



POVERTY AS A PROPENSITY TO ADOLESCENTS' PRONESS TO GET-RICH-QUICK SYNDROME IN LAGOS STATE: COUNSELLING FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION

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Abstract

Global socio-economic challenges appear to be accentuating social issue such as fraud, drug abuse, insecurity and poverty. These anti-social behaviours have tendency to lure unsuspecting adolescents to irrational desire to make money at all cost. This study therefore investigated poverty as a propensity to adolescents' proness to get rich quick syndrome: counselling for poverty alleviation. The study adopted descriptive survey design with two research questions and three hypotheses. The sample consisted of 274 adolescents randomly selected from seven secondary schools in Lagos State. A 30-item questionnaire titled "Poverty and Adolescents' Proness to Get-Rich-Quick-Syndrome Inventory (PAPGRQSI)" with three sections was used for data collection. Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.92. Data analysis was carried out using percentages, t-test and ANOVA. The first hypothesis was rejected while the second and third hypotheses were not rejected. Results showed that poverty is a strong propensity to adolescents' proness to get-rich-quick-syndrome among participants. Results also revealed that adolescents' proness to this syndrome is neither gender, nor age-based. Therefore, there is need for effective counselling for poverty alleviation. Family should provide for the basic needs of their children while government at all levels should be committed to eradication of poverty.

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Introduction

On a daily basis, the global community is witnessing diverse social challenges of different magnitudes occasioned by covid-19 pandemic, unfriendly climate change, insecurity, economic woes as well as excruciating poverty. While these social issues, and the associated challenges are global phenomenon, they appear noticeably ubiquitous and on the rise in Nigeria. Societies without strong social controls against delinquent behaviors and involvement to protect youths from anti-social behaviors, can lead to their involvement in unethical activities such as kidnapping, yahoo-yahoo, yahoo plus, credit cards and internet robbery and theft, drug abuse, armed robbery, cheating and exam malpractice, cultism, prostitution, militancy, to get money and escape perceived poverty. It is very worrisome that society now overtly or covertly encourages some of these “get rich quick” mentality ((Klenert, Funke, et al, 2020; Ogra, 2022).

Get-rich-quick-syndrome is an attitude that involves acquisition of large sums of money quickly and unexpectedly through unwholesome activities which are alien to the society (Dizik, 2020). It is an irrational, excessive and inordinate desire to acquire money and riches overnight. It is an unbridled quest for wealth due to desire for recognition with activities such as ritual killing, internet fraud, human rituals, baby factories, armed robbery, kidnapping, prostitution among others. It is a negative behaviour with several severe and dangerous consequences Ajide (2018). It makes individuals seek illegal ways of generating money; destroyed a lot of lives (Ogra, 2022); and has tendencies to lure and attract unsuspecting adolescents to itself, thereby becoming prone to it.

Proness to get-rich-quick syndrome is a strong attraction to irrational, illegal and unrelenting desire to make money at all cost and to live in luxury. It is a strong exposure to the ways and manners of those that are engaged in stupendous and extravagant lifestyle in the society. This is what attracts young people to those who engage in the crime to be rich quickly (Enaikele, Adeleke & Adeoye, 2022). Adolescents are easily drawn or prone to get-rich-quick syndrome because they detest hard work, they want to make quick money and generally want to live on the fast lane. Increasingly, youths are being dis-oriented by the get rich-quick syndrome on a daily basis (Salami, 2013).

In addition, Ukachukwu and Naetor (2020) opined that proness to get-rich-quick syndrome is a terrible, emotional, psychological and abnormal behaviour which usually occur as a result of strong temptation to acquire money by all means. It has engrossed the Nigerian adolescents in chasing the shadow of money to the detriment of the traditional values of honesty, hard-work, fairness, and uprightness. It is an addictive behaviour, because due to availability of quick riches, young people will want to engage in it. Ijafiya (2022) observed that the crazy way millions of Nigerian youths idolize get-rich-quick celebrities is attracting and drawing a lot of adolescents to this behaviour and it is consistently fueling crimes such as yahoo-yahoo, ritualism, kidnapping, drug peddling, surrogacy, human trafficking, and armed robbery.

In a study conducted by Edegbe and Imafidon (2021), it was discovered that the victims of human trafficking, which is one the activities of the syndrome were sexually abused; fell prey to exploitative labour; engaged in unavoidable, survival sex, had unwanted pregnancies and fatherless children. In addition, Ijafiya (2022) stated that young people nowadays are prone to get rich syndrome at all costs because of pressure to succeed at all cost and this has forced a lot of them to indulge in one terrible attitude or the other. A study by Ogunrin (2018) equally revealed that using the theoretical framework of differential association theory; through



interaction with others, individuals learn the values, attitudes, techniques, and motives for criminal behaviour. This pointedly underscores the reason why a lot young people, especially adolescents are prone to get rich quick syndrome. Eno-Abasi, Odita and Timothy (2022) reported that in January 2022, some young boys aged between 14 and 18 years lured their girl friend to a hideout in Ogun State and beheaded her for ritual purposes. The rate at which young people crave for and attracted to acquisition of money is unimaginable.

Adolescents' life, according to Biplob, Umme, Aklima and Hossain (2020), is very critical because their physical and mental adjustments are too difficult. Sometimes, they may drop from their academic performance; experience anger and lack of confidence which is threatening their self-esteem and can get attracted to drug abuse or anti-social activities like get rich quick syndrome. Dizik (2020) discovered that the effect of prones to this syndrome could be more severe on young people because those who have access to quick riches are more susceptible to social, emotional and psychological challenges that can hamper their well-being. They could experience identity crisis, feeling of uncertainty about their direction for future, financial situations and relationships.

It is very interesting to note that issues around prones to get rich quick syndrome is very prominent among male and female adolescents. In other words, it is a syndrome that is ravaging both male and female folks. Eno-Abasi, Odita & Timothy (2022) noted that the EFCC operatives, who acted on intelligence, stormed one yahoo training school and arrested 27 suspects, including it's coordinator, and his 'students,' who were predominantly young school leavers who are male and female aged 18 to 25 years. In other word prones to get rich quick syndrome is not tied to a particular gender, Also, Ojuade, Munene & Mbutu (2018), stated that several factors put adolescents at risk to exhibit suicidal behaviours such as depression, financial difficulties, dysfunctional family, gender, alcoholism, hopelessness, substance abuse, among others and that this is very common among adolescents experiencing get-rich-quick-syndrome.

The World Bank (2020), stated that apparent push factors that accentuate the menace of prones to get rich quick syndrome among adolescents in Nigeria include peer pressure, less reward for educational competitions, uncensored movies, value deficiency, fears and anxiety, identity crises, self-defeating behaviours, pursuing risky investments, inappropriate decision making as well as poverty. Lending credence to this, Ibrahim and Ahmad (2020) in their study on causes of kidnapping, revealed that corruption and fraud, political influence, joblessness, terrorism, lack of capital punishment by the government, the changing value system and abject poverty are the major causes of kidnapping, which is one of the activities of get rich quick syndrome in Nigeria.

Poverty refers to the state or condition in which people lack financial resources and essentials things for a minimum standard of living. As such, their basic human needs cannot be met. People and families who live in poverty may go without proper housing, clean water, healthy food, and medical attention. Poverty is a socioeconomic condition that is the result of multiple factor, such as income, race, sexual identity, sexual orientation, and lack of access to education, among others (Chen, 2023). In a nutshell, poverty is a problem of persons and that it resulted from economical, social, cultural, or biological inadequacies (Katz, 2013).

Brady (2023), defines poverty as a shortage of resources relative to needs defined by the prevailing standards of a time and place. Poverty is best defined as a shortage of resources compared with needs. Thus, regardless of whether it is a status or event, poverty affects a



huge population. Enaikele, Adeleke&Adeoye (2022), stated that poverty among adolescents is apparent through limited economic opportunities, deprivation, social exclusion, unemployment and social insecurity. Poverty is a global phenomenon and has no regard for race, colour or language. Brady (2023) opined that in the United States, counterproductive behavior is the key mechanism causing poverty with its attendant risks. The four major risks are joblessness, low education, and single motherhood. Indeed, the poor are poor because they exhibit a greater prevalence of such risks. In Nigeria, poverty is multidimensional in nature and over 130 million Nigerians are poor, using multidimensional indices (Nigeria Bureau of Statistics, 2022).

Several studies had linked poverty to increasing rates of get rich quick activities such as fraud, surrogacy, baby factories, human trafficking, rituals and others activities capable of attracting unsuspecting adolescents. Igomu (2021) revealed that the alarming proliferation of fraudulent investment platforms in recent times and the scramble to key into them were invariably linked to greed, which is most times fuelled by unemployment and poverty. Omogbolagun (2020),also stated that today, poverty and the quest to get rich quickly is a major drive for surrogacy. Many of the surrogates do so for financial gains and to meet their financial needs. With the level of poverty in the country, many more people will become surrogates.

In addition, a poll conducted by NOIPolls (2015) revealed that about 6 in 10 Nigerians (63percent) believe that poverty is the major factor responsible for the rising cases of baby factories and child trafficking, which is one of the activities of get rich quick syndrome and young people are attracted to it. Also, the study conducted by Enaikele, Adeleke & Adeoye, (2022) revealed 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.

Taken together, these and other studies that had established a nexus between poverty and increasing rate of get rich quick syndrome among adolescents in Nigeria had thrown up certain realities. Ukachukwu & Naetor (2020) were of the opinion that most adolescents in Nigeria are prone to get-rich-quick syndrome because they are low in self-confidence, tormented by poverty, and stifled by a deficiency of critical values and thus, become driven towards the welcoming arms of misconducts. Indeed, Nigeria is a rich country but majority of its inhabitants are poor because of inequality in wealth distribution. This is indeed a contradiction (World Bank, 2020). In another study by Ogra (2022) on adolescents' proness to this syndrome, it was discovered that most people experience this syndrome due to their background or the kind of families they come from. Understandably, an adolescent who is experiencing the contradiction in the society, whose family cannot provide for his/her basic needs, but sees others living and displaying flamboyant life could be predisposed, attracted and possibly engage in illegal means of survival, such as the get rich quick syndrome. This study therefore, examined poverty as a propensity to adolescents' proness to get rich quick syndrome in Lagos State, Nigeria. To aid the study, two research questions and three hypotheses were raised and answered at 0.05 level of significance.

Research questions

1. What are the levels of poverty among adolescents in Lagos State?
2. What are the levels of adolescents' proness to get- rich-quick-syndrome in Lagos State?

Hypotheses



1. There is no significant effect of poverty on adolescents’ prones to get- rich-quick-syndrome in Lagos State.
2. There is no significant difference between male and female adolescents’ prones to get- rich-quick-syndrome in Lagos State
3. Age cannot significantly influence adolescents’ prones to get- rich-quick-syndrome in Lagos State.

Methodology

The study used the descriptive design to obtain relevant data on poverty as a propensity to adolescents’ prones to get rich quick syndrome in Lagos State, Nigeria. The sample for the study consisted of 274 adolescents randomly selected from seven secondary schools in Lagos state. A self-designed 30-item questionnaire titled “Poverty and Adolescents’ Prones to Get-Rich-Quick-Syndrome Inventory (PAPGRQSI)” which consisted of three sections: A, B & C was designed for data collection. Section A sought information on respondents’ bio- data, section B sought information on their poverty experience, while section C sought information on their prones to get-rich-quick- syndrome. The instrument was validated by four experts in the field of psychometrics. The reliability of this instrument was tested using the Cronbach’s Alpha reliability and its coefficient was 0.92. The questionnaire was administered on individual basis. Data obtained from the instrument was analyzed using percentages, t-test and ANOVA to test all the stated hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research question 1.

What are the levels of poverty among adolescents in Lagos State?

Table 1: Levels of Poverty among adolescents in Lagos State

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Low	58	21.2	21.2
	High	216	78.8	100.0
	Total	274	100.0	

Table 1 shows that the level of poverty among adolescents are as follows: Low - 58 adolescents (21.2%) and High- 216 adolescents (78.8%). This finding shows that the level of poverty is very high among more than three-quarters of participants. This is a great concern to all stakeholders

Research question 2.

What are the levels of adolescents’ prones to get- rich-quick-syndrome in Lagos State?

Table 2: Levels of adolescents’ prones to get rich quick syndrome

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Weak	49	17.9	17.9
	Mild	87	31.8	49.6
	Intense	138	50.4	100.0
	Total	274	100.0	



Table 2 shows that the level of adolescents’ prones to get rich quick syndrome are as follows: Weak - 49 adolescents (17.9%), Mild - 87 adolescents (31.8 %) and Intense –138 adolescents (50.4%). This finding shows that the level of adolescents’ prones to get rich quick syndrome is very intense among half of participants. This is shows that it is a challenge among adolescents.

Hypothesis 1.

There is no significant effect of poverty on adolescents’ prones to get- rich-quick-syndrome in Lagos State.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of mean and standard deviation of effect of poverty on adolescents’ prones to get- rich-quick-syndrome

	Levels of Poverty	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean
Proness	Low	58	20.59	4.581	.601
	High	216	41.15	8.342	.568

Table 3 shows that the mean and standard deviation of effect of poverty on adolescents’ prones to get- rich-quick-syndrome are: low poverty: mean = 20.59 & S D = 4.581 and High poverty: mean= 41.15 & S D = 8.342. This shows that there is difference in their means. To know if the difference in their means was significant or not, t-test was performed and displayed on table 4.

Table 4: Independent Samples Test of effect of poverty on prones to get-rich quick-syndrome

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff
Proness	Equal variances assumed	15.121	.000	-18.043	272	.000	-20.567
	Equal variances not assumed			-24.868	168.331	.000	-20.567

From table 4, the independent t-test conducted revealed that df =272, F= 15.121, and p =0.000. Since the p-value which = 0.000 is less than 0.05, then there is a statistically significant difference between the variables. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. In other words, there was significant effect of poverty on adolescents prones to get-rich-quick-syndrome in Lagos State. That is poverty is a propensity to adolescents’ prones to get rich quick syndrome in Lagos State.

Hypothesis 2. There is no significant difference between male and female adolescents’ prones to get- rich-quick-syndrome in Lagos State



Table 5: Independent Samples Test of effect of gender on prones to get-rich quick-syndrome

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff
Proness	Equal variances assumed	13.606	.000	1.452	272	.148	2.036
	Equal variances not assumed			1.531	267.818	.127	2.036

Table 5 shows that the with the independent t-test conducted, $df = 272$, $F = 13.606$, and $p = 0.148$. Since the p-value which = 0.148 is greater than 0.05, then there is no statistically significant difference between the variables. Hence, the null hypothesis was not rejected. In other words, there is no significant difference between male and female adolescents' prones to get-rich-quick-syndrome in Lagos State. That is, adolescents prones to get-rich-quick-syndrome is not gender based.

Hypothesis 3.

Age cannot significantly influence adolescents' prones to get-rich-quick syndrome in Lagos State.

Table 6: ANOVA of age difference in adolescents' prones to get-rich-quick-syndrome in Lagos State

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	598.372	2	299.186	2.323	.130
Within Groups	34899.588	271	128.781		
Total	35497.960	273			

Table 6 shows that $F_{(2, 271)} = 3.323$ and that $p = 0.130$. Since the p-value which = 0.130 is greater than 0.05, then there is no statistically significant difference between the variables. Hence, the null hypothesis was not rejected. In other words, Age cannot significantly influence adolescents' prones to get-rich-quick syndrome in Lagos State. That is, adolescents can be proned to get-rich-quick-syndrome irrespective of their ages.

Discussion

This study investigated poverty as propensity to adolescents' prones to get rich quick syndrome in Lagos State. Findings from the study reveal that the poverty level of more than three-quarters of the respondents is very high; and that the prones of more than half of these respondents to get-rich-quick-syndrome is very intense. This is in agreement with the position of Enaikele, Adeleke & Adeoye (2022), who stated that poverty among adolescents is high and apparent through limited economic opportunities, deprivation, social exclusion, unemployment and social insecurity. Poverty is a global phenomenon and has no regard for race, colour or language. Also, Ibrahim and Ahmad (2020) in their study on causes of kidnapping, revealed that corruption and object poverty are the major causes of kidnapping, which is one of the activities of this syndrome.

The first hypothesis which stated that there is no significant effect of poverty on adolescents' prones to get-rich-quick-syndrome in Lagos State was rejected. In other words, there is a



strong and positive influence of poverty on adolescents' proness to get-rich-quick-syndrome. This shows that adolescents with high poverty level are intensely inclined to proness to rich-quick-syndrome and vice versa. This finding agrees with the position of Ukachukwu & Naetor (2020) who was of the opinion that most adolescents in Nigeria are prone to get-rich-quick syndrome because they are low in self-confidence, tormented by poverty. Findings by Ogra (2022) on adolescents' proness to this syndrome, revealed that that most people experience this syndrome due to their background or the kind of families they come from and influence of poverty.

The second hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference between male and female adolescents' proness to get-rich-quick-syndrome in Lagos State was not rejected. In other words, there is no significant difference between male and female adolescents' proness to get-rich-quick-syndrome in Lagos State. This is in agreement with Eno-Abasi, Odita & Timothy (2022) who noted that, it is very interesting to note that issues around proness to get rich quick syndrome is very prominent among male and female adolescents. In other words, it is a syndrome that is ravaging both male and female folks. In other words, proness to get rich quick syndrome is not tied to a particular gender.

The third hypothesis which stated that age cannot significantly influence adolescents' proness to get-rich-quick syndrome in Lagos State was also not rejected. In other words, there is no significant age difference in adolescents' proness to get-rich-quick-syndrome in Lagos State. That, is, adolescents can be proned to get-rich-quick-syndrome irrespective of their age. This position was corroborated by Ijafiya (2022) who opined that adolescents of about 18-25 years of age who has no meaningful source of income could be seen living in very expensive and well-furnished apartment, put on expensive designer wears, and are not employee of any organization, nor do they have any visible means of income, thereby becoming a snare to others around them.

Conclusion

Findings from this empirical study revealed that the poverty is a propensity and a precursor to ever increasing adolescents' proness to get rich quick syndrome in Lagos State. Therefore, the way out this challenge is adolescents in Nigeria could be assisted in raising their self-confidence, exposed to value-reorientation and be delivered from poverty. There should be equality in wealth distribution and while young people should be learn to control their urges whenever they are tempted to be drawn to illegal ways of getting riches.

Families, communities and larger society should also put in place strong social controls measures against delinquent behavior.

Counselling for Poverty Alleviation and Recommendations

In order to assist adolescents successfully navigate this stage of human development which is characterised with critical physical and mental adjustments, the following recommendations could suffice as follow:

- There is need for the provision of education for all as a tool for breaking poverty therefore there should be awareness creation for the need to fight poverty basically through education.
- There is need for the provision of effective counselling for poverty alleviation. This will dissuade adolescents from been prone to get-rich-quick syndrome.
- Parent should be ready to provide for the basic need of these adolescents. Parents should be more responsible towards their children. They should ask them several questions whenever they suspect any strange things or individuals around them.



- Adolescents should be encouraged to be contented and embrace skill acquisition, entrepreneurship and small-scale set-ups that they have interest in.
- Schools, religious organizations as well as larger society should desist from celebrating people with questionable character who come with or display large money.
- There is need for promotion of values-reorientation at home, school and in the society
- Governments at all levels must do everything possible to reduce poverty in the society through curbing of corruption, equal distribution of national wealth, and wealth creation, financing and supporting entrepreneurship and small-scale set ups, inculcating production in curriculum for teaching from early adolescent classes, formulation of formidable policies for e.g consumerism to production driven economy and most of all job creation.
- Embrace skill acquisition, Entrepreneurship and apprenticeship
- Schools, religious organizations as well as larger society should desist from celebrating people with questionable character who display large money and ostentatious lifestyle.
- There is need for promotion of values-reorientation at home, school and society



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