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Influence of Social Vices on Performance in Social Studies among Secondary School Students in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The thrust of this study was to examine social vices and academic performance of students in Social Studies in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. To achieve the purpose of this study, three hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Literature review was carried out accordingly. Survey research design was adopted for the study. A sample of four hundred and eighty-eight (488) students from a population of 5,039 was randomly selected through the stratified sampling for the study. Questionnaire was the main instrument used for data collection. The reliability estimate of the instruments was established through Cronbach Alpha reliability method. Regression analysis was the statistical technique employed to test the hypotheses under study. Each hypothesis was tested at .05 level of significance. The result of the analysis revealed that, cultism, drug abuse and Examination malpractice truancy significantly predicted academic performance of students in Social Studies in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. Based on the findings of the study it was recommended among others that government and non-governmental agencies and the media should step up their campaigns against cultism and its destructive tendencies. The evil nature of cultism should be explained to Students at all levels through sensitization, seminars, workshops, symposium, posters, handbills and public lectures.

Key words: social vices, cultism, Drugs abuse, Examination malpractice & Academic performance.

Introduction

Anti-social activities are rampant in the contemporary Nigerian schools. This is evident in the deluge of social vices witnessed on regular bases. These problems which include various factors such as social inequality, ethnicity, limited resources, corruption, and other socio-economic crises pervade the length and breadth of the country. There is a wide gap between the expectations of the society and its actual manifestations. Hardly would a day go by without a record of one form of social vices or the other. One may therefore surmise that delinquency is closely associated with civilization. There is a consensus among experts that deviance is a social vice and could be seen as a product of both personal and social traits (Mahoney, 2008). Osarenren (2002) argued that any behavior which does not conform to the rules, regulations, norms and values of a given time is viewed as deviance. Social pressures play an important role in the choices students make. In an environment where the degree of social vices is high, then the student would easily fall for the social pressure. This is what the students face on a daily basis. From the foregoing, it is evident that social vices in our society are generating concerns for all and sundry (Jamiu, 2008). This study is concerned about the extent to which social vices influence students in secondary schools. The most essential problem facing the educational sector in Nigeria is the problem of cultism here and there. There is no long existing single institution of higher learning that has not experienced the menace of cultism for one time or another. As we have today, the menace and the aggressiveness of cult members and cult related violent clashes and activities on most secondary schools have caused the sudden death of teachers and students (Ajayi & Ayodele, 2002). Over the past two decades, various attempts have been made to deal with the problem of cultism. The various measures taken



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include the enactment of decree 47 of 1989 that pronounced a number of jail term for any cultist found guilty (Fasanmi, 2006). Also, the Federal Republic of Nigeria under Chief Olusegun Obasanjo in 2000 issued a three- month ultimatum to all schools to eradicate cultism from the campuses. Some secondary schools also set up anti-cult groups consisting of the student body itself and some security agents to monitor and check the activities of cultists on campus. Despite the various measures, it appears the proliferation of cult groups and their dastard acts continue unabated. Cultism is one of the major social vices confronting the educational sector at all levels of education. The activities of these groups have caused the deaths of many (members and non-members inclusive). Secret Cult groups were rampant only in tertiary institution in the Country but today, cult activities have stepped down to the secondary, primary schools and the local communities which has become a smear on the proper development of the Nigerian youth as their activities take various destructive forms such as torture, armed robbery, drug abuse, kidnapping, murder and so on (Aniekpeno, 2017). Cultism is the practice of activities that are associated with organizations whose membership and modes of operation are considered to be unconventional and known to members only. Members pledge their allegiance to the cult, devoting themselves under oath to support and carryout the activities of the group without objection.

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. Lives of promising young men and women had been led astray or cut short in the hands of these bloody and murderous gangs on campus. Secret cultism is an evil wind that does no one any good (Nsor, Ugbong & Edu, 2016). Parents, teachers and law enforcement agents must work in synergy to ensure that this evil is put under control in our environment. Nsor, Ugbong and Edu (2016) investigated effect of cultism and other social vices on the academic achievement of Colleges of Education students in the South-South Region of Nigeria. A survey design was adopted for the study. Three research questions were posed. A simple percentage was used to find out how ignorance, parental background and upbringing affect students' membership of secret cults and students achievement academically. The researcher observed that: students' parental background and upbringing influenced membership of secret cults such that students of rich, influential and poor religious background were more vulnerable to secret cult membership; ignorance also influenced fresh student's membership of secret cults. Busuyi, Olayinka and Olalekan, (2016) investigated social vices and the effect of cultism activities among university undergraduates of Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria. Both primary and secondary source of data were used and survey design was adopted in this study. A total number of 150 respondents were used for the study and it was made up of undergraduates from nine faculties of Ekiti State University (EKSU). A simple random sampling procedure was adopted in choosing the population of the study. Questionnaire and in-debt interview guide was used for data collection. The data here was analyzed, using descriptive and statistical packages. The findings however showed that some of the causes of cultism are peer group influence, parental influence, to feel high, to be protected and secured, to gain power, for leisure etc. The researchers however recommended that, government and non-governmental agencies and the media should step up their campaigns against cultism and its destructive tendencies. The evil nature of cultism should be explained to Students at all levels through sensitization, seminars, workshops, symposium, posters, handbills and public lectures. The greatest and the most embarrassing problem facing the Nigeria society today is the renewal of the menace and aggressiveness of cult activities. Obviously, cultism is said to be the mother of crimes in tertiary institutions, and this phenomenon has negatively affected the image of schools in Nigeria. In Nigeria, alcohol and cigarette are legal but these substances have also said to be "gateway drugs" to other more potent drugs like heroin and cocaine. Drug abuse/addiction has gone a long way to create several health problems and dangers in our societies (Attah, Edna & Audu (2016). Posits that such health problems include mental illness, cancer of the lungs, school drop-outs, and juvenile delinquency. In Nigeria, consumption of drugs in schools is very common; student take these drugs to give them boldness to chase the opposite sex which most of them cannot ordinarily do without the use of some drugs, the timid types purposely take some drugs especially during social gathering to enable them feel on top. Odejide (2014) observed that the reasons advanced by the students for taking drugs are: to feel on top like adults, to feel good, to get excited, to be like friends and to be like stars. The abuse of these drugs which leads to addiction among these students gradually progresses to affect their academic performance and cause a host of evil happenings in the school and in the society, such as incessant occurrence of road accidents as a result of effects of these substances, some students indulge in exam-malpractices while others breakdown during examinations leading to failure and eventual drop-outs, some



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become rude and arrogant to teachers, and parents and occasionally causing riots and chaos on the campuses while some grow up to become criminals in the society leading them into prison-yards. The youths in Nigeria like many other countries of the world are developing addiction to psychoactive substances. The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) (2012) collected drugs use and abuse data from schools, records of patients admitted at mental health institutions for drug related problems and interview of persons arrested for drug offences. The result showed that youths constitute the high-risk group for drug trafficking and abuse. Friends and school mates account for about 90% of the source of influence of the use and abuse of various psychoactive substances. In Nigeria, alcohol and cigarette are legal but these substances have also said to be “gateway drugs” to other more potent drugs like heroin and cocaine. Drug abuse/addiction has gone a long way to create several health problems and dangers in our societies (Attah, Edna & Audu (2016). The authors further stated that such health problems include mental illness, cancer of the lungs, school drop-outs, and juvenile delinquency. In Nigeria, consumption of drugs in schools is very common; student take these drugs to give them boldness to chase the opposite sex which most of them cannot ordinarily do without the use of some drugs, the timid types purposely take some drugs especially during social gathering to enable them feel on top.

Odejide (2014) observed that the reasons advanced by the students for taking drugs are: to feel on top like adults, to feel good, to get excited, to be like friends and to be like stars. The abuse of these drugs which leads to addiction among these students gradually progresses to affect their academic performance and cause a host of evil happenings in the school and in the society, such as incessant occurrence of road accidents as a result of effects of these substances, some students indulge in exam-malpractices while others breakdown during examinations leading to failure and eventual drop-outs, some become rude and arrogant to teachers, and parents and occasionally causing riots and chaos on the campuses while some grow up to become criminal in the society leading them into prison-yards. Akanbi, Godwin, Anyio, Muhammad and Ajiboye (2015) investigated the impact of substance abuse on adolescent on academic performance in colleges of education in Kwara State. The survey design adopted for the study. A sample of 150 adolescent students was randomly selected from selected departments in three colleges of education in the State. These days, it is common to find students who failed the senior secondary certificate examination in public schools going to retake the examination in private schools and at the same time passing the examination with credits and distinctions in such schools. It seems that the need to have good results in public examinations and advertise their schools to prospective students in the way of money making appears to have led many private schools to be involved in examination malpractices. Divergent views have also been made about the rate of examination malpractices in urban and rural secondary schools in the country. Some researchers (Uyo, 2004; Akpan, Okey & Esirah, 2005) were of the opinion that examination malpractices were high in urban schools, other researchers (Lathrop & Foss, 2000; Onipede, 2003) had the viewpoint that examination malpractices were a common feature of rural schools. They argued that it is common to find students who failed the senior secondary certificate examinations in an urban school going to a remote rural school to retake the examinations. At the end, such candidates tend to obtain good results with credits and distinctions in the rural schools. Some of the reasons given for this include the lack of effective supervision and monitoring of public examinations in rural schools (Oderinde, 2003).

Hence, students seem to be left to massive cheating in such examinations. On the national setting, Olugbile (2004) conducted a study on examination malpractices in secondary schools in Nigeria and found that malpractices in senior secondary certificate examinations were at a high. The researcher reported that Ondo State took the 15th position among all the 36 States in Nigeria in examination malpractices as determined by the examination malpractice index (EMI). He furthermore found that out of the 909,888 pupils who sat for the senior secondary certificate examinations in year 2002, 95,519 of them were involved in examination fraud. While out of 2003, 111,969 of them were involved in examination malpractices. Supporting the findings, Onyechere (2004) reported that the National Examination Malpractices Index for Nigeria increased from 10.5 in 2002 to 12.1 in 2003 indicating that of every 100 pupils who wrote WAEC senior secondary certificate examinations in 2003, 12 were involved in examination scandal. Learning is important as it equips the learner with skills and attitude for self-improvement so as to later contribute to the development of the society. The alarming evidence in the prevalence of social vices, the effects and consequences of deviant behaviour among students has called for concern and challenge to all learning professions to mount strategies of equipping youths with skills of living to avoid them from engaging in act that the society does not approve. There is disruption of interpersonal relationships particularly



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within the family, marginalization, criminal behaviour, school failure, vocational problems and failure to achieve normal adolescent milestones, yet these adolescents are expected to be the leaders of the country in the future when they do not even have any focus for the future. Wanting to be attractive to others becomes very important to adolescence, and this factor is significant in the development of the desire to become cultist, eating disorders, alcohol consumption, tobacco and drug use, not practicing safe sex, and vulnerability to injury, among other behaviour. It is observed that the involvement of most teens in antisocial behaviour is as a result of peer victimization which refers to a situation where a powerful person or group of people recurrently and frequently oppressing a less powerful person in a physical and psychological manner. Despite the government effort to engage the youth through N-Power programme, the problem still persists at alarming rate. Based on this, the question that comes to the researcher mind is how does social vices in terms of cultism, drug abuse and examination malpractice relate with students' academic performance in Social Studies in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria? This is the problem which this study seeks to find solution.

Objective of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate social vices and academic performance of students in Social Studies in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to find out;

1. The prediction of Cultism on academic performance of students in social studies.
2. The prediction of Drug abuse on academic performance of students in social studies.
3. If Examination malpractice predict academic performance of students in social studies.

Null hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided the study:

1. Cultism does not significantly predict academic performance of students in Social Studies.
2. Drug abuse does not significantly predict academic performance of students in Social Studies
3. Examination malpractice does not significantly predict academic performance of students in Social Studies.

Research methodology

The research design that is used for this study is Survey design. It describes it as a type of research that studies large and small populations by selecting and studying samples chosen from the population to discover the relative incidence, distribution, interrelations of sociological and psychological variable. The study area is the Calabar education zone of Cross River State. The population of the study comprise all junior secondary three (JSS3) students in all the 77 public secondary schools in Calabar Educational Zone of Cross River State numbering 5,039 students (State Secondary Education, 2019). The sample consists of 488 secondary school adolescents which comprised of 10% of the estimated population from the seven local Government Areas in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. The instrument for data collection is a questionnaire tagged "Social Vices and Social Studies Achievement Test (SVSOSAT). The instrument consists of three sections. Section A elicits information on respondents' personal data such as sex and class size. Section B consist of the 18 items, which measure social vices. Section C consists of 25 structured objective questions with a test blue print on Social Studies academic performance. These topics are covered by all students used for the sample by the teachers in preparation for the junior secondary examination. The questionnaire was a 4-point modified likert scale type, ranging from Strongly Agree (SA, 4 points), Agree (A, 3 points), Disagree (D, 2 points) and Strongly Disagree (SD, 1 point) and the reverse for negatively worded items. Two types of validity were established for the instrument of this study. These are the face and content validity. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha reliability co-efficient method. Some copies of the instrument were administered to 50 JSS3 students who were not part of the main study. The questionnaires were administered personally by the researcher with the help of some research assistants. Out of four hundred and ninety-six (496) copies questionnaires administered, only 488 were successfully completed and retrieved from the sampled secondary schools.

Presentation of Results

Hypothesis one

Cultism does not significantly predict academic performance of students. Simple regression analysis was employed to test this hypothesis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Simple regression result of the prediction of Cultism on academic performance of students

Model	R	R. square	Adjusted square	R. Std error of the estimate	
1	.050(a)	.003	-.001	7.31515	
Model	Sum of square	df	Mean square	F	p-value
Regression	41.091	1	41.091	.768	.382(a)
Residual	16213.939	486	53.511		
Total	16255.030	487			
Variables	Unstandardized weight B	regression	Standardized weight	regression Beta weight	t p-value
(Constant)		14.859		2.807	5.293 .000
Cultism		.127		.145	.050 .876 .382

* Significant at .05 level. (Source: Field survey 2024)\

The simple regression analysis of the prediction of cultism on the academic performance of students produced an adjusted R^2 of -.001. This indicate that the Cultism account for -.1% of the determinant academic performance of students in the study area. This finding is a critical indication that cultism is relatively low in the area of the study. The F-value of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) obtained from the regression table was $F = .768$ and the sig. value of .382 (or $p < .05$) at the degree of freedom (df) 1 and 486. The implication of this result is that cultism is not a significant predictor of academic performance of students.

Hypothesis two

Drug abuse does not significantly predict academic performance of students. Simple regression analysis was employed to test this hypothesis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Simple regression result of the prediction of drug abuse on academic performance of students

Model	R	R. square	Adjusted square	R. Std error of the estimate	
1	.261(a)	.068	.065	7.07098	
Model	Sum of square	df	Mean square	F	p-value
Regression	1105.392	1	1105.392	22.108	.000(a)
Residual	15149.638	486	49.999		
Total	16255.030	487			
Variables	Unstandardized weight B	regression	Standardized weight	regression Beta weight	t p-value
(Constant)		8.688		1.874	4.636 .000
Drug abuse		.524		.111	.261 4.702 .000

* Significant at .05 level. (Source: Field survey 2024)

The simple regression analysis of the prediction of drug abuse on the academic performance of students produced an adjusted R^2 of .065. This indicated that the Drug abuse accounted for 6.5% of the determinant academic performance of students in the study area. This finding is a critical indication that Drug abuse is relatively high in the area of the study. The F-value of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) obtained from the regression table was $F = 22.108$ and the sig. value of .000 (or $p < .05$) at the degree of freedom (df) 1 and 486. The implication of this result is that Drug abuse is significant predictor of academic performance of students.

Hypothesis three

Examination malpractice does not significantly predict Academic performance of students. Simple regression analysis was employed to test this hypothesis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Simple regression result of the prediction of Examination malpractice on academic performance of students

Model	R	R. square	Adjusted R. Square	Std error of the estimate	
1	.202(a)	.041	.037	7.17409	
Model	Sum of square	df	Mean square	F	p-value
Regression	660.368	1	660.368	12.831	.000(a)
Residual	15594.661	486	51.468		

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Total	16255.030	487			
Variables	Unstandardized regression weight B	Standardized regression weight	Beta weight	t	p-value
(Constant)	9.041	2.340		3.864	.000
Examination malpractice	.458	.128	202	3.582	.000

* Significant at .05 level. (Source: Field survey 2024)

The simple regression analysis of the prediction of Examination malpractice on the academic performance of students produced an adjusted R^2 of .037. This indicated that the Examination malpractice accounted for 3.7 % of the determinant academic performance of students in the study area. This finding is a critical indication that Examination malpractice is relatively high in the area of the study. The F-value of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) obtained from the regression table was $F = 52.118$ and the sig. value of .000 (or $p < .05$) at the degree of freedom (df) 1 and 486. The implication of this result is that Examination malpractice is a significant predictor of academic performance of students.

Discussion of findings

The result of the first hypothesis study indicated that, Cultism significantly predicted academic performance of students. The finding is in line with the view of Obadan (2015) who opined that the rise of secret cults in secondary schools is a recent disturbing trend that has left school administrators, teachers, parents and pupil themselves confounded. In schools known to have cultists, many pupils live in overwhelming fear. This is because occasionally there are mysterious illness, accidents, disputes, threats and even deaths. Serious academic work can hardly ever take place in a climate of fright and insecurity. Noticeably in the last two decades, cult culture has gone down the ladder to secondary school in the South-South region of Nigeria and ravaging our youngsters therein. In schools noted for cultism, teachers charged with discipline and strict classrooms teachers come under frequent threats. This leads to decline in the quality of education and general academic performance. A good number of cultists have been accused of robbery, rape, harassment and intimidation of male teachers. Some have also been used by politicians to cause crisis in a bid to achieve their selfish gains. The result of the second hypothesis indicated that, drug abuse significantly predicted academic performance of students. The finding of this study agrees with that of Odejide (2014) who observed that the reasons advanced by the students for taking drugs are: to feel on top like adults, to feel good, to get excited, to be like friends and to be like stars. The abuse of these drugs which leads to addiction among these students gradually progresses to affect their academic performance and cause a host of evil happenings in the school and in the society, such as incessant occurrence of road accidents as a result of effects of these substances, some students indulge in exam-malpractices while others breakdown during examinations leading to failure and eventual drop-outs, some become rude and arrogant to teachers, and parents and occasionally causing riots and chaos on the campuses while some grow up to become criminal in the society leading them into prison-yards. Drug abuse is the substance abuse or disorder that is characterized by a destructive pattern of using a substance that leads to significant problem or distress. The result of the third hypothesis indicated that, Examination malpractice has a significant influence and academic performance of students. The findings are in line with the view of Adeyemi (2010) who revealed that one major cause of examination malpractices in the schools was indiscipline among students that made many of them to be involved in examination malpractices. Other causes include the non-implementation of the examination malpractices decree and the lack of effective supervision of students during examinations. It was recommended that concerted efforts should be made at improving the level of discipline among students through counselling services in the schools. There should be the full implementation of the examination malpractices decree. There should be increased efforts at effective supervision of students during examinations. The termination of appointment of examination officials and teachers involved in perpetrating examination malpractices should be in force to serve as a deterrent to others. To maintain standard, examination has been a method used for the past years in education to test the ability or evaluate students by teachers to confirm if learning has taken place. It is a means of assessing the level of achievement or quality of knowledge which students have acquired after teaching/learning process.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study it was concluded that Cultism, Drug Abuse and Examination Malpractice, Sexual Relationship Truancy significantly predicts Academic Performance of Students.



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Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government and non-governmental agencies and the media should step up their campaigns against cultism and its destructive tendencies. The evil nature of cultism should be explained to Students at all levels through sensitization, seminars, workshops, symposium, posters, handbills and public lectures.
2. Public enlightenment should be carried out periodically on the dangers of drug abuse while the regulatory bodies be strengthened to carry out their functions effectively so as to curtail the trend especially in Nigeria campuses.
3. Concerted efforts should be made at improving the level of discipline among students through counselling services in the schools. There should be the full implementation of the examination malpractices decree.
4. There should be increased efforts at effective supervision of students during examinations. The termination of appointment of examination officials and teachers involved in perpetrating examination malpractices should be in force to serve as a deterrent to others.

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