

**CARTOON ILLUSTRATION CAMPAIGN OF THE DANGERS
OF CULTISM IN
NIGERIA UNIVERSITIES**

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BENIN CITY

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**BEING A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE
DEPARTMENT OF FINE AND APPLIED ARTS, FACULTY OF
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BENIN CITY, EDO STATE.**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE AWARD OF BACHELOR OF ARTS (B.A) DEGREE
IN GRAPHICS DESIGN**

JANUARY 2025.

DECLARATION

I declare that this project is rooted in individual research conducted by me within the Department of Fine and Applied Arts, University of Benin, under the guidance of Dr. Felix Osaigbovo.

.....

Dr. Felix Osaigbovo
(Project Supervisor)

.....

Dr. Kennedy Eweka
(Head of Department)

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Almighty God, expressing gratitude for divine grace, mercy, favour, resilience, unwearing affection. And constant assistance that has been abundantly present throughout each stage of this project. I also extend my appreciation to the Lord for the inspiration to eventually realize this project praise be to God.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All appreciation belongs to God first, for his ultimate, care, protection and sustenance he bestowed me all through my stay in the University of Benin. Much thanks to my parents Engr. Sunday Makolo and Mrs. Grace Makolo. For their understanding and support throughout this project, thanks for provisions and prayers and more all through. I thank my siblings for the emotional support and friendship.

Profound gratitude also goes to my project supervisor Dr. Felix Osaigbovo for his constructive criticism, encouragement and prompt corrections that guided me through this God bless you Sir.

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ABSTRACT

Cultism remains a persistent challenge in Nigeria universities, contributing to violence, substance abuse, and disruption in academic environments. Despite numerous anti-cultism campaigns, many students continue to engage in cult-related activities. This study explores the use of cartoon characters as an illustrative medium to raise awareness about the dangers of cultism. Through engaging visuals narrative, cartoons have the potential to communicate complex social issues effectively, especially to young audience. The study employs a mixed method approach, combining survey and interviews with university students to accesses their perceptions of cultism and the impact of cartoon –based messaging. Findings suggest that cartoons can serve as an effective alternative to traditional anti-cultism strategies, offering relatable and visually compelling messages that resonate with students. The concludes that incorporation cartoons into awareness campaign could enhance student engagement and contribute to reducing cultism in Nigeria universities.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Cultism in Nigerian universities has evolved significantly since its inception in 1952 when the Pyrates Confraternity was founded at the University of Ibadan by Wole Soyinka and his peers. Initially, the group sought to challenge colonial oppression and social injustices, promoting intellectualism and patriotism. However, over the decades, the noble ideals of early confraternities have been replaced by violent and criminal activities, leading to a significant decline in campus security and academic stability.

Modern cult groups engage in activities such as extortion, intimidation, drug abuse, and clashes with rival groups, often resulting in loss of lives and property. These groups recruit members through promises of power, social status, protection, and financial incentives, exploiting students' vulnerability and desire for belonging. The consequences of cultism are far-reaching, affecting not only individual students but also the university environment and society at large.

Despite numerous anti-cultism campaigns, the menace persists, partly due to the ineffective communication strategies employed in sensitization efforts. Traditional approaches such as posters, seminars, and disciplinary actions

have not sufficiently resonated with students, as many perceive these methods as authoritarian, outdated, or disconnected from their realities. Thus, there is a need for a more engaging and relatable medium that speaks directly to the student demographic in a way that is both impactful and memorable.

This study explores the use of cartoon characters as an innovative and illustrative medium for conveying the dangers of cultism. Cartoons have been widely recognized as an effective tool for storytelling and education, simplifying complex messages while maintaining engagement. By leveraging visual narratives, animations, and symbolic representations, this study aims to present cultism and its consequences in a manner that captures students' attention and fosters behavioral change. The use of cartoons could provide a non-threatening yet powerful way to communicate the risks associated with cult membership, ultimately contributing to the fight against campus cultism.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Cultism remains a persistent problem in Nigerian universities despite multiple intervention strategies. The violent activities of cult groups continue to result in loss of lives, injuries, academic disruptions, and a general atmosphere of fear and insecurity on campuses. Many students join cults due to peer pressure, the need for protection, financial incentives, and

the quest for social influence. Universities and law enforcement agencies have implemented measures such as security patrols, expulsion policies, and public awareness campaigns, but these have proven insufficient in curbing the problem.

One major challenge in the fight against cultism is the ineffectiveness of existing awareness strategies in engaging the youth. Many students view traditional sensitization efforts, such as seminars, posters, and disciplinary warnings, as uninspiring, repetitive, and overly authoritative. These approaches often fail to resonate with the emotions and experiences of students, leading to apathy or outright resistance to anti-cultism messages.

Given the increasing influence of visual media on youth culture, there is a growing need to explore alternative approaches to awareness campaigns. Cartoons and animations have been successfully used to educate young people on issues such as drug abuse, gender violence, and civic responsibility. However, their potential in addressing cultism has not been fully explored. This study seeks to bridge this gap by evaluating the effectiveness of cartoon characters as a medium for anti-cultism advocacy, aiming to make the message more engaging, relatable, and impactful.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

General Objective

To evaluate the effectiveness of cartoon characters in raising awareness about the dangers of cultism among Nigerian university students.

Specific Objectives

1. To analyze the motivations behind student involvement in cultism.
2. To assess how cartoons influence student perceptions of cultism.
3. To explore themes in cartoons that effectively depicts cultism's negative consequences.
4. To compare student responses to anti-cultism messages in cartoons with those from traditional approaches.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What drives students to join cults in Nigerian universities?
2. How effective are cartoons in communicating the dangers of cultism?
3. What cartoon themes resonate most with students regarding the risks of cultism?
4. How do students perceive anti-cultism messages in cartoons versus traditional methods?

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the effectiveness of cartoons as an anti-cultism awareness tool among Nigerian university students. It specifically examines how visual storytelling and character-based narratives can shape students'

understanding of cultism and influence their attitudes toward it. The study will explore various themes within cartoons, such as peer pressure, deception, violence, and consequences, to determine which elements most effectively communicate the risks of cult involvement.

The research will be conducted within selected Nigerian universities, targeting students as the primary audience. While the study acknowledges that cultism exists beyond university campuses, it does not extend its analysis to other environments, such as secondary schools or street gangs. Additionally, the study will not focus on general animation techniques, but rather on the specific use of cartoon characters as an advocacy tool against cultism.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This research holds significant value for various stakeholders, including university administrators, policymakers, educators, media professionals, and students.

1.6.1 Contribution to Anti-Cultism Advocacy

By introducing cartoons as a medium for sensitization, this study could revolutionize how universities and advocacy groups communicate the dangers of cultism to students. Unlike traditional methods, cartoons have the potential to capture attention, sustain interest, and evoke emotional responses, making them a powerful tool for behavioral change.

1.6.2 Educational and Institutional Benefits

Universities may adopt cartoons in their orientation programs, workshops, and anti-cultism campaigns, providing students with an engaging and interactive way to learn about the consequences of cult membership. This could reduce cult recruitment rates and enhance campus security.

1.6.3 Policy and Media Influence

The findings of this study could inform policymakers, educators, and media content creators on how to effectively integrate visual communication into youth-focused campaigns. By providing empirical evidence on the impact of cartoons, the study may encourage government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to invest in cartoon-based advocacy programs.

1.6.4 Contribution to Visual Communication and Graphic Design

For graphic designers, animators, and media professionals, this research serves as a resource for developing socially responsible content. It highlights how cartoons can transcend entertainment to become a tool for social change, expanding the scope of graphic design applications in educational and advocacy campaigns.

Ultimately, this study seeks to influence student attitudes toward cultism by presenting anti-cultism messages in a format that is relatable, engaging, and

memorable. If successful, cartoons could become a key element in the fight against cultism, helping to create safer, more conducive learning environments in Nigerian universities.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Concept of Cultism

Cultism refers to the association of individuals in secret societies that often operate under covert agendas. This section explores how cultism is understood within the Nigerian context, emphasizing its social and psychological aspects and the appeal of these groups to youth.

Cultism in Nigerian universities is largely a youth phenomenon, as young people are particularly susceptible to its influence due to various socio-psychological factors. The appeal of these groups is often driven by a combination of peer pressure, a desire for power, and protection from rival groups. Some students also perceive cult membership as a means of gaining social prestige, access to influential networks, or financial benefits. However, despite its initial attraction, cultism typically results in negative outcomes such as violence, academic decline, and even loss of life.

2.2 An Overview of Cultism in Nigeria

Cultism in Nigeria dates back to the colonial era but became a pressing societal issue in the late 20th century. Initially, student organizations were formed with noble intentions, often aimed at social and political advocacy. However, these groups gradually transformed into violent organizations involved in criminal activities.

The major drivers of cultism in Nigerian universities include:

Peer Influence: Many students are lured into cults by friends or senior members who promise protection and prestige.

Socio-economic Factors: Economic hardships make cult membership appealing as some groups provide financial assistance or job connections.

Security Concerns: In some cases, students join cults out of fear, seeking protection from other violent groups or external threats.

Political and Institutional Corruption: Some political and academic figures covertly support cult groups, using them for personal or political gain.

The consequences of cultism in Nigerian universities are severe, affecting students, faculty, and the entire academic environment. The rise in cult-related violence has led to fatalities, the disruption of academic activities, and a decline in the overall quality of education. Despite efforts by university authorities and law enforcement agencies to curb the menace, cultism remains a persistent issue.

2.3 Historical Review of Cultism in Nigeria

The history of cultism in Nigeria can be traced back to the 1950s with the formation of the Pyrates Confraternity by Wole Soyinka and other students at the University of Ibadan. The initial aim was to challenge colonial oppression, elitism, and corruption. However, the movement eventually splintered into various factions, many of which became violent.

By the 1980s and 1990s, Nigerian universities witnessed an increase in cult-related violence. Many groups adopted militarized structures, using sophisticated weapons and engaging in territorial battles. The involvement of cult groups in crimes such as armed robbery, drug trafficking, and political violence further escalated the problem.

Several legislative and institutional measures have been implemented to combat cultism, including:

The Anti-Cultism Act: Enacted to criminalize cult-related activities and impose strict penalties on offenders.

University Policies: Most universities have anti-cultism regulations, including expulsion for members caught participating in cult-related activities.

Law Enforcement Interventions: Special police units have been deployed to curb cult activities on campuses.

Despite these measures, cultism persists due to weak law enforcement, political interference, and the secretive nature of these organizations.

2.4 Impact of Cultism in Nigeria

The effects of cultism in Nigerian universities extend beyond the campuses, affecting the broader society. Some of the most notable impacts include:

Academic Disruptions: Frequent clashes between rival cult groups lead to the closure of universities, delays in academic calendars, and reduced concentration on studies.

Physical and Psychological Harm: Many students suffer injuries, trauma, and even death due to cult-related violence. Victims of attacks often struggle with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Financial Burden: Universities and governments spend significant resources on security measures, including surveillance systems and law enforcement personnel.

Deterioration of University Reputation: Nigerian universities have suffered from negative public perception due to cultism, affecting the ability to attract international collaborations and investments in education.

Influence on Society: Many cult members transition into criminal activities after university, contributing to the rise in armed robbery, political thuggery, and organized crime in Nigeria.

Addressing these impacts requires a multi-faceted approach, including stringent law enforcement, improved security on campuses, and sensitization programs aimed at discouraging students from joining cults.

2.5 Empirical Review

Several studies have explored the role of visual media in shaping societal attitudes toward social vices, including cultism. Cartoons, as a form of visual media, have been effectively used in various educational and awareness campaigns on issues such as drug abuse, gender-based violence, and political corruption.

Past research indicates that cartoons can serve as a powerful tool for social change due to their ability to:

Simplify complex issues and present them in an engaging format.

Capture the attention of young audiences, making learning more effective.

Influence behavior through humor, satire, and visual storytelling.

Studies on the use of cartoons to address cultism in Nigerian universities are limited, but there is evidence that visual storytelling can shape public perception and encourage attitudinal change. By leveraging visual media, particularly cartoons, universities and policymakers can develop targeted campaigns that highlight the dangers of cultism in an accessible and impactful manner.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on two key sociological theories: Social Learning Theory and Symbolic Interactionism.

Social Learning Theory

Developed by Albert Bandura, Social Learning Theory posits that individuals learn behaviors by observing and imitating others, particularly role models. This theory is relevant to cultism in Nigerian universities because students often adopt behaviors they see in their peers or authority figures. Cult groups thrive on this principle, as new recruits observe and gradually adopt the violent or criminal tendencies of senior members.

In the context of this study, cartoons can serve as an alternative form of role modeling by presenting positive behavioral patterns and illustrating the dangers of cultism. By showcasing fictional characters who suffer

consequences due to cult involvement, students can learn vicariously and be discouraged from engaging in such activities.

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic Interactionism, a theory developed by George Herbert Mead and Herbert Blumer, focuses on how individuals derive meaning from symbols and social interactions. In the context of this study, cartoons function as symbolic representations of real-life issues, allowing students to interpret and reflect on cultism's dangers.

Through visual metaphors, satire, and storytelling, cartoons can influence students' perceptions of cultism, reinforcing negative associations with these groups and promoting alternative social identities. This aligns with the goal of using cartoons as an educational medium to raise awareness about cultism in Nigerian universities.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an in-depth review of cultism in Nigeria, including its origins, evolution, and impact on society. It has also explored past research on the use of cartoons as an illustrative medium for addressing social issues. Finally, the theoretical framework section has established the relevance of Social Learning Theory and Symbolic Interactionism in understanding how cartoons can shape students' perceptions and behaviors toward cultism.

CHAPTER THREE

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Methodology refers to the systematic plan, approach, and techniques used in research to collect, analyze, and interpret data. It provides a structured framework for conducting a study, ensuring that the research process is valid, reliable, and replicable.

Components of Methodology

1. Population and Sample – The group being studied and how participants are selected (e.g., students, lecturers, university authorities).
2. Data Collection Methods – Techniques used to gather data (e.g., surveys, interviews, observations, content analysis).
3. Area Of Study - The research project is based on the dangers of cultism using cartoon illustration, discussing the history of cultism and the effects of cultism in Nigeria universities.
4. Research Instruments – Tools used for data collection (e.g., questionnaires, interview guides, case studies).
5. Ethical Considerations – Ensuring the study follows ethical guidelines like confidentiality and informed consent.

MATERIALS

Software used. Corel, draw, Adobe illustrator and Adobe Photoshop this are softwares used mostly for designing and editing such as Graphics design, Logo design, Photo manipulation and many other graphics related designs.

Clip studio. This is a software that is used mostly for cartoon character design and animations.

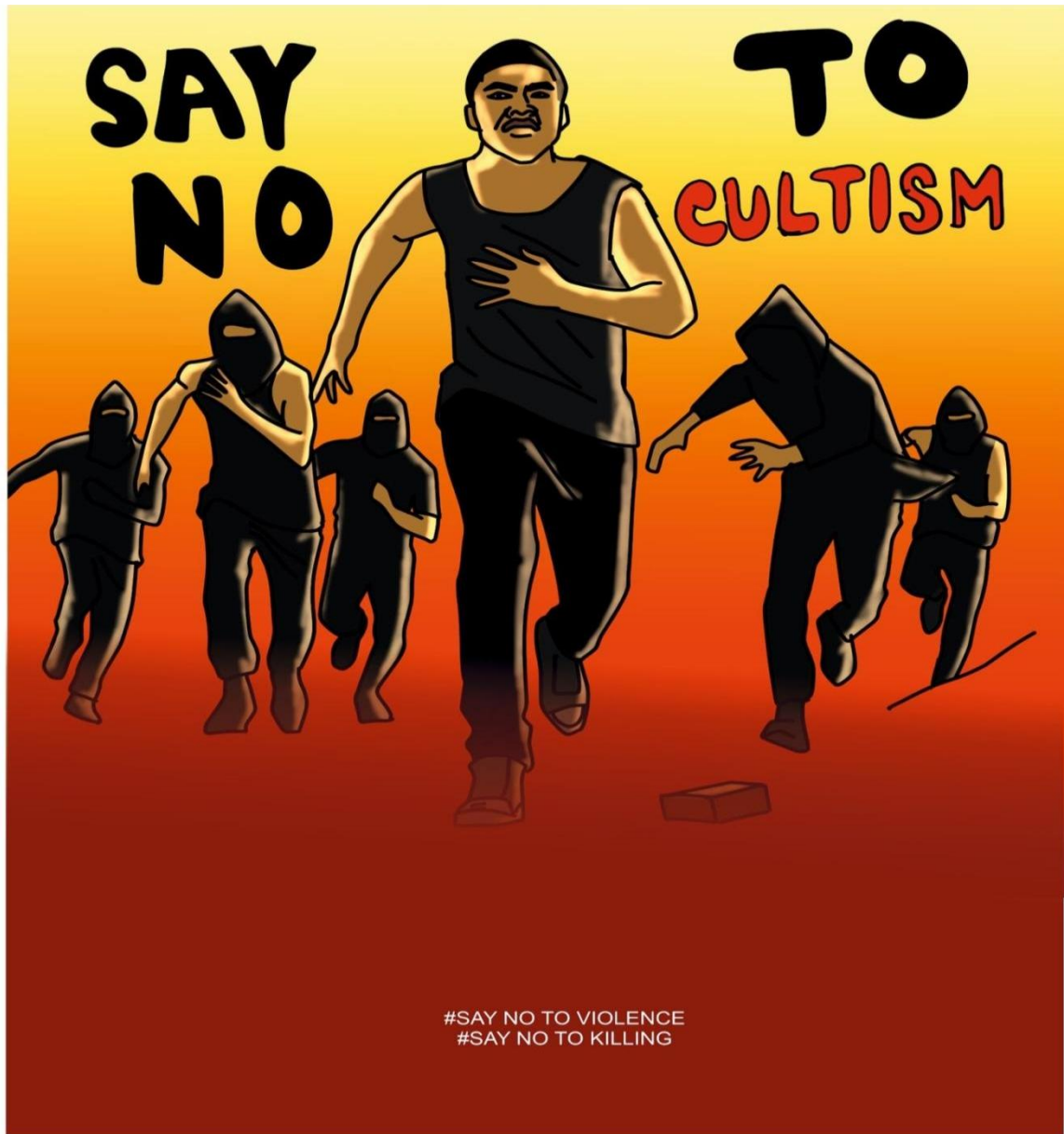
Production process.

The production process of this project is to use Cartoon illustration to show the dangers in cultism.

Each illustration was sketched and draw using Clip studio and Adobe Illustrator.

Expressionism was applied to show emotions on the audience using cartoon illustration to depict dangers in cultism.

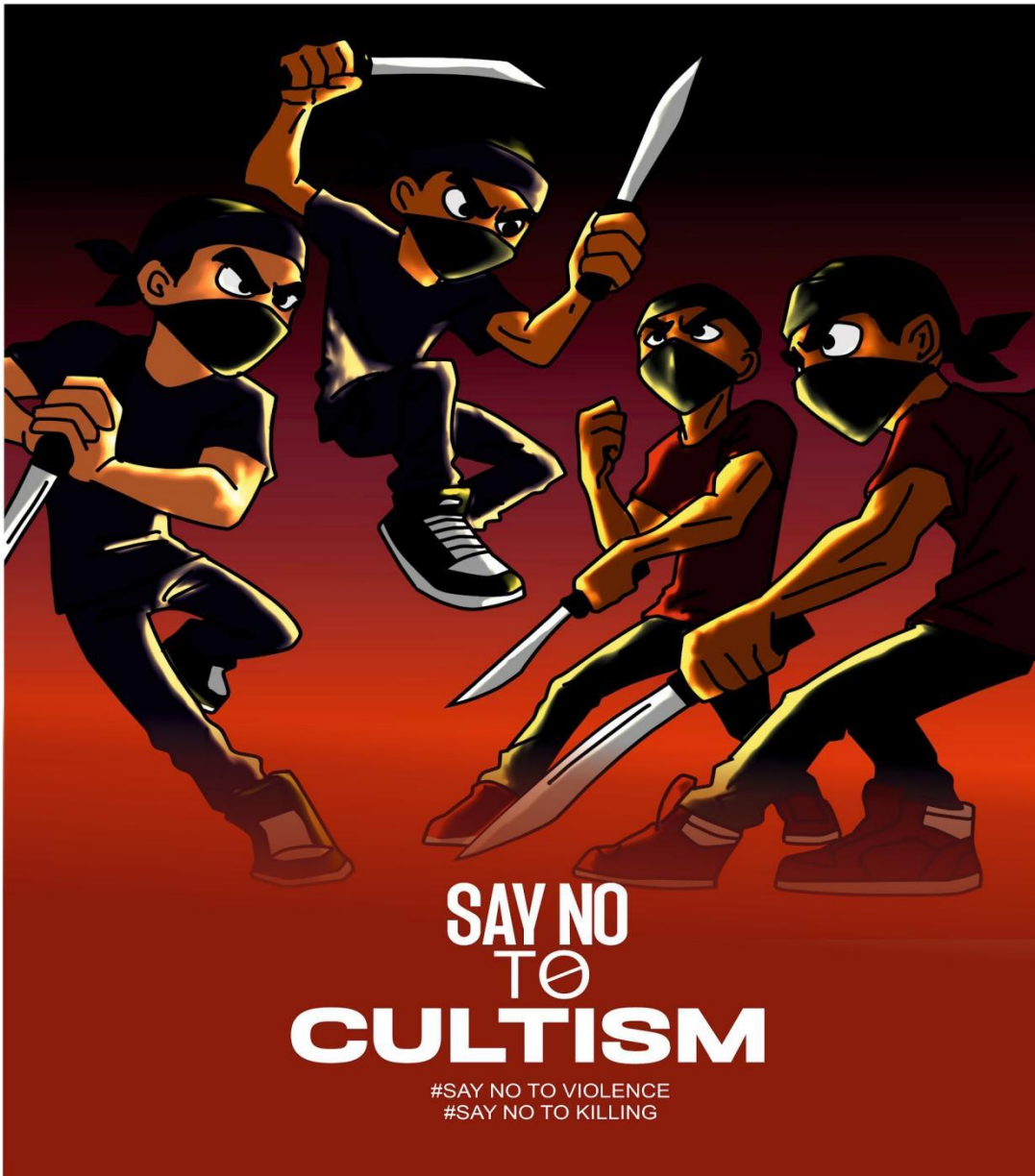
Each illustration shows the dangers of cultism the use of typography was also applied to narrate each illustration explain each illustration.



A cartoon illustration of a university student trying to break free from cultism

Artist: makolo marvelous,

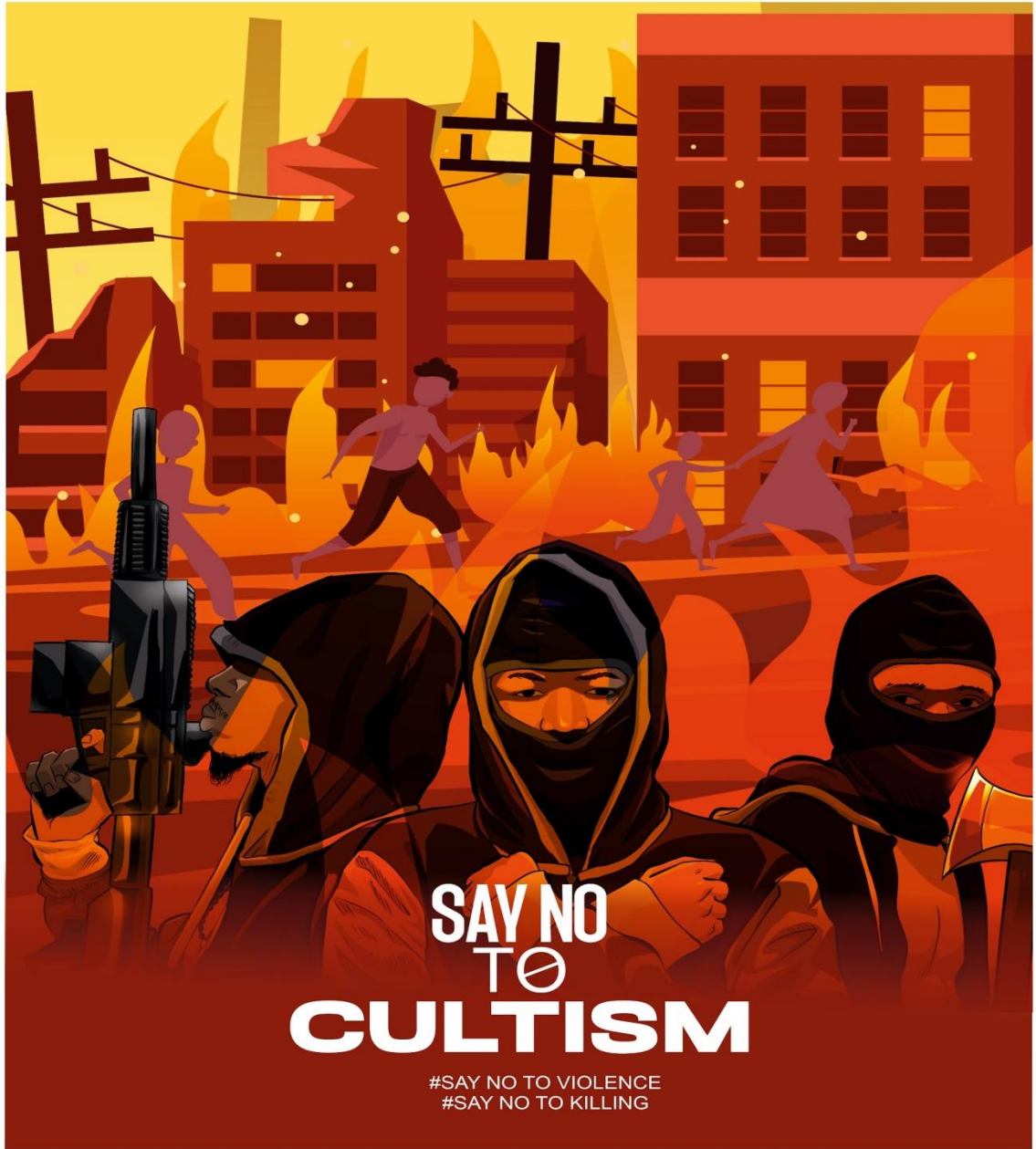
Date: 23/01/2025



An Illustration of a cult clash

Artist: makolo marvelous,

Date: 23/01/2025



An illustration showing the scene of cult destruction.

Artist: makolo marvelous,

Date: 23/01/2025



An illustration showing cult clash on campus
Artist: makolo marvelous,
Date: 23/01/2025

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data collected from the survey and interviews conducted among students at selected Nigerian universities. The data is analyzed to assess the effectiveness of cartoons in conveying anti-cultism messages. The findings are structured around the research questions, with data presented in tables, charts, and thematic analysis.

The analysis is divided into key sections, including respondents' demographic data, awareness levels of cultism, perceptions of cartoons as an awareness tool, and students' reactions to cartoon-based anti-cultism campaigns. The findings are then interpreted and discussed in relation to the study's objectives and existing literature on the subject.

4.2 Data Presentation and Analysis

A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed to students across various faculties in the selected university, resulting in an 85% response rate. The collected data was analyzed quantitatively using descriptive statistics and qualitative through thematic analysis of interview responses.

4.2.1 Demographic Data

The demographic characteristics of respondents, including age, gender, faculty and level of study, were collected to provide a clear understanding of the student population surveyed. The table below summarizes the demographic information:

Demographic variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	16 - 20	50	29%
	21 – 25	85	50%
	26 and above	35	21%
Gender	Male	95	56%
	Female	75	44%
Faculty	Arts	45	26%
	Science	60	35%
	Social Sciences	40	24%
	Other	25	15%
Level of study	100-200 level	80	47%
	300 – 400 level	60	35%
	Postgraduate	30	18%

The majority of respondents (50%) were aged 21-25 years, representing a significant portion of university students most likely to be targeted by cult groups. 56% of respondents were male, and 44% were female, reflecting a fairly balanced gender distribution.

4.2.2 Awareness of Cultism among Students

A significant proportion of respondents indicate that they were aware of cultism and its activities on campus:

92% of respondents were aware

of the existence of cultism in Nigeria universities.

68% had either encountered or witnessed cult-related activities,

Such as fights, intimidation, or recruitment attempts.

35% believed cultism is on the rise despite awareness campaigns.

Suggesting that existing strategies may not be effective enough.

Interviews with students revealed that many felt unsafe on campus due to the presence of cult groups, with some admitting that fear prevented them from reporting cult-related incident to authorities.

4.2.3 Effectiveness of Cartoons in Anti-Cultism Messaging

To assess the effectiveness of cartoon as a communication tool for anti-cultism messages, students were asked about their engagement with cartoon-based campaigns and how they compared to traditional awareness method.

78% of respondents agreed that cartoons are an engaging way to communicate serious issues.

65% stated that they found cartoon-based messages easier to understand compared to traditional methods such as posters and seminars. **71% believed that cartoons could make anti-cultism messages more relatable** to students.

These findings suggest that cartoon have strong potential as a medium for anti-cultism advocacy. The ability of cartoons to simplify complex issues and present them in a visually appealing and memorable way makes them an effective tool for raising awareness

4.3 Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study are discussed in relation to the research questions.

4.3.1 Research Question One: What Drives Students to Join Cults in Nigerian Universities?

The data collected highlighted several key motivations for cult motivations for cult membership among students.

Reason for joining	Percentage
Peer Pressure	45%
Need for protection	30%
Social Influence	15%
Personal Grievances	10%

- **Peer pressure (45%)** was identified as the leading factor driving students into cultism. Many students feel compelled to join cult groups because of their friends or roommates who are already members.
- **The need for protection (30%)** was another significant factor. Some students, particularly those in insecure university environments, believe that joining a cult will offer them protection from harassment or violence.
- **Social influence (15%)** played a role, as some students perceive cultism as a way to gain respect, power, or financial benefits.
- **Personal grievances (10%)** included cases where students joined cults for revenge or due to past conflicts.

4.3.2 Research Question Two: How Effective Are Cartoons in Communicating the Dangers of Cultism?

The study found that cartoons were generally well received as an anti-cultism awareness tool:

- Students appreciated the creativity and storytelling approach used in cartoons, making the messages more engaging.
- Unlike traditional methods such as posters and long seminars, cartoons were seen as more accessible, relatable, and visually appealing.

- Many students mentioned that they tend to ignore conventional awareness materials, but cartoons caught their attention and made them more likely to remember the message.

These findings suggest that integrating cartoons into awareness campaigns could enhance the effectiveness of anti-cultism advocacy.

4.3.3 Research Question Three: What Cartoon Themes Resonate Most with Students Regarding the Risks of Cultism?

Students were asked about the themes they found most impactful in cartoons addressing cultism:

Preferred Themes	Percentage
Real-life consequences (violence, expulsion, death)	55%
Use of humor with serious messages	30%
Stories of redemption (ex-cultists changing their lives)	15%

- 55% of students preferred cartoons that depicted the real-life consequences of cultism, such as expulsion, violence, and death.

- 30% favored humor-based cartoons that delivered serious messages in an engaging and less intimidating way.
- 15% were drawn to redemption stories, where ex-cultists turned their lives around, reinforcing the idea that leaving cultism is possible.

4.3.4 Research Question Four: How Do Students Perceive Anti-Cultism Messages in Cartoons Versus Traditional Methods?

The data revealed a strong preference for cartoons over traditional anti-cultism campaigns:

- Many students felt that conventional methods like seminars were too formal and repetitive, making them less engaging.
- Cartoons, on the other hand, were described as entertaining, visually appealing, and thought-provoking.
- Students expressed a greater likelihood of remembering and sharing cartoon-based messages, suggesting that cartoons could have a stronger long-term impact.

The findings of this chapter indicate that cartoons have significant potential as an anti-cultism advocacy tool. Students prefer visual storytelling over traditional awareness methods and believe that cartoons can effectively communicate the dangers of cultism. The next chapter will summarize the study, provide conclusions, and offer recommendations based on these findings.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

This study examined the effectiveness of cartoons as an illustrative medium for communicating the dangers of cultism in Nigerian universities. Data collected from 200 students revealed that cultism remains a significant issue, driven by peer pressure, fear, and social influence. The findings showed that cartoons serve as an effective means of engaging students and delivering anti-cultism messages in a more relatable and visually compelling manner.

5.2 Conclusion

Cultism continues to be a major challenge in Nigerian tertiary institutions, negatively impacting students and academic environments. Despite various awareness campaigns, traditional anti-cultism strategies often fail to connect with students on a deeper level. This study concludes that cartoons, as a form of visual storytelling, offer a powerful and engaging alternative for anti-cultism advocacy. By presenting messages in a relatable and appealing format, cartoons can enhance awareness and potentially deter students from engaging in cult-related activities.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Integration of Cartoons in Awareness Campaigns – Universities and student organizations should incorporate cartoons into anti-cultism campaigns to engage students more effectively.
2. Collaboration with Graphic Designers and Animators – Institutions should collaborate with graphic designers to develop impactful cartoon-based materials addressing cultism.
3. Incorporating Cartoons in Course Curriculum – Educational programs should consider using cartoons as teaching aids to communicate important social issues.
4. Government and NGO Support – The government and non-governmental organizations should support media campaigns that use cartoons to combat cultism.
5. Continuous Research and Innovation – Further research should explore other creative media, such as animations and comic books, to enhance the effectiveness of anti-cultism messaging.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

1. Limited Sample Size – The study focused on a select group of students, which may not fully represent the views of all Nigerian university students.
2. Regional Bias – The research was conducted within specific universities, limiting its applicability to other regions.
3. Scope of Data Collection – Due to time constraints, in-depth interviews were limited, which may have restricted deeper insights into students' experiences with cultism.