

Influence of Peer Pressure on Youth Involvement in Cybercrime in Onitsha North Local Government Area of Anambra State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of peer pressure on youth involvement in cybercrime in Onitsha North Local Government Area of Anambra State, Nigeria. Three research objectives and two hypotheses guided this study. The theoretical framework is based on strain theory. A descriptive survey design was employed, and the study sample size consisted of 397 youth residents of Onitsha North Local Government Area, aged 18 years and above. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. Data were analyzed using SPSS, through frequency count, percentage, mean ratings, and charts, while chi-square (χ^2) inferential statistics was used in testing the hypotheses. The findings revealed that peer group pressure influences youth involvement in cybercrime in the study area. The implications include erosion of moral values, intimidation of the public with questionable riches, violation of laws, weakening of judicial processes and intrusion of cyberspace, among others. Additionally, the study found that female respondents are not significantly more likely to perceive peer pressure as a leading factor in youth involvement in cybercrime ($p = 0.210, > 0.05$). Similarly, respondents with tertiary education are not significantly more likely to consider advance-fee-fraud (yahoo) as a prevailing form of cybercrime in Onitsha North compared to those with lower levels of education ($p = 0.104, > 0.05$). The study concludes that if no stringent measures are taken to curb the menace, cybercrime will not only sustain Nigeria's negative reputation in the comity of nations but also potentially destroy the nation's youth population. It recommends that the government should identify and address other social conditions, such as unemployment, that lead youth to engage in cybercrime, in addition to addressing peer pressure. Furthermore, the study suggests that the society should discourage the culture of celebrating wealth without clear processes.

Keywords: Cybercrime, peer group pressure, youths, unemployment

1. INTRODUCTION

Cybercrime has emerged as a global phenomenon, with its prevalence increasing rapid expansion of digital technologies (United Nations Office on drugs and Crime, UNODC, 2019). The internet, while offering numerous opportunities for education communication, and economic growth has also become a platform for illicit activities particularly among young people (Livingstone & Helsper, 2007). Youth involvement in cybercrime includes activities such as hacking, online fraud, identity theft, and phishing has become a significant concern for governments, law enforcement agencies and policymakers worldwide (Holt & Bossler, 2014). Adeniran (2017) observed that economic challenges, limited opportunities and systemic inequalities often push young people toward illegal activities as a means of survival or financial gain in most developing countries. Onwuchekwe, Ibekwe, Ezech, and Okpala (2023) noted that some of the conditions that breed criminals in many societies is non- provision of jobs.

Peer pressure has also been identified as a critical factor driving youth involvement in cybercrime, as young people often seek acceptance, validation, or social status within their peer groups (Pratt, Cullen, Sellers, & Winfree, 2010). In Nigeria, cybercrime, commonly referred to as "yahoo-yahoo," has become a widespread issue, particularly among the youth population. The country's high unemployment rate, coupled with the allure of quick financial rewards had made cybercrime an attractive option for many young Nigerians (Adeniran, 2017). According to Onyeoziri (2025) Anambra State and specifically Onitsha North Local Government Area is one of the areas with a high prevalence of youth involvement in cybercrime. The author argued that Onitsha, being a major commercial hub, provides a unique environment where young people are exposed to both legitimate and illegitimate economic activities. He further argued that, some youths in the area are vulnerable to the influence of peer pressure and therefore engages in illegitimate activities such as cybercrime. Ajah, Onwuchekwe and Ugwu (2017) observed that an area's bustling economic activities combined with widespread poverty and limited access to quality education creates a fertile ground for crime to thrive. Peer pressure which most times result to mental and emotional distress often encourages antisocial behavior among young people (Iremeka, Eseadi, Ezenwaji, Ezenwaji, Okide, Ogbonna & Onwuchekwe, 2021). Most young people in Onitsha North local government area have engaged in cybercrime as a result of peer group influence. According to Ezeah, Ogu, and Eze (2019) many young people in Nigeria are influenced by their peers who flaunt wealth acquired through cybercrime, which has created a perception that such activities are a viable and socially acceptable means of achieving success. Onyeoziri (2025) noted that most youths in Onitsha North local government area engages in cybercrime because they lack viable alternatives for economic empowerment and development. The author further argued that there is absence of effective legal frameworks and enforcement mechanisms to deter cybercrime offenders in Onitsha North local government area. This no doubt has created a vicious cycle where young people driven by both economic necessity and

social influence continue to engage in cybercrime without been caught by the law enforcement agents in the area.

2. Statement of the Problem

Many youths in Nigeria today engage in cybercrime. In fact, most of them have embraced it as a way of life and a means of improving their economic condition, especially as unemployment and lack of economic empowerment in the country continues to sear. Also, Alabi, Adisa and Emezie (2019) observed that most youth engage in internet fraud as a result of peer influence. No doubt, many young people get initiated into internet fraud as a result of their interaction with their notorious yahoo friends who lives a flamboyant lifestyle. Most of these Yahoo boys and girls lure innocent youth into internet by showing wealth, driving expensive cars, throwing monies they did not suffer to make. Today, most youth look up to them as role models. They get easily carried away by the luxurious life they live.

According to Onyeoziri (2025) social media has become one of the most powerful tools for amplifying peer pressure, especially among Nigerian youth. The author observed that social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, along with instant messaging apps like WhatsApp, provide virtual spaces where young individuals connect with peers and share their experiences. He further argued that many youths involved in cybercrime use the above mentioned social media platforms to flaunt their wealth, status, and material gains achieved through illicit activities. One can also argue that most young people who see their peers post pictures of luxury items, expensive vacations, or flashy cars, often accompanied by claims of success on their social media handles tends to be carried away by what they see. This visibility of wealth, coupled with the lack of understanding about the illegality of such actions creates an environment where cybercrime is normalized.

In this same vein, most youths engage in internet scam as a result of the activities of some social media influencers, whose lifestyle encourage normalization of illegal activities. In some cases, some youths perceives social media influential figures as role models, thereby adopting their practices without considering the ethical and legal consequences. These influencers often subtly or overtly glorify a lifestyle that may be funded through cybercrime, thus encouraging their followers to engage in similar activities (Nigerian Communications Commission, 2022). Adeniran (2017) observed that high youth unemployment and the allure of quick financial gains have made cybercrime an attractive option for most youths in Nigeria. It is against these backdrops that this study seeks to investigate the influence of peer pressure on youth involvement in cybercrime in Onitsha North Local Government area of Anambra state.

3. Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine the influence of peer pressure on youth involvement in cybercrime in Onitsha North Local Government Area of Anambra State. The specific objectives are;

1. To examine the extent to which peers pressure influences youths' involvement in cybercrime in Onitsha North Local Government Area of Anambra State.
2. To outline the security implications of youths' involvement in cybercrime in Onitsha North Local Government Area of Anambra State.
3. To ascertain respondents preferred measures for curbing youth involvement in cybercrime in Onitsha North Local Government Area of Anambra State.

4. Study Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided this study:

1. H₁: Female respondents are more likely to perceive peer pressure as major factor leading youth to cybercrime than their male counterparts in Onitsha North L.G.A.
2. H₂: Respondents who had tertiary education are most likely to consider advance-fee-fraud (Yahoo) as prevailing form of cybercrime in Onitsha North L.G.A than their counterparts with lower level of education.

5. Literature Review

5.1: Peer Pressure and Youth Involvement in Cybercrime

According to Onyeoziri (2025) cybercrime refers to criminal activities conducted through the internet or digital technologies. Peer pressure, on the other hand, is defined as the influence exerted by a peer group on an individual to change their behavior, attitudes, or values to conform to the group's norms which can be both positive and negative (Onyeoziri, 2025). In the context of cybercrime, peer pressure is a key factor that influences young individuals, particularly in societies like Nigeria, where social status and material wealth are highly valued (Ulo, 2022; Muraina & Muriana, 2015). Peer pressure can manifest in several ways, including direct encouragement to engage in illicit activities or indirect pressure to conform to a group's behaviors, especially when those behaviors are seen as cool, profitable, or necessary for social acceptance (Onyeoziri, 2025). Peer pressure typically encourages young individuals to engage in activities such as online fraud, hacking, identity theft, and other illegal digital acts. The desire to fit in with a group, gain material wealth, or achieve social recognition can make cybercrime seem like an attractive option, especially when it is glamorized by peers who are already involved in such activities (Eze & Nwachukwu, 2017). Youth are particularly vulnerable to peer

pressure during adolescence and early adulthood, as they seek identity, belonging, and validation. This stage in life is often marked by a strong desire to emulate successful or influential peers. In the digital age, where online communities are pivotal in shaping opinions and behaviors, youth are often exposed to peers who engage in cybercrime and show off their illicit wealth and success (Olumide, 2018).

In Nigerian society, social status is often linked to material wealth, and young people are highly motivated to attain recognition and validation from their peers. The desire to gain social status and impress peers drives youth to engage in criminal behaviors, including cybercrime (Onyeoziri, 2025). In similar vein, Ogunyemi and Ayotunde (2021) noted that many youths face pressure to exhibit conspicuous consumption as a means of validating their worth within their social circles. The authors further argued that, in many instances, youth involved in cybercrime are motivated by the need to be perceived as successful or influential. Peer groups often value financial success, which is perceived as an indicator of power and respect. When peers who engage in cybercrime appear to live prosperous lives with access to luxury goods, young individuals may feel compelled to follow suit in order to avoid feelings of inadequacy, rejection, or failure. For example, an individual who is not involved in cybercrime may be socially marginalized or perceived as unsuccessful if they do not keep up with the lifestyle of their peers (Olumide, 2018). Onyeoziri(2025) observed that cybercrime has become a norm or accepted behavior among youths in Nigeria. The author argued that certain youth groups glorify illegal activities as part of their identity, and peer pressure within these subcultures makes it difficult for individuals to resist engaging in cybercrime.

5.2: Security Implications of Youth Involvement in Cybercrime

The involvement of youth in cybercrime in Nigeria has far-reaching security implications, not only for individuals but also for the country's broader socio-economic and political environment. The increasing number of young people engaging in cybercrime has sparked debates about the threats to both national and international security, highlighting the urgency of addressing this issue in the context of Nigerian society (Adebayo & Udechukwu, 2020; Chiemeké, Egbokhare, & Ewwiekpaefe, 2010; Tade, 2020). The involvement of Nigerian youth in cybercrime poses significant threats to national security.

Cybercriminals, including youth, often target critical infrastructure systems such as banking networks, government databases, and communication platforms, putting the country at risk of data breaches, financial loss, and reputational damage. Youth who engage in cybercrime may use their skills to hack into government servers, steal sensitive data, and potentially expose the government's internal operations to malicious actors. This can result in espionage, identity theft, and data manipulation, which can destabilize national institutions and undermine the confidence citizens have in their government (Nigerian Communications Commission, 2022).

Adebowale (2019) argue that cybercriminals, especially youth who are skilled in hacking, often infiltrate military or police communication networks which results in breaches of security protocols and compromise of the effectiveness of national defense and law enforcement efforts. He further argued that cyber attacks on military or security agencies has potential to impair the country's ability to protect its citizens, control crime, and safeguard national interests.

Youth involvement in cybercrime directly impacts Nigeria's economic stability. One of the major forms of cybercrime that youth engage in is internet fraud, especially in the form of Yahoo Yahoo, which involves defrauding individuals or organizations by tricking them into providing money through deceptive online activities. These cybercriminals often target foreign nationals, creating financial instability in both the Nigerian economy and the economies of the targeted countries (Adebayo & Udechukwu, 2020; Okeke & Oli, 2024). According to report by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC, 2023), cybercrime activities cost Nigeria millions of dollars every year, both in terms of direct financial losses and the damage to the country's reputation as a business-friendly destination (Olumide, 2018). Additionally, the high level of youth involvement in cybercrime contributes to the unemployment crisis in Nigeria, as many of these young people choose illegal means of financial success instead of pursuing legitimate career paths. This underemployment, driven by the lure of easy money from cybercrime, further fuels the cycle of crime and impedes overall national economic development (Eze & Nwachukwu, 2017).

According to Onyeoziri (2025) the rise of youth participation in cybercrime in Nigeria has strained the country's law enforcement agencies and legal systems. The author further argued that the Nigerian Police Force, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), and other agencies tasked with tackling cybercrime often lack the resources and specialized knowledge needed to combat the advanced techniques used by youth offenders. As Nigerian youths become increasingly involved in cybercrime, the country is often labeled as a hotbed for internet fraud and cybercriminal activity. This negative perception undermines Nigeria's image on the international stage, making it difficult to build diplomatic and economic relationships with other nations (Olumide, 2018).

5.3: Preferred Measures for Curbing Youth Involvement in Cybercrime

Onyeoziri (2025) noted that one of the critical measures to curb youth involvement in cybercrime is through strengthening the legal and regulatory frameworks surrounding cybercrimes. In Nigeria, the establishment of legal structures such as the Cybercrimes Prohibition and Prevention Act 2015 has provided a legislative basis to tackle digital crimes. According to Okeke and Udechukwu (2024), while this law is an essential step, enforcement remains weak. Strengthening enforcement mechanisms and ensuring that youth are aware of the consequences of engaging in cybercrime is crucial. Authors like Adebayo and Udechukwu (2020) highlight that stringent penalties for cybercriminals, particularly those under the age of 30, could act as a deterrent.

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Additionally, improving the capacity of law enforcement agencies like the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Nigerian Police Force is vital to ensure quick response and investigation of cybercrime incidents.

According to Olanrewaju and Olayinka (2019), one of the main reasons young people turn to cybercrime is the lack of legitimate means of livelihood. Therefore, Onyeoziri (2025) argued that addressing youth unemployment through vocational training and skills acquisition programs will reduce youth's vulnerability to the allure of cybercrime. The author further noted that providing training in areas such as digital literacy, web development, data analysis, and other marketable skills will offer alternative income-generating opportunities. The Nigerian government, through various initiatives like the National Youth Empowerment Program and N-Power, has made efforts to create job opportunities. However, Akinsanya (2018) argues that expanding these programs to include more technical skills and creating more partnerships with the private sector will be beneficial in creating sustainable employment options for young people.

Onyeoziri (2025) observed that educating the youth about the dangers and consequences of engaging in cybercrime is one of the essential preventive measures to solve the problem. The author further advocated for campaigns in schools, universities, and social media platforms educate youth about the consequences of their actions. Adebayo and Udechukwu (2020) noted that integrating cyber security awareness into the national school curriculum in Nigeria will go a long way in addressing the problem of cybercrime among youths in the country.

On the other hand, Chukwu and Okeke (2020) noted that preferred measure to address the problem of cybercrime should embody peer-to-peer mentorship programs for youths-where more responsible youths can act as role models for younger ones. The author noted that an introduction of positive peer influence programs in schools, community centers, and even online platforms will help steer youth away from cybercrime and reorient them towards more productive and socially acceptable activities. In similar vein, Olanrewaju and Olayinka (2019) noted that community programs focused on empowering young people will help in reshaping their perceptions and behaviors regarding cybercrime.

6: Strain Theory

According to Ajah, Onwuchekwe and Ugwu (2017) the strain theory has its origin in the works of the French Sociologist, Emile Durkheim, but was elaborated upon and made popular by the American Sociologist, Robert K. Merton (1957). It conceives crime as a product of societal pressure that prevents individuals from achieving societal goals through legitimate means. Merton argues that when people are unable to achieve success through acceptable channels, they may turn to alternative, often deviant, methods to fulfill their goals. This theory is grounded in the assumption that society sets certain goals, such as financial success, that are deemed desirable, but it often fails to provide everyone with the necessary means to achieve these goals.

Onyeziri (2025) argued that strain theory assumes that crime is a result of frustration and blocked opportunities. A notable weakness of the theory is its focus on economic strain, which may not fully explain why some individuals in similar circumstances choose not to engage in criminal behavior. Moreover, it does not account for the influence of personal choices or peer pressure in the decision to engage in crime. Despite these limitations, Strain Theory remains highly applicable to the current study. The socio-economic pressures faced by youth in Onitsha North, coupled with the influence of peer groups, create an environment where cybercrime becomes an attractive alternative to legal means of achieving success.

In relation to this study, many may experience strain due to the lack of legitimate opportunities such as access to education, employment, and financial resources. With few legal avenues to achieve success, these youth may turn to cybercrime, such as online fraud, as an alternative means of attaining material wealth. Peer groups can exacerbate this strain by providing validation and encouragement for engaging in illegal activities. In this way, peer pressure plays a crucial role in amplifying the strain felt by youth, pushing them toward cybercrime as a means of overcoming socio-economic challenges.

6. Methodology

This paper adopts descriptive survey design. This study was carried out in Onitsha North Local Government Area of Anambra State. Onitsha is a historic and prominent city situated on the eastern bank of the River Niger and serves as a major commercial and urban center in southeastern Nigeria. Founded in the 16th century by migrants from Benin, Onitsha has grown to become one of the most economically vibrant cities in West Africa. Onitsha North LGA comprises several notable communities and neighborhoods including Odoakpu, Inland Town (Ogbeozala), Omagba Layout, GRA, and Fegge, among others. It is also home to iconic markets such as the Main Market (Out Odo), Ochanja Market, Ogboefere (Electrical Parts Market), and the Bridgehead Drug Market, which attract traders and buyers from across Nigeria and neighboring countries. The proliferation of cyber cafés, mobile technology, and relatively high internet penetration has made Onitsha North a hotspot for digital connectivity. However, these same factors have also contributed to growing concerns around youth involvement in cybercrime, often fueled by peer influence, socioeconomic pressures, and exposure to online fraud networks. Onitsha North in a study; The Troubling Epidemic of Wife-Battering in Ogbaru and Onitsha North Local Government Areas of Anambra State, Nigeria by Areh, Ajah, Ezeanya, Ugomma, Onwuchekwe and Onyejebu (2021) has a population of one hundred and twenty five thousand, nine hundred and eighteen (125,918). The above quoted population serves as the target population for this study. The study sample for the study is three hundred and ninety-seven (397) young adult residents of Onitsha North L.G.A. Multi- stage sampling technique which involves successive random sampling of probability and non-probability methods was used to select respondents. This helps in selecting towns, households and respondents. Structured

questionnaire was the major instrument of data collection. Data were sorted, coded and processed through the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Through the application of descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentages, Likert scale and mean scores data were analysed. Hypotheses were tested using chi-square (χ^2) inferential statistics and z-test. Out of the 398 copies of questionnaire administered, three hundred and seventy-four (374) that were properly filled were retrieved and used for analysis. This represents 94 percent response rate and was considered adequate enough for data analysis.

7. Results and Discussion

The respondents' socio-demographic characteristics were presented and analyzed in Table 1;

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Socio-Demographic Characteristics

S/n.	Variables	Frequency (385)	Percentage (100%)	Mean (x)
1.	Gender			
i.	Male	253	65.7	
ii.	Female	132	34.3	
2.	Age			
i.	18-23	104	27.0	
ii.	24-29	197	51.2	26.2
iii.	30-35	84	21.8	
3.	Marital Status			
i.	Single	206	53.5	
ii.	Married	141	36.6	
iii.	Divorced/Separated	25	6.5	
iv.	Widowed	13	3.4	
4.	Educational Level			
i.	No formal education	4	1.0	
ii.	Primary	22	5.7	
iii.	Secondary	91	23.6	
iv.	Tertiary	268	69.6	
5.	Occupation			
i.	Student	121	31.4	
ii.	Artisan	33	8.6	
iii.	Unemployed	90	23.4	
iv.	Trading	84	21.8	
v.	Other, specify	57	14.8	
6.	Religious Affiliation			
i.	Christianity	306	79.5	
ii.	Islam	66	17.1	

iii.	Traditional	13	3.4	
7.	Length of Residency			
i.	Less than 1 year	52	13.5	
ii.	1–5 years	101	26.2	
iii.	6–10 years	195	50.7	7.3
iv.	Over 10 years	37	9.6	

Field survey, 2025

Table 1 present results of the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. A cursory look at the table shows that majority 253(65.7%) of the respondents were males, while 132(34.3%) were females. It again revealed that majority 197(51.2%) of the respondents fell within the age bracket of 24-29, with an average age mean of 26.2 years. The least 84(21.8%) of the respondents fell within 30-35 years. However, marital status of the majority 206(53.5%) was single, and this is followed by 141(36.6%) that were married. Educationally, 268(69.6%) of the respondents which constitute majority had tertiary education, while the least 4(1.0%) had no formal education.

More so, it is observed that greater proportion 121(31.4%) of the respondents were students, while the least 33(8.6%) were Artisans. Religiously, majority 306(79.5%) of the respondents were Christians, while the least 13(3.4%) were practicing traditional African religion. In addition, there were Muslims, who constituted second highest 66(17.1%) respondents. However, majority 195(50.7%) of the respondents had lived in Onitsha North between 6-10 years. The average year of residency of the respondents was 7.3 years. The least 37(9.6%) of the respondents had spent over 10 years in the area.

Table 2: Respondents view on the extent peer pressure influence youth involvement in cybercrime

S/n	Questions and Responses	Frequency (301)	Percentage (100%)
1.	If “yes”, to what extent does peer pressure influence youth involvement in cybercrime in your area?		
i.	To a large extent	214	71.1
ii.	To some extent	59	19.6
iii.	To a lesser extent	21	7.0
iv.	To no extent	7	2.3

Field survey, 2025

Table 2 displays the responses of the 301 respondents that said peer pressure influence youth involvement in cybercrime. Majority 214(71.1%) of the respondents said to a large extent peer pressure leads youth to cybercrime. The least 7(2.3%) were of the opinion that to no effect does peer pressure influence youth to cybercrime.

Table 3: Respondents opinion on implications of youths' involvement in cybercrime

S/n	Questions and Responses	Frequency (385)	Percentage (100%)
1.	Which of the following do you consider a major implication of youth involvement in cybercrime in your area?		
i.	Rising spate of insecurity	21	5.5
ii.	Erosion of moral values	83	21.6
iii.	Security operatives raid and harassment	12	3.1
iv.	Porous/ intrusion of cyberspace	19	4.9
v.	Arrests and imprisonment	36	9.3
vi.	Intimidation of the public with questionable riches	61	15.8
vii.	Congestion of cells/custodial centres	54	14.0
viii.	Ritualism/ fetish practices	23	6.0
ix.	Violation of the laws / weakening of judicial processes through bribery	40	10.4
x.	Illicit substance / drug abuse	27	7.0
xi.	Others,	9	2.3

Field survey, 2025

Table 3 reveals that 83(21.6%) of the respondents who constituted majority considered erosion of moral values as major implication of youth involvement in cybercrime. This is followed by 61(15.8%) of the respondents that associated it with intimidation of the public with questionable riches. Other implications identified by the respondents are congestion of cells/custodial centres 54(14.0%), violation of laws and weakening of judicial processes through bribery 40(10.4%), arrests and imprisonment 36(9.3%), illicit substance/drug abuse 27(7.0%), ritualism and fetish practices 23(6.0%), rising spate of insecurity 21(5.5%), porous and intrusion of cyberspace 19(4.9%), security operatives raid and harassment 12(3.1%), as well as 9(2.3%) that said it cybercrime has other forms of implications.

Table 4: Respondents views on the preferred measures and suggested approaches to curbing youth involvement in cybercrime

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S/n	Questions and Responses	Frequency (385)	Percentage (100%)
1.	Which of the following do you consider effective measure that can help curb youth involvement in cybercrime in your area?		
i.	Awareness campaign against dangers of cybercrime	27	7.0
ii.	Skill acquisition/training programs	49	12.7
iii.	Peer education	18	4.7
iv.	Proper parental guidance	39	10.1
v.	Strict enforcement of cybercrime laws and prosecution of violators to serve as deterrent	7	1.8
vi.	Adequate job creations to address rising youth unemployment	50	13.0
vii.	Societal reorientation	42	10.9
viii.	Discouragement and sanctioning of public celebration of questionable riches	76	19.7
ix.	Revamping the educational system as to restore youth confidence in the system	61	15.8
x.	Stringent monitoring and regulation of the nation's cyberspace	16	4.2
2.	In your opinion, suggest other approaches to addressing cybercrime amongst youth in Onitsha North		
i.	Encouraging unemployed youths to embrace the Igbo Apprentice Business Model (igba boi) rather than going after unsustainable schemes	183	47.5
ii.	Discourage and ban of every form of get-rich-quick syndrome	79	20.5
iii.	To rid EFCC and other sister Agencies of corrupt men and women who compromise to cyber criminals	123	32.0

Field survey, 2025

Table 6 disclosed the respondents' selected measures that can be used to curb youth involvement in cybercrime. A cursory look at the table shows that the highest number 76(19.7%) of respondents canvassed for the discouragement and sanctioning of public celebration of questionable riches. This is followed by 61(15.8%) that called for revamping of the educational system as to restore youth confidence in the system. Again, 50(13.0%) of the respondents

advocated for adequate job creation in addressing youth unemployment. This was corroborated by 49(12.7%) of the respondents that called for skill acquisition and training programs for the youth. Others 42(10.9%) sue for societal reorientation, proper parental guidance 39(10.1%), awareness campaign on dangers of cybercrime 27(7.0%), Peer education 18(4.7%), stringent monitoring and regulation of the nation's cyberspace 16(4.2%), as well as the least 7(1.8%) that advocated for strict enforcement of cybercrime laws and prosecution of violators to serve as deterrent.

More still, the respondents when asked to proffer other workable approaches, 183(47.5%) of them said there is need to encourage unemployed youths to embrace the Igbo Apprentice Business Model (igba boi) rather than going after unsustainable schemes. In addition, 123(32.0%) of the respondents who believe that there are bad eggs amongst security operatives, posits that EFCC and other sister agencies needs to get rid of corrupt men and women who compromise to cyber criminals. However, the least 79(20.5%) called for discouragement and ban of every form of get-rich-quick syndrome in the society.

8. Test of Hypotheses

The formulated hypotheses were restated and tested in this section.

8.1 Presentation And Test Of Hypothesis One

H₁: Female respondents are more likely to perceive peer pressure as major factor leading youth to cybercrime than their male counterparts in Onitsha North.

Table 7: Test of hypothesis one

What is your Gender?	Do you think peer pressure influences youths to engage in cybercrime?			Total	Chi-Square
		Yes	No		
Male	Count/% within	191(49.6%)	62(16.1%)	253(65.7%)	$\chi^2 = 74.183^a$ N = 385 df = 1 p=.210, >0.05 Sig.
Female	Count/% within	110(28.6%)	22(5.7%)	132(34.3%)	
Total	Count/% within	301(78.2%)	84(21.8%)	385(100.0%)	

Field survey, 2025

Table 7 present the analysis and result of hypothesis one. Based on the table, computed chi-square is 74.183 and the degree of freedom (df) is 1. The p-value which is .210 is greater than

0.05 significance level. As a result, the tested substantive hypothesis was rejected and the null accepted, implying that perception of the factors leading youth to cybercrime is not gender based. Therefore, this study submits that female respondents are not likely to perceive peer pressure as major factor leading youth to cybercrime than their male counterparts.

8.2 Presentation and Test of Hypothesis Two

H₂: Respondents who had tertiary education are most likely to consider advance-fee-fraud (yahoo) as prevailing form of cybercrime in Onitsha North than their counterparts with lower level of education.

Table 8: Test of hypothesis two

What is your highest educational level?		Which of the following best capture the prevailing cybercrime amongst youth in your area?						Total	Chi-Square X ² = 59.472 ^a N = 385 df = 1 p=.104, >0.05 Sig.
		Advance-fee-fraud (aka Yahoo)	Identity theft	Romance scams	Phishing	Hacking/social media account hijacking	Money laundering through digital platforms		
	Count/% within	41(10.6%)	10(2.6%)	17(4.4%)	6(1.6%)	24(6.2%)	19(5.0%)	117(30.4%)	
	Count/% within	77(20.0%)	27(7.0%)	38(9.8%)	18(4.7%)	36(9.4%)	72(18.7%)	268(69.6%)	
Total	Count/% within	118(30.6%)	37(9.6%)	55(14.2%)	24(6.3%)	60(15.6%)	91(23.7%)	385(100%)	

Field survey, 2025

Table 7 present the analysis and result of hypothesis two. A cursory look at the table suggests that computed chi-square is 59.472 and the degree of freedom (df) is 1. The p-value which is .104 is greater than 0.05 significance level. In view of this result, the tested substantive hypothesis was rejected and the null was accepted. This implies that respondents who had tertiary education are not likely to consider advance-fee-fraud (yahoo) as prevailing form of cybercrime in Onitsha North than their counterparts with lower level of education.

9. Conclusion and Recommendations

Having examined the influence of peer pressure on youth involvement in cybercrime in Onitsha North Local Government Area of Anambra State, this study posits that cybercrime is a phenomenon that has feasted in Nigeria. This is usually orchestrated by peers pressure or

influence. Cybercrime is so prevalent in the society that one would wonder if the scheme has been socially approved as a legitimate means of livelihood. This is especially true given the manner in which the society celebrates young people with questionable and unclear sources of wealth. The most disturbing is the rate at which these criminals are infiltrating criminal justice administrators and weakening the judicial process through bribery. This study concludes that if nothing stringent is done to curb the menace, cybercrime will not only sustain the negative tag Nigerian is having in the comity of nations but also destroy the nation's youth population.

Therefore, this paper recommends that;

1. That aside peer pressure, the government should identify other social conditions such as unemployment that are leading youth to embrace cybercrime and address them. This is because without addressing the root causes, every approach to tackling the menace might not yield the needed result.
2. Nigeria's cyberspace should be adequately secured and made to be less porous. This is given that lack of protection and countering of cyber criminalities at formation stage would only continue to expose internet users to victimization.
3. Teaching of moral values and national reorientation should be prioritized by the National Orientation Agency (NOA). These should also be incorporated in the educational curriculum to help shape generations of responsible, hard working and upright youth.
4. The emerging and disturbing culture of celebrating wealth without clear processes should be discouraged by the society. The discouragement should be championed and advanced through the family, religious leaders and traditional custodians of cultures.
5. Parents should always observe and guard their wards (children) from negative influences of peers. Those in tertiary institutions or boarding schools should be visited frequently to have a grasp of their activities in school. Through this approach, the chances of being pressured into the wrong paths by peers would be minimal.

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