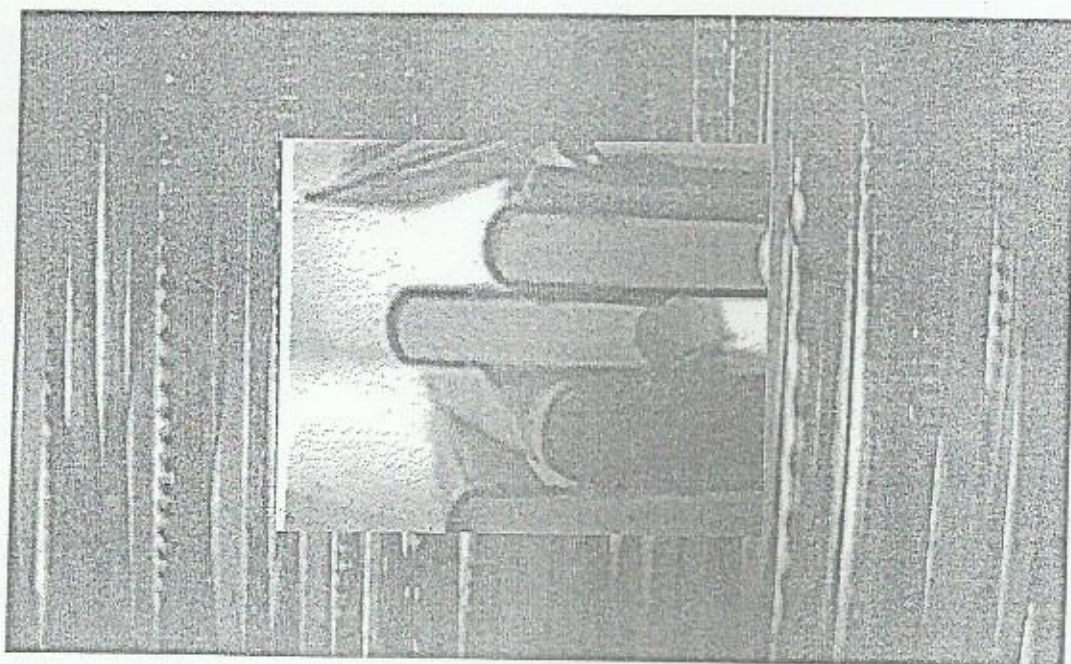




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Cultism or Gangsterism and Its Effect on Moral Development of Learners in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

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Abstract

This study examines the issue of cultism and gansterism in Nigerian tertiary institution, focused on Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education Oto-Ijanikin and Lagos State University, Ojo as case study. The current aggressive tendencies and violent behaviours of Nigerian students were investigated the genesis, causes and their effect on moral development of the learners were equally considered. One hundred students, 50 from each institution were involved in the study. The findings reveal that cults and gangsters' activities in the two campuses and other tertiary institutions in Nigeria is an epitome of moral decadence thus, affect their academic and moral development. It therefore connotes that if hands are not on deck to wage war against these two virulent school diseases, Nigerian institutions will constantly nurture and breed indisciplined people. It is recommended that parents should be made to sign a deed of undertaking before their children could be admitted in school, the school security department should be equipped with modern and sophisticated security gadgets, universities and colleges should established a well equipped guidance and counselling unit and that Religious Education as a core subject should be made compulsory.

Keywords: cultism, gansterism, tertiary institutions, undergraduate students

INTRODUCTION

Research on cultism and gangsterism has long being the interest of educational sociologists and psychologists experts. An examination of the Nigerian Tertiary Institutions today would reveal the use of dangerous weapons, sexual harassment, dwindling in the standard of the undergraduate, uncommitted and less dedicated lecturers to mention few. Raufu in Pemede (2000) reported that the problem of secret cult with its associated problem like killing, extortion, rape, maiming, stealing and other social vices in our tertiary institutions have permanently imprinted the issue in the mind of the average Nigeria. Odubunmi (1998) pointed out that many members of the society including the high placed one tend not to worry about these two pathogenic and virulent school diseases and so on. The question is, if education is regarded as the process by which the new members of the society are equipped with acceptable skills, knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, moral and values of the society then what model of moral standard are we inculcating through the process of education?

Ogunsanya (2000) reported that Cultism on campus emerged as a result of social unacceptable behaviour of media explosion, importation of foreign culture, the internet and junk magazine inclusive which overwhelm the Youths so that they fall prey to their effect. In view of this Mohammed (2004) asserted that the level of hooliganism among the students of tertiary institutions has risen very highly. It is a common phenomenon to see our students (male and

female) conducting themselves in manner not different from what tout do. In the same vein, Badejo (2004) quoted Oyediran (1996) opined that secret cult menace in our universities might not be unconnected with drug which some students use. Oni (2005) in his thesis reported that aggression has the second high effect on cult membership. Direct effect 4.33% of the total effect, indirect 0.24% of the total effect. Thus, aggression account for 0.5% of the total effect of cult membership. On this note, Holloway (1989) explains that the view that aggression or violence is mindless, random, or inexplicable, has been seriously questioned. Two alternatives but opposed conceptions of human aggression have been offered instead, one suggests that human violence is based on evolutionary mechanism for regulating social conduct. The other proposes that human societies impose stresses which in turn produce aggression as an abnormal response.

Concept of Cultism and Gangsterism

Odubunmi (1998) sees gangsterism as Secret Cult in our campuses. Gangsterism is seen as a group of criminals especially those who are armed and use guns or group of students acting as terrorists within the school system. He further asserts that once the group holds their meeting in secret, they are Secret Cults. The word Cultism may be referred to as the formation of a group of initiates or adherent round the figure of a god, a saint or even a living being. It may involve the practice of a particular doctrine within the body of religious belief.

Ogunbameru and Daodu (2003) defined Secret Cult to be any form of organization whose activities are not only exclusively kept away from the knowledge of others but such activities are carried out at odd hours of the day and they often clash with accepted norms and values of everyday life. Cultism started in Nigerian institutions of higher learning with the founding in 1952 of the Pirate Confraternity at the university college of Ibadan. The common ideology which the founding fathers held in allegiance to was the promotion of the dignity of the black man, which was then seriously threatened by the discriminatory and oppressive practices of the Colonial government and expatriates. Lasisi and Edun (1999) asserted that Pirate Confraternity commanded the respect and admiration of many people. Some years after the graduation of the founding fathers, internal wrangling and power tussle began to rent the organization as other similar organizations were formed such as Buccaneers, Eiye confraternity in 1968, Black Axe 1970 and others. Aje (2001) identifies the factors that caused secret cult which include economic handicap of some students in school, ticket to abuse education that is, abuse of quota system, examination malpractices and others, students' politics, social recognition, unfettered heartlessness and group protection.

As from 1990s, the activities of Secret Cult has taken a horrible and worrisome dimension which many criminal activities including murder arson, armed robbery and rape are frequently linked to their members, and lack of discipline. To that extent therefore, many of the purported Cultists are actually Gangsters or members of crime syndicates hiding under the umbrella of certain Secret Cults or societies. Holloway (1989) examined the proposition that human aggression can only be explained in terms of the capacity of human species to develop complex social communities on the basis of abstract idea. According to such view, he explained that violence springs from logic of the human condition. It represents typical and pathological response to frustration which are nevertheless endemic in human society and human mind. Conflict, he said begets frustration and in certain circumstances frustration begets violence. As a result of this, the study on Cultism and Gangsterism as the causes of current eruption, aggressive behaviors and violence in Nigerian tertiary institutions as they affect the learners' moral development is worth pursuing. It is therefore hoped that the result of this study will provide solution if not total as to the activities of the cultists and gangsters on campus. And in a short while sensitize the public and Nigerian schools to the evil of secret cult activities while the public would see the need to eradicate them within its rank and file in and outside Nigerian school system.

Research Question

Why do students indulge in cult activities?

Do secret cults and gangsterism make any meaningful contribution to moral development of the students?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following research hypotheses were formulated to answer the above stated research questions.

1. There is no significant relationship between cult activities and moral decadence in the campus.
2. There is no significant difference between cultists and non-cultists students in terms of moral standard in the campus.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a descriptive survey type because it is designed to describe the nature and activities of cultism and gangsterism in our tertiary institutions.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

The sample was made up of 100 students of two tertiary institutions in Lagos State. Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education Ijanikin and Lagos State University, Ojo 50 students from each school were randomly selected for the study. The subjects were made up of 30 male and 20 female students irrespective of level of study.

Instrument

The instrument contained fifteen-item questionnaire used to elicit information on the effect of cultism and gangsterism on the moral development of the learners. It consists of 2 sections. Section A sought information such as students' sex, institution, school/faculty, age and marital status. While section B consists of 15 attitudinal statements designed for the study. The statements are placed beside five-point likert scale of Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Strongly Disagreed, Disagreed and Undecided. The questionnaire was tested using test-re-test reliability method while the co-efficient of 0.83 at four weeks interval was established.

Procedure

The researcher and his assistant administered the questionnaire personally for proper monitoring and were collected from them at the spot. The researcher frequently visited the two schools to motivate the respondents towards being honest to their response view.

METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS

The data was analyzed using frequency counts and chi square statistical techniques.

Table I: Respondents opinion on the relationship between cult activities and moral decadence in the campus.

DF	Cal χ^2	Tab χ^2	Level of Significance	Decision
4	40.71	9.49	0.05	Rejected H_0

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From the above table, it was revealed that significant relationship existed between cult activities and moral decadence in the campus as the null hypotheses was rejected. This is because the calculated chi square value 40.91 is greater than the table value 9.49 at the degree of freedom 4 and alpha level 0.05.

Table II: Respondents opinion on the differences between student cultists and non cultists in terms of moral standard in the campus.

DF	Cal χ^2	Tab χ^2	Level of Significance	Decision
8	47.79	15.51	0.05	Rejected H_0

The result of the above table shows that significant differences existed between the moral standard of cultist and non-cultist students in the campus as the null hypotheses tested was rejected. This is because the calculated chi square value 47.79 is greater than the table value 15.51 at the degree of freedom 8 and level of significance 0.05.

DISCUSSION

The first hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between cult activities and moral decadence in the campus. The statistical data rejected the hypothesis, as the calculated chi square value 40.71 is greater than the table value 9.49. This is because campus cultists have been noted for maiming, raping, kidnapping, exchange of gunfire, sadistic torture, murder and many others. It conforms with Erediauwa in Adeyanju (2000) who reported that between 1996 and 1999 more than three hundred and fifty Nigerian students were killed as a result of power struggle among the secret cult groups in tertiary institutions while others were either seriously wounded or maimed in cult related violence. And Aje (2001) who reported the recent activities of cult in Nigerian institutions of higher learning which includes the raping of a first year female medical student of university of Ibadan in 1997, the killing of a Judoka who was a student of university of Port Harcourt in a night raid by cultists at the university, the murder of Dapo Aregbesola a twenty six years old students of Ogun State Polytechnic Abeokuta by assailants suspected to be secret cult members, a midnight clash between two secret cult societies Eiye and Black Axe which claimed the lives of three students while many others were seriously wounded in a fracas where such dangerous weapons such as guns, knives, axe were freely used.

The second hypotheses that stated that there is no significant differences between cultist and non-cultist students in terms of moral standard was also rejected. This indicated that there is significant differences in the moral standard of cultist and non

cultist students in the campus. This result confirms that no matter the level of morality in the campus, the behavior and way of reasoning of non cult members will definitely be different from that of cultists. The result is also in conformity with Adie (1997) who asserted that cultists are the kind of students who disrupt university examinations, carry guns or acid to examination halls and threaten lecturers in order to obtain good grades.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Despite the fact that cultism and gangsterism have posed some threat to the survival of education in Nigeria in the past and present, the future of Nigerian education can still be redirected to profitable activities, it would help in no small measure in assuaging the dangerous situation.

Based on the above results, we recommended that the photograph and bio-data of the rusticated students should be communicated to the press and other colleges and universities. Matriculation oath should be designated and contain a portion that would state the penalty for members discovered to be a member of campus cult. Parents should be made to sign a deed of undertaking before admitted to school. The school security department should be equipped with modern and sophisticated security gadgets, such as patrol vehicle, walkie-talkie, metal detector etc. Universities and colleges should establish a well equipped guidance and counselling unit that would be headed by professional and competent counsellor.

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