

## Cultism in Higher Institutions in River State and its Implications for Educational Development (1960-2020)

Dr. Alikor Oroma<sup>1\*</sup>, Dr. Orlunba Bartholomew Godstime<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Educational Foundations (History and Policy of Education), Faculty of Education, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

DOI: [10.36348/jaep.2023.v07i04.005](https://doi.org/10.36348/jaep.2023.v07i04.005)

| Received: 23.01.2023 | Accepted: 02.03.2023 | Published: 28.04.2023

\*Corresponding author: Dr. Alikor Oroma

Department of Educational Foundations (History and Policy of Education), Faculty of Education, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

### Abstract

The menace of cultism has eaten deep into the Nigerian Institution of higher learning especially in Rivers State and inspite of the jail term for airing members of a cult group caught by the authorities as proscribed in the Nigerian 1999 constitution as amended. This menace is still growing and gaining more grounds in the entire higher institutions on daily basis. Cultism constitutes a major social problem to the peace and harmony that ought to exist within the academic confines of Rivers State. Admittedly the menace have attracted so much tension and concerns of major stakeholders within and outside the educational system and it negative impact affects our universities in terms of disruption of academic calendar, vandalization of school facilities, loss of lives of both innocent and actual cult members within and outside the school environs as well as raping of students. Unfortunately, it has been reported that students who are from disorganized family background that fall prey of joining cult group either in their local environment or when they gain admission into higher institution. This however, is now seen as a very big problem that need immediate solution if the aims and objectives of educating the younger generation are to be actualized. Thus, it further indicates that some factors that motivate the emergence and sustenance of secret cult in the educational system are traceable to the faculty decadence of our immediate society, the parental or student background, the educational environment etc. This study therefore offer some policy recommendations that is needed if we are ready to curtail the activities of cultism in our society and within our educational institutions in Rivers State.

**Keywords:** Cultism, Education, Higher Institution, Educational development, Society.

**Copyright © 2023 The Author(s):** This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited.

### INTRODUCTION

Taking a historical look into the advent of educational development, it has been noted that the Nigerian government and other fundamental institutions are trying their best to create an enabling environment for even and equal educational opportunity for all in other to enhance its political, social, economic and cultural development through education. Thus, this dream has been bedeviled by individuals who have decided to thwart this development through their numerous cult activities mostly in the universities.

However, what is known as secret cult today in Nigerian universities started in 1953 at the university college Ibadan now university of Ibadan (UI) when the pirate confraternity was founded. Its founding fathers were Wole Soyinka, Aig-Imoukhuede, Pius Olwegbe,

Relph Opara Olumuyiwa Awe, Tunji Tubi, OluAgunloye And Nat Oyelola. Some of its stated aims include;

- To abolish convention.
- To revive the age of chivalry elitism (Adekugha, 1987-69 cited in Akani 1996).

Due to the tremendous happenstance of cult groups both in the society and the institution of learning, the aforementioned aims or objectives has been bastardised ranging from the destruction of properties worth millions and lives of our young and vibrant youths who would have contributed in the development of the nation Nigeria.

However it is disheartening to note that in spite of all conditions allotted to this institutional scourge, its activities is on the rise on daily basis .hence the aim of

every cult is to dominate its immediate environment and make life uncomfortable for its rival cult group which exist in the same environment. In other words, the rule of the jungle is a correct replicate of a zero-sum game, this means that any cult group that was able to suppress its rival in such a way that it will give up the territory, will have to move and parade itself as the lord of that institution, most at times this struggle for dominance position in school often leads to the loss of human head, meaning that most members of the cult group seeking for dominance may end up losing their lives. Akani(1996) noted that secret cults in Nigerian universities did not emerge as a result of certain extra-mundane force reminiscent of the Hegelian absolute spirit, but as a result of the irreconcilable contradictions and decay of the Nigerian societies which had been in existence in tertiary institutions in Nigeria long before the collapse of Nigerian economy in the eighties. But secret cult assumed a new dimension of violence and operation after the collapse of the Nigerian economy as a result of the split of the pirate confraternity in 1983, brought in the new blood birth era of cultism in Nigeria, leading to the loss of life of our potential youths who would have contributed in one way or the other in the society. Cult activities in our higher institution today constitute a major obstacle to quality assurance of our Nigerian universities without mincing words, the activities of cult groups are threatening to undermine and erode the very essence of university education (Nwankwo 2006). The dangerous part of the whole incidence is that, it is very difficult for one to get hold of the actual member who commits a crime in the school environment since the university community is considered to be a wider world where you may have over five to twenty thousand persons within its environment which includes students, lecturers, cleaners and other non-academic staffs. Kinanee (2003) points out that there is high level of intercampus co-operation among cult groups. This accounts for recruitment of brothers from other institutions whenever operations are to be carried out on a fraternity's own campus. They do this to hide the identity of the assailant who will carry out their monstrous activity.

Most at times, it is noted that students who are even caught on the act of cultism are easily set free, reason being that they are either sons and daughters or commissioner, vice chancellor, and any other big figure in the society. Hence, the highlight of cultism and cult related violence has regularly been reported in Nigeria news headline and manifest in different areas like schools, communities, and our immediate environment.

Off course it was never in the ideas of the founding fathers that cultism will grow up to this level it has grown today, living behind its original aims, goals and objectives to what is now a major social problem that every individuals do not want to get attached to, the menace have grown to the extent to which the university environment no longer contain it and has

taken another form to create smaller group in our streets living it at the hands of touts who have made it more dangerous than ever, some of this homemade cult group includes, dey well, dey Bam, Icelanders, green landers, Akans men etc.

The problems of cultism have really eaten deep into the higher institutions in Rivers State and the environment where this institution is situated. The cornerstone of a competitive and good educative process is anchored on the peaceful coexistence among students, teachers and administrators. However, it is disheartening to note that the reverse is the case in Rivers State cult activities and violence has really affected the educational system negatively in over two decades. Thus cult activities in Rivers State if not satisfactorily managed will lead to loss of confidence in the educative process, and authorities, as well as protest, violent contestation, social explosion and doubt about the institutions of learning.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### Cultism

The Advanced Oxford Dictionary defines cultism as a term coined out from the word cult, and that cultism is an extreme religious group that is not part of an established religion.

Etymological, according to Ecchekwube (1999), he traced the origin of the term cultism to a Latin word "cultus" which means worship and is actually associated with the worship of a God or Supreme Being. According to him, cultism originated from a Latin word "Occukre" which means something hidden, occulted concealed, mysterious etc. From the aforementioned it is now clear that cult is an assemblage of some individuals who are known for certain behavioural patterns, which are shrouded in secrecy and is controlled in form of a liminary base and also have a charismatic leader who they must obey and take certain actions on his behalf.

Cultism as a volatile concept in our society, it is a formal practice of a cult. According to Marret and Lang (1995), a cult is understood as a body of religious beliefs and practices associated with a particular god or set of gods. Constituting a specialized part of the religious institutions of a society (cited in Akani 1996). In the same vein, Chaplin (1979), cited in Akani (2011) defined cult as a body of beliefs, rites and customs associated with an object or person. The objective of the cult is usually religious and magical ritual attributed to its agents.

Also, Azelama, Alude and Imhonda (2000) noted that "cult is an assemblage of people united by certain ideas or symbols and whose rites and ceremonies of veneration are unique and shrouded in mysteries with a secrecy that cannot be broken. The section 318 of the 1999 constitution defined secret cult

or society as “any society, association, group or body of persons (whether registered or not) That use secret signs, oath, rites or symbols and which is formed to promote or 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 circumstance without due regards to merits fair play, justice to the detriment of the legitimate interest of those who are not members.

- a. The membership of which is incompatible with the function or dignity of any public office under this constitution and whose member are sworn to observe oaths of secrecy or
- b. The activities of which are not known to the public at large, the names of whose members are kept secret and whose meetings and other activities are held in secret.

Cults are seen as organizations which are frequently employed to get rid of certain problems considered super human and unnatural. It is because of its association with things metaphysical, odd and whimsical, that members are often regarded as being in a world of their own and to be avoided at all times, but only given minimal attention by men as they only obey whatsoever decision given by their leader. This is why Langane (1988) stated that cult leaders have absolute control over the members of the movement and as such they use force to subdue them under their command.

### History/Origin of Cultism in Nigeria

The origin of cultism in Nigeria can be traced back to the pirates confraternity founded by the Nigerian noble Laureate, Professor Wole Soyinka and six (6) others which includes: Olumuyiwa Awe, Tunji Tubi, Oluagunloye, Agi Imoukhuede, Pius Oluwegde, Relph Opera, And Nat Oyelola, at the university college of Ibadan (now university of Ibadan) in 1953). Its main objectives were to fight non-violently but intellectually and effectively against the imposition of foreign convention, revive the age of chivalry, and engender lasting solutions to the problems of tribalism and elitism (Adekugha, 1987:pg 69 cited in Akani (1996). At first it was patriotic and upheld strong belief in the Nigerian culture which represents bravery, oneness, valor, peace and progress.

According to Awe, when we started the confraternity in 1953, our aim was to abolish convention and so we dressed unconventionally, it was not a secret society though members were invited to join and we normally held our meetings at night but everybody in the university knew us (Ugwulebo, cited in Akani (1996). However, it was believed that the pirate confraternity derived inspiration from the Treasure Island a book known for its adventures notoriety and whatever was done was not intended to bring violence on the students nor the university community. As Prof. Wole Sonyinka said “we believe that a university education should be fun without the viciousness which was prevalent on campus. We also

thought students should map out a character of their own rather than follow sheepishly the norms of our largely European staff. Hence one day seven of us came together on somebody’s room and said let’s start something; everybody was enthusiastic and full of ideas. One person suggested the name, another thought of the satire and another of the initiation ceremony. But we all agreed that there won’t be room for colonial mentality (Adelola, 1999:33).

The emergence of cultism in Nigerian is not surprising, as the event took place in Nigeria in a time when the nation was swimming in the cocoon of European control and what was on their minds was ways in which the elite class can win election, rule their various regions with much emphasis on ethnicity. However, it was noted that due to the rigid and tight admission procedure, most students who actually want to become cult members were denied the opportunity because of the moral standard attached to the group. The aforementioned reasons gave a substantial background for the quick birth of new cult groups. Also, it is pertinent to note that in my quest of carrying an interview with a reliable source which gave me some names of other cult group that broke out from the pirates confraternity otherwise known as Seadogs, they includes: Vikings formed in 1983 with its headquarters at University of Port Harcourt (Alfa Marina), Ku Klux Klan which formed in University of Nigeria Nsukka in (1987), Black Axe, formed in University of Benin with headquarters at Federal Polytechnic Oko, Elye (Night Bird) formed in the West University, Mgba Mgba Brothers formed in Abia State University and a host of many others like Black Barret, Black Cat, Buccaneers, Dragons, Black Queens, Akins Men, Daughters of Jezebel and a host of many others. Hence in Nigeria higher institutions today, there is no school left out without any cult effect.

### Cult activities in Rivers State

It was noted that shortly after the splintering of the pirate confraternity in the 1960’s and 1970’s, many of the splinter cult that were formed came into existence with different ideologies other than that of the founding mother cult (Seadogs) otherwise known as the Pirate Confraternity. Their main targets was to kill and destroy, targeted persons and properties, most at times, when they attack their victims and found out that their target is not around the environment or at home, they will immediately attack whosoever they meet at that particular area not even taking into cognizance the persons innocence as at the time they attacked, be it the persons wife, sister, brother, mother etc, as a sign to show that they actually visited.

In my interview with a very reliable source, it was discovered that some members of the Vikings confraternity in 2005 attacked one Mr. Chigozie at his residence in the Mile 3 area of Port Harcourt who is a member of K.K. (klans men) cult group, upon arrival,

he was not at home, but his girlfriend was victimized, she was maim with machete, brutally injured and raped, also in 2014 a student of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education lost his life as a result of power control, an interview from a reliable source, it was discovered that the students was a member of the Vikings confraternity and was also the captain or leader as at when the incident occurred. According to the interview, he was asked by a fellow student by name Ogboka to step down as the chief pilot of the ship, but he refused at gun point, but was shut immediately by his fellow member of the (Omega Marine) Vikings confraternity in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Also in an interview with a very reliable source it was noted that in 2017, a noble youth of Minikpiti Rumuolumeni Port Harcourt by name Isi was shut died very close to the school gate by some unknown gunmen. This incident was however confirmed by the divisional police at Rumuolumeni to be a cult related attack, hence this occurrence kept many students of the institution in a drastic situation, most students who stay outside campus started living in fears of what might be the next line of action, if their might be any reprisal attack or not. Again in 2018, a female student of Faculty of Humanities in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education was shut died right at the school gate by a cultist known as Mr. Lekum who is from Ogoni tribe in Rivers State, according to Police investigation it was noted that the cultist asked the young girl to give him her wallet and phone which she refused to let go, this refusal warranted the young man to kill the innocent young girl.

In an interview from a very reliable source, it was noted that in 2005 a member of the Klansmen by name Endurance Otima, who was a Dey Ban member who just gained admission into the university thinking it's the same thing with that of the street cult, this young man was killed with no trace of his body up till today by some other cult members which they believed is the Vikings. But the dept was payed back to the Vikings since they were parading around the campus that they are responsible for his death.

In the same interview, it was discovered that by August 2006, the Vikings and the Axemen were having a fight, this however gave the Klansmen Confraternity clearer ground to attack the Vikings and made all the attacks look like it was the axe men, this incident however led to the lose of many lives of students in the Rivers State University of Science and Technology.

Also, a boy name Amakiri who left the Rivers State Polytechnic to study at Rivers State University of Science and Technology, was gunned down in 2006 when there was a confrontation between the axemen and the Vikings, the Klansmen upon getting this information, saw it as a medium to attack the Vikings,

so they the Klansmen attacked and gunned down a Vikings member by name Amakiri Paul.

Also in an interview, it was confirmed that in 2006, a young boy by name Nney was killed on a broad day light by members of the Vikings who forcefully adopted him with a bike at Rivers State University and took him to a mechanic workshop where they used a car engine block to hit him and kill him.

Also in an interview, it was confirmed that in 2017 a year two students of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education by name Ndubuisi Ihunwo was killed by his own cousin brother, this happened as a result of charm testing, after obtaining charms from a witch doctor so that bullets will not penetrate, they took cousin who are also members of the Vikings confraternity, the event took place in the bush at Azumini area in Rumuolumeni where they went to test their charms but the outward result became a very big problem. However, both are not alive today to tell the story again as the charm failed them and the bullet penetrated, which gunned down Mr. Ndubuisi, after much investigation the police apprehended the other one.

In an interview, it was also discovered that in 2005, a student of the Ken Saro-Wiwa Polytechnic who is a member of the Klansman cult by name Timkpa was buried alive by the Vikings cult group. This however led to retaliation by the Klansmen which led to the death of two Viking cult members.

The 2005 to 2015 was tagged the painful and black decade in the history of Rivers State University of Science and Technology (now Rivers State University) the menace and numerous havoc, caused by different cult group within the school environment was too much and unbearable, coupled with the everyday strikes, occasioned by the Nigerian government failing to meet up with the different demands of ASSU and other labour union demands (Ihunwo, 2010), the writer also noted that this unhealthy situation got to a point where he had no other choice but to remove his children from the institution.

In an interview with a reliable source, it was observed that in 2008, a 300 level student by name Chidi Akoham of the Faculty of Engineering was brutally injured by some members of the black axe confraternity at Rivers State University during their examination, they came into the hall, sported and start beating him up, this however made many students who actually came for the examination to leave the hall, with no one to write the already scheduled examinations for that day Ihunwo (2010).

According to Bennard, W (2015), he stated that, a young youth by name Papas Njokwu who is a student of the College of Arts and Science now Elechi

Amadi Polytechnic, who was supposed to have graduated but had carryover and a leader of the Vikings confraternity, he never wanted any of his younger student to rule or take over power and rule over him. This resulted to a very big fight between members of the same cult. Njokwu was brutally injured with many machete cuts all over his body. However, the school security intervened and he was sent to the hospital.

Also Collins Igwe who's dad was financially buoyant forcefully made a remedial student to join his cult group (Viking) at Rivers state University. In the year (2014), this incidentally resulted to a situation whereby the young student was drastically injured all over his body. However, the incident made the parent of the young boy to come to the school with over fifteen (15) military personnel who dealt with Mr. Collins, and he was rusticated from the school by the authorities.

### **Factors responsible for cultism in Higher Institutions**

It is a clear indication that students are attracted to cultist groups for a variety of reasons, the Nigerian educational environment create an enabling room for secret cult activities to gain strong grounds which has led to the deification of cults particularly in the campus. As a result of this, members have full confident about their new found status. These are backed up by the fact that most members of the secret cults are sons and daughters of person at the heads of affairs. However, most analyst will say that students join cult group as a result the absence of intellectual debates, erosion of the traditional academic culture, parental control factors, peer socialization factor etc. thus, it is also potent to state that most individuals who join secret cults in school do so because of their sagging ego, that need to be developed, whereas others join cults in other to have a sense of belonging, while others join cults in other to be protected against oppression from members of other cult group or for vengeance purpose (Orlu, 1998).

In the same vein, (Okwu 2006 cited in Denga 1991), outlined some factors that are responsible for student's cultism in higher institution which includes;

#### **Revenge**

The distasteful sweet feeling that comes with harming a fellow student in return for an injury, informs of a reprisal attack has been one of the major factors that has made most students to join cult in school. most students who do not have the heart of forgiveness and letting go certain occurrences in their lives end up seeking for vengeance since they know that they on their own may not be able to assert sanction or fight back those individuals that have dealt with them in one occasion or the other, they end up seeking for peer support either to get revenge or a negative pay back.

Mgbekem (2008) stated that this aforementioned reason explain why there is always a reprisal attack each time a cult group strikes another as in the case of the Vikings and the K.K.K men in Rivers State Universities.

#### **Peer group influence**

Peer group influence has been identified as one of the reasons why undergraduates join cult groups in the university; Omeege and Akanle (2007), stated that a student who is an active member of a secret cult can motivate, convince and propel his/her peer to join in such cult. This means that once a student is initiated as a cult member, it is now incumbent on him to persuade his friends to see reasons why being a campus big boy is tied to being a cult member so rather than feeling inferior to his friends who are now big boys in school as cult member such a student would want to join cult.

However it have been observed that most at times students who were persuaded or victimized to join a particular cult group, who later joined end up discovering that what they were told by their peers are mere lies and fallacies, and once an individual joins a particular cult group, opting out becomes a very big problem, this is because of the blood oath that was taking upon initiation. Hence, the fear of been killed by the fellow cult members is now the talk of the day.

#### **Parental Background**

Parents have divine and social responsibilities to bring up and train the child to be an acceptable, responsible, promoting and successful human. Olajugbe (2001), noted that parental background, lack of moral instruction at home and the manner in which the child is brought up is a determinant factor when it comes to the child's enrolment into a cult group. Most parents who come from a well-structured background with an outlined moral principle fully stated and strictly followed end up raising their children to follow suit in the their everyday life as it has been stated in over 500B.C in the Holy Bible in the book of Proverbs 22:6 (NIV), which say that "train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old, he will not depart from it"

This is not a promise to parents who raise their children properly but a warning to those who allow their adolescents to grow up without guidance, who raise them to go their own way. However, it is a clear note that children who are allowed to go their own way are likely to change to the wrong way. It is on this background that most children end up joining cult in school as a result of parent failure.

#### **Power**

Power is seen as another factor responsible for cultism in Nigeria. Frederick (1963:201-202), saw power as the capacity of an individual or groups of individual to modify the conduct of others in the

manner, which he desires. In other words, power is bilateral as well as relational, for someone to have power; there must be another person over whom power is exercised.

Hoffman and Graham (2009:5), 'positive power is seen as the ability to do things by the discovery of our own strength as opposed to negative power which is seen as a power over a domination. Hence, the negative power of dominance is what most students seeks or have in mind before joining secret cult in school. Egwu (2004), revealed that some students join cult groups for the purpose of power and security. According to Egwu, (2004), he said that these cult groups guarantee them power to influence decision making process in school, respect, recognition and financial assistance.

Bian (1964) posited that the pursuit of power is fundamentally human drive which knows no exceptions; every human craves for power even though it is little.

#### **Attaining greater height of leadership**

Over time, most individuals and students believe that for you to attain better positions in life; you have to be a cult member. The maxim may then be a truism. When considering the fact that most leaders of our beloved country today were members of one secret cult or the other, this can also be true, because it have been observed that most persons in the Rivers State House of Assembly are either former cult members or repented militants. This scenario, have on the other hand influenced most students today, as many of them now believe that the only way to gain better government positions in life is through being a retired cultist (XYZ).

According to Bennard, (2013) he noted that most students are told that they will get jobs immediately after they graduate from school since they are members who are also retired from school cultism. This however influences the student's decision on being a member of a cult group in other to join the ruling class of the society in future. Hence, cultism is now seen as the foundation that should be laid for a better tomorrow.

#### **Economic Gain**

It is clear that most students who join secret cult do so for economic gains, viewing the primary place of man's economic needs and the current economic status of the country and using the Marxian theory of dialectical materialism to analyze the Nigerian society nature. It is truism, that cultist now use force and other means of intimidations to get what they want from the weak and self-minding individuals and students in the academic community.

According to Oyegoke (2003), cult members are given the wrong impression that they stand a better

chance of becoming economically more buoyant and non-members. hence students from poor home are easily won over with this gimmick, while those who's parents are rich are promised protection, and other best positions in school; in fact, they are told that they will be made more relevant in the school and outside the school environment, and most at times, they are promised the best positions within the cult, in other for them to enforce command. On the other hand, those who's parents are poor are told that for them to live well and have access to so many avenue of making money on campus, the only way is to join a cult group or organization.

These cult groups make their victims believe that they can be independent of their poor parent's assistance while they are in school. However, the true indication is that so many students from poor homes fall victims of this, there is no normal and legitimate means of making money in the cult world. hence When it have been discovered that all they were told at the point of initiation when mere lies and that the only means of getting money is by forceful extortion of money from their fellow students, some even involve in stealing and armed robbery, etc the end result is frustration.

Furthermore, Azelama (2006), affirms that so many unsuspecting students have been lured into joining secret cults through deception, such deception includes becoming one of the untouchable, once, you are a member of secret cult, owing the most beautiful girl on campus, passing your exams without study etc, becomes attainable. Ehondo (1993), stated that for those who are lured through such lies there is no apology because it's only a highly mischievous, unskilled, and morally deficient students that would subscribed to such lies, for what manner of students are you that membership of a secret cult will enable you short circuit studies/ the answer is yet to be provided for.

Most students who are from broken homes or who are trained up by a single mother as a result of problems that may have emanated from the family are likely fresh wools which are very free and prone to cult invasion. Also students or children who are from very poor homes where their parents can hardly afford their basic needs which includes food, shelter, education etc are another example of those who easily fall victims of joining cult groups.

Hence, the girl child at teenage age is allowed to go out to hustle for money as the male child. Thus, the outward result of this is very disheartening, because most of this children especially the male child will have to meet up with other street peers who will convince him to joining a cult group, teach him to steal from people to survive as well as smoking all kinds of hard drugs, while the female child on the other hand may not actually join a particular cult group but may likely have a cultist as a boyfriend, she may end up being a

prostitute as well as start taking all manner of hard drugs.

### **Effects of Cultism in Rivers State Higher Institutions**

The critical effects of cultism on the educative process be exhausted as both intra and inter-cult clashes negatively affect the student in a very high proportion, it sometimes leads to incarceration, rustication or expulsion of both innocent individuals and student members (Opaluwah, 2009). Nene (2008) noted that a lot of lives and properties have been destroyed through cult violence; young individuals who are supposed to be contributive leaders of tomorrow have fallen victims of triggers happy cultists. Hence the youth population most especially the male counterparts are being gradually decimated due to cult activities. As a result of cult activities being shifted to the larger society, (Rivers State) where cult violence related to cultism is widespread in recent times, properties worth billions of naira have been destroyed in communities and most inhabitants living in these areas now have to park out of these areas as it is observed in Omoku and in Rumuolumeni (Mgbuodohia), one of the communities which inhabits the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, all in Rivers State.

Furthermore, peace on campus is adversely affected whenever there is cult invasion, this may result in suspension of academic activities for sometimes as most campus cultist kill, main and rape fellow students who did not accept them, lecturers are threatened into awarding unmerited scores or grades to cultist who did not even attend classes or neither did he or she do his or her continuous assessment, Ezeibunwo (1994).

Akani (1991) lamented that nights are no longer safe in university hostels because of frequent cult disturbance and insecurity those who cannot survive their constant taunts and humiliations join them, at times with the intent of revenging a maltreatment which altogether creates a chaotic situations in the campuses, as a result of these tremendous happenstance, most parents now prefer off campus accommodation for their children in tertiary institutions for fear of being victims of campus cultist rampage. Molagun (2006) outlined some negative effects of cultism in our higher institution.

### **Degradation of academic performance**

Ufuoma (2002) stipulated that every cultist stand the risk of being rusticated or expelled from school so many cultists in the past have either been rusticated or expelled from various higher institutions across the country. In most cases cultist suffer for the offence committed for cultist from another school who have nothing at state in the institution. Most at time occupied themselves with nocturnal activities at the detriment of the academic which result in a whole lots of carry-overs which makes their required cumulative

grade point (CGPA) not to be on the required percentage of the school, thereby leading to resignation or rustication sometimes they abandon their examination for the fear of being attacked by members of rival cults or picked up by law enforcement agents. Even those who try to graduate do not attend their convocation ceremony for the fear of being short or brutally injured by the rival cult groups, as it has been noted most cult groups like attacking during convocations since it is the only way it will really affect its target.

### **Mortgage of Liberty**

Cultism which is like a military force has different ways it operates and has different modes of command. Adelola L.O.A (2005) said that They have individuals who acts in the position of a general, major, Lieutenants, captains etc. hence authority is dispensed from the top or center to its subordinates, the implication of this is that the oath taken during the initiation of a cult member or members implies that the new born cultist have sold his personal liberty, freedom and everything about him or herself to the cult organization.

It means that the cultist doesn't have control over his or her life and to a reasonable extent the cult authority dictate the activity of its members and all cult faithful's must with a matter of concern and cogency follow the instructions given by the leaders and commanders.

### **Lost of Educational Values and Philosophy**

The menace of cultism in our higher institutions have made most of our parents and other individuals to lose hope on the institutions of learning in Nigeria, most parents have now resulted in sending their children abroad for studies due to the fear of cultism as no parent would be happy to hear that his or her child was killed or injured as a result of cultism in school. Also the sporadic killings and destructions carried out by cultism in our institution of learning end up disrupting the academic calendar of the school community in Nigerian; It has affected the educational development in the society and in most times the academic activities in the institution are brought to a standstill as a result of the activities of these nocturnal groups. Sometime they end up destroying expensive properties like cars, lab equipments, computers and even looting of important and crucial documents from the school community, thus, most of these properties after been destroyed takes a lot of time before it is been replaced by government of the required authority, this however causes more harm to the educative process.

## **CONCLUSION**

Cultism to a very large extent have hampered on our tertiary institutions in Rivers State. However in course of this study, the researcher identified some of the causes of cultism in Nigeria and most especially that

of Rivers State higher institutions of learning. Thus, some of the causes of cultism as identified by the researcher are: parental background, peer group influence, quest for power, economic gain, revenges etc all these factors were pointed out as a result of the research work.

Hence, cultism to a large extent have posed a very big threat to our peaceful co-existence ranging from the destruction of infrastructures, destruction of lives and also disrupting the university calendar and programs on daily bases. The negative impact of cultism is not only on learning environment but also to the surrounding confines within the higher institutions in Rivers State.

Thus, cultism can be reduced to its beeriest minimum if only all stakeholders which includes (the university administrative body, parents, religious leaders, traditional leaders, lawyers and top government officials and every other individuals within Rivers State will take it as a priority to fight this menace out of our higher institution

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are some recommendations that need appropriate attention if higher institutions of learning in Rivers State are to be free from this menace cultism:

1. Parents should learn to love and discipline their children properly whenever they misbehave, parents should be committed to laying a very solid foundation to their children since they are the first teachers which the child is to encounter as he grows up in society. Parents should help in checkmating the children's daily activities to know if they are actually doing what they are asked to do in school, they should observe very closely the kind of friends which their children keep.
2. The school which is the second place where this child are sent for formal learning should take its duties very serious and also ensure that they set out measures which it will use in tackling cultism within its environment. In-fact the joint committees of vice chancellors or heads of schools should meet and outline a very strict way on how to eradicate this social problem out of our institutions of higher learning. Also, the universities and higher institutions in Rivers State can make use of secret agents. These agents can function as students but not actually students, there main work is to provide every necessary information to the school authority about any cultist within the school premises, the school will now decide on the measures to take on that particular person or students.
3. Religious Institution: Be it Muslim, Christian or Traditionalist, should stop preaching and

teaching about wealth and prosperity but focus on transmitting good morals to the society. The rich churches in Rivers State can set out a rehabilitation home for individuals who are willing to denounce themselves from cultism.

4. Top values of the society should thought and students should see reasons why they ought not to join any groups that will cause harm to their fellow individuals.
5. Also, lecturers in every department should take attendance very serious, any student who does not meet up with 75% attendance should not be allowed to write exams.

## REFERENCES

- Adelola, L. O. A. (2005). *Secrets Cults in Nigerian Institution of Learning: A periscopal appraisal in reading on campus secret cult*. Ile-Ife: Kuntel publishing house.
- Adewale, R. (2005). Violence in the citadel: The menace of secret cult in Nigerian University. *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 14(1), 79-98.
- Aguda, A. S. (1997). *The Environment of secret cults*. In, *reading on campus secret cults*. O.A Ogunbameru(ed) Ile-Ife; Kuntel Publishing House.
- Akani, C. (1996). *Political economy of secret cults in Nigerian universities*, University Printing Press Delta State Abraka
- Akinfolarin, W. (2003). Combating Cultism in Nigerian's Institution of Higher learning: The role of the library. *Educational Thought*, 3(1), 297-204.
- Akpan, U. (1990). "Secret cult takes over campuses". *Sunday champion*. February 25.p.7.
- Amaele, S. (2010), *Understanding the Philosophy of Education; the Western and African perspectives*. Harey publications coy Port Harcourt.
- Atayi, B. (2002). *Violence and Culture in Nigerian Institution*. Port Harcourt: Dynamic printers Ltd.
- Babarinda, K. (1999). Cultism, Campus Violence and Student Leadership Development Process. In Jiti Ogunye (eds.) *Leadership Training for Nigerian Students*. Port Harcourt.
- Bennard (2015). Personality dimension to cultism in Nigeria tertiary institutions: A sociological perspective. *Journal of Human Ecology*, 16(2), 91-98.
- Echekwube, (1999). *Cultism in our Higher Institution, the Scourge of a nation*. Spero Books Lagos State.
- Echkwube, A. O. (1999). *Cultism in our Higher Institutions; the scourge of a Nation*. Lagos: Spero Books Ltd.
- Echkwube, A. O. (2005). *Youth Restiveness and Cultism; Effects on Societal Development*, Lagos: Spero Books Ltd.
- Elechi & Ogbondah (2005). *Sociological Foundations of Education*, Harey Publications Coy, Port Harcourt.
- Epeneyong, S. N. (2010). *Secret Cults at Niger*



- Delta University. *International Journal of Scientific research in Education*, 3(2), 121-130.
- Ezeani, E. O. (2010). *Political Science: "An introduction"*. Abakaliki: Willy Rose and Appleseed publishing coy.
  - Federal Republic of Nigeria. (1999). *The Constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria*, Abuja: Federal government printers.
  - Ihunwo, C. (2014). The rising wave of cultism in Nigeria universities. *Daily independent*, 18<sup>th</sup> November, P. 16.
  - Itedjere, P. O. (2006). *Current Issues in the Nigerian educational System*. Abraka: Delta Publishers.
  - Kaazem, M. G. (2000). Causes and effects of secrete cults in Tertiary Institution; The way out: *Journal of issues in technical teachers education*, 1(2).
  - Kinanee, J. B. (2003). The secret cult Syndrome in schools and the way out. *A paper presented at a seminar/Workshop for Head of Post-Primary Institutions in Rivers State organized by Agency for reorientation, Integrity Service and Ethics on November*.
  - Ogunbameru, O. A. (1997). *The Sociology of Campus Cults*. Obafemi Awolowo University Press Ltd.
  - Okeowo, S. (1994). Campus cults: Manifestation of national decadence. *Nigerian Tribune*, April 5, 1994, p.5.
  - Okwe, J. (2002). As black brad rule unlimited. In Adewale, R. *Violence in the citedal: the menace of secret cults in the Nigerian Universities*, Retrieved from <https://www.njas.helsinki.fi>