



Impact of Cultism on Access to Education in Khana Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the impact of cultism on access to education in Khana LGA of Rivers State. The study population is 411,500. However, a sample size of 420 was derived using Taro Yamane formula in addition to 5% error tolerated. The study used both the simple random sampling and purposive sampling methods. Survey design was adopted, five point Likert scale structured questionnaire was used. The questionnaire went through the process of validation while the reliability test outcome obtained indicated statistical value of 0.72% using Cronbach alpha method. However, out of the 420 questionnaires administered, there were positive responses of 394 used for coding and analysis. Ordinary Least Square (OLS) method was specifically used to analyse the research hypothesis. The result of the study showed that there was a negative significant impact between cultism and access to education in Khana LGA of Rivers State; with a coefficient (-0.66), indicating the depth and direction of impact while R² of (0.540), shows the variation of access to education that was explained by the autonomous factor (cultism); T-stat of 6.566 depicts the specific impact of the model and F-stat of 176.385, shows the overall impact of the model. The implication of the findings is that cultism played a major role in discouraging people from accessing education in Khana LGA and to a large extent the socio-economic development in general. The study therefore recommends government should ensure unbiased and complete implementation of the provision of laws made to punish perpetrators of cultism to discourage others from joining in order to ensure peace and safety of residents in the communities and schools that would enhance quality access to education in Khana LGA of Rivers State, Nigeria.

Keywords: Cultism and Education.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a major catalyst or instrument for development in any society. However, only a safe and peaceful environment can facilitate and guarantee the development expected in a society. Khana Local Government Area is one of the 23 Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Rivers State, among the Rivers South-East Senatorial District known for cultism. The Amanikpo Society or cult had been in existence in Ogoni land since the precolonial times of Nigeria. Khana LGA was part of Ogoni land known for the Amanikpo cult. The Amanikpo society was a cult for elders that played the role of local arbitration, administration of justice and social control (Owonikoko and Ifukor, 2016). The Amanikpo cult was a major part of the culture of the environment but was not violent.

However, the advent of student cultism started the era of cult violence in Khana LGA. Cultism was started by Wole Soyinka and his gang in 1952 at the University College of Ibadan now University of Ibadan as a student protest group and restricted to institutions of higher learning in Nigeria, but has found its way into the Communities and Secondary Schools in Khana LGA. Nnanyieto (2015) confirmed that cultism was formally a higher institution affair but has today gone down the line of the educational institution and beyond, that students and non-students today are members. For example, cult violence led to the death of at least 49 people in various communities between April and September 2019 in Khana LGA. The communities include Bere Community, Kaani-babe community and Kono-bue community. The cult violence made women and children to run away from their communities for safety (Amnesty International, 2020). The violence led to closure of schools, prevented teachers from carrying out their duties and students from attending school for some time.

Cultism is gradually becoming a way of life among secondary school students in Khana LGA. Cultism encouraged disruptive behaviour among students in school and outside school environment. Cultism affects access to education as fear of being attacked threaten the security of teachers and students who are not cult members on their way to school and while in the classroom; such fears increases students and teachers' absenteeism in school; and further make it cumbersome for students to actualise their educational dream.

In some of the communities in Khana LGA it is common to see students in corners of residence and bushes dress slovenly, indulging in drunkenness, smoking of cigarettes and psychotropic substance such as marijuana during learning periods. Having smoked and get drunk they begin to constitute threat to teachers and fellow students. They do this to conquer fear as they become bolder to carry out their cult activities. Such negative behaviour also instigated

them to cheat during examinations even though many of them end up with failure and poor grades. According to Abdul (2013) cultism create an atmosphere of indiscipline, deviance, lawlessness and insecurity of lives and properties in institution of learning. Kruger (2012) further confirmed that cultists among students hardly stay in class to study. Ayorinde and Okafor (2022) stated that more than 50 youths of Luebe Community of Khana LGA took oath to denounce cultism on August 6, 2022 but most of the youths who are students returned to their old ways. Not even the punitive measures of death sentence stipulated in the Rivers State Anti-Kidnapping and Cultism (Prohibition) Amendment Law No.2, No.7 of 2018 could deter the cultist. The cult menace among secondary school students in Khana LGA therefore, calls for a careful investigation.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Cultism creates an atmosphere of indiscipline, deviance, lawlessness and insecurity of lives and properties in institution of learning (Abdul, 2013); as Kruger (2012) further confirmed that cultists among students hardly stay in class to study. The cult menace among secondary school students in Khana LGA therefore, calls for a careful investigation. The current reality on ground perverts the good or value of education from being achieved or realized at this time. Overall educational sector which is the bed rock of development currently falls short of this very goal or ideal situation; as it not growing or performing as expected output are declining and level of employment, capacity utilization have drastically reduced.

The persistence increase in cult related activities has not been abated instead its performance is still increasing. Ayorinde and Okafor (2022) established that more than 50 youths of Luebe Community of Khana LGA took oath to denounce cultism on August 6, 2022 but most of the youths who are students returned to their old ways. Although several studies have been performed on this study by using spearman rank correlation test and panel data to resolve the problem, but the impact of access to education and cultism in Khana LGA is lacking hence, the choice of this study by adopting Ordinary Least Square (OLS) method, Likert Scale, structured questionnaires to test specifically the effect of cultism on access to education. This is a more elaborate approach that would include performance not captured by previous studies thus offering a better insight. Consequently, the question: What is the impact of cultism on access to education in Khana LGA of Rivers State, Nigeria?

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of the study is to examine the impact of cultism on access to education in Khana LGA of Rivers State, Nigeria.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Concept of Cultism

Aniekpeno (2017) defined cultism as the practice of activities that are associated with Secret Cults. Secret Cults are organisations whose membership and methods of operation are considered to be unusual and known to members only. Secret cult members pledge their loyalty to the cult, devoting themselves under oath to support and carryout the activities of the group without objection. Similarly, Ojomu (2016) conceptualise cultism as an enclosed organisation devoted to the some cause. Members of the group always commit themselves to oath and allegiance which serves as their strong bond. It is a form of organisation 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 the accepted norms and values of everyday life. The Federal Republic of Nigeria 1979 Constitution, Section 35(4) defined secret society as a society or association, not being solely cultural or religious body that uses secret signs, oaths, rites, or symbols. In the present study, cultism also known as secret society refers to any organisation or group of persons, whose activities are violent, kept secret and in contrast with the norms and values of any society.

Concept of Secondary Education

Secondary education has been conceptualised by the following authors:

Afribary (2022) defined secondary education as the education children receive after primary school. Similarly, National Policy on Education section 5, No 20 of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) defines secondary education as the education children receives after primary education and before tertiary education stage. According to the National Policy on Education, the goals of secondary education is to prepare the individuals for useful living within the society, and higher education. Additionally, Ige (2013) conceptualise secondary education as the education of a child, being the bridge between primary and tertiary education. This present work is in line with the definitions of scholars' conceptualisation of secondary education.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Chinedum (2022) examined effects of cultism on the management of Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State. The three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted descriptive survey design for the study. The population of study was 268 consisting of principals of public senior secondary schools. A sample size of 90 principals representing 30% of the population was drawn consisting of 50 males and 45 female principals using simple random sampling method. Questionnaire was used to collect data. The instrument was validated by experts from educational management department. Test-retest method was used to achieve its reliability index of 0.92. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions, while z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings among others showed that cultism strongly affect the

management of public secondary schools to a high extent because majority of the respondents agreed that cultism in public secondary schools in Rivers state leads to the breakdown of law and order, sexual harassment of female students, violence and death of students and disruption of academic activities. The study recommended among others that schools should have counselling unit with qualified and well trained counsellors to help students who have self-concept problems, parents, as partners in progress should monitor their children to find out the kind of friends they keep both at home and the school and the regular orientation programmes for the students.

Amawhule and Fynface (2022) examined the influence of insecurity on academic activities in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The study was guided by three research objectives from which three research questions were posed and three hypotheses were tested. The study adopted a descriptive survey design with a population of 1,041 comprising 1003 teachers and 38 principals in all the public senior secondary schools in Emohua and Ikwerre Local Government Areas of Rivers State. A sample size of 324 was determined using Taro Yamene formula. The sample consists of 286 teachers and 38 principals in public senior secondary schools in Emohua and Ikwerre Local Government Areas of Rivers State. Simple random sampling method and the questionnaire instrument for data collection were adopted for the study. The consistency of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach Alpha statistics while the reliability coefficient of 0.88 was obtained which showed the instrument was reliable. Data were analysed with mean statistics and standard deviation and the hypotheses were tested using z-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The findings showed that cult related violence, kidnapping and communal conflicts influence academic activities in public senior secondary schools in Emohua and Ikwerre LGA to a high extent. The study recommended among others that State and Local Government should establish and sustain the efforts of vigilantes in guarding against cult activities in communities in Emohua and Ikwerre Local Government Areas as this will reduce the effect of cultism on academic activities.

Ayorinde (2021) carried out a study on the effect of cult activities on public secondary school students in Iddo, Local Government Area of Oyo State and its counselling implications. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprises of all teachers in public secondary schools in Iddo Local Government Area (LGA) of Oyo State which are 20 public secondary schools, which were randomly selected. 20 teachers were randomly selected from each school. Consequently, a total of 400 respondents were selected which constitute the sample for the study. Questionnaire instrument was adopted for the study. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Simple percentage was used to analyse the three research questions and the findings indicates that cultism among students in public secondary schools is at alarming rate and had resulted in various vices that have effect on the students negatively and the development of the society. The study also made some recommendations. The recommendations were - that law enforcement agencies should be well equipped so as to be able to curtail the menace of cults activities, childhood development and guidance/counselling programmes should be made effective in all schools in the Oyo State and there should be need to maintain discipline and justice in the school system to bring about harmonious relationships among the students.

Theoretical Framework

Strain Theory

Robert King Merton's Strain theory (1938) is used to anchor this study. The principle of strain theory was based on the fact that all societies have cultural goals and institutionalised means of attaining them. Merton believed that in America the ways of achieving cultural goals were hard work, talent, educational qualifications, determination, etc, but insisted that the social inequality among some people in the lower class create tension or strain due to the nature of their jobs which provide little or no access to achieving the cultural goals. This situation lures them and other frustrated people to use illegal means to achieving success goals. Consequently, Merton maintained that societal structures can pressures individuals into committing crimes (Nickerson, 2021).

Members of societies according to Merton react to cultural goals in five ways: conformity (+ +), innovation (+ -), ritualism (- +), retreatism (- -) and rebellion (\pm). The plus (+) sign signifies 'acceptance' while the minus (-) sign signifies 'rejection'.

The reactions to cultural goals or modes of adaptation are discussed below.

Table I: Mode of Adaptation

S/N	Modes of Adaptation	Cultural Goals	Institutionalised Means.
1	Conformity	+	+
2	Innovation	+	-
3	Ritualism	+	-
4	Retreatism	-	-
5	Rebellion	\pm	\pm

Source: Adopted from Ejirefe Influence classroom lecture, 2021.

The theory indicates that people who belong to the conformity group (+ +) accept cultural goals and the institutional means of attaining them. Those who belong to the innovation group (+ -) love the American dream and really want to be successful in life but they believe in achieving success through illegal means. Examples of people in this group are cultists, thieves, ritual killers, kidnappers, etc. Those people who belong to the ritualism (- +) are those who reject cultural goals but accept the institutional means of achieving them because they believe the goal it is very difficult to achieve and therefore prefer to abandon it. The theory also shows that individuals in the retreatism (- -) group reject both cultural goals and the approved institutional means of achieving the goals. They isolate themselves from reality and prefer to adopt alternative lifestyles. Example of people in this group are area boys, drug

addicts, alcoholics, idlers, etc. They just believe in living life anyhow they like; and those who belong to the rebellion ($\pm \pm$) group reject both the cultural goals and institutional means of achieving them, and replace them with opposing goals and means for their selfish ends. Examples of people that belong to this group are terrorists and rebels.

This study emphasise the innovation adaptation because of its relevance this study. To begin with, cultism is a common occurrence in Rivers State that has evidently crept into the secondary schools, and therefore, a common phenomenon among many secondary school students in the state. Cultism instigates students to skip classes, bully fellow students, smoke marijuana, etc which further instigates them to make the school environment unsafe; thereby putting fear on the faces of everyone to the extent of encouraging absenteeism among teachers. To pass internal examinations such as class room test and external examinations such as GCE, NECO and WAEC, etc, some secondary school students, many of which are cultists prefer to innovate by cheating.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted survey design and specifically used questionnaire as instrument of data collection. The population of the study is 411,500 (Rivers State Projected Population of 2016). The sample size is 420 using Taro Yamane statistical method in addition to 5% error tolerated due to the fact that some of the respondents may not return or fill some of the questionnaires correctly.

Table II: Senatorial Districts, Local Government Areas and Sample Size

Senatorial Districts	Local Government Areas Purposively Selected	Population of Selected LGAs	Taro Yamane $n = \frac{N}{1+(e)^2}$	Plus 5% level of error tolerated
Rivers South-East	Khana	411,500	400	20
				Sample Size 400+20 = 420

Source: Field Survey, April 2022.

Simple random sampling method was used to select 21 Government Senior Secondary schools and residence of communities in Khana Local Government Area. The Government Senior Secondary Schools selected are: CCS Kaani, GCHS Taabaa, CSS Wiiyaakara, KCSS Kabangha, BHS Beeri, CSS Buako, CSS Lorre, CSS Okwale, CSS Kono-Boue, CSS Lueku, KSS Kono, GSS Kaa, CSS Uegwerre, CSS Bori, BNCSS Gwara, GSS Laawii, CSS Kpean, GSS Lumene, GSS Sogho, CSS Bane and CSS Baen.

Sample size of 420 was divided into 2. One halve of 210 for the Senior Secondary School respondents while the other halve 210 for the respondents who resides in the communities where the Government Secondary Schools are situated in Khana Local Government Area.

In each of the Senior Secondary Schools, students and teachers were selected for the study. These consist of 8 students (4 male students and 4 female students), including 2 teachers (1 male and 1 female) while 210 respondents consisting of 5 male and 5 female were purposively selected from each of the community where the government secondary schools are situated in the LGA.

The Likert Scale format questionnaire structured into scale 5-1 was self-administered by the researchers with the help of 2 research assistants having gone through the process of validation and reliability test as the result obtained indicated statistical value of 0.72% using Cronbach alpha method. However, out of the 420 questionnaires administered, there were positive responses of 394 while 26 questionnaires were invalid because they were incorrectly filled in by the respondents. Statistically, the Ordinary Least Square (OLS) Regression was used in the analysis of the research hypotheses using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 19.

ATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Access_ to_ EDUC	152	1.75	5.00	3.6505	.07829	.96529	-.390	.197	-1.026	.391
CULT	152	1.78	8.78	3.6520	.08725	1.07572	.586	.197	2.247	.391
Valid N (listwise)	152									

The descriptive statistic shown above depicts in a glance the behaviour of both cultism and access to education in the regression model; the skewness and kurtosis.

Model Summary ^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.735 ^a	.540	.537	.65657	1.988

a. Predictors: (Constant), CULT

b. Dependent Variable: ACCESS_TO_EDUC from the model summary, R of 0.735 depicts the strength of the relationship between access to education and cultism is established to be strong. But the R squared which is the coefficient of determination (0.540) implies that 54% of the total variation of access to education was explained by the activities of cultism in the area under investigation. While the DW indicates no autocorrelation between the variables regressed.

ANOVA ^b

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	76.036	1	76.036	176.385	.000 ^a
	Residual	64.662	150	.431		
	Total	140.698	151			

a. Predictors: (Constant), CULT

b. Dependent Variable: ACCESS_TO_EDUC

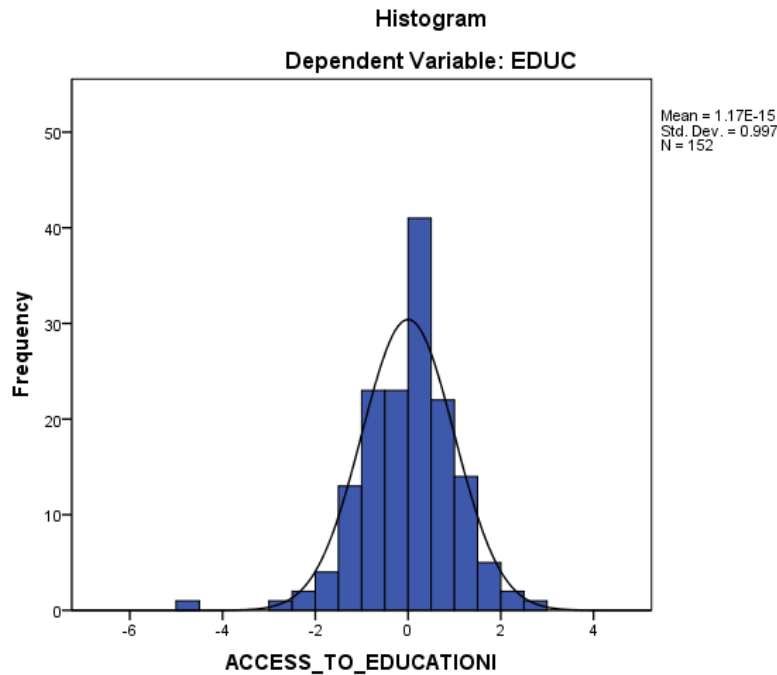
From the ANOVA table the F-statistic which indicates the overall significance of the regression in the model is fit due to the value of the significant level of 0.000.

Coefficients ^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1.241	.189		6.566	.000		
	CULT	-0.660	.050	.735	13.281	.000	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: ACCESS_TO_EDUC

The coefficient of the regression results shown above tells us that the t-test with a significant (p-value of 0,000) depicts the specific impact of the t-statistic in the regression model. Both the tolerance and VIP value of fit.



The test of normality, clearly depicted the simple distribution of the data used for the study was normal and fit for regression analysis as shown by the picture above.

EDUC = 1.241 + CULT (- 0.660**) Test of sig. = (0.000).

The above table shows the output of the regression method for the purpose of the study. From the results the study observed that there is a negative relationship between access to education and activities of cultism in Khana local government area of Rivers State as depicted by the coefficient of cultism (-0.660) meaning that 66% of the variation of access to education was explained by the independent variable (cultism). It is obvious from the result that 1% increase in cult activities triggers 66% decrease in access to education in Khana Local Government Area. Again, since the critical value or P-value of cultism is 0.000, it indicates that cultism was statistical significant as it is clearly below the 5% level. The analysis therefore shows that there is a negative impact between access to education and cultism in Khana LGA of Rivers State. The study, therefore reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between access to education and cultism in Khana Local Government Area of Rivers State. This finding is in tandem with the works of (Chinedum, 2022, Amawhule and Fynface, 2022 and Ayorinde, 2021).

CONCLUSION

Cultism is a major social wrong and menace that causes harm and endanger unity and cohesion among the inhabitants in Khana Local Government Area as the study primarily focused on the impact of cultism on access to education in Khana LGA using Ordinary Least Square method, Likert scale structured questionnaire, and specifically for the analysis of the research which specifically indicates that there was a negative and significant impact between cultism and access to education in Khana LGA of Rivers State. The implication of the findings is that cultism played a major role in discouraging people from accessing education pursuit in Khana LGA and to a large extent discouraged the socio-economic development of that locality under investigation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

(i) Government should ensure unbiased and complete implementation of the provision of laws made to punish perpetrators of cult activities to discourage others from joining to ensure peace and safety to members of the communities and specifically to the schools in order to encourage quality access to education in Khana LGA of Rivers State.

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