

UKH JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Vol.3 No.2 (2019)

Indexed by DOAJ



University of
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Hewlêr

2019

University of Kurdistan Hewlêr

UKH Journal of Social Sciences (UKHJSS) is a member of
the Directory of Open Access Scholarly Resources (ROAD)

Online-ISSN: 2520-7806

UKH Journal of Social Sciences (UKHJSS) is a member of the
Crossref Agency

DOI: 10.25079/issn.2520-7806

<https://journals.ukh.edu.krd/index.php/ukhjss>

e-mail: ojs.admin@ukh.edu.krd



UKH Journal of Social Sciences (UKHJSS); no article processing charge (APC).
2019, University of Kurdistan Hewlêr, Erbil, Kurdistan Region, Iraq

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25079/ukhjss.v3n2y2019>

Published: 2019-12-28

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The Growing Phenomenon of Money Ritual–Motivated Killings in Nigeria: An Empirical Investigation into the Factors Responsible

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Received: 17 July 2019

Accepted: 09 November 2019

Available online: 28 December 2019

ABSTRACT

This study investigated how beliefs in magical powers and related sacred activities, particularly those that accept human body parts for ritual sacrifices in return for fortunes, alongside poverty, unemployment, and quest for wealth as predictors responsible for the increase in money ritual–related killings in Ilorin Emirate of Kwara State, Nigeria. A total of 1736 respondents were selected using simple random sampling techniques. The instrument employed for data collection was a questionnaire. In addition, the information gathered was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences. The results indicated that the increase in money ritual–related killings in Ilorin Emirate is a result of the general belief that ritual sacrifices enhance fortunes, the boundless desire for material wealth among Nigerians, unemployment, and poverty in Nigeria. Therefore, this paper suggests that there should be public enlightenment in all languages spoken in Nigeria about the dangers in associating individual success with spiritual influences.

Keywords: Money rituals in Nigeria, Belief in magical sacrifices, Unemployment, Poverty, Excessive quest for wealth among Nigerians

1. INTRODUCTION

The belief in the existence of supernatural powers and the practice of ritual sacrifices are major phenomena that have been part of Nigerian society for ages. Nigeria and other sub-Saharan African countries have a long traditional belief that individuals' successes and accomplishments could be realized with the intervention of a mystical power(s) (Moore and Sanders, 2003). This form of belief is still

widespread across all ethnic groups and social classes in Nigeria. A significant number of Nigerians hold the conviction that charms and amulets (tied around the body or hung in houses and cars) can protect them against any misfortune, such as an accident, sickness and diseases, stillbirth, and death (Oyewole, 2016). In addition, people are confident that ritual sacrifices and magical concoctions prepared with bizarre ingredients will bring them financial fortunes, fame, and power (Obineke, 2008). Thus, ritual sacrifices are often performed (to achieve these aims) in various forms using different materials. The kind of ritual sacrifices performed to induce or enhance financial fortunes are referred to as money or wealth rituals. Money rituals are supposed to make the doer rich or draw fortunes to him or her (Smith, 2001). The

Access this article online

DOI: 10.25079/ukhjse.v3n2y2019.pp32-44 E-ISSN: 2520-7792

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kind of materials used in money ritual sacrifices depend on the amount of wealth the doer desires. Some make use of wildlife, while many use human body parts that are believed to be more potent (Jegade, 2014; Abayomi and Dedeke, 2006). The various parts of the human body, as Obineke, 2008, has stressed, are understood to produce different results in money rituals. For instance, in an interview conducted with people caught with human body parts, Usman, 2017, found that human genitals, female breasts, head, tongue, heart, and bones yield powerful outcomes in money rituals. Moreover, certain categories of humans with different (genetic) conditions such as people with albinism, dwarfism, and hunchbacks are also said to be suitable for money ritual sacrifices (Brilliant, 2015; Nkrumah, 2018).

Accordingly, thousands of innocent Nigerians (male and female) across all ages have been killed and their body parts severed for money ritual sacrifices (Usman, 2017). The rate at which people are murdered and incomplete bodies abandoned in Nigerian cities has been alarming in recent years. In fact, hardly will a week pass by without news (on the media - print and online) of a missing person and an incomplete human body found. In addition, cases of individuals caught with human body parts continuously flood news updates. The actual number of people murdered for money rituals in Nigeria is not known, owing to the lack of systematic data gathering on issues relating to money ritual-related killings in the country. Similarly, academic investigations that explore this area are relatively scanty. Therefore, it is difficult to present figures and illustrate how pervasive the phenomenon is in Nigeria.

It is important to note, however, that ritual-related killings are not new in Nigeria. The practice dates back to the precolonial era when many communities offered human (and animal) souls and parts for ritual sacrifices to the deities (Moore and Sanders, 2003). Victims during this period were criminal offenders, persons who defied the gods and leaders, and those who committed other dishonorable deeds such as incest (Awolalu, 1979). In most cases, communities resorted to human sacrifice in times of adversity (during a disease outbreak, persistent infant mortality, and death of rulers) to appease certain divinities, cleanse the

community, and to prevent further and future calamity (Ayegboyin, 2009). Law Robin, 1985, stressed that this practice was based on the principle that it is better to sacrifice the lives of individuals who flouted the norms and who are dangerous to the public for the good of the community than for all to perish. Nonetheless, human sacrifice by private individuals or a group outside the communal rituals was not acceptable. This practice was abolished and criminalized in Nigeria, and there were no cases of such practices reported anywhere in the country in the last few decades (Oyewole, 2016).

However, the upsurge in taking peoples' lives for money ritual sacrifices in Nigeria is pervasive in recent times (Usman, 2017). The reasons for this increase remain unclear. This is, perhaps, due to the deficiency in academic research and/or divergent opinions among different intellectuals on this matter. Some experts, on the one hand, claimed that the undesirable socioeconomic condition (the level of poverty and unemployment) in Nigeria is an underlying factor (Melvin and Ayotunde, 2011; Adagbada, 2014), while others held that the culture of boundless quests for material wealth, power, and fame among Nigerians and the general beliefs that ritual sacrifices (especially those that contain human body parts) induce fortunes have encouraged money ritual-related killings in Nigerian cities (Jegade, 2014; Okeshola and Adeta, 2013). However, none of these positions has been duly subjected to an empirical investigation.

It is on this account that this study considers it necessary to examine the perception of the people (based on widespread opinions) about the underlying factors that have driven the increase in money ritual-related killings in recent times in (Ilorin Emirate, Kwara State) Nigeria. This study is primarily opinion-based research, as it samples the perception of the people of Ilorin Emirate, the capital city of Kwara State, Nigeria, on whether the socioeconomic conditions in Nigeria, obsession with wealth, and the widespread beliefs in ritual sacrifices influence the increase in money ritual-related killings in the city.

2. CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Money Rituals

Ritual generally refers to a series or chain of actions that involve the use of gestures, specific words (with intonation and syntax), objects (including roots and herbs), and animals or human body parts as materials for sacrifices (Igbinovia, 1988). It is often performed by specialized individuals in accordance with the tradition or doctrine of a given group, community, or religion (Law, 1985). Rituals involve “activating spiritual powers, whether they be of gods, spirits, or ancestors, in order to achieve a beneficent result” (Fontaine, 2011, p. 2). These activities are often conducted in secret (and sometimes in the open, depending on the type and purpose) and in special places (Law, 1985). Rituals, according to Bell, 1997, are usually characterized by strict adherence to traditional practice and values, sacral symbolism, and sequential performance.

A vital component in a ritual sacrifice is the identification of a particular object(s) that becomes a sacred symbol(s) through a process of sanctification (Fontaine, 2011). Generally, rituals take different forms and are performed for different purposes or motives. Among the widely known types of rituals in Africa and/or reasons why rituals are performed are coronation rites, rites of passage, commemorative (festival) rites, and mitigation of affliction rites, among others (Law, 1985). Money rituals are rites or activities that follow the same procedure as other forms of rituals except for their motives, the kinds of materials used, and perhaps the kind of people involved. Money rituals unlike other forms of rituals are performed to enhance riches or to make people rich (Awolalu, 1979). They are often performed by “herbalists” (also known as witchdoctors or magicians) on behalf of their clients or ritualists (people who visit them for spiritual or ritual assistance). Herbalists are individuals who are believed to be wizards and to have magical powers to see and command spirits (Adeniyi, 2014).

In Nigeria, money rituals are categorized into three types. The first category involves the use of human body parts (head, tongue, eyes, heart, and genitals) as sacred symbols and objects for ritual sacrifices. The second category includes using wild animals (combined with roots and herbs) for ritual sacrifices, while the third category involves using

amulets and charms, and incantation of phrases that are supposed to bring fortune to the person who uses them. The first category is generally believed to be more potent, reliable, and long-lasting than the other two; for these reasons, many people interested in money rituals go for it (Falae, 2018).

People (ritualists) who are fascinated by it are required to bring or offer human body parts (fresh or decomposed) for ritual sacrifices (Akinyemi, 2017). Similarly, Nkrumah (2018), Usman (2017), and Brilliant (2015) noted that body parts of individuals with special genetic conditions (such as albinism, dwarfism, and hunchbacks) are also believed to be more potent in money ritual sacrifices. The ritualists (also known as head-hunters) generally go hunting for prey (victims) at the request of the herbalists, who perform the rituals. The victims’ body parts are obtained by either taking innocent lives or exhuming dead bodies from their graves and offering them to the divine spirit (to whom the ritual is addressed) in return for fortune (Ebhomele, 2015).

Moreover, the ritualists also engage in odd activities such as having sexual intercourse with dead bodies and with people with physical disabilities and mental health disorders (Igbinovia, 1988). The dead body, for instance, is assumed to be surrounded by spirits that could be controlled (through charms and intercourse) to bring fortune to an individual. In the same way, persons with physical challenges and mental health disorders are perceived to be possessed by wild forces that could be turned into agents of fortune (Adagbada, 2014). From the above, this study defines money rituals as a sequence of spiritual rites and activities that are believed to induce fortunes or draw riches to people when performed. It involves the use of objects, incantations, and offerings of human body parts (or animals in some cases) as the sacrificial component of the rituals to the deities in return for a prosperous life.

2.2. Factors Responsible for the Increase in Money Ritual–Related Killings in Nigeria

In the light of the increase in money ritual–related killings across Nigeria in recent years, this paper briefly examines how the socioeconomic challenges in the country and the quest for material

wealth among Nigerians have encouraged these brutal and barbaric killings.

Nigeria's Socioeconomic Challenges: Nigeria is a country bedeviled by multidimensional poverty, unemployment, and insecurity among other problems (Ojowu et al., 2017). The wave of Nigeria's socioeconomic challenges and their impact are widely reported in the literature. Numerous studies and reports have demonstrated that a significant number of Nigerians live below the poverty threshold, do not have access to drinking water, medical, and health care facilities, and find it challenging to survive. For instance, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reports have consistently revealed that poverty in Nigeria is growing at an alarming rate. The number of people who cannot afford the basic needs such as food, shelter, and clothing is roughly half of the entire population (see the National Bureau of Statistics Reports, 2009, 2010, 2016, 2017). Recently, the World Poverty Clock also reported that 87 million Nigerians, or around half of the country's population, live in extreme poverty and that the number of Nigerians falling into abject poverty grows approximately by six people every minute (Gertz and Kharas, 2018). This particular report indicates that Nigeria tops the list of the world's poorest nations, despite her enormous human and natural resources and poverty alleviation and intervention programs.

Similarly, unemployment is also a serious challenge facing Nigeria. The NBS reported that more than 45% of the Nigerian working population is unemployed. Between January 2016 and September 2017, around 7.956 million jobs were lost in Nigeria, and the capacity (of both public and private sectors) to create new ones is limited (NBS, 2017). This is because the various economic sectors (particularly manufacturing, trade, and investment) that are supposed to drive Nigeria's economy are practically handicapped (Saliyu, 2019). Consequently, the civil service (local, state, and federal), which is presently the largest employer of labor in Nigeria, finds it tough to create new jobs and pay salaries to the current employees (Etodike et al., 2018). More than 20 (out of the 36) states in Nigeria were reported to have owed at least 7 months' salary between 2016 and mid-2018. Besides, employees serving under some local and

state civil services received 25 % of their monthly salaries throughout the first and second quarters of 2018 (*The Nation*, 2018; Olowolagba, 2018).

Additionally, employees in the private sector lose their jobs by the day. In fact, private establishments fire more employees than they hire in recent years (Nwanguma et al., 2012). The economic situation, decaying infrastructure, and the unfavorable business environment (government policies, tax system, high interest on and access to loans, and insecurity, among others) in the country have made it very difficult for many of the private businesses - including small and medium scale, to survive (Okpara, 2011). For most of them struggling to survive in such conditions, cutting down the staff strength and increasing the price of their services are the order of the day (Ihugba et al., 2014). In addition, many have folded up or relocated to the neighboring countries. The Manufacturers' Association of Nigeria (MAN) reported that between 2015 and 2017, more than 200 private manufacturing enterprises (including small- and medium-scale businesses) have either crumpled or relocated to neighboring countries owing to Nigeria's economic conditions (Clement, 2017).

Consequently, it has become difficult for graduates to get jobs. It is also challenging for those who acquired (or have an interest in) vocational and entrepreneurial skills to put them into practice and earn a living (Agwu and Emeti, 2014). The various prospective determinants and legitimate means of having a good and prosperous life (such as education, skills and talents, and employment, among others) appear to be irrelevant in Nigeria in recent years (Saliyu, 2019). Thus, many Nigerians have learned the hard way; they go to any length to put food on the table and fulfil other basic necessities of life. Many engage in devious and criminal activities to meet these needs (Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, 2016). *Quest for Wealth and Material Acquisition Among Nigerians:* Nigeria is also one of the societies in Africa (and the world) where great value is attached to money, properties, and luxuries; excessive acquisition of wealth is boundless, and the source of the acquisition is often not a concern (Obo et al., 2014). Excessive desire for wealth and properties is a social syndrome that cuts across all the cultural groups and social classes in Nigeria. Wealth

accumulation according to Iheriohanma, 2009, has become a general way of life in Nigeria and young people are being socialized in this way unconsciously. Iheriohanma further stated that the volume of fortune - mansions, vehicles, and expensive outfits, that one has and/or how extravagant one is, define his or her influence in the society. In fact, success in the Nigerian context as Salihi, 2012, observed, is often associated with a person's wealth and material possession (similar to Robert Merton's description of the American dream). An individual who has a lot of money and sometimes extends his or her hands (with cash and material distribution or gifts) to other members in the community is recognized as successful.

Accordingly, many (young) Nigerians grow up to admire wealth and have a high regard for an extravagant lifestyle. This strong desire for wealth has become an obsession that makes an average Nigerian (young, adult, educated, and uneducated) think about money and a luxurious life (Bisong and Ekanem, 2014). How to own a private jet, buy the latest vehicles and a luxury mansion, and spray money at public functions are the dreams of an average school-going boy in Nigeria (Adama, 2015). In addition, despite the high level of poverty and unemployment in the country, the society still expects people to be successful and wealthy. Parents and family members, for instance, always anticipate and expect that their younger ones, who are often without a specific source of income, will raise them out of poverty or provide for their basic needs (Iheriohanma, 2009).

This boundless obsession for wealth fueled by the societal pressure has, therefore, pushed many Nigerians to engage in all kinds of (strange and illegal) activities to get rich. The end results are evident in the enormous diversion and misappropriation of state resources, and the unimaginable illicit enrichment among public office holders (Obo et al., 2014); increase in fraud, pilfering, and other dubious activities that are common among employees in the public and private sectors (working class Nigerians; Issah et al., 2016); and different forms of depravities - such as the Advance Fee Fraud (commonly known as 419), internet scam (also known as Yahoo-Yahoo), armed robbery, kidnapping for ransom, street and store raiding, trafficking of humans, sale of drugs,

and trading of human body parts, among others, are being perpetrated by unemployed Nigerians (Smith, 2001; Salihi, 2019). The excessive desire for wealth undoubtedly remains a major social issue that fuels other social problems confronting both young and old Nigerians today (Bisong and Ekanem, 2014).

2.3. Incidents of Money Ritual–Related Killings in Nigeria

There is no official record on the occurrence of money ritual–related killings in Nigeria; however, there are regular media reports of the incidence across the country. The media coverage of some cases involving individuals caught and arrested for the possession of human body parts revealed that, in several cases, perpetrators were family members, friends, neighbors, co-workers, and religious leaders of the victims. In addition, perpetrators (male and female) are varied in age range, with an average being in their early 20s to mid-30s; and the overwhelming majority are men from the lower class (Usman, 2017). This, therefore, suggests that money ritual–related killings are perpetrated by both the young and middle-aged individuals from the lower class. This paper presents some of the recent incidents of money ritual–related killings so as to have a clear understanding of how rampant the practice is in Nigeria. All the cases presented here are made available to the public by the law enforcement agency through Nigerian daily newspapers, magazines, and online news blogs.

Among the widely circulated incidents include the case of a third-year university student, Olozino Ogege, from Delta State University, Abraka, who was earlier declared missing on the November 18, 2018. Her body was later found the following day with her breast and tongue severed (Perez, 2018). Also, an 18-year-old boy, Samuel Akpobome, was arrested on October 29, 2018, for killing his mother for money rituals in Edo State. Samuel confessed to the police that he strangled his mother while she was asleep and had sexual intercourse with her corpse as the herbalist instructed him (Alexandra, 2018). On October 5, 2018, Yakubu Azeez, a 37-year-old commercial driver and his group were also paraded by the Nigeria Police Force for being in possession of human skulls, bones, and hair, in Aromaradu area in Ilorin Emirate, Kwara State. Yukubu's house was raided and the group arrested

by the police following intelligence about suspected ritual killings (Jimoh, 2018).

In another case, on August 27, 2018, Folake Folade who posed as an insane person was caught with a decomposing corpse and other human body parts in Lagos State. Police interrogation led to the arrest of her accomplices and the discovery of a tunnel where decomposing corpses, human bones, and materials (such as clothes, bags, student school uniforms, and books) were found (Onyegbula, 2018). Similarly, on November 23, 2017, Olayinka Abass, a 32-year-old man, was caught with human skulls which he claimed to have exhumed from a cemetery in Ilorin for money rituals (Akinyemi, 2017). Also, on August 20, 2017, a 23-year-old man, Ifeanyi Chukwu Dike, was arrested for killing and severing the body parts of an 8-year-old girl, Chikamso Victory, at Messiah street, Ellozu area of Port-Harcourt in River State (Usman, 2017). These cases are a few among several others reported. It should be noted that there are many other unreported cases of money ritual–related killings in Nigeria.

2.4. Structural Strain Theory

This study draws on Robert Merton's structural strain theory. The structural strain theory was greatly influenced by Emile Durkheim's work on (anomie) suicide (Stack, 2004), which explains the condition where the cultural norms of a society break down as a result of the inability of the society to regulate or restrain the goals and desires of its individual members. Merton adopted this idea to develop a macro understanding of the social structure and pattern of norm-violating behavior in American society. For Merton (1938), the society consciously defined a set of (cultural) goals or desires that serve as the dominant culture instilled in its members and created an institutionalized (socially accepted) means to attain these goals.

In American society, the dominant theme (American dream) according to Merton was the culture that emphasized on a member's monetary success. Success in American society is measured by the amount of an individual's wealth and material possessions. Besides, society emphasizes more on members' successes than the means available to attain them. Thus, members are socialized in this way and made to believe that

everyone has a right and opportunity to be successful and that by using the institutionalized means, they will definitely achieve the American dream.

However, in the process of pursuing the American dream, some portions of society will realize that there is a disconnect between the goals and the socially accepted means of attaining them. This disconnect, according to Merton, 1938, is a result of the uneven distribution of opportunities created by the structure. The social conditions and economic realities dictate who succeeds, that is, the structural arrangement limits the rights and opportunities of some members in the society. Consequently, different individuals will experience a different level of strain as they try to achieve the goals. These variations will, in turn, produce some pressures that typically result in various kinds of outcomes (lawlessness).

Merton's assumption is based on the principle that if an individual is thwarted in his or her efforts to obtain the culturally defined goals using institutionalized means, he or she may be tempted to achieve them through a variety of illegal means, that is, individuals who are frustrated by their inability to fulfil the American dream are likely to channel their energies into unlawful activities as ways of attaining these goals. Merton gave five major ways individuals or groups may respond to the situation of strain. According to him, some groups will conform to the existing standards and values by accepting the goals and are determined, despite the constraint, to achieve them using legitimate means (conformist), while others will opt for rather deviant approaches by accepting the legitimate goals but inventing illegitimate means to achieve them (innovationists), rejecting the goals but continuing to use the legitimate means (ritualists), rejecting both the goals and the means (retreatists), or rejecting the goals and substituting them with something entirely different, and adopting whatever means they deem fit to achieve their goals (rebels).

Merton's structural strain theory basically focused on how the structure of a society induces or motivates individuals or groups to violate the social norms. To Merton, the societal emphasis on the socially defined goals rather than on the means of

attaining them and the restricted opportunities available to some members are the essential ingredients that fuel a sense of strain and anomie, which in turn contributes to the crime rate.

In the case of Nigerian society, wealth and material acquisition may be likened with the American dream (Merton's culturally defined goals) that serves as the dominant culture in which Nigerians are socialized and urged and pressured to pursue. Also, formal and informal education including vocational and entrepreneurial skills that Nigerians are encouraged to acquire so as to be able to make a living and fulfil life expectations can be associated with Merton's legitimate or accepted means. However, the limitations or unequal opportunities created by the system prevent some groups of Nigerians from attaining the goals through socially accepted means, and thus they experience some levels of strains or pressures, which in turn produce various kinds of consequences.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was carried out in Ilorin Emirate, the capital city of Kwara State located in the north-central geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Administratively, Ilorin Emirate is divided into 35 wards clustered into three local government areas (LGA). Both primary and secondary sources of data were employed. The primary data were a cross-sectional survey design, and the targeted population for the survey included all the residents of Ilorin Emirate aged 18 years and above. The convenience sampling method was the recruitment technique employed to select a total of 1800 respondents.

A questionnaire was the instrument used to collect (quantitative) data from the selected respondents. The questionnaire was structured and designed in three sections. The first part contained the sociodemographic information of the respondents (such as the age, gender, education, and employment status); the second part covered questions on the prevalence of money rituals and related killings in Ilorin; and the third section covered issues regarding the respondents' perception of the factors responsible for the increase. The questionnaire was measured on a

five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree (very low - very high).

To achieve a reasonable level of validity, the questionnaire was evaluated by a number of research experts in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ilorin, Nigeria. It was revised based on the recommendations of these experts. Also, a pilot study was conducted on 150 people in Ilorin to discover and rectify possible errors in the questionnaire as well as to ensure the reliability of the instrument. Moreover, regarding the procedure employed, copies of the questionnaire were administered on a cross-sectional basis with the assistance of six research assistants. The researchers took enough time to shed light on areas that were not clear to the respondents and also provided answers to questions raised by the respondents. Some of the respondents completed and returned the questionnaire on the day it was given, while others were received a few days after. Basically, the duration of the exercise (administration and collection) was 1 month (including weekends).

It is important to point out that participants' consent was sought. They were duly informed of the objectives of the study and their rights to or not to participate and withdraw from participation anytime. Also, they were assured of their anonymity and confidentiality of the information shared. Thus, participation was voluntary and anonymous. The information gathered was coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to generate simple percentages, frequency distributions, and multiple regression analysis on some quantitative responses relating to the research objectives. Finally, the secondary sources used include academic research, institutional reports, information from newspapers and magazines, and online sources. These sources were carefully analyzed to give a clear picture of the widespread poverty and unemployment and the belief in the existence and influence of supernatural powers on individual success and that human body parts can bring fortune when used for rituals in Nigeria.

3. RESULTS

It is important to note that this study adopts opinion-research, and the results are founded on the opinions of the respondents, rather than an association with an act that has been done, or that the respondents might do. This section, therefore, presents and analyzes the results of the information gathered from the survey. It is also important to note that 1800 questionnaires were distributed to respondents; however, only 1736 were returned completed. Thus, the analysis and inferences are drawn based on the completed questionnaires. It can be observed from Table 1 that 57% of the

respondents were male and 43% female. Also, 11% were between the ages of 18 to 23 years, 26% were 24 to 29 years, 42% were 30 to 35 years, and 21% were 36 years and above. Additionally, the table shows that 12% have informal education, 9% have secondary education, 38% have a Polytechnic National Diploma (ND) and National Certificate in Education, and 41% have a Higher National Diploma and Degree. Finally, 17.4% were government employees, 20% were private organization employees, 27.6% were self-employed, and 35% were jobless.

Table 1: The components that are used in the project

Sex	Frequency (%)	Age	Frequency (%)	Education	Frequency (%)	Occupation	Frequency (%)
			191		208		302
Male	990 (57%)	18-23	(11%)	Informal Edu.	(12%)	Civil Servant	(17.4%)
			451		156	Private Sector Employee	347
Female	746 (43%)	24-29	(26%)	Secondary Edu.	(9%)		(20%)
			729		660		
		30-35	(42%)	ND/NCE	(38%)	Self-Employed	479 (27.6%)
					712		
		36-above	365 (21%)	HND/Degree	(41%)	Unemployed	608 (35%)
Total	1736		1736		1736		1736

Source: Researchers' Field Survey, 2018

In addition, the respondents' perception of the degree of the quest for material wealth among Nigerians and an increase in money rituals in Ilorin

Emirate is presented in Table 2. The table shows that 54% of the respondents believed that the quest for material wealth is very high among Nigerians,

Table 2: Distribution of respondents' perception of the level of the quest for material wealth among Nigerians and the increase in money rituals in Ilorin Emirate

Rate of pursuit/quest for wealth among Nigerians	Frequency	Percentage
Very low	0	0
Somewhat low	0	0
Neither high nor low	139	8
Somewhat high	660	38
Very high	937	54
Total	1736	100
Increase in money rituals	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	87	5
Neither agree nor disagree	243	14
Somewhat Agree	642	37
Strongly Agree	764	44
Total	1736	100

Source: Researchers' Field Survey, 2018

38% said it is somewhat high, while 8% were of the view that it is neither high nor low. In addition, 44% of the respondents strongly agreed that there is an increase in money rituals in Ilorin Emirate, 37% somewhat agreed, 14% neither agreed nor disagreed while 5% somewhat disagreed and none of the respondents strongly disagreed. The implications of these results are that the majority of the respondents perceived that the rate at which Nigerians pursue wealth is extraordinary and that money rituals are on the rise in Ilorin Emirate.

Furthermore, Table 3 presents the respondents' perceptions of the increase in money ritual–related killings in Ilorin Emirate and the factors responsible for the increase. The table shows that 28% of the respondents strongly agree that money ritual killings are on the rise, 43% somewhat agree, 17% neither agree nor disagree, and 12% somewhat disagree. In addition, 17% and 22% of the respondents strongly agree and agree, respectively, that poverty was the factor responsible for the

increase, 29% neither agree nor disagree, while 6% and 26% strongly disagree and disagree, respectively. Moreover, 57% (31%) strongly agree (agree) that unemployment was the factor, 12% neither agree nor disagree, while none (0%) strongly disagree and disagree. Also, 67% (28%) agree (strongly agree) that excessive desire for material wealth was responsible, 4% were neutral, 1% disagree, and none strongly disagree. Additionally, 55% (32%) agree (strongly agree) that the shared beliefs in (money) rituals were responsible, 9% neither agree nor disagree, and 17% (3%) strongly disagree (agree). The implications of these results are that a larger number of the respondents were of the perception that money ritual killings are on the rise and excessive quest for material wealth among Nigerians, unemployment, and beliefs in rituals are the key factors responsible for the increase. Also, less than half (39% - 677) of the respondents held that poverty was the reason.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents' perception of the widespread money ritual–related killings and the factors responsible in Ilorin Emirate

Widespread/increase in money ritual–related killings	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	0	0
Somewhat disagree	208	12
Neither agree nor disagree	295	17
Somewhat agree	746	43
Strongly agree	487	28
Total	1736	100

Factors Responsible	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Total
Poverty	104 (6%)	451 (26%)	504 (29%)	295 (17%)	382 (22%)	1736 (100)
Unemployment	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	208 (12%)	990 (57%)	538 (31%)	
Excessive demand/quest for material wealth	0 (0%)	18 (1%)	69 (4%)	486 (28%)	1163 (67%)	
Beliefs in (money) rituals	17 (1%)	52 (3%)	156 (9%)	556 (32%)	955 (55%)	
Source: Researchers' Field Survey, 2018						

Additionally, Table 4 presents the multiple regression and coefficient analysis of poverty, unemployment, the quest for material wealth, and beliefs in (money) rituals as predictors of money ritual–related killings in Ilorin Emirate, Nigeria. It can be observed that, R-Square which measures the amount of variance in the dependent variable (that independent variables accounted for when taken as a group) is $R^2 = .60$. This suggests that poverty, unemployment, excessive demand for wealth, and the belief in rituals significantly predict the occurrence of money ritual–related killings in Ilorin Emirate. Also, the analysis of variance that tests whether R-square is significantly greater than 0 ($R^2 > 0$) is 0.000, that is, $F(4,149) = 55.751$, P value $0.000 < .001$, and $R^2 = .60$ ($R^2 > 0.000$).

In addition, the table indicates the coefficient analysis that shows the relationship between the dependent variable (ritual-related killings) and each predictor (independent variables: excessive quest for material wealth, unemployment, beliefs in [money] rituals, and poverty) at alpha 0.05. The results indicate the P value for the predictors, (a) excessive quest for material wealth = .000, (b) unemployment = .000, (c) beliefs in (money) rituals = .000, and (d) poverty = .000, are less than the alpha value: $\alpha = 0.05$ (P values $< a, b, c,$ and d). Thus, there are significant relationships between the independent variables (predictors) and the dependent variable.

Table 4: Multiple regression analysis of the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable

Predictors	β	T	P	R	R^2	F	Sig
a. Excessive quest for material wealth	.345	5.938	<.05			(4, 149)	
b. Unemployment	.658	11.619	<.05	.774 ^a	.599	55.751	.000
c. Beliefs in (money) rituals	.195	3.643	<.05				
d. Poverty	.491	8.684	<.05				

Source: Researchers' Field Survey, 2018

5. DISCUSSION

This study investigated respondents' perceived factors responsible for the increase in money ritual–related killings in Ilorin Emirate of Kwara State, Nigeria. Poverty, unemployment, the unbound quest for wealth, and the belief in rituals (or supernatural powers) among Nigerians were examined as the underlying predictors. Respondents' opinions clearly indicate that the rate

at which people seek material wealth is high, the demand for money rituals is on the rise, and so are killings related to money rituals. Moreover, the results also indicate that the predictors considered in this study altogether (as a set) accounted for a substantial change observed in money ritual–related killings in Ilorin Emirate. This revealed that the collective presence of the independent variables has a significant influence on the dependent variable, that is, an excessive quest for wealth

among Nigerians, unemployment, and the general beliefs in rituals, as well as poverty, contributed to the increase in money ritual–related killings in Ilorin Emirate. The results, therefore, suggest that unemployment, the excessive quest for wealth, the beliefs in rituals, and poverty do predict and have implications on money ritual–related killings in Ilorin Emirate of Kwara State, Nigeria.

Thus, these findings signify that despite the level of poverty and unemployment in Nigeria, value for wealth accumulation is widespread among Nigerians. It appears that Nigerian society places greater emphasis on achievement and success (socially defined goals) and automatically socializes members in this way in the presence of the limitations and difficulties in attaining them. To be a successful person in the Nigerian context (as the literature has demonstrated), an individual is expected to be rich, have the necessary material wealth, and be able to provide for the needs of family members and/or possibly lead them out of poverty. However, the socioeconomic reality in the country appears to be a constraint blocking the opportunities of some portions of the population.

Hence, some people appear to be unsatisfied and frustrated with their situation of being jobless, inability to quench their desire for wealth acquisition, and perhaps not having access to basic needs (poverty). Therefore, the willingness to better their present condition appears to be widely influenced by a shared belief in the existence of mystical powers and influences rituals could have on individual fortune. Consequently, these resulted in strains that compelled them to opt for money rituals to achieve the goals - material acquisition (innovationists); this in turn resulted in the hunt for the essential component of ritual sacrifices - human body parts. Thus, the principles of Merton's structural strain theory agree with the findings of this study.

The findings, therefore, validate the positions of some analysts and scholars such as Melvin and Ayotunde, 2011; Adagbada, 2014; Jegede, 2014; and Okeshola and Adeta, 2013, who have claimed that the predominant desire or urge for wealth among Nigerians, socioeconomic conditions, the level of poverty and unemployment, and the common belief that rituals could bring fortunes are

major elements that encouraged money ritual killings in (Ilorin Emirate) Nigeria.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Nigeria is one of the religious countries in the world. There are deep beliefs among Christians, Muslims, and followers of the African Traditional Religion that life and death, success and failure, and health and sickness are determined by destiny or influenced by supernatural divinity. These beliefs, therefore, play a significant role in the day-to-day activities of the people. They shape interactions among the various groups and how people interpret events and occurrences in their lives and around them. This paper examined how the belief in the magical powers and related sacred activities, particularly the ones that accept human body parts for ritual sacrifices in return for fortunes, alongside other factors such as poverty, unemployment, and desire for wealth, have resulted in a major social problem that continues to claim innocent lives on a daily basis across all cities in Nigeria.

On the basis of the findings discussed, the authors, therefore, conclude that there is an indication of relationships between the collective presence of the predictors (widespread beliefs that ritual sacrifices enhance fortunes, the boundless desire for material wealth among Nigerians, unemployment, and poverty) and money ritual–related killings in Ilorin Emirate. In other words, money ritual–related killings in Ilorin Emirate are influenced by the widespread beliefs in ritual sacrifices, the desire for material wealth, unemployment, and poverty. Thus, this study suggests that there should be public enlightenment in all languages spoken in Nigeria about the dangers in associating individual success with spiritual influences. People should be educated that the various determinants of success are education, skills and efforts, and employment opportunities. In addition, there should be a campaign against the belief that human body parts used for rituals will enhance financial fortunes. These notions have not been scientifically proven anywhere in the world. In addition to this, severe penalties (more severe than imprisonment) should be imposed on any person caught with human body parts or found guilty of killing another person for rituals. Also, such a punishment should be carried

out in the public. Scholars have established that severe public punishments serve as a threat to the potential offenders and often put them in a conscious position.

Additionally, a conducive business environment that will allow Nigerians to own business and create employment opportunities should be the objective of the government for eradicating poverty and unemployment in the country. As it is not possible for the public service to accommodate all Nigerians, policies that will aid and encourage small- and medium-scale business should be made. Also, the issue of infrastructure decay should be addressed. When the necessary amenities (such as stable power supply) are provided, business will thrive and young Nigerians will be job architects rather than job hunters. Finally, the urge for wealth is not peculiar to the Nigerian society, as people around the world strive to get rich. However, the manner in which many Nigerians pursue or get their wealth is questionable. People should be encouraged through various religious institutions and social groups to seek wealth in a healthy and lawful manner

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