

## CULT ACTIVITIES AMONG PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN IDDO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OYO STATE: COUNSELING IMPLICATIONS

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### **Abstract**

*This study investigated cult activities among the public secondary school students in Iddo Local Government Area of Oyo State and its counselling implications. The design for the study was a descriptive survey type. The population of the study were all teachers in public secondary schools in Iddo Local Government Area (LGA) of Oyo State. 20 public secondary schools were randomly selected within the LGA through Random Sampling Techniques. In each school, 20 teachers were also selected through Random Sampling Techniques. A total of four hundred (400) respondents were used for the study. A self-made instrument labelled "Cult Activities among Secondary Students Questionnaire (CASSQ)" was used to collect data. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A contained the respondents' personal data while section B and C consisted of the 20 question- items. In consideration of content validity, the instrument was given to experts in the field of Educational Management and Counselling for scrutiny. Corrections were made before administration of the questionnaire. Test and retest method was used and a reliability co-efficient of 0.85 was obtained. Simple percentage was used to analyse the three research questions. It was established that cultism among students in public secondary schools is at alarming rate and had resulted in various vices that have affect the students negatively and in the development of the society. Recommendations were made that law enforcement agencies should be adequately equipped and up and doing in curbing the menace of cults without prejudice to anybody, childhood development and guidance/counselling programmes be made effective in all school areas of study and that there is need to maintain discipline and justice in the school system to sustain peaceful coexistence among the students.*

**Keywords:** Cultism, Counseling, Peaceful coexistence, Menace, Peer group influence

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### **Introduction**

The rate of cultism among secondary school students has been on the increase. The earliest record of secret cults in Nigerian schools, according to Umeh (2001), was in 1952 in the then University College, Ibadan, when the National Association of Sea Dogs (Pirate Confraternity) was founded. This group had noble ideals and objectives at inception but changed into full blown heinous group with the passage of time. Then, they brought to focus societal ills, cherished humanitarian services, and established relationships for future benefits. These days, it has been observed that many

students have cultivated the habit of laziness towards their academic pursuit and channeled their energy to cultism. They spend much time engaging in various clandestine and occult practices. Cultism appears to rank very high among the maladaptive behaviours among secondary school students. Nnayieto (2015) remarked that cultism was formerly a higher institution affair but has today gone down the line of the educational institution and beyond, that secondary school students and non-students today are members.

Kruger (2012) pointed that cultists among students hardly stay in class to study.

They are fond of moving aimlessly from one class to another, trying to recruit new students or trying to disturb the peace of the class and also disturb the students who refuse to join. They do not obey laws and orders that have been laid down by the school authorities. Wherever, they commit any crime, like fighting in the school, they feel it is only twelve strokes of cane they are going to receive and that is all. They are known to put on certain colours of attires like black, red, green and yellow berets, so also they put on mufflers with different colours, depending on the cult gang they belong to. Some put on the chaplet, it is either yellow, or those mixed with different colours, with the same bangles, especially yellow, depending on which group they belong to.

More so, Kruger (2012) added that most of them do not dress very properly; they are the students that put on low waist trousers. When they are corrected, either by their teachers or their senior students, trouble begins to brew and one begins to have fear going home after the close of the day because they are going to be beaten severely. Also, they do not have good thoughts or do not think straight in life, all they do is to destroy and this has made them basically not to be focused in life. For instance, most of them rape girls. Osakinle and Falana (2011) stated that all over the world, from the universities to the polytechnics, colleges of education and other tertiary institutions, and regrettably some secondary schools, come stories of violence, tortures, and intimidation executed by members of secret cults. The cult groups are turning Nigerian institutions of learning into killing fields or theatres of war. Osakinle and Falana (2011) described secret cult as a group of people whose activities are carried out in exclusive locations and unusual times.

Mediayanose (2016) adduced causes of cultism to include need for protection. Some meek students are lured or bullied into cults as a result of their anxiety not to be attacked or harassed by members of secret cults or other aggressive individuals. Economic benefits are another reason. Some individuals see cultism as a veritable avenue for making money through unwholesome activities such as prostitution, blackmail,

examination racketeering and other unscrupulous activities. Another one is exerting authority or supremacy from individuals. Some patronize cults in order to be able to flaunt their power or influence to other members of their school community. More so, broken family is a factor as some cultists embrace cultism as an outlet from their traumatic home experiences, especially where there is lack of harmony.

Uncontrolled drug abuse makes some students to dabble into cultism. As a result of overpowering influence of drugs which they get easily from cults and they could not wriggle out later, having sworn to oaths of allegiance to the cult. Lack of guidance or direction is another means through which some students are usually deceived or lured into joining cults. They join cults due to inadequate guidance by adults. Influence of politicians and school administrators can also lead to assurance of connection to powerful people in schools and politicians from larger society who are themselves members of cults. In addition, academic excellence or promise of success in school work through cheating and other unconventional means provide attractive prospect for some cult members (Birabil & Okanezi (2017).

According to Onyemwinmina and Aibieyi (2015), peer influence can force some students to join cult because their friends also belong to such cults. This is accentuated by adolescence. Need to exert vengeance is another factor. Some students join cults to seek revenge for wrongs committed against them. According to Onyemwinmina and Aibieyi (2015), such activities include extortion of money by threats, class disruption, fighting, improper dressing, wearing of jewelry to school, smoking, whistling or shouting in corridors, alcohol abuse, vandalism and robbery. They intimidate authorities, especially teachers, to award marks to pass examinations. In addition, cult members exploit individuals and pose a threat to the society. Udoh and Ikezu (2015) in Ajitoni and Olaniyan (2018) explicitly stated some of the adverse effects of cultism to the education system which include wanton destruction of lives of stakeholders in the education sector, heinous crimes like armed robbery, rape, kidnapping

black mailing examination malpractice. Also, cultism invariably leads to examination malpractice, poor academic performance, destruction of property and, most of the times, disruption of school academic calendar.

### **Panacea to Cultism in Nigerian Education System**

Ajitoni and Olaniyan (2018) identified relevant measures that would help to eradicate cultism in Nigerian schools. These include:

- Parents should provide adequate guidance to their children on the inherent dangers of cultism.
- Parents should also endeavor to provide the basic needs for their children to prevent them from falling prey to inducement by cults, through which they can be lured to join secret cults.
- Mosques and churches should intensify efforts to discourage their members, especially the adolescents, from joining cults.
- Government should ensure adequate provision of necessary facilities in educational institutions. This would enhance engagement of students in recreational activities.
- Government should refrain from deploying "divide and rule" tactics, which set cult groups against student unions in Nigerian institutions in a bid to stifle agitation for improved conditions and services in Nigerian education institutions.
- Government, through the legislature and judiciary, should ensure enactment and enforcement of new laws that prescribes more stringent measures against cult related crimes.

There is no problem without solution. Strategies and measures that can be used to curb cultism include disciplinary committee (Ejionueme, 2004), parental guidance (Umeh, 2001, Idowu, 2009; 2007), school guidance and counselling activities mentorship (Welch, 2006), and expulsion of culprit (Ejionueme, 2004). In addition, Ogbu (2001) proffered

other measures such as the use of peaceful methods such as the use of dialogue and communication network and moral persuasion such as appeals and orientation of new students; use of force, such as vigilante counter force mechanism; use of legal and extra-legal sanctions like expulsion and consequent prosecution of known cultists; use of effective security surveillance methods; society wide-reforms; and improvement in the general welfare of students.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Like the rampant cult activities in our societies, eradication of cultism in our public secondary schools has been a matter of concern to the general public, researchers, teachers, parents and educationists because it seems there has been an increase in the number of students involved in our public secondary schools. This contemporary issue resulted from need for protection as a result of anxiety, parental influence, peer group influence and indoctrination. The situation is worsened by the fact that most secondary school students now believe in searching for short-cuts to succeed. In spite of many efforts by the government to curb this menace, it has continued to increase in many of our public secondary schools. Thus, there is need for this study. This study thus investigated rampant cultism activities among the public secondary school students in Iddo Local Government Area of Oyo State and its Counselling implications.

### **Purpose of this Study**

The main purpose of this study was to find out the causes, effects and strategies to stop cultism in public secondary schools in Nigeria. It was discovered from the study that cultism among the students of secondary schools is real and urgent solutions is needed by government and institution at large to curb it

### **Significance of the Study**

The study will benefit all education stakeholders in the school system. It would provide adequate knowledge to the teachers on the causes, effect and remedies of curbing cultism. It would help the school

administrators have a conducive crime free environment for effective teaching-learning processes. The study will also serve as an eye opener to researchers and other stakeholders on how to ensure discipline in the school for effective school management. In addition, the study will significantly solve the problem of cultic activities thereby, helping school administrators to achieve the set goals by reducing complexities in school management.

### Research Questions

The following questions were generated to guide the study.

- vi. What are the causes of students' involvement in cult activities in Iddo Local Government Area of Oyo State?
- vii. What effects has cultism on the students' academic performance in Iddo Local Government Area of Oyo State?
- viii. In what ways can cultism be curbed in public secondary schools in Iddo Local Government Area of Oyo State?

### Methodology

The design for the study was a descriptive survey type. The population of the study were all teachers in public secondary schools in Iddo Local Government Area (LGA) of Oyo State. The sample for the population was

done as follows: Iddo Local Government Area (LGA) of Oyo State was identified. Twenty (20) public secondary schools were randomly selected within the LGA through Random Sampling Techniques. In each school, 20 teachers were also selected through same Random Sampling Techniques. A total of four hundred (400) respondents were used for the study.

An instrument labelled "Cult Activities among Secondary Students Questionnaire (CASSQ)" was used to collect data. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. Section A contained respondents personal data while sections B and C consisted of the 20 questions item. The format adopted for section B is Likert scale format in which respondents were required to respond to. In consideration of content validity, the instrument was given to experts in the field of Educational Management and Counselling for scrutiny. Corrections were made before administration of the questionnaire. Two public secondary schools that were not part of the selected schools were used for reliability. Test and retest method was used and a reliability co-efficient of 0.85 was obtained. Simple percentage was used to analyse the three research questions.

### Analysis of Data

#### Answering of Research Questions

**Research Question 1:** What are the causes of students' involvement in cultism activities in Iddo Local Government Area of Oyo State?

**Table 1: Causes of Students' Involvement in Cultism Activities**

S/N	I	t	e	m	s	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
1	.	Need for Protection as a result of their anxiety not to be attacked by members of secret cults				340 (85.0)	40 (10.0)	20 (5.0)	0 (0.00)
2	.	Parental influence led some students to be cultists				300 (75.0)	0 (0.00)	60 (15.0)	40 (10.0)
3	.	To terrorise either innocent people or as a pay back to retaliate whoever has offended them either in the past or present				380 (95.0)	20 (5.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)
4	.	Indoctrination and Deceit: Usually new cult recruits are indoctrinated about bloated ideals of the group and benefits accruable from it.				260 (65.0)	140 (35.0)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)
5	.	Some students just want to instill fear into their fellow colleagues; they want to be seen as big boys and girls.				200 (50.0)	180 (45.0)	0 (0.00)	20 (5.00)

6	Individuals patronize cults in order to be able to flaunt their power or influence to other members of their school community	280 (70.0)	120 (30.0)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)
7	Influence of Politicians and School Administration made the students to join cult	2 0 0 (50.0)	1 5 0 (37.5)	0 (0.00)	5 0 (12.5)
8	Economic/Financial Benefits from cult are responsible for cultism	2 4 0 (60.0)	1 6 0 (40.0)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)
9	Peer group/Senior Influence can be adduced for cultism	300 (75.0)	1 0 0 (25.0)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)
10	Some embrace cultism as an outlet from their traumatic home experiences.	3 6 0 (90.0)	4 0 (10.0)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)

Table 1 shows causes of students' involvement in cultism activities in Iddo Local Government Area of Oyo State. From the findings, 340 (85.0%) and 40 (10.0%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that there is need for protection as a result of their anxiety not to be attacked or harassed by members of secret cults or other aggressive individuals while 20 (5.0%) respondents disagreed. 380 (95.0%) respondents strongly agreed while 20 (5%) respondents agreed that parental influence led some students to be cultists. Also, 200 (50.0%) respondents strongly agreed that some students just want to instill fear into their fellow colleagues; they want to be seen as big boys and girls 180(45.0%)

respondents agreed while 20 (5.0%) respondents strongly disagreed with the motion. On the influence of politicians and school administration, 200 (50.0%) respondents strongly supported while 150 (37.5%) respondents agreed while 50 (12.5%) respondents strongly disagreed. 300 (75.0%) respondents strongly maintained that Peer group or senior students can influence junior students while 100 (25.0%) respondents agreed. On the view that some cultists embrace cultism as an outlet from their traumatic home experiences, especially where there is lack of harmony, 360 (90 %) respondents strongly agreed while 40 (10%) respondents agreed.

### Research Question 2: What effects has cultism on the student's academic performance in Iddo Local Government Area of Oyo State?

**Table 2: Effects of Cultism on the Student's Academic Performance**

S/N	I t e m s	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
1 .	Wanton Destruction of Lives of Stakeholders in the Education Sector	280.0 (70.0)	100.0 (25.0)	2 0 . 0 (5.0)	0 . 0 (0.00)
2 .	Disruption of School Calendar	350.0 (75.0)	0.0 (0.00)	5 0 . 0 (12.5)	0 . 0 (0.00)
3 .	Poor students' Academic Performance	3 2 0 . 0 (80.0)	8 0 . 0 (20.0)	0 . 0 (0.00)	0 . 0 (0.00)
4 .	Heinous crimes like armed robbery, rape, kidnapping black mailing, prostitution etc.	2 0 0 . 0 (50.0)	140 (35.0)	6 0 . 0 (15.0)	0 . 0 (0.00)
5 .	Deserted School/areadue to fear of been attacked	2 0 0 . 0 (50.0)	180.0 (45.0)	0 . 0 (0.00)	2 0 . 0 (5.00)

Table 2 shows effects cultism has on the student's academic performance in Iddo Local Government Area of Oyo State. From the findings. It was revealed that 280 (70.0%) and 100 (25.0%) respondents strongly

agreed and agreed respectively that the wanton destruction of lives of stakeholders in the education sector respectively while 20 (5.0%) disagreed. 350 (75.0%) strongly agreed while 50 (12.5%) agreed that

disruption of school do occur as of cultism activities. Also, 320 (80.0%) agreed that poor students' academic performance while 80.0 (20.0%) agreed. That the heinous crimes like armed robbery, rape, kidnapping black mailing, prostitution etc., 200 (50.0%) strongly supported, 140 (35.0%) agreed while

60 (15.0%) strongly disagreed. 200 (50.0%) strongly maintained that there is always deserted school/ area due to fear of been attacked while 180 (45.0%) agreed while 20 (5.00%) strongly disagreed.

### Research Question 3: In what ways can cultism be curbed in public secondary schools in Iddo Local Government Area of Oyo State?

**Table 3: Some Remedies to Cultism Activities**

	I t e m s	SA (%)	A ( % )	D ( % )	SD ( % )
1	Mosques and churches should intensify efforts to discourage their members, especially the adolescents from joining cults.	280 (70.00)	120 (30.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)
2	Government should ensure adequate provision of necessary facilities in educational institutions. This should be coupled with provision of recreational facilities in schools.	1 5 0 (35.70)	2 0 0 (50.00)	0 (0.00)	5 0 (12.50)
3	Parents should provide adequate guidance to their children on the inherent dangers of cultism	2 4 0 (60.00)	1 6 0 (40.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)
4	Parents should also endeavor to provide the basic needs of their children to prevent them from falling prey to inducement by cults.	380 (95.00)	2 0 (5.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)
5	School administrations should create enabling environment for peaceful dialogue with students unions,	2 6 0 (65.00)	1 0 0 (25.00)	4 0 (10.00)	0 (0.00)

Table 3 shows opinion of respondents on various ways cultism can be curbed in public secondary schools. On the statement that mosques and churches should intensify efforts to discourage their members, especially the adolescents from joining cults, 280 (70.00%) respondents strongly agreed while 120 (30.00%) respondents agreed. Also, 150 (35.70%) respondents strongly agreed, 200 (50.00%) respondents agreed while 50 (12.50%) respondents strongly disagreed. On the view that parents should provide adequate guidance to their children on the inherent dangers of cultism, 240 (60.00%) respondents strongly agreed while 160 (40.00%) respondents agreed with the view. 380 (95.00%) respondents strongly agreed that parents should also endeavor to provide the basic needs of their children to prevent them from falling prey to inducement by cults while 20 (5.00%). In addition, 260 (65.00%) respondents strongly agreed, 100 (25.00%) respondents agreed while 40.00 (10.00%) respondents strongly agreed that school administrations should

create enabling environment for peaceful dialogue with students unions,

### Discussion of Findings

Table 1 addresses the causes of students' involvement in cult activities in Iddo Local Government Area of Oyo State. From the findings, respondents pointed out that the need for protection as a result of their anxiety for possibility of being attacked or harassed by members of secret cults or other aggressive individuals and parental influence led some students to be cultists, some students just want to instill fear into their fellow colleagues; they want to be seen as big boys and girls. Also, influence of politicians and school administration, peer group or senior students can influence junior students to embrace cultism as an outlet from their traumatic home experiences, especially where there is lack of harmony.

This study is in line with the conclusion of Mediayanose (2016) and Nnaji et al. (2015) in their studies that causes of cultism include need

for protection. Some meek students are lured or bullied into cults as a result of their anxiety not to be attacked or harassed by members of secret cults or other aggressive individuals. Economic benefits are another reason. Some individuals see cultism as a veritable avenue for making money through unwholesome activities such as prostitution, blackmail, examination racketeering and other unscrupulous activities. More so, broken home is a factor as some cultists embrace cultism as an outlet from their traumatic home experiences, especially where there is lack of harmony.

Table 2 displays some effects of cultism on the student's academic performance in Iddo Local Government Area of Oyo State. From the findings, it was revealed that there is wanton destruction of lives of stakeholders in the education sector, disruption of school do occur as of cultism activities, the heinous crimes like armed robbery, rape, kidnapping black mailing, prostitution etc., Also, there is always deserted school/area due to fear of been attacked.

This study is in line with the opinion of Nnam, Birabil and Okanezi (2017), Udoh and Ikezu (2015) explicitly stated some of the adverse effects of cultism to the education system which includes wanton destruction of lives of stakeholders in the education sector, heinous crimes like armed robbery, rape, kidnapping black mailing examination malpractice. Also, cultism invariably leads to examination malpractice, poor academic performance, destruction of property and. most of the times, there is disruption of school academic calendar.

Table 3 shows opinion of respondents on various ways cultism can be curbed in public secondary schools. Among the respondents views were that mosques and churches should intensify efforts to discourage their members, especially the adolescents from joining cults, parents should provide adequate guidance to their children on the inherent dangers of cultism, and parents should also endeavor to provide the basic needs for their children to prevent them from falling prey to inducement by cults. Also, school administrations should

create enabling environment for peaceful dialogue with students unions.

This study is in line with the view of Ajitoni, and Olaniyan, (2018) who identified relevant measures that would help to eradicate cultism in Nigerian schools. These include: parents should provide adequate guidance to their children on the inherent dangers of cultism. parents should also endeavor to provide the basic needs of their children to prevent them from falling prey to inducement by cults, through which they can be lured to join secret cults and government should refrain from deploying "divide and rule" tactics, which plays cult groups against student unions in Nigerian institutions in a bid to stifle agitation for improved conditions and services in Nigerian education institutions.

### **Conclusion**

The major goal of education should be to make a child grow up to be morally sound. Therefore, to bring about this desired goal, all those charged with the responsibility of training students should perceive cultism as a common enemy that should be jointly eradicated in the schools. The issues of cultism in Nigerian secondary school should not be taken with levity. Hence, all education stakeholders must be united in eradicating manace of secret cults in Nigerian schools. For educational objectives to be achieved, there is need for all the hands to be on desk to provide lasting solution to the existing problems in our society.

### **Counseling Implications on Rampant Cultism Activities**

The National Policy on Education (2014) objectives of secondary education focuses on maintaining national development through advanced significant manpower training; cultivate and instill proper values for the survival of the society, cultivate the intellectual proficiency of learners to comprehend and become responsive to their environments. Likewise, if guidance and counseling programme is not effective in all the schools in Nigeria, the rate of student cultists will be increasing. Also, gain both technical and academic skills that could aid learners to be resourceful and beneficial

members of the society; The findings however imply that if childhood development programme is not effective in the Nigerian schools, the rate of cultism will be increasing till it is beyond control. In addition, care should be taken in recruiting school teachers and counselors so that only those certified cult-free should be entrusted with the sacred duty of raising school children. This implies that adequate facilities, appropriate instructional materials, and a conducive environment are imperative in achieving educational goals in schools.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are given:

- Law enforcement agencies should be adequately equipped and up and doing in curbing the menace of cults without prejudice to anybody.
- Childhood development programme and guidance/counseling programme be made effective in all schools so as to curb cultism in the country.
- There is need to maintain discipline and justice in the school system to sustain peaceful coexistence among the students.
- The law enforcement agents should not fail to arrest and prosecute cult members.
- There is need for accommodative environment. School administrations should create enabling environment for peaceful dialogue, with students unions,
- School administrations should be seen to discipline errant students without fear or favour so as to serve as deterrent to others.

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