STUDENTS' INVOLVEMENT IN CULTISM IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA: UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' VIEW OF THE CAUSES, EFFECTS AND SOLUTIONS

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Abstract
The study aimed at investigating the causes, effects and solutions to Cultism in the Nigerian Tertiary Institutions as perceived by Undergraduate students of Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka Anambra State. Descriptive survey design was adopted. Three research questions were answered, and three hypotheses were tested at 0.05 of significance. Purposive sampling technique was used to sample 150 students from the 1,711 400 Level undergraduate students of Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. The research instrument used was constructed by the researchers and validated by experts. Data collected were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and t-test. Findings of the study revealed that the major cause of cultism in tertiary institutions was inadequate funding of the University to acceptably take care of students' welfare, amongst others. However, the effects of cultism and possible solutions were not clear. Based on this finding, we recommend that parents, government and necessary stakeholders should fund the tertiary institutions adequately to combat and ensure an efficient and effective handling of campus secret cults related issues. Also for a future study on separate audience to further verify the possible effects of cultism and solutions.

Key words: Cultism, Tertiary Institutions, Undergraduates

Introduction

Cultism that has since reared its ugly head on campuses of tertiary institutions in Nigeria has continued to mar the serenity of the teaching, learning, assessment and assessment outcome by tutors and learners. The numerous and diverse activities of campus cults and confraternities had gained undue and unwanted popularity in institutions of higher learning that the society has borne brunt of their existence. There is hardly any academic

session without reported cases of cultism in most Nigerian institutions which Unizik is not an exemption, owing to the fact of 2020/2021 session killings among cultist members (Edeh, 2021). In the month of October 2021, investigation shows that not less than 10 persons died in cult war around Ifite, Unizik junction and Amaenyi axis of Awka, Amansea in Awka North and Igbariam in Anambra East. Also, from December 1 to 31, 2021 about 10 suspected cultists were also killed. These include the trending videos of one reportedly killed at Amawbia on December 19, 2021 whose manhood was equally severed before dumped somewhere at Awka. Others were four persons, including a supposed leader of tricycle operators shot dead on December 14 at Unizik junction by suspected cultists and two others killed at Amansea in the same month. There are no single Nigerian institutions of higher learning that has not experienced the menace and spread of cultism for some time now. This was supported by Ogwudile (2020) and Ugorji (2011), as at September 2010, 5000 students and lecturers have died on Nigerian campuses as a result of cult related violent clashes. The recent destructive cult activities on campuses are mind-boggling, irritating and distasteful. Lives of promising young men and women believed to be our potential future leaders have been cut short by the bloody hands of murderous gangs on campuses.

Cult activities are prevalent in Nigerian tertiary institutions as a result of various reasons which could be attributed to the parents, students' institutions and the society which include the collapse of the family institution, peer group influence, school administrators, and students' population explosion, culture of violence, encouragement of cultism by the Government and among others (Elujekwute, 2019). It has been observed as stated by Thompson (2010), that students join cult for certain factors such as protection, sense of identity, deception, family background, the Western media and role models. The researchers observe that there should be more to this than meets the eyes. It is only further investigation that can establish these reasons. Higher institutions should be centres of academic excellence and moral uprightness, academic pursuit cannot be achieved in an atmosphere painted with bloodshed and hooliganism. Furthermore, what are the social problems associated with secret cult activities in tertiary institutions? Arogundade (2014), Amachere (2012) and Oriaku (2012), observed that cultism in our tertiary institutions have brought about riots, maiming, raping, rival, robbery, looting and radical student bodies. The extent of their ugly trends needed to be further established and if not checked, may cast serious doubts on the future role of our Universities. It is based on the submissions above that the researchers investigated the views of undergraduate students of Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka Anambra State on the causes, effects and solutions to Cultism in the Nigerian Tertiary Institutions. In this study, the possible effect of gender on the views of undergraduate students on the causes, effects and solutions to Cultism in the Nigerian Tertiary Institutions was also determined.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the causes of students' involvement in cultism in tertiary institutions as perceived by undergraduate students of Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?
2. What effect has cultism on the academic achievement of students as perceived by undergraduate students of Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?
3. What are the strategies/solutions for eradicating cultism in tertiary institutions as perceived by undergraduate students in Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?

Hypotheses

To carry out the study, the researchers tested the following formulated research hypotheses for rejection or otherwise at 5% level of significance:

Ho 1: There is no significant difference between male and female undergraduate students' views on the causes of students' involvement in cultism in tertiary institutions.

Ho 2: There is no significant difference between male and female undergraduate students' views on the effect of cultism in tertiary institutions on the academic achievement of students.

Ho 3: There is no significant difference between male and female undergraduate students' views on the strategies/solutions for eradicating cultism in tertiary institutions.

Research Methodology

The researchers adopted a descriptive survey design as its means of data collection. The population of the study comprised of 1711 400 level regular undergraduate students for the 2021/2022 academic year in the nine (9) departments of Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria (see appendix page). The sample size constitutes 150 400 level regular undergraduate students from the nine departments in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the 150 respondents from the nine departments in the Faculty of Education. The researcher purposely used 400 level students as the respondents, considering the facts that students at that level have been academically accustomed and have stayed long in the University to have experienced or heard of any incident of cultism with the campus and may be able to answer the questions.

The questionnaire was constructed by the researchers and it is titled: Cultism, its Effects and Solutions on Tertiary Institutions Questionnaire (CESTIQ). The questionnaire is

rated on a four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA=4), Agree (A=3), Disagree (D=2), and Strongly Disagree (SA=1). Based on the research questions, the questionnaire is made up of fifteen (15) items of two sections. Section one provides the personal data of the respondents, section two has 3 clusters(A-C), cluster "A" contains questionnaire items pertaining the causes of cultism, cluster "B" contains items pertaining the effects of cultism and cluster "C" contains items pertaining the strategies/solutions to cultism as viewed by the undergraduate students were four-point rating scales used in the questionnaire. The instrument was tested on a different group of students to ensure its reliability. The coefficient gotten was 0.84 which was high enough for the instrument to be considered reliable. The researchers collected data for the study by handing out 150 questionnaires to students on the spot with the help of three research assistants all of the 150 questionnaire were retrieved back through direct collection and they were used for the data analysis. Mean, standard deviation, and t-test were used in data analysis. Analysis was by Statistical Package for Social Science version 23 (SPSS v 23.0). A p-value ≤ 0.05 was taken as significant.

Results and Discussion

The collected data was analyzed and the result presented in this section based on research questions and hypotheses.

Research Question 1: What are the causes of students' involvement in cultism in tertiary institutions as perceived by undergraduate students of Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between male and female undergraduate students' views on the causes of students' involvement in cultism in tertiary institutions.

In Table 1, is shown the mean ratings of causes of students' involvement in cultism in tertiary institutions as perceived by male and female undergraduate students of faculty of education Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Table 1

Causes of Students' Involvement in Cultism in Tertiary Institutions as Perceived by Undergraduate Students of Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

S/N	Students indulge in cultism because	MALE			FEMALE			Total		
		N	$\bar{X}$	Std. Deviation	N	$\bar{X}$	Std. Deviation	N	$\bar{X}$	Std. Deviation
1	those caught in cult activities are not prosecuted	68	2.40	1.024	82	2.41	0.860	150	2.41	0.935
2	of broken homes	68	1.71	0.865	82	1.90	0.938	150	1.81	0.908
3	of corruption in the society	68	1.37	0.621	82	1.49	0.724	150	1.43	0.680
4	of inadequate funding of the University	68	2.26	1.074	82	2.21	0.978	150	2.23	1.019

5	they want to take care of their welfare	68	2.96	1.085	82	3.09	1.056	150	3.03	1.068
	Cluster total		**10.7**	**4.669**		**11.1**	**4.556**		**10.9**	**4.61**
	Cluster mean		**2.14**	**0.934**		**2.22**	**0.911**		**2.18**	**0.922**

Table 2

t-Test of Independent Samples for Comparing Male and Female Students' Mean Ratings on Perceived Causes of Students' Involvement in Cultism in Tertiary Institutions

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
CAUSES	Equal variances assumed	0.314	0.576	-1.130	148	0.260	-0.40638	0.35968	-1.11715	0.30438
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.136	145.657	0.258	-0.40638	0.35759	-1.11312	0.30036

In Table 1, none of the cluster mean ratings based on gender and overall (2.14, 2.22 and 2.18) is greater or equal to 2.50 which is the benchmark. This showed that students do not mainly involve in cultism based on the listed causes. However, item 6 had a mean rating greater than 2.50, revealing that students could involve in cultism so as to take care of their welfare. The corresponding pooled standard deviation based on gender and overall (0.934, 0.911 and 0.922) revealed that respondents were close to the mean and to each other in their responses. The t-test result for the difference in mean ratings of male and female undergraduate students on the causes of students' involvement cultism in tertiary institution is shown in Table 2. The t-test value of -1.130 was not significant at 0.000. The null hypothesis was accepted because the p value of 0.260 was greater than the 0.05 level of significance at which it was tested. As a result, the perceived causes of students' involvement in cultism in tertiary institutions do not differ significantly across male and female students in faculty of education.

Surprisingly, these study findings are in disagreement with that of Ugorji (2011) and Ogunbameru (2014). Ugorji (2011) identified family breakdown as one of the causes of Cultism on campuses. According to him, a child who comes from broken home is exposed to parental negligence and frustration. Such child is easily induced into cultism. Similarly, Ogunbameru (2014) lamented 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 cults. Ogunbameru's assertion is in accordance with item 3 that corruption in the society is one of the causes of cultism. However, the respondents only agree that the cause of students' involvement in cultism in tertiary institutions is because they want to take care of their welfare. Maybe it is the well-known notion in the respondent faculty.

Research Question 2: What effect has cultism on the academic achievement of students as perceived by undergraduate students of Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between male and female undergraduate students' views on the effect of cultism on the academic achievement of students.

Table 3

Effects of Students' Involvement in Cultism in Tertiary Institution as Perceived by Undergraduate Students of Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

Table 4

t-Test of Independent Samples for Comparing Male and Female Students' Perceived Effects of Students' Involvement in Cultism in Tertiary Institutions

In Table 3, is shown the mean ratings of effects of students' involvement in

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper
EFFECTS A	Equal variances assumed	1.224	0.270	-0.010	148	0.992	-0.00251	0.24859	-0.49375	0.48872
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.010	140.547	0.992	-0.00251	0.24956	-0.49590	0.49088

cultism as perceived by male and female undergraduate students of faculty of education Namdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The male and female students mean ratings were slightly different but were not equal or greater than 2.50 benchmark. The corresponding pooled standard deviation based on gender and overall (2.812, 2.956 and 2.907) revealed that respondents were somehow close to the mean and to each other in their responses. In Table 4, the t-test of Independent Sample conducted was to check how significant or not the dissimilarities are. As seen in Table 4, there was non-significant dissimilarity between males and females student mean ratings on the effects of students' involvement

S/N	Effects of cultism	MALE N	MALE $\bar{X}$	MALE Std. Deviation	FEMALE N	FEMALE $\bar{X}$	FEMALE Std. Deviation	Total N	Total $\bar{X}$	Total Std. Deviation
1	There is decline in academics of the cultist.	68	1.65	0.664	82	1.56	0.611	150	1.60	0.635
2	Destruction of lives and property of students and the University.	68	1.24	0.492	82	1.31	0.584	150	1.28	0.544
3	Diseases like AIDS could be spread by sucking blood during oath taking by cultist.	68	1.32	0.502	82	1.50	0.689	150	1.42	0.616
4	Increase in examination malpractice due to non-seriousness of cultist with their study.	68	1.50	0.702	82	1.38	0.580	150	1.43	0.639
5	Cultists engage in nefarious activities like armed robbery, prostitution etc to meet up with their extravagant styles.	68	1.28	0.452	82	1.26	0.492	150	1.27	0.473
	Cluster total		**6.99**	**2.812**		**7.01**	**2.956**		**7**	**2.907**
	Cluster mean		**1.389**	**0.562**		**1.402**	**0.591**		**1.4**	**0.581**

in cultism in tertiary institution. The null hypothesis was accepted because the p value of 0.992 was greater than the 0.05 level of significance at which it was tested.

This study results as regards the Tables 3 and 4 were in sharp contrast to that of Akinfolarin (2013), who expressed that most students gained admission into the Universities with dubious credentials and such students because of their low self-image find solace in cultism in order to survive the academic rigors at all cost. For such students to survive the academic system becomes a game of survival at all cost. As such, they join cult groups to intimidate lecturers and the school authorities. In support of Akinfolarin view, Opaluwah (2009) asserted that the peace on campus is adversely affected whenever there is cult invasion, this may result in suspension of academic activities for some time. Times without number, academic activities in these institutions have been brought to a standstill due to cult violence. Campus cultists kill, maim and rape fellow students and even lecturers. Lecturers are threatened into awarding unmerited scores to cultists who do not attend classes. The author also added that sometimes it leads to incarceration, rustication or expulsion of students of the cult. Thus, the authors suggest that the respondents faculty (education) might have influence their choice of responses.

Research Question 3: What are the strategies/solutions for eradicating cultism in tertiary institutions as perceived by undergraduate students in Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference between male and female undergraduate students' views on the strategies/solutions for eradicating cultism in tertiary institutions.

Table 5 represents the mean ratings of solutions for eradicating cultism in tertiary institutions as perceived by male and female undergraduate students of faculty of education Namdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Table 5:
Solutions for Eradicating Cultism in Tertiary Institutions as Perceived by Undergraduate Students of Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

S/N	Strategies for Eradicating Cultism	MALE N	MALE $\bar{X}$	MALE Std. Deviation	FEMALE N	FEMALE $\bar{X}$	FEMALE Std. Deviation	Total N	Total $\bar{X}$	Total Std. Deviation
1	Workshop should be organized during orientation of fresh students on the dangers of cultism	68	1.60	0.626	82	1.46	0.549	150	1.53	0.587
2	Regular check on possession of arms by the student should be carried out on campus	68	1.47	0.680	82	1.44	0.547	150	1.45	0.609
3	Establishment of tribunal to try cultists and if found guilty should be sentenced accordingly	68	1.32	0.471	82	1.41	0.608	150	1.37	0.550
4	Parents should monitor their children both in and outside the school and counsel them regularly	68	1.41	0.738	82	1.29	0.509	150	1.35	0.624
5	High cost of education in Nigeria Universities should be reduced	68	1.25	0.529	82	1.40	0.665	150	1.33	0.609
	Cluster total		**7.05**	**3.044**		**7.00**	**2.878**		**7.03**	**2.979**
	Cluster mean		**1.41**	**0.609**		**1.40**	**0.576**		**1.41**	**0.596**

Table 6
t -Test of Independent Samples for Comparing Male and Female Students' Perceived Solutions for Eradicating Cultism in Tertiary Institutions

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper
SOLUTIONA	Equal variances assumed	0.449	0.504	0.266	148	0.790	0.07102	0.26650	-0.45563	0.59766
	Equal variances not assumed			0.263	133.983	0.793	0.07102	0.26996	-0.46291	0.60495

In Table 5, none of the cluster mean ratings based on gender and overall (1.41, 1.40 and 1.41) is greater or equal to 2.50 which is the benchmark. This showed that the respondents considered that none of the items are the strategies/solutions for eradicating cultism in tertiary institutions. The corresponding pooled standard deviation based on gender and overall (0.609, 0.576 and 0.596) revealed that respondents were close to the mean and to each other in their responses. The t-test result of the difference in mean ratings of male and female respondents view on the strategies/solutions for eradicating cultism in tertiary institutions is presented in Table 6. The null hypothesis which states that there was no significant difference between male and female undergraduate students' views on the strategies/solutions for eradicating cultism in tertiary institutions was accepted because the p value of 0.790 was greater than the 0.05 level of significance at which it was tested. That is, male and female undergraduate students' mean ratings were significantly similar in their responses.

With regards to the third research question which examined the startegies/solutions for eradicating Cultism in Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The result of the findings as summarized in Tables 5 and 6 showed that the respondents overwhelming disagree to the suggested strategies/solutions of the researchers. The findings of this study disagrees with the findings of Osalgbovo (2010), who recommended that through seminars, workshops, symposium, posters, handbills and public lectures, cultism may be effectively combated. In support of Osalgbovo view, Adewale (2015) asserted that moral education should be re-introduced in all spheres of our lives and the decadent society should be spiritually reawakened. The parents, religious organizations and government are to work jointly on this measure. Parents should be more vigilant concerning the activities of their children within and outside the home. In line with Ogwudile (2020) the researchers also points that there must be improved facilities and improved living conditions on campuses so as to minimize perceived strain in the social system which underlines cultism on the campuses.

Conclusion

Since cultism among the students of Tertiary Institutions is real, urgent solution is needed to be taken by the government and institutions at large to curb it. The parents must work closely with the institutions authority to arrive at a lasting solution. More importantly, counseling services in Tertiary Institutions 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 main cause of cultism in Tertiary institutions is that students wants to take care of their welfare. But there is need for a future study on separate audience to further verify the possible effects of cultism and solutions.

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