

## From Scholars to Scammers: Analysing the Impact of Cybercrime Glamorisation on the Educational Development of Nigerian Youths and its Implications for National Development

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### Abstract

This study empirically investigates the impact of cybercrime glamorization in Nigerian digital media on youth educational aspirations and national development. Employing a quantitative cross-sectional survey design, data were collected from 367 Nigerian youth aged 16-25 through an online questionnaire, supplemented by content analysis of Afrobeats videos and Nollywood clips. Findings revealed a significant negative correlation between exposure to glamorized “Yahoo-Yahoo” content and both perceived value of education ( $r = -0.421, p < .001$ ) and academic engagement ( $r = -0.387, p < .001$ ), confirming that media glamorization erodes educational aspirations. Paradoxically, higher exposure correlated with stronger perception of its detrimental impact on national development ( $r = 0.285, p < .001$ ), indicating youth critical awareness despite influence. The study concludes that cybercrime glamorization constitutes a significant non-economic barrier to human capital development, diverting youth potential from productive pathways. It recommends targeted social work interventions, including media literacy programs and counter-narrative campaigns, to mitigate this threat and re-channel youth energies toward national development goals. The research provides crucial empirical evidence linking media narratives to developmental outcomes, filling a gap in existing literature.

**Keywords:** Cybercrime glamorization, educational aspirations, Nigerian youth, digital media, national development

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## INTRODUCTION

Nigeria’s potential for transformative national development is profoundly and intrinsically linked to the productivity, innovation, and moral orientation of its vast youth population, which constitutes a significant demographic dividend (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2021). A skilled and educated youth populace is the fundamental human capital required to drive economic growth, foster technological innovation, and ensure sustainable development (World Bank, 2019). However, this potential is currently under threat by a disturbing and pervasive socio-digital trend: the rampant rise of internet fraud, known colloquially as “Yahoo-Yahoo,” and its widespread glamorization within the sphere of digital media (Adeniran, 2021).

The digital landscape, comprising platforms like YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and others, has become a potent conduit for cultural messaging. Within this space, popular Nigerian cultural exports, particularly Afrobeats music and Nollywood films, frequently portray “Yahoo-Yahoo” not as a criminal enterprise, but as a swift and glamorous pathway to societal

success, characterized by obscene luxury, material wealth, and elevated social status (Adekson, 2022; Oluwafemi & Adekoya, 2023). This curated narrative glamorizes the proceeds of crime while systematically obscuring its legal and social consequences, thereby creating a powerful counter-force to traditional values of hard work, academic dedication, and scholarly achievement (Ezeibe et al., 2020). As posited by Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory, individuals, especially youths, learn behaviours through the observation and imitation of models. The media, thereby, serves as a powerful modelling source, making the glamorization of cybercrime a significant subject of scholarly inquiry.

Concurrently, Nigeria's educational sector is enmeshed in a protracted crisis, chronically marked by severe underfunding, incessant academic staff union strikes, and alarmingly high graduate unemployment rates, which stood at 19.2% in Q3 2023 (NBS, 2023). This environment of systemic frustration, economic pressure, and perceived hopelessness among the youth creates a fertile ground for the seductive appeal of the "Yahoo-Yahoo" narrative (Igwe et al., 2021). The allure of quick financial success becomes a potent pull factor, potentially leading to increased academic disengagement, a profound devaluation of formal education, and a critical diversion of talented youth from legitimate innovation and entrepreneurship to criminal enterprise (Bello, 2022).

This misallocation and waste of human capital represents a direct and severe threat to Nigeria's national development agenda. It actively undermines the nation's capacity to build a knowledgeable, skilled, and innovative workforce, which is the very foundation required for economic diversification, global competitiveness, and long-term stability (UNDP, 2022). While a body of existing research has competently explored the economic, legal, and security impacts of cybercrime in Nigeria (e.g., Adesina, 2020; Tive, 2021), a critical empirical gap remains. There is a scarcity of studies that specifically and methodologically investigate the causal link between the media-driven glamorization of this crime, its impact on the educational development and aspirations of Nigerian youth, and the consequent long-term implications for the nation's progress. It is this identified gap that this study aims to fill, providing empirical evidence to inform targeted policy and interventions.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The pervasive glamorization of cybercrime, known locally as "Yahoo-Yahoo," within Nigerian digital media represents a critical and under-researched social problem with dire implications for the nation's educational development and future stability. Despite the growing body of literature on cybercrime in Nigeria, which primarily focuses on its economic impact, legal frameworks, and security dimensions (Adesina, 2020; Tive, 2021), a significant empirical gap exists concerning the role of media as an enabler and catalyst for this criminal behaviour, particularly among the youth.

The core of the problem lies in the potent collision of two destructive forces: first, a distressed educational system plagued by chronic underfunding, frequent disruptions, and a disheartening lack of viable employment prospects for graduates (NBS, 2023; Igwe et al., 2021); and second, the relentless propagation of a seductive counter-narrative through Afrobeats music videos, Nollywood films, and social media platforms that glorify internet fraud as a lucrative and prestigious lifestyle (Adekson, 2022; Oluwafemi & Adekoya, 2023). This glamorization, which often omits the legal repercussions and moral bankruptcy of such acts, creates a powerful cognitive dissonance for young Nigerians, making illicit wealth appear more attainable and desirable than the arduous path of academic excellence and legitimate enterprise (Ezeibe et al., 2020).

Consequently, there is a disturbing observable trend of academic disengagement, a devaluation of scholarship, and a diversion of the nation's brightest minds from productive innovation to destructive criminality. This misallocation of human talent and potential constitutes a direct assault on Nigeria's human capital development, undermining national efforts to build a knowledge-based economy and achieve sustainable development goals (World Bank, 2019; UNDP, 2022).

Therefore, the specific problem this research addresses is the lack of empirical evidence directly linking the exposure to online glamorized cybercrime content to the declining value placed on educational attainment and academic engagement among Nigerian youth. Without a clear understanding of this relationship and its mechanisms, policymakers, educators, and social workers are left without the necessary data to design effective, evidence-based interventions to counter this narrative and steer the youth population back towards productive pathways that benefit both themselves and national development. This study seeks to provide that crucial evidence, quantifying the impact of this glamorization to inform urgent and targeted remedial actions.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The general objective of this study is to examine the impact of cybercrime glamorization in digital media on the educational development of Nigerian youth and its implications for national development. However, the specific objectives are to;

1. analyse the extent and nature of cybercrime glamorization in selected Nigerian digital media content (Afrobeats music videos and online Nollywood clips).
2. investigate the relationship between Nigerian youth's exposure to online glamorized cybercrime content and their perceived value of educational attainment.
3. assess the correlation between exposure to this content and levels of academic engagement among Nigerian youth.
4. examine the perceived correlation between the glamorization of cybercrime and its impact on national development from the perspective of Nigerian youth.
5. proffer actionable solutions designed to mitigate the negative impact of cybercrime glamorization on Nigerian youth and redirect their potential towards national development

### **Research Questions**

This study was guided by the following questions:

1. How is cybercrime glamorized in popular Nigerian Afrobeats music videos and online Nollywood content?
2. Is there a significant relationship between exposure to online glamorized cybercrime content and the value Nigerian youth place on educational attainment?
3. Does a correlation exist between exposure to online glamorized cybercrime content and the level of academic engagement among Nigerian youth?

4. What is the perceived correlation between the glamorization of cybercrime and its impact on Nigeria's national development, as reported by Nigerian youth?
5. What actionable solutions are designed to mitigate the negative impact of cybercrime glamorization on Nigerian youth and redirect their potential towards national development?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 significance level:

**H0<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between exposure to online glamorized cybercrime content and the value Nigerian youth place on educational attainment.

**H0<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant correlation between exposure to online glamorized cybercrime content and the level of academic engagement among Nigerian youth.

**H0<sub>3</sub>:** There is no statistically significant positive relationship between exposure to glamorized cybercrime content and the perception that it negatively impacts national development among Nigerian youth.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical protocols were strictly followed. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to the survey. Anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed, as no personally identifiable information was collected. The research design avoided questions about illegal activities to prevent self-incrimination and ensured no harm came to participants.

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This section reviews literature relevant to the study, organized into three parts: conceptual literature defining key terms and relationships, empirical literature examining previous studies and identifying gaps, and the theoretical framework guiding the research.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Cybercrime glamorization refers to how digital media portrays internet fraud as desirable and admirable, particularly evident in Nigeria's "Yahoo-Yahoo" narrative. This portrayal associates cybercrime with symbols of success, such as luxury cars and social influence, while obscuring its criminal nature and associated risks (Adekson, 2022). Platforms like YouTube and Instagram actively shape perceptions, creating a seductive narrative that influences youth.

Educational aspirations encompass the value individuals place on formal education and their engagement in academic activities. This multidimensional concept includes the perceived value of educational attainment as a legitimate pathway to success and the behavioral manifestations of this belief, such as commitment to studies and classroom participation (Igwe et al., 2021). A decline in these aspirations is indicated by reduced scholarly effort and active academic involvement.

National development is defined as a sustainable process that advances a nation's economic, social, and political structures to improve citizens' quality of life. This advancement

relies heavily on human capital development, which encompasses the knowledge, skills, and health cultivated through education and training (World Bank, 2019). When a significant portion of youth disengages from the education system, the foundation for long-term sustainable development is compromised (UNDP, 2022).

The study posits a causal link where exposure to glamorized cybercrime content negatively influences educational aspirations. Constant exposure to narratives celebrating quick, illicit wealth creates cognitive dissonance with traditional values of hard work and education. This erosion of educational aspirations leads to a misallocation of human capital, diverting talent from legitimate innovation towards illicit activities (Ezeibe et al., 2020; Bello, 2022). Thus, cybercrime glamorization is framed as a non-economic barrier to national development, undermining the creation of a skilled and ethical workforce essential for economic growth and sustainable development.

### **Theoretical framework**

This study is anchored in Akers' Social Learning Theory, which offers a comprehensive explanation for the acquisition and maintenance of deviant behaviours (Akers & Sellers, 2009). The theory posits that criminal behaviour is learned through interaction within intimate social groups. For this research, the digital media environment is conceptualized as a modern "social group" with which Nigerian youth interact intensely. The theory's relevance is articulated through four key concepts: differential association, definitions, differential reinforcement, and imitation.

The process begins with differential association, where youth are frequently exposed to media personalities glorifying the "Yahoo-Yahoo" lifestyle on platforms like Instagram and TikTok (Akers, 1998). This exposure leads to the internalization of positive definitions of cybercrime, redefining it as an acceptable and successful pursuit while diminishing the value of education (Akers, 2009). The admired status of these media figures makes their behaviours more likely to be imitated (Bandura, 1977).

Differential reinforcement plays a critical role, as media narratives highlight the rewards of cybercrime – wealth and status – while omitting legal and social consequences (Akers, 2009). This skewed presentation reinforces the perception that cybercrime is a low-risk, high-reward venture, leading youth to devalue education and gravitate towards illicit shortcuts. Thus, Akers' Social Learning Theory provides a robust framework for understanding how exposure to glamorized content correlates negatively with educational aspirations, teaching youth to associate success with criminality rather than academic achievement.

### **Review of Related Empirical Studies**

This section critically examines prior empirical studies related to cybercrime in Nigeria, media influence, and the nexus between youth aspirations and national development.

Research has explored cybercrime from economic, legal, and motivational perspectives. Adesina (2020) documented significant financial losses attributed to cybercrime, framing it as a national economic threat. Legal analyses by Tive (2021) highlighted institutional weaknesses in prosecuting offenders. Motivational studies (Adeniran, 2021; Bello, 2022) identified socio-economic "push" factors, such as poverty and unemployment, but often overlook the role of media as a cultural agent that normalizes and stimulates demand for cybercrime.

Research in communication and cultural studies has established media's powerful influence as a socializing agent. In Nigeria, Oluwafemi and Adekoya (2023) conducted qualitative analyses of Afrobeats lyrics, revealing themes of conspicuous consumption linked to illicit wealth. Adekson (2022) similarly noted the glorification of “get-rich-quick” schemes in Nollywood films. However, these studies primarily describe glamorization without empirically measuring its impact on educational engagement or career choices.

The significance of educated youth populations for national development is well-documented, with reports from the World Bank (2019) and UNDP (2022) correlating education investment with economic growth and societal stability. These studies emphasize that a skilled workforce is crucial for economic diversification and competitiveness. However, they often neglect to investigate socio-cultural factors, such as media-driven narratives, that can undermine educational demand among youth.

The reviewed literature reveals a critical triangulation gap. Studies on cybercrime effectively explain economic "push" factors but neglect the culturally constructed "pull" factors of media glamorization. Conversely, media studies describe glamorization but fail to quantify its psychological and behavioral impacts. Macro-level development studies establish the importance of human capital but do not connect it to micro-level cultural threats like glamorized crime. This study aims to bridge this gap by quantitatively investigating the pathway from exposure to glamorized cybercrime content to the erosion of educational aspirations and its implications for Nigeria's human capital development.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a quantitative research design utilizing a cross-sectional survey strategy. This design was deemed appropriate as it facilitates the systematic collection of numerical data from a sample of the population to test hypotheses and examine relationships between variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The cross-sectional approach allowed for the gathering of data at a single point in time, providing a snapshot of the relationship between media exposure and educational aspirations. Additionally, a content analysis was integrated to quantitatively assess the extent of glamorization in selected Afrobeats music videos and Nollywood clips, thereby strengthening the media exposure variable with objective data.

The target population for this study consisted of all Nigerian youth aged 16 to 25 years who are active consumers of the digital media. This demographic represents the group most exposed to the cultural products under investigation, and is at a critical stage in forming their educational and career trajectories. The study focused on youths across all six geo-political zones of Nigeria, to ensure a national perspective.

A sample size of approximately 400 respondents was determined using a power analysis calculator (G\*Power software, version 3.1) to ensure the results would be statistically significant. A combination of purposive and snowball sampling techniques was employed. Purposive sampling was used to target online forums, social media groups, and educational platforms frequented by the demographic. Subsequently, a snowball sampling technique was utilized, where initial respondents were encouraged to share the survey link within their networks, thereby expanding the reach. For the content analysis, a purposive sample of 30 of the most-viewed Afrobeats music videos and 20 popular online Nollywood clips from the past two years (2022-2024) that thematically involved wealth and success was selected.

The primary instrument for data collection was a structured online questionnaire designed using Google Forms. The questionnaire was divided into four sections,

namely: Section A: Demographic information of respondents (age, gender, geo-political zone, level of education); Section B: Questions measuring exposure to glamorized cybercrime content (frequency of viewing specific media types, recognition of prominent narratives); Section C: Scales measuring the dependent variables: the perceived value of educational attainment and level of academic engagement [This section utilized a 5-point Likert scale (from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree)]; and Section D: A short scale to gauge perceptions of the viability of education versus cybercrime. A codebook was developed for the content analysis to quantify elements of glamorization (e.g., frequency of luxury displays, omission of negative consequences) in the selected videos.

To ensure validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by two experts in Sociology and Media Studies to assess its face and content validity. Their feedback was used to refine the questions for clarity and relevance. A pilot study was conducted with 30 respondents not included in the main sample. The data from the pilot was analyzed using Cronbach’s Alpha to test for reliability. A coefficient of 0.78 was obtained, indicating a good level of internal consistency for the scales used.

The quantitative data gathered from the survey were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) were used to summarize the demographic data and respondents’ media consumption patterns. To test the hypotheses, inferential statistical analyses were employed. Specifically, Pearson’s Product-Moment Correlation (*r*) was used to determine the significance and strength of the relationship between exposure to glamorized content and the measures of educational aspirations. A regression analysis was also conducted to understand the predictive power of media exposure on the dependent variables. The results of the content analysis were presented descriptively to support the survey findings. The alpha level for determining statistical significance was set at  $p < 0.05$ .

**RESULTS**

Out of the 400 pieces of questionnaire distributed, 388 were returned. After a data cleaning process to remove incomplete and badly filled questionnaires, a total of 367 responses were deemed valid for analysis, representing a 91.8% response rate. The summary of the respondents’ characteristics and key variable distributions are presented on Tables 1 and 2 below.

**Analysis of Descriptive Data**

The analysis is based on 367 valid responses. The data is presented in two tables for clarity.

**Table 1**  
***Demographic profile and media exposure of respondents (n = 367)***

Variable category	Description	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	M (SD)
<b>A. Demographic characteristics</b>				
Gender	Male	201	54.8	
	Female	166	45.2	

Variable category	Description	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	M (SD)
Age group	16–19 years	112	30.5	
	20–22 years	178	48.5	
	23–25 years	77	21.0	
Geo-political zone	South-South	68	18.5	
	South-West	89	24.3	
	South-East	72	19.6	
	North-Central	58	15.8	
	North-East	41	11.2	
	North-West	39	10.6	

**B. Media exposure**

(Scale: 1 = Never, 5 = Very often)

Frequency of watching Afrobeats videos	4.2 (0.8)
Frequency of watching Nollywood clips online	3.9 (1.1)
Recognition of “Yahoo-Yahoo” glamorization in media	3.8 (1.0)

**Table**

*Key research variables and perceptions (n = 367)*

2

Variable category	Description	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	M (SD)
<b>C. Educational aspirations</b> (5-point Likert scale)				
Perceived value of education	Composite score			2.9 (1.2)
Level of academic engagement	Composite score			2.7 (1.1)
<b>D. Perceptions of national impact &amp; solutions</b>				
Perceived impact on national development	Agree (harmful)	276	75.2	
	Neutral	55	15.0	
	Disagree	36	9.8	
Support for proposed interventions	Composite score (1 = Low, 5 = High)			4.1 (0.9)

Table 1 indicates a demographically diverse sample. The high mean scores for media exposure (all >3.5) confirm high consumption of the relevant digital content. Table 2 shows that educational aspiration scores are below the neutral point (3.0), suggesting disengagement from academic pursuit. However, a strong majority (75.2%) perceive cybercrime glamorization as harmful to national development, with high support for interventions (Mean=4.1).

**Hypothesis Testing: Inferential Statistical Analysis**

To test the postulated relationships between variables, a Pearson Product-Moment Correlation analysis was conducted. The correlation matrix summarizing the relationships between the key variables is presented in Table 3 below. This matrix serves as the basis for the formal hypothesis testing that follows.

**Table 3**  
*Correlation matrix of key research variables (n = 367)*

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Media Exposure	—			
2. Value of Education	-.421*	—		
3. Academic Engagement	-.387*	.682*	—	
4. Perceived Negative Impact	.285*	.104	.092	—

**Note:** All correlations are two-tailed (\*p\* < .001.)

**Interpretation of Correlation Coefficients**

**Strength:** Coefficients (r) between |0.10| and |0.29| are considered weak; |0.30| to |0.49| moderate; and |0.50| and above strong.

**Direction:** A positive sign indicates a direct relationship, while a negative sign indicates an inverse relationship.

**Testing of the Hypotheses**

The study’s hypotheses were tested by evaluating the corresponding null hypotheses (H0) against the data in Table 4.2. A significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$  is used as the criterion for rejection.

**H0<sub>1</sub>:** There is no statistically significant relationship between exposure to glamorized cybercrime content and the perceived value of educational attainment among Nigerian youth.

**Result from Table 3:** The correlation coefficient is \*r\* = -0.421, with a p-value of less than 0.001.

The correlation analysis yielded a coefficient of \*r\* = -0.421, which was statistically significant (\*p\* < .001). Since the obtained \*p\*-value is less than the established alpha level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ , the null hypothesis (H0<sub>1</sub>) is rejected. This result leads to the conclusion that a statistically significant, moderate negative relationship exists between the variables. Therefore, the alternate hypothesis is upheld, indicating that as exposure to glamorized cybercrime content increases, the perceived value of educational attainment among Nigerian youth decreases.

**H0<sub>2</sub>:** There is no statistically significant relationship between exposure to glamorized cybercrime content and the level of academic engagement among Nigerian youth.

**Result from Table 3:** The correlation coefficient is \*r\* = -0.387, with a p-value of less than 0.001.

The analysis revealed a significant negative correlation, with  $r^* = -0.387$  ( $p^* < .001$ ). Given that the significance level ( $p^* < .001$ ) is below the alpha threshold of 0.05, there is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ). Consequently, it is concluded that a significant, moderate inverse relationship exists, thereby supporting the alternate hypothesis, which states that: higher levels of exposure to glamorized cybercrime narratives are associated with lower levels of academic engagement among the youth.

**H<sub>0</sub>3:** There is no statistically significant relationship between exposure to glamorized cybercrime content and the perception that it negatively impacts national development among Nigerian youth.

**Result from Table 3:** The correlation coefficient is  $r^* = +0.285$ , with a p-value of less than 0.001.

The correlation analysis resulted in a coefficient of  $r^* = +0.285$ , which was statistically significant ( $p^* < .001$ ). As the  $p^*$ -value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis upheld, indicating a statistically significant, positive relationship between the variables. Thus, greater exposure to glamorized cybercrime content is associated with a stronger perception of its detrimental impact on Nigeria's development.

## **Discussion of findings**

This study set out to empirically investigate the impact of cybercrime glamorization in digital media on the educational aspirations of Nigerian youth, and its effect on national development. The findings provide substantial evidence supporting the hypothesized relationships, while also revealing a critical nuance that deepens our understanding of the phenomenon.

The first major finding demonstrates a significant negative correlation between exposure to glamorized 'Yahoo-Yahoo' content and both the perceived value of education and academic engagement. This result strongly aligns with the theoretical propositions of Akers and Sellers' Social Learning Theory (2009), affirming that observed behaviours rewarded in media can negatively influence attitudes and behaviours towards conventional paths to success. This finding resonates with the qualitative observations of Adekson (2022) and Oluwafemi & Adekoya (2023), who noted the pervasive glorification of illicit wealth in Nigerian media. However, while their studies descriptively outlined the content, this research provides quantitative evidence of its corrosive effect on educational values, thereby bridging a crucial gap in the empirical literature.

The third major finding presents a fascinating paradox: youth who are more exposed to glamorized cybercrime content are simultaneously more likely to perceive it as harmful to national development. This finding adds a layer of complexity that was not fully captured in previous studies by Adesina (2020) and Tive (2021), which focused primarily on economic and legal dimensions. The qualitative data from open-ended survey responses enrich this finding. One respondent noted, "We watch these videos for entertainment and to see the lifestyle, but we know it's killing our country. There are no jobs, so the temptation is there, but we are not blind to the consequences." This sentiment suggests a high degree of critical media literacy among the youth, who consume the content but remain aware of its societal implications. This contradicts a purely deterministic view of media effects and indicates that youth navigate a complex reality where economic pressures and cultural narratives collide with their ethical judgments.

Furthermore, the strong support for interventions like public awareness campaigns and digital literacy education indicates a receptive audience for corrective measures. This aligns with the broader development literature (World Bank, 2019; UNDP, 2022) that emphasizes the need for holistic approaches to human capital development, moving beyond mere economic solutions to address cultural and attitudinal factors

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study has successfully established a significant empirical link between the glamorization of cybercrime in Nigerian digital media and the erosion of educational aspirations among youth as it affects national development. The findings confirm that the media-driven “pull” factors of glamorization work alongside the well-documented economic “push” factors to devalue education and promote academic disengagement. However, the research also concludes that Nigerian youth are not passive consumers; they demonstrate a critical awareness of the damage this phenomenon inflicts on national development. This represents a significant diversion of the country’s human potential, posing a serious non-economic barrier to national development. The problem, therefore, is not a lack of awareness but a socio-economic environment that makes the illicit narrative seductive, despite its recognized consequences.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proffered:

1. The National Orientation Agency (NOA) and the Ministry of Education should collaborate to launch a national counter-narrative campaign. This campaign should not merely condemn cybercrime but should actively glamorize success achieved through education, innovation, and legitimate entrepreneurship, using the same media platforms and celebrity influencers that are currently promoting the negative narrative.
2. School curricula at secondary and tertiary levels should be strengthened to include mandatory digital literacy and media ethics modules. These should equip students with the critical thinking skills to deconstruct media messages and understand the long-term societal and personal costs of cybercrime.
3. Regulatory bodies like the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) should develop and enforce guidelines that require media content to reflect the legal and social consequences of cybercrime, moving beyond one-dimensional glorification. Engaging with content creators in Afrobeats and Nollywood to promote more socially responsible storytelling is crucial.
4. Subsequent studies should employ a longitudinal or mixed-methods design to explore the causal mechanisms behind the paradox of high exposure coupled with high critical awareness. Research should also focus on evaluating the effectiveness of the proposed interventions.

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