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EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF CULT ACTIVITIES AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN AWKA EDUCATION ZONE OF ANAMBRA STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the educational implications of cult activities among students of secondary schools in Awka Education zone of Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population comprised 109 teachers in the 18 public and 22 registered private secondary schools in the zone. The population is made up of 54 teachers in public and 55 teachers in private secondary schools in the area. Teachers were used as respondents because there is likelihood that students may not rate themselves objectively. The whole population was studied using purposive sampling technique. A researcher-developed instrument was the instrument for data collection. The instrument was made up of two parts- "A" and "B". Part A was on the bio-data of the respondents while part B contained items on cult activities. The response option of the research questions in the questionnaire was Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The face and content validity of the instrument were established by three experts; two in Educational Administration and one in Measurement and Evaluation. All the experts are lecturers in the Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU) Anambra State. To determine the reliability of the instrument, the Cronbach Alpha method was used. Twenty copies of the instrument were administered on 20 respondents made up of 10 teachers in public and 10 teachers in private secondary schools in Onitsha education zone. The co-efficient of 0.82 was obtained for the items. This high reliability index indicated that the instrument is reliable and therefore considered adequate for the study. The researchers collected the data from the respondents. The research questions were answered using mean. The findings of this study revealed some key causes of cult activities among students of secondary schools in Awka Education zone of Anambra State such as fighting for perceived injustice in the institution, to acquire power to oppress their enemies and also protect themselves and their friends from being intimidated among others. The findings of the study revealed also that students who belong to cult group cheat in examinations openly, threaten lecturers, leads to students ending up as school dropouts, increases prostitution and lesbianism, brings about teenage pregnancy, stealing, alcohol intake and untimely death among others. It was concluded that the problem of cult activities in universities in Awka Education zone of Anambra State persist due to social and economic reasons

which breeds crimes and also hamper academic achievement of female universities in Awka Education zone of Anambra State. The cultists are potential mothers. Therefore, the activities of cultists and role of mothers are not the same. Students are encouraged to desist from joining cultism in order to save their lives and that of the members of the society. It was recommended among others that government should establish tribunal to try cultist and if found guilty should be sentenced accordingly. This will be the detriment to those who have join or to those who have the intention of joining the secret cults.

Keywords: Education; Implication; Cult Activities; Secondary School; Students.

Introduction

Education helps one to become a useful member of the society and participate in the ongoing changes and developments. Education is therefore vital for the economic prosperity of a nation. Education at the tertiary level are mainly youths and these youths always emulate their mates in school in whatever form of behaviour they exhibit such as taking drugs, alcoholism, truancy, stealing, disobedience, laziness, disregarding school rules and regulations and some even join dangerous gangs in form of secret cult. Consequently, the issue of cultism in secondary schools have become a matter of concern among government, policy makers and stakeholders in Nigeria especially cult activities

However, in the late 1980s, all-female confraternities began to be formed. Abiona (2016) and Adoga (2017) listed some of the female cult groups to include Black Berets, Woman Brassier, Daughters of Jezebel, Pink Lady, The Amazons, White Angels, Lady of Rose, Sisterhood of Darkness, Golden Daughters, The Ten Wonderful Girls, White Ladies, The Royal Queens, Daughters of the Night, Viqueens, Cosmic Queens, Daughters of Doom, The Orange Girls, The Damsels, and so on. Accordingly, the most famous of them are: White Angels, 1990, Sisterhood of Darkness, 1993, Daughters of medusa, 1994, dirty virgins, 1991, Black queen, 1989 (Udobasi, 2017). All these groups and more exist in our society today to carry out various activities which are bent on perpetuating evil in the society. These groups have various modus operandi. As they are different, so are their modes of operation. According to Adoga (2017), membership of cults in schools cut across religion, sex, tribe and socio-economic status of the students.

Cult activities is a cankerworm that hinders academic progress in secondary schools. Ordinarily, the term cult also known as confraternity as stated by Wilson (2014) refers to a system of religious worships especially one that is expressed in rituals. Samuelson (2014) gave the sociological definition of cultism as a small group or religious activities whose beliefs are typically secret, esoteric and individualistic. Also, cult activities is defined as any form of female organization whose activities are exclusively kept away from the knowledge of male but such activities are carried out at odd hours of the day and they often clash with the accepted norms and values of everyday life. Members

take a strong vow with their blood to keep secret of all the activities undertaken and to be law abiding. Members billed for initiation pass through a lot of physical and mental torture. They are usually blindfolded and querried. The initiation ground is usually a cemetery or a thick swamp or the outskirts of the campus. In absolute blindness, the initiate could be compelled to jump from a tall tree down the ground. At the peak of the task, selected group of cultists, normally the immediate seniors, would beat the initiates mercilessly, stab them, make incisions, dab cigarette stubs on their bodies. The initiation process may differ from cult to cult but the goal is similar. The initiation starts with mental and physical torture which are said to surpass that of the military and the prisoners of war. This explains why some initiates sometimes die in the process of initiation.

The most popular cult activities is, crueler in its methods. Violence was manifested from the first steps of newcomers in cult activities. In order to pass the initiation, it was necessary to be tortured. Odili (2015) posited that cultists were beaten with sticks. It was a cruel test of endurance. Those who passed tests had to drink alcohol mixed with blood. This oath was evidence of adherence to the cult. As a result, many people were maimed and died seeking illusory fanatical goals. However, there is a real terror of cult activities in Nigerian universities in recent time, as each cult sought to prove its supremacy and significance. Not infrequent were the incidents of murders due to revenge, intimidation of the lecturers and students. The basic activities undertaken by the female cult group as significantly different from that of the male are: sexual atrocities with same sex, agent of set-up, prostitution syndicate, alcoholism/smoking/drug abuse and harassment of non-members. This implies the activities of female cults appears to be more dangerous than their male counterparts

In recent times, cult activities have continued to thrive in Nigeria due to the enormous impression of the seeming invisibility of cult and their members. Chichebe (2019) reported that in some secondary schools, cultists from different fraternities violently clash even in broad day light and manta themselves down with dangerous weapons such as guns and daggers, nocturnal initiation ceremonies in which initiates are animalized and some of them die in the process of making blood covenants and performing other occult rituals. Cult wars, especially among male cultists, are usually instigated by cultists. This is supported by Okengwu (2002), who opined that most of the cult wars on our campuses are caused by the girls and many of these girls are cult members. The cult wars put the society in the state of insecurity. Sometimes female cultist clash with each other and members of the society may find it difficult to carry out their normal businesses with gunshots and killings here and there. The recent cult clashes in Awka and its environs have put the members of the society in the state of constant fear; those residing in Awka were forced to restrict their movements or might even relocate to a more peaceful zone. In the society today, there have been cases of ritual killings which involved missing parts of the body of the victim. Adoga (2017) agrees that female cult groups take part in blood and ritual murder

and some set up their fellow girls for ritual and the sale of human parts; also, they abduct innocent children for spiritual protection and power. Sometimes cultists are used by politicians to achieve their selfish desire during election periods. Politicians use cultists to monitor what is going on in polling units and sometimes they hijack ballot boxes when it is unfavourable to the politicians who sent them through gun shots. Most of the cultists fail to attend classes and also fail to carry out their academic activities because of their engagements with their cult activities. Most of them may confront lecturers to award them marks which they do no merit. Also, most of them do not graduate from the university because of more engagements in cult activities.

Despite the fact that all manners of evil have become the prevalent pattern of cult activities, some students of secondary schools in Nigeria still find it fashionable to engage in it for different reasons. Consequently, some reasons why some students join cultism includes: search for social responsibility, search for satisfaction of one's aspirations and needs, search for security and search for social identity. Similarly, Okeke (2019) reported that some students join cult groups in order to perform certain services for the members. For instance, some students may engage in cult activities in order to fight for perceived injustice in their schools against their members. Some university students also engage in cult activities in order to satisfy their desire, aspirations and needs. Example of this is that a female student may belong to a cult group which part of her objective is to ensure the success of her members in academic examinations. Many university students especially the female ones join secret cult in order to protect themselves while some students join to secure their boyfriends and there are also students who join cult group for popularity. They want to make name and to be regarded as powerful people. To those students, belonging to a cult group is a way of achieving prestige and greatness. They believe that they could influence decisions in school (Akubuilo, 2014). There are others who join because they want to create avenues to exhibit and diffuse frustrations from the family, schools and society. There are students who join cult group for reason of financial assistance why others join just to hide their weaknesses (inferiority complex). Some are forced to join while others feel that the objectives of the cults are laudable and worthwhile. Other reasons while students engage in cult activities might be influenced by parental and home background, some parents who are members of secret cults do not see anything wrong in their children's involvement in cultism either male or female.

Nonetheless, the prevalence of cult activities in Nigeria could be a cankerworm militating against the success of the goals of education in Nigeria. Ossai (2019) postulated that, education system in Nigeria is under siege, bombardment and almost ruined by secret cult particularly in secondary schools. When they take a lead of any of the activities, so many deaths would be recorded. In many secondary schools in Nigeria, majority of the students, lecturers and their families live in perpetual fear. Cult activities has destroyed

so many lives, wasted so many families, and aborted so many futures and make Nigerian secondary schools unstable for academic activities. Cult activities involve blood shedding and waste of human lives; it has reached an alarming proportion in many schools in Nigeria (Adeleye, 2019). Sometimes, they cheat in examinations openly and even threaten lecturers. It also leads to students ending up as school dropouts, teenage pregnancy, alcohol intake, drug abuse, stealing and all kinds of unwanted misdemeanor.

The issue of cult activities seems pathetic in secondary schools in Awka Education zone of Anambra State where it has become a common phenomenon to hear or witness incidence of students' involvement in cult activities, and this could lead to some students' ending up as school dropout and prostitutes and all kinds of unwanted misdemeanor. All these social problems are created by activities of cultists in secondary schools in the Awka Education zone of Anambra State and beyond.

In Awka Education zone of Anambra State where we may have secondary schools, it has become a common phenomenon to read, hear and witness incidences of students' involvement in reprisal attacks against other cults and this had led to death of students, intimidation of non-members, some end up as school dropouts, alcohol intake and drug abuse, and taking of cigarettes becomes business of the day and all kinds of unwanted misdemeanor. The situation has become worrisome because of the way it hampers the socio-economic development and progress of university leavers and even the State in general. More so, if this problem is not addressed, graduates of the institution particularly those that indulged in cult activities will hardly fit into paid or self-employment because they have trained themselves not be law abiding. It will also make the students not be equipped with proper knowledge and relevant skills for economic and technological advancement. This means that the level of unemployment and poverty will continue to rise in the society at large. The family which is the bedrock or cornerstone of the society is affected badly. Marriage to such cultists will breed divorce and separation which will affect the society.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed to guide the study:

1. What are the causes of cult activities among students of Awka Education zone of Anambra State secondary schools?
2. What are the implications of cult activities among students of Awka Education zone of Anambra State secondary schools?

Research Method

This study was carried out in public and private secondary schools in Awka Education zone. The design adopted for the study was descriptive survey. The population comprised 109 teachers in the 18 public and 22 registered private secondary schools in the zone (information was collected from Post Primary School Service Commission on the

19th of January 2019). The population is made up of 54 teachers in public and 55 teachers in private secondary schools in the area. Teachers were used as respondents because there is likelihood that students may not rate themselves objectively. The whole population was studied using purposive sampling technique. A researcher-developed instrument was the instrument for data collection. The instrument was made up of two parts- "A" and "B". Part A was on the bio-data of the respondents while part B contained items on cult activities. The response option of the research questions in the questionnaire was Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The face and content validity of the instrument were established by three experts; two in Educational Administration and one in Measurement and Evaluation. All the experts are lecturers in the Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU) Anambra State. To determine the reliability of the instrument, the Cronbach Alpha method was used. Twenty copies of the instrument were administered on 20 respondents made up of 10 teachers in public and 10 teachers in private secondary schools in Onitsha education zone. The co-efficient of 0.82 was obtained for the items. This high reliability index indicated that the instrument is reliable and therefore considered adequate for the study. The researchers collected the data from the respondents. The research question was answered using mean. Mean scores that fall between 3.00 -5.00; 3.50 – 3.49; 2.50 – 3.49; and 1.00 – 1.49 were taken to indicate Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) respectively.

Presentation of Results

Research Question 1: What are the causes of cult activities among students?

Table 1: Mean rating of respondents on causes of cult activities among students

S/N	In my school, Students:	$\overline{X}$	REMARKS
1.	engaged in cult activities to fight for perceived injustice in the institution.	2.56	Agreed
2.	join cultism in order to acquire power to oppress my enemies.	2.80	Agreed
3.	join secret cult in order to protect myself from being intimidated	2.50	Agreed
4.	join to protect my friends	2.70	Agreed
5.	join cult activities for popularity.	2.56	Agreed
6.	join cultism to create avenues to diffuse frustrations from my family, schools and society.	2.60	Agreed
7.	join cult activities for financial assistance	2.82	Agreed
8.	join cult activities in order to hide my weaknesses	2.60	Agreed
9.	join cult activities because my friends forced me to do so	2.50	Agreed
10.	join cult activities because my parents belonged to the cult group.	2.80	Agreed
11.	join cult activities because I am a lesbian and will find beautiful girls amongst the group	2.79	Agreed
12.	join cult activities because of quest for materialism	2.51	Agreed
13.	join cult activities because of influence of mass media over my life	2.88	Agreed
14.	join cult activities because of peer group influence	2.97	Agreed
15.	join cult activities because I lacked morals	2.84	Agreed
16.	join cult activities because I came from a broken home	2.63	Agreed
	total	**40.46**	

Cluster x	**2.53**	**Agreed**

In table 1, all the items (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16) obtained mean score 2.50 and above indicating agreed. On the whole the mean of means was rated 2.53 it implies that all the above items in table 1 are causes of cult activities among students in Awka Education zone of Anambra State.

Research Question 2: What are the implications of cult activities among students?

Table 2: Mean rating of respondents on implications of cult activities among students

S/N	QUESTIONNAIRE	$\bar{X}$	REMARKS
17.	Cult activities aborts the future of students	2.86	Agreed
18.	Cult activities makes the institutions of learning unconducive.	3.01	Agreed
19.	Cult activities breeds torture, rape, kidnap, rob and maim among students within and around the school environment.	2.60	Agreed
20.	Students who belong to cult group cheat in examinations openly	2.88	Agreed
21.	Students who belong to cult group even threaten lecturers.	3.00	Agreed
22.	It also leads to students ending up as school dropouts	2.90	Agreed
23.	they become threats to their fellow students	2.79	Agreed
24.	they fall victims of exam malpractice	2.88	Agreed
25.	It is a gate way to prostitution and lesbianism	3.12	Agreed
26.	It brings about teenage pregnancy	2.94	Agreed
27.	it leads to stealing	2.87	Agreed
28.	It leads students to substance and alcohol intake,	3.22	Agreed
29.	It leads to untimely death	2.95	Agreed
30.	It leads to untold hardship	2.89	Agreed
31.	it disrupts school academic programme	2.57	Agreed
32.	it brings about insecurity in the area	3.65	Agreed
33.	The family of the cultist is threatened especially when the cultist is at large	2.54	Agreed
34.	The cultists liberty is mortgaged	2.77	Agreed
	Total	**52.23**	
	cluster x	**2.90**	**Agreed**

In Table 2, items (17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33 and 34) were rated agreed by the respondents. On the whole the grand mean score was rated 2.90, this implies that all the items in table 2 are implications of cult activities among university students in Awka Education zone of Anambra State.

Discussion

The findings of this study revealed some key causes of cult activities among students in Awka Education zone of Anambra State secondary schools such as fighting for perceived injustice in the institution, to acquire power to oppress their enemies and also protect themselves and their friends from being intimidated. This was why Obodo (2015) posited that many students join cult

activities to protect themselves from threat in school. Findings further revealed that students join cultism for popularity, to create avenues to diffuse frustrations from the family, school and society, for financial assistance, to hide their weaknesses and some of them join secret cult because their friends forced them to do so. Similarly, Nwankwo (2017) noted that frustration from the family, financial problems as well as inferiority complex causes cult activities among students in Awka Education zone of Anambra State. More so, some students join cultism because they were lesbians, quest for materialism, influence of mass media, peer group influence, lack of morals and broken home. To support this finding, Uwadileke (2018) stated that many students who are from broken homes join secret cult as a result of frustration particularly in the aspect of finance. Adoga (2017) argues that cultism in secondary schools is traceable to general frustration and the feeling of deprivation, hopelessness, injustice, and so on brought about by factors beyond the control of an individual such as instability in the system, Also, Nwachukwu, Agbor and Oboada (2013) attributed the causes of cult activities to inadequate moral upbringing on the side of the parents; the mass media which expose the young to all kinds of negative behaviours-; motivation from peer group and inadequate learning facilities which make some students unable to cope with academics. Odudele (2014) also advanced some causes of cultism in schools as follows: for the cult members to boost their ego and obtain power to oppress their fellow students and members of the campus community; students from broken homes who lack home training.

Secondly, cult activities have negative implications among students in Awka Education zone of Anambra State, cult activities abort the future of students, makes the schools unconducive, breeds torture, rape, kidnap, rob and maim among students within and around the school environment. In that regard, Okoye (2016) agreed that cult activities affect the academic progress of students because it hampers effective teaching and learning and also encourage examination malpractice.

The findings of the study revealed also that students who belong to cult group cheat in examinations openly, threaten teachers, leads to students ending up as school dropouts, increases prostitution and lesbianism, brings about teenage pregnancy, stealing, alcohol intake and untimely death. This result is supported by Wilson (2012), who stated that one of the basic implications of cult activities is that it influences school dropout. Finally, it was discovered that cult activities lead to untold hardship, disrupts school academic programme, brings about insecurity in the area and the cultists liberty is mortgaged. This report is in agreement with Oyemwinmina and Aibieyi (2015) who stated that the implications of cult activities in Nigerian secondary schools to include life of insecurity; threat to family; mortgage of liberty; disrupted academic programme; threat to cultist academics and threat of law enforcement agencies. It could be inferred from the above implications that cultism can affect the individual involved in cult activities and the society at large.

Conclusion

The study explores causes and implications of cult activities among students in secondary schools in Awka Education zone of Anambra State. Cult activities is a social vice. It is clear that there is no moral justification for any female to join cult. It is a whirl wind which blows nobody good in the society. The implications of cult activities outweigh whatever benefit they derive from joining those cult groups. A society that has been characterized by social vices, especially vices that disrupt economic and academic activities, cannot thrive. It was concluded that the problem of cult activities in Awka Education zone of Anambra State persist due to social and economic reasons which breeds crimes and also hamper academic achievement of students in Awka Education zone of Anambra State. The cultists are potential parents. Therefore, the activities of cultists and role of mothers are divorced. Students are encouraged to desist from joining cultism in order to save their lives, families and that of the members of the society.

Educational Implications

The study has a lot of implications on the students, school management, society and government. The clash of power between cults disrupts academic activities. This means teaching will not be very effective and learning will be deterred. Also, some of the students die untimely because of involvement in secret cult activities. They do not live to graduate from school. Also, students who are trained to be potential parents and role models have lost their sense of responsibilities completely which will affect societal growth and development. The family will run the risk of losing its functions. The family which is the bed rock of the society is at the verge of collapsing because cultists who are parents lack morals required of them for running responsible and peaceful home The society will lose its value system because cult wars put the society in the state of insecurity. Members of the society will find it difficult to carry out their normal businesses with gunshots and killings here and there. Without adequate security to help cushion the effect of cult activities, there will be insecurity of lives and properties and this will degenerate to lawlessness which will hamper societal development.`.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Parents should help the society in socializing their children the right way, since the family is the basic unit of socialization. They should teach them the basic tenets of the society, the norms, values and culture of the society. Once these children are caught young, the problem is half solved.
2. Government should establish tribunal to try cultist and if found guilty should be sentenced accordingly. This will be at the detriment to those who have join or to those who have the intention of joining the secret cults.

3. Government should reduce the high cost of education in Nigeria so that everyone can afford it.

5. The school authorities should also help in shaping the lives of the students as the

students are certified on the grounds of character and learning upon graduation. The school communities should give no room for any bad behavior from the students. They should develop strict rules against cultism and other deviant behaviours and follow them up. The school communities should also endeavour to have guidance counsellors who would always direct the students the right way.

6. Churches should have strong youth forum in other to give youths opportunity to vent out their issues.

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