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TRANSITION FROM YAHOO TO YAHOO PLUS AMONG NIGERIAN YOUTH: AN ANALYSIS OF DEMOGRAPHIC INFLUENCES AND CONSEQUENCES

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Abstract

The rise of Yahoo Plus, a type of cybercrime characterized by computer fraud and ritualistic behaviors, has become a considerable social and economic issue among Nigerian youth. This paper examines the progression of Yahoo Plus from its inception in conventional internet fraud (Yahoo) to its more perilous form, which amalgamates financial schemes with occult practices. The paper examines the demographic variables contributing to this change, emphasizing socio-economic conditions, cultural pressures, and the scarcity of work alternatives that compel young Nigerians to engage in this unlawful activity. The paper also analyzes the implications of Yahoo Plus on individual, communal, and national levels, highlighting its effects on the moral and cultural fabric of Nigerian society. Furthermore, it offers an examination of the current actions and policies, including legislation, awareness campaigns, economic strategies, and community-based interventions aimed against Yahoo Plus in Nigeria. Emphasizing the deficiencies in combating this emerging type of cybercrime. The research delineates essential proposals for addressing Yahoo Plus, encompassing legal reforms, youth empowerment initiatives, educational programs, and international collaboration. The paper

ultimately concludes that tackling the Yahoo Plus phenomenon necessitates a multi-faceted strategy that includes legal and institutional reform, educational and awareness initiatives, socio-cultural transformation, youth empowerment, international collaboration, improved technological solutions, and the establishment of public-private partnerships. By addressing both demographic and non-demographic factors contributing to crime, Nigeria can reduce the incidence of Yahoo Plus and foster a future where youth are empowered to seek legitimate paths to success.

Keywords: *Yahoo, Yahoo Plus, Transition, Nigerian Youth, Demographic Drivers.*

Background to the Study

The swift progression of digital technology has resulted in an increase of internet-based activities. In Nigeria, smartphone penetration and accessible internet services have profoundly impacted youth lifestyles. Social media platforms are commonly utilized for both communication and education, as well as for entrepreneurial endeavors. Nonetheless, these sites have also evolved into instruments for cyber fraud, with youth utilizing digital technologies to execute Yahoo-related actions. Historically, cybercrime in Nigeria can be attributed to the notorious 419 scams, named after the provision of the Nigerian Penal Code that prohibits advance-fee fraud. Initially, these frauds entailed deceptive letters, emails, or faxes assuring victims significant financial gains in return for upfront fees. These activities expanded considerably in the 1990s and early 2000s, coinciding with the increased availability of internet access nationwide. Ogunleye (2020) observes that early internet fraudsters, commonly referred to as "Yahoo boys," utilized platforms such as Yahoo Mail to execute scams, leading to the coining of the name.

With the rise in global awareness of these scams and advancements in cybersecurity, fraudsters commenced employing increasingly complex techniques. The advent of Yahoo Plus signified a pivotal moment in Nigeria's cybercrime narrative. Oluwadare (2020) contends that Yahoo Plus exemplifies the convergence of technology and cultural traditions, as perpetrators integrated ritualistic components, including sacrifices and occult invocations, into their operations to augment the efficacy of their schemes. Olufemi's research (2020) indicates that conventional cyber fraud techniques frequently produced unreliable outcomes, leading many individuals to adopt spiritual and ritualistic rituals thought to guarantee success. Ogundele (2021) similarly observes that peer influence and exposure to success narratives among Yahoo Plus practitioners further legitimize these behaviors. These elements combined highlight the intricate interaction of societal pressures and individual decisions influencing this growth.

This paper examines the demographic factors influencing this transition and its ramifications for Nigerian society. Essential demographic parameters encompass age, socio-economic status, peer influence, and educational attainment. Many young individuals from economically deprived families are attracted to these activities due to a scarcity of legitimate wage options. Likewise, peer groups and social networks frequently serve a crucial function in normalizing and endorsing Yahoo Plus practices among impressionable adolescents.

Statement of Problem

The shift from Yahoo to Yahoo Plus presents a considerable challenge to Nigeria's socio-economic and ethical framework. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2022), youth unemployment rates have exceeded 35%, intensifying economic difficulties and driving many individuals towards cybercrime.

Moreover, Olufemi (2020) observes that the societal veneration of riches, irrespective of its origin, fosters the normalization of Yahoo Plus habits among Nigerian young. Young individuals, confronted with unemployment, poverty, and cultural expectations for achievement, are increasingly attracted to these behaviors. The National Bureau of Statistics (2022) indicates that more than 53% of Nigeria's youth population is below the poverty line, while a 35% unemployment rate intensifies economic instability. Research by Eze and Ugo (2021) indicates that numerous youngsters perceive these behaviors as the sole feasible method for attaining financial independence in the face of restricted options.

The transition prompts inquiries into the sociological, cultural, and economic determinants shaping these behaviors, along with the enduring effects on the nation's youth and development. For example, the societal veneration of wealth, regardless of its origin, frequently compels youth to engage in unlawful actions, as noted by Olufemi (2020). Cultural beliefs in supernatural interventions for success, as documented by Ogundele (2021), significantly influence these actions. These factors are exacerbated by restricted access to quality education and feasible economic prospects, intensifying the difficulty.

Although literature addresses the historical origins of online fraud in Nigeria, the particular methods and motivations for the evolution from Yahoo fraud to Yahoo Plus remain little examined. The transition from conventional email fraud to ritualistic cybercrime (Yahoo Plus) indicates an advance in criminal conduct that integrates technology with traditional African spiritual practices. Nonetheless, a significant portion of the current literature either conflates both types of fraud or concentrates just on one facet, lacking a thorough analysis of the mechanisms and reasons behind this transition. Therefore, this paper is necessary to examine the demographic factors and effects on Nigerian adolescents.

Aim and Objectives

- i. This paper analyzed the evolution of the conventional yahoo scam to yahoo plus among Nigerian youth. The paper specifically investigated:
- ii. The prevalence of Yahoo Plus activities among Nigerian youth.
- iii. The demographic factors influencing Yahoo Plus activities among Nigerian youth.
- iv. Additional non-demographic factors influencing Yahoo Plus activities among Nigerian youth.
- v. Implications of Yahoo Plus activities among Nigerian youth.
- vi. Strategies and obstacles regarding Yahoo Plus activity among Nigerian youth

Methodology

This research utilizes a secondary data collection method derived from existing literature and case studies. The data encompasses comprehensive database inquiries on significant academic platforms related to Yahoo and Yahoo Plus among Nigerian youth, as well as an assessment of existing measures and regulations addressing Yahoo Plus in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

The paper employs the Social Learning Theory (SLT), which asserts that behavior is acquired through the observation and imitation of others, particularly within peer groups. This idea is especially pertinent to the dynamics of Yahoo and Yahoo Plus within Nigerian youth. Olufemi (2020) emphasizes that young individuals frequently imitate successful friends engaged in cyber fraud, viewing these actions as legitimate routes to money and social standing. Bandura's seminal research on social learning emphasizes that reward and modeling within communities profoundly influence behavior. Recent research, like Adewale (2019), illustrate that in Nigeria, youth frequently acquire cybercrime strategies and rationalizations for such conduct from older peers or mentors within their circles. This peer-to-peer transmission is bolstered by material incentives and social affirmation, establishing a self-perpetuating cycle of deviance.

Moreover, Oyedele (2021) emphasizes that digital platforms exacerbate these tendencies, facilitating broader propagation of deceptive practices and the glorifying of unlawful achievements. The impact of peer networks in sustaining Yahoo Plus habits is apparent, as these networks offer both the methods and social endorsement necessary for participation in such activities. Furthermore, Strain Theory is utilized to comprehend how societal constraints and restricted opportunities compel individuals to partake in deviant actions, exemplified by Yahoo Plus. Merton's Strain Theory highlights the disparity between cultural objectives and institutional methods as a fundamental cause of deviation, particularly observable in the Nigerian context. Eze and Ugo (2021) illustrate that youths, hindered from attaining societal wealth aspirations through official avenues due to unemployment and systemic inequalities, frequently turn to unlawful activities such as Yahoo Plus.

Adekunle (2020) similarly emphasizes that systemic corruption and inadequate access to quality education are significant catalysts for deviant behaviors. Afolabi and Ojo (2018) research underscores how urbanization and exposure to global trends intensify these concerns, fostering a sense of inequity among Nigerian young. These studies jointly highlight the diverse economic and social dynamics driving the emergence of Yahoo Plus. Adewale (2019) emphasizes that discontent and perceived injustices drive individuals to engage in cybercrime and ritualistic behaviors as a means to surmount economic obstacles. Furthermore, Newman and Clarke (2003) examine the interaction between digital crime frameworks and economic pressures in developing nations, which closely corresponds with the situation of Nigerian teenagers participating in Yahoo Plus.

Literature Review

This section of the paper analyzes relevant subjects and literature associated with the investigation.

Conceptual Review

The fundamental elements of this subject are presented with thorough definitions and explanations to provide a clear understanding of its trajectory. These principles include evolution, Yahoo, Yahoo Plus, demographic factors, and Nigerian youth.

Concept of Evolution

In this sense, evolution denotes the steady development and transition of Yahoo's activities into Yahoo Plus. Numerous researchers, such as Adewale (2019) and Olufemi (2020), have chronicled this evolution, emphasizing the transition from rudimentary email frauds to more intricate schemes that integrate spiritual activities. Ogundele (2021) offers a comprehensive examination of the impact of societal and technological transformations on this progression, especially among economically disadvantaged children. The comparative analysis by Holt and Bossler (2016) investigates the global adaptability of cybercrime strategies in areas with elevated unemployment rates.

Concept of Yahoo

Yahoo, initially linked to email and search engine services, has informally become synonymous with cyber fraud operations among Nigerian youth. Researchers like Olufemi (2020) and Afolabi and Ojo (2018) have recorded the influence of socio-economic pressures and extensive internet accessibility on this cultural transformation. Ogundele (2021) examines how the term 'Yahoo' has become synonymous with criminal internet activity, indicating a societal normalization of cyber fraud among certain young populations. Ashforth (2005) offers comparative insights into the evolution of vernacular terminology into representations of deviant behaviors in postcolonial nations.

Concept of Yahoo Plus

Yahoo Plus integrates ritualistic components designed to enhance efficacy in cyber fraud. Research by Ogundele (2021) and Adewale (2019) has recorded that these activities frequently entail consulting spiritualists, conducting sacrifices, and following superstitions thought to ensure financial benefits. Ogundele's research presents case studies of individuals participating in these practices, elucidating the cultural and peer factors that compel them. Afolabi and Ojo (2018) underscore the influence of ancient beliefs and their amalgamation with contemporary cybercrime strategies, illustrating how these methods exploit entrenched cultural norms. Apter (2005) examines analogous ritualistic adaptations in various African contexts, offering a more extensive comparative framework for comprehending Yahoo Plus.

Concept of Demographic Drivers

Age, educational attainment, socio-economic status, and peer influence are determinants in the adoption of Yahoo Plus. Research by Adewale (2019) and Afolabi & Ojo (2018) has investigated how economic adversity and restricted educational access act as drivers for these behaviors. Olufemi (2020) emphasizes the influence of peer networks in legitimizing these practices, whilst Ogundele (2021) examines the interplay between socio-economic position and cultural views in motivating teenage involvement in Yahoo Plus. Osgood and Anderson (2004) examine the correlation between unstructured socializing and deviant behaviors, providing findings relevant to Yahoo Plus.

Concept of Nigerian Youth

Nigerian youth, as delineated by the National Youth Policy (2009), are those between the ages of 15 and 35, constituting a substantial segment of the population. They encounter obstacles include

elevated unemployment rates, deficient educational systems, and cultural pressures that frequently drive them towards unlawful activities (National Bureau of Statistics, 2023). Research, including Adekunle (2020), highlights the elevated rates of unemployment and underemployment within this demographic, which are associated with heightened susceptibility to criminal behavior. Moreover, Oyedele (2021) emphasizes that restricted access to quality education and entrepreneurial prospects intensifies economic dependency. Sommers' (2012) research offers comparative insights into the disproportionate impact of systemic inequality on youth in poor nations, thereby contextualizing the challenges faced by Nigerian young within wider global trends. Sommers (2012) examines the impact of restricted opportunities and systematic inequalities on youth in emerging nations, offering a comparative perspective for Nigeria. Adewale (2019) analyzes the effects of elevated unemployment and educational inequalities on Nigerian adolescents, associating these elements with heightened susceptibility to deviant behaviors. Furthermore, Olufemi (2020) underscores the ambitions of Nigerian young in overcoming systemic obstacles, accentuating the impact of peer influence and cultural influences on their socio-economic results.

Demographic Characteristics of Nigerian Youth

Nigerian youth exhibit diversity in education, urban-rural habitation, and technological exposure. The National Bureau of Statistics (2022) reports that approximately 30% of youth in rural areas have reliable internet access, in contrast to 70% in urban centers. Educational attainment levels exhibit considerable variation, with youngsters in northern regions demonstrating lower literacy rates compared to their southern counterparts (UNESCO, 2021). Research conducted by Adewale (2019) and Olufemi (2020) highlights the impact of these differences on economic possibilities and social mobility for Nigerian youth. Moreover, youth unemployment has emerged as a critical issue. The National Bureau of Statistics (2022) indicates that youth unemployment in Nigeria has exceeded 35%, while underemployment impacts an additional 20%. Oyedele (2021) and Adekunle (2020) emphasize the impact of insufficient job creation strategies and pervasive corruption in intensifying this problem. The absence of vocational training and entrepreneurial assistance renders several youths inadequately equipped for the labor market, compelling them to seek alternative revenue sources.

An in-depth comprehension of the obstacles encountered by Nigerian teenagers also highlights the impact of gender inequality. Afolabi and Ojo (2018) observe that young women frequently face supplementary obstacles, such as restricted educational opportunities and societal norms that favor early marriage over professional advancement. This gender disparity further constrains the economic potential of a substantial segment of the population.

The ambitions of Nigerian young are influenced by globalization and access to worldwide media. Adewale (2019) underscores that these variables engender a sense of inequality, wherein local prospects do not align with the elevated aspirations of global success. This discrepancy frequently results in frustration and the pursuit of alternate methods for attaining financial stability, including involvement in cyber fraud operations.

Brief History of Yahoo in Nigeria

Yahoo fraud emerged in the early 2000s, primarily characterized by basic email scams. Researchers Adewale (2019) and Ogundele (2021) elucidate how offenders employed phishing tactics, masquerading as organizations or individuals to mislead victims

into disclosing confidential information. Interpol reports from 2005 indicate that Nigeria's economic difficulties and global perceptions of inadequate cyber restrictions created a conducive environment for fraudulent enterprises. Early Yahoo schemes frequently targeted overseas victims, leveraging the secrecy of email conversations to perpetrate frauds with minimal risk of detection.

As technology progressed and law enforcement intensified, offenders evolved by employing more advanced and covert techniques. Ogundele (2021) elucidates the evolution of phishing schemes to incorporate counterfeit websites and social engineering techniques, whereas Adewale (2019) emphasizes the proliferation of malware and ransomware attacks perpetrated by Nigerian cybercriminals. Technological innovations, like virtual private networks (VPNs) and encrypted communication tools, have facilitated these offenders' evasion of identification. Furthermore, regulatory measures like the implementation of Nigeria's Cybercrime Act of 2015 have compelled criminals to employ more discreet and innovative tactics, as noted by Eze and Ugo (2021).

The Transition from Yahoo to Yahoo Plus in Nigeria

The transition to Yahoo Plus from conventional Yahoo commenced in the mid-2010s, as young Nigerians progressively integrated traditional spiritual rites into their online fraudulent endeavors. These ceremonies, frequently conducted by local "spiritualists" or witchdoctors, were thought to enhance the efficacy of deceptive practices, including online fraud. While conventional Yahoo scams primarily encompassed email fraud and rudimentary social engineering, Yahoo Plus provided an additional level of rituals and occult practices. It is frequently defined by the engagement of supernatural forces, encompassing blood sacrifices, invocations, and occult procedures, aimed at shielding fraudsters from law enforcement and enhancing the probability of success in their scams (Oluwadare, 2020; Ogundele, 2021).

The rituals associated with Yahoo are not only symbolic; they are seen as a vital component in the efficacy of fraudulent operations. Afolabi and Ojo (2018) assert that the rituals typically encompass sacrifices, offerings, or prayers directed towards deities and spirits in return for wealth. These traditions are significantly shaped by traditional African faiths and beliefs in supernatural entities. The belief that supernatural forces can directly affect financial results is ingrained in the cultural framework of numerous Nigerian communities. Cybercriminals frequently consult spiritualists or 'Babalawos' (traditional healers) to obtain "protection" or "favors" that may enhance the efficacy of their fraudulent activities. Ogundele (2021) indicates that these spiritual consultations might vary from relatively innocuous practices, such as pouring libations, to more severe actions, including human sacrifices. This progression of cyber fraud signifies the amalgamation of contemporary technology with conventional belief systems, rendering the activities more intricate and challenging to dismantle.

Prevalence of Yahoo Plus Activities among Nigerian Youth

The incidence of Yahoo Plus, a more intricate and ritualistic kind of internet fraud, has markedly escalated among Nigerian youth in the last decade. What commenced as a rather marginalized and stigmatized practice has now evolved into a more mainstream and pervasive phenomena, becoming integrated into the culture of numerous Nigerian adolescents. The practice has expanded beyond a narrow group and is now widespread throughout the nation, especially among university students and young professionals. In 2019, the Nigerian Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Annual Report (AR) and statements from its former

chairman, Abdulrasheed Bawa, indicated a consistent increase in arrests tied to internet fraud, particularly Yahoo Plus, over the years. The 2019 paper documented more than 2,000 individuals apprehended for diverse internet fraud-related crimes, a significant number of them participated in Yahoo Plus frauds.

In 2020 and 2021, arrests experienced a minor decline due to the COVID-19 epidemic; nevertheless, the trend reestablished itself in 2022, with EFCC reports indicating a 10-15% (1,500) annual increase in arrests associated with internet fraud. Moreover, 2023 numbers indicate a consistent rise in Yahoo Plus-related charges, predominantly originating from institutions and schools where a culture of fraud is deeply ingrained. The expansion of the online gaming industry, wagering, and social media influencers has further enhanced the visibility and acceptance of internet fraud. A significant number of individuals apprehended for Yahoo Plus have been discovered to engage in social media activities, showcasing their affluence and associating their illicit actions with ritualistic rituals (Olajide, 2021).

Demographic Influencers of Yahoo Plus Engagement among Nigerian Youth

Yahoo Plus is influenced by several demographic characteristics in Nigeria. This portion of the paper discusses several significant demographic determinants.

Economic Factors

Elevated unemployment and poverty rates drive youth towards illicit activities. Structural problems like income inequality intensify this trend, as numerous young individuals perceive themselves as marginalized from economic prospects. The absence of accessible affordable startup financing and occupational education restricts their realistic opportunities for upward mobility. Research, like that of Olufemi (2019), indicates that the lack of organized financial support networks compels several youths to engage in illicit activities as a means of survival. Moreover, inflation and escalating living expenses exacerbate the pressures on young adults to choose unconventional strategies for attaining financial stability.

Globally, researchers such as Merton (1938) have demonstrated that socio-economic inequalities contribute to deviant conduct, especially when society objectives are prioritized without fair means to attain them. Research conducted in Africa, including research by Akinyemi and Okeke (2020), indicates that economic disparity propels youngsters towards cybercrime due to the scarcity of genuine work possibilities. In Nigeria, entities such as the National Bureau of Statistics (2022) continuously indicate a disparity between the quantity of job applicants and the number of available employment, fostering an environment conducive to criminal activity. Moreover, restricted access to entrepreneurship support networks intensifies youth susceptibility. Initiatives targeting youth economic empowerment sometimes falter because of corruption or bureaucratic inefficiencies. A World Bank (2020) assessment on youth employment in Nigeria revealed that fewer than 10% of entrepreneurial loans reached their intended recipients, resulting in disillusionment among many potential young entrepreneurs and an inclination towards deviant options.

Inflation and escalating living expenses exacerbate these problems. Osalor (2022) emphasizes that the unpredictability of the Nigerian economy disproportionately impacts youth, compelling many to engage in cybercrime as a projected survival strategy. The

romanticization of cybercrime affluence in media and social circles exacerbates this financial strain.

Educational Background

Inadequate education diminishes understanding of legal and ethical ramifications. Global scholars, including Freire (1970), assert that insufficient critical thinking abilities frequently result in suboptimal decision-making among undereducated groups. Njoroge (2018) emphasizes that deficiencies in educational institutions in Africa do not equip young with practical and ethical frameworks to address difficulties. Ojedokun and Eraye (2012) discovered that in Nigeria, tertiary-level students' insufficient education on digital ethics and legal frameworks is associated with increased participation in cybercrimes. This indicates that attaining higher education levels alone is inadequate; the quality and pertinence of the education are also critically important. Research indicates that inadequately funded educational institutions are unable to impart the skills essential for authentic digital or entrepreneurial success. For example, insufficient computer skills and the lack of anti-cybercrime courses render students unprepared to identify or evade fraudulent activity. Moreover, the cultural belief that formal education does not ensure work intensifies youth frustration and drives them towards criminal activities as alternative means of money.

Cultural influences associated with education significantly influence outcomes. Adegboye's research (2021) indicated that communities that devalue education frequently see elevated rates of young participation in fraudulent operations. This signifies that a comprehensive strategy to education encompassing curriculum change, enhanced financing, and community involvement is essential for effectively addressing this issue.

Cultural Influences

Convictions regarding the effectiveness of rituals for financial prosperity motivate engagement. Cultural values are profoundly ingrained in Nigerian society, where ancient traditions frequently converge with everyday life. Researchers like Smith (2021) contend that the syncretic amalgamation of ancient African ideas and contemporary aspirations significantly fosters ritualistic practices among Nigerian adolescents. This phenomena is not exclusive to Nigeria; throughout sub-Saharan Africa, research by Awolalu (1976) and Mbiti (1969) underscores how traditional religions provide rationales for success and adversity, influencing individual conduct. Within the framework of Yahoo Plus, faith in supernatural entities frequently acts as a rationale for ritualistic behaviors intended to augment success in deceitful endeavors. Adebajo's (2018) research indicates that numerous youths view these rites as a form of "spiritual hacking," integrating digital competencies with cultural components. This view is bolstered by peer narratives and cultural attitudes that glorify rapid money accumulation irrespective of ethical considerations.

Durkheim's theory of collective consciousness (1912) elucidates how communal ideas and values can sustain aberrant acts within a society. In Nigeria, these ideas are frequently sustained by community elders, traditional healers, and media representations. Akinola (2020) asserts that the standardization of ritualistic behaviors in music videos and Nollywood films enhances their allure, integrating them into the cultural framework.

Peer Pressure

Peer pressure is a significant factor influencing youth participation in Yahoo Plus activities. Worldwide, researchers like Bandura

(1977) highlight the significance of social learning theory in comprehending aberrant conduct, wherein individuals acquire and emulate behaviors observed in their peers. In Nigeria, the conspicuousness of rapid riches among peers engaged in Yahoo Plus serves as a significant incentive. Adebisi's (2019) research indicates that numerous youngsters are introduced to Yahoo Plus via peer networks that normalize and romanticize these activities. Peer networks frequently facilitate early exposure to fraudulent operations, impart technical expertise, and promote ritualistic behaviors. This corresponds with the research of Akerlof and Kranton (2000) regarding identity economics, wherein individuals adhere to behaviors that conform to the expectations of their social groupings.

Peer influence has been recognized as a crucial determinant of teenage criminal conduct throughout Africa. Research conducted by Edeh (2020) in Ghana and Obioha (2018) in Nigeria indicates that the conspicuous exhibition of affluence by Yahoo Plus practitioners generates a ripple effect, enticing others to engage. Media representations of affluence exacerbate this phenomenon, as music videos and social media platforms depict deceptive prosperity as desirable.

Age

Age significantly influences vulnerability to cybercrime. Research by Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) in the General Theory of Crime indicates that younger individuals, especially those in their late teens and early twenties, are more predisposed to criminal activity due to impulsivity and risk-taking propensities. Research conducted by Monyatsi (2020) indicates that individuals aged 18 to 25 in Africa are overrepresented in cybercrime, influenced by their technological proficiency and socio-economic difficulties. Olawale (2020) asserts that individuals aged 18 to 25 constitute the predominant demographic of Yahoo Plus participants in Nigeria. This demographic frequently demonstrates superior digital knowledge and adaptation to changing cybercrime strategies. The prospect of rapid financial success substantially attracts younger folks confronting unemployment and restricted options for economic progress. Adebisi (2019) emphasizes that this cohort is especially susceptible to peer influence and cultural pressures, which further propels their engagement in Yahoo Plus.

Moreover, age-related vulnerabilities are enhanced by developmental variables. Adolescents, in the process of developing their identities and values, may be more susceptible to the allure and perceived success linked to cybercrime. This corresponds with Akintola's (2020) findings, which indicate that numerous youths justify their involvement in Yahoo Plus as a provisional strategy for attaining financial autonomy.

Gender

Gender substantially affects participation in Yahoo Plus activities. Internationally, research like that of Messerschmidt (1993) underscores the influence of conventional gender roles and cultural expectations on the manifestation of deviant behavior. In Nigeria, males predominantly engage in Yahoo Plus, as they are conventionally seen as breadwinners and consequently face pressure to attain financial success. Adebayo (2020) observes that this pressure frequently compels males to pursue alternative sources of income, such as cybercrime. Recent research by Adedoyin (2021) indicates a progressive rise in female involvement in Yahoo Plus activities. Males typically assume primary roles in frauds and rituals, but females generally serve as accomplices or facilitators.

Research indicates that certain women participate in ritualistic practices, motivated by peer pressure and the prospect of monetary gain. Moreover, societal stigmas surrounding male failure intensify the disproportionate male participation in Yahoo Plus, as many individuals feel pressured to fulfill expectations of financial superiority. Researchers like as Adebajo (2018) contend that comprehending the gendered dynamics of Yahoo Plus participation necessitates an awareness of the socio-cultural constructions that propel both men and women into these pursuits. Interventions must consider gender-specific vulnerabilities and pressures, emphasizing education, awareness, and alternate avenues for financial empowerment.

Ethnic Affiliation

Ethnic and cultural backgrounds affect the propensity of youth to engage with Yahoo Plus. Cultural norms and traditions worldwide significantly influence behaviors. Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions theory illustrates the influence of society views on individual behavior. In the African environment, Mbiti's (1969) research emphasize the significance of spirituality and traditional values in decision-making processes. Akintola (2020) indicates that in Nigeria, specific ethnic groups are predisposed to ritualistic practices owing to well rooted beliefs in supernatural interventions. Ethnic groups with robust traditional customs, especially those encompassing mysticism and ancestral veneration, frequently justify these actions as culturally permissible. Adegboye (2021) corroborates this, indicating that youngsters from communities with profound spiritual foundations may view Yahoo Plus actions as an extension of their cultural legacy rather than as criminal conduct.

Nonetheless, regional disparities are present. Certain ethnic groups are more inclined to depend on traditional justifications for Yahoo Plus, whereas others may dismiss these habits due to religious influences or urban experience. Addressing this necessitates culturally relevant solutions that honor traditions while deterring exploitative practices. Involving community leaders and utilizing culturally pertinent narratives can facilitate a change in perceptions and diminish participation in Yahoo Plus.

Geographical Location/Place of Residence

The geographical location profoundly affects youth participation in Yahoo Plus. Urban hubs, especially megacities such as Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt, are recognized as focal points for these operations owing to the presence of digital infrastructure, anonymity, and increased susceptibility to global fraud strategies (Nwosu, 2019). These cities offer the technology resources and social connections that enable Yahoo Plus activities, establishing them as centers for cybercriminal networks. In contrast, rural regions have historically exhibited reduced occurrences of Yahoo Plus owing to restricted internet connection and technology availability.

Research by Adebajo (2018) indicates that the expansion of internet connectivity to rural areas is correlated with an increase in cybercrime activities in these places. Young individuals in rural regions, frequently inspired by metropolitan tales of rapid wealth and achievement, commence engaging in analogous fraudulent activities despite the absence of sophisticated technology infrastructure.

Religious Belief

Religion is conventionally regarded as a moral compass that deters immoral conduct. Conversely, certain persons misconstrue or use

religious doctrines to rationalize their participation in unlawful behaviors. Weber's idea of the Protestant Ethic illustrates the influence of religious beliefs on economic conduct worldwide. Research by Stark and Bainbridge (1985) examines the emergence of religious deviance when individuals amalgamate spiritual conceptions with personal aspirations. In Nigeria, Olumide (2020) indicated that some youths justify their cybercriminal activities by perceiving them as "divine blessings" or essential survival strategies inside a structurally inequitable society. The research indicates that the spread of prosperity gospel ideas in Nigeria may unintentionally legitimize the relentless chase of wealth regardless of the consequences.

Furthermore, conventional religious convictions regarding supernatural forces and rituals significantly influence Yahoo Plus activities. Akintola (2020) observes that spiritual rationalizations, including the employment of rituals to "augment success," are grounded in traditional African religious customs. The interaction between contemporary cybercrime and indigenous mysticism is a unique characteristic of Yahoo Plus operations.

Marital Status

Marital status is a demographic element that affects youth participation in Yahoo Plus activities. Merton's Strain Theory posits that persons with diminished social duties are more predisposed to engage in risk-taking behaviors. Likewise, research by Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) indicates that unmarried individuals experience less familial constraints, rendering them more susceptible to deviant conduct. Adegboye (2021) discovered that in Nigeria, single adolescents, especially males, predominantly constitute the ranks of Yahoo Plus practitioners. This group frequently views cybercrime as a method to get financial autonomy and enhance their social standing prior to marriage. Married persons tend to exhibit greater risk aversion owing to their familial obligations and apprehensions regarding legal or societal consequences.

Moreover, cultural norms in Nigeria impose considerable financial burdens on young males to fulfill marriage obligations, including dowry payments and extravagant celebrations. Adedoyin's (2021) research indicates that certain teenagers turn to Yahoo Plus as an expedient method to meet societal expectations.

Other Non-Demographic Drivers of Yahoo Plus Activities among Nigerian Youth

Some of the key non-demographic drivers of yahoo Pus in Nigeria include

Desire for Quick Wealth and Status

The allure of rapid financial gain significantly influences the demographic factors of Yahoo Plus. Ajayi (2020) indicates that numerous Nigerian adolescents are psychologically motivated by the pursuit of rapid gratification. The protracted and challenging journey to achievement via conventional careers frequently appears unappealing in contrast to the rapid environment of online fraud, where financial gain is readily accessible. The aspiration for elevated social standing, frequently associated with the ostentatious exhibition of riches and power, serves as a significant incentive. The emergence of social media influencers showcasing their opulent lifestyles has intensified the yearning for immediate achievement. A significant number of Nigerian youth regard celebrities and influencers as paragons, with social media functioning as a platform for the exhibition and veneration of affluence. Olajide (2021) observes that these influencers frequently advocate materialism and the notion that affluence is essential for

happiness and success. For youth facing unemployment and limited possibilities, these ideals are alluring and may drive them to resort to deceitful methods to attain comparable money and position.

Social Media and the Glorification of Fraud

The expansion of social media has significantly influenced youth engagement with Yahoo Plus. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and Snapchat have fostered an environment in which the exhibition of affluence and opulence is commonplace. Numerous fraudsters, including participants in Yahoo Plus, utilize these platforms to showcase their income and lifestyle, so mistakenly romanticizing illicit money. Olajide (2021) asserts that social media influencers frequently disseminate their success narratives, which several young Nigerians see as authentic, despite the possibility that these accounts may be based on deception. Furthermore, online dating applications, e-commerce platforms, and financial schemes present enough opportunities for fraudulent activities. Young Nigerians engaged in Yahoo Plus frequently utilize these platforms to perpetrate deception and generate income through fraudulent schemes. Ajayi (2023) emphasizes that the convenient access to global clientele via digital platforms enhances the appeal of Yahoo Plus.

Legal and Governmental Factors

Despite the efforts of the EFCC and other law enforcement agencies to combat internet fraud, the inadequate implementation of anti-cybercrime legislation and the absence of effective deterrents enable the continuation of Yahoo Plus activities. Oluwadare (2020) posits that the protracted duration of legal processes and the scarcity of resources for cybercrime investigations facilitate the involvement of young Nigerians in fraudulent operations with diminished apprehension of prosecution.

Consequences of Yahoo Plus Activities among Nigerian Youth

This portion of the paper examines the primary repercussions of Yahoo Plus activities among Nigerian youth.

Social Consequences

The social ramifications of Yahoo Plus are complex, influencing both individuals and groups. Merton's Strain Theory elucidates how societal pressures and restricted legitimate options can result in deviant behavior on a global scale. Adebayo (2020) emphasizes that in Nigeria, the normalizing of cybercrime via music, films, and social media has diminished moral norms among the youth. Communities frequently stigmatize youth from regions linked to elevated occurrences of Yahoo Plus activities, resulting in social exclusion and reduced societal trust. Moreover, the societal endorsement of rapid wealth accumulation, regardless of its origin, intensifies social issues. Research by Adebajo (2018) reveals that the public glorification of fraudulent acts has resulted in a generational schism, as older generations denounce such actions while younger ones justify them. This alteration in cultural norms sustains the cycle of criminal conduct and undermines communal cohesion.

Economic Consequences

Yahoo Plus substantially hinders economic development. Becker's Economic Theory of Crime elucidates how individuals assess the costs and advantages of criminal behavior, especially in contexts characterized by inadequate regulatory structures. In Nigeria, cybercrime has engendered pervasive skepticism about digital transactions, dissuading multinational enterprises and investors.

Olumide (2020) asserts that the nation's notoriety as a center for internet fraud has led to heightened worldwide scrutiny of Nigerian enterprises and individuals. At a microeconomic level, youngsters involved in Yahoo Plus frequently emphasize ostentatious consumption rather than long-term investments, so contributing minimally to sustainable economic progress. Research by Akintola (2020) highlights that the financial benefits derived via Yahoo Plus are often ephemeral, since individuals encounter legal repercussions or suffer from mental health complications. This recurrent cycle of financial instability exacerbates economic inequality.

Psychological Consequences

The psychological impact of Yahoo Plus is significant, influencing both practitioners and their victims. Bandura's Social Learning Theory emphasizes the impact of environmental factors on the development of individual behavior worldwide. In Nigeria, those involved in Yahoo Plus frequently encounter feelings of guilt, paranoia, and anxiety stemming from the fraudulent and occasionally violent nature of their actions. Adegboye's (2021) research indicates that numerous youngsters engaged in the ritualistic elements of Yahoo Plus experience post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD) as a result of their involvement in horrific behaviors. Victims of Yahoo Plus, both domestically and globally, experience financial and emotional turmoil, exacerbating public distrust. Adedoyin's (2021) research highlights that the psychological effects of these fraudulent activities affect families and communities, as they contend with the shame and repercussions of their involvement with Yahoo Plus practitioners.

Measures and Challenges against Yahoo Plus Activities among Nigerian Youth

Government and non-governmental organizations have implemented various measures, including:

- i. **Legislation:** Implementation of cybercrime statutes, including the Cybercrimes Act of 2015. Nonetheless, as Adebite et al. (2022) indicate, implementation gaps frequently undermine the efficacy of these regulations. Instances of corruption within law enforcement hinder efforts to achieve justice for culprits (Ogunleye, 2021).
- ii. **Awareness Campaigns:** Initiatives launched by organizations such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) have concentrated on informing adolescents of the risks and legal ramifications of cybercrime. Researchers like Okonkwo (2020) have underscored that these programs should transcend fear-based messaging to incorporate ethical reorientation and positive role modeling. Notwithstanding these endeavors, the campaigns frequently lack profound resonance owing to their generic messaging and restricted accessibility, particularly in rural regions.
- iii. **Economic Policies:** Initiatives for job development, especially aimed at metropolitan areas, have been suggested as enduring remedies. Ogundele and Akintoye (2019) contend that tackling unemployment is essential for diminishing the allure of Yahoo and Yahoo Plus activities. Government initiatives such as the National Social Investment Program (NSIP) have potential but are hindered by inconsistent execution, insufficient funding, and restricted scalability.
- iv. **Community-Based Interventions:** Local leaders and traditional institutions can contribute to mitigating Yahoo

Plus by confronting cultural ideas that validate ritual activities. Community-based educational and rehabilitation initiatives have proven helpful in specific areas (Ogunleye, 2021). Nevertheless, the absence of coordination between local initiatives and overarching national policies frequently constrains their effectiveness, resulting in a disjointed response to the issue.

Summary and Conclusion

The problem of Yahoo Plus in Nigeria has emerged as a significant societal crisis that jeopardizes the nation's economic stability and presents profound ethical, cultural, and legal issues. This type of cybercrime, which combines computer fraud with ritualistic and occult practices, is especially prevalent among Nigerian adolescents. The transition from conventional Yahoo fraud to the more perilous Yahoo Plus is fundamentally linked to the demographic traits of Nigerian youth, intensified by elevated unemployment rates, poverty, and restricted access to educational and economic prospects. Resolving these difficulties necessitates collaborative engagement among several stakeholders, effective policy execution, and ongoing initiatives to offer substantial choices for young development.

Recommendations

- i. **Legal and Institutional Reforms:** Enhance current legislation, including the Cybercrime Act, to explicitly target Yahoo Plus and its related components.
- ii. **Education and Awareness:** Incorporate anti-fraud education and financial literacy into educational curricula, while promoting youth empowerment through vocational training and mentorship.
- iii. **Socio-cultural Changes:** Transform the societal acceptance of Yahoo Plus via community and religious initiatives that advocate for ethical conduct and diligence.
- iv. **Youth Employment:** Allocate resources to youth-centric economic empowerment initiatives, including skills enhancement, entrepreneurship, and employment generation in both formal and informal sectors.
- v. **Multinational partnerships:** Enhance multinational partnerships for transnational cybercrime investigations and resource allocation.
- vi. **Augmented Technological Solutions:** Elevate law enforcement's technological capabilities with sophisticated cybercrime tracking instruments, encompassing artificial intelligence, machine learning, and block-chain technology.
- vii. **Public-Private collaborations:** Cultivate public-private collaborations to generate sustainable employment possibilities.

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