



Get-Rich-Quick Syndrome and the Incidence of Human Rituals among South-West Nigerian Youths: A Sociological Analysis of Associated Factors

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Abstract. Weber's *Protestant Ethics and Spirit of Capitalism* represents the ethics, moral virtue and strict attitude toward hard work as a fundamental way of wealth creation. The Yorubas also extol ethics and moral virtue of hard work as means of making money to escape poverty. The study is explorative and dialectical, probing and opening up the reality of motivated human killings for money ritual among the Yoruba youths, in the course of struggle for survival and to escape poverty amidst limited economic opportunities, deprivation and inequality in wealth distribution. The study investigates the factors that could have influenced the inordinate desire of these youths to get rich quick and accumulate sudden wealth and riches. The study was carried out in Oshogbo. Accidental sampling method was employed to sample a cross section of respondents from the indigenous communities in Oshogbo. Three hundred and sixty (360) respondents were randomly selected and sampled with open and close-ended questionnaires. Out of this figure, three hundred and forty one (341) questionnaires properly filled and returned were analysed for the study. An in-depth unstructured interview (IDI) was also conducted with five other respondents in each of the indigenous communities. The study reveals that the present inordinate desperation of the youths to get-rich-quick is influenced by unemployment, online and Nollywood videos, peer influence, poor parenting and change in societal value system, economic deprivation and inequality in wealth distribution characterized by marginalization, limited opportunities and social exclusion of these youths perpetrating the criminal acts. Finally, the study recommends that society should exhibit zero tolerance to the get-rich-quick syndrome of these youths. The federal and States governments should create job opportunities for the youths. The youths should also be encouraged to engage in entrepreneurial skills acquisition ventures that will

provide them with means of earning income and wealth generation.

Keywords: Get-Rich-Quick, Human Rituals, South-West Nigeria, Youths, Associated Factor.

1. Introduction

Max Weber (1864-1920) wrote *The Protestant ethic and The Spirit of Capitalism* between 1903 and 1904 and published it as two separate essays in 1905 and 1906. While *The Protestant Ethic* stands as an independent study, Weber scholarly established the link between it and *The Spirit of Capitalism*, as how the development of Capitalism and the pursuit of wealth generation started in Western Europe (Haralambos, et al, 2013). The emphasis is that *The Spirit of Capitalism* represents the ethics, moral virtue and strict attitude toward hard work as a fundamental way of wealth generation (Morrison, 2006). Though *The Protestant Ethic and The Spirit of Capitalism* was viewed as classic because of its central assertion on strict attitude toward hard work in the pursuit of wealth generation, yet the essay was controversially criticised by historians and theologians who claimed that Weber's argument has unnecessarily exaggerated the protestants, especially the Calvinists religious conduct of strict attitude toward hard work in the pursuit of wealth generation as a factor that influenced the development of modern capitalism in Western Europe (Henslin, 2010).

Weber's work on *The Spirit of Capitalism* has variously received several scholarly applications to illustrate the objective need to make money and accumulate wealth through hard work, frugality, rationality and discipline. Scholarly opinions commonly agree that the very idea of *The Spirit of Capitalism* is based on capacity for hard work

because the ethics and moral virtue of hard work is indispensably found in the spirit of capitalism. But the general attitude of the present generation of youths in Nigeria, to make money and accumulate wealth without necessarily working hard or sweating for it has recorded a negative impact on work ethic among these youths. This is because the value which the present generation of youths in Nigeria seem to attach to a “Get-Rich-Quick,” mindset through cyber crime and the use of human blood or body parts for money ritual can be discerned in contemporary scholarly effort as a serious disconnect from the Weberian thesis. The argument is that poverty may have severed the connection between the Weberian thesis of the spirit of capitalism and development of the ethics and moral virtue of hard work. This can be corroborated by the present poverty situation that clearly manifests with the denial of opportunities, unemployment and inequality in wealth distribution.

The average Nigerian is a poor person. Nigeria is a rich country but majority of its inhabitants are poor because of inequality in wealth distribution (World Bank, 2020). This inequality in wealth distribution, unemployment especially among youths and corruption especially among politicians and public office holders, has increased the rate of poverty (Ucha, 2010). There are several effects associated with poverty in Nigeria. Some of such effects are high crime rates like cyber fraud, kidnapping, prostitution and motivated ritual killings for money making by the present generation of Nigerian youths. In Nigeria today, it seems that the easiest way to make money, get-rich-quick and accumulate wealth is to engage in criminal activities (Osinowo et al, 2019) especially through cyber crime or the use of human body parts for money ritual.

In Nigeria, the common social vices that are associated with social media and the internet among youths is the “get-rich-quick” syndrome or “how to make fast money”. The inordinate desire of these youths to “get- rich-quick” or “make fast money” is not peculiar to Nigeria because it is a globalized phenomenon, which has spread across the world via digital transformation (Ajao, 2022). In this digital age, digital skills such as social media content creation, programming, web designing, mobile app designing, video editing, online forex trading, online bitcoin trading, children cartoon designing, computer game creation, etc, are legitimate means of making fast money without necessarily pursuing education to university level (Ajao,2022). But the narrative seems quite different with Nigerian youths who may have been wrongly socialized into using their digital skills negatively for making quick money through

glamorized “Yahoo-Yahoo,” “Yahoo-Plus” and other cyber crimes connected with hacking of bank accounts.

Nothing is absolutely wrong with making money and accumulating wealth legitimately through hard-work to escape poverty; but to make money and accumulate wealth with little or no hard-work or not necessarily sweating for it, especially through cyber crime or the use of human body parts for ritual is what can be described as “get-rich-quick syndrome”. This is more prevalent among Nigerian youths, today. These youths are mostly into cyber crimes like advanced-fee-fraud otherwise known as 419, human trafficking, prostitution and motivated ritual killings for making money. These youths, mostly unemployed, want to drive posh cars, live in mansions in the choicest areas of town, hang-out with beautiful ladies and frivolously lavish money on betting, casinos and in club houses (Balogun and Oladipupo, 2013).

The use of human body parts for money rituals has been known for centuries in Africa. The practice has not totally relented despite the huge influence of Christianity and Islam. Especially, in recent times, Nigerian youths have developed and maintained a very deep syncretic link with the traditional African system, metaphysical forces, spiritism, rituals and indigenous epistemologies of acquiring sudden and unimaginable wealth and prosperity through motivated ritual killings (Adedayo, 2021). The link between motivated ritual killings or the use of human blood or body parts for money making or wealth generation, though cannot be scientifically explained, but the traditional African spiritual system believes that when the body parts of the victim of the motivated ritual killing is used for money ritual, the soul of the victim is sent on an errand in the supra-physical realm to engage in laborious work that will spiritually ‘generate or harvest’ sudden and unimaginable wealth and riches for the ritual killer (Adedayo, 2021). Metaphysically, this is possible because man is essentially a spirit being with a soul that lives in his physical body. This traditional African supra-spiritual system of wealth generation through the invisible world of spirits and forces by using human body parts or blood is based on metaphysics which is not only ‘unexplainable’ but ‘crude’. This same spiritual and occultic ritual basis for money making and wealth generation is also being used in the sustenance of cyber crimes. (Adedayo, 2021). This is why some Nigerian youths no longer value the ethical and moral virtue of hard work that could influence them to engage in serious work activities that will take them through laborious paths for wealth generation.

Apart from these youths, many Nigerian elites, including business men and women, politicians, artists, celebrities and socialites also engage in human rituals for money making, fame, power, electoral success and for protection. For example, in Lagos in 2017, the Nigeria Police arrested a member of a gang popularly known as “Badoo Boys”. The suspect confessed that the business men and women, celebrities, socialites, politicians and public office holders pay them as much as one hundred dollars (\$100) for stolen ladies pants, used menstruation pad and five thousand dollars (\$5000) for an handkerchief soaked with human blood of motivated ritual killing for protection, money making, fame and power (Obadare, 2022). The ritual killers perpetrate the evil by killing their victims and collecting their blood or removing vital organs (especially the reproductive sexual organs, eyes, heart, breasts, head, tongue, toes and fingers) from the victim for rituals. Some however prefer to use their own sperm or inflict themselves with occult ulceric sore as a form of indigenous epistemology for acquiring sudden and unimaginable wealth. The belief is that the invisible metaphysical world of spirits and forces holds the key to wealth, riches, prosperity power and fame and this can only be achieved by using human blood or body parts for the ritual. The belief in the existence, influence and efficacies of the invisible metaphysical world of spirit and forces as a way of making money, riches, prosperity, fame and power only confirms the myths about man’s relationship with the metaphysical and spiritual world. Yet, this traditional African system, rituals and indigenous epistemologies of acquiring sudden and unimaginable wealth and prosperity do, however, not endure for long because evidence has shown that it attracts serious repercussions such as sudden calamities befalling the wealth or sudden ailment or death of the ritual killer. Also, sometimes, the children of the ritual killer could be spiritually doomed to pay with miserable life, mysterious death or mental illness (Adedayo, 2021).

In the Yoruba socio-ethical thought, the ethics and moral virtue of hard-work are extolled as a means of making money and as a condition through which survival could be achieved and escape poverty (Balogun and Oladipupo, 2013). While the moral virtue of hard-work is given an important priority in the fight against poverty, of course, the Yorubas are also aware that inequality in wealth distribution, unemployment and the unnecessary flaunting of wealth by the haves and the associated frustrations that come with all these, could drive one to engage in crimes of stealing or money ritual (Balogun and Oladipupo, 2013).

Over and above these, however, the use of human blood or body parts for money rituals has been known for centuries in Africa, and the practice has since continued despite the huge influence of Christianity and Islam. More pathetic is that recently, motivated killing for money rituals has almost become a permanent feature in our daily news and social media. A worrisome issue about the increasing cases of these motivated killings for money ritual is that no part of the country can be excluded from this horrified menace. This among other issues, have provoked the interest of this paper to pedagogically offer a scholarly contribution to this contemporary sociological discourse of traditional African spiritual system of wealth generation through the invisible metaphysical and spiritual world of forces and spirits by using human blood or body parts. To do this, the study shall attempt a critical analysis of the incidence of get-rich-quick syndrome among youths in indigenous Yoruba town of Osogbo, in South-west Nigeria and especially, to explore the seeming factors that could have influenced the inordinate desire of these youths to get rich quick and accumulate sudden and unimaginable wealth and riches through the use of human blood or body parts. Following this, this paper shall attempt to unveil and stimulate the study with some of the newspaper reported cases of motivated ritual killings in south-west Nigeria. We shall also provide a body of sociological theories as a framework to evaluate the crime of motivated human ritual killings. Above all, the study shall test a hypothesis to show that **Ho Null Hypothesis** that the African Magic/Yoruba Nollywood and online videos/films is not significantly associated with the incidence and involvement of youths in motivated killing for money rituals in Osogbo.

2. Theoretical Framework

Since the industrial revolution of the eighteenth century, sociologists have vigorously developed a body of empirical studies that spurred the structural application of several theories to explain the phenomenon of crime, criminal behaviour and deviance. The intellectual crystallization of the novel theoretical perspectives of these theories of crime is very complex. This is because none of these theories is sufficient enough to singularly explain the totality of the phenomenon of crime. This is so because each of these theories provides different perspectives on the issue of crime. While one theory may explain the cause of crime; others may be explaining the prevalence of crime. Yet, the general consensus of these theories is that the basis of social order is when the norms, ethics, moral virtues and value system of the society is collectively shared and conformed with.

But when these norms, ethics, moral virtues and value system are broken by an individual, that individual is a deviant and has committed a crime. Crime is one of the most ambiguous concepts in sociology and related fields. Yet, crime can be defined as an act of omission or commission punishable by law or which the state has set a penalty for. Thus, making money is not a crime, but the act of making quick money only becomes a crime when an individual does not conform to the societal ethics and moral virtues of hard work to making such money, or when the individual breaks the institutional rules or uses an illegal means in making such money. When the rules defining the institutional and legitimate means of making money are thus broken, the result is a situation called “the state of anomie”.

Max Weber (1864-1920) opines that natural science cannot adequately address or explain the phenomenon of crime and what predisposes an individual to engage in crime. That human beings do not merely commit crime because they have consciousness, reasoning, interpretive meaning and value judgment. They define situation and give meaning to external stimuli that impinge on their mental reasoning. Over time, Weber’s ideological view became a theoretical justification for the pursuit of a distinctive theory of social action among sociologists who are interested in the basis of social order. Therefore, the sociological explanation of the ‘get-rich-quick’ syndrome among south-west Nigerian youths is such that these youths engage in internet crimes such as hacking of bank accounts, and also human trafficking, pornography, prostitution and ritual killings, because of the subjective meaning and interpretive understanding of the youths concerning deceptive social media posts, information, messages, videos and photographs that impinge on their mental reasoning. This is reasonably what spurs the youths to engage in crime to make quick money by any means especially through human ritual killings.

On the other hand, acts such as internet fraud, which involves hacking bank accounts as well as, human trafficking, pornography, prostitution and ritual killings to make ‘quick money’ are defined as “crime” by the society because the societal norm, moral virtue and value system connected with the ethics and virtues of working hard is broken by some Yoruba youths through their wrong socialization and exposure to internet social networking sites that post deceptive information that are capable of misleading them.

Demonology is one of the earliest theories of the sociology of crime and deviant behavior. It states that

crime perpetrators like those Yoruba youths engaging in the act of internet fraud pornography, prostitution and ritual killing to make quick money, are strongly influenced by unseen supernatural or demonic forces. That crime generally cannot be committed without the perpetrator being under Satanic or demonic influence. The core assumption and application of demonological explanation of the phenomenon of crime was based on religious belief that people commit crime under Satanic or demonic influence. The theorists posit further that “God created man free from criminal tendencies but Satan entered into man and caused him to commit crime. Though demonology is one of the earliest theories of crime and deviant behavior, yet its explanation came to be seen as rather unscientific and merely a product of imagination, speculation and superstition, well crafted with the creative mind of religion. In spite of this however, demonological theory still cannot be considered as totally irrelevant because in many parts of the world today, people still believe in the supernatural forces of Satan to explain reasons for engaging in crime.

Other theoretical perspectives of sociology that may explain the phenomenon of crime and what predisposes individuals to engage in crime include functionalist, internationalist and Marxist theories. The **functionalist perspective** argues that crime is an inevitable part of society, and it has a positive function essentially because it suggests that something has gone wrong in the society. Emile Durkheim, a prominent member of this school of thought argues the presence and inevitability of crime in all aspects of social life. That crime is an integral part of all healthy societies. It is inevitable because not every member of the society can be equally committed to the norms, moral ethics and value system of society. This is because individuals are exposed to different influences and circumstances. As such, they may not all be equally committed to conforming to the norms, moral ethics and value system of the society. Durkheim argues further that the function of punishment is not to stop crime but rather to maintain the strength in the collective bond expressed in the shared norms, moral ethics and value system of society. This view was taken up and developed by Robert K. Merton (1910-2003), another notable member of the school of thought.

According to Robert Merton, society creates crime by setting cultural goals and institutionalized means of achieving these goals through value consensus which all members of the society share in common. Merton argues further that by this, society creates five modes of behavior namely: conformity, innovation,

ritualism, retreatism and rebellion. Conformity occurs when people accept both the cultural goals and institutionalized means through value consensus of achieving the goals. Such behaviour forms the bedrock of social order. At the other extreme, rebellion occurs when people accept the cultural goals but reject the institutionalized means of achieving the goals. Like Durkheim, Merton concludes that society itself creates the phenomenon of crime and deviance because since people are placed on different social strata by social class and life chances, to realize the cultural goals through the shared norms, moral ethics, virtues and value consensus of the society, there is the propensity for some people to reject the institutionalized rules of the game and strive to achieve the goal of making money and escaping poverty by other alternative and 'illegitimate' means of crime such as through cyber crime and human ritual. When the rules defining the legitimate means of achieving success are thus broken, the result is a situation which Merton calls 'state of anomie'.

The interactionist perspective explains the aspect of crime which has been largely ignored by the functionalist school of thought. The interactionist perspective focuses on the interaction between the potential criminal and the agencies of social control which define him or her as 'criminal'. The interactionist perspective also examines the importance and meaning which the various actors bring into how and why certain individuals are defined as 'criminals' and the effects of such definition upon their future actions. That the definition of crime is negotiated and formed in the interactions between the "criminal" and the agencies of social control. Thus, the criminality of an act is not necessarily derived from the content of the act but the way people define and react to it. This view was further developed by the labeling theory of the American sociologist, Howard Becker. Becker's labeling theory provides a clear illustration of the phenomenon of crime, crime behavior and how people become criminal.

The labeling theory argues that the society is the creator of crime and it does so by identifying certain act as crime and thus creating a situation for the act to be committed yet society turns round to label those who commit these acts as 'criminals'. That being 'criminal' is a social construct even though their criminal behaviour reveals a fundamental truth about who they really are. Criminals only become criminals when society perceives and defines them as "criminals". Society creates "criminals" by placing recognition on conformity to institutional

rule as an ideal and accepted choice of behavior of which any infraction is crime. The criminal is therefore one to whom the label has successfully been applied. A label thus defines 'criminal' as particular kinds of persons.

Once labeled, this label becomes an essential part of their identity. This label is an evaluation of their 'persons' and people relate to them based on their labeled identity. Thus the labeled individuals typically find themselves isolated and rejected by people. This prejudice, pushes this stigmatized individual toward other people that are also similarly criminally labeled. Following this, a subculture is formed. The individuals now participate in the subculture as a way of coping with the frustrations arising from the discrimination, rejection and isolation. They find emotional support and acceptance from their peers within the subculture. This subculture then provides the necessary beliefs, values and confidence to rationalize, justify and support their criminal identity because they have been so publicly labeled. However, since individual concept is largely derived from the response of others, criminals tend to see themselves in terms of this label. This in turn produces what Howard Becker calls "self-fulfilling prophesy". However, **Emile Durkheim (1858-1917)** work on deviant behaviour also provides a good illustration of the phenomenon of crime. Durkheim sees criminals as deviants that are 'inevitable' because not every member of the society will be equally committed to the collective sentiments, rules, moral and ethical value of the society.

The **Marxist perspective** sees the prevalence of crime from the material basis of society. That capitalism is characterized notably by inequality in wealth and power distribution between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, and that this inequality is the root cause of crime. The Marxist sees power as largely being held by those who own and control the means of production (the Bourgeoisie who constitute the ruling class). That the capitalist society reflects the relationship between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, and the definition of crime in general essentially reflects and serves the interests of the ruling class. According to Marxists, laws are not expressions of value consensus but rather a reflection of ruling class ideology and the general commitment to law on the part of members of the society as a whole is an aspect of false class consciousness. A sociologist like Livingston worked on this ideological framework and adopted the concept of 'underclass'. According to him, the 'underclass' is similar to Marx's concept of

proletariat. That the underclass experiences material deprivation, inequality, marginalization and social exclusion. His argument is that underclass criminality is the consequence of material deprivation, inequality, marginalization and social exclusion. That is to say, because of material deprivation, unequal access to opportunity, marginalization and social exclusion, there is a greater pressure on the underclass within the social structure to deviate and commit crime.

So far, the theory of crime is not a single and all restricted theory. It has several ideological perspectives that allow wide applications to capture acts such as cyber crimes, human trafficking, pornography, prostitution and ritual killings as crime; immoral and as something strongly disapproved of or which the society finds impossible to tolerate. Since the beginning of the decline of oil boom in Nigeria in the 1980s and '90s and the global economic crunch in the early 2000s, the attendant struggle for survival by Nigerian youths has found vent in crimes like cyber crimes, advanced fee fraud (popularly called 419), prostitution, human trafficking, ritual killings, drug and arms dealings, among others. These crimes are a spontaneous phenomenon and a product of the capitalist culture in Nigeria, characterized by existence of exploitation and denial, reinforced by poverty, inequality, marginalization, limited opportunities or life chances, unemployment and social exclusion of the youth perpetrating the criminal acts. In Nigeria, a great importance is attached to success and making money now-a-days but relatively little importance is paid to how the wealth is made. This situation provides a huge tendency to reject the norms, ethics and moral virtue to work hard to make money and wealth legitimately. In Africa, societal norms, ethics and moral virtue of working hard to make money and wealth are the important part of the socialization process that individuals are exposed to and society frowns strongly at any form of rejection of these norms, ethics and moral virtues.

3. Research Methodology

The study was carried out in the indigenous Yoruba town of Oshogbo in south-west Nigeria. Osogbo is the capital of Osun State, Nigeria. Nigeria has three major tribal groups, the Yorubas, Hausas and Igbos. The Yorubas are prominently found in the South-Western geo-political zone, comprising Osun, Oyo, Ogun, Ondo, Ekiti and Lagos States. They are also found in large parts of Kwara and Kogi states in the North-Central geo-political zone of Nigeria. Apart from Nigeria, the Yoruba people also spread across to

some neighbouring West African countries like the Republic of Benin and Togo. Yorubas in the Diaspora are also found in South America, particularly Brazil, and some Caribbean countries like Cuba, Haiti and Dominican Republic (Johnson 2009). The Yoruba people have unique peculiarities in history, traditional belief system, myths, culture, norms, values, moral virtues, taboos and superstitions everywhere they are found.

This study is basically an opinion study. Since the link between motivated ritual killings or the use of human blood or body parts to generate sudden and unimaginable wealth may sound rather strange and as myth or figment of imagination well crafted within speculations and superstitious beliefs, which cannot be scientifically explained or empirically proven, efforts are made in this study to concentrate on the societal opinion and interpretative understanding of the factors seemingly responsible for the inordinate desire of the present generation of youths in Osogbo to get rich quick and accumulate sudden and unimaginable wealth through money rituals. Hence, the opinions of the sampled respondents who are not perpetrators of ritual killing are taken as the societal interpretative understanding of the factor deemed responsible for this get-rich-quick syndrome among the youths. The study was carried out in Osogbo. Osogbo shares boundaries with other indigenous Yoruba towns like Ifon, Ede, Ikirun, Ibokun and Ilesha. Osogbo is an indigenous Yoruba town with the following indigenous communities: Ooke-Bale, Isale-Osun, Balogun-Agoro, Ooke-Oniti, Ita-Olokan, Igbonna, Alekuwodo, Oloba-Ile, Ooke-Fiaa, Igbonna-Alaye, Idi-Sheke, Gba-Eemu, and Oluode.

Primary and secondary sources of data were employed for this study. While the primary data was sourced through survey conducted with the aid of questionnaire administered on a cross section of respondents, secondary sources of our data include newspapers reports, online posts and Yoruba home videos/films. Yoruba home videos/films were used as a secondary source of information because three out of every five randomly picked Yoruba home video/films on money rituals, power and fame has major or sub-themes related to indigenous ritual sacrifices, ceremonies, spells, incantations and rites (though are mere fiction) that demonstrate vividly how the indigenous epistemologies and metaphysical world of the invisible forces and spirits are invoked and placated with human blood or body parts to produce sudden and unimaginable wealth, and for the purpose of acquiring power and fame.

Accidental sampling method was employed to survey a cross section of respondents from the indigenous communities in Oshogbo. The questionnaire used for the study was drawn to probe into present desperation of youths to get-rich-quick. In all, three hundred and sixty (360) respondents were randomly selected and sampled with open and close-ended questionnaires. From this figure, three hundred and forty one (341) representing 94.7% of the questionnaires properly filled and returned were analysed for the study. An in-depth unstructured interview (IDI) was also conducted with five other respondents in each of the communities. The IDI participants' consent was sought and they were duly informed about the objectives of the study and their rights to quit or withdraw their participation at any time. Also, they were assured of their privacy of identity and confidentiality of the information shared with the researchers. These sets of respondents were not part of those sampled with questionnaires. The in-depth unstructured interview (IDI) questions were not arranged as a fixed questionnaire. Answers to the questions were also gently probed, only where necessary, to give respondents a moment to reflect and gather their thoughts for clearer responses and information. Above all, the data gathered was analysed with inferential and descriptive statistics presented in frequency tables with the aid of statistical package of the social sciences (SPSS).

4. Results and Discussion

Some Newspapers Reported Cases of Motivated Human Killings for Money Rituals Perpetrated by Youths in South-West Nigeria.

Official statistics on motivated human killings for money rituals in Nigeria is very scanty and inconsistent because such cases are generally underreported. A worrisome issue about the increasing cases of this menace however is the nature of the desperation of South-West Nigerian youths to get-rich-quick through violent ritual killings as reported in the newspapers and social media. Some decades back, matters of ritual killings and the quest to get-rich-quick by what-ever-means were restricted to the older generation, but in recent years, cases of youth involvement have been on a sharp increase. These desperate youths go the extra mile to achieve their aim, while their targets include their siblings, parents, friends, lovers and strangers especially, people with hunch back and albinos.

For example, The Guardian Newspaper of Monday, February 21, 2022 reported that one Afeez Olalere, 32 year old, a suspected internet fraud-star confessed

to killing his own younger brother for money ritual after he was arrested during a stop-and-search by operatives of the Lagos State Police Command, along Itamaga-Ikorodu, in Lagos State. Upon interrogation, he reportedly confessed that he was encouraged by his mother to sacrifice his younger brother to make money to end the family poverty situation. Timothy Odeniyi, 35 years old was reportedly arrested by men of the Amotekun Corps in Ondo State, and allegedly confessed to harvesting human body parts from burial ground for money ritual. A necrophilic mortuary attendant, Asimiyu Amuda 43, was caught having sex with a female corpse for money ritual at Ifo, before he was arrested by men of the Ogun State Police Command. Another 27 years old bricklayer, Olamide Odulaja connived with a 29 year old native doctor named Ifajuyi to kill one Modupeola Folorunsho and her four year old son for money ritual at Ijebu-Igbo, before they were arrested by men of the Ogun State Police Command. Also, 29 year old Ismail Wasiu in collaboration with Shittu Mutairu, having failed in his earlier bid, using a dry human skull in his quest to be rich at-all-cost, opted for the fresh skull of his ex-lover, Mujidat for money ritual in Ogun State. A hunter, Oladipupo Lekan acceded to the request of a friend to get human body parts for money ritual but was arrested alongside Sulaimon Aremu, Akanji Moruf and Adekunle Tajudeen over the murder and dismemberment of one Sunday Okosun. A 50 year old man Moruf Ganiyu was arrested by detectives from Mapo Divisional Police Headquarters, Ibadan, Oyo State, with a human head severed from the exhumed body of a buried woman. Two brothers, Monsuru Tajudeen, 37 and Lawal Tajudeen, 32 were arrested in Iwo, Osun state in connection with operating a ritualist den where innocent people are gruesomely murdered and their body parts and organs severed for sale. A 45 year old cleric, Philips Segun, pastoring the Cherubim and Seraphim Church, Solution Chapel, Ikoyi-Ile, Osun State, was arrested and charged to court with a 49 year old woman, Bola Adeeko and her 26 year old son, Owolabi Adeeko, for allegedly killing one Favour, a 400 level student of Lagos State University with her body parts severed. One Ramon Adedoyin, 45 year old and owner of Hilton Hotel, Ile-Ife, Osun State, was arranged before the Osogbo High court alongside six others for conspiring and allegedly murdering one Timothy Adegoke, an Executive MBA student of the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-ife who lodged at the Hilton Hotel. And also, the murder of 17 year old Sofiat Kehinde who was lured by her 18 year old boyfriend, Soliu Majekodunmi to his house in Abeokuta where she was murdered by her lover and his friend, 19 year old Mustakeem Balogun. Her head

was severed and burnt for money ritual (The Guardian Newspaper, Friday, March 4, 2022).

We adopted a purposive sampling method that focused the youths as our sampling audience because a random view of age of overwhelming majority of the above newspapers reported youths that were involved in ritual killings, shows that they are between 18-45years. This age bracket obviously suggests an economic active age at which moral ethics and virtue of hard work is expected to be indispensably found for serious work activities that will take the youths through laborious paths for wealth generation. Yet, limited economic opportunities, deprivation, social exclusion and

unemployment reinforced by poverty and changes in societal value, especially when society begins to honour wealth, money and fame regardless of how they are made, this may have forced majority of these youths into perpetrating the criminal acts as a way to escape the agony of poverty.

The composition of data in Table 1 shows that the respondents are basically youths within the economic active age group of 20-45 years. In the study, profound majority (26.7%) of the respondents are within the age bracket of 26-30 years, 31-35 years (23.2%), 36-40 years (19.1%), 41-45years (10.0%), 21-25years (8.5%) and <20 years (2.6%).

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents Based on Personal Characteristics

AGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
<20	09	2.6
21-25	63	8.5
26-30	91	26.7
31-35	79	23.2
36-40	65	19.1
41-45	34	10.0
TOTAL:	341	100.0%
<u>GENDER</u>		
MALE	223	65.4
FEMALE	118	34.6
TOTAL:	341	100.0%
<u>EDUCATION</u>		
No formal education	83	24.3
Primary	101	29.6
Secondary	131	38.4
Tertiary	26	7.6
TOTAL	341	100.0%

On the other hand, a significant percentage of our respondents (65.4%) are male while (34.6%) are female. The significance of involving women in our sample coverage is that women are also fond engaging in money rituals. Above all, the study revealed that 24.3% of respondents had no formal education while 29.6%, 38.4% and 7.6% had primary, secondary and tertiary education respectively.

Incidence of Money Rituals among Youths in Osogbo.

The composition of data in Table 2 shows significant percentage (82.7%) of respondents confirming incidence of involvement of youths in money rituals in Osogbo while (17.3%) did not agree to ever

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents Based on Confirmation of Incidence of Money Rituals among Youths in Osogbo

INCIDENCE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
Yes	282	82.7
NO	59	17.3
TOTAL:	341	100.0%

Knowing or hearing about any incident of money ritual among youths in Osogbo. This finding seems to confirm the narrative of the attitude of the present generation of youths in south-west Nigeria, to get-rich-quick and make sudden and unimaginable

wealth, through money ritual instead of engaging in moral and ethical activities of hard-work. The Yorubas extol the moral and ethical virtue of hard-work as means of escaping poverty and keeping the

good name of the family (Balogun and Oladipupo, 2013).

However, the result of the IDI conducted reveal that apart from money rituals involving the use of human blood or body parts, there are other lesser forms of money rituals such as “Anobo” (money laced with charm that returns to the spender with other monies it touches or comes into contact with after being spent); “Awure asiri-bibo” (charms for easy access or flow of money); “Awure oja-tita” (charms for making bumper sales); “Aajo lilo-aisiki” (ritual involving the use of human destiny); and “Eyonu agba” (benevolence favour of powers). Olufadekemi (2014) confirms that some of these lesser money rituals may initially involve the use of animal blood and sacrifices to appease the metaphysical, zodiac spiritual forces but when the potency of the money ritual starts to reduce or stops yielding money as expected, the invisible forces when consulted by “Ifa” priest locally known as “Babalawo,” could demand that the money ritual be renewed and placated with human blood or body parts, spells, incantations, ceremonies, ritual sacrifices and rites.

Especially in the case of “Aajo lilo-aisiki” (ritual involving the use of human destiny), the Yoruba “Ifa” divinity explanation of metaphysical and spiritual forces connected with human destiny may have apparently given rise to the belief that inspires the use of human destiny for money ritual. The belief is that these unseen forces connected with human destiny can be induced with spells, incantations, rites and ritual sacrifices to spiritually harness and dispense the volume of material well-being, fortune and prosperity of another person’s destiny for sudden and unimaginable wealth to the ritualist. When this is achieved, the life of this other person whose destiny is used will be so miserable and will be mysteriously pauperized. Man is essentially a spirit being with destiny metaphysically connected to zodiac forces, which determines and influences the fulfillment, well-being, wealth, prosperity and happiness of man on earth. The metaphysical and zodiac forces connected with human destiny have a hidden fact about the volume of material well-being, wealth and prosperity deposited in an individual’s destiny (Enaikele and Adeleke, 2018) and it is only Ifa divinity that can reveal the secret. The quantum of material well-being and fortune in people’s destiny differs from one person to another. So, those who engage in “Aajo lilo-aisiki” (the use of human destiny) don’t just use anybody, they inquire first from Ifa divinity about the volume of material well-

being, wealth, prosperity and happiness deposited in the destiny of the individual they want to use.

The sociological understanding of the link and how the supernatural forces provide sudden and unimaginable wealth and material well-being could only be explained as myth showing the relationship between man and the supernatural forces. So also, the ritual sacrifices, rites, ceremonies, incantations and spells of money rituals are symbolic ways of communicating, appeasing and appealing to the metaphysical, supernatural, and zodiac forces to influence the speedy benevolence of unimaginable wealth, fortune and prosperity for the money ritualist. Above all, this is a component part of the people’s cultural belief system, heritage and alternative means by which they could ultimately appease and influence the supernatural forces for the purpose of attaining luck, power, fame protection, material well-being and fulfillment in order to escape the pains and agony of poverty and failure in life.

Associated Factors Responsible for Youths Involvement in Money Rituals.

The Yoruba indigenous films otherwise known as the Yoruba Nollywood home videos, were used as a secondary source of information for this study. An assessment of Yoruba home videos/films shows that three out of every five randomly picked Yoruba video/films with major or sub-themes related to money ritual, power and fame seems to commonly demonstrate (though mere fiction) how the indigenous invisible forces and powers are invoked and placated with human blood or body parts and spiritual ceremonies, spells, incantations, sacrifices, rites and rituals to produce sudden and unimaginable wealth and for the purpose of acquiring power and fame.

The composition of data in Table 3 shows significant percentage (68.3%) of respondents’ opinion stating that Yoruba home videos/films have principally influenced the involvement of youths in cases of money rituals, while just about (31.7%) stated that the Yoruba home videos/films have not in any way influenced the involvement of youths in cases of money rituals.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents Based on Opinion that Online/Social Media and Yoruba Home Video/Film is the Major Factor that Influenced the Youths Involvement in Money Rituals.

YORUBA HOME VIDEO	FREQUECNY	PERCENTAGE (%)
YES	233	68.3
NO	108	31.7
TOTAL:	341	100.0%

On the other hand, the IDI conducted reveal that the present inordinate desperation of youths to get- rich-quick and escape poverty through money rituals is influenced by several factors, which include unemployment, peer influence, poor parenting, changes in societal value, especially when society begins to honour wealth, money and fame regardless of how they are made and the influence of social media and African Magic/Nollywood Yoruba Videos/films. Others include the inefficiency of Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) social media/film censors board and weak enforcement of criminal laws. Interestingly also, the Ifa priests locally known as “Babalawo” who offer metaphysical services to the desperate youths in their search for quick wealth, and church pastors who preach financial break through without hard work, as well as Imams who indirectly encourage laziness among the youths are also partly to blame

Test of Hypothesis

The **Ho Null Hypothesis** that the African Magic/Yoruba Nollywood and online videos/films is not significantly associated with the incidence of involvement of youths in money rituals in Osogbo is tested with Pearson Chi-square with the aid of statistical package of the social sciences (SPSS) and the result is as shown on the tables below:

Table 4: Chi-Square Tables Testing Significant Association Between Yoruba/ African Magic and Online Videos/Films and Incidence of Involvement of Youths in Money Rituals in Osogbo.

VIDVIDEOS/ FILMS * INCIDENCE* Cross tabulation

Videos/Films	INCIDENCE		Total
	yES	no	
YES	185	49	233
NO	97	10	108
Total	282	59	341

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.980 ^a	1	.008		
Continuity Correction ^b	6.189	1	.013		
Likelihood Ratio	7.649	1	.006		
sFisher's Exact Test				.008	.005
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.960	1	.008		
N of Valid Cases	341				

0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 18.57.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

$X^2 = 6.980, Df = 1, P = 0.008$

Since the probability value of 0.008 is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the Null hypothesis (Ho), which states that Yoruba/African Magic and online videos/films are not significantly associated with the incidence and involvement of youths in money rituals is rejected while the alternative hypothesis (H1) which states that Yoruba/African Magic and online videos/films are significantly associated with the incidence and involvement of youths in motivated killing for money rituals is accepted. Or put differently, there is a significant association between the Yoruba/African Magic and online videos/films and incidence of involvement of youths in money ritual in Osogbo. The implication of this finding is

that social media musicals and Yoruba/African Magic and Nollywood videos/films have done enormous damage to the psyche and well-being of the youths because these are platforms where the gullible youths are exposed to different sorts of immorality and criminality. Especially, the Yoruba Nollywood video/films on money rituals, power and fame are known to frequently demonstrate how the metaphysical, supernatural and zodiac world of the invisible forces and spirits are invoked and placated with ritual sacrifices, ceremonies, spells, incantations, human blood or body parts (though mere fiction) to produce sudden and unimaginable wealth, fortune and prosperity.

On the other hand, there is a probable reason to think that the social media musicals and Nollywood Yoruba videos/films did not principally influenced the involvement of youths in cases of money rituals because ritual killings in Nigeria predated these online and Nollywood videos/films. Consequently, ritual killings for money making could rather be seen in the broader context of economic/opportunities deprivation and inequality in wealth distribution characterized by existence of exploitation and denial, reinforced by poverty, inequality, marginalization, limited life chances, unemployment and social exclusion of majority of these youths perpetrating the criminal acts.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

The use of human body parts for money rituals has been known for centuries in Africa. But the practice has not totally relented despite the huge influence of Christianity and Islam. In recent time, the rate at which the crime is perpetrated by youths in the south west of Nigeria is remarkably worrisome because there is never a time in the past that the quest to get rich quick at all costs has been this alarming. Though the idea that human blood, body parts or destiny can be used for money ritual to get-rich-quickly may sound strange and as myth or figments of imagination that cannot be proven scientifically, yet the phenomenon is very real because the metaphysical, supernatural and spiritual zodiac forces and spirits are invoked and placated with human blood or body parts, spells, incantations, ceremonies, ritual sacrifices and rites that later spiritually produce sudden and unimaginable wealth and riches for the ritualist.

Even though ethics and moral virtue of hard-work are extolled among the Yorubas of south west Nigeria as a means of making money, the youths now mostly engage in cyber crimes and motivated ritual killings, for the purpose of accumulating sudden and unimaginable wealth, rather than in moral and ethical activities of hard-work through laborious paths for wealth making and keeping the good name of the family. These youths perpetrate the crime of killing their victims and collecting the blood or removing vital organs from their victims for ritual purpose. Some however prefer to use their own sperm or inflict themselves with occult ulceric sores as a form of indigenous epistemology for acquiring sudden and unimaginable wealth.

Other forms of money rituals that the youths engage in include “Anobo” (money laced with charm that returns to the spender with other monies it comes into

contact with after being spent); “Awure asiri-bibo” (charms for easy access or flow of money); “Awure oja-tita” (charms for making bumper sales); “Aajo lilo-aisiki” (ritual involving the use of human destiny); and “Eyonu agba” (benevolence favour of powers). Some of these money rituals may initially involve the use of animal blood and sacrifice to appease the metaphysical supernatural and spiritual forces but when the potency of the money ritual starts to reduce or stops yielding money as expected, the invisible metaphysical, supernatural and spiritual forces when consulted by “Ifa” priest locally known as “Babalawo,” could demand that the money ritual be renewed and placated with human blood or body parts and various spiritual ceremonies.

The test of hypothesis shows that there is a significant association between the Yoruba/African Magic and online videos/films and incidence of involvement of youths in money ritual in Osogbo. Yet, what could have principally influenced the involvement of youths in cases of ritual killings for money making could be seen also in the broader context of economic deprivation and inequality in wealth distribution characterized by existence of exploitation and denial of opportunity reinforced by poverty, inequality, marginalization, limited life chances, unemployment and social exclusion of these youths perpetrating the criminal acts.

The present inordinate desperation of youths in south west Nigeria to get- rich-quick and escape poverty through money rituals is also influenced by such factors as peer influence, poor parenting, and changes in societal values. Others include the inefficiency of Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) social media/film censors board and weak enforcement of criminal laws. The Ifa priests (Babalawo) who provide spiritual services for the desperate youths are themselves not totally blameless, just as the pastors who preach prosperity without hard work, or the Imams who encourage laziness on the alter of faith.

Following this, fighting against the get- rich-quick syndrome among the youths is all encompassing. Law enforcement agencies like the Nigeria Police Force (NPF), the courts, parents, Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC), Social Media/Film Censors Board and members of the public are all expected to play different but critical roles in the war. In a nutshell, society should exhibit zero tolerance to the get- rich-quick syndrome of these youths engaging in various cyber crimes and money rituals. Governments should create job opportunities for the youths, who in turn should also be motivated to acquire necessary entrepreneurial for

employability. News media should promote public awareness of these crimes and collaborate with the National Orientation Agency (NOA) to work on reorientation of the youths against crime. Parents should instill necessary moral discipline and ethics on their children. Civil Society Organisations and schools can also do much in advocacy and sensitization of the general public on the danger of get-rich-quick syndrome of these youths. The Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) Social Media/Film Censors Board should be stricter with its censorship policies. Pastors and Imams should emphasize more on the sacredness of human life and the essence of hard work. Above all, government and the courts should show more political and legal will with prompt prosecution of anyone engaging in various cyber crimes and motivated ritual killings to serve as deterrent.

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