

Causes, Effects and Strategies for Eradicating Cultism among Students in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria-A Case Study of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka Anambra State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The issue of cultism has in spite of many efforts at reducing it, soared up in the Nigeria's tertiary institutions. Cultism has cast gloom over the educational sector. It is repeatedly said that the youths are the future leaders but it is a little wonder what the future holds for the youth of this country which has a good proportion of her youth as secret cult member. It therefore became imperative to carefully redress the issue of cultism in our tertiary institution where reason should rule over emotion. Undoubtedly, the issue has assumed horrifying proportion as cultic violence thrives even more. The main purpose of this study was to find out the causes, effects and strategies to stop cultism in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. It was discovered from the study that cultism among the students of tertiary institutions is real and urgent solutions is needed by government and institution at large to curb it. The parents must work closely with the institutions authority to arrive at a lasting solution.

Keywords: Cultism, Nigerian, Institutions, Youths and Violence.

INTRODUCTION

Campus cult in Nigeria have been traced back to 1952 when Prof. Wole Soyinka, winner of the 1986 Noble prize for literature and a group of six friends formed the Pirates Confraternity Elite of the University college Ibadan, then part of the University of London [1]. It was formed with the aim of producing future Nigeria leaders who should be very proud of their Africa heritage. They have skull and cross bones as their logo while members adopted confraternity names as "Capon' Blood" and "Long John Silver". The pirates cultivated a style that ridiculed colonial attitude [2]. They proved popular among students even after the original members moved on. Membership was opened to every male students regardless of tribe or race [3] and [4]. For almost 20 years, the pirate a non-violent body become established in all tertiary institution that emerged in post independent Nigeria as the only confraternity on Nigeria campus. The emergence of campus cult as they are known in Nigeria today began with a split of early 1970s, in pirates confraternity. 1972 Bolaji Carew and several others were expelled from the pirates for failing to meet expected standards [5]. In reaction to this and other events, the pirates registered themselves under the name National Association of Seadogs [NAS]. The Buccaneers of Seadogs was founded by Carew. In 1980s confraternities spread over the 300 institutions of higher education in the country. The Neo-Black movement of Africa [Black Axe] emerged from University of Benin in Edo state while the Supreme Eiyee confraternity [National Association of Air Lords] broken off from Black Axe in 1983 [6]. Students at the University of Calabar in cross River State founded the Eternal Fraternal Order of the Legion Consortium [the Klansmens Konfraternity] while a former member of Buccaneers confraternity started the Supreme Vikings confraternity [the Adventures of the De Norsemen Club of Nigeria] the following year [8].

In the mid 80s, it had become evident that some of the cults had been adopted as elements in the intelligence and the security services serving the then military government. They were used against students union and University staff who were the only organized groups opposing military rule [9], [10], [11] and [12].

In 1984, Prof Wole Soyinka, extricated himself from emerging trend, initiated the abolition of the pirates confraternity in all tertiary institution, by then the phenomena of violent cults had developed a life of its own. In early 1990s as the end of the second Republic drew near, confraternity activities expanded dramatically in the Niger Delta as they engaged in a bloody struggle for supremacy. The family confraternity [The campus mafia or The mafia], which modeled itself after the Italian mafia, emerged, shortly after their arrival, several students were expelled from Abia State University for cheating and "cultism " a reference to the voodoo-practicing confraternities, which marked the beginning of a shift of confraternity activities from the university to off campus.

The Brotherhood of the Blood [also known as Two-Two [Black Beret] another notorious confraternity was founded at Enugu State University of Science and Technology. Cults established in early 1990s are; Second Son of Satan [SSS], Night Cadet, Sonmen, Mgba Mgba Brothers, Temple of Eden, Trogan Horse, Jurists, White Bishops, Gentlemen Clubs, Fame, Executioners, Dreded Friends, Eagle club, Black Scorpion, Red Sea Horse, Fraternity of Friends The klansmen konfraternity expanded their influence by creating a Street and Creek Wing,, Deebam to expanded their influence by creating a street and Creek wing, Deebam to fight for and control territory outside the Universities through violence and crime. In response, the supreme Vikings Confraternity

[SVC] establish their own street and creek group, Dewell. When was unable to match Deebam, the SVC created the second confraternity wing. The Icelanders [German], which was led by militia leader Ateke Tom. The outlaws, another well-known street and creek confraternity began to be formed. These includes the Black Brazier [Black Bra], the Viqueens, Daughters of Jezebel and the Damsel. Female confraternities have supplied spies for all allied male confraternities as well as acted as prostitution syndicates [13], [14], [15], [16], [17] and [18].

Statement of the problem

Eradication of cultism in our tertiary institutions has been of concern to many researchers and educationist because there are increases in the number of students that join cultism in tertiary institutions.

Purpose of study

The main purpose of this study is to find out the causes, effects and strategies to stop cultism in tertiary institutions. The study is specifically set out to achieve the following objectives

- Reason students in tertiary institutions join cults.
- Investigate the effects of this social problem in the student's academic performances.
- The extent to which students are involved in cultism.
- Determine strategies for eradicating or minimizing it in tertiary institutions.

Significance of Study

The study is considered significance for the following reasons.

- This study will be of value to the individual, students, parents or guardian, educational sector and the society in general.
- The result of the study will enable the educational administrators to design strategies they will adopt in dealing with matters that would help to eradicate cultism in universities.
- It will also act as bare-line data for future researchers who may want to engage in similar study in future.

Scope of study

The researcher wishes to state the scope of the study as follows.

- ❖ That the topic indicates, the study is restricted to the incidence, cause, effects and remedies of cultism among students of tertiary institutions University Awka and not the whole tertiary institution in Anambra State.
- ❖ That the researcher is very much constrained by time to confine the study to tertiary institution of Nnamdi Azikiwe. That it will not include other tertiary institutions in the state. Therefore, the generalization and conclusion to be made shall be valid to the extent they apply only to Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State.

Research Questions

The study will attempt to find out answers to the following research questions.

1. What are the causes of students involvement in cultism
2. What effect has cultism on the student's academic performance?
3. What forms of behaviours do the cultism manifest that affects the societies?
4. Can cultism be stopped in our tertiary institutions
5. What should be done to curb cultism in our tertiary institutions?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Design of Study

The type of design used in this study was descriptive survey. In this type of design, investigations were carried out in their natural setting without research manipulation of either the independent or dependent variable. In this present study a survey design is preferred since the study aims at sampling students, lectures and non academic staff, perception of the causes, effects and strategies for eradicating cultism in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Area of study

The study was carried out in tertiary institution of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. Virtually all the tertiary institutions in Nigeria are under the impact of cultism.

Population of the study

The population of this study was made up of 50students, 30 lectures and 20 non-academic staff of Nnamdi

Azikiwe University Awka.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The researcher used simple random techniques. Due to the vast number of people in the institution, 100 respondents were randomly selected, 50 were students, 30 were lecturers and 20 were non-academic staff.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire, which was designed by the researcher to elicit response from the respondents. The instrument was divided into four major sections. A contains the personal data, section B contains causes of cultism, section C effects of cultism and section D solution to eradicate cultism in tertiary institutions. The responses are rated as follows:

Strongly Agree [SA] -4 points

Agree [A] – 3points

Disagree [D] – 2points

Strongly Disagree [SD] – 1 point.

Validity of the Instrument

The instrument was given to experts on the field of Educational Psychology, Measurement and Evaluation. This was to ensure the content and face validity. The experts analyzed the instrument and gave corrections based on the language of the instrument so as to be more appropriate. The questionnaire was given to the Supervisor for final approval.

Reliability of the instrument

The reliability of the instrument was established using test-retest method. The researcher administered the instrument on 50 students, 30 lectures and 20 non-academic staff, not included in the study. A month later, the same instrument was administered on the same set of people on the pretext the initial copies were correlation coefficient of 0.75 was obtained. This score was considered high enough to be used for data collection.

Method of Data Collection

One hundred questionnaires were distributed among the selected samples. In administering the questionnaires, the researcher adopted the direct delivery techniques [DDT]. This means that the questionnaires were personally administered and collected by the researcher. This was to ensure high rate of questionnaire returns. The direct delivery techniques was used as to

- Reduce the mortality rate of the questionnaire.
- Help researcher to clarify issues and matter, which were ambiguous
- Encourage the respondents to complete the questionnaires on their own rather than being influenced by others.
- Eliminate delay and time loss often associate with other method of data collection.

Method of Data Analysis

For analysis of data, the researcher used descriptive statistical method of analysis. Thus, the researcher computed the mean and standard deviation of the responses on each questionnaire item using the mean formula

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum fx}{N}$$

And standard deviation formula

$$S = \frac{\sum fd^2}{N}$$

X=Mean of the response on each questionnaire item

F=Frequency of each questionnaire item

X= Deviation of each scale point from mean.

N= Total number of response on each questionnaire item.

Calculation of the decision point or cut –off mean was arrived as follows:

Strongly Agree [SA] –4 points

Agree [A] – 3points

Disagree [D] – 2 points

Strongly Disagree [SD]-1 point.

$$\text{Cut off mean} = \frac{4+3+2+1}{4} = 2.5 \text{ decision.}$$

Hence the cut – off mean 2.50 implies that every mean score, that is exactly or above 2.50 agree with the

decision while any score below 2.50 agree with any score below 2.50, disagree with the decision.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The data collected from the study were presented and analyzed. These were done according to each research question.

RESEARCH QUESTION 1

What are the causes of cultism in tertiary institution in Nigeria?

Table 1

Scores of the students, lecturers and non-academic staff responses on the causes of cultism in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

SN	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	EX	REMARK
1	Corruption in the society leads Students to cultist	58	22	12	6	328	3.28	Accepted
2	Parents that are in secret cult influence their children to be cultist	30	42	25	3	299	2.99	Accepted
3	Broken homes can lead students to cultism	20	48	20	12	276	2.76	Accepted
4	Inadequate funding of the university to acceptably take care of students welfare encourage cultism	7	11	50	32	193	1.93	Not accepted
5	Students with inborn trait of being cultist	21	43	24	12	273	2.73	Accepted
6	Harsh economic situation in the country encourage cultism	30	54	13	3	311	3.11	Accepted
7	Students indulge in cultism because those caught in cult activities are not persecuted.	42	36	13	9	311	3.11	Accepted

The above table showed that cultism can be caused by corruption in the society; this had a weighted mean of 3.28. It was also observed that harsh economic situation in the country and the fact that those indulge in cultism are not persecuted have a mean score of 3.11 respectively. The influence of parents in secret cult on their children has a score of 2.99. Broken homes and the fact that students with inborn trait of being sadist are mostly cultist have mean score of 2.76 and 2.73 respectively. All the above scores were generally accepted because their mean score are above normal mean of 2.50 while inadequate funding of the universities to take care of the students welfare has a mean of score of 1.93. It is not generally accepted because the score is below the normal mean 2.50. The table summarily showed that the main cause of cultism in tertiary institution are corruption in the society, harsh economic situation, the fact that those indulge in cult activities are not persecuted, influence of parents that is in secret cult and broken homes.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2

What are the effects of cultism in tertiary institutions in Nigeria?

Table 2

Scores of the students, lecturers and non-academic staff responses on the effects of cultism in tertiary institution in Nigeria.

SN	Items	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL	EX	REMARK
8	Destruction of lives and property of students and the university	52	46	2	-	350	3.50	Accepted
9	Cultist engage in nefarious activities like armed robbery, prostitution etc to meet up with their extravagant lifestyle.	60	40	-	-	360	3.60	Accepted
10	Diseases like Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome could spread by sucking blood during oath taking by cultist.	47	42	9	2	334	3.34	Accepted
11	There is decline in academic of cultist	30	39	16	15	284	2.84	Accepted
12	There is increase in malpractice due to non-seriousness of cultist in their study	40	37	18	5	312	3.12	Accepted
13	Cultism could result to arrest, detention, and imprisonment of those involved in it	60	40	-	-	360	3.60	Accepted

From the above table, effect of cultism in tertiary institution include arrest, detention and imprisonment of those involved, engaging in nefarious and imprisonment of those involved, engaging in nefarious activities like armed robbery, both have a mean score of 3.6 which are generally accepted because they are above the normal mean 2.50. Destruction of lives and properties of students and University with mean of 3.5, spread of diseases like Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome which result in sucking of blood during oath taking by cultist with mean of 3.34. Increase in examination malpractice due to non-seriousness of cultist in their study with mean of 2.84 are all accepted as effects of cultism because they are above the normal mean of 2.50.

The table summarily showed that effects of cultism in tertiary institution as destruction of lives and properties of students and University, spread of diseases like Immune deficiency syndrome from blood sucking during oath taking by cultist in their studies and decline in academic performance of cultist.

RESEARCH QUESTION 3

What are the strategies towards building a cultist free tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Table 3

Scores of the students, lecturers and non-academic staff responses on the strategies towards building cultists free tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

SN	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	EX	REMARK
14	Students should be properly guided through guidance and counseling	25	60	10	5	305	3.05	Accepted
15	Workshop should be organized during orientation of fresh students on the dangers of secret cult	50	30	13	7	383	3.83	Accepted
16	Regular check on possession of arms by the students should be carried out on campuses	22	48	20	10	282	2.82	Accepted
17	High cost of education in Nigeria should be reduced	18	50	20	12	274	2.74	Accepted
18	Establishment of tribunal to try cultists and if found guilty should be sentenced accordingly	26	47	13	14	282	2.82	Accepted
19	Parents should monitor their children both in and outside the school and counsel them regularly	33	60	7	-	319	3.19	Accepted
20	Churches should have youth department that would give the youths the forum to vent their issues.	56	24	14	6	330	3.30	Accepted

From table 3. Strategies towards building a cultist free tertiary institutions in Nigeria include monitoring the students both in and outside the school and counseling them regularly by the parents. This has a mean value of 3.19 which is accepted generally because it is more than the normal mean of 2.50. Other strategies include organizing orientation for fresh students on the dangers of secret cult with a mean of 3.83. Organizing a strong youth department to give the youths forum to vent out their issues by churches with mean of 3.30, guiding of students properly through guidance and counseling with mean value of 3.05, Regular check on possession of arms by the students should be carried out on campuses and tribunal establishment to try cultist and if found guilty should be sentenced accordingly both have a mean value of 2.74 are all accepted because of the fact that they are above the normal mean of 2.50.

Summarily, the table showed that strategies towards building a cultist free tertiary institution in Nigeria include guiding student properly through guidance and counseling, organizing workshop during orientation of fresh students on the dangers of secret cults. Regular check on possession of arms by the students on campuses should be carried out. Reduction in the high cost of education in Nigeria. Establishment of tribunal to try cultist and sentenced accordingly if found guilty, monitoring of children both in and outside the school by the parents and organizing a strong youth forum by the churches for youth to vent out their issues.

Three research questions were raised to formulate twenty questions. Which were asked in questionnaire, hundred respondents were selected, 50 students, 30 lectures and 20 non-academic staff. The research questions were based on the following: The cause of cultism, the effect of cultism and strategies towards building a cult free tertiary institution in Nigeria, the respondents accepted all the items expect item 4, which is inadequate funding of Universities to take care of students welfare. Thus, out of seven items on the effect of cultism, the respondent accepted all the six items enumerated. Finally the respondents accepted all the seven items enumerated on the strategies towards building cultist free tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

DISCUSSION

The main aim of this study was to find out the causes, effects and strategies for eradicating cultism in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. To obtain the necessary data the researcher had to first review some related literature on cultism, drawn up questionnaire which were completed by the students, lecturers and non-academic staff of

Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka.

Simple random sample and sampling techniques to select 50 students, 30 lecturers and 20 non-academic staff to which all of them responded. In order to carry out the study effectively, the researcher analyzed the collected data by using their mean value and it was observed from the findings that the current wave of cultism in tertiary institution were widely distributed to corruption in the society influence from parents who belong to secret society, in born trait of being sadist, broken homes and the fact that those caught in cultic activities are not prosecuted consequently, cultism was discovered to be very common in tertiary institution. This was based on the fact that most of this tertiary institution students are in their adolescent age or about to enter adult age, it was observed that most of the students misbehavior starts from adolescent age, when not curtailed pose a great challenge to the nation and its entire economy. Furthermore, the effect resulting from this which include destruction of lives and properties of students and the University, engaging in armed robbery, prostitution etc to meet up with their extravagant lifestyle, contraction of diseases, decline in academic performance increase in examination malpractice and arrest, detention and imprisonment of those involved in it. The above effects have increased lawless education in our country. In addition, some corrective measures used by institutions like suspension and expulsion have yielded negative or no result. Hence measures like guidance and counseling, establishment of tribunal to try cultist, monitoring and counseling by parents and workshops should be organized during orientation are considered more effective.

IMPLICATION OF STUDY

Parent should monitor the activities of their children both in and outside the school. They should know the kind of friends they keep and monitor them regularly. Churches and mosques should establish strong youth department that would give youths opportunity to vent out their issues. Finally, the government should establish tribunal to try cultists and if found guilty should be sentenced accordingly without fear or favour. They should also carry out regular check on the students on possession of arms in the campuses. High cost of education should be reduced to enable the poor ones meet up their educational expenses, thereby giving most students opportunity to study comfortably. The study has a lot of implications on the students, the institution, society and educational sector in general. The findings that cultism is caused by laxity among parents implies that parent should wake up from their slumber. They should act as model for their children to emulate. They should start on time to teach them moral and values of the society.

Moreover, cultism affects the institution tremendously, both in the standard of education and in the area of discipline. These would give the institution bad image. The school authority should try as much as possible to enforce law and order in the school and provide basic amenities that would take care of the students welfare and make the environment conducive for studying. Government should know that nobody is above the law. Whoever that is guilty of cultism whether he or she is from rich or poor family should be made to face the music accordingly. They should provide the institution with enough fund to enable them take care of their needs, the educational sector should know that education is the key for growth and development of a nation. A nation without good and firm educational foundation is bound to fail. We should learn from the story of Spartan and try to make our education sector an emulatory one. They should provide well equipped libraries and equipment for different laboratories to enable students study with ease. They should provide scholarship to brilliant students to study further in overseas. Finally, government should provide job opportunities for the graduates.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the finding from the data collected from the research. The researcher has come up with the following recommendation so that the cause of cultism can be minimized. The research is of the opinion that cultism among students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria could be minimized by introducing programmes in the television, radio and other awareness programme such as workshop and seminars designed to enlighten the students on the implications and the danger of joining secret cults. Guidance and counselor should be posted to every tertiary institution in Nigeria with the duty of counseling the students and staff only. These counselors should report systematically cases of unexplained and unjustified advances of students to female or male lecturers, and that of lecturers to students. The institution administrators should maintain adequate inspection, supervision and monitoring the staff and students on cultism. There should be forum where the students and lecturers should discuss the issues of cultism. Parents should train their children in moral and try to meet their needs. They should check the company their children keep and counsel them regularly.

Government should establish tribunal to try cultist and if found guilty should be sentenced accordingly. This will be the detriment to those who have joined or to those who have the intention of joining the secret cults. They should reduce the high cost of education in Nigeria so that everyone can afford it. Finally churches and mosques and other religious organization should have strong youth forum in other to give youths opportunity to vent out their issues.

LIMITATION OF STUDY

This study has certain limitations and they are as follows

1. The researcher would have liked to cover the entire nation, but due to the insufficient time and finance, the study was restricted to Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra state.
2. Some of the students who completed the questionnaire were not co-operative, some even requested of gratification before completing it while others were very reluctant. This may have affected the result of the study since some respondents may have given fake response.
3. Another limitation of this study is lack of textbooks, journals and articles in the area of cultism.

CONCLUSION

The study discovered that cultism among the students of tertiary institutions is real and urgent solution is needed to be taken by the government and institution at large to curb it. The parents must work closely with the institutions authority to arrive at a lasting solution [19] and [20]. More importantly, counseling services in tertiary institution should be taken seriously and counselors have a major role to play towards helping to implement the programme for the reduction of the incidence of cultism in tertiary institutions. It was therefore concluded that the following were the cause of cultism in tertiary institution, they are corruption in the society, broken homes, inborn trait of being sadist, not persecuting those who are caught in cultist activities and influence from parents who belong to secret cults. It can be concluded that the following were the effects of cultism on the students at large. They include increase in crimes like armed robbery and prostitution etc, spread of diseases, decline in academic performance of cultist, increase in examination malpractice, destruction of lives and properties, drug abuse, arrest, detention and imprisonment. The following were the suggested solution to cultism school or institution authority should organize workshops during orientation of new students to enlighten them on the dangers of cultism, every institution should have department of guidance and counseling in order to guide and counsel the students. Also necessary support and encouragement should be provided to this department in terms of finance and materials [20] and [21].

SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In view of the limitations of the study, it is pertinent that further research should be carried out in other Universities as it concerns cultism in Institutions and other government sectors.

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