
Cultism and Academic Activities in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State: Students Perception

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Abstract

This study investigated students' perception of cultism and academic activities in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. It further determined the reasons why tertiary institution students join secret cults; evaluate the extent to which cult activities affect the academic activities of the tertiary institutions. Questionnaire was the source of data collected, and the data collected was analyzed using mean, standard deviation and Z-test statistical tool to strengthen the validity of the findings. The sample size of this study comprised 211 respondents. The study's reliability index is .85. The data collected were analyzed to answer the specific research questions and hypotheses. The study found that there is no significant difference between the rating of male and female students on the reason why students join cult, effect of cultism on academic activities, extent in which cult activities threaten life in tertiary institutions such as University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT), Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE), federal College of Education (Technical) (FCET) and Elechi Amadi Polytechnic on the measures adopted to curb cultism in tertiary institutions. Recommendations were made.

Keywords: Cultism, Academic Activities, Tertiary Institutions, Students, Lecturers, Rivers State.

INTRODUCTION

The most important and embarrassing problem facing tertiary institutions in Nigeria today is the menace and aggressiveness of cult members and cult related activities. Never before has the potential for destruction of lives and properties on campuses of tertiary institutions been so great or escalated so fast and horrible as now. There is rarely any academic session without reports of cult related activities in most Nigerian institutions. There is rarely any tertiary institution in Rivers State that has not experienced the hazards of cult activities lately. The presence of secret cult activities in higher institutions has resulted in the death and injury of students and management staff of higher institutions. Their activities continue to impact negatively on safety and security in the mind of students and staff. The lives of promising young men and women have been cut short by the bloody hand of murderous gangs on campuses.

According to Okwu (2006) students and lectures died on campuses as a result of cult related violent clashes. The pertinent question remains that why is the phenomenon of cult common in Nigerian institutions of higher learning? This is because international figures have been known to be members of the pirate confraternity in their college days.

Ekwueme and Ogbondah (2005) noted that in 1952 Wole Soyinka (now professor) and six others (Olumuyiwa Awe, Ralp Opara, Tunji Tubi, Daign Imokhuede, Pius Olegbe and Olu Agunloye) of University of Ibadan formed the seadogs (a.k.a the pirate). Nwideduh

(2003) state that admission into the confraternity was open to men who are credible with high intellectual ability. Names of members were contained in a directory, including their field of study and address and the mode of operation was public knowledge.

Ekwueme and Ogbondah (2005) observed that the idea behind the formation of the confraternity were both patriotic and altruistic as it was not imagined to be secret cult. The main objectives of the Seadogs as summarized by Orintusin (1990) were to fight non-violent but intellectually, to abolish colonial mentality, for revival of the age of chivalry and to find a lasting solution to the problem of tribalism and elitism.

Ekwueme and Ogbondah (2005) observed that some members of the Pyrates who were earlier expelled from the group in 1972, for falling short of acceptable standards of the pirate confraternity, teamed up under the leadership of Bolaji Carew and formed a new confraternity very similar to the pirate. This new group called Buccaneers confraternity (a.k.a National Association of Sea Lords) was to accommodate students who could not be admitted into pirate confraternity (Rotimi, 2005).

Ololube (2012a) citing Orintusin (1990) stated that in July 1984, the pirate confraternity formally closed all its students affiliate groups in Nigerian campuses, citing as their reason, the rising incidents of cult violence and proliferation of cult groups on Nigerian campuses; But this was not before several other secret cult groups have sprung up throughout the over 300 tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Worlu (2007) highlighted some of the prominent cult group that emerged to include the supreme Vikings confraternity founded in University of Port Harcourt, Black Axe or Neo Black Movement which emerged from university of Benin in Edo state, later broke off from the group to form the National Association of Air Lords (also called Supreme Eiye Confraternity). Brotherhood of blood (a.k.a Black Beret) was founded at the Enugu State University of Science and Technology. Akani (1996) observed that these campus cults could be identified by their colour. Black Axe with black and yellow, Vikings with black and red. Worlu (2007) observed that in 1990's so many female cult groups emerged such as Black Brassiere, The Amazons, Amashi Babes, Daughters of Jezebel and Viqueen.

Ololube (2012b) observed that these female cult groups often collaborate with their male counterparts in carrying out cult activities on campus. Ibukun (1999) noted that the process of recruitment is mostly done at the beginning of each school session when cultists embarked on aggressive hunt for new members. They do this by approaching fresh students to join them. Sometimes, they assist them in admissions, accommodation all in a bid to entice them into their group. The most effective tool employed by cultists to hoodwink fellow students into their group is deception and lies. They paint a grossly picture of cultism as a harmless, enviable group that provides students the best opportunity to enjoy their lives on campus. They also make empty promises of providing the student security and connections both in and outside the campus.

Often times, tales are told of Vice-chancellors, Rectors, lecturers and other important personalities in the society who belong to these cult group and how the connection acquired through membership of these group can benefit the student in one way or the other (Nnadi, 2000; Okafor, 2003).

They also employ brainwashing as a viable technique by which they convince people to join them. A few psychologist working independently in this field suggested that "brainwashing" techniques were used to maintain loyalty of "Cult" members (Richardson & Intovigine, 2001). Sometimes they employ threats, intimidation and outright violence to coerce students into joining their group. Some of the special qualities they look at for the prospective members include mean and fierce looking face, ruggedity and wealthy background.

After recruitment and screening, prospective members must pass through an initiation process to ascertain eligibility for membership. On the initiation day, the new members are made to drink some concoction mixed with blood, after which they are subjected to thorough beating as a means of hardening them and testing their resilience and endurance of pain (Rotimi, 2005; Nnadi, 2000).

Okafor (2003), cites the narration of the experience of an ex-cultist thus : At the initiation ground, we were tortured and mercilessly beaten, flogged with sticks as big as water pipes and were made to wrestle with each other even when it was clear that there was no strength left in us . We were tortured without mercy inside the bush, from 12 midnight to about 4:30am when we were asked to lie down on our belly and members of the cult jumped up and down on our backs. A boy fainted and another had his waist broken seriously, while some had bleeding head". Cultists indulge in rape, murder, armed robbery and kidnapping. Also these cultists have been linked to political violence, rigging, assassination and ballot box snatching. Based on these aforementioned, the study set out to investigate cultism and academic activities in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Statement of the Problem

Cultism as a social menace has threatened lives and security of students and their properties and most times students lose their lives and that of their loved ones and academic calendar affected. Their manner of operation is sinister and bizarre leaving behind them, a trail of wanton destruction. Most distressing of the problems is the space of killing in our campuses in recent time; many lives have been terminated permanently. Unfortunately, this issue of cultism is applicable everywhere.

According to Adewale (2005) in University of Port Harcourt on the 24th November 1995, seven students belonging to the Buccaneers confraternity plunged into the choba river while returning from initiation ceremony. He also reported the following: In 1991 a student of University of Port Harcourt was beheaded during feud between cult members. In 1997, the Mafia confraternity killed Obasi Ezewaa a student of University of Port Harcourt, Department of Marketing a member of Vikings and the next day, Humphrey Igwe of Accountancy department belonging to Mafia cult was killed by Vikings cult members in retaliation by the Vikings confraternity, Emeka Nkwocha member of KKK was killed by Black Axe confraternity in 1998 and Hausa Mallam died as a result of stray bullet from the Vikings confraternity.

Babatandi (1998) reported in June 2008 of the pandemonium that erupted in University of Port Harcourt, which eventually led to the death of Dr. Ikezam Ozuru of the education faculty, a market woman, two members of the cult team that struck. It was a very sad day in the history of University of Port Harcourt that showed mindless and aimless shooting by cultists.

Opaluwah (2009) reported another incident on 20th May 2008, night of the matriculation day when University of Port Harcourt witnessed another shooting at the Nelson Mandela Hostel area and this action resulted to the death of two students. At Federal College of Education Technical Omoku on the 11th march 2012, school and personal property were destroyed, vehicles were burnt and many lives were threatened. Following this scenario, it is evident that life and properties are no longer safe on campuses for students and staff. All kinds of dangerous weapons are found around the cultist in the hostel such as guns, machetes, knives, axe and charms used to perpetrate their devilish act. The mayhem perpetrated by cultists on campus has attracted much public interest over the years. Hence, the study sets out to investigate cultism and academic activities in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the perception of undergraduate students on the impact of cult related happenings on social and academic activities of students in tertiary institutions in Rivers state. Specifically, the study aim to:

- Identify the reason why undergraduate students join secret cults;
- Examine the extent to which cultism affect academic calendar of tertiary institutions in Rivers State;
- Investigate the extent to which cult activities affects lecturers-students relationship in tertiary institutions; and
- Examine the extent to which cult activities threaten life, property and security of students on campus.
- Identify the measures adopted by management to curb the menace of cultism on tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research question guided the researcher in the study:

- Why do tertiary institution students in Rivers state join secret cults?
- How does cult activity affect the academic activities of the tertiary institutions?
- How does cult activity affect students and lecturers relationship?
- How does a cult activity threaten the life, property and security of students and lecturer on campus?
- What are the measures put in place to curb secret cult activities in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypothesis were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance to direct the study:

- Ho1: There is no significant difference between the rating of male and female students on the reason why students join cult in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.
- Ho2: There is no significant difference between the rating of female and male students on the effect of cultism on academic calendar in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.
- Ho3: There is no significant difference between the rating of male and female students to the extent which cult activities threaten life in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.
- Ho4: There is no significant different between UNIPORT, IAUOE, FCE(T) and Elechi Amadi Polytechnic on the measures adopted to curb cultism.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

The sociological theory adopted in this work is social learning theory. Social learning theory is derived from the work of Albert Bandura (1971) which proposed that social learning occurred through four main stages of imitation: close contact, imitation of superior, understanding of concepts and role model behaviour.

Social learning suggests a combination of environment (social) and psychological factors influence behaviour. Social learning theory emphasized the importance of learning in personality growth, development and change; like the behaviourists, but differ in three ways; first, social learning theorists argue that reinforcement such as praise and sanctions (penalty) are important in determining whether behaviours are performed, but are not critical to behaviours being acquired or learned. For instance, a child learns certain behaviours from their parents or other people, through observing their actions, without the necessarily knowing the outcomes of such actions. Nevertheless, children are more likely to practice behaviours they have observed or learnt when they are rewarded for such practices. Social learning theorists argue that complex behaviour are learned holistically; and, emphasizes is on the importance of internal processes such as thoughts in the development and regulation of behaviours. When an individual is conditioned to be rewarded they anticipate it to happen in the future, but when they are presented with a non-reward situation this creates an unconditioned frustration response.

According to Dollard and Miller's (1939, 1950), the individual is "instigated" toward a behaviour, which is some antecedent condition of which the predicted response is the consequences. The applications of social learning theory have been important in the history of education policies. Agha (1994) observed that some students from families that have an established practice of traditional religious worship are often characterized by fetishness and pettishness, would want to join cults to continue their family traditions, especially when it comes to fetish behaviours is a sine quo non for campus cult activities, assorted charms, voodoo, magic masks and peculiar regalia are more or less part of the secret cults paraphernalia, this then shows that people learn through imitation and observing.

Social learning theory can also be seen in television and movie rating system that is used in our different homes and tertiary institutions where students have most freedoms. The rating system is designed to let all parents know what the programs that their children are watching contain hence some students may decide to join cult after watching these movies. Some content may be harmful to children who do not have the cognitive ability to process certain content; however, the child may model the behaviours seen on TV. Locus of control is an important consideration when helping students in higher education environments perform better academically. This is because the individual influences his environment while the environment in turn influences the individual. Thus a person in a friendly environment would learn friendliness which they could transfer to another environment.

The environment has to do with the individuals' immediate surroundings and other human persons. No educational institution can survive or achieve its objectives if authority has not been vested in it. Eguaroen (2006) socialization is the process through which cultural values, norms, behaviors and characteristics of the society is transmitted to its young and potential members. This is a means through which society preserved its rich cultural heritage and achieved basic social conformity, which are important means for ensuring their survival. Also Adewale (2005) explain that learning by imitation deals with learning by observation. This is very rapid form of learning by students and most behaviors is acquired by imitation. The imitation model of socialization theory is one which learners themselves learn roles,

duties, and values by copying and approximating the expected standard of behavior of their peers and most importantly of those they wish to be like.

Conceptual Review

Echekwube (1999) traces the origin of the term cultism to the Latin word "cultus" which means worship and is actually associated with the worship of one God or Supreme Being. The word 'cultism' originated from the Latin word 'Occukre' which denotes something hidden, occulted, concealed, enigmatical, mysterious, mystical, etc.

Orukpe (1998, p. 1) notes that "cults are a group of people who share and propagate peculiar secret beliefs divulged only to members". The (1999) constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria define secret society in section 318 (1) as any society, association, group or body of persons (whether registered or not) that uses secret signs, oaths, rites or symbols and which is formed to promote a cause, the purpose or part of the purpose of which is to foster the interest of its members and to aid one another under any circumstances without due regard to merit, fair play or justice, to the detriment of the legitimate interest of those who are not member.

The Origin of Cultism

The history of cultism in Nigeria higher institutions is traceable to the university college of Ibadan now university of Ibadan Ekwueme and Ogbondah (2005). Ekwueme and Ogbondah (2005) noted that in 1952 Wole Soyinka (now professor) and six others (Olumuyiwa Awe, Ralph Opara, Tunji Tubi, Daigh Imokhuede, Pius Olegbe and Olu Agunloye) of university of Ibadan formed the seadogs (a.k.a the pirate). The ideas behind the formation of the confraternity were both patriotic and altruistic as it was not imagine as a secret cult.

According to Orintusin (1990) the objectives of the seadogs were good and noble. The main objectives of the Seadogs as summarized by Orintusin (1990) were to fight non-violent but intellectually, to abolish colonial mentality, the revival of the age of chivalry and to find a lasting solution to the problem of tribalism and elitism. Names of members were contained in a directory, including their field of study and address and the mode of operation was public knowledge. The members engaged in charity works. They donated blood to the hospital to save life, they present gift to orphanages.

Opaluwah (2009) noted that one positive thing about this group is that they do not harm unless provoked and could serve as instruments for social change in the society. Ekwueme and Ogbondah (2005) observed that in 1972, there was fracas amongst members of the confraternity and this was as a result of ideology differences. This difference emanated between those who wanted radical politics and those ideology of the founding fathers. Worlu (2007) noted that the disagreement in ideology between members of pirate confraternity led to the suspension and expulsion of some members. Those suspended and expelled members of pirate confraternity teamed up and formed Buccaneers (a.k.a the sealords).

Ololube (2012a) citing Orintusin (1990) noted that in July 1984, the pirate confraternity formally closed all its students affiliate groups in Nigerian campuses, citing as their reason, the rising incidents of cult violence and proliferation of cult groups on Nigerian campuses; But this was not before several other secret cult groups have sprung up throughout the over 300 tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Worlu (2007) stated that 1980s witness a great split of the parent cults that has existed before this time. Some of these groups include: Black Axe, Black cats, Vikings, Amazors, Mafia, Dragon, Eyie frigates, Barracudas, Daughters of Jezebel, Vimpers, etc.

Adewale (2005) observed that the Black movement of the 1990s, some of these cult group which describe themselves as Black this” or “Black that” were characterized by militancy, devilish objectives and bloody clash among the rival cults.

Reason Why Students Join Cultism

Some of the reasons while students join secret cults in tertiary institutions according to Ekwueme and Ogbonda (2005), Ekwueme and Ogbondah (2005), Wali (2007) and Ololube (2012a,b) are:

- **For moral and financial support:** Cult activities are alleged to have been sponsored by wealthy individuals within and outside the campus. The sponsors give financial and moral support to members because they regard themselves as brothers and should be their brother’s keeper.
- **To Earn Respect:** Members of secret cult are feared and respected because of the backing they command. People are afraid of them because of their dangerous activities.
- **Crave for Supremacy:** To be seen as a lord or tough guy, because to them toughness ensures a lot of benefits, free access to any female students of one’s choice, free entry to parties; free access to other students belonging such as buckets, electric iron, radio, money, cheating in examination, intimidating lecturers into passing them (Onuogha, 1998).
- **Search for Responsibility.** Some students join cult in order to perform certain service for the members. For example some students may engage in cult activities in order to fight for perceived injustice against members in their campus.
- **For Protection:** The most common antic employed in luring ignorant students is the protection fable. They make an ignorant student believe that they can give their victim absolute protection being the most powerful and strongest cult that nobody or cult group can cross their path without paying dearly for it. In order to seek power for protection from attack from rival cults, and intimidation from fellow students, some students join the secret cult. Some students are made to believe that as members of secret cults, they are certainly free to command respect from fellow students. They see it as a way of intimidation from fellow students. Some students are made to believe that as members of secret cult, is a way of getting rid of their timidity.
- **Inferiority Complex:** Students who join cult groups for this reason make mistakes due to their perception that the cult organization is a place where they can find people who will readily accept them without regard to their social status and they believe that becoming A cultist would forestall those who they assume to be superior to them from looking down on them.
- **For Economic Gain:** According to Oyegoke (2003), cult members are given the wrong impression that they stand a better chance of becoming economically more buoyant than non-members. Students from poor homes are easily won over with this gimmick. They are told that for them to live well and have access to so many avenue of making money on campus, the only way is to join a cult organization. They make their victims believe that they can be independent of their poor parents’ assistance. So many students from poor home fall victim of this. There is no normal and legitimate means of making money in the cult world. The only means cultists employ in getting money is by forceful extortion of money from their fellow students, some are involved in stealing and armed robbery.

- **Frustration:** A lot of students join cult groups out of financial, academic, social and psychological frustration and these students usually resort to drug abuse as a way out.
- **Love for Female Students:** There are students who join cult groups because they think female students will like to go out with them. And can use their status as cultist to force or coerce any girl on campus to go out with them.
- **Peer Group Influence:** Most students joined various cult groups due to peer group influence and pressure. Students who became cultist due to this factor have done so, based on the assumption that they don't want to be seen as weaklings and mere men by their friends who are cultists.
- **Administrative style:** A number of administration in higher institutions are autocratic and maintain hostile relationship with staff and students. They rarely involved the members of the school community in decision making process and they ban students Unionism at will and the students feel threatened and provoked on campus.
- **Parental background:** Some parents are cultists and their ward is fully aware of the activities of their parents so when they enter into higher institutions they practice what their parents do at home because to them, it is a way of life or a normal thing. Mgbekem (2004) noted that some parents love their children up to the extent that when they do wrong things instead of scolding them, they pampered them and these children grow up with these behaviors which lead them to join cult groups.
- **Societal decadence:** Ogumbaramru (1997) lament that the Nigerian society has willingly or unwillingly provided an enabling environment for all forms of crimes among which is the problem of campus secret cult. This author argued that Nigeria has replaced honors for dishonor as a standard attitude. Mgbekem (2005) also lamented that youths nowadays imbibed immoral values instead of inculcating moral and decent values.
- **Mental illness:** Students who suffer from mental illness tend to be more frustrated and they express their of anger neglect, they join cult groups to unleash terror to those who contributed to their emotional distress.
- **Inadequate welfare programmes for students:** Our educational institutions have inadequate basic amenities including accommodation, transportation, and recreational facilities. Students are sometimes encouraged to join violent groups like cult that wreak havoc in these institutions because of insensitivity of government and institutional administrators to their plight.
- **Mass media:** The mass media also expose the students to all kinds of negative behaviors, Advertisement and literature in media detail the ways in which students can join cult organization both locally and international.
- **Other factors:** like nepotism, tribalism, favoritism, bribery, corruption, victimization, dishonest, timidity, fear and reckless spending.

The Effect of Cultism

The horrible situations and experience pose by the cult activities on campus cannot be over emphasized. The activities of cult groups in tertiary education have drawn the attention of scholars, parents, school administrators and government as cult activities continue to pose severe dangers to the students and management of higher education.

Ololube (2012) listed some of the following factors to be the effect of secret cult on tertiary institution management and students: students, lecturers and management are under constant fear. Members of cult group destroyed school facilities while clashing with the opponent. Cult members steal school property, staff property and that of fellow student,

disruption of academic calendar and business activities on campus, harassment, embarrassment and humiliation of innocent students, academic and non-academic staff. There is increase in crime rate, as cult group engage in robbery and assassination of lecturer and fellow student. Members constitute themselves into a nuisance, leading to disobedience of laws in higher institution. Staff and student are kidnapped occasionally on campus.

Cultism is a threat to the survival of educational institutions as lecturers and student are embarrass on daily bases. A lot of lives and properties have been destroyed in the course of clashes between different cult sects without occurring to them that they could be victims of the cult war. In the cult world, the strongest, the bravest, the weaklings and the most careful one have been killed. The most unfortunate thing is that those who were not party to what led to these clashes are mostly the victims and majority of the cultists ignorantly walked into the hands of their assailants without the prior knowledge of a clash between their cult and a rival cult (Obamwonyi, 2004). He is never sure if the next momentous clashes can erupt any moment, time and place. Cultism is a threat to family. Cult clashes have actually gone beyond the perimeter fence of the Campuses to rival cult members home. A lot of the cult family members have been killed at their home for the escape of their son by their own cult group in course of leadership tussle and rival cut group in the case of clash (Obadere, 2000). Mortgage of Liberty: The oath taken during the initiation implies that you have sold your liberty, freedom and everything about yourself to the cult group.

Measures Adopted by Tertiary institution to Curb Cultism on Campus

Over the past decades, various attempts have been made to deal with the problem of cultism in Nigerian higher institution. Worlu (2007) cited the enactment of Decree 47 of 27th December, 1989. It is entitled Students Union Activities (control and regulations), Decree of 1989.

The decree, which was introduced by the General Babangida military administration empowered the governing council of each university to proscribe any society operating within the campus, pursuing activities which are not in the interest of national security, public safety, order, morality and health. Fasanmi (2006) noted that Rivers State Government made a law stipulating a ten years jail term sentence without option of fine for culprits of cultism. In year 2000 the former president Olusegun Obasanjo issued a three months ultimatum to all Vice-chancellors to eradicate cultism from their campuses. Some institutions of higher learning set up anti-cult groups consisting of student body and security agents to monitor and checkmate secret cult activities on campus. However despite the various measures adopted by management of higher institution to eradicate cultism, the activities of secret cult groups continued to increase on campuses. Ekwueme and Ogbonda (2005) citing Opetu and Dittimiya (2000, p. 243) and Kinanee (2003, pp. 22-23) recommended the following measures to curb the menace of secret cult activities in higher institutions in Nigeria:

- Students with established case of cult involvement should not be registered by the professional bodies of their courses or discipline because they are not found worthy in character;
- Schools should be reappraised to embrace civics and moral education;
- Government should stop appointing cult members as Vice-chancellors of universities;
- Rectors of Polytechnics, and Provosts of Colleges of Education;
- Regular orientation programmes for fresh students in order to sensitize them against cultism;
- Students of highly placed individuals in society who are cultists should be punished accordingly; and

- Students should form vigilante groups that will give cultist no breathing space on campus.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design adopted in this study is the survey design because large numbers of participants are easily studied through the use of a representative sample and questionnaire.

Population for the Study

The population of the study consists of students from tertiary institutions in Rivers state. The population for the study was two thousand one hundred and eight (2108) students from two Universities, one Polytechnic and one Federal College of Education in Rivers state.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample size for the study is two hundred and eleven (211) representing ten percent (10%) of the entire population. The sampling technique adopted were stratified sample technique which was used to determine the size of the study by grouping the population into difference strata.

Table 1: The breakdown of students selected for the study

S/n	Tertiary institution	Male student	Female student	Total
1	UNIPORT.	50	27	77
2	FTCE Omoku	25	15	40
3	IAUOE.	35	20	55
4	Elechi Amadi Polytechnic	21	18	39
Total		131	80	211

Method of Data Collection

The instrument that was used for data collection is a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire is used to get information on cultism and academic activities in tertiary institutions in Rivers state with specific reference to University of Port Harcourt, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Elechi Amadi Polytechnic and Federal College of Education (Technical) Omoku. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: personal information and for variables item base on modified four point Likert ccale format: Strongly Agreed (SA) = 4, Agreed (A) = 3, Disagreed (D) = 2, Strongly Disagreed (SD) = 1.

Validity

Validity is the degree of accuracy which a test measure what it is set out to measure after constructing the questionnaire. The questionnaire was given to some research expert in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education for vetting and validation. The recommendations made were used to improve on the final version of the instrument.

Reliability

The reliability of the instrument was determined through the use of test-re-test method to ensure the reliability of the research instrument. The researcher first administered twenty five (25) copies of the questionnaire to respondents (Rivers State University and Ken Sarowiwa Polytechnic Bori) outside the study area. After two weeks the same twenty five (25) copies of the research instrument were re-administered to the same group of respondents. Pearson Product Movement Correlation Coefficient statistical tool was used to determine the reliability of the instrument and reliability coefficient calculated was .85.

Administration of instrument

The researcher administered two hundred and eleven (211) copies of the research instrument to sample respondents' opinions on the theme of this study. The administration of the research instrument was carried out by the researcher with the help of a research assistant. The researcher and the research assistant administered the instrument to the respondents personally. The instruments were collected immediately from the respondents on completion for onward analyses. All the 211 copies of the questionnaires were retrieved.

Method of data analysis

The data were analyzed qualitatively using mean and standard deviation to answer research question, while z-test was used to test the null hypotheses at .05 level of significant. For the purpose of determining the criterion mean score, the researcher summed the grades of response and divided the output by four. This was expressed as $4+3+2+1=10/4 = 2.5$. Thus this formed the bases of evaluating the questionnaire items. This by implication means that any item whose mean score is equal to or above 2.5 was accepted. Hence such item is positive and is accepted, while any item whose mean score is below 2.5 is rejected. For the hypothesis the decision rule is established when the calculated values of z-test is greater than the table value of $p < .05$, which means that the null hypothesis (H_0) will be rejected, while the alternate hypothesis will be accepted.

RESULTS

Research Question One: What is the reason why undergraduate students join cult group in tertiary institutions in Rivers state?

In order to empirically ascertain the reason why undergraduate students join cult group in tertiary institutions, the perception of undergraduate students is tabulated against the average mean score which was established as the criterion mean. The essence is to determine the reason why undergraduate students join cult group in tertiary institutions in Rivers state.

Table 2: Mean, mean set and standard deviation score of the reason why students join cult group in tertiary institutions in Rivers state

s/n	Questionnaire items	IAUOE & Elechi Amadi Polytechnic		UNIPORT. & FTCE		Mean Set	Remark
	Questionnaire items	N ₁ = 97		N ₂ = 114		X ₁ - X ₂	
1	Poor leadership style provokes student to join cult in tertiary	X ₁	SD ₁	X ₂	SD ₂	3.48	Accepted
		3.40	1.39	3.56	1.19		

2	institution Some students join cult group because of protection	3.56	1.16	3.19	2.26	3.38	Accepted
3	Students join cut group to earn respect	2.16	1.25	2.29	1.38	2.22	Rejected
4	Academic frustration is a factor or reason why students join cult	3.96	1.31	3.25		3.61	Accepted
5	Some students join cult because of economic gain	4.13	0.75	3.34	1.21	3.74	Accepted
6	The love for female students is the reason why some students join cult group	2.13	1.32	2.28	1.24	2.30	Rejected
7	Poor parental background is a factor why students join cult.	3.21	1.41	3.28	1.39	3.5	Accepted
Average score		3.23	1.40	3.03	1.44		Accepted

As presented in table 2, seven questionnaire items were used to test the first research question, which centered on the finding out the reason why undergraduate students join cult group in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The views of undergraduate students revealed that Ignatius Ajuru university of education and Elechi Amadi Polytechnic have mean score of 3.40 (SD = 1.39), 3.56 (SD=1.16), 2.16 (SD= 1.25), 3.96 (SD= 1.31), 4.13 (SD = 0.75), 2.13 (SD = 1.32), 3.21 (SD = 1.41) respectively. While the response of undergraduate students in University of Port Harcourt and Federal College of Education Omoku had the mean score of 3.56 (SD = 1.19), 3.19 (SD = 2.26), 2.29 (SD = 1.38), 3.25 (SD = 1.21) 3.34 (SD = 1.24), 2.28 (SD = 1.39) and 3.28 (SD = 1.39) respectively. By implication, items 1,2,4,5 and 7 were accepted as views of students on the reason why undergraduate students join cult group in tertiary institutions. Table 4.1 shows that students in tertiary institutions in Rivers state join cult group because of protection, poor leadership style, academic frustration, economic gain and poor parental upbringing.

Research Question Two. How does cult activities affect academic calendar in tertiary institution in Rivers state?

In assessing the effect of cult activities on academic calendar in tertiary institutions in Rivers state, the result of undergraduate students from University of Port Harcourt, Federal College of Education Omoku, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education and Elechi Amadi Polytechnic are compared and presented in the table below.

Table 3: Mean, mean set and standard deviation score of how cult activities affect academic activities in tertiary institution

s/n	Questionnaire items	IAUOE & Elechi Amadi Polytechnic		UNIPORT. & FTCE		Mean	Remark
8	Cult clashes affect academic activities	N = 97		N ₂ = 114			Accepted
		X ₁	SD ₁	x ₂	SD ₂	3.37	
		3.38	1.32	3.35	1.17		
9	Cult activities affect academic activities	3.38	1.18	3.35	1.52	3.37	Accepted

10	negatively Is there any session without cases of cult clash	3.50	1.09	3.16	1.33	3.33	Accepted
11	All academic session is affected by cult clash	2.02	1.13	2.49	1.44	2.26	Rejected
12	Cult activities affect academic activities	3.43	1.22	3.30	1.24	3.37	Accepted
Average score		3.1	1.2	3.13	1.3		Accepted

The data presented in table 3 revealed that five(5) questionnaire items were raised to answer research question two, which set to find out the extent cult activities affect academic activities in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Mean score were used to find out the opinions of undergraduate students on the effect of cult activities on academic activities in tertiary institutions. The mean response of the opinion of students indicate that items 1 to 5 had a mean score of 3.38 (SD = 1.32), 3.38 (SD = 1.18), 3.50 (SD = 1.09), 2.02(SD = 1.13) and 3.43 (SD = 1.22) and 3.35(SD=1.17), 3.35(SD=1.52), 3.16(SD=1.33), 2.49(1.44), 3.30(SD=1.24) respectively. This implies that cult activities affect academic activities in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, University of Port Harcourt and Federal Technical College of Education Omoku in Rivers State

Research Question Three: How does cult activity affect students and lecturers relationship in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

In answering the extent cult activities affect lecturers and students' relationship in tertiary institutions in Rivers State as reported in the table below.

Table 4: Mean, mean set and standard deviation on the extent cult activities affect students and lecturers relationship.

s/n	Questionnaire items	IAUOE & Elechi Amadi Polytechnic N ₁ = 97		UNIPORT. & FTCE N ₂ = 114		Mean X ₁ - X ₂	Remark
13	Cult activities influence students and lecturer relationship to a great extent on campus.	2.74	1.39	2.86	1.43	2.80	Accepted
14	Cult activities do not affect students and lecturers relationship.	1.81	1.25	2.26	1.14	2.04	Rejected
15	Students' families and lecturers' families are both affected by cult activities in tertiary education.	2.35	1.16	2.27	1.30	2.31	Rejected
16	Students and lecturers have good relationship on campus.	2.48	1.36	2.44	1.92	2.46	Rejected
Average score		2.3	1.3	2.5	1.4	2.4	Rejected

Table 4 of the study revealed that four questionnaire items were raised to answer research question three which sought to find out the extent to which cult activities affect students and lecturers relationship in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Out of these items the response of undergraduate students on the subject matter had mean scores of 2.74 (SD=1.39), 1.81 (SD = 1.25), 2.35 (SD = 1.16) and 2.48 (SD = 1.36). Items 1 to 4 respectively, on the other hand, the responses of the students to items 1 to 4 in the table revealed that those item had mean scores of 2.86 (SD = 1.42), 2.26 (SD = 1.14), 2.72 (SD = 1.30) and 2.44 (SD = 1.92). This implies

that cult activities have little effect on students and lecturers relationship in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Research Question Four: How does cult activity threaten life, property and security on campus?

In order to find out the extent cultism threatens life, property and security in tertiary institution. The table below shows the mean, mean set, and standard deviation to the extent cult activities threaten life, property and security of lecturers and students in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Table 5: Mean, mean set, standard deviation and the extent cult activities threaten life, property and security on campus

s/n	Questionnaire items	IAUOE & Elechi Amadi Polytechnics		UNIPORT & FTCE		Mean	Remark
		$N_1 = 97$	$N_2 = 114$	X_1	SD_1		
17	Lecturers and students live in constant fear because of cult activities on campus	3.92	0.98	3.71	1.21	3.82	Accepted
18	Students, lecturers and non-academic staff are kidnapped occasionally on campus	3.46	1.32	3.42	1.38	3.41	Accepted
19	Business activities are disrupted by cult groups occasionally	3.29	1.32	3.42	1.04	3.26	Accepted
20	Cult members destroy students, lecturers and school properties when rival cult group clash.	3.16	1.36	3.35	1.25	3.26	Accepted
21	Cult group steal school and fellow students properties occasionally on campus.	3.24	1.33	3.20	1.3	3.22	Accepted
Average score		3.41	1.25	3.41	1.24	3.41	Accepted

As presented in table 5, five questionnaire items were used to answer research question four, which sought to find out the extent to which cult activities threaten life, property and security in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. All the items were accepted based on the fact that their respective mean set scores in the table, are above the criterion mean score of 2.5. Specifically the opinions of students in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education and Elechi Amadi Polytechnic revealed that the mean responses of items are 3.92 (SD = 0.98), 3.46 (SD = 1.27), 3.29 (SD = 1.32), 3.16 (SD = 1.36) and 3.24 (SD = 1.33) respectively. On the other hand, the mean score responses of students in University of Port Harcourt and Federal College of Education (Technical) Omoku revealed that item 1 to 5 had mean scores of 3.71 (SD = 1.21), 3.35 (SD = 1.38), 3.42 (SD = 1.04), 3.35 (SD = 1.25) and 3.20 (SD = 1.30) respectively.

In essence, it therefore follows that the opinions of students on the extent cultism threaten life, property and security, the mean scores of students shows that cult activities threatened life, property and security of students and lecturers in tertiary institutions in Rivers state.

Research Question Five: What are the reasons put in place to curb secret cult activities in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

Table 6: Mean, mean set and standard deviation on the Measure adopted by management to curb cultism in tertiary institutions in Rivers

s/n	Questionnaire items	IAUOE & Elechi Amadi Polytechnics		UNIPORT & FTCE		Mean	Remark
		N ₁ = 97		N ₂ = 114		X ₁ - X ₂	
		X1	SD1	X2	SD2		
22	Management of tertiary institutions expelled students found guilty of cult activities	2.74	1.39	2.86	1.42	2.80	Accepted
23	Management organize orientation program for new students to educate them about the dangers of secret cult	3.56	1.16	3.19	2.26	3.38	Accepted
24	Rules and regulation are made to guide student's activities on campus.	2.51	1.31	2.74	1.40	2.63	Accepted
25	Students vigilante is created to checkmate activities of students on campus	2.74	1.39	2.86	1.42	2.80	Accepted
26	Students unionism is encouraged by management to enable students speak out their need on campus	4.13	1.18	3.34	1.52	3.74	Accepted
27	More academic programs and recreational facilities are made available to engage students time on campus	3.38	1.18	3.35	1.52	3.37	Accepted
Average score		3.18	1.3	3.06	1.5	3.12	Accepted

The table above shows that six (6) questionnaire items were used to test the measure adopted by management to curb the activities of secret cult in tertiary institutions in Rivers state. All the items were accepted and their respective mean score revealed that Ignatius Ajuru University of Education and Elechi Amadi Polytechnic have the mean score of 2.74 (SD=1.39), 3.56 (SD=1.16), 2.51 (SD=1.31), 2.74 (SD=1.39), 4.13 (SD=1.18) and 3.38(SD=1.18) respectively while University of Port Harcourt and Federal College of Education (Technical) Omoku have the mean score of 2.86 (SD=1.42), 3.19 (SD=2.26), 2.79 (SD=1.40), 2.86 (SD=1.42), 3.34 (SD=1.52) and 3.35 (SD=1.52) .From the above scores, it means that there is no difference on the measures adopted by management of UNIPORT, Federal College of Education (Technical) Omoku, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education and Elechi Amadi Polytechnic to curb secret cult activities on campus.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One (H₀₁): There is no significant difference between the rating of male and female students on the reasons why students join cult group in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Table 7: Z=test of differences in the views of UNIPORT & FTCE Omoku and IAUOE & Elechi Amadi Polytechnic student on the reason why students join cult

Subject	N	X	SD	DF	z-cal	z-tab	Decision
UNIPOINT & FCE(T) Omoku	114	3.29	1.40				
IAUOE & Elechi Amadi Polytechnic	97	3.07	1.44	209	1.13	1.96	z-cal < z-tab, accepted

Level of significance = 5% = 0.05

From table 7, it is revealed that the value of z_{-cal} is 1.13, while that of z_{-tab} is 1.96 with 209 degrees of freedom at 5% level of significance. The result shows that z_{-cal} (1.13) is less than the z_{-tab} (1.96). This implies that the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore there is no significant difference on the reason why students join cult group in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Hypothesis two (H_{0.2}): There is no significant difference between the rating of male and female students on the effect of cult activities on academic calendar in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Table 8: Z-test of the differences on the effect of cultism on academic calendar in tertiary institutions in Rivers State

Subject	N	X	SD	DF	z-cal	z-tab	Decision
Uniport & FCE(T) Omoku	114	2.97	1.33				
IAUOE & Elechi Amadi Polytechnic	97	3.08	1.28	209	1.62	1.96	z-cal < z-tab, accepted

Level of significance = 5% = 0.05

As presented in table 8, the values of z_{-cal} are 1.62 and 1.96 respectively, tested at 209 and 5% level of significance. From all indications, it is obvious that the value of z_{-cal} (1.62) is less than the value of z_{-tab} (1.96). Therefore the null hypothesis is accepted, meaning that there is no significant difference on the effect of cultism in UNIPOINT & FCE(T) Omoku and IAUOE & Elechi Amadi Polytechnic in Rivers State.

Hypothesis three (H_{0.3}): There is no significant difference between male and female student rating on the extent to which cult activities threaten life, property and security in tertiary institution in Rivers State.

Table 9 z-test difference in view of undergraduate students on the extent cult activities threatened life, property and security in tertiary institutions in Rivers state

Subject	N	X	SD	DF	z-cal	z-tab	Decision
Uniport & FCE(T) Omoku	114	2.56	1.25				
IAUOE & Elechi Amadi Polytechnic	97	2.73	1.39	209	0.96	1.96	z-cal < z-tab, accepted

Level of significance = 5% = 0.05

Table 9 revealed that at 209 degrees of freedom with 5% level of significant, the values of z_{-cal} and z_{-tab} are 0.94 and 1.96 respectively. The result indicates that the value of z_{-cal} is less than the value of z_{-tab} and therefore the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence there is no significant difference on the extent cult activities threatened life, property and security in Uniport, FCE(T) Omoku, IAUOE and Elechi Amadi Polytechnic in Rivers state.

Hypothesis Four (H_{0.4}): There is no significant difference between management of UNIPOINT, FCE(T) Omoku, IAUOE and Elechi Amadi Polytechnic on the measure adopted to curb cultism.

Table 10: z-test of difference in the views of undergraduate student on the measure adopted by management to curb the activities of secret cult on campus in Rivers state

Subject	N	X	SD	DF	z-cal	z-tab	Decision
Uniport & FTCE Omoku	114	3.41	1.25	209	0.00	1.96	z- cal < z – tab, accepted
IAUOE& Elechi Amadi Polytechnic	97	3.41	1.24				

Level of significance = 5% = 0.05

As presented in table 10, the hypothesis was tested at 209 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. The values of z_{-cal} and z_{-tab} are 0.00 and 1.96 respectively. The result revealed that the value of z_{-cal} is less than the value of z_{-tab} , hence the null hypothesis is accepted. By implication it means that there is no significant difference on the measure adopted to curb cultism in UNIPORT, FCE(T) Omoku, IAUOE and Elechi Amadi Polytechnic in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION

The result of this study as documented in table 2 revealed that students join cult group because of protection, economic gain, poor leadership style, poor parental upbringing, to earn respect and academic frustration. And there is no significant differences on the reason why students join cult group in University of Port Harcourt, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Federal College of Education (Technical) and Elechi Amadi Polytechnics. In line with the findings Ekwueme and Ogbondah (2005) opine that students join cult group because of economic gain, search for responsibilities, administrative style and poor parental background.

The Extent Cult Activities Affect Academic Activities

Table 3 presents the result of the findings to research question two. The findings show that cult activities affect academic activities in UNIPORT, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Federal College of Education (Technical) and Elechi Amadi Polytechnic in Rivers State. And there is no significant difference on the extent cult activities affect academic calendar in University of Port Harcourt, Federal College of Education (Technical) Omoku, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education and Elechi Amadi Polytechnic.

The Extent Cult Activities Affect Student and Lecturer Relationship

Table 4 of the study showed the result of research question three. The result showed that cult activities influence little of the relationship between lecturer and student in University of Port Harcourt, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Federal Technical College of Education Omoku and Elechi Polytechnics. And there is no significant different on the extent cult activities affect students to lecturers relationship in UNIPORT, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Federal Technical College of Education Omoku and Elechi Polytechnic.

The Extent Cult Activities Threaten Life, Property and Security

Table 5 presented the result of the research question four, which point out that presence of secret cult on campus threaten life, property and security of student in tertiary institution,

student agreed that the presence of secret cult on campus make the school environment uncomfortable for students and lecturers because they live in constant fear of the unknown. Also these means that there is no significant difference on the extent cult activities threaten life, property and security in University of Port Harcourt, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Federal College of Education (Technical) Omoku and Elechi Amadi Polytechnic.

In line with these, Ekwueme and Ogbondah (2005) highlight the following as effect of cult activities on campus. Student and lecturers live in constant fear, school property are stolen and destroyed by cultist when rival cult clash, innocent students are embarrassed, harassed and raped occasionally by cult members.

Measures adopted by management to curb the activities of secret cult in tertiary institution.

Table 6 shows the result of the research question five which revealed that management of tertiary institution put in place some measures to checkmate the activities of undergraduate students on campus and violation of the measures is punished accordingly. Also there is no significant difference between University of Port Harcourt, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Federal College of Education (Technical) Omoku and Elechi Amadi Polytechnic on the measure put in place to guide student on campus. In line with these, Worlu (2007) cited decree 47 of 1986 which prescribe ten (10) years jail for cultist.

CONCLUSION

The study has examined cultism and academic activities in tertiary institution in Rivers State. The study was guided with five research questions and four hypotheses. It adopted survey design with the study population of two thousand one hundred and eight (2108) students drawn from two Universities, one Federal College of Education Technical and one Polytechnic. Namely; University of Port Harcourt, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Federal College of Education (Technical) Omoku and Elechi Amadi Polytechnic. The sample size of the study is determined at 10% of the population which stood at two hundred and eleven (211). The research instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire and the instrument was confirmed reliable at co-efficient of 0.85. Method of data analyses adopted were parametric statistical tools of mean, standard deviation and z-test for answering the research questions and testing hypotheses. Based on the analyses, the findings of the study revealed that undergraduate students join cult because of poor leadership style, economic gain, influence of peer group, poor parental back ground, to earn respect, to be seen as powerful person, societal decadence, academic frustration, victimization, nepotism, tribalism, favoritism, dishonest, timidity and corruption. The four null hypotheses are accepted because of the parametric statistical significance of the mean differences. Finally cult activities have negative effect on students, lecturers and academic calendar in tertiary institutions in Rivers state.

Recommendations

This research work has examined cultism and academic activities in tertiary institutions in Rivers state. Based on the findings of the study, the following are recommended:

- Management of tertiary institutions should, involve students union in the decision making process to enable the students have sense of belonging.

- Students with established cases of cult involvement should be expelled from the institution.
- Parents should always give their children proper attention and monitor their activities at home and even on campus.
- Students should form vigilante groups that will fish out cult members and inform the security agencies for prompt action.
- Government should encourage tertiary institutions to set up anti-cult committees that would act as statutory bodies with the mandate of eradicating cultism.
- The community surrounding the universities should co-operate fully with the university authority to ensure that cultists and other criminals are not accommodated among them.
- Government should improve facilities and living conditions on campuses.
- Management should organize orientation programs for new and old students in every academic session to educate them on the dangers of cultism.

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