

'They withdrew all I was worth': Automated teller machine fraud and victims' life chances in Nigeria

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Abstract

A major downside of the cashless policy introduced by the Central Bank of Nigeria in 2014 is pervasive automated teller machine (ATM) frauds. While fraudsters gain, the life chances of victims are affected. Previous studies in Nigeria had not investigated the effect of ATM frauds on victims' life chances. Data were generated through in-depth interviews with victims of ATM fraud. Findings show victims suffered post fraud trauma and often depended on friends, parents and relatives to survive the trauma. The reaction of banks to customers' victimization was unfavorable and unhelpful in compensating the financial losses of customers. We recommend better internal controls for banks and implementation of mechanisms to govern trust and protect customers from victimization.

Keywords

Cashless policy, life chances, victimology, fraud, Nigeria

Introduction

A major snag of the cashless policy in the Nigerian banking industry and payment systems is fraud. Since July 2014, when the policy became fully operational, the fraud landscape has widened through electronic transactions. Van Dijk and Kunst (2010) define e-fraud as cheating for financial gain of people making transactions on the internet. Wopperer (2002: 384) avers that many risks are

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associated with electronic banking, with fear of the deceptive use of credit and debit card details provided during online transactions keeping many people away from e-banking. Users of electronic banking are vulnerable to fraud with considerable consequences for the victims (Sparrow, 2008; Van Dijk and Kunst, 2010). Relating to who is victimized, Blanton (2012) reports a rise in financial fraud with disproportionate effect on older people. Moore et al. (2009) show how electronic fraud has transformed from a cottage industry into a more advanced form involving the purchase of encoding machines, copying of customers' cards and stealing of cash at automated teller machines (ATMs) at night. Hence, the migration from a cash-based to a cashless economy comes with the challenge of fraud for users in a developing cashless economy like Nigeria with few existing protection mechanisms for users. Media reportage of ATM fraud in Nigeria has been considerable while data indicate an increase in victimization of persons using this payment system. In this paper, we focus on the impact of ATM fraud on the life chances of its victims.

The Central Bank of Nigeria attests that there is a high success rate for electronic fraud (The Punch, 30 June 2014). The Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC) reported a total of 3,756 fraud cases in 2013 (NDIC, 2013). The amount involved was N21.79billion¹ (\$136.19million) which represented a 21% increase compared with the N18.05billion (\$112.8million) officially documented for 2012. Furthermore, about half of the actual losses occurred within the first three months of 2013. However, looking beneath this aggregate picture reveals the major channels through which fraudulent practices were executed. NDIC (2013) offers an elaborate list of 14 such sources with ATM fraud occupying a prime position. This prominence of ATM fraud is clear on two important fronts. First, a total of N585million (\$3.66million) was lost to ATM fraud in 2013. This represented approximately 10% of actual losses over the course of the year. Second, and more importantly, in terms of frequency, almost half (46.3%) of reported fraud cases were ATM-related.

On the policy side, it is also important that the NDIC Act 2006 stipulates monthly returns on frauds, forgeries and other financial malpractices. The NDIC acknowledges that the extent of compliance among deposit money banks (DMBs) is impressive. The NDIC (2014) reports a significant surge in the incidence of fraud in the banking industry in 2014. Specifically, the 10,612 reported fraud cases represent almost a three-fold increase from the previous year (3,786 cases were reported for 2013). Corresponding to these crime counts is the increase in the amount of loss by 17.5% from N21.80 billion in 2013 to N25.61 billion in 2014. The configuration of these fraud cases by type shows similar patterns for the years 2013 and 2014. In terms of actual losses in 2014, web-based (internet banking) fraud accounted for about half of the cases (51.6%), while the remainder was split among ATM frauds, unauthorized credits, foreign currencies theft and some nine other dimensions of fraud (see NDIC, 2014). However, the escalation of ATM type fraud is particularly worthy of note. The quantum leap in the number of ATM-related fraud reports from 1,739 in 2013 to 7,181 in 2014 speaks volumes about the more recent ascendancy of fraud victimization of this kind. In the 2015 NDIC report, the total of 12,279 reported cases of fraud represents a 15.71% increase over the figure for 2014. Also, the trend of increasing ATM-related fraud has clearly continued as evidenced by the surge in such cases from 7,181 in 2014 to 8,039 in 2015. These statistics undoubtedly point to the high and still rising incidence of ATM fraud within Nigeria's financial space. Against this background, this study therefore examines how ATM fraud affects the life chances of victims.

Max Weber's term 'life chances' has been used by sociologist E. Stanley Eitzen (1985: 263) to mean 'the chances throughout one's life cycle to live and to experience the good things in life'. According to Tumin (1973: 104), life chances comprise those things that 1) better-off people can purchase (good education, good medical care, comfortable homes, fine vacations, expert services of all kinds, safe and satisfying occupations, etc.) and that poor people would purchase if they had

the money; 2) make life easier, longer, healthier, and more enjoyable. In general, the term 'wealth' may be understood as an individual's access to or possession of the good things in life. The specific content of this understanding of wealth would necessarily depend upon what a society considers to be the 'good things' of life. Differential access to these good things constitutes differing life experiences, styles, and chances. Miller (1992) explains that family background, gender and race can enhance life opportunities and/or inhibit them.

Economic policies could increase an individual's vulnerability and exposure level to victimization. Notwithstanding the investment committed into one's life, a single crime episode experienced may alter the life chances of victims. The effects manifested can be emotional, psychological (including fear of particular environments or spaces), and loss of investment and property. Scholarship has documented how investment in education and the consequent upward mobility that comes with it can determine one's life-space (where and how one lives), taste and consumption patterns (Cangemi, 1967). A particular crime may have an effect on victims directly in a number of ways. They may be physically injured, incur financial loss or damage to property or lose time, as a result of the crime itself or of involvement in the criminal justice process. Most existing studies have concentrated on the impact of more serious personal or property crimes (as opposed to the majority of everyday crimes or other high-profile cases of business crime or criminal negligence). These studies have highlighted the acute stress, shock, sense of intrusion of privacy, and adverse physical, practical or financial effects suffered by many victims (Brogden and Nijhar, 2000; Lurigio et al., 1990; Maguire and Corbett, 1987; Shapland et al., 1985).

In relation to online fraudsters, Moore et al. (2009) opined that they are usually educated and capable and live in a society with poor job prospects and ineffective policing such as Nigeria. Electronic crime in the online space creates significant costs for banks, citizens and service providers. However, very little has been done to understand how such experiences of fraud affect the life chances of victims of ATM electronic fraud. Understanding how fraud affects the life chances of bank customers may provide data on the downside of the policy and inform the need to erect structures of trust which may reduce victimization. It will also provide information on victim concerns for restitution within the criminal justice system.

Existing literature

The research literature is replete with papers on both the causes and consequences of criminal behavior. The mainstream emphasis in relation to financial crime is on white-collar crimes which by definition may be seen as high profile occurrences of crime by reputable individuals or corporations. Along this train of thought there are a number of key contributions from Western authors especially from the United Kingdom and Australia. For instance, Levi (2002) explored the respective impacts of *shaming* and *stigma* on corporate financial offenders. This author typifies shaming as essentially reintegrative in terms of intent, while stigma is deployed purely for an exclusionary motive. Levi further highlighted the major factors that can make shaming an antidote to white-collar fraud. First, the efficacy of shaming varies widely across cultural spaces and physical geographies implying that the construction of white-collar crimes will follow similar patterns. Second, offenders may more actively engage the media as a technique of neutralizing the intended consequences of shaming. According to Levi (2002: 149–150), 'abused tycoons or corporations are not passive victims of the media, for they are often able to employ PR staff to produce more positive readings of how they have behaved'. Finally, there are perceived views on the amount of deserved punishment and the attendant decisions about reintegration. That said, the functionality of

shaming is predicated on four key premises, namely: its application must be impersonal (that is, against specific acts rather than persons); the reference group to which the offender belongs must consider the act negative; shaming must culminate in behavioral change in the offender as well as potential offenders; and society must reintegrate shamed persons once atonement is deemed complete.

Stigma, described by Levi as the dark side of shaming, involves a blanket generalization of shaming especially to inappropriate targets – for instance, superimposing the image of a single fraudster on every citizen of the offender's country of origin. However, stigma works depending on how much offenders care about these reactions on the one hand, and what such reactions mean on the other. In an extreme scenario, offenders may be willing to endure the stigma if the financial payoff is substantially large and the prospect of confiscation is slim. Another difficult context to activate stigma is where the fraudulent behavior stimulates the local economy via the provision of jobs (Levi 2002: 157). Put together, Michael Levi submits that more research is required both on better understanding the effectiveness of shaming and stigma, as well as making the two applicable in practice depending on context. The role of the media looms fairly large in the foregoing narrative and the interaction of the media with white-collar crime cases can be said to shape outcomes considerably. The paper by Levi (2006) thus focused on the construction of white-collar crimes by the media. Put succinctly, the author argues that several factors interplay to define what is labelled as fraud by the media. A key view expressed is, however, that media construction incorporates sensationalistic elements – encompassing 'prominent names', 'unusual features' and 'significant cum visualizable harm' – in putting financial crime stories together. Another paper by Schuchter and Levi (2015) looks beyond media construction to critically probe the personal constructions of elite white-collar offenders in Austria and Switzerland using in-depth interviews. The preponderance of their narratives suggests that the two most important drivers of such acts are opportunity and perceived pressure. These forces, in the view of these offenders, potently blur the demarcating line between what is legal or otherwise.

For blue-collar crimes, as may be the case for the aforementioned white-collar crimes, there may be contestation on the precise victims of fraud and fraudulent practices. The question of who the victim of fraud is has a long history. Quinney (1972) raised important queries about the social construction of victims as well as how such social construction interfaces with the notion of morality. Some forty years after this initial enquiry, Walklate (2012) critically examines the specific ways in which victimology as an enterprise has engaged the questions raised by Quinney. According to her, the narratives of criminal victimization hinge on the academic, the cultural and the political. Academic discourses include positivist, radical and critical perspectives as distinct approaches. Positivism views victimization largely from the prism of legal provisions and relies substantially on quantification mostly through the use of criminal victimization surveys. However, the structures and processes that generate the victims within these surveys are little understood by positivists. Radical victimology is sympathetic of human rights and its treatment in the analysis. Thus, Walklate (2012: 175) emphasizes that 'radical victimology makes visible the power relations that underpin who is seen and responded to as a victim and who is not, and thus affords a much wider and far-reaching conceptualization of what counts as crime'. However, law and legal codes both at the national and international levels still shape the characterization of victims just as in positivism. Critical victimology takes into explicit account more nuanced views on the definition of victims and the conditions under which such a label can be appropriately applied. Within this orientation, the availability of data and the empirical analysis of the same are not sufficient to define who a victim is. In other words, victim identification is neither simple nor straightforward.

The cultural and political narratives emphasize that harm suffered as a consequence of victimization will vary with cultural context and depending on the power relations that define what constitutes harm (Walklate, 2012).

Button et al. (2014) conducted an investigation into the impact of fraud on victims and their families in England and Wales. The authors conducted close to 800 telephone interviews and complemented these with 30 semi-structured interviews with both the victims of fraud and their family members. They pursued both the characterization of victims as well as the influence of the experience of victimization on their life courses. Almost half of the victims in the telephone survey were old (above 60 years), were more likely to live in London and earned at least £30K a year. The age distribution of the participants in the semi-structured interviews mimicked the former. With respect to impact, victimization substantially worsened financial hardship, resulted in broken relationships and produced new forms of both physical and mental illnesses. To sum up, the authors dismiss the point of view that fraud is a 'victimless crime' due to the overwhelming evidence in support of its impact on livelihoods and argue for a better disposition of the criminal justice system towards victims of crime.

Within a different setting, Cassandra Cross examined online fraud victimization especially among the elderly in Queensland, Australia. Specifically, Cross (2015) examined the avenues through which victim blaming works to sustain the belief that online fraud victims are both greedy and gullible, thereby deserving of their experiences. The author conducted interviews with 85 senior citizens who had at least received fraudulent emails. Many of those who self-reported as having responded to such emails and been defrauded in the process said they did not disclose their victimization to their family and close associates for fear of being laughed at. Clearly, rather than humor serving a functional role as a stress coping mechanism, it rather became a tool for perpetuating silence which then sustains the victimization experience. This is made effective by the isolation of victims and the attendant drag in the facilitation of victim recovery.

Elsewhere, Cross (2017) delves into the phenomenon of identity crime in Queensland, Australia. The crux of her enquiry is engaging the concept of 'prudential citizenship' which is described as self-regulating behavior geared towards self-identity preservation. Among the 29 elders who were interviewed, the majority had exposed their identity covertly or overtly. The author then substantiates the argument that rather than being a deliberate act, this behavior arises from a misplaced understanding of the risk and probability of occurrence of fraud. Victim protection policies, in the author's submission, should therefore pay greater attention to e-fraud awareness campaigns, especially among the elderly.

Overall, this financial elder abuse (FEA) appears to have gained currency as it is thoroughly conceptualized in Gilhooly et al. (2016). The authors examine FEA within the analytical framework provided by the bystander intervention model. The bystander intervention model is credited with the potential of fostering appreciation of the decision making of policymakers and the public in relation to FEA as well as elder abuses even in spaces other than the financial.

Based on the preceding discussions, it is obvious that the literature is still scant in respect of the victims of e-fraud, particularly in developing countries. In some of these countries, with Nigeria being no exception, ATMs have emerged to be a popular financial services delivery channel, particularly for their ease of use. However, appreciable concerns loom as to ATMs' guarantee of security since their deployment is fraught with unintended consequences such as unauthorized withdrawal fraud via ATM machines among others (Liao and Wong, 2008; Wada and Odulaja, 2012). It is important to note, nonetheless, that even in the Nigerian setting some research has been carried out on ATM fraud. Some of this research has examined the relationship between ATM

fraud and literacy levels (Obiano, 2009), the uncooperative attitude of banks in addressing ATM-related fraud (Ihejiahi, 2009), and infrastructural challenges facing ATM users in Nigeria (Ade-loye, 2008). Diebold (2002) catalogues ATM fraud types, while Furst et al. (2000) investigated ATM robbery patterns. Emeka and Ezeani (2012) investigated the factors underlining the use of ATMs by customers in Ibadan, Nigeria. Also noteworthy is Tade and Adeniyi (2016) who probed ATM fraud in Lagos and Oyo States in southwest Nigeria with specific emphasis on uncovering both the identity of fraudsters and the strategies they deploy for defrauding. Within a sequential exploratory research design, data were collected from both ATM users and victims of ATM fraud. Their findings showed that fraudsters were predominantly those with close familial and social ties with victims. In terms of strategies for defrauding, the results indicated that card cloning, swapping of cards and physical attacks at ATM galleries are commonplace. By implication, the findings suggest the need for well guided policy initiatives with respect to the deployment of e-payment systems such as ATMs in Nigeria with a view to engendering trust in the capability of the financial ecosystem to deliver on the purported gains from the adoption of a cashless regime. The clear point of departure of the present study, especially from Tade and Adeniyi (2016), is its explicit consideration of the impact of fraud victimization on the life chances of ATM fraud victims in southwest Nigeria.

Our study makes a new contribution by placing the narratives of ATM fraud victims in the spotlight since they are among those whom the e-payment technology is designed to serve. Furthermore, this attempt is timely because victims of ATM fraud are often helpless in the face of fraudsters who defraud them and commercial banks that employ techniques of neutralization to avoid responsibility.

Methods

The research was exploratory and was conducted in Ibadan, the capital city of Oyo State. It involved the use of qualitative in-depth interviews with 30 purposively selected victims of ATM fraud in Ibadan. Reaching the research participants was through contacts and referrals. This implies that the snowball sampling method constituted an important part of the recruitment of participants for this study. Those who facilitated contacts with victims were ATM custodians and victims who linked us with other victims. While interviews were carried out with 15 victims face-to-face (using an interview guide), the rest were conducted via telephone. This latter mode of interviewing was preferred by the victims since their jobs could not allow them to be physically present for an interview. Each of the interviews lasted about 30 minutes. The interview guide focused on effects of victimization on life chances and the reactions of banks to episodes of fraud. All interviews were recorded and were subjected to thematic analysis around the related themes of the research objectives.

Findings

The effects of victimization on the life chances of ATM fraud victims

The responses of our participants indicated that 'locational vulnerability' accounted for the impact ATM fraud had on their socio-economic activities. By locational vulnerability, we mean that every individual within the social world is located within a stratification ladder, such that the place they occupy determines their reaction to any event that happens to them within social spaces, whether

planned or accidental. Factors such as class, status, age, economics, sex and existence of support networks have functional roles to play in what happens to individuals and their ability to cope with the adverse consequences of events such as fraud. These factors played a major role in explaining the life chances of victims of ATM fraud in our research setting.

A person's position in a stratification system may have important effects on many areas of their life. It may enhance or reduce their life chances, that is, their chances of obtaining those things defined as desirable and avoiding those things defined as undesirable in their society. Gerth and Mills (1954: 313), referring to Western society, state that life chances include:

everything from the chance to stay alive during the first year after birth to the chance to view fine arts, the chance to remain healthy and grow tall, and if sick to get well again quickly, the chance to avoid becoming juvenile delinquent and, very crucially, the chance to complete an intermediary or higher educational grade.

Financial wealth is held for different purposes and saving it in a bank could be designed towards achieving particular socio-economic purposes. These may include business, education, daily survival and securing accommodation. In other words, the purposes for which particular money was saved, the worth of the account holder and their available support systems may influence the emotions generated when defrauded and the consequent impact on their life chances.

We categorized our participants into their levels of vulnerability: students, unemployed youth, the sick, aged and illiterate, and working class. The levels of emotions generated after the fraud were affected by their position. A student who is defrauded is a dependant whose life chances within the school are primarily related to survival. Monies are held by students to purchase educational materials and food for sustenance. Having money allows the student to pay full attention to their studies - they may be studying miles away from their parents/guardian. Easy access to cash thus gives students the assurance that they can face any eventualities within the citadel of learning. However, loss of money may generate different emotions particularly when the loss occurs through victimization through electronic payment platforms. It does not only affect confidence in the payment system but leads to an extended period of psychological trauma.

Post victimization recovery may be shortened or lengthened depending on the nature of support networks available and accessible to the victim. This has unintended consequences on their studies and eventually success or failure. For female victims, the ability to obtain support from relatives or family may reduce their vulnerability to exploitation by the opposite sex when they ask for help. A defrauded female student explained that:

I survived through my parents. I told them. At a time I could not even tell my dad because he would really blame me that I was keeping a lot of money. I told my mummy but I later told my daddy, and some friends. It was really terrible because I cannot get help from friends. It was a time when we were all preparing for our last semester examinations. Nobody had money. I only got money through my friends and dad. Not really friends. Basically the help came from my family. My mum first gave me N18,000 (\$112.5) and later dad gave me like N7,000 (\$43.75).

For some other victims help came mainly from friends. Most of the victims in this category were from a poor socio-economic background. The initial money lost to the ATM fraudster was raised through their personal entrepreneurial activities aimed at sustaining them in the school. They did not only use the money for their education but they also provided assistance to the family through

the money they made from their businesses. They engaged in selling clothing materials while others were into fashion designing. A participant who was into seasonal business in school told us her story. During the Christmas period, she would buy and sell poultry products. She told us that she would sell cakes during the Valentine season as well as jewelry to students who could afford it. The staff of her university were also her customers. She did all these things to support herself due to the death of her mother and to the fact that her father was not too financially buoyant. As such, it was expected that no help would come from the family should she fall into economic crisis. Following victimization, she described how she came out of the shock:

The second one affected me so much unlike the first because during the first victimization, I still had some money and so I quickly came out of the shock. But the second one, it was actually everything I was worth that was withdrawn. Getting out of it was not easy. I thank God for some friends. It affected my social plans, economic plans. Without money you cannot move about. I started looking up to my friends to assist me with N1,000 (\$6.25) and those who could afford more than that. It was not easy.

Not all victims have support networks that may bring them out of the shock occasioned by fraud. Another category of victims were males who did informal jobs with a view to getting some money to obtain their own accommodation to reflect both the attainment of maturity and foster a sense of independence. In Nigeria, more than 60% of the population is youthful with unemployment rising yearly. This perhaps explains why some men of marriageable age still live with their parents and remain dependent on them. They wait until the time they are able to secure a job and then they begin the process of living apart by saving enough money to get relevant but moderate accommodation of their own. With an apartment, they may begin the process of getting married. However, such a life goal may be shattered through victimization by ATM. A respondent explained how the dream of getting accommodation ended:

I had about N130,000 (\$812.5) in my account but close to N50,000 (\$312.5) was withdrawn by fraudsters. I wanted to get an apartment to rent my own house and leave my parents' house because I needed my privacy. Ever since then I have not been able to get an apartment.

Yet another victim said:

They withdrew my N200,000 (\$1250) naira which I was saving to rent an accommodation. I had sweated for so long to save the money and it was nearing the time the money was complete when the ATM robbers attacked me and withdrew the money. Due to this, I still live with my parents till date but I am hopeful that once I save enough I may be able to realize getting my personal accommodation in some months to come . . .

The narratives point to the seasonality of victimization. It indicates that electronic fraudsters targeted critical seasons of the year when people seem to be concerned about making extra money through investment in businesses and pay very little attention to security. Critical life events already targeted by participants made the fraud shock severe with psycho-social consequences on the victims. The implication of all the victims' narratives is that ATM fraud affects life chances of victims by altering their plans and life goals and delaying their fulfillment. Van Dijk and Kunst's (2010) study underlined the serious consequences of e-fraud on victims. They argued that such consequences go beyond economic shocks to the manifestation of signs of severe mental stress and

shattered assumptions. Other related studies (Deem, 2000; Pascoe et al., 2006; Office of Fair Trading, 2006) have shown that victims of fraud suffer great financial loss, anger, distress, anxiety and low self esteem. All these consequences undermine trust in the cashless policy.

The reaction of banks to episodes of fraud

The reactions of deposit money banks added to the pains of participants as a result of their fraud experiences. The reaction of their banks to the fraud episode was most unfavorable. All the victims reported incurring further expenses trying to see if their deposit money banks could find the culprits. In most cases, the camera footage was either non-existent due to system shut down at the time of the fraud, or when it was available, it was blurred with no apparent view of who the offender was. Victims were most anxious to know who defrauded them. For those whose victimization occurred via the machines of banks other than the one in which they held their account, the process was more tedious. It involved inter-bank networking and exchange of sensitive information. This mostly became delayed due to the fact that the requested information from the bank where the fraud occurred was not released. Information such as footage showing who made the withdrawal was mostly not released. Owing to promises of respite from their own banks, victims kept their hopes alive that a possible solution would be found. This, however, did not happen to the majority in most of the cases covered in this research. After incurring more expense in transporting themselves to their banks with no solution in sight, the victims decided to give up complaining that the blame of withdrawal was put on them by their banks. This neutralization technique of denial of responsibility by banks for episodes of fraud, we argue, has implications in relation to trust in the electronic payment system. A victim captured these views:

Sincerely I cannot say I am happy the way my bank handled the fraud issue. I actually thought my bank ought to have done more than what they did in that case. To them they were less concerned, it was not their money and they were less concerned. I think they should do more with investigation and this camera of a thing. What is the usefulness of the camera when it is actually supposed to cover the event that occurs and at the end the camera is black (blurred and blank), not covering the images. I think they are not doing well at all. They should do more in investigating fraud and customer complaints on ATM issues.

A female student who was victimized explained how the response of the bank complicated the pains of the fraud for her:

Ah! The way I felt that time? I felt so depressed. I felt like the whole world had come to an end because I started feeling that as a student how and where I will get N49,000. I felt unhappy and discouraged of using the bank. The whole thing stressed me. It took me about six to seven months to really survive the shock of the fraud. What even pained me was that the bank could not even show me how it occurred. The rest of the money was my personal savings and some money my friends asked me to keep for them.

Banks are supposed to provide support systems for their customers from being victimized through education about the usage of electronic payment machines. The strains defrauded customers face owing to their bank's inability to assist them engenders ill-feeling about the cashless policy.

I did not feel bad because I thought it was those errors that would be corrected. But when I called my account officer and he said I had no money in the account, I felt terrible. I was in second year of my study in the university. The money was for my school. I was keeping them for sustenance in school. I did some dirty jobs to save that much for a better life in school. I went to their headquarters several times. They told me to keep coming. I went there almost every Friday but the correspondent bank has not released any information to them. They were waiting for certain information but till tomorrow I could not get my money back. The bankers' reaction to me was unfair and I felt like one of the bankers might know what has happened because it might be one of the guys at the tellers that did those transactions. It may not be an outsider. It could be one of the fraudulent acts they do in the banks. They said they could not get the CCTV footage because it was from another bank. The money was not forthcoming after several repeat visitations to my bank. I was spending so much on transportation and I had to give it up.

Conclusion

As a form of electronic payment, studies have documented that new technologies have the potential to create opportunities for both legitimate and illegitimate transactions (Tade, 2013; Tade and Aliyu, 2011). While ATM remains one of the most patronized electronic payment platforms in Nigeria, it is laden with challenges, particularly fraud. However, very little has been done to understand how experiences of fraud affect the life chances of victims of ATM fraud.

To own ATM cards, bank customers have two options: by voluntary request and by coercion. At the inception of the cashless policy, banks adopted a radical approach which aimed at decongesting the banking halls by imposing charges on manual withdrawals. Such imposition compelled customers to obtain ATM cards. It also accounted for voluntary requests for ATM cards by bank customers. As a rational strategy, holders of ATM cards have unhindered access to their money thereby saving time. This is because ATMs are largely used for cash withdrawal, to check balances and to undertake other e-payment services. ATM card holders prefer to use the ATMs of their bank to those of other banks. This is to remove the bottlenecks associated with dispensing errors and fraud.

Infrastructural challenges have led to unresolved ATM fraud episodes. This relates to the failure of banks to show CCTV footage and resolve inter-bank transactions. Coincidentally, most frauds happened around points when a critical life goal for the victim was nearing fulfillment. Hence, victims had to defer life goals and targets to the future. While victims received no support from their own banks to recover from fraud, friends, family and colleagues provided this support. Arising from the findings, there is a need for the Central Bank of Nigeria and deposit money banks to enlighten the banking public on the use of ATMs and electronic cards, and ensure that the specific socio-demographic characteristics of the banking public are taken into consideration in designing policies. This will reduce fear of the electronic payment system, build confidence and engender financial inclusion. Policy makers and practitioners need to take on board the peculiarities of their markets and block loopholes which may threaten the embrace of the cashless policy by Nigerians.

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Note

1. It is pertinent to note that recent attempts at better macroeconomic management that arose as a consequence of dwindling global oil prices have in recent times led to the exchange rate sliding as far as N380 to \$1. We note, however, that the conversions in this paper are done using N160=\$1 in consonance with the position at the time the field work was undertaken.

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