

Framing of Cybercrime (Yahoo-Yahoo Business) by *The Guardian* and *Vanguard* Newspapers

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Abstract

The advent of the digital media is supposed to aid communication, among other functions, but the crimes associated with these novel inventions are impinging on Nigeria's image and national development. This paper concentrates on the aspect of cybercrime known as "Yahoo Yahoo Business" (YYB). The paper uses content analysis to determine how *The Guardian* and *Vanguard* newspapers framed stories related to cybercrime in parts of 2018 and 2019. Relying on the Framing Theory, the study identifies the dominant frames and themes used by the newspapers. The study found that the newspapers had only 68 stories on YYB for the period under study, and framed the perpetrators of this crime as 'Fraudsters'. Other frames used by the newspapers were 'Ritual', and 'Fight against YYB'. The dominant themes used by the newspapers were 'Arrest and Parade', 'Arraignment', and 'Conviction'. Based on the findings of the study, we recommend that newspapers should frame their stories to continue to condemn the *Yahoo Yahoo Business* in all its ramifications, and that their reports should lead to the eradication of the problem and the ultimate development of the Nigerian nation.

Keywords: Cybercrime, Cyber security, Digital media, Framing, National development, Yahoo-Yahoo business

Introduction

When the inventor of the World Wide Web (www), that is today known as the Internet, Tim Berners-Lee (Berners-Lee, 2017) came up with his idea, he "imagined the web as an open platform that would allow everyone, everywhere to share information, access

opportunities and collaborate across geographic and cultural boundaries” (p.1). His intention was that the problems it would solve will go beyond communication. Today, the world is interconnected, and we now have digital banking, virtual currencies and different social platforms that link people and cultures.

However, this brilliant innovation came with some dysfunctions due to their malicious use. This innovation has unsettled virtually every aspect of human endeavours globally, ranging from commerce, governance, development, among others. There are even plans to 'weaponise' frontier technologies like the Artificial Intelligence (Muggah & Kavanagh, 2018). In fact, Kuziemski (2017), concludes that “... in some ways, the Internet has exacerbated our problems” (p.20).

Apart from the foregoing and the issue of the perpetuation of 'fake news' that the social media have thrown up in the international communication scene recently (Guanah, 2018), another facet of the Internet that is worrisome is cybercrime, that is, committing various types of crime through the Internet, viz, but not limited to fraud, character assassination, sexual harassment and blackmail (Obiakor, 2016, p. 401). This crime has made the World Economic Forum's Global Risks Report 2019 to rate the widespread loss of trust in the Internet as the fifth greatest strategic risk facing the world. According to Dixon (2019), cybercrime will continue to be the security challenge of the 21st century, and it is predicted to cost the global economy \$6 trillion by 2021. Since everything is connected in the digital age, Troels Oerting Jorgensen, the head of the World Economic Forum (WEF) Centre for Cyber security, and former head of Europol's European Cybercrime Centre sees cyber security concerns climb up the list of things that keep Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) up at night (Haworth, 2018).

There are a lot of cyber security issues related to the digital media, but the focus of this study is financial cybercrime, also known as Yahoo Yahoo Business (YYB). Today, Nigeria is a renowned hotspot for Internet scams. Ogunlere (2013) cites Nuhu Ribadu as saying that Nigeria is ranked first in the African region as the target and origin of malicious cyber activities as at 2007; and this is spreading across the West African sub-region. Okogba (2019) reports that in 2018, about 89% of all financial services fraud in Nigeria happened through electronic channels while only 11% were non-electronic. Nigeria's Minister of Communication and Digital Economy, Isa Pantami, says cybercrime is growing at an alarming rate globally. He reveals that “In 2018, the cybercrime industry generated about \$1.5 trillion while social media-related crimes generated a minimum of \$3.25 billion. Bitcoin crimes generated \$76 billion all within 2018” (Udegbunam, 2020, p.2).

The rate of YYB in Nigeria has reached an alarming level, apart from scamming people, the perpetrators have now left the ordinary Yahoo Yahoo level to the “Yahoo plus” level where they go about collecting human hair from saloons, eating human faeces, and

harvesting ladies' panties for rituals to enhance their abilities to successfully defraud their victims. The belief is that with the rituals, victims can be easily “remote controlled” to obey whatever order, command, or instruction given to them by the Yahoo boys to send money. With Yahoo Plus, the unfortunate victims tend to comply with all commands without any resistance because they are under spell and the influence of the effect of the rituals.

At present, young girls and teenagers are not only involved, but YYB training schools and academies are being operated and parents are encouraging their wards to go for YYB tutorials (Mcadioh, 2019; Lawal, 2019; Naijaloaded, 2019a; Stephen, 2019a; Daniel, 2019; Papa, 2019a; Yusuf, 2019), and mothers of Yahoo boys are now organising themselves into an association (*Punch*, 2019). It is alleged that the Yahoo Yahoo syndrome is at its greatest peak in Nigeria, and that probably in every 10 Nigerian youths, there are at least 2 of them involved in cybercrime (Papa, 2019b).

The media, especially newspapers, have significant roles to play in curbing such crimes through how they frame their stories. This shows that newspapers can play critical roles in enlightening the public on how to guard against cybercrimes, as they can help to expose the perpetrators of these crimes, and educate users of the cyberspace about possible means of combating cybercrimes. Hence, this paper looks at how *The Guardian* and *Vanguard* newspapers reported YYB stories through the use of frequency, types of frames and themes used to report such stories.

Statement of the Problem

The advent of the Internet, the precursor of the digital media, brought about the easier and simpler ways of doing a lot of things. However, the manipulation of this great innovation in carrying out criminal activities has assumed a worrisome dimension the world over. This challenge is intense in sub-Saharan Africa where there has been no effective means yet to combat these various criminal activities which include cyber financial crime (YYB).

This criminal act has not only been negatively affecting the image of Nigeria, but also causing embarrassment to Nigerians at some foreign airports where they are thoroughly checked due to the bad image these fraudsters have given to the country. Cybercrime is also having a toll on Nigeria's economic development because many foreign investors are scared of coming to the country to do business, or are sceptical in dealing with Nigerians when it comes to investing in the country. This denies Nigeria of the much-needed foreign investments that would have contributed to the nation's development.

It is even insinuated that some e-commerce platforms like eBay are sceptical when it comes to dealing with Nigerians because of the impression already created by Yahoo boys that Nigerians are fraudulent. These problems have to be confronted frontally for Nigeria to move forward in the comity of nations. This is the major problem which necessitated the current investigation.

Scope of the study

This study spanned 12 months, from July 2018 to June 2019. Any cybercrime outside of this time frame was not analysed in this study. Second scope is with the type of cybercrimes covered. For this study, we focused only on Yahoo Yahoo Business (YYB) as it relates to Nigeria. It looked at how *The Guardian* and *Vanguard* newspapers framed YYB stories during the period of study.

Study Objectives

This study generally sought to analyse how *The Guardian* and *Vanguard* newspapers framed cybercrimes or Yahoo Yahoo Business in Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the frequency of Yahoo Yahoo Business reports in the select newspapers;
2. ascertain the dominant news frame used in reporting Yahoo Yahoo Business stories; and
3. identify the dominant media themes used in reporting Yahoo Yahoo Business stories.

Theoretical Framework

This study is founded on the Media Framing Theory which is credited to Anthropologist Gregory Bateson (Bateson, 1955/1972). The Media Framing Theory has its roots in the agenda-setting theory, and both have the intention of calling public's attention to issues they consider to be salient, thereby deliberately, or inadvertently setting agenda. However, some scholars see the framing theory as nothing more than a subsection of the agenda-setting theory, while others see it as deserving to stand as a distinct theory. The framing theory has some connection with the agenda setting theory, which focuses on how the media direct attention to some issues through coverage, and thus, alter the perceived importance of such issues in reality. Meanwhile, agenda setting relates with salience of issues, while framing deals with the presentation of such issues (DeVreese, 2004).

Framing theory emerged through the field of sociology in the 1960s. It is now multidisciplinary and through this theory media effects can be explained and studied. Through the Framing theory, the media situate their perspective on given situations, issues, or events, and by this, influencing the interpretation of a given issue by the audience. Bryant and Miron (in Yang & Ishak 2012, p. 169) see the Framing theory as the most commonly applied research approach in recent years succeeding agenda setting and cultivation theories.

McQuail (2010) notes "that a frame is needed to organise otherwise fragmentary items of experience or information. The idea of a frame in relation to news has been widely and loosely used in place of terms such as frame of reference, context, theme, and news

angle. In a journalistic context, stories are given meaning by reference to some particular news value that connects one event with other similar ones" (p.350). That is to say, it concerns how media organisations deliberately create, select and shape news stories in particular frames to reflect the reality they wish to create.

The issue of framing in this study relates to how newspapers select and tell stories about the cybercrime popularly known as Yahoo Yahoo Business. The theory is pertinent to this study because the way newspapers frame their stories on cybercrime will determine how they understand the issue, and it has a lot of influence on how readers of newspapers perceive the crime and its perpetrators. The frames and themes through which the newspapers represented and presented Yahoo Yahoo Business stories helped the researchers in making an insightful inference on the effects of these frames on the readers.

Yahoo Yahoo Business as Cybercrime

Cybercrime is a security issue; therefore, cybercrime and cyber security are intertwined, and cannot be discussed in isolation. Gercke (2012) cites Carter to have defined cybercrime as "any activity in which computers or networks are tools, a target or a place of criminal activity" (p.4), and Hale to have defined it as "computer-mediated activities which are either illegal or considered illicit by certain parties and which can be conducted through global electronic networks" (p.5). These two definitions clearly categorise Yahoo Yahoo Business (YYB) as not just a cybercrime, but an Internet financial crime because it is an unlawful act "using the computer as either a tool or a target or both" (Adebiyi, 2009, p.2). The perpetrators of YYB are also called 'Yahoo Yahoo Boys', or 'G'Boys' due to their frequent use of fake Yahoo emails.

The modus operandi of YYB perpetrators include using the computer and the Internet facility falsely, presenting themselves as foreigners, and fraudulently impersonating different people at different times, using fake foreign names backed up with fake email addresses, often containing forged sender addresses. Most of their victims are females, especially in America and Europe, whom they propose love and marriage to online, and end up deceiving them to obtain various sums of money from them. They leverage on the anonymity provided by the Internet to defraud unsuspecting victims.

Yahoo Yahoo Business is an offence that is contrary to the Cyber Crimes Act 2016. This Act deals more with cybercrimes holistically (i.e. critical national information, child pornography, identity theft, etc.). The Act touches on instances where fraudsters send electronic messages or hack into secure databases to misappropriate sensitive data. According to Omoregie (2018), the Act was enacted to provide a unified legal, regulatory and institutional framework for the prohibition, prevention, investigation and prosecution of cybercrimes in Nigeria.

This Act is akin to the Advance Fee Fraud and other Fraud Related Offences Act

2006. In Nigeria, Advance Fee Fraud is popularly referred to as '419'. The term *419* comes from Section 419 of Chapter 38 of the Criminal Code Act, which deals with obtaining property by false pretences and cheating. The Act makes it an offence for any person to obtain or induce to obtain by false pretence, with the intent to defraud another, whether in Nigeria or in any other country, property or a benefit of any kind, onto him or any other person. This law further goes on to prescribe sentencing guidelines of 7-20 years' imprisonment for the successful conviction under this Act. It also makes the possession of fraudulent documents illegal, "the Act indicts possible accomplices needed for the commission of the offence" (Omoriege, 2018, p. 3).

Every crime, just like cybercrime, can cause insecurity in one way or the other. According to a report released by the Cyber Security Experts Association of Nigeria (CSEAN) in 2016, the cybercrime menace would soon include destruction of data, stolen money, lost productivity and theft of intellectual property, theft of personal and financial data, embezzlement, fraud, post-attack disruption to the normal course of business, forensic investigation, restoration and deletion of hacked data and systems including reputational harm. Adanikin and Ikpefan (2016) quote the CSEAN President, Remi Afon, as saying that the Federal Government of Nigeria had estimated cybercrime loss to N127 billion annually. According to the immediate past Minister of Communications, Adebayo Shittu, that is 0.8 per cent of the country's Gross Domestic Products (Akindele, 2019). Also, while presenting Nigeria Electronic Fraud Forum's (NeFF's) 2018 Annual Report, the Chairman of NeFF, Sam Okojere, disclosed that a total of 63,895 bank customers lost N3.6bn to cyber fraud in two years, 2017 and 2018 (Umeh, 2019).

According to a March 2018 report by Cyber Intelligence Company, CrowdStrike, Internet frauds are run by organised crime syndicates, "Behind the fraudsters is an organised crime network with its hands in human trafficking, drugs, prostitution, money laundering and cybercrime" (Ndubuisi, 2018, p.2). The CrowdStrike report says it was commonplace for fraudsters to have officers of some crime-fighting outfits on their payroll. The EFCC Ibadan Zonal Head, Ibadan, Friday Ebelo, also disclosed cartel involvement in cybercrime. He mentioned that the cartels operate networks across various countries, and that cybercriminals use bankers and operators of Bureau De Change businesses to launder their illicit loot, away from the prying eyes of authorities (Stephen, 2019b). All these make the fight against the heinous crime more complicated.

Effects of Yahoo Yahoo Activities on National Development

All cybercrimes are committed in the cyber space, and they transcend multiple national, administrative and jurisdictional boundaries; according to Elebeke (2018), this "brings a wide array of non-state actors together, from commercial entities, individuals, cybercriminals, to terrorist groups; creating a terrain that blends all possible scopes of

action” (p. 2). The cyberspace is very important to the growth, development, and security of nations because the activities going on there impacts on them, just as YYB can impact on the development of Nigeria negatively. It can affect the development of the nation, and dent the image of the country. It also puts Nigeria and Nigerians on a dark spot in the international community,

Away from the cases being reported in Nigeria, there are occasions where Nigerians involved in this social vice have been arrested. Deji (2019a) reports that about 17 Internet fraudsters were forcefully deported to Nigeria by Ghanaian authorities recently for their alleged involvement in 'YYB'. On August 22, 2019, a 252-count federal grand jury indictment charged 80 individuals, out of which 77 are Nigerians, for alleged involvement in a massive conspiracy to steal millions of dollars through a variety of fraud schemes and launder same through a Los Angeles-based money laundering network uncovered by the FBI. According to Whittaker (2019), the FBI says these impersonation attacks have cost consumers and businesses more than \$3 billion since 2015.

The situation with Nigeria's image is so pathetic that it was also reported some time ago that a group of Nigerian hackers are trying to scam the biggest companies around the world off some billions of dollars. The group, known as “London Blue”, after an investigation by cyber security firm Agari, another company attacked by the group, are said to be sending emails that mainly targets the chief financial officers of these companies. The group is said “operates like a modern corporation,” with people working on business intelligence, sales, email marketing, financial operations, and human resources (BellaNaija, 2018).

The foregoing activities have effects on the economy of the nation, and they are undermining the quest for foreign direct investment, thereby discouraging foreign investors from coming into the country. External investors are needed to grow Nigeria's economy, and contribute their quota to her development, especially with the United Nations report indicating that Nigeria's foreign direct investment has plunged by 43 per cent to \$2bn (Asu, 2019). Okeke (2011) points out that the flow of such investments into a country is accompanied with the transfer of a package of resources in the form of capital, technology, management and marketing enterprise to an enterprise located in another country for the purpose of acquiring a lasting interest and effective control in the management of that enterprise without necessarily having majority shareholding.

YYB affects the way the world views Nigeria and Nigerians. Due to the activities of Yahoo boys who are destroying the reputation of Nigerians doing honest jobs, one Abdul lost a deal worth N154m simply because of his nationality as a Nigerian. According to Abdul who is a freelance copywriter who claims to be certified globally, the foreigners pulled out of the deal the moment they discovered he was a Nigerian. He wrote: "Yahoo boys are really destroying the reputation of Nigerians that are doing legit jobs online,

imagine closing a deal for a company on content creation only to be discovered you're Nigerian and the deal is called off! He lamented, 'These idiots are ruining our businesses'" (Yaakugh, 2018, p.2).

Just as the arrest of Obinwanne Okeke, popularly known as Invictus Obi, an internationally renowned young entrepreneur for conspiracy to commit computer fraud and wire fraud could gradually spell doom for up-coming entrepreneurs in Nigeria, so also can the activities of YYB have disastrous effects on Nigeria's development. Nwabueze (2019b) cites pulse.ng as mentioning that Invictus Obi's arrest could negatively affect young Nigerian entrepreneurs by reducing media coverage of up-and-coming Nigerian Entrepreneurs; making organisations think twice before inviting future entrepreneurial stars from Nigeria; possible delayed visa application reviews for Nigerian travellers; possible challenges to funding for future Nigerian start-ups, and possible increased profiling of young Nigerian men by the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS). Today, almost every email sent from Nigeria is being screened before delivery. The activities of fraudsters have made Abati (2019) to lament that Nigeria is thoroughly embarrassed, and that the Nigerian brand is damaged, with the collateral damage being colossal.

YYB do not only affect the development of the nation, but the activities of its perpetrators are costing many Nigerians their jobs, freedom and peace of mind, and driving people to their early graves. Stephen (2019d) mentions the case of one Mrs Nnodi, who lost her retirement benefit of 34 years of service to fraudsters, got hospitalised and died few days after her discharge from the hospital.

Methodology

Content analysis was employed in this study. *The Guardian* and *Vanguard* newspapers were purposively selected based on their geographic location and high circulation rates. The population of this study was all the editions of the *The Guardian* and *Vanguard* newspapers from July 2018 to June 2019, bringing the total to 730.

Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table for determining the sample size of a finite population helped to obtain this sample size of 248. The sample size was established at 95 percent confidence level and 5 percent sampling error. According to Krejcie and Morgan, when the finite population is between 700 and 749, the required sample is 248. A total of 248 editions of the two newspapers were studied; 124 editions of each newspaper.

The multistage sampling technique was adopted for the sampling procedure. To get at the exact editions to be studied, 11 editions were picked from the first two months, and the last two months of the period of study while 10 editions of each newspaper were picked monthly from the remaining 8 months in-between. Each month was divided into 4 weeks, and from each week 2 or 3 editions were selected. The researchers purposively picked the days within the week, considering the newspapers' editions that contain stories relating to

financial cybercrime and YYB. From the 248 editions of the two newspapers studied, there were 68 stories that have to do with YYB.

Table 1: Showing selection of sample editions/days per newspaper

Months	1 st Week	2 nd Week	3 rd Week	4 th Week	Total
July 2018	1, 3, 5	9, 13, 14	17, 18, 21	22, 25	11
August	2, 4	5, 7, 10	13, 15, 18	21, 24, 29	11
September	2, 6, 8	10, 11, 14	18, 22	24, 26	10
October	2, 4	7, 10, 12	15, 20	23, 26, 31	10
November	1, 3	4, 6, 9	12, 15, 17	20, 28	10
December	2, 4, 6	10, 14	18, 21	25, 27, 29	10
January 2019	1, 4, 5	6, 9, 12	14, 16	23, 31	10
February	1, 2	3, 7, 9	11, 13, 15	10, 27	10
March	1, 2	4, 10, 12	17, 20, 21	28, 29	10
April	1, 4	7, 10, 12	14, 16, 20	24, 28	10
May	2, 4	6, 8, 10	13, 18, 21	25, 28, 30	11
June	2, 4, 6	9, 12, 14	18, 21, 22	23, 25	11
Total	27	35	31	27	124

Source: Fieldwork 2019.

Research Instruments

Coding sheet and Coding guide were used to collate data from manifest content of selected newspapers.

Inter-Coder Reliability

To ascertain the inter-coder reliability/agreement, the services of two coders (Research assistants) were engaged; they were trained with the coding guide on how to code the data gathered on the basis of the frequency, frames, and themes as spelt out in the coding sheet.

A pilot study was carried out to clarify inter-coder reliability using Ole Holsti's (1969) formula based on the ratio of coding agreement to the number of coding decisions as recommended by Wimmer and Dominick (2000).

The formula is:

Reliability =

$$\frac{2m}{N1+N2}$$

Where m = number of coding decision the code agrees with.

$N1 + N2 =$ total number of coding decision by the first and second respectively.

$$\text{Therefore: } \frac{2(10)}{2+12} = \frac{20}{24} = 0.85$$

This shows that each coder identified and categorised 12 themes, but they agreed on only 10 themes. The outcome (0.83) is acceptable, therefore the coding sheet was used for the content analysis because it was adjudged reliable.

Unit of Analysis

The units of analysis for the study were the newspapers' articles in the form of news, features and editorials that indicated the kinds of frames and themes used by the two national dailies under consideration, in the framing of Yahoo Yahoo Business in Nigeria within the period under study.

Frame Categories

Using the thematic and episodic frame approaches, broad categories of frames were identified in the coverage of the Yahoo Yahoo stories by Nigerian newspapers. The frames are: 'Name Calling', 'Ritual', and 'Fight Against YYB'. Under 'Name Calling', newspapers frame cybercrime perpetrators as 'Fraudsters'. That is to say, YYB boys defraud innocent people of their hard-earned money. The 'Ritual' frame by newspapers portrays how the YYB involves various types of rituals being performed by its perpetrators. The 'Fight Against YYB' frame highlights the various efforts being made to tackle the menace YYB by security agencies.

The dominant themes through which the newspapers reported the Yahoo Yahoo stories were determined based on the report pattern and contents of the newspapers as they relate to this cybercrime. The dominant themes used were: 'Arrest and Parade', 'Arraignment', and 'Conviction'. 'Arrest and Parade' is about the apprehending of YYB suspects, and their subsequent parade before the media by law enforcement agents. 'Arraignment' explains the docking of the suspects in law courts. 'Conviction' talks about the handing down of judgements on YYB cases by various courts.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 2: Frequency of Yahoo Yahoo Business stories in the newspapers

Items	<i>Guardian</i>		<i>Vanguard</i>		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
News story	5	25	5	10.42	10	14.70
Feature	3	15	11	22.92	14	20.59
Advertisement	4	20	3	6.25	7	10.29
Opinion article	3	15	8	16.66	11	16.18
Photograph	5	25	21	43.75	26	38.24
Total	20	100	48	100	68	100

Source: Fieldwork 2019.

The data in table 2 indicate that both newspapers sparsely reported about the cybercrime.

Table 3: Distribution of stories according to dominant frames

Items	<i>Guardian</i>		<i>Vanguard</i>		Total		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Name calling	7	35	17	35.42	24	35.30	
Ritual	6	30	16	33.33	22	32.35	
Fight against YYB		7	35	15	31.25	22	32.35
Total		20	100	48	100	68	100

Source: Fieldwork 2019.

The data in table 3 show how both newspapers framed the Yahoo Yahoo business (YYB) stories under “Name calling”, “Ritual”, and “Fight against YYB”.

Table 4: Distribution of stories according to dominant themes

Items	Guardian		Vanguard		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Arrest and Parade	10	50	28	58.34	38	55.89
Arraignment	7	35	16	33.33	23	33.82
Conviction	3	15	4	8.33	7	10.29
Total	20	100	48	100	68	100

Source: Fieldwork 2019.

Table 4 itemises the dominant themes under which YYB stories were reported and discussed as 'Arrest and Parade', 'Arraignment', and 'Conviction.'

Discussion of Findings

The first objective of this study is to determine the frequency of the report of YYB stories by the selected two newspapers. Data gathered revealed that only 68 stories of various types were on YYB throughout the period of study. With the effect YYB can have on the development of the nation, one would have expected the newspapers to have had more stories on the subject, especially those of enlightenment of the public since the mass media play very significant role in national development as summarised by American columnist, Arthur Miller whom Onayiga (2016) quotes as saying that “a good newspaper is a nation talking to itself” (p.3).

It should be the role of newspapers and other media to carry out intensive enlightenment campaigns and awareness on measures to deal with YYB by giving continual and enough reports that expose the perpetrators of this crime. Newspapers need to continue to sensitise, mobilise and educate all the critical stakeholders because of their ability to reach every segment of the society with the messages appropriate for each segment. This tallies with the position of Evwierhoma (2019) that the newspaper features prominently in locating the tastes of its target audience and the method to approach and gratify them because “where the propagated content reaches its target, it is appreciated and the required feedback to sustain its subsequent transmission, reach and spread, such newspaper becomes part of the people's history (p.68).

Through the second objective of this study, it was discovered that the frames used by the two newspapers were 'Name calling', 'Ritual', and 'Fight against YYB'. Under “name calling”, the newspapers referred to YYB suspects as “fraudsters”. For instance, on page

49 of the November 9 edition of the *Vanguard* newspaper, the paper had a headline, “Cybercrime: Beating fraudsters in their own game.”

Newspapers are not supposed to align with security agents who arrest suspected Yahoo boys and parade them as criminals, calling them fraudsters even before they are convicted by courts of competent jurisdiction. Nigeria operates an adversarial legal system whereby every suspect is presumed to be innocent except a court of competent jurisdiction says otherwise, as provided for in Section 162 sub-section 1 of the Nigerian 1999 Constitution (as amended); that is to say there is a presumption of innocence until proven guilty (Nigeria 1999 Constitution, 2008).

The newspapers also framed YYB suspects as “ritualists”, as can be seen from *Vanguard* newspaper of 2nd December, 2018 captioned “Gruesome murder of DELSU student, 'we plucked Elozino's eyes as she begged to be released before we killed her-suspected Yahoo boy/ritualist”, and *Vanguard* newspaper of 6th December, 2018 with the caption “Rates of ritual killings, Yahoo plus among youths.”

The ritual frame by the newspapers must be because of the dimension the YYB has assumed whereby various bizarre acts like penis cut Papa (2019c), barking like dog (Naijaloaded, 2019b) etc., are now employed just to ensure they successfully fleece people. They are said to become “mumustic” and continue to send money as demanded by the Yahoo boys until the scales fall off their eyes, and they suddenly discover that they have been duped.

The third frame used by the newspapers for the YYB stories is that of “fight against YYB”. *The Guardian* newspaper of 2nd October 2018 had the caption “Notifying the public in October National Cyber security awareness month”, and *The Guardian* newspaper of 20th October 2018 had as its Headline, “Police: How we busted cyber fraud cartel.” This clearly shows that the nation's security outfits are out to combat this crime, and that newspapers are collaborating, cooperating, and supporting them in the fight against the YYB. This is in concord with the submission of Kippax and Murray (1980) that “newspapers are not perceived as satisfying any emotional needs, but are seen to serve an information function” (p.346). Newspapers are essential tools that can be used to give bite to the fight against this heinous crime through their information and message content. Hence, Ibrahim Magu, the Acting Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) calls on the media to continue to lend its voice to the fight against corruption, economic and financial crimes, saying that “no one has the monopoly of knowledge of how the fight should be fought and won (Afolayan, 2019, p.1).

The fight against YYB includes enlightening the youth who are the major perpetrators because they tend not to know the import of their actions on other Nigerians, the image of the country and its development, for this reason, Newspapers owe the youth the social responsibility of making them know the need to work hard to earn whatever they

need to live the type of life they desire to live without getting involved in YYB, or any other criminal activity. This role of the newspapers is important because “development is about change, and change cannot occur without communication.... People with more and understandable information are empowered to make better choices.... Newspaper is where the community meets” (Sam Amuka aka Uncle Sam, in Babarinde, 2019, p.116).

The third objective of this study focuses on the dominant themes through which the selected newspapers discussed the YYB. The finding is that the themes were 'Arrest and Parade', 'Arraignment', and 'Conviction'. The newspapers elaborately reported the “Arrest and Parade” theme under captions like “Yahoo boy nabbed for allegedly attempting to kill his mother for ritual” in *The Guardian* newspaper of August 21st 2018; - “EFCC Arrests proprietor, students of Yahoo Yahoo school” in *The Guardian* newspaper of May 28th 2019; “EFCC parades 10 suspected Yahoo boys for posing as US soldiers to defraud Americans” in *The Guardian* newspaper of December 21st 2018, and “Music producer threatens to sue EFCC for parading him as Yahoo boy” in *The Guardian* newspaper of June 9th 2019.

Arrest and parade are sometimes considered to be media trial where the suspects are accused by the arresting law enforcement agency, and most times are not given the opportunity to defend themselves, or give their own view of the incident. There is the case of one Nasiru Ali, an Abuja based music producer and photographer, who has threatened to sue EFCC for parading him as a “Yahoo Boy.” According to Jeremiah (2019), Ali was among 10 suspected internet fraudsters paraded by the EFCC operatives. Ali in a petition to the EFCC Acting Chairman, Ibrahim Magu, demanded a compensation of N100 million and an unreserved apology for arresting him wrongly and giving a libellous information to the public about him.

It is for this reason that Femi Falana, a human rights activist, approached a Federal High Court in Abuja, for an order to declare media parade of criminal suspects in the country as illegal and unconstitutional. According to Adegun (2019), Falana sought a declaration that the pre-trial media parade of criminal suspects by the respondents was “illegal, null and void as it violates Section 34 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Article 5 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Ratification and Enforcement) Act (CAPA9) Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004” (p. 2).

Under the “Arraignment” theme, *The Guardian* newspaper of September 22nd 2018 captioned a story thus: “Men of EFCC arraigned some alleged fraudsters for document forgery in Ibadan, Oyo State”. Nigerian newspapers are filled with stories of the EFCC arresting and parading suspecting as can be seen that it is the highest report (55.89%), but there are fewer stories on arraignment (33.82%). Most times, after the arrest and parade, the police announce that “the suspects will be charged to court as soon as investigations are completed”, but, most times too, nothing is heard again about the suspects being arraigned

in court, and even when they are eventually taken to court, the cases drag on for months or years.

This can give the wrong impression to the public that the suspects might have bribed their way to freedom, and that even when a person gets involved in this crime, there is every tendency that he/she may not be arraigned in court. This will encourage YYB rather than discourage it.

The “Conviction” theme is the third theme utilised by the newspapers in this study, as exemplified by *The Guardian* newspaper report of June 25th 2019 captioned “Court sentences Yahoo boy to 35 years in prison.” Data gathered show that newspapers report on conviction of arraigned YBB perpetrators was a minimal 10.29%.

The finding is in consonant with the view of Omoregie (2018) who has searched court records both at the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal judgments and discovered there seem to be very few cases discussing advance fee fraud/cybercrime. This made him wonder how many convictions there have actually been for advance fee fraud/cybercrime in the history of Nigeria, and he therefore concluded that many Nigerians have now accepted advance fee fraud/cybercrime as a part of life and have now become de-sensitised to it. According to Busari (2019), this may be due to the congestion of cases in our courts, and because the judges are overwhelmed with heavy workload. The implication is that there is sustained frustration and several adjournments.

From the fore goings, the dominant themes used by the two selected newspapers for this study can be summarised as many arrest and parades, few arraignments, and fewer convictions. This trend must be changed going forward in the fight against YYB.

Conclusion

Through framing, the newspapers were able to highlight the devastating effects of YYB by making meaning to the readers, and also by influencing their perceptions about YYB. However, dominant in the themes are the series of events that took place after a cybercrime has been committed, and a suspect is arrested. The newspapers can display better their agenda setting function of telling people what to think about by coming up with frames that will concentrate on how the cybercrime menace can be dealt with in the society. Since framing greatly influences the perception of the mass media audience as per issues reported, and newspapers, like other arms of the media, have a way of focusing the minds of readers on a particular issue presented by the media, and in this case cybercrime, newspapers will be doing the society a lot of good by further enlightening readers about the antics of YYB perpetrators who are daily stepping up their game by regularly coming out with new methods to hoodwink their victims.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following are recommending in a concerted effort to rid Nigeria of Yahoo Yahoo Business:

First, it is recommended that newspapers should give adequate reportage of YYB activities, highlighting its demerits and its effects on the nation. They should investigate the root causes of this heinous crime, and proffer solutions on how it can be handled. This is essential because the media can make or break a society by the way and manner, they function in our information-based society. The media have a disproportionately visible and influential role in fostering an environment where good governance will flourish (Egbule, Emuebie & Egwu, 2016).

Second, Newspapers should frame their stories to continue to condemn the YYB, and frame their reports to lead to the development of the nation at the end of the day. Newspapers have to refrain from name calling because the moment they frame YYB suspects through their reports that they are criminals, and publish their photographs taken during their parades by security agents, the public too will consider them to be so; what then happens if the court sets them free? Hence, newspapers must obey the law, and not give wrong frames to stories because an accusation does not necessarily mean guilt.

Finally, the dominant themes in the Newspapers' coverage should be about constant enlightenment of digital media users on how to avoid being scammed by Yahoo Yahoo boys. The Newspapers should teach the potential victims how they could be protected while on the Internet. Newspapers should come up with frames that will deal with issues that discourage youths from getting involved in the get-rich-quick syndrome without doing any tangible work, and instead engage themselves in productive activities without waiting for government to provide employment for them.

In essence, it is expected the Nigerian press should frame their stories to continue to condemn the *Yahoo Yahoo Business* in all its ramifications, and that their reports should lead to the eradication of the problem and the ultimate development of the Nigerian nation. Anything short of this would amount to press irresponsibility.

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