

MENTAL ILL-HEALTH AND PRONESS TO GET-RICH-QUICK-SYNDROME AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN LAGOS STATE: NEED FOR ATTITUDINAL CHANGE

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Abstract

Nowadays, adolescents have been put under unnecessary pressure to succeed at all costs with too much emphasis on achievement, competition and success. Quite a number of them try to cut corners while others get involved in various dubious acts, such as cybercrime, ritual killing, kidnapping and fraud. This has led to what is known as get-rich-quick syndrome. Get-Rich-Quick Syndrome is the endless and unabated desire and quest for making quick money not minding its attendant dangers and consequences. This paper, therefore, examined mental ill-health and proness to get-rich-quick-syndrome among adolescents in Lagos State: need for attitudinal change. The study adopted the descriptive survey with one research question and two hypotheses formulated to guide the research. The sample consisted of 170 students randomly selected from five secondary schools in Lagos State. A 20-item questionnaire titled “Mental ill- Health and Proness to Get-Rich-Quick-Syndrome Questionnaire” (MPGRQSQ) was designed for data collection. Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the instrument stood at 0.82. Data analysis was carried out with the use of percentages, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and t-test. The first hypothesis was rejected, while the second one was retained. Results showed that more adolescents are prone to get-rich-quick syndrome and there is a strong correlation between mental ill-health and proness to get-rich-quick syndrome among students. Results also revealed that their proness is not gender specific. Therefore, counselling psychologists have a responsibility in assisting these students to have attitudinal change towards quick riches and adults in the society should lead by example.

Keywords: Attitudinal change, mental ill-health, proness to get-rich-quick-syndrome, students.

Introduction

Adolescents have been put under unnecessary pressure to succeed at all costs, due to too much emphasis on achievements, competition and success. Young people opt for easy life, while some of them try to cut corners in order to move ahead in life; others get involved in various dubious acts, such as cybercrimes, ritual killings, kidnapping, fraud and other anti-social behaviours in order to make money at all costs. This ugly trend has led to some anti-social behaviours that culminate in what is known as Get-Rich Quick Syndrome (GRQS), which connotes an endless desire, quest for fast means to get rich quick; and it has always resulted in wide spread illegal means of acquiring wealth by all means, not minding its attendant dangers and consequences (Ogunrin, 2018). It is an irrational, excessive and inordinate desire to acquire money and riches overnight. Against this backdrop, many vices, such as internet fraud, rituals, armed robbery, kidnapping, prostitution among others, thrive. Wealth and affluence are today the yardsticks for measuring one's acceptance by the

society, unlike the days of yore, when young people had respect for wisdom and hard work (Ajide, 2018). This syndrome has the capacity of attracting and drawing to itself unsuspecting and innocent adolescents, thus they will be prone to the syndrome.

Proness to the get-rich-quick syndrome is a strong liking, preference or attraction to irrational and unabated desire to make money at all costs and to live in luxury. It is a strong enticement and exposure to the ways and manners of those that are engaged in stupendous and extravagant lifestyle in the society (Enaikele, Adeleke & Adeoye, 2022). Basically, it is a way of finding riches quickly without hard work. Salami (2013), posited that adolescents are easily drawn or prone to the get-rich-quick syndrome, because they want to make quick and easy money and generally want to live on the fast lane. Increasingly, youths are being dis-oriented by the get rich-quick syndrome. In addition, Ukachukwu & Naetor (2020) added that most of Nigerian adolescents are prone to get-rich-quick syndrome because that are low on self-confidence, agonized by poverty, threatened by lack amidst obvious plenty, suffocated by a deficiency of critical values and become driven towards the welcoming arms of crime. The values associated with hardwork, honesty and patriotism, become easily replaceable with greed, largely driven by an ill-conceived get-rich-quick mentality among these adolescents.

Ijafiya (2022) observed that the crazy way millions of Nigerian youths idolize the 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 and armed robbery. The quest for wealth and luxury has led to an increase in crime and disregard for law and order in society with the kidnapping and killings of people for money rituals increasing on a daily basis. In essence, Ukachukwu and Naetor (2020) opined that proness to the get-rich-quick syndrome 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; and that it is an addictive behaviour, because due to availability of quick riches, young people will want to engage in it. Also, [Odusanya \(2022\)](#) added that it suffices to say that no iota of success or failure of the Nigerian is without the asterisk of potential criminality, rooted in a culture where many young people see fraud as the only way to make money. On deeper reflection, it epitomizes the present spirit of Nigeria's younger generation.

To buttress this assertion, Edegbe and Imafidon (2021) conducted a study on “Human Trafficking and Sexual Abuse: Evidence from Female Libya Returnees in Edo State, South-South Nigeria”. The study adopted an In-depth interview, which was conducted with thirty nine (39) purposively selected female Libya returnees of Edo State origin, between January and March 2018 and discovered that the victims were sexually abused; fell prey to exploitative labour; engaged in unavoidable, survival sex, had unwanted pregnancies and fatherless children. They, therefore, recommended that there is need for concerted efforts by the government and other stakeholders, in order to work assiduously to launch a vigorous campaign against gender discrimination, as well as other cultural and societal attitudes that portray women and girls as second fiddle and sexual instrument.

Also, Ibrahim and Ahmad (2020) worked on causes of kidnapping in Nigeria and proposed solutions. The study's findings through descriptive and historical method, show that abject poverty, corruption and fraud, political influence, joblessness, terrorism, lack of capital punishment by the government, the changing value system and quick-money syndrome, are the major causes of

kidnapping in Nigeria. Furthermore, Odika (2020) discovered that the youths of our present day society, have developed a huge appetite for quick riches, such that the thought and expectation of an average young man in Nigeria today is to get rich overnight and live a life of affluence, not minding the consequences. Also, Ukachukwu and Naetor (2020) opined that proness to get-rich-quick syndrome, is a terrible and severe emotional, psychological and abnormal behaviour, which usually occurs as a result of the strong desire and temptation to acquire money by all means. In addition, Ijafiya (2022) stated that young people nowadays are prone, or are easily drawn, to get rich at all costs and by all means, because of pressure to succeed at all costs and this has forced a lot of them to indulge in one terrible attitude or the other.

Ogunrin (2018) noted that one major factor that accentuates the state of proness to GRQS is lack of contentment, which has eaten so deep into the system of Nigerian youths. In addition, poverty is another major factor, as the economy is not helping matters and it has exposed some youths to the option of money rituals, drug trafficking, prostitution, armed robbery, smuggling etc. as a means of survival. Other factors include laziness, unemployment, as well as peer group influence. To highlight this, Ogunrin (2018) carried out a research on factors in get-rich-quick syndrome. The aim of the study was to assess the factors affecting the get rich quick syndrome in the life of the youths. A useful tool to the theoretical framework was the Anomie Theory and Differential Association theory. Differential association states that through interaction with others, individuals learn the values, attitudes, techniques, and motives for criminal behaviour, while Anomie's Theory, on the other hand, brings to mind the term "Anomie" which is a state of normlessness or norm confusion within a society. Anomie may apply when there are not enough legitimate means to reach legitimate societal goals. In his opinion, Dizik (2020) discovered that the effect of 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 regarding their direction for future careers, financial situations, and relationships.

It is very interesting to note that issues around proness to the get-rich-quick syndrome are 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 its coordinator, and his 'students,' who were predominantly young school leavers who are male and female aged 18 to 25 years. 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.

Kennebeck and Bonin (2016) also reported that between 2009 and 2016, suicidal thoughts, ideation and intent rates increased among female aged 10 to 14 years by 76 %, females aged 15 to 19 years by 32%, whereas suicidal attempts and suicide completion rates increased by 73% among males aged 15 to 21 years. Therefore, one major consequence of the get-rich-quick syndrome is identity crisis which could be described as a collection of beliefs about oneself that includes elements such as gender, sexuality, racial-identity and academic performance (Myers, 2009). Apart from the fact that proness to get rich quick syndrome is not tied to a particular gender, the World Bank (2020), also

discovered that apparent poverty is another push factor that accentuates the menace of prone to get rich quick syndrome among adolescents in Nigeria. Other factors discovered are; 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 paranoia, depression, anxiety and insomnia which are part of mental-ill health.

Mental ill-health could be described as ineffective and unproductive functioning in everyday life which could result into low productive activities, bad relationship and inability to adapt to any change that could occur. Mental ill- health or mental disorder connotes negative thought pattern, irrational changes in emotion or behaviour of an individual and it is associated with problems in school, social rapport, work or family activities (Parekh, 2015). Mental ill- health connotes mental health conditions that have negative effect on the way an individual thinks, feels, and behaves. It encompasses many different types of mental health problems (Morin, 2019). According to Counselling Directory (2017), mental health problems affect 450 million people worldwide. It stated further that 1 in 6 adults in the UK will experience a significant mental health problem each year; 1 in 10 children and young people, between ages of five and 16, have a clinically diagnosed mental health disorder; depression affects 2.6 in 100 people; anxiety affects 4.7 in 100 people and that male mental health is a growing concern in the UK, as suicide is currently the leading cause of death in men under the age of 50.

The American Psychiatric Association (2013) stated that major types of mental ill- health include depression, anxiety, trauma and stressor-related disorders, schizophrenia, eating disorders, insomnia, sexual dysfunction, disruptive behaviours and personality disorders. Some of the causative factors of mental ill-health include:- biological - genetic problems, prenatal damage, infections, exposure to toxins, old age, brain injuries, chemical imbalances, and substance abuse: environmental factors-dysfunctional home life, poor parenting, divorce, poor relationships with others, substance abuse, not meeting social expectations, poverty and Psychological factors - emotional, physical or sexual abuse, neglect and being unable to relate to others.

Furthermore, Andy (2012) stated that some symptoms of poor mental health among adolescents include confused thinking, prolonged depression, irritability, excessive fears, anger, worries, and anxieties. Others are dramatic changes in eating or sleeping habits, delusions, inability to cope with daily problems, denial of obvious problems, unexplained physical ailments, substance abuse as well as social withdrawal. Mental ill-health has serious and devastating effects on children and teenagers. Some of its effects include low academic achievements, suicidal thoughts, anti-social behaviours, which could trigger insecurity in the society, dysfunctional families, as well as social isolation. It is a serious challenge to parents, teachers, care givers, educational administrators, political and religious leaders. It is equally a vital concern to mental health professionals, psychologists, counsellors and, in particular, to social workers.

To highlight the assertion on relationship between mental ill health and prone to get rich quick syndrome, Okunade and Shehu (2015) carried out a study on “Get Rich Quick Syndrome and Nigerian Literature in the 21st Century: an Examination of Ameh's Sweet Taste of Shame”. This study discussed the moral depravity of Nigerians, as dramatized by four teenage girls who were found to have been forced into producing children for a morally bankrupt syndicate spearheaded by

a couple (Doctor and Cash madam). These accomplices signify the dimension of the heinous crime and the need for action to transform our society, restore its cherished values and promote the mental wellbeing of young people. In the same vein, Laracy (2016) conducted a study on “The Downside of Wealth: Toward a Psychopathology of Money Accumulation”. The study suggested one possible explanation for why more money does not necessarily lead to more happiness – the wealthy are more paranoid and distrustful of others than the non-wealthy. Therefore, it was proposed that those who have a lot of money exhibit more paranoia, higher levels of money addiction, and less quality of life, than those who only have average amounts of money, which may explain why more money does not equal more happiness. In addition, MMCI (2020) in their study, found out that prones to get-rich-quick syndrome could lead to increase in feelings of depression, feeling empty, gloomy, or not enjoying ordinary pleasurable activities. If ignored, prones to get-rich-quick-syndrome may settle into underlying patterns of psychological inhibition and mood dysphoria. Drawing from all these researches, this study therefore sets out to find out if there is any relationship between mental ill-health and prones to get-rich-quick- syndrome among adolescents in Lagos state and the need for attitudinal change in order to reduce unethical and corrupt practices in the country.

One research question was raised in the study:

1. What is the level of adolescents' prones to get-rich-quick syndrome in Lagos State?

Two research hypotheses were raised and tested at 0,05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between mental ill-health and prones to get-rich-quick syndrome among adolescents in Lagos State
2. There is no significant difference in the prones of adolescents in Lagos State to get-rich-quick syndrome on the basis of their gender.

Methodology

The study used the descriptive design to obtain relevant and useful data on mental ill-health and prones to get-rich-quick syndrome among adolescents in Lagos State. The sample for the study consisted of 170 adolescents randomly selected from five secondary schools in Lagos State. A 20-item questionnaire designed by the researchers titled “Mental ill- Health and Prones to Get-Rich-Quick- Syndrome Questionnaire” (MPGRQSQ) which consisted of three sections: A, B & C, was designed for data collection.

Section A sought information for students' demographic data, section B sought for students' response to Prones to Get-Rich-Quick Syndrome, while section C sought for information of their mental ill-health. The instrument was validated by three experts in the field of psychometrics. The reliability of this instrument was tested, using the Cronbach's Alpha reliability and its coefficient stood at 0.82. The questionnaire was administered on individual basis. Data obtained from the instrument were analyzed, using percentage, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and t-test to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question: What is the level of adolescents' prones to get-rich-quick syndrome in Lagos State?

Table 1: Level of Prone to Get-Rich-Quick Syndrome among Adolescents in Lagos State

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Low	24	14.1	14.1
Val	Mild	53	31.2	45.3
id	Extreme	93	54.7	100.0
	Total	170	100.0	

Table 1 shows that the level of prone to get-rich-quick-syndrome of 14.1 % of respondents (24 adolescents) is low, that of 31.2 % of respondents (53 adolescents) is mild, while the level of prone to get-rich-quick syndrome of 54.7 % of respondents (93 adolescents) is extreme. This finding shows that more than half of the respondents have extreme level of prone to get-rich-quick syndrome.

Hypothesis 1. There is no significant relationship between mental ill-health and prone to get-rich-quick syndrome among adolescents in Lagos State

Table 2: Correlations between mental ill-health and prone to get-rich-quick syndrome among adolescents in Lagos State

		Prone to Get Rich Quick Syndrome	Mental-ill-health
Prone to Get	Pearson Correlation	1	.846**
Rich Quick	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
Syndrome	N	170	170
Mental	Pearson Correlation	.846**	1
Ill-health	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	170	170

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

From Table 2, it was observed that the correlation coefficient using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) stood at 0.846. It also shows that there is a strong positive correlation between the variables and the correlation p -value < 0.05 . The correlation is significant at 0.05 level. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. This then indicates that there is a significant relationship between mental ill-health and prone to get-rich-quick-syndrome among adolescents in Lagos

State. That is, the higher the level of their proness to get-rich-quick syndrome, the higher their mental ill-health level and vice versa,

Hypothesis 2. There is no significant difference in the proness of adolescents in Lagos State to get-rich-quick syndrome on the basis of their gender.

Table 3 : Descriptive Statistics of mean and Standard deviation of proness of adolescents in Lagos State to get-rich-quick syndrome on the basis of their gender

	Gender	N	\bar{X}	SD	Std. Error Mean
Proness to Get Rich Quick Syndrome	Male	41	22.00	1.565	.244
	Female	129	21.85	4.729	.416

Table 3 shows that the mean and Standard deviation of proness of adolescents in Lagos State to get-rich-quick syndrome on the basis of their gender are: male mean = 22.00 & S D = 1.565 and female mean = 21.85 & S D = 4.729. This shows that their means are very close. To know if the difference in means was significant or not, t-test was performed on the data and displayed on table 4.

Table 4 : Independent Samples Test of Adolescents' proness to get-rich-quick syndrome and gender

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff
Proness to Get Rich Quick Syndrome	Equal variances assumed	64.161	.000	.196	168	.845	.147
	Equal variances not assumed			.305	167.692	.761	.147

From Table 4, the independent t-test conducted revealed that $df=168$, $F=64.161$, and $p=0.845$. This result showed that there is no statistically significant difference between the variables. Hence, the null hypothesis was not rejected. In other words, there is no significant difference in the proness of adolescents in Lagos State to get-rich-quick syndrome on the basis of their gender. Both male and female adolescents could be prone to get-rich-quick syndrome.

Discussions

This study investigated Mental ill-Health and Proness to Get-Rich-Quick Syndrome among Adolescents in Lagos State: Need for Attitudinal Change. The findings from the study revealed that more than half of the respondents have extreme level of proness to get-rich-quick syndrome. This is in agreement with the findings of Odika (2020) who discovered that the youths of our present day society have developed a huge appetite for quick riches, that the thought and expectation of an

average young man in Nigeria today is to get rich overnight and live a life of affluence, not minding the consequences. The prevalence and pervasiveness of Get-rich-quick syndrome is alarming. These evil practices of get-rich-quick syndrome is very disturbing now because of its prevalence among young people and adolescents.

The first hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between mental ill-health and prone to get-rich-quick syndrome among adolescents in Lagos State was rejected. This then indicates that there is a significant relationship between mental ill-health and prone to get-rich-quick syndrome among adolescents in Lagos State. That is, the higher the level of their prone to get-rich-quick syndrome, the higher their mental ill-health level and vice versa. This finding agrees with the position of MMCI (2020) who found out that get-rich-quick syndrome could lead to increase in feelings of depression, feeling empty, gloomy, or not enjoying ordinary pleasurable activities which are all part of manifestation of mental ill-health. Having all the things they want does not in itself provide for a deeper sense of satisfaction and fulfillment. If ignored, get-rich-quick syndrome may settle into underlying patterns of psychological inhibition and mood dysphoria

The second hypothesis which stated that there no significant difference in the prone of adolescents in Lagos State to get-rich-quick syndrome on the basis of their gender was not rejected. This implies that both male and female adolescents could be prone to get-rich-quick syndrome. This again agrees with the position of Eno-Abasi, Odita & Timothy (2022) who stated that the EFCC operatives, who acted on intelligence, stormed one Yahoo training school and arrested 27 suspects, including its coordinator, and his 'students,' who were predominantly young school leavers who are male and female aged 18 to 25 years. Also, Ojuade, Munene & Mbutu (2018), corroborated this by saying that several factors put adolescents at risk to exhibit suicidal behaviours such as depression, older age, financial difficulties, dysfunctional family, gender, alcoholism, hopelessness, substance abuse, among others and that this is very common among adolescents experiencing get-rich-quick syndrome. In essence, prone to get-rich-quick syndrome is prevalent among both male and female adolescents.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study has established the fact that there is a strong nexus between mental ill-health and prone of adolescents to get-rich-quick syndrome in Lagos State. Due to the findings of this study, it is recommended that there is need for urgent attitudinal change among adolescents, and this can be done if:

- Counsellors ensure proper education and enlightenment of adolescents on coexistence of prone to get-rich-quick-syndrome and mental ill-health.
- Counsellors lay more emphasis on the need for these adolescents to change their attitude towards trying to be rich overnight
- Parents are more responsible and responsive towards their children. They should ask them several questions whenever they suspect any strange things or individuals around them.
- Adequate and effective parenting in the area of training against the get-rich-quick syndrome is an every home concern and engagement. Parents should, therefore, train children in a way to divert their minds from quick wealth acquisition
- Parents engage in frequent monitoring, visit, heart to heart talk and bonding with their children, especially, young adolescence in other to stop bad influence in all its ramification.

- Adults in the society also serve as role models to these young ones
- Schools, religious organizations, as well as the larger society desist from the attitude, celebrating people with questionable character, who come with or display large sums of money.
- Our value system are reviewed through reorientation by parents, guardians, counselors, teachers toward inculcating the right value into the young ones-hence catch them young.
- State governments continue to re-orientate and fully engage pupil and adolescents in productive activities that will keep them busy. This will serve as a way of solving the ravaging situation now and in the future.
- Fight against crime becomes a collective effort. All hands must be on deck in fighting for a better future without crime for our young ones.
- Authorities, Security Agencies and even local vigilante groups monitor activities of these young ones to nip the problem in the bud.

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