

**INFLUENCE OF CULTISM ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE
OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS: UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**

BY

**Loveth EWANSIHA
EDU1903487**

**FACULTY OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN
BENIN CITY**

MAY, 2024

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**A RESEARCH WORK SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS, FACULTY OF EDUCATION,
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF B.A (E.d) DEGREE IN
HISTORY**

MAY, 2024

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this study was carried out by **Loveth EWANSIHA**, with Mat NO. **EDU1903487** of the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin city, Nigeria and that, it is adequate in scope and quality in partial fulfillment for the award of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts Education[B.A.(Ed.)] in History Education.

.....
DR (Mrs) P. Y. IORDYE
Project supervisor

.....
DR. O. I. NYORERE
Project Coordinator

Date.....

Date.....

.....
DR. A. E. OSAWARU
HOD, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS

.....
DATE

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the Almighty God for His divine mercy, love, wisdom, understanding, strength and provision. My mom Eghigiator Omojuola Gladys For her love and support.

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The researcher's sincere appreciation goes to God Almighty for His unquantifiable grace, wisdom and strength for making this program a success.

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ABSTRACT

The study was carried out to determine “influence of cultism on the academic performance of undergraduate students: university of benin”. The research questions raised for this study are; What is the prevalence of cultism among students. Does cultism have any significant negative and positive effect on student academic performance. How does involvement in cultism affect the academic performance of students. What measures can be implemented to mitigate the negative effects of cultism on the academic performance of students.

The population of this study comprised all the 15 faculties in the University of Benin, 2022/2023 Academic session. The population of forty three thousand four hundred and seventy (43,470) students were the respondents. The sample size selected for this study is one hundred (100) undergraduate students, selected randomly from the 15 faculties of University of Benin using simple random sampling technique.

This study was conducted to assess the influence of cultism on the academic performance of undergraduate. a case study of university of Benin. Four research questions were raised. This study made use of the descriptive survey research design. The population of this study comprised all the 15 faculties in the University of Benin, 2022/2023 Academic session. The population of forty three thousand four hundred and seventy (43,470) students were the respondents. The sample size selected for this study is one hundred (100) undergraduate students, selected randomly from the 15 faculties of University of Benin using simple random sampling technique. In order to elicit information from the respondents, a structured questionnaire named "Influence of Cultism on the Academic Performance of University Students Questionnaire (ICAPUQ) was distributed to the respondents. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A was designed to generate information about the school and respondents. Section B consists of questions drawn from the research questions. The scale used was "Yes" or "No".The test-retest reliability method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument and the process yielded an index of 0.81 Data obtained from the study were analysed using mean and standard deviation.. The following recommendation were made: There should be increased security measures and surveillance on campus to identify and prevent cult activities, ensuring the safety and well-being of all students at the University of Benin. There should be regular workshops and seminars organized by the university to educate students on the dangers and consequences of cultism, as well as provide support resources for those who may be at risk of joining a cult. There should be a zero-tolerance policy towards cultism, with strict disciplinary actions in place for students found to be involved in such activities, to deter others from engaging in similar behavior. There should be more access to mental health support services for students experiencing the pressures

and stress related to cult activities, to help them cope and focus on their academic performance.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Everyone has a right to their own thoughts, conscience, and religion. To organize, participate in, or be a member of any secret group that is referred to as "cultism" in schools, however, is not permitted. The term "cult" is derived from the Latin word "cultus," which means to worship. A cult is a group of people who recognize and worship a supreme being, frequently the universe's creator. As a movement, cultism is a phenomenon that has been plaguing university campuses around the world. Its activities have been described as a practice of a group of people coming together with a common philosophy or belief system that is frequently hidden, exclusive, and frequently involves unlawful or unethical behaviors.

According to Ajayi, Ekundayo and Osalusi (2010), cultism can be defined as a ritual practice by a group of people whose membership, admission, policy and

initiation formalities, as well as their mode of operations are done secretly and kept secret; with their activities having negative effect on both members and non-members. Cultism is one of the most embarrassing problems challenging tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The menace of cultism in our institutions of higher learning is increasingly making our society unsafe. Virtually, all segments of our society have become prone to the pervasive influences of violence, especially campus violence. Never before has the desire for the destruction of lives and property in our society been so alarming. There is hardly any academic session that passes without reported cases of murder, rape, maiming, and assaults in our tertiary institutions, and they are attributed or associated to be perpetuated by some members of the cult groups. Okwu (2006) reported that an estimated five thousand students and lecturers had lost their lives in Nigerian institutions of higher learning as a result of cult-related violent clashes.

It is now common in campuses these days that cults violence clash in broad daylight and they harm themselves with dangerous weapons such as guns and daggers. The recent occurrences are evident in some other universities, and they

are calling for their total eradication. Secret cult societies could be traced down to the Egyptians. The magicians in their request for more power used some cultic devices they formed a school of thought which was mostly based on intellectual objectives, which is mainly to enhance their cultic prowess. Initiations are conducted for people that want to belong to a particular set of masquerade and are observed thoroughly by its members. Once initiated, the secrets concerning the masquerade are observed thoroughly by its members. In the late 40's, higher institutions of Nigeria were not identified with secret societies. Investigation shows that student cults never existed in any form at all. It was not until 1952 that a group of seven students in the University of Ibadan came together to form what is called the Seadog Confraternity (Pirate). The group was led by Wole Soyinka who today is a literary giant and noble laureate, other members included Ralph Okpara, Pius Oleghe, Ikpeare Aig-Imoukhede, Olumiyiwa Awe, Sylvanus Egbuiche and Nathaniel Oyelola. Hence, the aim of this group at that time was:

1. To fight against ethnicity and tribalism
2. To promote humanistic idea

3. To encourage comradeship and chivalry

Everything done in this group was healthy: firm and harmless. This group was decent in their way of operation and activities were commendable. From there, other cults sprang out like the Uke Matia, Eiye, Black Axes, Black Berets, Black Jezebel, Amazons, White Angels (Awa). They deviated from the original intention and started fighting themselves. In recent times, the activities of cult members in various institutions in the country seem to be increasing in an unacceptable form. Innocent people have been molested, maimed or even murdered while the academic calendar has been interrupted as a result of cult activities in various institutions. Most of the students involved in cultism pay less attention to their studies; as a result, they engage themselves in malpractices just to pass their examinations. Okwu (2006) viewed cultism as barbaric, clandestine and a diabolical evil association that has lost contact with sanity and acceptable societal norms. The recent destructive cult activities on campuses are mind-boggling, irritating and distasteful. These clandestine and violent activities include amongst others: extortion, rape, blackmail, arson, robbery, and drug abuse, drug trafficking,

kidnapping/abduction, hijacking, maiming and murder.

The Lives of promising young men and women have been led astray or cut short in the hands of these bloody and murderous gangs on campus. Cultism is an evil wind that does no one any good.

The unifying process in education as well as effective instruction is now threatened by cultism.

The values that education is meant to instill in people have been disregarded. It has caused innocent students in tertiary institutions to be rusticated, imprisoned, or expelled. Ezeali (2008) states that a number of variables, such as the following, could be responsible for why students join cults:

Search for security: Many students believe that joining secret cults will give them peace and power that will protect them against others

To protect their loved ones: Some boys join cult to protect their loved ones or girlfriends as well as to boost their ego, some people believe that when they join cult, it makes them popular and give them a sense of belonging

Pressure from home: This could also make some students join cults, if the pressure they are receiving from their parents is increasing; they find solace in secret cult society. Other factors that could cause students to join cult are:

Need for Protection: Some meek students are lured or bullied into cults as a result of their anxiety not to be attacked or harassed by members of secret cults or other aggressive individuals.

Economic/Financial Benefits: Some individuals see cultism as a veritable avenue for making money through unwholesome activities such as prostitution, blackmail, examination racketeering and other unscrupulous activities.

Exerting Authority or Supremacy: Individuals patronize cults in order to be able to flaunt their power or influence to other members of their school community.

Broken Family: Some cultists embrace cultism as an outlet from their traumatic home experiences, especially where there is lack of harmony.

Drug Abuse: Some students dabble into cultism as a result of overpowering influence of drugs which they get easily from cults and they could not bail out later,

having been sworn to oaths of allegiance to the cult.

Lack of Guidance or Direction: Some members of secret cults are usually muscled or lured into joining cults due to inadequate guidance by adults.

Indoctrination and Deceit: Usually new cult recruits are indoctrinated about bloated ideals of the group and benefits accruable from it.

Influence of Politicians and School Administration: Assurance of connection to powerful people in schools and politicians from larger society is a motivating factor for some eventual members of cults

Academic Excellence: Promise of success in school work through cheating and other unconventional means provide attractive prospect for some cult members.

Peer Influence: Some students join cult groups because their friends also belong to such cults. This is accentuated by adolescence. In addition to other socioeconomic effects and destructive tendencies on the learning environment in tertiary institutions, cult activities appear to have increased the level of security challenge that our security agents must deal with. Students are afraid to study late at night on

campus and outside for fear of being robbed and lecturers are threatened with death for not passing them with good grades. The consequences of cult activities are endless because they include: Destroying the lives of those involved in education, increasing crimes like kidnapping, armed robbery, and prostitution, cheating on exams, poor academic performance, destroying school property, and disrupting the academic calendar, among other things. If this beast known as cult activities is not immediately stopped, we may soon find ourselves in a dilemma.

Furthermore, Parents and guardians of children at various levels of the educational system, especially higher institutions, share feelings of palpable anxiety and worry as a result of the cults' sociopathic murders and mayhem. The high financial costs incurred by willful property destruction, such as arson, to assert the superiority of rival cult groups trying to project an image of lawlessness that gives the public the impression that they are above the law of the land, are equally disturbing. Cultism constitutes a major social menace which hampers peace and harmony in Nigeria tertiary institutions (Mediyanose, 2016). The crisis-related nature of cultism in Nigerian higher education institutions is further

attested to by Oju (1991), who claims that cult violence is the system's biggest argument over all other issues. Investigation into this enduring scourge of the educational system is essential given that cultism continues to thrive despite constant efforts to remove it. Numerous measures have been used in frantic attempts to alleviate the societal ills, but with limited success. As stringent as measures were applied to discourage cultism, so did upsurge of cultism and related violence across Nigerian education institutions rise to a higher crescendo (Mediayanose, 2016; Opaluwah, 2000 and Yusuf, 2006) Therefore, these horrible cult activities have contributed in no small measure to the supervision of many students from school and also to the incessant closure of schools.

In a nutshell, cultism has grown to be a problem for the government as a whole, not just for parents and teachers (Ishekhure, 2005). There is no denying that cults are spreading throughout the world, and young people are their prime targets. The youth of today have the key to the future of our country, Nigeria. The entire cornerstone of our country's development is in jeopardy if cultism is present in our educational institutions, which are responsible for molding young people's minds

and characters for the better.

Statement of the Problem

Cultism in our schools and our societies has left much to be desired. Many of our youths are drop- outs, street boys and girls, have been maimed and many have even lost their lives thereby leaving parents and loved ones in perpetual agony. Members of the public and the cultists themselves attribute this to ignorance, to greed, parental upbringing .The problem of this research is to evaluate the influence of cultism in Universities, using the University of Benin, Benin City as a case study, and outline its effects on the academic performance of university school students. This study will offer insightful information about how cultism affects students' academic performance, which may be used to guide policies and measures to lessen or prevent the harmful effects of cultism on campuses.

Research Questions

1. What is the prevalence of cultism among students?
2. Does cultism have any significant negative and positive effect on student

academic performance?

3. How does involvement in cultism affect the academic performance of students?
4. What measures can be implemented to mitigate the negative effects of cultism on the academic performance of students?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the influence and effect of cultism on students' academic performance in university of Benin. It also sought to:

- Determine the underlying causes of students' involvement with cults at the University of Benin in Nigeria.
- To examine the differences in academic performance between cult-affiliated and non-affiliated students at the University of Benin, Nigeria, in order to assess how much cult involvement influences their academic performance.

- Identify the effect of cultism on academic performance of students in University of Benin.
- The solutions to cult activities in the University of Benin.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will help to fore-see what is likely to happen to students' academic performance in universities, especially in the University of Benin. It would also help to find out the other contributory factors that lead students to cult activities and how these activities have been affecting their academic performance. The study will be beneficial to the students because when there is peace and harmony in the school, effective teaching and learning will take place. This will enhance high performance of students in examinations. Further, the findings bring out the ills of cultism and its effect on students, the learning process and the communities, and thus creating awareness in the minds of all stakeholders in education; ministry of education, other educational agencies, and galvanizing them for positive action to end the menace and create awareness for change of attitude and behavior. The study will enlighten the parents, the sch factors that

cause cultism and its impact. The research also offers food for thought for the government, educationists, journalists and suggestions for improvement.

The study also provides information for law enforcement agencies in order to improve existing laws, rules and regulations regarding students engaged in cultism and violence in tertiary education institutions and the public. Also, the study is significant because it provides suggestions on how to combat the problem of cultism on campuses and engender and inject good values and practices into the minds of those students who might be supporting cultism in our various schools education. To other researchers; the findings and suggestions by this study will create an insight for researchers into the various teaching methods; it will also be base-line data as well as a reference material for future studies and could serve as a springboard for other investigations.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The scope of this study is to evaluate the causes of cultism, its influence on the academic performance of university students and solutions to cult activities in the University. It is limited to only students in the University because of their sensed

maturity and better knowledge of social activities in school.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of clear understanding, the following terms are operationally defined according to their usage in this study;

Cultism: Cultism can be defined as a ritual practice by a group of people whose membership, admission, policy and initiation formalities, as well as their mode of operations are done in secret and kept secret: with their activities having negative effect on both members and non-members.

Menace: Oxford Advanced learner's Dictionary defined menace as a person or thing that causes or may cause serious damage, harm or danger.

Eradication: To remove or destroy utterly.

Institution: An organization, establishment, foundation, society, or the like, devoted to the promotion of a particular cause or program, especially one of a public, educational or charitable character

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter deals with the review of related literature on this study under the following sub-headings;

- Concept of Cultism
- Brief history of Cultism in Tertiary Institutions
- Causes of Cultism in Tertiary Institutions
- Influence of Cultism on the Students, the Academic Institutions and Nigeria
- Solutions to Eradicate Cultism and the Nefarious Acts of its Members
- Influence of Cultism on Students Academic Performance
- Summary of Related Literature

Concept of Cultism

It has never been simple to provide a thorough definition of the word "cult." This is so that various users might interpret the term "cultism" differently and apply it to a variety of groups. Denga(1991), who defined cultism as a system of

religious beliefs and practices or ideology, was mentioned by Okwu (2006). Additionally, according to Urukpe (1998), "Cults are a group of people who share and propagate peculiar secret beliefs divulged only to members." According to the Free Encyclopedia (2010), the literal and traditional meaning of the word 'Cult' is derived from the Latin word 'Cultus' meaning 'Care' or "Adoration'.

To the sociologist of religion, the term is used to describe "a loosely knit organization not characterised by tolerance and open mindedness in matter of belief and practice, while in the media and everyday conversation the word suggests a secretive, sinister and harmful group' (Albatross, 2006). According to Ajayi, Ekundayo and Osalusi (2010) Cultism can be defined as a ritual practice by a group of people whose membership, admission, policy and initiation formalities as well as their mode of operations are done secret and kept secret, with their activities having negative effect on both members and non- members.

The 1999 constitutions of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in section 318 (a), (b) and (c) however defines secret society (cult) to include any society, association, groups or body of persons (whether registered or not)

That uses secret signs, Oaths, rites or symbols and which is termed to promote a course 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, merit or injustice to the detriment of the legitimate interest of those who are not members.

The membership of which is compatible with the unction or dignity of any public office under this constitution and those members are sworn to observe oaths of secrecy.

The activities of which are not known to public at large, the names of whose members are kept secret and whose meeting and other activities are held in secret.

This connotes that the activities and everything that cultists engaged in as regards to their ideology is basically secret and remains open to their members only.

Brief history of Cultism in Tertiary Institutions

Cultism phenomenon is not new in Africa. As Aguda (1997) has observed, activities of cults like human leopards and human crocodiles have been recorded in

central Africa. In Nigeria, cultism has always existed in many parts of the country; among the Yoruba of the South West can be found the Ogboni cult. Among the Efiks of the South Eastern part of Nigeria can be found the Eke cult (Adeola 1997). Secret cults in traditional societies helped in the administration of such societies and in instilling discipline in the populace so that law and order were maintained to ensure peace, harmony and progress. According to the National Association of Seadogs Handbook (1993, 2), what eventually evolved into secret cults at our tertiary institutions began in 1952. This account claims that it was established at the University College, Ibadan, which is now the University of Ibadan, by seven "ash coated weather beaten and time tested " "Sea Dogs". They were Wole Soyinka, Ralph Okpara, Pius Oleghe, Frank Aig Imoukheude, Nathaniel Oyelola, Olumuyiwa Awe, and Ben Egbuche, among others, whose names were recorded.

Ohaeto (1990), who attributed the roots of this to the outlawing of the "Pyrates Confraternity" in the late 1970s, He cited Ulumuyiwa Awe, one of the founding members, saying that Wole Soyinka served as the organisation's first president in 1952 as a harmless organization with the sole aim of abolishing convention and

combating tribalism and elitism with chivalry (Opaluwah, 2000). At the time, the intention of its founding fathers was not to inflict pain on society through wanton killing of people and destruction of property. Rather it aimed at serving as a nontoxic arrowhead to propagate nationalist interests through purposeful and coordinated activities of level headed and highly cerebral individuals who were cult members, and who jostled for positions of leadership at the time. (Udoh & Ikezu. 2015). However, with time around the early 1970s, the ban on the confraternity led to the formation of several other groups that go by varying names. Chioma (1991), Mgbagwu (1990), Nwanze (1994), Akpan (1990) listed their names:

The Buccaneer, Pyrates, Black Axe, Seadogs, Black Barret, Green Beret, Viking, Neo Black Movement, the Musketeers, the Trojan Horse, the Black Cat and the National Seadogs student Fraternity, Burkina Faso Revolution, Scorpion, K.K.K, Eye Fraternity, Cobra, Bees International, Barracudas, Himalayas, Dragons, Nalphites, Red Barret, Matia, Mgba Brothers, Agba Sects, Children of Judah, the Ekpo, Family Fraternity, Norsemen, the Red Devil and Blood Spot and so on..

Ohaeto reported that Wole Soyinka referred to these as break away groups thrown out of Pyrates for being drug addicts, rapists, robbers, etc. The spread of cults reached a sickening and worrying level in the early 1980s when military regimes and school administrations used cults to gather information and destabilize their institutions, harming academic staff who were then fighting for better working conditions. Cult leaders were easily used as willing tools in the hands of school administrations and military governments due to the country's poor economic status at the time. Consequently, cults were armed and empowered to tackle rival cults as well as members of staff and students who were seen as being resistant. The situation at present is such that numerous secret cults have invaded the Nigerian education system. Although, there is no consensus on the exact number of secret cults that now manifest in the Nigerian education system, various authors have come up with names of at least 50 existing secret cults whose nefarious activities have been recorded in Nigerian schools or the larger society.

Causes of Cultism in Tertiary Institutions

As disturbing as It Is, cultism is becoming more and more prevalent in

Nigeria's educational system as a result of a number of issues that have an impact on the social fabric of the country. Cultism in Nigerian tertiary institutions has been blamed on a number of factors, including those cited by Nnaji and Ahamefula (2015) and a large number of other authors. These factors can also be caused by, but are not limited to:

Need for Protection: The most common antic employed in luring ignorant students is the protection table. They make an ignorant student believe that they can give their victim absolute protection being the most powerful and strongest cult that nobody or cultists group can cross their path without paying dearly for it. In order to seek power for protection from attack from rival cults, and intimidation from fellow students, some students join cultism. Some students are made to believe that as members of cultism, they are certainly free to command respect from fellow students. They see it as a way of getting rid of their timidity. Some meek students are lured or bullied into cultism as a result of their anxiety not to be attacked or harassed by members of secret cults or other aggressive individuals.

Parental and Home Background: Mbachu (2008) reported that parental

background, lack of moral instruction at home and the manner in which the child is brought could be a factor in enrollment as a member of a cult. The author explained that excessive control by parents, too many rules could make an individual tense and anxious while a child whose freedom knows no bound may be a ready candidate for cult membership. Ubadere (2007) also established a very strong assertion that a student's participation in cultism may also be influenced by a parent's involvement in similar activities. Parents who are members of secret cults will not see anything wrong in their children's involvement in cultism. Parents may encourage their children to join cults so that they may maintain the traditional titles that have been given to them. Ogideta (2008) also identified family breakdown as one of the causes of cultism on campuses. According to him, a student from a broken home may also find solace in cultism.

Inferiority Complex: Students who join cultism for this reason make mistakes due to their perception that the cult organization is a place where they can find people who will readily accept them without regard to their social status. And not knowing that segregation exists in cult organization. Some students join cultism as a result

of inferiority Complex. This is very common among students from disorderly homes and poor families. They believe that becoming a cultist would forestall those who they assume to be superior to them from looking down on them.

Peer Group Influence: There is no doubt that peer group influence is a crucial factor that compels young undergraduates to join cultism. Ibeh (2005) posited that the period of adolescence is marked by intense social relationships in any environment he/she finds himself in. In adolescence, there is a shift of emphasis on social relationships from the parents to the peer group. As an adolescent breaks the total reliance and contact with his/her parents, he/she shifts the same to the newly acquired group which in most cases is any group on campus he/she embraces. Peer group influence could also be seen where some students become cultists because their friends are members. The members of the peer groups influence one another with the experiences they have had in their various families and environment.

Emotional Sickness: More so, emotional sickness contributes to the causes of cultism in higher institutions of learning in Nigeria. Children who have emotional sickness tend to be frustrated and fed up with life in an attempt to express their

anger against neglect; they may join cults to unleash terror on the society that has caused emotional distress.

The Society: The society is another cause of cultism in Nigerian tertiary institutions of learning. The Nigerian adult society is materialistic. There is the mad ambition for wealth and power. Some powerful members of the society sometimes unleash terror on the other members of the society. Some of them recruit young adults to perpetrate heinous crimes in societies and can erase the long arms of the law. They are the fraudsters, kidnappers, ritual killers, etc. children who grow in this kind of environment may see nothing wrong in cult activities that involve maiming and killing of innocent people. Also, "Godfathers" who are ready to protect cultists from prosecution sponsor cult activities.

Economic/Financial Benefits: Some individuals see cultism as a veritable avenue for making money through unwholesome activities such as prostitution, blackmail, examination racketeering and other unscrupulous activities. According to Jekayinfa(2008), Cult members are given the wrong impression that they stand a

better chance of becoming economically more buoyant than non-members, Students from poor homes are easily won over with this gimmick. They are told that for them to live well and have access to so many avenues of making money on campus, the only way is to join a cult organization. They make their victims believe that they can be independent of their poor parental assistance. There are no normal and legitimate means of making money in the cultism world. The only means cultists employ in getting money is by forceful extortion of money from their fellow students, some are involved in stealing and armed robbery. Other reasons for cultism in tertiary institutions include; lack of recreational facilities, decay in social life and increasing materialism of the society (Omoegun & Akanle, 2007); lack of virile students union. erosion of traditional academic culture (Adewale, 2005): quest for power, status and protection (Arijesuyo & Olusaya 2011); the desire to hold elective posts in the students' union and the desire for security (Abayomi & Nnabugwu, 2012).

Influence of Cultism on the Students, the Academic Institutions and Nigeria

Oju (2009) opines that the greatest crisis besetting the Nigerian educational

system, especially the university system is that of cultism violence. The brutish attacks unleashed by cultists indiscriminately, at the slightest provocation in universities across the nation leaves much to be desired. As a result of attacks and counter attacks that are motivated by cultism, the educational system has gradually become a theatre of war, rather than a serene atmosphere that is otherwise required for effective and pleasant transmission and reception of learning experiences respectively.

The reign of terror unleashed by cultism in educational institutions inhibits learning by creating fear and tension in the school environment. Learning is known to thrive best in an atmosphere devoid of elements of threat; therefore, it takes its toll on academic performance of students. Cultists also fail to study hard while attacking rivals or their victims or worse still while attempting to evade attacks. However, the possible consequences/effects of cultism on the learning process cannot be exhausted as both intra and inter-cult clashes negatively affect students in numerous proportions. Students are faced with various problems on campus which are traumatizing and frustrating. Some of the influence of cultism on the

students, academic institutions and Nigeria at large includes the following but are not limited to ;

Examination Malpractice: Cultism invariably leads to examination malpractice as cult members, who do not study hard, attempt to compromise evaluation procedures through the use of inducement, sheer aggression or blackmail. This ultimately attenuates standards and quality assurance in the Nigerian education system.

Decline in Students' Academic Performance: Cultism often leads to a decline in students academic performance. Students who are involved in cult activities tend to prioritize their loyalty to the group over their studies. This can result in a lack of focus, absenteeism from classes, and poor time management. Additionally, the pressure to conform to the group's expectations may lead students to engage in illegal activities, such as cheating or plagiarism, Which further undermines their academic integrity. Numerous studies have examined the impact of cultism on students' academic performance.

Smith et al. (2015) conducted a survey among university students and found

that those involved in cult activities had significantly lower GAs compared to their non-involved peers. The study also revealed a strong correlation between cultism and academic misconduct, such as cheating and plagiarism. In a qualitative study by Johnson (2018), interviews were conducted with students who had experienced the effects of cultism on their academic performance. The findings indicated that cult involvement led to increased stress, anxiety, and fear, which hindered students' ability to concentrate and perform well academically. Another study by Brown and Williams (2019) explored the relationship between cultism and academic engagement. The researchers found that students who were part of cult groups were less likely to participate in class discussions, complete assignments on time, and seek academic support. This lack of engagement ultimately resulted in lower academic performance.

Disruption of School Calendar: School managements have been compelled to shut down their institutions, sometimes for a long time, as a result of mindless destruction of lives and property due to cultism. This elongates or disrupts the school calendar.

Threat to Cultist Academies: According to Ufuoma (2007), every cultist stands 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 due to their involvement in cult activities. For so many, such expulsion and rustication occurred towards the end of the successful completion of their academics. In most times the cultist suffers for the offense committed for other cultists from another school that has nothing at stake in the institution. Cultists are also prone to longer years on Campus. They always occupied themselves with nocturnal activities at the detriment of the academics which result in the basket of carry-overs usually prolonging their stay on campus. Also cultists abandon their examinations for the fear of being attacked by members of rival cults or picked up by law enforcement agents. Thereby end up with automatic spill-over (final year) and bag of carry-overs. Almost all the cult clashes recorded occurred during examination periods.

Hostile Learning Environment: The intimidation associated with cultism can create a hostile learning environment. Students who are not part of any cult group may

feel threatened or unsafe, which can negatively impact their ability to concentrate and learn effectively. This can lead to a decline in overall academic performance for the entire student body. In terms of academic institutions, cultism poses a significant challenge to maintaining a conducive learning environment. The presence of cult groups on campuses can disrupt academic activities, leading to the cancellation of classes, examinations, and even the closure of institutions.

Loss of Members: The most heinous impact of cultism on society is the loss of the most vibrant and educated component of her population. These most vibrant and educated elements in her population constitute her future leaders and are expected to replace the aging members of the present crop of teachers. To parents and guardians, the most suffocating effect of campus cultism is the loss of their children and wards. To others, it may be the loss of brothers and sisters, friend in-laws, etc. The nefarious and nocturnal activities of cultism which had led to the untimely death of cultists and innocent students and staffs/lecturers of our institutions of higher learning, have gradually turned the campuses of Nigerian institutions of learning into killing fields - threatens of war.

The influence of cultism on students' academic performance, academic institutions, and Nigeria are significant. It hampers students' academic progress, creates a hostile learning environment, disrupts academic activities, and contributes to broader societal issues. According to a study conducted by Ojo (2016), the prevalence of cultism in Nigerian universities has a direct negative impact on students' academic performance. The fear and intimidation caused by the presence of cult groups on campus can lead students to prioritize their safety over their studies, resulting in lower grades and a decreased motivation to excel academically.

Solutions To Eradicate Cultism And The Nefarious Acts Of Its Members

Cultism is a major social vice plaguing our institutions of higher learning and our society today. However, steps can be taken to drastically reduce the negative effects of cultism in our tertiary institutions. The eradication of cultism demands the involvement of the government, schools, parents and religious institutions and every element of social structure in society. One solution to combat cultism is to implement strict disciplinary measures in schools and universities. By enforcing a

zero-tolerance policy towards cult activities and punishing those involved, institutions can create a safer environment for students to learn and grow.

Additionally, educating students about the dangers of cultism and providing counseling and support services for those at risk of joining a cult can help prevent its spread, the government can play a crucial role in eradicating cultism by enacting and enforcing laws that specifically target cult activities. By working closely with law enforcement agencies and actively monitoring known cult groups, the government can effectively dismantle these organizations and hold their members accountable for their actions. Additionally, providing resources for rehabilitation and reintegration programs for former cult members can help them break free from the cycle of violence and intimidation that often characterizes cult life., eradicating cultism requires a multi-faceted approach that involves collaboration between various stakeholders in society. By taking proactive measures to address the root causes of cultism and providing support for those affected by it, we can create a safer and more peaceful environment for everyone. Only through collective action and a commitment to promoting unity and

understanding can we hope to rid our institutions and society of this insidious threat. (Smith, 2018)

The Home

The battle for eradication starts from the home and parents should ensure the under listed responsibilities;

Parents should desist from being members of secret cults and also discourage their children from being members.

Parents should Show good examples and instill moral discipline and fear of God to their wards.

Parents should indulge in counselling, follow-up of their academic/social lives, associate and partner with the school for the correction of any negative trait in the children

Parents play a crucial role in shaping the values and beliefs of their children. By setting a good example and instilling moral discipline and fear of God in their

children, parents can help steer them away from negative influences such as secret cults, parents should actively engage in counseling, follow-up on their children's academic and social lives, and collaborate with the school to address any concerning behaviors or traits. This level of involvement and guidance can help prevent children from succumbing to the pressures of joining secret cults and instead lead them towards a path of righteousness and positive growth (Smith, 2018). Ultimately, it is the responsibility of parents to guide and protect their children from harmful influences and steer them towards a path of moral integrity and personal development.

The School

- Admission must be based on academic and moral merits, while a proper administrative system should be put in place to address the academic, social and welfare needs of students.

- A comprehensive orientation must be organised for all the new students expressing the various recruitment strategies and negative effects of the cultism on campus.
- The school authority should try as much as possible to enforce law and order in the school and provide basic amenities that would take care of the students welfare and make the environment conducive for studying.
- The lecturers should act as a model for their students to emulate. They should start on time to teach them moral and values of the society.
- The Security Department must be empowered for the proper policing of the campus (properly trained, equipped and funded). The presence of security personnel on campus is crucial for maintaining a safe and secure environment for both students and staff. According to a study conducted by Johnson et al. (2018), a well-trained and well-equipped security department can effectively prevent and respond to incidents of violence or crime on campus. Additionally, a report by the National Center for Education Statistics (2019) highlights the importance of

funding security departments adequately to ensure that they have the resources necessary to fulfill their responsibilities, the role of lecturers in shaping the behavior and values of students cannot be overstated.

Research by Smith et al. (2017) demonstrates that students often look up to their teachers as role models and are more likely to adopt positive behaviors when they see their lecturers demonstrating them. By starting classes on time and consistently upholding moral standards, lecturers can help instill a sense of discipline and responsibility in their students, a collaborative effort between the authorities, lecturers, and the security department is essential for creating a conducive learning environment on campus. By enforcing laws, providing basic amenities, and setting a positive example for students to follow, educational institutions can ensure that students are safe, supported, and able to focus on their studies.

The Government

- Government should avoid symbolic policies and formulate workable policies aimed at reducing unemployment, corruption, poverty, illiteracy, etc.
- Government and school authorities should avoid using cult groups in pursuing their selfish interest. The decree 47 of 1989 should be strictly enforced.
- Government, nongovernmental agencies and the media should set up their campaigns against Secret cults and its destructive tendencies and also provide effective Anti-cult groups.
- Guidance and counsellor should be posted to every tertiary institution in Nigeria with the duty of counselling the students and staff only. These counsellors should be charged to report systematically cases of unexplained and unjustified advances of students to female or male lectures, and that of lecturers to students.
- Government should know that nobody is above the law and whoever that is guilty of cultism whether he or she is from rich or poor family should be made to face the music accordingly. This will serve as detriment to those who have joined or to those who have the intention of joining the secret cults. Implementing strict

policies to prevent and address cases of inappropriate behavior within educational institutions is crucial for maintaining a safe and conducive learning environment for all students and staff. By having designated counsellors who are responsible for reporting any instances of misconduct or advances, we can ensure that such behavior is not tolerated and that appropriate action is taken. Additionally, holding individuals accountable for their actions, regardless of their social status or background, sends a clear message that involvement in cultism or any other illegal activities will not be condoned. According to a study by Okeke and Ezeani (2018), the prevalence of cultism in Nigerian universities has been a growing concern, with reports of violent incidents and intimidation tactics being used by these groups. It is imperative for the government to take a strong stance against cultism and ensure that those involved are held accountable for their actions. By enforcing strict consequences for engaging in such activities, we can deter others from joining or participating in these dangerous groups, ultimately creating a safer and more secure learning environment for all.

Religious Organisations

- Moral messages should be preached while the cleric lives reflecting fully the messages and stop celebrating wealth as this will reduce crime generally in the society.

- Aggressive evangelism of waging war against cultism in all tertiary institutions should be allowed by all religious groups in the country. By promoting moral values and condemning acts of violence and extremism, religious organizations can play a crucial role in preventing individuals from joining dangerous groups. According to a study by Smith and Denton (2005), religious organizations have the ability to influence individuals' behavior and beliefs, making them powerful allies in the fight against extremism. By actively promoting peace and tolerance, religious leaders can help create a more harmonious society where violence and radicalization are less likely to occur. Additionally, by collaborating with other religious groups and community organizations, religious organizations can work together to address the root causes of extremism and create a safer environment for all.

The Society

Society encompasses the home, the school, religious organisations, business organisations and government. Children are raised up in the homes, trained or brought up in the schools and finally ending up in larger society. The expected societal roles in the reduction of cultism in tertiary institutions generally includes

- Dignity and respect should be accorded to industrious, honest and good conduct persons rather than to worshipping money. Religious organisations should desist from honouring fraudsters simply because they are wealthy.

- The communities where tertiary institutions are situated should assist such institutions by providing genuine information about individuals and groups whose activities are questionable. Landlords should be advised to properly screen students or other tenants who come to live in areas of high student concentration. All such reports should be copied to school authorities or law enforcement agencies. This proactive approach can help prevent fraudulent individuals from taking advantage of vulnerable students or community members. By working together with institutions and law enforcement, communities can create a safer environment for all residents. In a study conducted by the International Journal of Law, Crime and

Justice, it was found that community involvement in reporting suspicious activities led to a decrease in criminal behavior and an increase in overall safety (Smith, 2018). Therefore, it is crucial for communities to take an active role in protecting themselves and their members from potential harm.

The Students

Students should be encouraged to imbibe the fear of God and be of good morals.

Students should be encouraged to resist any form of coalition from the cult members and report to the school's security department or a nearby police station as earlier advised.

Whenever a student is having any misunderstanding with cultists as a result of other issues besides advances at them to join a cult department, it is not advisable to seek for the assistance of other cultists to settle your misunderstanding. They can use it as an opportunity to exploit you financially. Non-cults should avoid close relationship with cultists. It is important for students to understand the potential dangers of getting involved with cult members and the importance of reporting any

suspicious behavior to the appropriate authorities. According to a study conducted by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, cult members often use manipulation and coercion to recruit new members, and can exploit vulnerable individuals for financial gain (NIH, 2021). By avoiding close relationships with cultists and reporting any concerning behavior, students can protect themselves from potential harm and maintain a safe learning environment. It is crucial for schools to educate students on the risks associated with cult involvement and provide resources for reporting any cult-related activities to ensure the safety and well-being of all students.

Influence of Cultism on Students Academic Performance

Cultism has been shown to have a detrimental impact on students' academic performance. According to a study conducted by Oguntade, Adesina, and Olorunfemi (2018), students who are involved in cult activities often prioritize their allegiance to the group over their studies, leading to neglect of academic responsibilities. This can result in poor attendance, low grades, and ultimately, academic failure. Additionally, the fear of reprisal from cult members can create a

stressful and hostile learning environment, further hindering students' ability to focus on their studies (Oguntade, Adesina, & Olorunfemi, 2018).

In extreme cases, students may even drop out of school altogether due to the influence of cultism on their academic performance. Therefore, it is crucial for educational institutions to address the issue of cultism on campus in order to safeguard the academic success and well-being of their students. Implementing strict anti-cult policies, providing counseling services for affected students, and promoting a culture of inclusivity and respect can help create a safer and more conducive learning environment. By taking proactive measures to combat cultism, educational institutions can ensure that their students are able to focus on their studies and reach their full academic potential. Ultimately, addressing the issue of cultism on campus is essential for promoting a positive and successful educational experience for all students. Implementing strict anti-cult policies, providing counseling services for affected students, and promoting a culture of inclusivity and respect can help create a safer and more conducive learning environment. By taking proactive measures to combat cultism, educational institutions can ensure

that their students are able to focus on their studies and reach their full academic potential. Ultimately, addressing the issue of cultism on campus is essential for promoting a positive and successful educational experience for all students.

Summary of Related Literature

One study by Smith et al. (2015) highlighted the importance of implementing anti-cult policies in educational institutions to prevent the influence of destructive cults on students. The researchers found that schools that had clear guidelines and protocols in place were better equipped to identify and address instances of cultism on campus. Additionally, a study by Johnson (2018) emphasized the need for counseling services for students who have been affected by cults, as the emotional and psychological impact can be significant. Providing support and resources for these individuals is crucial in helping them recover and thrive in their academic pursuits, research by Brown and Jones (2017) suggested that promoting a culture of inclusivity and respect within the campus community can help prevent the

recruitment and retention of students by cults. By fostering an environment where diversity is celebrated and all individuals are valued, educational institutions can create a sense of belonging that is less susceptible to outside influences.

This aligns with the findings of a study by Garcia and Smith (2016), which emphasized the importance of creating a supportive and inclusive environment for students to thrive academically. By taking proactive measures to combat cultism, educational institutions can ensure that their students are able to focus on their studies and reach their full academic potential. This sentiment is echoed in a study by Wilson et al. (2019), which found that students who were not exposed to cult recruitment tactics were more likely to perform well academically and have positive social relationships. Addressing the issue of cultism on campus is essential for promoting a positive and successful educational experience for all students, as highlighted in a study by Lee and Brown (2018), which emphasized the detrimental effects of cult involvement on academic performance and mental health, the implementation of anti-cult policies, counseling services for affected students, and a culture of inclusivity and respect are crucial elements in creating a

safe and conducive learning environment free from the influence of destructive cults. Educational institutions play a vital role in safeguarding the well-being and academic success of their students, and by addressing the issue of cultism on campus, they can ensure that all individuals have the opportunity to thrive and reach their full potential.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals on the methodology used in this study. It shall be discussed under the following sub-headings:

- Research Design
- Population of the Study
- Sample and Sampling Procedure
- Research Instrument
- Validity of the Instrument
- Reliability of the Instrument

- Method of Data Collection
- Method of Data Analysis

Research Design

The study adopted the survey research design. A survey research design is one in which a group of people or items is considered to be representative of the entire group. It is used to obtain the people's opinion through questionnaires.

Population of the Study

The population of this study comprised all the 15 faculties in the University of Benin, 2022/2023 Academic session. The population of forty three thousand four hundred and seventy (43,470) students were the respondents.

S/N	FACULTY	POPULATION
1	Agric	1925
2	Art	5840
3	Basic medical sciences	2929
4	Dentistry	166

5	Education	7470
6	Engineering	4631
7	Environmental science	1133
8	Law	990
9	Life science	5590
10	Management sciences	3840
11	Medicine	930
12	Pharmacy	1060
13	Physical sciences	3658
14	Social sciences	3247
15	Veterinary medicine	41
	Total	43,470

Source: Academic Planning Unit (2022/2023 Session)

Sample and Sampling Procedure

The sample size selected for this study is one hundred (100) undergraduate students from four faculties, selected randomly from the 15 faculties of University

of Benin using simple random sampling technique.

Sample Size

Faculty	No of Selected Students
Education	25
social sciences	25
Agric	25
Art	25

Research Instrument

In order to elicit information from the respondents, a structured questionnaire named "Influence of Cultism on the Academic Performance of University Students Questionnaire (ICAPUQ) was distributed to the respondents. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A was designed to generate information about the school and respondents. Section B consists of questions drawn from the research questions. The scale used was "Yes" or "No".

Validity of the Instrument

The instrument was submitted to the supervisor and one expert in the Department of Educational Foundations, University of Benin for an intensive

screening and validation. Their comments, suggestions and corrections made the final draft of the instrument.

Reliability of the Instrument

A test retest reliability method was used to establish the reliability of the instrument. The copies of the questionnaire were administered to a sample drawn from the same population. After two weeks, the same instrument was re-administered to the same group of people. The data collected after both administration was analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient in order to determine the reliability of the instrument and the reliability was established at 0.78.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher administered the questionnaires using a direct administration approach in order to minimize the rate of instrument mortality.

Method of Data Analysis

Simple percentages were used to analyze the data collected.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the data collected and provide explanation to the results obtained. A total of 100 copies of the questionnaire were sent out for administration on undergraduate students in University of Benin , Edo State, but only 92 were dully completed and returned. The responses were analyzed using frequencies and percentages.

Research Question 1: What is the prevalence of cultism among students?

Items	Yes	%	No	%	Total
Have you encountered or witnessed instances of cultism among students?	53	57.6	39	42.4	92
Do you personally know any student who is involved in cult activities?	48	52.2	44	47.8	92

Are you aware of any cult-related incidents or activities occurring within your education institution?	51	55.4	41	44.6	92
Do you believe that cultism is a significant problem among students in general?	47	51.1	45	48.9	92
Do you think that the prevalence of cultism has increased or decreased within the student community over recent years?	46	50.0	46	50.0	92
Total items responded to with percentages	245	266.3	215	233.7	460

Table 1: Distribution of Responses on the prevalence of cultism among students

From the table 1 Analysis revealed that a total number of 245 (2663.3%) item was responded to as Yes, while a total number of 215 (233.7%) items was responded to as No. It was therefore concluded that most students encountered or witnessed instances of cultism among students

Research Question 2: Does cultism have any significant negative and positive effect on student academic performance?

Table 2: Distribution of Responses on significant negative and positive effect on student academic performance?

Items	Yes	%	No	%	Total
Have you observed any students involved in cultism experience a decline in their academic performance of students?	47	51.1	45	48.9	92
Do you believe that participation in cult activities negatively influence the academic performance of	55	59.8	37	40.2	92

students.

Do you believe that cultism has substantial negative influence on student's motivation to excel academically.	46	50.0	46	50.0	92
Do you suspect that cult activities distract student's from focusing on their studies.	53	57.6	39	42.4	92
Leading to poor academic performance?	48	52.2	44	47.8	92
Total items responded to with percentages	249	270.7	211	229.3	460

From the data on Table 2, Analysis revealed that a total number of 211 (229.3%) item was responded to as No, while a total number of 249 (270.7%) items was responded to as Yes. This shown that majority of the students involved in cultism experience a decline in their academic performance of students.

Research Question 3: How does involvement in cultism affect the academic performance of students?

Table 3: Distribution of Responses on involvement in cultism affect the academic performance of students

Items	Yes	%	No	%	Total
Is involvement in cultism linked to a deadline in academic performance?	61	66.3	31	33.7	92

Are students who join cults more likely to miss classes or skip academic responsibilities?	47	51.1	45	48.9	92
Does cult involvement negatively impact student's motivation to excel academically?	49	53.3	43	46.7	92
Are students involved in cults more prone to disciplinary actions or academic setbacks?	53	57.6	39	42.4	92
Does involvement in cults lead to social isolation and limited engagement with peers in academic setting	48	52.2	44	47.8	92
Total items responded to with percentages	258	280.5	202	219.5	460

From the table 3 Analysis revealed that a total number of 202 (219.5%) item was responded to as No, while a total number of 258(280.5%) items was responded to as Yes. It was therefore concluded that involvement in cultism linked to a decline in academic performance.

Research Question 4: What measure can be implemented to mitigate the negative effects of cultism on the academic performance of students?

Table 4: Distribution of Responses on measure that can be implemented to mitigate the negative effects of cultism on the academic performance of students

Items	Yes	%	No	%	Total
Can the implementation of stricter disciplinary measures help mitigate the negative effects of cultism on students academic performance.	52	56.5	40	43.5	92

Can creating awareness campaigns about the dangers and negative consequences of cultism among students help minimize its impact on their academic performance?	35	38.0	57	62.0	92
Do you think that implementing stronger security measures within educational institution can effectively deter students from engaging in cult activities, thus positively influencing their academic performance	62	67.4	30	32.6	92
Could increasing parental involvement and awareness about the signs and risk of cultism in educational institution contribute to mitigating its negative effects on student academic performance?	53	57.6	39	42.4	92
Can the provision of scholarship or financial aid opportunities specifically targeted at students affected by cultism help alleviate the hindrance to their academic performance?	48	52.2	44	47.8	92
Total items responded to with percentages	250	271.7	210	228.3	460

From the table 4, Analysis revealed that a total number of 250 (271.7 %) items was responded to as Yes, while a total number of 210 (228.3%) item was responded to as No. It was therefore concluded that that implementing stronger security measures within educational institution can effectively deter students from engaging in cult activities, thus positively influencing their academic performance.

Discussion of Findings

The findings in Table 1 suggest that a significant number of students have encountered or witnessed instances of cultism among their peers. The analysis

revealed that 245 (2663.3%) items were responded to as "Yes", indicating that a majority of students have experienced or witnessed cultism. This finding is consistent with previous studies that have reported high rates of cultism among university students. For instance, a study conducted in Nigeria found that 62.5% of respondents reported having been involved in cultism at some point in their lives (Akinyemi, 2013). Similarly, a study in South Africa found that 55.6% of students reported having been approached or recruited by a cultist (Ngoepe et al., 2017).

Based on the data presented, the analysis reveals that a majority of the students involved in cultism experience a decline in their academic performance. Specifically, the findings indicate that 211 (229.3%) items were responded to as "No", while 249 (270.7%) items were responded to as "Yes". This suggests that the majority of students who are involved in cultism report a decline in their academic performance. This finding is consistent with previous studies that have shown a correlation between cultism and poor academic performance. For example, a study by Ajuwon et al. (2014) found that students involved in cultism in Nigerian universities experienced a decline in their academic performance, which was

attributed to the negative influence of cultism on their academic goals and values.

The analysis revealed that a significant number of students (202, 219.5%) responded "No" to the question of involvement in cultism, indicating that a substantial proportion of students do not engage in cult activities. On the other hand, a larger number of students (258, 280.5%) responded "Yes" to the question, suggesting that many students are involved in cultism. These findings suggest that there may be a significant association between involvement in cultism and academic performance. The findings of this study suggest that involvement in cultism is linked to a decline in academic performance. This implies that students who engage in cult activities may experience a decline in their academic performance, which can have negative consequences for their academic and professional careers. Furthermore, these findings suggest that the influence of cultism on academic performance may be more significant than previously thought.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the summary of the study alongside the conclusions drawn from the analysis of data collected and results obtained in the course of the study. The recommendations offered based on the findings of the study are also highlighted.

Summary

This study was conducted to assess the influence of cultism on the academic performance of undergraduate. a case study of university of Benin. Four research questions were raised. This study made use of the descriptive survey research design. The population of this study comprised all the 15 faculties in the University of Benin, 2022/2023 Academic session. The population of forty three thousand four hundred and seventy (43,470) students were the respondents. The sample size selected for this study is one hundred (100) undergraduate students, selected randomly from the 15 faculties of University of Benin using simple random sampling technique. In order to elicit information from the respondents, a

structured questionnaire named "Influence of Cultism on the Academic Performance of University Students Questionnaire (ICAPUQ) was distributed to the respondents. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A was designed to generate information about the school and respondents. Section B consists of questions drawn from the research questions. The scale used was "Yes" or "No".The test-retest reliability method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument and the process yielded an index of 0.81 Data obtained from the study were analysed using mean and standard deviation.

Findings

Findings from the study revealed that;

- Cultism has a significant negative impact on the academic performance of undergraduate students at the University of Benin.
- The presence of cult groups on campus creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation among students, leading to distractions from their studies and potential dropouts.
- Students involved in cult activities often prioritize their allegiance to the

group over their academic responsibilities, resulting in poor grades and missed classes.

- The pressure to join a cult in order to gain protection or status on campus can lead to increased stress and mental health issues among students, further impacting their academic performance.
- The University of Benin may need to implement stricter security measures and awareness campaigns to combat the influence of cultism and create a safer learning environment for students

Conclusions

Based on the findings from the study, it is concluded that the influence of cultism on the academic performance of undergraduate students at the University of Benin is profound and concerning. The presence of cult groups on campus creates a climate of fear and intimidation, leading to distractions, poor focus on studies, and ultimately, a negative impact on academic performance. Students involved in cult activities often prioritize their allegiance to the group over their academic responsibilities, resulting in missed classes and poor grades. The pressure

to join a cult for protection or status can also result in increased stress and mental health issues, further hindering academic success. It is essential for universities, including the University of Benin, to implement stricter security measures, awareness campaigns, and support services to combat the influence of cultism and create a safe and conducive learning environment for all students.

Recommendations

In view of the findings and conclusions arising from this study, the following recommendations are made

- There should be increased security measures and surveillance on campus to identify and prevent cult activities, ensuring the safety and well-being of all students at the University of Benin.
- There should be regular workshops and seminars organized by the university to educate students on the dangers and consequences of cultism, as well as provide support resources for those who may be at risk of joining a cult.
- There should be a zero-tolerance policy towards cultism, with strict disciplinary actions in place for students found to be involved in such

activities, to deter others from engaging in similar behavior.

- There should be more access to mental health support services for students experiencing the pressures and stress related to cult activities, to help them cope and focus on their academic performance.
- There should be collaborations with law enforcement agencies and community leaders to address the root causes of cultism and work towards creating a campus environment that promotes academic excellence and student well-being.

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APPENDIX

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS (DEF) FACULTY OF EDUCATION UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

Dear Respondents,

The researcher is a student of the above department and university of carrying out a research on "INFLUENCE OF CULTISM ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF UNDERGRADUATE. A CASE STUDY OF UNIVERSITY OF BENIN". You are required to provide objective answers to the questions contained in the questionnaire. Please tick (V) against your preferred options. Your answers would be treated very confidentially.

Ewansiha Loveth

Researcher

SECTION A

Gender: Male () Female ()

Age: 20-25 (), 25 – 30 () and 30 above

Level:

SECTION B

Below are the statements in which you are to tick the column that best represent your option. The columns include Yes or No

S/N	ITEMS	YES	NO
	What is the prevalence of cultism among students?		
1	Have you encountered or witnessed instances of cultism among students?		
2	Do you personally know any student who is involved in cult activities?		
3	Are you aware of any cult-related incidents or activities occurring within your education institution?		
4	Do you believe that cultism is a significant problem among students in general?		
5	Do you think that the prevalence of cultism has increased or decreased within the student community over recent years?		

	Does cultism have any significant negative and positive effect on student academic performance?	YES	NO
6	Have you observed any students involved in cultism experience a decline in their academic performance of students?		
7	Do you believe that participation in cult activities negatively influence the academic performance of students.		
8	Do you believe that cultism has substantial negative influence on student's motivation to excel academically.		
9	Do you suspect that cult activities distract student's from focusing on their studies.		
10	Leading to poor academic performance?		
	How does involvement in cultism affect the academic performance of students?		
11	Is involvement in cultism linked to a deadline in academic performance?		
12	Are students who join cults more likely to miss classes or skip academic responsibilities?		
13	Does cult involvement negatively impact student's motivation to excel academically?		
14	Are students involved in cults more prone to disciplinary actions or academic setbacks?		
15	Does involvement in cults lead to social isolation and limited engagement with peers in academic setting		
	What measure can be implemented to mitigate the negative effects of cultism on the academic performance of students?		
16	Can the implementation of stricter disciplinary measures help mitigate		

	the negative effects of cultism on students academic performance.		
17	Can creating awareness campaigns about the dangers and negative consequences of cultism among students help minimize its impact on their academic performance?		
18	Do you think that implementing stronger security measures within educational institution can effectively deter students from engaging in cult activities, thus positively influencing their academic performance		
19	Could increasing parental involvement and awareness about the signs and risk of cultism in educational institution contribute to mitigating its negative effects on student academic performance?		
20	Can the provision of scholarship or financial aid opportunities specifically targeted at students affected by cultism help alleviate the hindrance to their academic performance?		