have knowledge of how certain technology work. Having digital knowledge can allow for better academic growth and help them get employed and even become entrepreneurs and come up with innovative ideas. But there is also a possibility that they will commit crimes using that knowledge. Therefore, when we discuss youth cybercrime, we should not think of it as something that only happens to younks but can be due to various factors that surround them. Many Nigerian based studies have shown that youth cybercrime is related to unemployment, poverty, peer influence, greed and lack of better opportunities to earn money (Adeyinka et al., 2023; Omokhabi et al., 2024).

Because when one reaches their young adulthood, they want to achieve these things. So if they don't have these things in their lives then there may resort to cybercrime to attain what they want. Omokhabi et al. (2024) found a correlation between youth cybercrime and poverty, unemployment, want of fast money, peer influence and loss of values from family and society. This goes to show that when

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youth engage in cybercrime there are usually multiple factors at play.

When growing up you can learn behaviour from your friends, classmates, co-workers and others around you. When it comes to yahoo-yahoo an older yahoo boy can teach younger younks about how to scam someone and where to do so and also slang and why you should want to do yahoo. Studies have shown that youth can get involved in cybercrime by interacting with yahoo boys (Adejoh et al., 2019). Nwokoro et al. (2022) also showed that peer pressure and hanging out with bad friends can lead to cybercrime in Owerri Municipal. Unemployment, peer influence, want of wealth, poor internet security and parental supervision can cause youth to engage in cybercrime in South Eastern Nigeria (Ekwochi et al., 2025). So, youth cybercrime can be caused by multiple factors. Not just due to financial reasons. It can also be influenced by others doing it around you, exposure to digital media, family life and status they believe they'll gain from committing cybercrime and the consequences of it.

Youth Unemployment and Cybercrime

Unemployment has been noted as one of the socio-economic causes of cybercrime in Nigeria. When an individual is employed, they not only gain money but they also have status in society, freedom, respect and self-actualization. An unemployed graduate or a skillful person will always be frustrated when he cannot find a good source of income in society. Since we live in a world where money talks and success are measured by one's wealth. Cybercrime would become a source of money for them if they can't find any other source of income. According to Merton's (1938) Strain Theory society teaches us to strive for wealth success and better lives but when those opportunities aren't granted to us some turn to deviance. Youths who can't get jobs and have no other source of income are more likely to commit cybercrime since we are taught to be successful and have wealth. They turn to yahoo-yahoo which is one form of deviance.

Many scholars have proved that unemployment leads to cybercrime. Adeyinka et al. (2023) stated that unemployment was one of the socio-economic causes of youth committing yahoo-yahoo. Nwokoro et al. (2022) discovered that unemployment and no other source of income was one of the factors that makes youths commit cybercrime in Owerri Municipal. Omokhabi et al. (2024) also found that there was a significant relationship between unemployment and young adults that commit cybercrime.

Although unemployment is not a sole reason for youths to commit cybercrime since most unemployed youths don't commit crimes. But they are more likely to when factors like poverty, peers, materialism, access to technology, poor social control and not knowing the consequence of cybercrime come into play. Unemployment can also lead to underemployment which can cause an individual to have a job but not enough money to satisfy their needs. Therefore, creating jobs for the youth would help reduce yahoo-yahoo instead of just arresting those who commit cybercrime.

Poverty, Inequality and Cybercrime

Poverty and inequality affects criminality. Poverty can have a direct effect on crime but when an individual compares their standard of living to that of others who may appear to be richer or better off they can experience inequality. This is applicable to many Nigerian youths who are experiencing poverty and see others living lavish lives with cars, clothes, holiday destinations and much more. Through the use of social media these lifestyles can be portrayed to Nigerian youths which can cause them to feel that they should be living such a lifestyle as well. Adeyinka et al. (2023) stated that poverty can be linked to Yahoo-Yahoo. Omokhabi et al. (2024) showed that poverty is a significant factor to why youth engage in cybercrime. This can go hand in hand with unemployment, influence from friends, want of money and loss of morals.

Inequality can also play a significant role in cybercrime. When someone feels like they are less than their peers they may try to obtain money through cybercrime. They could feel as though they should be just as rich as their friends or celebrities/ business people or politicians etc. When an individual cannot obtain what they feel as though they deserve through legitimate means they can become frustrated. Merton's (1938) theory of Strain explains how someone can experience strain if a society places too much importance on culturally accepted goals. Poverty and inequality should not be seen as the sole reason why people commit cybercrime. If there are more job and school opportunities available it will help prevent people from turning to cybercrime.

Governance, Corruption and Cybercrime

Governance can be defined as the set of processes, institutions, rules and norms that guide how public issues and resources are administered. If we have good governance then there will be accountability and transparency. Efficient service delivery and responsiveness to citizens as well as the rule of law

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will exist. Poor governance can lead to corruption within institutions and lack of accountability. Lack of efficiency within institutions will also occur. As stated earlier there can be effects on crime as opportunity can increase or people may not think they will be caught. Corruption will affect the control of cybercrime. This is because if agencies are corrupt, we may not see full cooperation from these institutions. Some of these institutions include but are not limited to the police, banks, telecommunication companies, lawyers and court rooms. All of which need to work together to detect cybercrimes. Therefore, if there is corruption or poor governance, we may not be able to properly detect and catch cyber criminals. There have been studies conducted in Nigeria that show how our institutions are failing in these areas (Adibe et al., 2017; Bribena, 2026).

As we know when people do not have jobs or access to certain things that government should provide for them, they become unhappy. Cyber criminals could develop from these poor living conditions. If we look at corruption people may believe that they too can become rich by doing the same thing. They may not care about the moral behind how they got that wealth. It is not to say that corruption is the reason why cybercrime is occurring or that every cybercriminal has political motives. It's just that if we had good governance these things could be reduced. We would have better chances of opportunity being given to everyone and laws being enforced fairly.

Political Patronage and Youth Cybercrime

Political patronage is a form of system that exists in most political systems where politicians give their subordinates positions, resources, job, protection and so on. It does not always have to be corrupt but when used to gain favors or protect oneself it could become corrupt. This can lead to under developed institutions and may not be practiced on everyone equally. How political patronage relates to youth and cybercrime is that it can play a major factor in how they view certain institutions. When political figures reward their god children and friends, they open the eyes of the youth that these things can only be gained if you know someone. Human Rights Watch (2007) talks about how Godfathers exist in politics and how it plays a hand with corruption and violence in Nigeria. Which can lead them to think that if they want to make money, they have to use wrong means to get there.

Political patronage can affect cybercrime because they know if they know someone in high power they will not get caught. Which leads them to have a lower chance of being punished. Similar to what was said above when studying why people commit cybercrime, we have to look at rational choice. They know that if they break the law, they may not face any consequences due to knowing someone in a high position. While political patronage can be used to explain why some youth commit cybercrime it is not a main reason that can be directly applied to cybercrime.

Therefore, political patronage will be used in this essay to explain some factors that can lead to why some youth commit Yahoo Yahoo. When looking at factors such as unemployment, poor governance and political patronage we can better understand why some youth commit Yahoo Yahoo than just focusing on the criminal.

Law Enforcement, Institutions and Cybercrime

Enforcement and institution building are some of the factors that help to curb cybercrime. Due to the nature of cybercrime many areas of expertise are needed when dealing with this type of crime. Experts must have a deep understanding of the technology used, digital forensics, financial records and be able to handle e-evidence. There are also instances where different jurisdictions will have to cooperate to solve a case. Therefore there must be laws in place to prosecute cyber criminals and also the ability to enforce these laws. Nigeria has put measures in place to help stop cybercrime. There are laws that are in place and amended to deal with cybercrime. Although laws will not stop cybercrime, but money is required to properly enforce the laws that are currently in place. More training of law enforcement officials, digital forensics equipment, financial intelligence and better prosecution of cybercrime cases will help. According to UNODC (2023) identifying cybercrime and having a measurement of cybercrime is essential.

Research has shown some short comings that are happening in Nigerias fight against cybercrime. Oyenuga found that cybercrime in Lagos was a subculture that had issues with the cybercrime law being ambiguous, lack of equipment and corruption. Adejoh et al. (2019) found that social and family can play a role in controlling cybercrime. When law enforcement enforces the law it can act as a deterrent as well. If youth know that they can make lots of money from committing cybercrime and don't believe they will be caught or punished then there isn't much of a deterrent. By enforcing the law, it can show that the consequences of cybercrime will happen and they should think before doing it.

But enforcement should go hand in hand with prevention. By catching people and prosecuting

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them will only go so far if the factors mentioned above continue to occur. Cybercrime can change as well. Offenders can find new ways to commit cybercrime if one method is stopped by law enforcement. It should be viewed as a deterrent and factor when discussing youth committing cybercrime.

Materialism, Social Status and the Glamourization of Wealth

Materialism is the obsession over having money. Money, goods, consumption and things that symbolize wealth. Materialism comes into play when discussing Yahoo-Yahoo as some of the youths see wealth as having a nice car, clothes, gadgets, travelling, partying etc. What's wrong is not that they're rich but that they believe wealth is the only thing that symbolises being successful and that their source of income isn't known. According to Ukeachusim (2022) youths in Nigeria exhibit characteristics of being materialistic by showing high levels of acquisitiveness and conspicuousness. This can also be related to them wanting to become rich quick and engage in criminal acts. If these people that show signs of wealthiness are admired by others it could also lead to yahoo-yahoo. Because if you make money from fraud and have nice things people will admire you. Which makes it seem that it's not bad to become rich through fraud. Especially if you can get away with it.

Omokhabi et al. (2024) states that there is a link between youth committing cybercrime and them wanting to be rich quickly. Also having friends that do it, being poor and lack of family values and societal values. Ojolo and Singh (2023) believe that Yahoo-Yahoo is part of what Nigerian youths consider to be culture. And how they feel about wealth may lead them to continue doing it. Having wealth can give you status and women and attention. This can show that there are more factors than socio economic reasons. Some people may be fine with what they have but want more to be considered wealthy. We need to teach them to value other things such as getting an education, becoming an expert at something, being entrepreneurial, creative and have good morals.

Digital Exposure and Peer Influence

Digital exposure means how much an individual uses the Internet, social-media sites, digital devices, groups and others aspects that allow people to be connected digitally. While technology itself is not criminogenic as it allows for many opportunities. There are also negative aspects that come from digital exposure. These include being introduced to bad content and criminals. Digital exposure can lead one to commit crime if they are exposed to these types of people and environments. Another factor that may influence someone to become involved in Yahoo-Yahoo is peers. Peers can influence an individual by allowing them to make certain decisions in life. From schooling to work, lifestyle and even spending habits can be influenced by your peers. In the case of Yahoo-Yahoo peers can show you methods of fraud and give you knowledge about how to perform certain acts. They can also encourage you to do so and tell you that its ok to perform these acts.

There has been research that supports this finding in Owerri Municipal. When studying internet fraud Nwokoro et al (2022) found that most of the social media used included Facebook, what's app, instagram and twitter. Some factors that contributed to this was having corrupt friends and peer pressure. Peer pressure was another factor found by Adeyinka et al (2023). Other factors included unemployment and poverty. Interaction with Yahoo boys and young people have also shown to contribute to someone committing Yahoo-Yahoo by Adejoh et al (2019).

As mentioned earlier when people use digital media, they are able to display pictures of cars, clothes, air flights and gadgets. If a young person sees this and don't know where their money is coming from, they may want to do the same. Technology will give them the platform and opportunity to commit these crimes. Having friends who do these things will also allow you to gain knowledge and motivation to perform these acts. Therefore, digital exposure and peer influence can affect someone to commit Yahoo-Yahoo. Especially if there are high rates of unemployment, poverty, greed and lack of control from parents and government. If we want to reduce this, we need to educate people about Cyber security and provide them with healthy friends that will motivate them to succeed in digital entrepreneurship.

Theoretical Framework: Strain Theory

Strain Theory has been used to explain deviant and criminal acts in society. It states that there are social structures in our society that cause people to feel strain. There are certain goals that our society pushes on us. Whether it's making money, being successful, having status, money and moving up in life. But sometimes we don't have the opportunity to get those goals by using legal methods. Such as education, jobs, money and business. Strain can occur from these types of factors and cause people to act in deviant ways (Merton 1938, 1968). This can help us understand certain

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social problems that arise in our society such as unemployment, poverty, inequality and crime. It can also help explain why youths turn to yahoo-yahoo.

Strain theory originated from Émile Durkheims theory of Anomie. Which stated that there is a lack of social rules that guide an individual's wants (Durkheim 1897). Merton took this theory and went in another direction. By studying how our society causes people to act deviant by not giving them the proper means to reach these goals. Merton believed that there were many things that could cause strain in our society that lead to deviance. (Social Structure and Anomie, 1938). He further explained his ideas in Social Theory and Social Structure (1968).

There are five types of people when it comes to Merton's theory. These include conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism and rebellion. People who are conformist will follow the rules and try to reach these goals by using legitimate means. Those that innovate will want to reach these goals by any means necessary whether they are legal or not. Ritualist will only focus on following the steps and won't really care about reaching the goal. Retreatist will give up on reaching these goals and will not follow any of the steps to get there. And lastly Rebellion will want to change the rules to reach these goals. Yahoo-Yahoo would fall under innovation. As many of these people want to be wealthy and have a good name but believe that they cannot make that happen legally so they decide to take illegal methods.

As you can see poverty does not always cause people to become criminals. There are many people that are in poverty and do not commit crimes. There could be multiple reasons for this. Some people may have morals and grow up with the knowledge of right and wrong. Maybe their peers don't offer them an opportunity or maybe they know how to deal with being poor. Strain Theory can help explain why some people may become criminals and others may not.

Relevance of Strain Theory to Yahoo Criminality in Imo State

Strain Theory can be applied to the study of youths in Yahoo-Yahoo (an Igbo slang for cybercrime). Anomie was first theorized by Émile Durkheim. However, Robert K. Merton developed his strain theory which argues that there is a discrepancy between what is considered important in our culture and what is not equally available to achieve those goals through legitimate means (Merton, 1938, 1968). There have been Nigerian studies that link youth involvement in cybercrime to factors such as unemployment, poverty, lack of economic opportunity, peers, societal changes and need for instant wealth (Akanle et al., 2016; Omokhabi et al., 2024). One such study by Nwokoro et al., (2022) which looked at the case of youth in Yahoo-Yahoo in Owerri Municipal, Imo State. They discovered that unemployment/lack of means of getting income, peer influence and need to gain money fast are factors that can contribute to youths being involved in Yahoo-Yahoo. Merton argued that people engage in innovation where they want to reach goals set out by our society but take illegitimate means to get to those ends.

Another aspect to consider about Strain Theory is that not everyone will commit cybercrime if they are poor or unemployed. People values and morals, family/communities influence, peer group, availability of technology, influence from others who are making money from Yahoo-Yahoo and perception of getting caught all play a role in one's decision to engage in cybercrime. Someone who is unemployed and living under circumstances of poverty could fall victim to cybercrime if they believe there is something they can do to get rich quick. There are many ways governments and other organizations can work towards decreasing Yahoo-Yahoo. Providing job opportunities, teaching entrepreneurial skills, providing technological literacy to the masses, giving people access to better education and empowering youth are some steps we can take. Along with educating youth on morals and ethics, building stronger communities, awareness and enforcing laws that will decrease cybercrime and show that it is not an attainable goal.

Empirical Review

Studies have shown that there is a correlation between unemployment/poverty and youth involvement in cybercrime. Some of these studies include Akanle et al. (2016) and Ayandele and Popoola (2022), Nwokoro et al. (2022). Who all have linked unemployment and lack of economic opportunity to youth being involved in Yahoo-Yahoo in Nigeria? Specifically, in Owerri, Imo State. Just like unemployment there is also a chance that some people who live in poverty could decide to commit cybercrime. However, Strain Theory would state that there is strain between wanting what others have in life but not having the means to acquire those things (Merton, 1938, 1968). There have also been recent studies that link cybercrime to exclusion and poverty (Aneke et al., 2025; Okpa et al., 2026). By allowing youth to receive an inclusive education we can start working towards solving this problem. As well as creating more jobs and opportunities for those in poverty.

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When it comes to Cybercrime there are also some shortcomings when it comes to governing institutions in Nigeria. 79.5% of respondents stated that there are incidents of cybercrime due to poor governance (Aneke et al., 2025). Studies have also found that Nigeria has issues with it's technical expertise, institution and ability to report cases of cybercrime and prosecute those who have committed the crime (Adibe et al., 2017; Bribena, 2026). If corruption plays a role in the Nigerian society there may not be morals that hold someone back from committing a crime. Many Nigerian studies have linked Yahoo-Yahoo to injustice, greed and thinking that having money is more important than how you got it (Ene & Oluku, 2024; Ayandele & Popoola, 2022; Okpa et al., 2026). Having peer involvement with cyber criminals can allow for youth to learn more information about the world of cybercrime (Adejoh et al., 2019; Nwokoro et al., 2022). Another study that linked youth to cybercrime was when looking into how materialism can attract people to Yahoo-Yahoo (Oluku & Ofili, 2025). Merton stated that there are people that use innovation to get to goals they want. They just don't always use legitimate methods to get to those ends (Merton, 1938, 1968).

Implications of Yahoo-Criminality

Economic Implication

As mentioned earlier, one of the implications of Yahoo-Yahoo in Imo state is that it will result in false economy. Many young people will develop the habit of thinking that they can get rich quickly. Due to high rate of unemployment and poverty in our country, some youths will find yahoo-yahoo attractive. There has been research that have found that youth are prone to committing cybercrime due to unemployment, no source of income, peer pressure, poverty, corruption and social economic deprivation (Nwokoro et al., 2022; Ewuzie et al., 2023; Onyeachu et al., 2025). Some of these yahoo boys will flaunt their wealth by buying expensive cars, clothes, house, phone and living lavish life. Which may lead them to think that working hard, gaining professional knowledge and starting up a business is unnecessary. It can also impact on education by lowering human capital development. Some youths may neglect their education and use their computer skills for Yahoo Yahoo instead of starting up innovations, writing code, research and online businesses (Onyeiwu, 2025).

It can also affect trust between people who use money online and slow down the digital economy. For the digital economy to thrive we need trust between the buyers and sellers, companies, banks, employers and service providers. With many cyber frauds happening there is a possibility that people may start to be wary of doing transactions online. Cybercrime such as stealing identities, phishing, e-banking fraud, payment card frauds, crypto scam etc. Will impact the digital economy. (Auwal & Lazarus, 2025) Yahoo Yahoo can also impact Nigerias economy by affecting our image internationally. If foreigners find out that some Nigerians commit cybercrime, they may be less willing to do business with Nigeria. Which will also affect foreign investment and income. (Adeyinka et al., 2023; Ojukwu & Osigwe, 2023). Therefore Yahoo-Yahoo can affect employment, human capital development, digital economy and trust in business and economic development in Imo state.

Moral Implications

Many young people will grow up learning wrong morals. Once young people see others getting rich by deceiving others, they may begin to view cyber fraud as a normal way of getting money. Some of the causes include poverty, unemployment, peer pressure and materialism and lack of values from families and society. (Nwokoro et al., 2022). Yahoo can also cause moral dilemma within families if the parents or guardian know that their children are obtaining wealth from yahoo yahoo but allow it. Another implication of this menace is the involvement of rituals that go along with Yahoo Plus. (Nwokoro et al., 2022) So we can say that Yahoo can negatively affect the morals of young people. By teaching them that they can become successful without working for what they have, being honest and caring for others.

Political Implications

As stated, earlier Yahoo criminality can affect politics. There will be an increase in workload for security agencies such as the EFCC. Police and judicial system will have to investigate cybercrimes, jail those that commit these crimes and find ways to prove cybercrime. In 2019 there was news that the EFCC raided some areas in Owerri Imo State and arrested 37 yahoo boys in Okwu Urata, Aladinma and Egbu. Since there are news and stories regarding cybercrimes it shows that it has become an issue in politics. Recently in march 2026 stakeholders in Imo State promised to stand against corruption. Yahoo Cybercrime has become one of the many economic crimes committed in imo and Anambra State under the purview of EFCC along with corruption, property fraud, tax crimes and bank frauds. As you can see there is a relationship between cybercrime, corruption and politics.

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Yahoo criminality can also lower trust in our government and political system. If young people feel that there aren't many jobs available for them and that some people can get rich by committing crimes, they will lose trust in public office. This can happen if citizens believe that criminals will not be jailed or that the law enforcement agencies accept bribes to let them go free. Some researchers have even suggested that some security agencies may accept money from yahoo boys (Ojolo & Singh, 2023). There may be poor socio-economic conditions that can lead young people to not participate in politics or find themselves doing illegal activities to become successful (Onyeachu et al., 2025). Therefore, we can conclude that to stop Yahoo Yahoo we need more than just law enforcement. Government needs to provide more job opportunities for its citizens and give them reason to participate in politics and legal economic activities.

III. Conclusion

The study concludes that Yahoo criminality has many social economic and political effects to Imo state and beyond. In terms of socio economics, Yahoo distorts true economic value, encourage materialism and flashiness of life. It discourages students from performing well in school, can affect trust when dealing with electronic transactions. And can also have a negative impact on Nigerian business if left unchecked. On a social level Yahoo criminality destroys the family value system and encourages people to earn through crime. Politically yahoo puts too much burden on the police force and court system. It can cause a loss of trust in our government and creates an avenue to expose failure in the job creation sector, youths' sector and bad governance in Nigeria.

Based on the findings, unemployment, not having any means of getting money, and wanting to get rich quick are part of the drivers Yahoo criminality among youths. We need to crack down on the criminals but find ways to educate the people on how to better use their talents. By creating more jobs for the youth, better technology classes. Schools and Universities can teach morals and ethics. Help better support the family unit and ensure there is no corrupt practices when solving cybercrimes. Youths can be taught to use their technology skills for good such as web developing and starting their own business on the internet.

We must continue to fight Yahoo in Imo state but we must do so by fixing our problems that cause these crimes to occur. There will always be punishment for those who commit crimes but we can lower the amount of Yahoo if we fix some issues in our society. Provide jobs, change people morals and provide them with proper education. Ensure good governance and just policing. If we can achieve all this, we can take the large youth population in Imo state and use them as a great asset to our economy and politics.

Recommendations

i. The government should provide more job opportunities and livelihood to youths by enhancing the existing youth empowerment programmes. Such as providing skills training to them on various fields such as business, entrepreneurship, providing cheap credit to start small businesses, apprenticeship and train them on the use of internet and other digital devices. If they are provided with sustainable means of livelihood in both formal and informal sectors there will be less cases of youths turning to cybercrime to make money overnight.

ii. The government should also put measures in place that will improve its governance structure by eliminating corruption in the system. Lack of patronism and better institutional structures and eliminate any sense of injustice by the people. Institutions should work for the benefit of the people and be accountable to them. Politicians and other political appointees should also be brought to book when necessary. Good governance will help curb cybercrime by building a positive image of the institution and make the citizens believe that no one will escape justice.

iii. Enforcing bodies should have good measures that can help combat cybercrime. There should be proper fund allocated to these agencies and also equip them with modern day technology to combat cybercrime and the staff that works in those agencies should know what they are doing when trying to detect cybercrime. They should be unbiased and make sure there is no favoritism or selective policing. Also put measures in place that will prevent youths from getting involved in internet fraud by creating jobs that will eliminate poverty. Measures should be put in place by the government and local community organizations that can stop the influence of peers on youths who wants to be rich. Schools should teach children on morality and how to use the internet properly. Churches, Youth association, Parents and NGOs should help curb this by teaching children and young adults about morality and not celebrating unexplainable wealth.

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