

Easy-Money Making, the African Youth Self-Destruction in Ben Akponine-Samuel's *the Yahoo Millionaires*

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Abstract: *The objective of this study is to expose the losses of Africa with this phenomenon of easy-money making to which an important part of Africa's youth is completely and energetically dedicated. By abandoning schools and engaging into easy ways of making money like internet scam, some African young people are jeopardizing the future of Africa. To reach my goal within the context of this study, I have found qualitative research method more appropriate because it consists in exploiting reference books, articles, thesis and internet sources for the interpretation and analysis of the data collected; so I have used it. The study depicts the phenomenon of amazing wealth accumulation through internet scam, by young people in Africa, which has sprung up for more than one decade now and exposes the consequences that it bears. The conclusion is that appropriate measures must be taken to make stop and eradicate this phenomenon lest it affect the coming generation by putting Africa into a total pandemonium. To successfully reach the goal of the study, I have applied sociological criticism, which focuses on the norms and values of society and how literary works make reflect those values.*

Keywords: *Easy-money making, scam, self-destruction, Yahoo Millionaires, pandemonium.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Poverty and underdevelopment have started producing a new type of thieves in Africa. Since political leaders have decided to rob Africa through public funds by starving the populations, some youths have pondered over the situation and have found a similar way of wealth accumulation. The former use their statecraft to steal public and common funds destined to development through vital infrastructures such as roads, schools, hospitals, universities, etc. The latter who languish under misery, created to them by the former, have decided to take their destiny in hand. This, for them, consists in using all possible means to make money. For money sake, many have abandoned school and engaged in the new source of easy money, internet scam. This is the outcome of a deep reflection led by African youths so as to halt misery and even unemployment. Small boys – especially teenagers – ignore school lessons and give in to internet scam as a system of making quick and big money. Their 95 per cent victims, are whites.

The system of online trade or e-business is popular and practical in developed countries. So, some African youths simulate Europeans, set attractive bait to which their victims - often Europeans or Americans - bite without any possibility to uncover the real identity of their scammers. This is part of African social reality that deserves to be transcribed in books. Ben Akponine-Samuel has understood it and has fictionalized it through his booklet *The Yahoo Millionaires* in a very instructive way. After the reading of the book I am more and even better convinced that easy wealth acquirement is like dry straw fire which does not last. He makes the readers understand that for the youths in Africa, amassing secondary and university degrees and qualifications doesn't matter but what matters is making money no matter the used means.

The story is indeed instructive in so far as it makes Steve, the narrator, regret his behavioural metamorphose caused by immoderate and uncontrolled ambition for wealth. By begrudging the nice and earthly material wealth of Dele and Alex – both his former secondary classmates and living a

luxurious life from internet scam – Steve has parted from his good nature, printed in morality and valuable principles, to a bandit, a criminal. Akponine-Samuel teaches a lesson here that can be helpful within the context of the education of our children. It is that of the saying “a man is known to the company he keeps”. If Steve does not abandon himself to the devil that is controlling his longing for health acquirement, he will not be so weak and vulnerable to Dele’s wealth story. And the first time he has gone to Dele and is told how Dele earns his livelihood must make him realize that Dele’s company is a bad one and keeping it can bring nothing but self-destruction.

At the beginning Steve remains doubtful, but the lack of firm resolution to no more go to Dele’s house makes him meets there again Alex - another secondary classmate of his - with his classy Honda Sedan, flanked by two pretty girls. The temptation has then got him when he finds himself tiny beside his former classmates Dele and Alex. Fine and convincing words from his friends have dazzled him and so weak, he gives in to Dele’s proposition to him as a business partner. He learns so rapidly and becomes an expert of internet scamming. Realizing that his sudden change into luxurious life starts drawing the attention of his colleagues - in the bank where he is working - upon him, he quits and dedicates himself entirely to internet scam. He and his companion scammers create fictive bank accounts to take money from their white clients. In this, they have some policemen as allies.

But as nothing remains hidden under the sun, they finally get caught red-handed while trying to swindle the second time a client that they have robbed once. Conscious of the game, the client alerts the police and they design a plan that help to catch them. It is then gone for a long stay in prison for these youths. They bypass the right path to wealth and undertake the wrong and criminal short trail that finally and undoubtedly leads to self-destruction. *The Yahoo Millionaires* by Ben Akponine-Samuel deserves to be read by the African youths and even adults because of the morality that it contains and conveys. This research work is divided into three parts which are ‘African youth inordinate ambitions’, ‘Influence of Ill Companionship on Young People with good Habit’ and ‘Price of Internet Scam’.

2. AFRICAN MILLENNIALS INORDINATE AMBITIONS

As the saying goes “grasp all lose all”. This, our elders do know it and behave accordingly for a life without trouble and police boredom. African youth today is in such a hurry to have wealth that it starts seriously worrying. The youths think that morality and decency favour poverty. And they don’t want to be and dwell in poverty. All the means are then welcome for them to achieve their goal. So, they abandon school and fetch for easy ways to get money. School for them is too boring and doesn’t ensure richness. This is exactly what Dele means when he states “This is stress, the person that is destined to make money will make money”(B. Akponine-Samuel,2012, P.5). When Steve often tell his friend classmate Dele that he plans to go to university and study accountancy so as to make money, he advises him:“you don’t even need to go beyond secondary school to make money.” (B. Akponine-Samuel, 2012, P.5)

Steve is a hard-working student whereas Dele is an idle and slack student who has often been the laughing-stock of the biology teacher. He is so unproductive that the biology teacher can’t prevent himself from declaring: “You are in S.S 3 and you cannot explain photosynthesis? And you want to write WAEC. I pity your parents who are paying your school fees, you won’t amount to anything”(B. Akponine-Samuel,2012, P.6).

In fact the biology teacher is not saying this to curse Dele though his friends think so. But he says it to put him to shame for his non-satisfying results so that he may think of taking his studies seriously. It is a kind of punishment that may make Dele do his duty and no more be victim of it next time. But the only concern of Dele is to make money. When Steve tells him that he must reject the cursing words of the biology teacher, Dele, in a worriless mood, states: “Who is he to curse me? Is he God? I will amount to something and I will come here and dash him money”(B. Akponine-Samuel,2012, P.6).

As we can realize, Dele’s only concern is to amass wealth not secondary and high education diplomas and degrees. But he is not the only one to have such unbounded ambitions. Steve is also willing to become a rich man. But the difference between them is that Steve counts on his studies to become a wealthy man whereas Dele finds that furthering education to become rich is not only annoying but also time wasting. Dreaming to become a wealthy man is not a bad thing. The way and means used to

acquire wealth is what matters. In the case of Steve his ambition of making money is located in the formal, moral and decent values. He wants to make money by becoming an expert accountant. But the question raising is the kind of wealth he wants to acquire. Can an expert accountant in Africa earn 20 million in a week? This can be a little bit difficult but not impossible. But the internet scammers can do it easily.

After completing his studies Steve starts looking for job. He finally gets employed in a bank as accountant. His salary does not beam to the light of his ambition of becoming rich. But he sticks to it the time to be promoted or to find better elsewhere. His ambition is a big one and the salary he is paid can't make it come true. The fact that he has remained unemployed for two years does not content him enough of what he is paid now. He aspires to be far better paid. He says: "Then lucky later came when I was employed to work in one of those old generation banks. The pay package was not fantastic as I'd expected but it was far better than nothing". (B. Akponine-Samuel, 2012, P.9)

In the bank he meets Dele. He has lost sight of him for years. Dele comes to the bank for an operation. Everybody in the bank is paying him respect in such a special way that stuns Steve. He confirms my words: "I was managing in that job when I met Dele again. He had come to the bank. That day, every body was running around, my manager came out to receive him. I was shocked when I recognised it was Dele that was causing all the upheavals"(B. Akponine-Samuel,2012, P.9). From that day Steve's ambition has, at the same time, received a stroke and strengthened. He reads accountancy to become a wealthy man. Yet, his classmate and friend Dele who quits school and has not even completed his WAEC is being honoured at his very eyes. He then expresses an inquisitive attitude by asking one of his colleagues: "Why are they running about because of him?". (B. Akponine-Samuel,2012, P.9) The answer he is waited on, has dumbfounded him. His colleague replies: "That is Dele Ishola, the money man. He is doing the bank a big favour by keeping an account with us". (Akponine-Samuel,2012, P.9). For Steve, education is the worthy canal that leads to wealth acquirement. Under the astonishment he mumbles to himself: "So, this chap made it like he always said. Perhaps, ha had gone to school". (B. Akponine-Samuel,2012, PP.9-10).

Steve goes to greet Dele who is very happy to meet his classmate and friend again. He declares, while introducing Steve to the bank manager as his best friend: "Steve has the brain to read, my own brain is for how to make money". (B. Akponine-Samuel,2012, P.10). Youths in Africa are more and more giving in to facility and are no more willing to afford any reproach from anybody calling themselves bosses. They don't want to be under pressure and orders. Dele clearly teaches it to Steve when he has gone to his luxurious apartment: "Listen Steve, I've seen that working for people or companies is slaving, maybe that was why going on with school didn't catch my fancy. I realised that people cannot make it that way" (B. Akponine-Samuel,2012, P.13). Steve finds that the fortune of Dele is too big for his age and too quick. He tells him: "You made it very big and quick" (B. Akponine-Samuel,2012, P.12). But the answer of Dele describes how immoderately and hurriedly ambitious the youths have become today in Africa by violating all the values and norms within the society. He says to Steve: "You are the bookworm, you wanted certificate but I wanted money, that's just all" (B. Akponine-Samuel,2012, P.12). But, stuck to his moral values, Steve says: "I wanted certificate so I could get rich" (B. Akponine-Samuel,2012, P.12). But Dele makes fun of him: "Yes, and the certificate gave you a job to keep money for me" (B. Akponine-Samuel,2012, P.12).

Unemployment and the lure of Europe as the "Eldorado" also push many young people to try their chance at any business that can bring them money. In this regard, some scholars argue that; "The ever increasing unemployment rate in several African countries (most of whom are graduates who are literate in computing and internet) is probably an influential factor of the existence and growth of cyber-crimes"(Abia et.al, 2010, p.111 2009).

Unlike the ones portrayed in Akponine-Samuel's booklet, there are some African Millennials who are breaking new ground, deconstructing through digital entrepreneurship and high tech, the myth of Africa as an underdeveloped continent. Most of those African Millennials live between Africa and European or American Metropolitan cities, straddling many cultures and trying to get the best from each side. In an article, Steve D. Amara describes, what he calls, "the dilemma of the African Millennials":

We are surrounded by elders and parents who are the reflection of a community-centric society though, a contrast that creates a particularly painful dissonance. Our adult selves end up trapped between 2 worlds that have less in common than our adolescent selves let us believe: an individualist approach inherited from the western media, and the traditional collectivist approach inherited from our elders. (S. D. Amara, 2016)

When young people start comparing their conditions to the ones of other young people, they start feeling useless and this finally makes them fall in the pit of easy money. Since Steve compares himself with Dele, he becomes psychologically feeble. He says:

I'd seen him like a life failure, a no-future-ambition, especially when he made up his mind not to further his education. I was really motivated to go to school because I wanted to be very rich but here I was; a graduate and not in any context rich whereas Dele who did not go to higher institution was already very rich. (B. Akponine-Samuel PP.11-12)

Excessive ambitions are spreading and rooting in the heart of African youths today. In fact, studies in Cameroon reveal that "The most common reasons advanced by students and youths in general involved in scamming are over ambitiousness for money (42%), for prestige and ostentation (26%); peer influence (17%) and poverty described as lack of jobs (despite having obtained the necessary certificates) with numerous basic needs (47%)" (W. A. Abia, et.al, 2010, p.113). So disproportionate ambition and lust for money are the most common factors that drive Youths to indulge in cyber criminality. Many teenagers who are from poor families are living on internet scams and are commonly called "guyman" in Benin Republic and in some other countries. In Ivory-Coast they are called "brouteur". You see them drive beautiful cars or expensive motorbikes. They are most of the time very young people who apparently and normally can't make such fortunes at their age. Others buy or build beautiful houses which sound beyond their formal and normal capacities. They float in refreshing-bars, doss-houses, night clubs, beaches, public squares, spending money wrongly gained. They are overwhelmed by girls who remain at their disposal for sexual amusement and for outing programs.

Young people who don't breathe nothing else than quick and easy money constitute a great danger for the society. The young scammers reinforce their luck with traditional and spiritual forces from indecent and immoral Ifa-priests and traditional healers. They are asked to make some ceremonies so as to master the spirit of their victims. They may be asked to bring a fowl, a goat, an ox or even a human being depending on the bulk of the amount they want to swindle from their victim. When the scammer wants to swindle millions from his "client", the sacrifice must sound great and it is often a human being according to what some of them explain to the police when caught. Children, young ladies are disappearing every day without being found alive.

With this phenomenon quietude is really and seriously threatened within the society. The political authorities and even religious authorities must join hands to combat internet scam. Parents must watch over their children and teach them the good values through advice and especially their own behaviour. Internet scam is accustoming the youths to the wrong way and it can worsen with the coming generations if nothing is done to make it stop.

That is what worries Bishop of Ife Diocese (Anglican Communion), Rt. Rev. Olubunmi Akinlade, to urge the youths in Nigeria and in whole Africa to jettison their inordinate ambition of get-rich-quick syndrome that is conspicuously prevalent among them. Akinlade, who gives the advice during the first session of the 11th synod of the diocese in Osun State, in Nigeria, with the theme: **Godly Parenting in a Cosmopolitan World**, decries the restlessness of the youths to make it fast with many of them not minding whose ox is gored. He says: "Youths, take it easy. Rome was not built in a day. I know that we are in a jet age, but even jets will take some time to gather momentum before they take off and after taking off, they will still take some time to balance in the air." (O.Akinlade, 2021). He, therefore, urges parents to effectively play their role by having time to lay a good foundation for the future of their children to avert what is happening today among the youths.

To successfully reach their goal, those youths use most of the time email address of their victim to get them. Andrews Attah-Asamoah has agreed with this in his article titled *Understanding the West African cyber crime process*. He writes that "the scam process involves searching for and extracting e-

mail addresses and making contact with the targets” (A. Attah-Asamoah, 2017, p.5). The scammers just send email inviting you to receive a number of valuable things that belong to them and for a valuable reason the parcel can no more belong to them and then they decide to give it to the victim. They may even call directly with a number that is unknown to their victim. So everything is done through trapping messages that they send to their victims so as to loot them entirely. It is in the same vein that Jan Blommaert and Tope Omonivi feel the urgent will to write an article that they have published. Their article is *Email Fraud: Language, Technology, and the Indexicals of Globalisation*. In the abstract of the article, they define the phenomenon:

...a corpus of email messages known as “419 scams”: a form of financial fraud in which huge offers of money are being made to people provided they pass on bank details and other personal information to the perpetrators. This kind of message presents us with a typical instance of “globalized” communication: they are produced in the margins of the world (the term “419 scam” is Nigerian) and sent to other places; they are electronically mediated; and they are written in varieties of “world languages”, mostly English. In the messages, authors claim particular identities and relationships, and have to do so using specific, generically regimented forms of communication. (J. Blommaert and T. Omonivi, 2006)

That is exactly the way those scammers, mostly teenagers, proceed to get people endowed with feeble spirit. They emit influence on the cretinism that epitomizes the personality of their victims by asking them to create another bank account even though they already have one before. Since Steve has joined the clan despite his working in the bank, he is of great help to the group. Dele asks Steve to create a fictive account where the victim can send the money that is going to be swindled from him. He says: “I want you to help open a domiciliary account for the the transfer. Once the money is received, the account gets closed”. (B. Akponine-Samuel, 2012, p.25).

3. INFLUENCE OF ILL COMPANIONSHIP ON YOUNG PEOPLE WITH GOOD HABIT

Friendship is a very important stage in human being’s life. Friends can give emotional support and advice so that we don’t get drowned in a damping situation and this makes us feel gleeful and happy. Friends can help find a positive life-impacting way to cope efficiently and successfully with situations.

But certain friends are really bad for us because of what they belch out as behaviour and image. They can be difficult to be around. Those bad friends may promote evil by engaging in risky or criminal behaviour. These kinds of friends are most of the time unveiled by parents who forbid their children to frequent them. Parents don’t like them because they are exclusive, excluding, and toxic.

Bad company corrupts good manners. This popular saying clearly shows how the choice of those we befriend can influence – either positively or negatively - our behaviour and even our nature. When you befriend a thief and keeps frequently his company, you may surely end up thief. He can’t share anything with you that is the opposite of his daily habit. Steve is a good man with a good education. He does well in school with his hard-working ambitious character. He has always thought to succeed in making wealth through his studies. He has then been at the beck and the call of his studies and his teachers’ assignments. He agrees with me by declaring:

Being rich had always been the borne of my desire. Right from when I was in Junior Secondary School, I’d always dreamt of the day I’d become a millionaire and have so much money. I wanted to control life and be the big man, having everything at my disposal. My father used to tell me that I could be whatever I wanted to become if I faced my studies very well and go to the University. Equipped with that advice, I decided within me to work hard at school so I could become very in future. I did well in school and came out with outstanding results that expressly saw me get admission into the University. (B. Akponine-Samuel, 2012, p.5)

This passage shows clearly the kind of education that Steve has received from his parents. He has been taught by his father to earn his wanted and dreamed livelihood through studies which vehicle good manners and qualities. Steve’s education is printed in moral values and dignity. He is then a good man dreaming to get rich. He has then complied with the educational advice given to him by his father, and has taken his studies in earnest. He has indeed understood that where there is a will there is a way.

But he has a friend called Dele who does not seem to care for his studies. Dele does not have his head at studies. His poor results often make the biology teacher to deride him. Steve is upset and vexed any time that this scene is displayed. But Dele himself has never shown any wrath and sadness about it. He often tells Steve that he does not want to further his studies and adds that what is besetting him is making money. He says: "This is stress, the person that is destined to make money will make money" (B. Akponine-Samuel, 2012, p.5). Steve is so well educated that he and together with the other students have felt anger when Dele answers badly back the biology teacher one day. He declares: "We were shocked that he could talk back at a teacher"(B. Akponine-Samuel, 2012, p.5). In fact, that day Dele can't define ecosystem and the biology teacher angrily declares: "Imagine yourself. I pity you. You had better sit up because the way you are going, you may not have a meaningful life except by dishonest means." (B. Akponine-Samuel, 2012, p.7). Dele is so vexed because during the previous class the teacher has already declared "you won't amount to anything" (B. Akponine-Samuel, 2012, p.6) because of his inability to explain photosynthesis. He then explodes: "You are quick to condemn me. I'll make it in this life and you will be alive to see it. I pray that God gives you long life so you may see what I will become in future." (B. Akponine-Samuel, 2012, p.7).

A well-educated child knows the value of respect toward elders. He or she knows that grains of maize are never right before the hen. To elders, one must never answer back. And Steve carries such good values. And these good values that he bears in himself makes him wonder if Dele is going to engage in robbery when he tells him that he is not furthering his education. He says: "In the alcove of my mind, I only laughed at him. More so, he had already confided in me that he wasn't furthering his education after secondary school. I wondered what he planned to do. I even suspected that he was considering robbery."(Akponine-Samuel, 2012, p.7). Such a soliloquy statement impels me to believe that for Steve, robbery is something which breaks the boundaries of moral and ethics. So, every parent in whom dwell worthy moral and ethical qualities, must wish to have a child like Steve who dreams to build his life through educational degree for accountancy. Having a child like Steve, may make you as a parent think that no uneducated and unconscious childish crime will not hinder your peace and quietude. That may surely be what the parents of Steve feel. Bewailing a criminal act by their child has surely never knocked at the door of their mind. Yet, such an unexpected heart-peace-shaking criminal act has unfortunately found a way to their family.

In fact, for having lost contact with Dele since the day he has answered back their biology teacher for his seemingly harsh pealing reproach - but devoid of intentional curse – it is in the active and professional life that he meets him again. He explains:

I lost contact him [sic] when I went to school and I never heard of him. After my school and service year, I came into the world armed with good certificate and began applying for jobs in banks. For two years, I was unemployed and I roamed the street of Lagos. Then luck later came when I was employed to work in one of those old generation banks. The pay package was not as fantastic as I'd expected but it was far better than nothing. I was managing in that job when I met Dele again. He had come to the bank. (B. Akponine-Samuel, 2012, p.9).

Their regaining contact has promoted and executed the downfall of Steve. The author of a study titled *If Your Friends Jumped Off of a Bridge, Would You Do It Too? Delinquent Peers and Susceptibility to Peer Influence* writes that "association with delinquent peer groups is one of the most salient predictors of delinquent behavior." (H. V. Miller, 2009). She states that youths especially teens who are highly susceptible to peer pressure have an even greater risk of getting into trouble with their friends.

If you make the mistake to have bad people as friends, you can't easily escape their behaviour-transforming appealing advice and suggestions that they offer you. Somebody -undoubtedly a scholar - writes:

It may be hard to cut off ties with such people, even if you know they're bad for you. And you may not be ready for that step - at the moment. However, if you see that you're developing emotional/mental health issues because of these peers, or you're falling into substance abuse or risky behaviors along with them...you may be better off without these people. (Y. Klein, 2002).

He continues in the online article by stating that “Certain people can hamper you from moving forward in your life. Even worse, they can cause you harm—both physically and emotionally.” (Y. Klein, 2002). Steve is part of what Klein is exposing. In fact, his new encounter with Dele has totally jeopardized his former holy nature. Dele has laden him with enticing propositions that can help achieve his dearest dream which is to acquire wealth. He falls in the pit because he has made a comparison by pondering over his salary that he earns as an account where Dele has domiciled his account and is treated as the first VIP client of the bank. He feels tiny when everybody is expressing care and deep consideration to Dele and it angers him because he can't understand how his friend who has abandoned school can deserve and receive such regards by his colleagues and even his boss. He declares: “That day, everybody was running around, my manager came out to receive him. I was shocked when I recognised it was Dele that was causing all the upheavals.” (B. Akponine-Samuel, 2012, p.9). he has then made an effort to know what is amiss. He asks one of his colleagues: “Why are they running about because of him?”(B. Akponine-Samuel, 2012, p.9). The answer he receives debilitates him like a noiseless thundering stroke. The colleague replies: “That is Dele Ishola, the money man. He is doing the bank a big favour by keeping an account with us”(B. Akponine-Samuel, 2012, p.9).

The resurgence of the two former classmates' friendship, has helped Steve build his desired wealth. But the building of this wealth doesn't content him as it should because it is not acquired following his dreamed process. He wishes to amass wealth from his accountant profile. Since accountancy has not done enough to make him soar financially, internet scam has successfully and efficiently done the job. His new companionship with Dele has trained him to become an expert and professional scammer. His former moral and ethical qualities have vanished before the robbery he has suspected that Dele is engaging into. Though it is not an armed robbery, internet scam is robbery too. It is a crime which is severely punished by the law. That is how bad companionship influences negatively morality by diverting it to immorality.

That day that they meet in the bank, Dele gives his address to Steve and asks him to come to him so that they have time to discuss more. After Dele has left the bank, Steve has kept on questioning his colleague to know more about the source of his old schoolmate's wealth. The nature of the questions he is posing makes his colleague warn him not to ever begrudge his old school friend for not knowing the fountain of all that luxury for a young boy like him. His colleague tries to put him on his guard: “Don't ever be envious of him because you don't know his source of income. For all you know, he may be a drug pusher or a ritualist because I think he is too young to be this rich” (B. Akponine-Samuel, 2012, p.11). These words by the colleague are such educative and edifying that complying with them can assuredly spare Steve's honour and dignity from the criminal scourge that may cost his liberty. He replies that he is not envious of Dele. But, inwardly he hankers the mighty man his friend Dele has become. He avows:

I went back to work but my mind was still on Dele. He was not like a man who would ever make it. I'd seen like a life failure, a no-future-ambition, especially when he made up his mind not to further his education. I was really motivated to go to school because I wanted to be very rich but here I was; a graduate and not in any context rich whereas Dele who did not go to higher institution was already very rich. (B. Akponine-Samuel, 2012, pp.11-12).

This is the way youths often fall into the trap of criminality. Envy is the first step that facilitates the corridor to bad friendship. Since the youth wants to be like his friend, he befriends him. Steve has hidden his actual feeling by telling his colleague “No, I am not envious of him”(B. Akponine-Samuel, 2012, p.11). But as soon as office closes, he calls Dele and gets the address of his dwelling place. He goes to the indicated place and makes his old nature – printed in moral and dignity – wash by a shower of sneering and deceitful fine words. This has made him feel subordinate to the boy he thinks has no future for not taking seriously his studies. He mourns: “I was feeling somewhat inferior to him”(B. Akponine-Samuel, 2012, p.12).

Dele explains to Steve that being rich cannot come from working under and for people. He says: “Listen Steve, I've seen that working for people or companies is slaving”(B. Akponine-Samuel, 2012, p.13). He tries to convince him on the grounds that during slavery era and even today, white people have abundantly robbed Africa. Dele freshens Steve's memory: “Since the day the colonial master

ventured into Africa, they did nothing but plunder Africa, they purloined all our wealth and caused this backwardness and poverty that you see in Africa” (B. Akponine-Samuel, 2012, p.14). But this excuse that scammers use to justify their crime is not unknown to Steve. He informs: “I’d heard this before, it was the usual excuse that international swindlers tell and internet scammers have adopted it as well. I was afraid that my friend had joined this unwholesome business” (B. Akponine-Samuel, 2012, p.14).

In fact, Steve is weakened by the tantalizing bait set before him by Dele. He, for a moment, forgets the good values that always characterizes him and ashamed to directly admit he is interested in the business, he hypocritically asks Dele what his point is. At once, Dele answers: “My point is that you can live a much better life and have everything at your reach if you join in this business of retrieving from the whitemen what they had stolen from us”(B. Akponine-Samuel, 2012, p.15). His hesitation brings Dele further in his exercise of denaturing a man who carries good values in himself. Dele declares: “Take a serious position. I only want to be of help to you. I’m not happy that with all the university you went, you are still the one to count my money in the bank” (B. Akponine-Samuel, 2012, p.15). This underestimating and pestering statement has prompted Steve to say: “Ok, I am interested”(B. Akponine-Samuel, 2012, p.15).

That is how he has joined the clan and has learnt rapidly to become an expert and professional internet scammer. He makes it as goes his dream and has beautiful houses and cars. He lives an indecent luxurious life with pretty girls. He feels himself financially potent and independent. No boss can any longer rebuke him for coming late to office or for doing something wrong. He is now the boss of himself and this gladdens him a lot. But for how long is this fake-golden life going to glitter? The third and final point of this article sparkles the answer.

4. PRICE OF INTERNET SCAM

A Nigerian adage says "Every day is for the thief, one day is for the owner". In King James Bible, God declares: “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live” (Deuteronomy 30:19). This words of God sufficiently show the reward that awaits a good doer or a wrong doer. Blessings come from good attitude but self-destruction is the only price for bad behaviour. The choice that African young people are making today is what can make their destiny shine in glorious success or in a doomed filthy failure. In that an online Interpol report reveals what awaits those youths who take that way of easy-money making. Measures are taken to private them from their liberty with the creation of a project:

Through ENACT, INTERPOL assists police in Africa to adopt proactive strategies to combat organized crime threats, facilitate information exchange and enhance analytical skills. Project ENACT is the first initiative of its kind to cover the entire African continent in analysing the scale of organized crime and its impact on security, governance and development. This analysis serves to inform decision-makers and strengthen law enforcement cooperation at regional and continental levels (Interpol, 2020)

This project has not been fruitless. African youths engaged in internet scam are being arrested. In South Africa, two youths have fallen in the claws of Interpol through the Operation Jackal:“In South Africa alone, the two suspects arrested were wanted for online scams that extracted USD 1.8 million from victims” (Interpol, 2022). Some valuables are found and seized by the police. The Interpol report informs that “The lavish lifestyles and greed of many suspects – allegedly paid for by defrauding members of the public of their savings and other criminal activities – was on clear display at the scenes of their arrest. Various luxury assets were seized, including a residential property, three cars and tens of thousands in cash” (Interpol, 2022).

Money is a necessity for everyone. But it must not make us bypass the right path that leads to it no matter how tortuous the path may be. Impatience often leads youths to a way that facilitates money-getting. They often forget that this impatience can bring them troubles. Observing patience and moral values through worthy hard-working attitude is a kind of sacrifice that never causes trouble. By spurning this peace-assuring sacrifice, some young people capsize into an easiness which bears abhorrent and destructive consequences. Since they don’t abide by the societal good customs, they entangle themselves into illegal and punishable affairs like internet scamming.

Steve has joined his friends scammers to be trained for that illegal and immoral business. By doing so, he has dwindled the good values that his parents have formerly sown into him. And that's how his sudden downfall occurs. A boy with good education has ended up scammers and prisoner for being metamorphosed by bad companionship. Together with his boss – his old classmate Dele – they invest themselves into internet scamming. He is trained on the tactics of swindling that he confirms:

I learnt many tactics one could use to defraud people particularly foreigners. The first job I initiated was the sale of an oil company that belonged to the government. I got three people across the world who were interested through the internet. I valued the company at a ridiculous price, claiming it was my family company and my family had mandated me to sell off the company. I faxed letters of the agreement to them and two of them bought it. (B. Akponine-Samuel, 2012, p.26)

For security safe, the two who have accepted to buy the oil company have expressed the will to come and see by their eyes. Steve replies to them this way: "I told them that they could but that if actually they wanted to buy the company, they should pay commitment fee so that I don't sell it to another person who wanted it. I gave them the impression that there were many people who were desperate to buy the oil firm."(B. Akponine-Samuel, 2012, pp.26-27). When they loot someone, they cut communication with them. They do so to avoid threats and disturbance from those they scam. Steve recognizes: "One I collected the money which was a percentage of the money, I shut off all communications with the two of them."(B. Akponine-Samuel, 2012, p.27). He explains it better by saying that after taking the money, he erases the account and his contact with his victims ends. It is important to precise that they don't use their real identity. Steve clarifies: "...it was a pseudo name I used"(B. Akponine-Samuel, 2012, p.27).

The internet scam convert informs us about another technique that they – he and his friends - use to swindle people. He declares: "The next deal I made was that I put up a photograph of a beautiful, seductive girl on the internet, claiming I was the one. I was seeking relationship and marriage. Many men showed interest. And that was it. I had many on-line 'lovers' and many of them were sending money through Western Union though not much."(B. Akponine-Samuel, 2012, p.27). They often select those victims who are rich enough to continuously loot them by inventing tragedies that have never happened to them. Steve has chosen Marc, one of his lovers from Belgium who has made fortune in automobile company. He makes his lover invite him to his country. This requires some expenses related to the trip. Marc sends the money. But to justify his incapacity in travelling, he contrives a chimera in which he makes himself victim of kidnapping. This is another plan to plunder his lover Marc. He makes him pay ten thousand dollars to his supposed kidnappers to keep him alive. All this is done with the help of one his girls who speaks with Marc on phone. And his voice is used as the one of the leaders of kidnapping gangs.

Steve is making such a praiseworthy progress that wows Dele. His life has outclassed the one of his colleagues working in the bank. He excessively supervenes his wants without being in shortage of anything that money can provide. He supersedes his old needy life with wealth through internet scam. He describes his gleeful life that he temporarily enjoys and which makes him quit the bank: "Dele was impressed by my progress and shortly, I was in big money, living large to the amazement of my colleagues in the bank. They were asking questions and somehow, I discovered that they were investigating me in the bank. It was then, I resigned." (B. Akponine-Samuel, 2012, p.29). He opens an account in the bank that grants him total respect. His life has totally wealthily changed. He states: "My life took on the very fast lane. I was making money and soon, I'd built a mansion that was state-of-the-heart-art."(B. Akponine-Samuel, 2012, p.29).

The three youths – Dele, Alex and Steve – have become so wealthy that they have gone to their secondary school to donate half a million naira. When they get there, the principal who does not know the source of their wealth proudly and joyfully gathers the teachers - among whom is their biology teacher who has more than once made severe reproach to Dele for his poor results at school- and explains to them: "These young men are products of this school. They have come back to make generous donation to the school."(B. Akponine-Samuel, 2012, p.30).

The biology teacher does not recognize Dele. He explains to the teacher that he has been the student he is often so angry with. He gives him five thousand to the teacher who, just a while before, congratulates him for having succeeded in life. This, he has promised to do to the teacher the day he answers back to his reproach. And he reminds him of it: "I had always said that I would one day return to this school and dash you money because when I couldn't explain what photosynthesis was, you said I'd amount to nothing. I said I'd prove you wrong." (B. Akponine-Samuel, 2012, p.31). For everyone there, those young boys have made it in life. But the nature of the wealth they have acquired has escaped everybody's reflection. This insolence, to the biology teacher by Dele, has not pleased Mother Nature. Their downfall is therefore imminent because immorality also collapses by its unwise and arrogant character.

Those youths feel themselves so powerful that their cutting off the communications with their victims does not eternally last. They, at times, come back with another identity. An old victim of Dele has caused their imprisonment. In fact, Dele has swindled the man with an amount that has since then prevented the man from sleeping well. He starts looking for a way to lay hand on him. He informs the police about his misfortune and a trap is set up to catch his swindlers. Steve explains: "The client was once a victim of Dele and had reported to the police and they had been trying to track Dele down. Then there other complaints and the ISP showed that it was from the same quarter. So the deal was actually a plot to catch us and they have succeeded." (B. Akponine-Samuel, 2012, p.33).

In fact, they have concluded with the client the deal of ten million dollars. He shows no resistance but tells them that he is going to pay the amount in batches over a period of five weeks. So, the first week he sends them one million dollars that they have all gone to receive in the bank. They don't care anything because Steve declares: "I had to make contacts with the police and be friendly with them. I was giving them money to protect me" (B. Akponine-Samuel, 2012, pp.29-30). But their connections with the police has failed in preventing them from being arrested. Ten men in suits walk into the bank and bring out pistols. They round them and put handcuff around their wrists and take them away. The police call the press to present them. They confess their deeds. Considering the palpable evidences, their trial is quickened and they are sent to prison. Steve rues:

We were sent to jail and I bagged twenty years. And here I am; a convict and a criminal. Yes, I made money and lived large. I git rich like I'd always wished for but I've lost it all. And even my freedom. I was a millionaire briefly, now, I wished I'd remained in my honest way. I had good prospects as a banker and my life was heading to a good future. But I had no patience and this is the reward. The whole world now knows of my crime and I am finished. My friends too. Twenty years is such a long time. I really regret it. (B. Akponine-Samuel, 2012, p.34).

This is the way facility adepts end up. The price is either sudden, premature and untimely death or imprisonment. Young people had better stop engaging into internet scam or other unworthy and illegal activities that can cause them trouble. Despite the qualifications that Steve has, it can result very tricky for him to henceforth find a job - after having purged his sentence alive and set free - because he is known to the whole as a criminal, an immoral person who is not trustworthy. His police report is sullied forever. He is then finished together with his qualifications in accountancy.

5. CONCLUSION

This research work reflects my deep intention which is to expose the evils that internet scam is inflicting to young people, families and African societies in wholeas it is lived by Steve, the main protagonist in *The Yahoo Millionaires* by Ben Akponine-Samuel.

As we may realize it, the yearning to acquire wealth and glory by African youths has led them to engage in things that do not to them good. The fiction on which is based my research work has overtly shown it. Then, something deserves to be urgently done to stunt the phenomenon of internet scam which not only tarnishes Africa but also promotes facility within the youth that constitutes the future changing of leaders.

In this research work, I have explained in the first point how the inordinate ambitions of African youth leads them into self-destruction. In the second, I tackle the negative effects that ill companionship sparkles on youths with good education. And finally, I have outlined the final price that internet scam as facility provides to the young people who adopt it as a job to earn their livelihood.

Ben Akponine-Samuel has exposed the way internet scam is adopted by young people, the techniques that they use to swindle people and how briefly they shine. I find this book so edifying and instructive because it denounces social facts that can easily undermine Africa's development.

Steve has always wanted to build wealth. He takes his studies in serious to achieve his goal. But his inordinate ambition printed in impatience has dashed him into the gob of self-destruction. He follows his classmate Dele – who abandons school and becomes professional internet scammer - and is trained on the way he can easily make money from internet. He learns so rapidly by arraying his good habits and qualities into the dungeon. He has made fortune by swindling people. But he has ended up in prison, sentenced to twenty years, by blemishing his honour and his qualifications in accountancy. He regrets all he has done that has caused his own destruction.

The study is appealing the young people in Africa to be more and more near to the good values that Africa promotes by complying with patience in wealth making. There is no so small job that cannot lead to prosperity if seriousness and honesty are observed. May African young people stop coveting their friends and be proud of what they are and what they have. They must know that haste makes waste.

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