



## **Effects of Cultism on the Management of Secondary Schools in Rivers State**

**Amadi Johnson Chinedum, Ph.D**

**Department of Educational Management  
Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria  
[Amadijohnson019@gmail.com](mailto:Amadijohnson019@gmail.com)**

### **ABSTRACT**

This paper examined effects of cultism on the management of Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. The research design adopted in this study was a descriptive survey. The population of the study was 268 principals of public senior secondary schools. A sample size of ninety principals representing 30% of the population was drawn consisting of 50 males and 45 female principals using simple random sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled: causes and effects of cultism in the management of senior secondary schools questionnaire (CEMSS) developed by the researcher to elicit information on the causes and effects of cultism in public secondary schools in Rivers State. 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. Some recommendations made among others were that schools should have counseling unit with qualified and trained counselors 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.

**Keywords:** cultism, causes, school management.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The education system had not been without aberrations. Some of these are products of political, social and economic factors in the environment within which the school operates. Schools are set up not only to provide academic certification but to mould the character of these vulnerable minds in positive ways. Unfortunately, one hydra-headed syndrome in our secondary schools today is the issue of cultism. Increasingly today, schools are focusing more on peripheral things rather than their core mandates.

School administrators and teachers are reminded of their core mandate standing in loco parentis, that is in place of parents and by extension society at large.

Cultism in schools are problems that have pervaded our educational institutions in recent times. It is doing so much havoc to the academic and social life within and outside the school environment, that many sane members of the public and government are getting worried and concerned. Unfortunately, despite all the voices raised against this syndrome, the malaise seems to be spreading like bush fires. Secret cult is a secret activity.

The American Family Foundation (online) has defined the concept cult as a group or movement exhibiting great or excessive devotion or dedication to some person, idea or thing and employing

unethical manipulative or coercive techniques of persuasion and control designed to advance the goals of the group leaders to the actual or possible detriment of members, their families, or the community. Onugha (1996) defines secret cults as a group of organizations characterized using secret initiations or rituals, oaths, grips or handclaps or signs of recognition between members. The existence of membership, plans, activities, and rituals of such societies are usually kept secret and not revealed to non-members.

In the same vein, the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria defines a secret society as any society, association, group or body of persons (whether registered or not) that uses secret signs, oaths, rites or symbols and which is formed to promote a cause, the purpose or part of the purpose of which is to foster the interest of its members and to aid one another under any circumstances without due regard to merit, fair play or justice to the detriment of the legitimate interest of those who are not members (section 318(1)).

Cultism in Nigeria have been traced back to 1952 when Professor Wole Soyinka winner of the 1986 Noble prize for literature and a group of six friends formed the Pyrates Confraternity Elite of the University College Ibadan now University of Ibadan. This was confirmed and re-authenticated by Professor Muyiwa, one of the seven (7) pioneers of Pyrates Confraternity in the Punch Newspapers of Monday, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2004 (P.16). Recent searches have confirmed that the menace of these cults have extended far beyond the walls of the universities to the larger society including primary and secondary schools in the country thereby posing security challenges to the nation.

Cultism is no longer a phenomenon known only among students of higher institutions. For over two decades now, several amorphous groups have been known to exist in secondary schools in Rivers State. Like their parent groups in the universities, these cults are known to be responsible for most of the dastardly acts reported in our Post Primary Schools. Violence has become a normal abnormality in Nigerian schools, even in the lower institutions of learning. But it is unfortunate that our primary and secondary schools are veritable grounds for breeding cultists, thereby making one to wonder if we are civilizing the right way. The expulsion of 26 secondary school students for involvement in cult activities in 2002 in Cross Rivers State, the beating of a secondary school typist to death in Eket in Akwa-ibom State in January 2004, the killing of one Victor Aka (Papa) a secondary school student in Oron Akwa-Ibom state in January 2004, the massive initiations of children into more than 150 cult groups identified by the Anti cultism law of Rivers State, and the arrest of seven secondary school kingpins in Uyo Akwa-ibom state in 2004 opened our eyes to the rot at the secondary school level in Nigeria (Vanguardngr.com.May 10, 2012).

Also, cult groups devise various ways to recruit members into their folds which include among others: students with poor study habits, low self-esteem and probably those suffering from complexes either superiority or inferiority complex easily fall prey to cult groups for recruitment. Other means include toasting, deception, psychological manipulation, brain washing, luring, inducements, threat, weakness exploitation etc.

Today, we have a situation whereby high level of indiscipline and hooliganism have become the order of the day. Our students in both junior and senior secondary schools today, display the height of arrogance towards their teachers and fellow students, and any attempt to correct or discipline them earns the teacher the wrath of the cultists or violent gangs. The case of the female student arrested by the police in Calabar for going to the school with locally made pistol with the intention to shoot one of her teachers is still fresh in our minds (Vanguardngr.com. Feb-May 20, 2021). The menace, over the years has eaten deep into the system as more school children are initiated daily into different cult groups. These groups including girls terrorize their neighbourhoods and unleash mayhem in schools as they engage in supremacy battle, disrupting the fragile peace in the land (The Guardian. Ng. 8 July, 2021).

In a related development, Robert-Okah, (2013) stated that after several cases of organized fighting among secondary school students in Rivers State in the 1990s in which students injured themselves, and freely used dangerous weapons on each other, the Rivers State Government instituted a panel to investigate the report submitted by the disciplinary committee of ANCOPSS on secret cults and illegal levies in secondary schools. It was discovered that most of the cases of group fighting, riots, vandalism, sexual harassment and promiscuity, examination fraud and killings in the school then were traceable to vicious

cults existing in those schools. According to Oriaku (1992), several cult groups like white bishops, one thousand midnight club, black crab, witchcraft, the hardens, the warriors, the war mongers, black bangles, the avengers, the queen of the coast, Deybam, Deywell, Area boys as well as the Caribbean queens were found in many secondary schools within and outside Port Harcourt.

Stakeholders and individuals across the country have decried the high incidence of the menace of cultism in our schools. Attributing the rise in cultism to the complexity of some desperate politicians, President of National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), Comrade Dauda Mohammed stated that “it is frightening to see the depth at which the menace of cultism has eaten deep into our educational system, particularly with its incursion into the secondary school level, and we expect the government to take a decisive step in checkmating cult activities in our campuses and also taking practical steps in bringing the sponsors of these cult groups to book. The presence of cult groups in our secondary schools is a spillover of the prevalence of cultism in our tertiary institutions (vanguard ngr. May 10 2012). In a similar vein, Opara (2012) attributed the spread of the menace to poor parental control, poor upbringing, lack of care, poverty, decay in moral standards, poor education, drug abuse, broken homes and peer pressure. He stated further that these factors are pointers to the general problems confronting the society.

Also worried by the rise in cultism in Primary and Secondary schools, President Goodluck Jonathan called on the National Assembly to enact tougher laws against cultists and those engaging in examination malpractice. He stated that the eradication of cultism was a national project for all stakeholders in the country as campuses of higher institutions have been turned into breeding grounds for cultism and an avenue for the practice of immorality and a base for grooming terrorists. (Vanguardngr. May 10, 2012).

In pursuit of free school environment devoid of cultism, several states like Edo, Ebonyi, Lagos and Rivers State, the main trust of the study have taken some decisive steps to check the menace of school or campus cults (Orika, 1992; Edo state news, 2000; Robert-Okah, 2003).

It is therefore, in view of the above and its attendant effects on the management of public secondary schools in Rivers State that forms the focus for the study.

### **Causes of Cultism in Secondary Schools**

The issue of cultism has despite many efforts at reducing it soared up in secondary schools in Rivers State. It has cast a gloom over the educational sector. Though, it is often said that the youths are the future leaders of tomorrow, but it is a little wonder what the future holds for the youths which has a good proportion of her youths as secret cult members.

Most cases of crime such as armed robbery, drug abuse, sexual assault, murder, bullying etc are associated with cultism. As a social menace, it has become an issue of concern to government, religious organizations, families and individuals. Some of these cult groups in secondary schools in Rivers State include: Buccaneers, black axe, Vikings, Aro mates, Supreme eiye, Black eye, Black bra, Daughters of jezebel, Dey-bam, Dey-well etc. These cult groups have some features in common which include initiation of new members, ritual practices, use of colours, symbols and oath taking. Recall that the very first reported case of cultism in secondary schools was in 2003. One would think that the government would have put measures in place to curb its spread.

All fingers point to the family as the major institution that have contributed to the incidence of cultism and growing violence in the school system. Parental background has been identified as one of the causes of cultism. Children of too harsh or liberal families easily fall prey to cultism (Mbekem, 2004). Many, of the cult students are products of hooliganism, a good number of these students turned terrors or cultists, are offspring of some high and mighty politicians who use the services of other cultists especially in tertiary institutions to eliminate political opponents. One need not worry or wonder why it is easy for many of these children of secondary school ages to be initiated into cult groups.

Thus, Ezenienari (2018) and Udom (2021) enumerated several other causes of cultism in schools to include the use of cultism by politicians, as thugs during elections, search for protection and security, the quest for social identity, poor parental training, spirit of revenge, to avenge, emotional instability of the student, loneliness, poverty and drug abuse.

According to Ibeh (2005) several students get initiated into cultism through the influence of school peer groups. This is worrisome since no student can live isolated in schools and preventing interaction among students in schools is far from being ideal not to even talk of its impossibility.

Drug abuse and cultism are two inseparable vices in the society. The influence of drugs on young people makes them throw away their consciences to the wind. Corruption in the society, inadequate funding of educational sector, lack of recreational facilities in schools, students with inborn traits of bad behaviour and attitudinal problems, harsh economic situations, influence of corrupt military and political leadership, repeated experiences of poor academic performance, mal-administration of some school heads and or breakdown of avenue for free flow of communication can be a take-off point and lack of government will to prosecute those caught in the act of cultism and other violent crimes. According to Omoegun and Akanle (2007), many schools lack the necessary sporting and recreational activities through which the young energetic youths will dissipate their energies. Lack of these facilities has reduced the schools to mere academic training centres for acquiring only book knowledge without any provision for useful curricular activities.

#### **How to Identify a Cultist in Secondary Schools**

They hardly stay in class to study and are found moving aimlessly trying to recruit new converts, they don't obey school rules, laws and order of the school authorities, they are known to put on certain colours of attires like black, red, green and yellow berets or mufflers with different colours depending on the cult gang they belong to, Some put on the chaplet, bangles either yellow, or those mixed with different colours, depending on the group they belong to, they are arrogant, noisy, violent and boastful but very flamboyant and sophisticated in their dressing, they are in most cases lavish and scandalous in their spending.

They wear tattoos, scars and mark of identity on their bodies and even wear uniforms especially during their meetings, they have special forms of handshake or grip and sing songs of rituals, they use special forms of communication and language understood by members only, they are usually callous, heartless and arrogant and consequently bully and terrorise junior students and even threaten or beat up teachers.

#### **Effects of Cultism on the Management of Secondary Schools in Rivers State**

The problems posed by cult groups in our schools are better imagined than discussed. A plethora of researchers have delved extensively into horrible situations and experiences caused people (staff, students and others) disruption of academic calendars and programmes, other heinous activities masterminded by cult groups (Denga & Denga, 1998; Okorie, 1999).

The presence of cult members in our secondary schools send feelings of fear and dread within and outside the school premises. In one of our institutions in the country, there was a report of a tragic case involving Sylvester Oromoni Jr., the twelve-year-old student of Downen college, Lagos State who possibly died of poisoning and internal injuries sustained by torture from students for failing to join a cult group. Like we see in movies, some primary and secondary school students have turned into nightmares to fellow students/classmates, an unfortunate reflection of a nation overrun by high level of moral decadence. Violence has become a normal abnormality in Nigerian schools even in the lower institutions of learning.

Today, we have a situation in our schools, where high-level indiscipline and hooliganism are the order of the day. Students in public secondary schools, display the height of arrogance toward their teachers and fellow students, and any attempt to correct or discipline them earns the wrath of the cultists.

There have also been cases of unrest, riots and disruption of academic programmes by cult members. The story is the same all over the country. In March 2020, Akwa-Ibom state government banned or proscribed 57 cult groups and societies in secondary schools following cult related violence and unrest in schools. One wonders how these children whose pre-occupation is to inflict harm on others in schools, pass examinations and graduate?

Cultism is a daily experience in public secondary schools across the country, so bad is the situation in public schools that rival cult groups often engage in violent attacks on each other as well as teachers and management staff often leading to deaths. Cult members often engage in sexual harassment of female students and robbery activities. They use threats and intimidation to force non-members into cult membership. They are also known to be high-handed, violating school rules and regulations with no sense

of guilt. Creating a safe environment where children can thrive socially, physically, and academically without being afraid is necessary in secondary schools. The National Policy on education, section II and sub-section 43 makes it mandatory for schools to have counsellors.

The effects on the individual cult members have been tremendous. In the first place, there is the loss of one's personality. Personal identity is wrapped up in a group identity. Several deaths of cult members during inter-cult clashes are equally reported in newspapers and other media outlets. Many others are expelled from their schools/colleges when caught. This is a serious economic loss, not only for the cult members themselves, but also for their families as well as the nation.

The incidence of cultism in our secondary schools further exposed the managerial loopholes and growing weakness in the school system. Management is either complaisant, aiding or abetting or completely ignorant of what to do to check excessive character or behavioural or even what we call delinquency. Furthermore, the withdrawal of punishment in the school system is not helping matters. Schools need to uphold discipline as an integral part of school law backed by national laws. It is common knowledge that members of rival cults attack each other or students with dangerous weapons and in some instances handguns.

Sadly, the root of the decay in the education sector can be traced to neglect by successive governments at various levels. Public secondary schools have been neglected to the extent that parents are no longer comfortable with them. Parents are forced to drift in droves to the private entrepreneurs who set up schools, mostly with the profit motive more paramount. All sorts of inadequacies are rife, and no serious efforts are made to redress them. Government have abandoned their duties as enshrined in section II of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria containing "Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy". The school environment requires serenity, security, peace and tranquility for any meaningful learning to take place. Certainly, cultism is an enemy to these values. Teachers lack comfort, peace and security, their lives are constantly threatened. These fears compel them not to relax in their work. Therefore, effective learning cannot take place since learning can only take place where effective teaching takes place.

#### **The Effects of Cultism to the Larger Society**

Every cult member belongs to a family, every family belongs to a society and every society belongs to a nation. It means therefore that the nation subsequently suffers from the dangers of cultism.

In the case of a school, the cult members who in most cases are unrecognized receive training geared towards being able to make meaningful contribution to the nation to ensure its development. What then does one expect of the nation in a generation where the majority belongs to one cult group or the other? Certainly, the result is acrimony, crisis and killing for rituals, threats and consequently lack of progress. In the face of all these, the non-cult members are much more prone to attack, living in condition of perpetual fear and insecurity.

#### **Eradication of Cultism in Secondary Schools**

Cultism is perhaps one of the greatest problems confronting our secondary institution in Nigeria. In recent years this plague has assumed a frightening and deadly dimension. The spread of cultism in secondary schools in the country is enough to give every caring parent a cause to lose sleep. Dealing with cultism in our schools require a multi-dimensional approach considering its nature, mode of spread and grave consequences.

Some of the measures to curb the menace of cultism in secondary schools will include thus:

Schools should be provided with trained and qualified guidance counsellors to assist students suffering from self-concept problems, effective funding of our secondary schools by the government which will enable the school authority to provide the necessary teaching and learning materials, ensure fine and attractive school environment and provide recreational and sporting facilities which make them channel their energies, especially during free hours meaningfully, all students caught participating in cultism should be expelled from the institution, government must come up with legislation or decree to facilitate legal prosecution of the cult suspects, also, Parents as partner in progress should be able to monitor their children properly to find out the type of friends they keep at home and in the school, voluntary and religious organizations have their role of preaching against cultism and its attendant evils in the school

and society, and school authority should discourage bullying in the school and seek or solicit protection for the junior students so much so that the feeling of insecurity which will force them to form or join cult groups will not exist or arise. The school authority should solicit for security services such as Man 'O' War, Boys Scouts, Police and forming vigilante groups to checkmate cult activities. The school, through public enlightenment need to undertake campaigns against cultism, creates good student- authority relationship; discourage drug abuse among students, effective supervision by teachers and school authorities, legislative support from government and unsuspected searches and checking of student bags, lockers and hostels will go a long way to curb the menace of cultism in our Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State.

### **Research Questions**

The study will attempt to find answers to the following research questions:

- i. What factors causes students to join cultism in public secondary schools in Rivers State?
- ii. To what extent does cultism effect on the academic performance of students of Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State?
- iii. To what extent have measures to eradicate cultism in secondary school effect on the management of Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- i. There is no significance difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on factors that causes students to join cultism in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State.
- ii. There is no significance difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the extent cultism effect on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State.
- iii. There is no significance different between the mean ratings of male and female principals on measures to eradicate cultism in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study was carried out in Rivers State Public Senior Secondary Schools in Nigeria. The study adopted the descriptive survey design as it attempts to describe the present condition of a given phenomenon by collecting data from a defined population on causes, effects and eradication of cultism in our public secondary schools in Rivers State. The population of the study was 268 principals of public secondary schools. A sample of ninety (90) principals representing 30% of the total population was drawn consisting of 50 male and 40 female principals using the simple random sampling technique. A self-structured questionnaire titled: Causes and Effects of Cultism on the Management of Public Senior Secondary Schools Questionnaire (CEMSS) with fifteen (15) questionnaire items on modified validated four-point rating scales response option such as Strongly Agreed (SA)= 4, Agreed (A)= 3, Disagreed (D)= 2, and Strongly Disagreed (D)= 1.

Reliability index of 0.92 was obtained using test-retest method. Data obtained was analyzed using mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) to answer the research questions while the z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

**RESULTS**

**Research Question 1:** *What factors cause students to join cultism in public senior secondary school in Rivers State?*

**Table 1: Mean Responses of Male and Female Principals on Factors That Causes Students to Join Cultism In Public Secondary Schools In Rivers State**

S/N	ITEMS	MALE PRINCIPALS		FEMALE PRINCIPALS			
		$\bar{X}_1$	SD <sup>1</sup>	$\bar{X}_2$	SD <sub>2</sub>	Avg. Mean	Decision
1.	Due to the lack of proper parental background students join cultism	2.84	0.77	3.02	0.72	2.93	A
	Parents who are members of secret cults influence their wards to join cults	2.90	0.70	2.88	0.83		
2.	Students indulge in cultism due to peer group influence	3.01	0.84	2.67	0.79	3.01	A
3.	Lack of effective guidance and counseling units in schools	3.10	0.81	3.00	0.80	3.05	A
4.	Government inability to come up with legislation to facilitate legal prosecution of suspects	3.93	0.82	3.20	0.70	3.07	A
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	2.96	0.79	2.95	0.77	2.99	A

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 1 above for research question 1 revealed that respondents agreed to questionnaire items (1-5) on factors that causes students to join cultism in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, with a grand mean of 2.96 and 2.95 for male and female principals respectively. The answer to research question 1 revealed that these factors are responsible for students joining cultism in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

**Research Question 2:** *To what extent does cultism effect on the academic performance of students of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.*

**Table 2: Mean Responses of Male and Female Principals on The Extent Cultism Effect on The Academic Performance of Students In Public Senior Secondary Schools In Rivers State.**

S/N	ITEMS	MALE PRINCIPALS n=50		FEMALE PRINCIPALS n=40			
		$\bar{X}_1$	SD <sup>1</sup>	$\bar{X}_2$	SD <sub>2</sub>	Avg. Mean	Decision
5.	Cultism in schools lead to breakdown of law and order in the school system.	3.03	0.68	3.07	0.75	3.05	A
6.	It leads to total collapse of educational system if not properly handled.	2.83	0.81	2.96	0.82	2.90	A
7.	Cultism leads to sexual harassment of female students in schools.	2.90	0.70	3.10	0.88	3.00	A
8.	Cultism in schools affect the meaningful valid and reliable evaluation of students academics.	2.75	0.66	3.14	0.90	2.95	A
9.	It leads to the death of students cultists and other non-cultists in school.	3.00	0.73	2.83	0.98	3.01	A
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	2.90	0.72	3.02	0.83	2.96	A

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 2 above showed that the consequences of cultism on students academic performance can lead to breakdown of law and order with an average mean of 3.05. it was also observed that it leads to total collapse of educational system, and sexual harassment of female students with an average mean of 2.90 and 3.00 respectively. Also, cultism affect the meaningful valid and reliable evaluation of students with average mean score of 2.95, while death of student cultist and other non-cultist has a mean score of 3.01. All the above scores were generally accepted because their mean scores are above normal mean of 2.50

**Research Question 3:** *To what extent has measures to eradicate cultism in public secondary schools effect on the management of public senior secondary school in Rivers State?*

**Table 3: Mean Responses of Male and Female Principals on The Extent Measures To Eradicate Cultism In Schools Effect on The Management Of Public Senior Secondary Schools In Rivers State.**

S/N	ITEMS	MALE PRINCIPALS		FEMALE PRINCIPALS			
		$\bar{X}_1$	SD <sup>1</sup>	$\bar{X}_2$	SD <sub>2</sub>	Avg. Mean	Decision
10.	Schools should create good student – authority relation	2.92	0.68	2.88	0.81	2.90	A
11.	Guidance and counseling units should be compulsory established in schools	3.01	0.86	2.86	0.77	2.94	A
12.	Schools should set up special tasks force of prefect, police force and special intelligence unit to identify cultist in schools	2.95	0.60	3.01	0.74	2.98	A
13.	Expulsion of students caught in cult related matters	3.18	0.77	3.00	0.69	3.09	A
14.	There should be legislations to facilitate legal prosecution of cult suspects	2.88	0.79	2.66	0.61	2.77	A
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	2.99	0.74	2.88	0.72	2.94	A

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 3 above for research question 3 revealed that respondents agreed to questionnaire item 11-15 on the extent measures to eradicate cultism in public senior secondary school effect on the management of public secondary schools in Rivers State with a grand mean of 2.99 and 2.88 for male and female principals respectively. The answer to research question 3 is that all the measures put in place to eradicate cultism in public senior secondary school effect on the management of public secondary schools in Rivers State.

**Hypothesis**

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significance difference between the mean opinion scores of male and female principals on factors that causes students to join cultism in public secondary school in Rivers State

**Table 4: z-test analysis of difference between the mean scores of male and female principals on the factors that causes students to join cultism in public secondary schools in Rivers State.**

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	DF	Cal.Z-value	Critical Z-value	Decision
Male	50	2.90	0.72	88	0.03	± 1.96	Failed to reject
Female	40	3.02	0.83				

Table 4 revealed that the Z-test analysis of male and female principals on the factors that causes students to join cultism in public senior secondary school in Rivers State. The table reveals that Z-test calculated value of 0.03 at degree of freedom of 88 and 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated z- value was less than the critical z-value of ± 1.96, the null hypothesis was accepted which states the mean scores of male and female principals on factors that causes students to join cultism in public secondary schools in Rivers State was upheld.

**Table 5: Z-test analysis of difference between the mean scores of male and female principals on the extent cultism effect on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers state.**

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	DF	Cal.Z	Critical Z-value	Decision
Male	50	2.90	0.72	88	0.72	± 1.96	Failed to reject
Female	40	3.02	0.83				

Table 5 above showed that the z-calculated value of 0.72 which was less than z-critical value of ± 1.96 , the null hypothesis was accepted, which states that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female principals on the extent that cultism in school effect on the academic performance of students in public secondary school in Rivers State.

**Table 6: Z-test analysis of differences between the mean score of male and female principals on the extent measures to eradicate cultism in secondary schools effect on the management of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State**

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	DF	Cal.Z	Critical Z-value	Decision
Male	50	2.99	0.77	88	0.69	± 1.96	Failed to reject
Female	40	2.88	0.72				

The data in table 6 above showed the z-calculated value of 0.69 at degree of freedom of 88 and 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated Z-value of 0.69 is less than the z-critical value of ± 1.96, the null hypothesis was accepted. This implies that the hypothesis which states that there is no significance difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the extent measures to eradicate cultism in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State was upheld.

**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The result of the findings of research question 1 revealed that the following factors were causes why students join cultism in public secondary schools in Rivers State. This is because majority of the respondents agreed that lack of proper parental background, parents that were in secret cults influence their wards to join cults, peer group influence, lack of effective guidance and counseling units and government inability to come up with legislation to facilitate legal prosecution of suspects. These findings agreed with Mbekem Cited in Gwarjiko (2015) who said that poor parental background has been

identified as one of the causes of cultism. In similar vein Ibe cited in Opara(2012) and Gwarijiko(2015) attributed the spread of cultism in schools to poor parental control, poor upbringing, lack of care, poverty, decay in moral standards, poor education, drug abuse and peer group influence.

The result of the corresponding hypothesis showed that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on factors that causes cultism in public secondary schools in Rivers state.

The result of the findings of research question 2 agreed that cultism affect the academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This is because all the respondents were of the view that cultism in secondary schools leads to total breakdown of law and order, total collapse of educational system, leads to sexual harassment of female students, affect the meaningful valid and reliable evaluation of students academics and leads to death of student cultists and non-cultists in the school.

This finding agreed with Owoeye (2015) who said that many student cultists also suffer from the obnoxious effect of cultism by ending up losing their lives or part of their bodies during inter-cult crisis or in the process of fulfilling ritual obligations. Also, Denga & Denga cited in Kinanee (2003) said that cult members often engage in sexual harassment of female students and robbery activities. The result of the corresponding hypothesis 2 revealed that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the extent cultism affect the academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers state.

The result of the findings of research question 3 agreed that measures put in place to eradicate cultism in public secondary schools effect on the management of public senior secondary schools in Rivers state. This is because the respondents agreed that school should create good student-authority relation, establishment of guidance and counseling unit, expulsion of students caught in cult related matters, setting up of special task force of the police force and special intelligence unit and a legislation to facilitate legal prosecution of cult suspects. The findings agreed with Kinanee (2003) who said that schools should be provided with trained guidance counselors to help students who have self concept problems.

Thus, Kinanee (2003), Owoeye (2015), and Gwarijiko (2015) agreed that all students caught participating in cultism should be expelled from the school and come out with legislation or decree to facilitate legal prosecution of cult suspects.

The result of the corresponding hypothesis 3 showed that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on measures to eradicate cultism in public secondary schools in Rivers state.

## **CONCLUSION**

Cultism in our schools is a social evil that portends no good to the youth and the country. The syndrome called cultism must be fought vigorously and militantly by all the stakeholders considering the enormity of physical and emotional instability it has inflicted on our educational sector.

The school authority and our parents must observe keenly the behaviour, the taste, dresses and dressing of the children. There is also need to explore a lot more on curative measures in curbing cultism, one of such measures is that schools authority should proscribe all identifiable cult groups and at the same time expel those who are found to be members of such cults from the college to serve as deterrent to others.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Parents, as partners in progress should monitor their children properly to find out the kind of friends they keep both at home and the school, and at the same time act as role models by shunning secrete cults and advise their children against it.
2. Schools should have counseling unit with qualified and trained counsellors to help students who have self concept problems.

3. Government, in order to eradicate cultism in schools must therefore carry out their regulatory and supervisory roles, by providing adequate funds to cater for recreational facilities that are youth friendly in the schools where pent-up emotions can be released.

## REFERENCES

- Akani, C. (1996). Political economy of secret cults in Nigerian University: Port Harcourt. Chriskam Publishers.
- Akuyeski, E.O. (1988). Secret cults in educational institutions: Why they persist paper presented to the Rotary Club, Jos.
- Daily Sunray, (1<sup>st</sup> Nov. 1992; pp21)
- Denga, D.I. & Denga, H.M. (1998). Educational malpractice and cultism in Nigeria: Calabar; Rapid Educational Publishers. Edo State News (2000 Oct.25).
- Federal Ministry of Information (1999). Selected speeches of President Olusegun Obasanjo, Vol.1. Abuja Federal Government Printers.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999). The constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria, Lagos. Federal Ministry of Information
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004). National policy on Education; Lagos. NERDC.
- Gwarijiko, U.I. (2015). Cultism in schools: Challenges and remediation strategies: *Informational Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development* vol. 2(10); 408-413.
- Ibeh, A.E. (2005). The psycho-sociological imperatives of cultism in Nigerian institutions of higher learning. Being a paper presented at a seminar on cultism and its effects on Nigerian institutions of higher learning. Nov. 23 & 24.
- Kinane, J.B. (2003). The secret cult syndrome in schools and the way out: paper presented at the seminar/workshop for heads of post primary institutions in Rivers State.
- Moegun, M. & Akanele, F.F. (2007). Perceived causes and effects of cultism in Nigerian Universities: Prevention and solution with counseling implications. *Journal of Sociology and Education in Africa*. 6(1); 79-97.
- Okorie, J.U. (1999). Student Affairs. Onitsha Cape Publishers Limited
- Onugha, D.C. (1996). Causes and effects of secret cults in education; Paper presented at the National Workshop on the eradication of cults in educational institutions, Jos. December, 16-18.
- Owoeye, J. (1997). Campus cultists: A study in urban violence. In O.A. Ogunbameru (ed): Reading on campus secret cults. Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press Ltd. Pp18-34.
- Punch Newspaper, Monday 17<sup>th</sup> May, 2004 (p16)
- Robert-Okah, I. (2003). Cult metamorphosis in Nigerian schools: Matters arising: Port Harcourt: Harey Publications.
- The Guardian.Ng.8July,2021.
- Vanguardngr.com.Feb-May20,2021
- Vanguardngr.com.May10,2021
- Webster Dictionary vol.1, 1980