

Effective Cultism Management Techniques as Perceived by Staff and Students in Higher Education: A Case Study of Federal Colleges of Education in Nigeria

Dickson Onoyase*, Anna Onoyase and Diana Arubayi

Department of Guidance and Counselling, Delta State University, Abraka, Delta State, Nigeria

**E-mail: dickonoyase @ yahoo. com*

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ABSTRACT The investigation was set out to study effective cultism management technique as perceived by academic staff, non-academic staff and students in higher education in Nigeria a case study of federal colleges of education in Nigeria. Five hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The study made use of an instrument known as the effective cultism management technique questionnaire (ECMTQ). The instrument had a reliability coefficient of 0.78. The instrument was administered on a total of five hundred and sixty seven respondents made up of academic staff, non-academic staff and students. All the respondents returned their copies of questionnaire showing one hundred percent return rate. The analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to analyse the data and the findings showed that coercion, persuasion, public renunciation, public awareness campaign and school disciplinary measure were found to be effective techniques in the management of cultism. public awareness ca

INTRODUCTION

The origin of cult activities in Nigeria's higher education dates back to 1952 when Wole Soyinka and six others founded the PYRATES CONFRATERNITY. The remaining six are, Olumuyiwa Awe, Ralph Opara and Tunji Tubi. The others are Daig Imokhuede, Pius Olegbe and Olu Agunloye. The basic objective of the organization at that time was to elevate the social life of the university campus where orderliness and discipline could be planted in the mind of youths who were expected to be future leaders in Nigeria.

Adejoro (1995) lamented that little did Soyinka and his friends realize that they were making history, nor did they come to terms with the fact that students and indeed youths radicalism was being given a national boost and the unleashing of a national vanguard. The development was paradoxical to the extent that they little realized that they were laying the foundation for what was to be transformed eventually into gangsterism in educational institutions in Nigeria.

As far as Thompson (1998) is concerned, the youths join cult because:

1. It provides members with security
 2. It gives them licences to do any thing and get away with it
 3. To seek vengeance
- Aboribo (1999) maintained that:

Any scholarly discussion on cultism without a spiritual touch has missed the link and the whole

discussion will be termed a poverty of scholarship because cultism is essentially a spiritual matter.

As far as Ossai (2000:15) is concerned, the higher education system in Nigeria is under siege, bombardment and almost ruined by secret cults. Thus majority of the students, lecturers and their families live in perpetual fear. Under the cover of darkness, the gang torture, rape, kidnap, rob, and maim any body in the campus who dares cross their way. They cheat at examination openly and threaten lecturers. They were often with fire arms, daggers, axes and knives. In short, they are known as tin god and sacred cows of the campus.

In Brazil, Paulo (1994) stressed that gangs were multiplying at a frightening rate. They attacked rival gangs, people of another race and the poor migrant workers. According to Paulo, the cultists:

Robbed people on the beach, fought among themselves and turned a major avenue in Rio de Janeiro into a war zone.

Cultism Management Techniques

In Nigeria, the Government, Corporate bodies, religious organization and individuals have been making frantic effort to see that cultism is brought under control through proper management. Osaigbovo (2000) identified the following cultism management techniques:

1. Coercion
2. Persuasion
3. Public awareness campaign

4. Public renunciation and
5. School disciplinary measures

1. **Coercion:** It is a common knowledge that cultists operate violently. Probably this was why Ede (1995) and Ige (2000) advocated that suspected cultists arrested should be tried and if found guilty should be jailed or hanged depending upon the magnitude of the offence. On the other hand, Osemeikhian (1998) and Sowore (1998) maintained that the use of force to curb cult activities may not yield any positive result since members of these secret cults are already used to violence. As far as Onah (1999) is concerned, cultists should be handled with care and not through the use of force.

2. **Persuasion:** Among the techniques that may be used in stamping out cultism is persuasion. May be, this was why Oladunjoye (2001:90) asserted that through persuasion, students were seriously appealed to about the evils of cultism and they were encouraged to renounce membership. However, Alemika (2000) stated that the only way in which cultism can be eradicated in tertiary institutions is by involving spiritual leaders to organize non-congregational services and counselling in schools.

3. **Public Awareness:** This may be another vital means through which cultism may be effectively eradicated. Osaigbovo (2000) stressed that through seminars, workshops, symposium, posters, handbills and public lecture, cultism may be effectively combated. Bamidele (1994) and Idogun (1999) advocated the use of public enlightenment, public lectures and seminars as ways of combating cultism.

4. **Public Renunciation:** The success recorded in persuasion may lead to public renunciation of cultism by students. Oladunjoye (2001:91) supported this view when he said that, "in various institutions of higher learning a good number of repentant students who openly renounced their membership of cultism surrendered their instruments of operation". Ekoko (1999) identified public renunciation whether voluntary or induced, with the institution ready to forgive the students as means of effectively combating cultism in our higher institutions.

5. **School Disciplinary Measures:** It may be interesting to note that the task of identifying cultists by authorities of higher institutions is not an easy one. Membership of secret cults may not be restricted to students alone, but highly placed members of higher institutions may equally be members.

Therefore, a situation where a student cultist is brought before the school authority who is a cultist, justice may not prevail. Probably, this was why Effiong (2000) stated that the management of cultism must not be allowed to rest on the shoulders of the school administrator alone because it may not yield fruitful results. Withdrawal, expulsion and rustication has been the major weapon of school administrator right from time, but the incidence of cultism keeps rising. Onah (2000) stated that expulsion, withdrawal and rustication will continue to be effected in nearly all institutions of higher learning as long as cult members are detected and arraigned before a disciplinary panel.

The Encyclopaedia Americana (1979) defines cult as a form of worship that emphasizes the ritual devotion to a god or person as distinct from the aspect of religion. the formation of a group of initiates around the figure of a god or saints, often concentrating on a particular doctrine within the body of religious beliefs. The investigators hereby adopt this definition of cult to the present study. This study regards SUG to mean students union Government.

The National Policy on Education NPE (2004:36) defines higher education to mean the post secondary section of the national education system which is given in universities, polytechnics and colleges of technology including colleges of education.. Management is defined as problem solving.

Statement of the Problem

The literature reviewed so far seems to show that higher educational institutions, that is, Federal Colleges of Education in Nigeria are under threat of cultism. The problem in this study therefore is how did academic staff, non-academic staff and students perceive coercion, persuasion. Public awareness campaign, public renunciation and school disciplinary measure as being effective in the management of cultism in Nigeria's higher educational institutions. Specifically, the researchers formulated five hypotheses to guide the study.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study adopts descriptive research design. Ofo (1994:8) maintains that descriptive research involves collecting data in order to test hypotheses and answer research questions raised in the study. The study made use of an instrument known as the effective cultism management technique questionnaire (ECMTQ) and was composed of twenty items. Each cultism management technique has 4 items. It had the reliability coefficient of 0.78. Respondents were to indicate their opinion by scoring each of the items. One was the least while five was the highest score.

The population of the study was made up of all the members of the Academic Staff Union of Colleges of Education (ASUCE) all members of the Non-Academic Staff Union Senior Staff Association Colleges of Education (SSANUCE) and all members of the national Association of Nigerian Students Colleges of Education (NANSCE) in all the twenty (20) Federal Colleges of Education spread across Nigeria. The researchers used the random sampling technique to select four (20%) cultist prone Federal Colleges of Education that took part in the study.

The investigators used the random sampling technique to select one hundred and eighty nine (189) ASUCE executive and Congress members, one hundred and eighty nine (189) SSANUCE executive and congress members and one hundred and eighty nine (189) NANSCE executive and Students Representative Council (SRC) members that participated in the study. The respondents sampled, were known to have participated in the management of cultism in their various institutions.

The researchers visited the four (04) sampled Federal Colleges of Education and administered five hundred and sixty seven (567) copies of the questionnaire on the respondents. The investigators were assisted by ASUCE, SSANUCE, and NANSCE leadership to administer copies of the questionnaire on the respondents. All the five hundred and sixty seven (567) copies of the questionnaire administered were filled and retrieved showing one hundred percent return rate.

For the purpose of analysis, the researchers added up the score for the academic staff, non-academic staff and students and used one way

analysis of variance (ANOVA) to determine the difference among the academic staff, non-academic staff and students in their perception of the effective cultism management techniques. Findings were held significant at 0.05 level of confidence.

RESULT

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference among academic staff, non-academic staff and students in their perception of coercion as an effective cultism management technique (Table 1).

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference among academic staff, non-academic staff and students in their perception of persuasion as an effective cultism management technique (Table 2).

Hypothesis Three

There is no significant difference among academic staff, non-academic staff and students in their perception of Public Awareness Campaign as an effective cultism management technique (Table 3).

Hypothesis Four

There is no significant difference among academic staff, non-academic staff and students in their perception of public renunciation as an effective cultism management technique (Table 4).

Hypothesis Five

There is no significant difference among academic staff, non-academic staff and students in their perception of school disciplinary measure as an effective cultism management technique (Table 5).

The null hypothesis which says that there is no significant difference among academic staff, non-academic staff and students in their perception of coercion as an effective cultism management technique is hereby retained. This is because the value of f critical of 3.0 is greater than f calculated of 0.000123 at 2/564 degree of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 1: Difference in perception among academic staff, non-academic staff and students regarding coercion as an effective cultism management technique using one way analysis of variance

Source of variance	Df	Sum of squares	Mean square	F. Cal.	F. Crit.
Between groups	2	42.6	21.3	0.000123	3.0
Within groups	564	97644979.5	173129.4		
Total	566	97645022.1			

Source: Field Work

Table 2: Difference in perception among academic staff, non-academic staff and students regarding persuasion as an effective cultism management technique using one way analysis of variance

Source of variance	Df	Sum of squares	Mean square	F. Cal.	F. Crit.
Between groups	2	110.8	5.9	0.00041	3.0
Within groups	564	81855941.5	145134.7		
Total	566	81856052.3	145140.6		

Source: Field Work

Table 3: Difference in perception among academic staff, non-academic staff and students regarding public awareness campaign as an effective cultism management technique using one way analysis of variance

Source of variance	Df	Sum of squares	Mean square	F. Cal.	F. Crit.
Between groups	2	151.8	75.9	0.000417	3.0
Within groups	564	86000981.9	15248.4		
Total	566	86001133.7	15324.3		

Source: Field Work

Table 4: Difference in perception among academic staff, non-academic staff and students regarding public renunciation as an effective cultism management technique using one way analysis of variance

Source of variance	Df	Sum of squares	Mean square	F. Cal.	F. Crit.
Between groups	2	42.6	21.3	0.000123	3.0
Within groups	564	87644979.5	173129.4		
Total	566	87645022.1	173150.7		

Source: Field Work

Table 5: Difference in perception among academic staff, non-academic staff and students regarding school disciplinary measure as an effective cultism management technique using one way analysis of variance

Source of variance	Df	Sum of squares	Mean square	F. Cal.	F. Crit.
Between groups	2	182.2	91.1	0.00064	3.0
Within groups	564	79925867.5	141712.5		
Total	566	79926049.7	141803.6		

Source: Field Work

The null hypothesis which says that there is no significant difference among academic staff, non-academic staff and students in their perception of persuasion as an effective cultism management technique is accepted. This is because the calculated f value of 0000041 is lower than the critical f value of 3.0 at 2/564 degree of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance.

The null hypothesis which says that there is no significant difference among academic staff, non-academic staff and students in their perception of Public Awareness Campaign as an effective

cultism management technique is hereby retained. This is because the value of f critical which is 3.0 is higher than the value of f calculated which is 0.000417 at 2/564 degree of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance.

The null hypothesis which says that there is no significant difference among academic staff, non-academic staff and students in their perception of Public Renunciation as an effective cultism management technique is accepted. This is because the critical value of f which is 3.0 is greater than the calculated value of f which is

0.000123 at 2/564 degree of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance.

The null hypothesis which says that there is no significant difference among academic staff, non-academic staff and students in their perception of School Disciplinary Measures as an effective cultism management technique is hereby retained. This is because the critical f value of 3.0 is higher than calculated f value of 0.00064 at 2/564 degree of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance.

DISCUSSION

The study has found out that there is no significant difference among academic staff, non-academic staff and students in their perception of coercion as an effective cultism management technique. This finding CORROBORATES WITH Ede 1995 and Ige 2000 when they advocated that offenders found guilty of cultism should be jailed or hanged. The finding disagreed with Osemeikhian 1998 and Sowore 1998 because they asserted that the use of force to curb cult activities may not be fruitful since cultists are already used to violence.

The investigation also revealed that there is no significant difference among academic staff, non-academic staff and students in their perception of persuasion as an effective cultism management technique. The finding gives credence to Oladunjoye 2001 because of his assertion that students should be persuaded and told the evils of cultism and encouraged to give up their membership of cult activities. The finding agrees with Alemika 2000 because he said that "the only way to eradicate cultism from our higher institutions is by using spiritual leaders to organise non-congregational services and counselling in schools".

The present study also found out that there is no significant difference among academic staff, non-academic staff and students in their perception of public awareness campaign as an effective cultism management technique. This finding gives credence to what Osaigbovo 2000, Bamide 1994 and Idogun 1999 advocated. They advocated for public enlightenment making use of seminars, workshop, symposium and public lectures as ways of combating cultism.

Another finding of the study is that there is no significant difference among academic staff, non-academic staff and students in their perception of public renunciation as an effective

cultism management technique. This finding agrees with Oladunjoye's assertion of 2001, that in various institutions of higher learning a good number of the cultists who openly renounced their membership of cultism surrendered their instruments of operation. This finding also give credence to Ekoko 1999, who, identified public renunciation as means of effectively combating cultism in our higher institutions.

Finally, this study found out that there is no significant difference among academic staff, non-academic staff and students in their perception of school disciplinary measure as an effective cultism management technique. This finding is at variance with Effiong's position in 2000. This is because Effiong stated that the management of cultism must not be allowed to rest on the shoulders of the school administrator alone. Effiong maintained that, even though the school authorities have withdrawn, expelled or rusticated students found guilty of cultism, the measure has not yielded fruitful results since incidence of cultism keeps on rising in our higher institutions.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion that may be drawn is that cultism exists in higher educational institutions in Nigeria. However, the use of coercion, persuasion, public awareness campaign, public renunciation and school disciplinary measure have been found effective in the management of cultism. Public awareness campaign had the highest calculated f value of 0.000417 while persuasion had the least calculated f value of 0.00041.

RECOMMENDATION

In view of the findings and conclusion reached, the following recommendations are proposed by the investigators. Public awareness campaign appears to be the most effective in the management of cultism; consequently, we recommend that the authority of higher educational institutions may give priority to its use when cultism is found to exist. We recommend too that coercion, persuasion, public renunciation and school disciplinary measure may also be used as means of managing cultism since they have been found effective, but, we state categorically that persuasion may be used as last resort since it has the least calculated f value of 0.00041

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