

Cultism and Economic/Manpower development in Cross River University of technology: Need for counselling approaches

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate cultism and economic/manpower development in Cross River University Technology; and need for counselling implications. To guide the study two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The instrument for data collection was a well validated 15 items questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered to 100 students, randomly selected in the area of study. The data collected was analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient. The result of the findings revealed that there is an inverse significant relationship between cultism and economic/manpower development in Cross River University of Technology. Based on these findings appropriate counselling recommendations and approaches were made: which include; the need for the National Association of Counsellors in Nigeria and all counselors to intensified awareness campaign on the negative impact of cultism in school security, academic performance of students, the society and lives of lecturers and all in the school system. Also the government to improve on its security unit and punish adequately those caught in the act of cultism and need to avoid cult activities.

Keywords: cultism, economic/manpower, development, university, technology: counselling, approaches

Introduction

The inhuman activities of cultism in our institutions of higher learning leaves a remarkable imprint or setback in the workability of manpower and economic growth of our university in its productivity and quality assurance. Secret cult dates back to the ancient world, to the Greco-Egyptian Society of Omens and Superstitions. In Nigeria the first confraternity, the Pirates Confraternity was created as a social organization for promising students. However, as new confraternities were formed, they became increasingly violent through the 1970s and 80s. By 1990s to date many confraternities largely operate as criminal gangs, called "campus cults" in Nigeria. Besides normal criminal activities confraternities have been linked to political violence as well as the conflict in the Niger Delta. Accordingly a significant percentage of economic development is being affected. Hence, its origin in Nigerian universities highlights the paradox of its existence. Where in 1952, Nobel prize winning author Wole Soyinka and a group of six friends formed the Pirate Confraternity at the elite University College, Ibadan, then part of the University of London (Rotimi, 2005) [8]. Their objective was opposing the absurdity of the colonial mentality in the post independent studentry and adopted their motto: "Against all Conventions". The confraternity being exclusive, students not allowed to identify with them formed their own confraternities. As a result, these new fraternities did not share the gracious intents of Soyinka and his clique; inter-group tensions led to fighting, though these were initially limited to fist fights (IRIN, 2002 August report) [4].

Furthermore, the schism broke their ranks with breakaway, formations pitched against one another for supremacy. The result was a rash of different groups with misplaced values, unhealthy rivalry and an antisocial culture of fire eating and bloodletting sustained by the cause effect principle. Hundreds of innocent students are slaughtered yearly in our campuses. They

are simply awe striking, evoking images of intransigence, blood and death. Namely, the Bucaneers, the Supreme Vikings Confraternity, the Black Axe, Klu Klu Klan, the Executioners, Black Berets, Daughter of Jezebel, the Eiyé Confraternity, the Black Braziers among others (Raymond, 2005). There are a few others such as Mgba Mgba, the Amazons etc that are really not significant enough but need not be ignored.

Benefiting from the chaos of cultism are the politicians and other elite class whose pool of bodyguards, assassin squads and rabble rousers are conscripted from the miscreants. The elite class is highly culpable for the menace of cultism in the universities and communities with unprecedented tolls posing more danger to our communal existence than the virus HIV/AIDS and the suffering Nigerian society. The wave of militia in the Niger Delta is the direct result of campus cults. Various deadly factions have mushroomed in our various communities with every trapping egos in the campuses. Engaging in rituals and mind bending initiation rites which are their hallmark.

Despite the obvious dangers of cultism (secret cult), it continues to entice the fancies of the growing youths. The allure of power and dominion; desire for protection against real and imagined enemies; are usually canvassed by cult scouts who go about enlisting like-minds. There are cases where unwilling students have been brown beaten into identifying with these bloodletting cliques students engaged in cultism to dare, to shore up their ego, to intimidate even their lecturers and court the best girls in the campus. Some girl hostels are "fenced" off by a given gang and intruders paid dearly. Fingers in the sponsorship of cultism and cult attacks are big wigs of the society before whom the law and law enforcement agents shrank into oblivion (Okiro, 2009) [6].

The cost of violence in the institutions and surrounding communities are often the most unexpected. These consequences are often unaddressed but are devastating enough to serve as remote cause for communities and state to begin the

fight against cult violence. Most institutions suffering from high cult violence epidemics are also economically depressed, they are riddled with abandoned buildings, shattered classrooms, shuttered businesses, and a lack of smooth running of academic calendar. Businessmen/women are afraid to invest in the institution and environs, with limited buying potential or security; insurance rates are high, and potential for successes are low. This affects the university calendar and teaching/learning activities and need to be addressed by those in authority and communities within and outside the state. Hence intensive guidance services should be rendered on a continuous basis. Accordingly, Denga (2011) ^[2] stated that students need help to resolve their social, health, home, academic, emotional, financial, vocational, religious and security problems. The needs to assist them in resolving these problems cries out for counsellors, administrators and other para professional to team up together and provide services which are essential for the comfort of students and institutions in their struggle to achieve their academic goals in university education. Students counselling is concerned chiefly with students' psychological health which leads naturally to normal behaviour. Based on this, we were determined to carried out this study to investigate the influence of cultism on economic development in Cross River University of Technology.

Theoretical framework

Differential association theory of Sutherland (1974) is relevant to this study. He stated that, criminal behaviour or deviant behaviour is learned through contact with criminal pattern so those who are not criminals are fortunate for being brought up in good environment. This implies that, cults victims are at many time those who are influence negatively and through contact with those who are already involve in such acts. Also some students who fall pear to cultist activities are those from well disciplined families. This is as a result of the quest in the growing child to experiment self and be the authority figure.

Statement of problems

Cultism is threat to life and abuse to human right and freedom of association. Majority of students and victims enlisted as cultist are either forced to or were not abreast of the hard facts about cultism. New students are lured in by rosy promises of dominion on campus, power, protection from enemies and others. Also campus threat to life is reported on daily basis on the loss of lives of students in the stiff initiation rites by old members. Then the survivors, far from protection become targets of rival cults, are hounded by police, the administration, students' union authorities and the society.

The resultant effect of cultism in campuses therefore, is the inability of the university to produce sufficient manpower as expected of the university due to incessant and untimely closure or breakdown of the school activities in the academic system; which has negatively affected the academic performance and input of instructors to give in their best in a highly demanding economy. Hence, this study is aim at investigating the influence of cultism in economic development of Cross River University of Technology and needs for counselling approaches.

The purpose of the study was to examine the cultism and economic development in Cross River University of Technology (with campuses at Obubra and Ogoja local government areas respectively); and the need for counselling approaches. The study was specifically aim at investigating whether (i) they exist

any relationship between cultism and economic development and (ii) cultism and manpower development in Cross River University of Technology.

Literature reviews was carried out on the variables under study; cultism and economic development. Although not all students are involved in cultism, the few that are involved do considerable damage to the economic system of the study and society. Since the inception of cultism, thousands of students/lecturers have lost their lives to it while properties worth millions of naira have also been destroyed. Apart from the injured and those rusticated or expelled, troubled universities students are generally known for their activism everywhere. Odili (2004) ^[5] in his study on the relationship between cultism and social development, postulated that cultism significantly affects the economy of the nation as it reduces the manpower productivity and the economy of the nation becomes that final end point of the negative effects of cultism. According to him a significant percentage of economic development is been effected by cult activities and that the implications of cultist activities in Nigerian tertiary institutions are not without their very grave implications. He pinpointed seven (7) implications of this trend to include: (i) destruction of lives and properties (ii) upsurge in crime due to armed proliferation (iii) epileptic university system (iv) loss of prospective investors (v) loss of government revenue through illegal bunkering (vi) cost of maintaining law and order (vii) threat to government.

In line with this, Uche (2009) ^[11] in his study, "the economic dimension of interpersonal cult violence" posited that, interpersonal cult violence is expensive, estimated cost of cult violence in Nigeria reach 33% of the gross domestic product. In Ghana and Sierra Leone, the total cost from violence including homicide, injured (wounding) and sexual assault among to an estimated \$4.2 billion annually. He further explained that this unfortunate development in our educational system represents a high sophistication to which examination malpractices had risen in recent times. Sadly too some parents have been found to encourage the perpetuation of this ugly act by their children/wards either directly or indirectly.

Furthermore, Durkan (2004) ^[3] ascertain that not only does cult conflict negatively impact the financial opportunities of those directly involved in a conflict – hospital costs, medical treatment, lost wages, missed opportunities, investigation and court cost but it also hinders an entire communities' or institutions' potential to grow. Cults' firearm injuries exhibit higher costs them any other type of injury and those involved are all held responsible for paying the dues. About N10 billion a year is spent on cultist firearm assaults, a cost of roughly N0.2 million per shooting, with the average medical cost to treat a victim estimated to be N45,000 pending on the severity, the total criminal justice cost per homicide are estimated to be N183,000 with an additional N35,600 for each cult firearm assault. The psychological costs of cult violence equally contributed to the economic quicksand. Students who witness cult violence are more likely to perform poorly in school activities, suffer cognitive and emotional disorders, lack motivation and have increased susceptibility to violence themselves. While anxiety and grief from such experiences and tragedies results in lost hours, lost wages and limited opportunities. As a result those involve fund it difficult to break cycle with societal judgement and limitations or a lack of opportunity to embark on a new path for success.

Cultism and manpower: Frequent criminal activities for cults

include intimidating professors into giving high grades, including by burning their cars or briefly abducting their children (The Economist, 31 July, 2008). Since the 1980s, confraternities have murdered people who are thought to have “stolen” a mother’s girl friend or sugar daddy” in the case of female groups. Female groups began operating as prostitution rings relatively early. While the majority of confraternities, as of 2005, were engaged in a variety of money-making criminal activities ranging from cybercrime to armed robbery and kidnapping (Bestman Wellington, 2007) [1]. Cult members may also get money from political figures, who wish to intimidate their opponents. The exact death toll of confraternity activities is unclear. One estimate in 2002 was that 250 people had been killed in campus cult-related murders in the previous decade while Exam Ethics Projects Lobby Group estimated that 115 students and teachers had been killed between 1993 and 2003 (The Economist, 2007). However, those figures pale into insignificance when compare with recent cult activities in Benin City, the Edo State capital in 2008 and 2009, with over 40 cult related deaths recorded monthly. Hence, it becomes very clear that the teaching and learning process, the fear, anxieties, worries, tension, reduce manpower, the psychological and emotion effect on lecturers and students and the general peace in campuses are adversely affected.

Furthermore, Patrick (2009) [7] carried out a study on the effect of cultism on the society using 500 respondents found out that cultism significantly affects the manpower development of the society as it often destroys those who are involved in the active labour force of the society. He explained that the gravity of the impact and consequences of intra and inter cult clashes on campuses have resulted in physical harm on individual, disruption of learning process, destruction of college property and even death which ends the manpower productivity of the individual. Similarly Smah (2006) [9] in a study in the University of Middle Belt Zone in Nigeria, reported that 15% of students had either observed or reported cult/gang motivated deaths in the university campuses between one and two times in the previous years and these has resulted to 10% shortage of the manpower that was to be added to the labour force in the university, state and country generally. However, the perpetrators of cultism and its attendant violence are youths. Youths are a catalyst of manpower development and social change. Their activities, actions and exuberance are always notices. It become extremely important that youths be nurtured, guarded and trained towards progressive vibrant and sustainable future. Thus, the essence of good well-trained youth is a reflection and embodiment of concerned efforts for positive social reproduction. The underlying fact remains that youths cannot fulfill their manifest destiny in a volatile environment saturated by fratricidal wars, illiteracy and barbarity; resulting to youth infected with the virus of injustice, bizarre life style, and low intellectual development. It is important to state that any institution, society or community whose youths have resigned themselves to negative venture is on fast line of destruction.

Methodology

The research design adopted for the study was survey design. Survey design involves the collection of data to accurately and objectively describe the existing condition or phenomena. The population of the study comprises all students in Cross River University of Technology. A simple random sampling technique was adopted in selecting subjects for the study; while purposely

sampling was used in selecting the students so as to include some suspected cultists. A breakdown of the figures shows that ten (10) students were selected from ten (10) departments in the research area.

The major instrument that was used for data collection was the questionnaire; which comprises of ten (10) items all of the likert types 4 point scale; with a section A on personal data of the respondents. The respondents were required to tick their level of agreement for each statement. The instrument was validated by experts from psychology of education and two from educational measurement research and evaluation. The reliability instrument was established using test re-test method. The reliability index ranged 0.83. Through the head of departments, the questionnaire was tested in the study, and all the 100 copies were retrieved after administration (i) cultism and economic development (ii) cultism and manpower development.

Results

Hypothesis one (1): There is no significant relationship between cultism and economic development in Cross River University of Technology. There are two variables here, cultism as independent variable and economy development, the dependent variable. The analysis of this hypothesis is presented in table 1.

Table 1: Analysis of the relationship between cultism and economic development in Cross River University of Technology (n = 100)

Variables	$\sum x$ $\sum y$	$\sum x^2$ $\sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	r
Cultism	1495	23793		
			20519	-0.586*
Economic development	1423	21399		

* Significant at 0.05 level; df = 98; critical r = 0.195

From the analysis above, calculated r-value of -0.195 is in it absolute term greater than the tabulated r-value of -0.195 at 0.05 level of significant with 98 degree of freedom. This implies that the null hypothesis was rejected while an alternative hypothesis was upheld, that, there is an inverse significant relationship between cultism and economic development in Cross River University of Technology. That is, the higher the level of cultism among students, the lower level of economic development and vice-versa.

Hypothesis two (2): There is no significant relationship between cultism and manpower development in Cross River University of Technology. The analysis of this hypothesis is presented in table 2.

Table 2: Analysis of the relationship between cultism and manpower in Cross River University of Technology (n = 100)

Variables	$\sum x$ $\sum y$	$\sum x^2$ $\sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	r
Cultism	1495	23793		
			19269	-0.743*
Manpower development	1350	19274		

* Significant at 0.05 level; df = 98; critical r = 0.195

The result of the hypothesis as presented in table 2 show that the r-value of -0.733 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.198 at 0.05 level of significant with 98 degree of freedom. This implies that the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis is retained. That is the higher the level of cultism among students the lower the level of productivity in manpower development.

Discussion and conclusion

The result of the hypothesis reveals that there is a significant relationship between cultism and economic development in Cross River University of Technology. The results of the finding was in line with the views of Uche (2009)^[11] who posited that interpersonal cult violence is expensive, and reported that an estimated cost of cult violence in Nigeria reach 33% of the gross domestic product. In Ghana and Sierra Leone, the total cost from violence including homicide, wounding and sexual assault amount to an estimated \$4.2 billion annually. He further explained that this unfortunate development in our educational system represents a high sophistication to which examination malpractices had risen in recent times. Sadly too some parents have been found to encourage the perpetuation of this ugly act by their children/wards either directly or indirectly. Also the result was in correspondence with the study of Dunkan (2004)^[3] who posits that not only does cult conflict negatively impact the financial opportunities of those directly involved in a conflict, hospital costs, medical treatment, lost wages, missed opportunities, investigation and court cost, but it also hinders an entire communities' or institutions' potentials to grow. Cults' firearm – injuries exhibit higher costs than any other type of injury and those involved are all held responsible for paying the dues. About N10 billion a year is spent on cultist firearm assaults, a cost of roughly N0.2 million per shooting, with the average medical cost to treat a victim estimated to be N45,000. Hence, in comparisons with high income countries are complicated by the fact that economic losses related to productivity tend to be undervalued in low-income countries since those losses are typically based on foregone wages and income.

While the result of the hypotheses on cultism and manpower development in Cross River University of Technology reveals that there is an inverse significant relationship between cultism and manpower development. The result is in line with the finding of Patrick (2009)^[7] who in his study on the effect of cultism on the society, using 500 respondents found out that cultism significantly affect the manpower development of the society as it often destroys those who are involved in the active labour force of the society. He further explained that, the gravity of the impact and consequences of intra and inter cult clashes on campuses have resulted in physical harm on individual, disruption of learning process, destruction of college property and even death, which ends the manpower productivity of the individual. Also in correspondent with the views of Bestman Wellington (2007)^[1] affirmed that since 1980s, confraternities have murdered people who are thought to have "stolen" a mother's girlfriend, or sugar daddy in the case of female groups. Female groups began operating as prostitution rings relatively early. While the majority of confraternities as of 2005, were engaged in a variety of money-making criminal activities ranging from cybercrime to armed robbery and kidnapping. It becomes very clear that teaching and learning process, the mentality of the students and fear, anxiety, intension on the part of the lecturers and general administrative peace in the campuses are adversely affected which result to drastic dropped in manpower production.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following counselling recommendations are made:

1. The Guidance and Counseling Unit in the Cross River

University of Technology and all professionally trained counselors and psychologist should create awareness programme on student's unrest on campuses and the danger of secret cult activities. Backing up these programme with effective individual counselling process, to enable counsellor identified corporate groups and used adequate counselling skills to disengage the groups.

2. The state government in collaboration with the school security should endeavour to constantly carry out security surveillance on university campuses in order to watch out for cult activities. This will enable students who are not yet members to avoid cult activities and unnecessary meetings on campuses.
3. The legislative law on secret cult activities should be effectively implemented with respect to all cut in cults' activities.

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