



Sociological Variables as Determinants of University Undergraduate's Involvement in Secret Cult in Southwest, Nigeria

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Key words: University undergraduates, cultism, academic culture, sociological variables, societal values

Abstract: This study investigated sociological variables as determinant of involvement of university undergraduates in secret cult in Southwest, Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive research design of the survey type. The population consisted of all university lecturers in Southwest, Nigeria. The sample comprised of 600 lecturers selected from 10 universities including federal, state and private owned using multistage sampling procedure. Simple random sampling techniques was adopted to select two federal three states and five private universities. Simple random sampling technique was also used to select sixty lecturers from each university sampled to make a total of 600 L. The instrument used for the study was a questionnaire titled Sociological Variables as Determinant of University Undergraduate's Involvement in Secret Cult Questionnaire (SVDUUISCQ). The validity of the instrument was established through face and content validity while the reliability was determined using test-re-test. The instrument was first administered on 20 L from a university that was not part of the sample. The instrument was re-administered again on the same set of lecturers after 2 weeks. The scores of the two tests were correlated using pearson product moment correlation co-efficient analysis and the reliability co-efficient of 0.74 was obtained. The data collected were analyzed using pearson correlation and regression statistical tools. It was found in the study that sociological variables contributed significantly to university undergraduate's involvement in secret cult in Southwest, Nigeria. It was therefore recommended that children should imbibe moral, spiritual and societal values. Parents should wake up to their duties on the children and government should make necessary provisions for universities to give room for academic culture that could discourage cultism.

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INTRODUCTION

Education received in tertiary institutions of learning is an enrichment or enhancement of knowledge and desirable skills in preparation for a contented and jam-packed achievement life. Rotimi (2005) noted that the universities are abridged version of the larger society as school is for academic excellence which shapes an individual to the world of honour and dignity. Olayanju (2014) noted that education plays a critical role in human capacity building and skills acquisition. Education according to Abdu-Raheem (2017) is the gateway to greater achievement and the golden key to development of individuals, family and the nation as a whole. Anjorin and Popoola (2018) posited that university and other tertiary institutions are supposed to be center of peace and academic excellence.

In spite of the enormous significance of education in Nigeria for the future leaders, many of its recipients involve in rebellious activities such as armed robbery, kidnapping, stealing, internet fraud and cultism which have claimed thousands of lives from among lecturers and students. Odudele (2014) maintained that cultism in tertiary institutions in Nigeria show the degree of moral decadence to which the society has degenerated. In addition, Ajayi defined cultism as a ritual practice by a group of people whose membership, admission, policy band initiations formalities and mode of operations are done in secret and kept with their activities having negative effects on both members and non-members alike. Ogunbameru in Ekundayo (2019) lamented that the most unpalatable problem facing tertiary institutions today in Nigeria is how to curb the menace of secret cult.

The escalating rate of cultism in Nigeria institutions is a source of great concern and restlessness to the innocent students, parents, lecturers, institution's authorities and the society at large. Cult members cause a lot of havoc on Nigerian campuses during their strikes by maiming and killing with acids, charms, machetes, knives, guns and other dangerous weapons. Oyegoke (2003) posited that the menace of cultism has been very overwhelming as nearly all the arms of the education industry in Nigeria have been infested. Smah in Ekundayo (2019) asserted that academic programmes cannot be run accurately in institutions where secret cults are gaining ground.

According to Jekayinfa (2008), cultism is a social crime which is very rampant in the institutions of higher learning and also a common phenomenon characterizing the entire educational systems including secondary schools. It is one of the greatest contemporary social problems confronting Nigerian educational system (Kolawole, 2008). Ogunya (2009) saw cultism as a ritual practice by a group of people whose membership, admission, policy band initiations formalities and mode of operations are done in secret and kept with their activities

having negative effects on both members and non-members alike. Aigboye (2013) posited that cultism is a devotion to or craze for a course. The dimension of the menace has assumed both frightening and alarming levels. Cultism is the most embarrassing problem and the mother of crimes in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. (Oyemwinmina and Aibiye, 2015) Ekundayo and Ajayi (2017) saw secret cult as all organizations whose activities are obscured in secrecy.

However, some students who are from villages or poor parents join secret cults to overcome their sense of inferiority complex and enhance the status among peers. Sam (2009) and Rasheed (2010) attributed the sudden increase of cultism to indifferent attributes of parents and unchallenging academic activities. Aigboje (2013) confirmed the parental background is connected with possibility of the child joining secret cults. He posited that 51% of his respondents agreed that children from rich families join secret cults while only 6% agreed that children from poor families join such groups. In addition, Ajayi and Ekundayo (2010) attributed involvement of students in secret cult to peer influence, societal decadence, laxity and divorce on the part of parents, low education standard, foreign influence and sponsorship by affluent graduate cultists and politicians.

According to Mgbekem (2004) some parents cover children to the extent of pampering them. When children misbehave, instead of scolding them such parents allow the children go free from the offence. The children grow up with such negative habit and consequently imbibe criminally oriented behaviour which lead them to joining cult groups.

Ohwerwo (2009) noted that secret societies at the tertiary institutions might have evolved from brains just like the science of 419 (advance free fraud) evolved from some clever brains. He further claimed that children whose parents were members of the Ogboni confraternity joined or formed secret societies whenever they are admitted into a tertiary institutions which means the masterminds of these students and their strength could be an added advantage.

Parental background is a major factor that leads to students joining secret cult. Students, who come from homes where codes of good conduct and discipline are strictly enforced, may not be prone to cultism. It must also be noted that excessive control by parents and too many rules at home could make individuals tense, restless and turn out to become irresponsible while children that have their freedom guaranteed may become equipped candidates for cult membership. Aigboje (2013) posited that broken homes have drastic negative impact on the upbringing of children. Aigboje (2013) stressed that unguided and unguarded children grow up to become a ready ingredient for cultism. Udoh and Ikezu (2014) affirmed that one of the major reasons why students join secret cults is broken home.

A lot of parents are careless about attitudes, behaviour and the type of friends keeping by their children. Some pay undue attention to business and religious activities, social engagement, educational pursuit cultural expedition and political campaigns rather than care of children. Sam (2009) and Rasheed (2010) attributed the sudden increase in membership of secret cults to indifferent attitudes of parents. Abdu-Raheem (2017) posited that the cares that are to be provided by the parents will be given by the society as a result of neglect of duties by parents. Carefree attitude of parents is a genuine reason for students to look up to peer groups who are morally bankrupt and members of secret cults as role models.

Statement of the problem: It has been observed that many undergraduates in Nigeria tertiary institutions embroil in felonious deeds, like cultism, killing and maiming of innocent students and lecturers, raping, kidnapping, stealing, robbery, advanced internet fraud, drug abuse, indecent dressing, examination malpractices and illegal vandalism of university property. It was also noted that the amassed rate of the unlawful acts especially cultism among undergraduates have undesirable effects on their attitudes towards academic excellence, increase moral laxity among them in institutions of learning and the image of the country is at stake. Ekundayo (2019) lamented that the most disgusting problem facing tertiary institutions today is how to handle the hazard and ferociousness of secret cult members. This study therefore, investigated sociological variables as determinants of university undergraduate's involvement in secret cult in Southwest, Nigeria.

Research hypothesis: The following research hypothesis were formulated to guide the study: gender will not significantly influence university undergraduate's involvement in secret cult in Southwest, Nigeria. Location will not significantly influence university undergraduate's involvement in secret cult in Southwest, Nigeria. Family background will not significantly influence university undergraduate's involvement in secret cult in Southwest, Nigeria. Inferiority complex will not significantly influence university undergraduate's involvement in secret cult in Southwest, Nigeria. Indiscipline will not significantly influence university undergraduate's involvement in secret cult in Southwest, Nigeria. Ignorance will not significantly influence university undergraduate's involvement in secret cult in Southwest, Nigeria. Peer group will not significantly influence university undergraduate's involvement in secret cult in Southwest, Nigeria. Sociological variables will not significantly influence university undergraduate's involvement in secret cult in Southwest, Nigeria.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted for the study. The population for the study comprised all university lecturers in Southwest, Nigeria. The sample consisted of 600 L randomly selected from ten universities across Southwest, Nigeria. Multistage sampling procedure was used to select the sample. Simple random sampling was used to select two out of seven Federal Universities, three out of eleven state universities and five out of 37 private universities in Southwest, Nigeria. Simple random sampling was used to select 60 L across the faculties from each university to make a total of 600 L. The distribution and collection of the instrument was done through the research assistants. The instrument used was a questionnaire designed by the researcher titled 'Sociological Variables and University Undergraduates' Involvement in Secret Cult Questionnaire' (SVUUISCO). The validity of the instrument was determined through face and content validity procedures by experts in social studies, educational management and test and measurement. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained through test-re-test method. The instrument was first administered on 30 L of an institution which was not part of the sample. After two weeks, the instrument was re-administered again on the same set of lecturers. The scores of the two tests were correlated using pearson product moment correlated coefficient analysis. The reliability coefficient of 0.74 was obtained. Eight research hypotheses generated were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The data collected were analysed using pearson correlation and regression statistical tools.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Testing of hypothesis H₁: Gender will not significantly influence university undergraduate's involvement in secret cult in Southwest, Nigeria. Table 1 reveals that there is significant relationship between gender and student's involvement in secret cult ($r = 0.447, p < 0.05$). The null hypothesis is not accepted. The relationship between gender and university undergraduates' involvement in secret cult is average and statistically significant in a positive direction.

Hypothesis 2: Location will not significantly influence university undergraduate's involvement in secret cult in Southwest, Nigeria. Table 2 shows that there is significant relationship between location and student's involvement in secret cult ($r = 0.387, p < 0.05$). The null hypothesis is not accepted. The relationship between location and university undergraduate's involvement in secret cult is low but statistically significant in a positive direction.

Table 1: Pearson correlation of gender and university undergraduate's involvement in secret cult in Southwest, Nigeria

Variables	N	R	p-values
Gender	400		
Involvement in secret cult	400	0.447*	0.000

Table 2: Pearson correlation of location and university undergraduate's involvement in secret cult in Southwest, Nigeria

Variables	N	R	p-values
Location	400		
Involvement in secret cult	400	0.387*	0.000

Table 3: Pearson Correlation of Family Background and University Undergraduate's Involvement in Secret Cult in Southwest, Nigeria

Variables	N	R	p-values
Family background	400		
Involvement in secret cult	400	0.793*	0.000

Table 4: Pearson correlation of inferiority complex and university undergraduate's involvement in secret cult in southwest, Nigeria

Variables	N	R	p-values
Inferiority complex	400		
Involvement in secret cult	400	0.859*	0.000

Table 5: Pearson correlation of indiscipline and university undergraduates' involvement in secret cult in southwest, Nigeria

Variables	N	R	p-values
Indiscipline	400		
Involvement in secret cult	400	0.601*	0.000

*p<0.05

Hypothesis 3: Family background will not significantly influence university undergraduate's involvement in secret cult in Southwest, Nigeria. Table 3 shows that there is significant relationship between parent/family background and university undergraduate's involvement not accepted. The relationship between family background and university undergraduate's involvement in secret cult is significantly high in a positive direction.

Hypothesis 4: Inferiority complex will not significantly influence university undergraduate's involvement secret cult in Southwest, Nigeria. Table 4 reveals that there is significant relationship between inferiority complex and university undergraduate's involvement in secret cult ($r = 0.859$, $p < 0.05$). The null hypothesis is not accepted. The relationship between inferiority complex and university undergraduate's involvement in secret cult is significantly high in a positive direction.

Hypothesis 5: Indiscipline will not significantly influence university undergraduate's involvement in secret cult in Southwest, Nigeria. Table 5 reveals that there is significant relationship between indiscipline and university undergraduate's involvement in secret cult ($r = 0.601$, $p < 0.05$). The null hypothesis is not accepted. The relationship between indiscipline and university undergraduate's involvement in secret cult is average and statistically significant in a positive direction.

Table 6: Pearson correlation of ignorance and university undergraduate's involvement in secret cult in Southwest, Nigeria

Variables	N	R	p-values
Ignorance	400		
Involvement in secret cult	400	0.715*	0.000

Table 7: Pearson correlation of peer group influence and university undergraduates' involvement in secret cult in Southwest, Nigeria

Variables	N	R	p-values
Peer group influence	400		
Involvement in secret cult	400	0.362*	0.001

*p<0.05

Hypothesis 6: Ignorance will not significantly influence university undergraduate's involvement in secret cult in Southwest, Nigeria. Table 6 reveals that there is significant relationship between ignorance and university undergraduates' involvement in secret cult ($r = 0.715$, $p < 0.05$). The null hypothesis is not accepted. The relationship between ignorance and university undergraduate's involvement in secret cult is average and statistically significant in a positive direction.

Hypothesis 7: Peer group will not significantly influence university undergraduate's involvement in secret cult in Southwest, Nigeria. Table 7 reveals that there is significant relationship between peer group influence and university undergraduate's involvement in secret cult ($r = 0.362$, $p < 0.05$). The null hypothesis is not accepted. The relationship between peer group influence and university undergraduate's involvement in secret cult is low but statistically significant in a positive direction.

Hypothesis 8: Sociological variables will not significantly influence university undergraduate's involvement in secret cult in Southwest, Nigeria. The result in Table 8 shows that there is significant contribution of sociological variables to university undergraduate's involvement in secret cult ($F_{7,392} = 157.179$, $p < 0.05$). The null hypothesis is not accepted. The composite relationship between the sociological variables and university undergraduate's involvement in secret cult activities is high and statistically significant at 0.05 level ($r = 0.859$, $p < 0.05$). The coefficient of determination; $R^2 = 0.0737$. This implies that all the sociological variables jointly accounted for about 73.7% of the observed variance in university undergraduate's involvement in secret cult while the remaining 26.3% unexplained variance is largely due to other factors outside the regression model. The table further reveals that ignorance is the single best predictor of university undergraduates' involvement in secret cult activities with beta weight of 0.480(48%), closely followed by parent/family background ($\beta = 0.430$; 43%), location ($\beta = 0.182$; 18.2%), indiscipline ($\beta = 0.169$; 16.9%), peer group influence ($\beta = 0.167$; 16.7%) and inferiority complex ($\beta = 0.126$; 12.6%). The variable with the least

Table 8: Multiple regression analysis showing the contributions of sociological variables to university undergraduate’s involvement in secret cult in Southwest, Nigeria

Models	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		
	B	SE	Beta (β)	t-values	Sig.
(Constant)	1.949	3.070		0.635	0.526
Gender	0.938	0.421	0.067	2.230	0.026
Location	2.467	0.494	0.182	4.998	0.000
Parent/family background	1.390	0.101	0.430	13.716	0.000
Inferiority complex	2.030	0.524	0.126	3.877	0.000
Indiscipline	3.786	1.099	0.169	3.444	0.001
Ignorance	10.107	1.105	0.480	9.146	0.000
Peer group	3.015	0.614	0.167	4.912	0.000

Multiple R = 0.859, Multiple R² = 0.737, Adjusted multiple R² = 0.733, F_{7,392} = 157.179; *p<0.05

contribution to university undergraduate’s involvement in secret cult activities is gender (β = 0.067; 6.7%). The study found that there is significant relationship between gender and university undergraduate’s involvement in secret cult. Boys are more involved than girls in secret activities in tertiary institutions in Southwest, Nigeria. The study is in relation to that of Abdu-Raheem (2017) who observed that some male students join secret cult to get a lot of benefits including attracting beautiful ladies to them on campuses.

The study also discovered that location of university undergraduate’s may be from rural and urban has to do with involvement of students in secret cult. Students from urban centers are more involved in secret cult activities than those from rural areas. The findings is in contradiction to that of Abdu-Raheem (2017) who noted that some students join secret cult because they are from villages or poor parents to overcome their sense of subsidiarity miscellaneous.

The study also discovered that family background of university undergraduate’s is significantly related with student’s involvement in secret cult. The study found that students from rich homes involve more in secret cult activities than those from poor families. It was also found that students from broken homes join secret cult more than those from intact homes. Then, students from parents who are secret cult members are mostly members of secret cult in schools. The study corroborate that of Udoh and Ikezu (2014) who submitted that family background is highly associated with involvement of children in secret cult.

The study found that inferiority complex significantly influence university undergraduate’s involvement in secret cult. Students who are not sure of themselves, those that are weak and depend so much on their parents readily join secret cult in tertiary institutions and involve more in secret cult activities than the confident and self-esteemed ones. The study is in line with that of Aigboje (2013) who noted that sketchy and unwary children who have nobody to put them through will grow up to become ready-made elements for cultism.

The study found a significant relationship with indiscipline and university undergraduate’s involvement in secret cult. Students who are lawless, indecent and irresponsible involve more in secret cult activities than

those who are well discipline. The study is related to that of Rasheed (2010) who found that increase rates at which students are joining secret cult may be attributed with carefree attitudes of parents towards care and discipline of their children.

The study found that ignorance significantly influence university undergraduate’s involvement in secret cult. The study discovered that students who have not been exposed or not mature enough before getting admission to tertiary institutions involve more in secret cult than the matured and exposed ones. The study authenticated that of Aigboje (2013) who observed that ignorance of some students led them to join secret cult in schools. The study discovered that peer group significantly influence university undergraduate’s involvement in secret cult. The study found that students who have secret cult members as their friend in tertiary institutions also join their friends to become members of secret cults. The study is closely related with that of Ufuoma (2007) who posited that negative decisions of some youth have led them to destructions through their peer groups.

The study discovered that sociological variables significantly influence university undergraduate’s involvement in secret cult. The study is in line with that of Olofintoye and Olusegun (2018) who listed some sociological factors such as peer group, family settings and the media as reasons why students in social misdeed or join secret cult in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

It was concluded in the study that boys are more involved in secret cult than girls among university undergraduates. Children from urban centres and those from rich parents involve more in secret cult than those from rural areas and poor families. It was also noted in the study that students who are not mature at the point of admission were inferior to other and also ignorant of such group and unknowingly fall into the arrows of secret cult members. Peer group is also one of the factors that lead university undergraduates to cultism. Generally, all the identified sociological variables significantly contributed to university undergraduate’s involvement in cultism.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Students should obey their parents by maintaining discipline, moral and spiritual education giving to them from home. Students should face their studies and be watchful of the type of friends to keep so as to avoid cultist members that can initiate them to bad group which could eventually lead to same, expulsion from schools, untimely death and damage of family identity. Parents should wakeup to their duties and responsibilities on children by given them sound moral, spiritual and social values to lead a fulfilled lives. Parents from urban areas and the rich ones should stop over-pampering their children and give them discipline, ethical and high moral standard to enable them display sense of responsibility and reliability in schools. Parents should avoid preferential treatment among their male and female children. They should not allow the male children to claim superiority over the females in terms of home-assignments, finance, food, clothing and schooling. Parents should be keenly interested in the type of friends their children are keeping right from early stages before getting admission to the university. This will enable them to guide against keeping of bad cliques which can lead to future destruction of the children. Government should improve quality of education and also make staff welfare packages a priority through regular payment of salaries and other allowances such as car loans, housing loans, research grants, sponsorship for conferences and seminars. These could give room for smooth academic programmes unobstructed of staff strikes and secret cult interference.

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