

The Influence of Socio-Psychological Manipulation on Cultism in Public Universities in Kenya: Perceptions of Christian Union Students

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Abstract

Cultism is prevalent and increasing among students in universities, with growing concern due to its destructive results, such as suicides, drug abuse, crimes, unrest, and homicide. Other consequences include withdrawal from family, academic malpractices, failure, attrition, and psychological and financial exploitation, among others. This study analyzed the Christian Union (CU) students' perceptions of socio-psychological manipulation as a factor influencing cultism in public universities in Kenya. The study was carried out in six selected public universities in Kenya. The study employed a mixed-method research design guided by Bounded Choice Theory. The target population was 55,600 Christian Union students in public universities in Kenya, while the accessible population was 10,900 Christian Union students in the six public universities in Kenya. A sample of 220 Christian Union students was selected through simple random and stratified sampling methods, while 60 small group Bible Study leaders and 6 CU patrons were selected through purposive sampling. Data was collected using a questionnaire, focused group discussion, and interview schedules. The study concluded that socio-psychological manipulation significantly affects the prevalence of cultism ($\beta=0.628$; $p<0.05$). The study established that cult recruiters prey on new students when they are most vulnerable. Cultists take advantage of students' psychological anguish by posing as though they can provide alternative solutions to their problems. The study recommends that during new students' orientation, the freshers must be trained on logical and critical thinking and spiritual discernment against cultism and be informed on the dangers of cultism.

Keywords: Christian Union, Cultism, Cultism in Public Universities, Campus-Based Cults, Socio-Psychological Manipulation.



Introduction

Cultism has been defined by Ajayi et al. (2010) as the secret rituals by associations whose membership, admission, policy, initiation, and mode of operation are secret and negatively affect both members and non-members. Aniekpeno (2017) states that cultism refers to the practice of activities linked to organizations whose membership and ways of operation are secret and reserved exclusively for members who pledge their loyalty under oath to support and carry out the activities of the group. In this study, cultism covers the recruitment, involvement, participation, commitment to, or spiritual devotion to campus-based religious, pseudo-religious, or non-religious charismatic minority movements whose beliefs, rituals, and practices are binding on members but are considered repugnant to biblical teaching. Public University refers to government-established and owned secular universities regulated and financed by the government through public funds. Socio-psychological manipulation refers to the social influence that is aimed at modifying the behavior of students using mind control tactics. It also refers to the systems of influence and systems of control (Lalich, 2004) used in cultism to gain control of recruits and retain members in cults. The Christian Union refers to a registered interdenominational association of Christian students in the university. Christian Unions in Kenyan universities are affiliated with the Fellowship of Christian Unions (FOCUS- Kenya) and internationally linked to the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES).

Cultism has been reported among undergraduate students worldwide as Pager (2019) reports on the death and other atrocities of university students due to fraternity recruitment rituals and cult hazing in the University of Buffalo, where it is reported that one in every ten undergraduate students participated in cultic groups. Stack (2019) concurs with Pager that at Louisiana State University, a student was found guilty of homicide and jailed for five years and expelled from the University for involvement in the hazing death of a recruit during an initiation ritual.

Hassan (2020) argues that cult leaders and recruiters capture the hearts, minds, and souls of the best and brightest students. These are active, productive, intelligent, energetic individuals who would be useful for the cult in fund-raising, recruiting other followers, running cult-owned businesses, and even facilitating cult-related seminars. It has been observed that cults approach fresh students upon their admission when they are most vulnerable, and Ross (2014) concurs with the above author that cults target new students struggling to adjust to the campus at the start



of their college careers, away from family support and friends. The cultic groups take advantage of their transitional dilemma. Wangari, Kimani, and Mutweleli (2012) argue that a new university environment can overwhelm new students, making them vulnerable to cultic groups who take advantage of people's psychological anguish by purporting to offer alternative solutions to their problems.

In the United Kingdom, Wallis (2003) found out that the Manchester University Student Union warned of cult recruitment and activities of the International Christian Church (ICC), which had been banned in campuses in London, Birmingham, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Manchester. The cultic group taught that non-members were doomed and required members to recruit their friends as proof of their own commitment to the group.

Cultism has been considered a major problem in Nigerian universities (Omebe & Omobe 2015). Tete (2020) concurs with the above authors that cults are a menace in the universities and further argues that cults practice in secrecy because they are proscribed as illegal and criminal. Ajitoni and Olaniyan (2018) agree with Tete that cultism hinders effective teaching and learning due to violence, chaos, and lawlessness. Further, a study conducted by Smah (2001) in Universities in the Middle Belt Zone in Nigeria revealed that 67.9 percent of the students were aware of certain cult-related organizations on Campus. It notes that a typical campus of universities in Nigeria could have as many as 40 cult groups. In the study, 69.63 percent of the students indicated that cult groups operated violently.

The Kenya Police Service (2018) reported an emerging cult, namely Young Blud Saints, operating within Nairobi that targets youths, especially students in the university. The group targeted Kenyatta University, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, and Technical University of Kenya, among others. Thus, there is a need to establish the Christian Union students' perceptions of socio-psychological factors influencing cultism in public universities in Kenya.

Statement of the Problem

There is evidence that socio-psychological manipulation is one of the significant factors influencing the high and increasing number of university students engaging in cultism. According to the Fellowship of Christian Unions (FOCUS 2020) in the Annual General Meeting report, the Christian union students in Kenya highlighted that cultism has become a major challenge facing university students. This challenge had earlier been reported by the Christian



Union leaders during a National Students Executive Committee (NASEC), further decrying the mushrooming of cultic groups in Kenyan Universities (FOCUS Kenya, 2019). This has resulted in students abandoning their studies, failing their examinations, engaging in crimes, committing suicide, withdrawing from friends and family, engaging in drugs and substance abuse and immoral behaviors, and becoming a nuisance in the universities. Several factors, among them socio-psychological manipulation, have been cited. Wallis (2007) asserts that a growing number of cult groups are recruiting on university campuses, hoping to catch young people at the most vulnerable time of their lives when away from home for the first time, lonely, or looking for psychological assistance.

Literature Review

This section covers studies on the influence of socio-psychological manipulation on cultism.

Influence of Socio-Psychological Manipulation on Cultism

Studies have reported that cults recruit their members through various ways and means, including socio-psychological manipulation. Wallis (2019) remarks that cult experts have become interested in highlighting the parallels between how cults such as the Moonies recruit new members and how terrorist groups use the same methodology and psychological manipulation to secure unswerving commitment. Wallis further states that people do not just join cults but rather are targeted and recruited. They are showered with love, seduced, told how special they are, and told what a difference they could make to the movement. Kilani (2008) concurs with Wallis that cults are groups that use psychological coercion to recruit, indoctrinate, and retain their members.

The cult recruiters take advantage of new students at their vulnerable points. A study by Wangeri, Kimani, and Mutweleli (2012) revealed that the unfamiliar university community and schedules make first-year students anxious and vulnerable because they are breaking from their familiar places and people for the first time. Talbert and Edwin (2008) concur with the above authors and assert that first-year students are confronted with uncertainty and need to make decisions regarding when and what to do. The cultists take advantage of this dilemma to manipulate and recruit the students at this point in life. Again, Wallis (2003) posits that students who are emotionally disturbed or distressed at this moment are recruited into a secret cultist group who come disguised as affectionate, loving, and understanding, thus endearing themselves



to the vulnerable students to enroll in their groups. It gets worse for those from broken homes, destitute, lonely, depressed, dejected, disorientated, and frightened.

People are deceived and then psychologically coerced into association with these cults using mind control techniques (Haworth, 1994). Wallis (2003) adds that cults recruit using psychological tricks such as mind-narrowing chants and singing and phrases, confession and destruction of the ego, isolation from family, friends, and society, change of diet, controlled approval, sleep deprivation and fatigue, and removal of privacy, love-bombing, hypnosis through relaxation and meditation. These are meant to alter the student's ability to think critically and engage with the issues presented. Students who have emotional sickness become vulnerable. Cults target the stressed, lonely, and susceptible students during stressful or traumatic times by promising them friendship and quick solutions to their predicaments (Ajayi & Ayodele, 2002).

University students may, however, join cults to fulfill their subconscious psychological needs (Mediayanose, 2016). Oyemwimina and Aibiye (2015) found out that many students join cult groups out of psychological frustration. They cite an inferiority complex and a search for social acceptance and status as major psychological reasons for cultism. A study conducted by Kageema and Maina (2014) on New Charismatic movements found that people joined the New Charismatic Movements seeking psychological healing, and in some of these instances, they were manipulated.

According to Singer and Lalich (1995), cultism presents an extreme ideology in its social structure and promises salvation or transformation through the charismatic leader, systems of influence, and control. This ideological extremism exhibits forms of violent outcomes such as physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, exploitation, murder, and mayhem among religious or quasi-religious groups. Cults establish a self-sealing social structure to ensure obedience and conformity on the part of the followers. Members of cults are brainwashed into a socio-psychological and emotional state of bounded choice (Lalich, 2004). Lalich further asserts that this makes normal, intelligent, educated people give up years of their lives because of the deep internalization of the group's ideology and purported goals. Hassan (2020) concurs with Lalich and asserts that cults use influence techniques and deception to attain psychological control over members and new cult recruits, such as brainwashing, thought reform, or mind control.

Cult recruits lose their natural identity and individuality. Lalich (2004) refers to this as "the bounded choice" because, from then on, the person's decision-making process is limited to



the dictates of the group. He states that a successful induction by a destructive cult displaces a person's former identity and replaces it with a new identity that may not be what the person would have freely chosen. On the contrary, some scholars argue that the mind control technique is a fantasy and that counseling seeks to overcome a non-existent problem (Martin 2003). Martin further posits that those who reject the mind control model affirm the individual ability and responsibility for personal decision-making regarding cultic involvement and that people can make decisions for themselves despite the influence of others being strong.

The above survey looked at socio-psychological manipulation as a factor influencing cultism by looking at the role of charismatic leaders, the methods and techniques they use to manipulate students and hold them ransom, the role played by the vulnerable students, and the resultant bounded choice.

Theoretical Framework

This study was based on the Bounded Choice Theory developed by Lalich (2004). Lalich (2004), a cult specialist, described the “Bounded Choice Theory” as a model that can be used to examine and analyze cults or high-demand groups. It is a socio-psychological theory developed to interpret the behavior of true believers in a closed, charismatic context. The theory explains the seemingly irrational behavior of the most dedicated adherents and attempts to consider individual choice within the context of an authoritarian, transcendent, and closed group. The theory posits that once people join cultic groups, they may cease to socialize with anyone outside the cultic group and become locked in or bound. They become irrational in their thoughts, making it difficult for them to exit the group. The bounded choice theory was used to study the Christian Union students' perception of their family background.

Research Methodology

This section discusses the various facets of the research methodology used in the study.

Research Design

The study used a mixed research design involving qualitative and quantitative data collection tools (Dawadi et al. 2021). Quantitative data was collected through questionnaires distributed to Christian Union students. Qualitative data was collected using interview guides for CU patrons and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) for small group Bible study leaders. Bell et al. (2018) posit



that the qualitative research method through interviews applies to understanding people's thoughts and views on a given social issue.

Location of the Study

The study was conducted on the main campuses of six selected public universities in Kenya: Kenyatta University, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT), Moi University, Egerton University, Maseno University, and Chuka University. A pilot study was carried out at the University of Nairobi. These public universities were selected because of reported cases of cultism by FOCUS (FOCUS Kenya 2020) and Kenya Police Service (2018). Furthermore, the student population in these universities is derived from all the regions in Kenya, thus representing the whole country.

Population of the Study

The study targeted fifty-five thousand six hundred (55,600) Christian Union students in public universities in Kenya. The accessible population of the study was ten thousand nine hundred (10,900) Christian Union students in the six selected public Universities in Kenya.

Sampling Technique

The researcher used simple random sampling to select the respondents. A sample of 220 CU students was selected. Once the sample size was determined, a stratus was created per university using stratified random sampling. The researcher then used the purposive sampling method to select six Christian Union patrons, sixty (60) small group Bible Study leaders, and ten (10) from each of the six (6) universities. According to Babbie (2011), purposive sampling is a method utilized by researchers in selecting cases that would best answer their questions and meet their research objectives.

The sample size was calculated and determined using the formula Nassiuma (2000) propounded, independent of the population's underlying probability distribution. Thus, the sample size $n = \frac{NC^2}{C^2 + (N-1)e^2}$ Where n is the sample size, C is the Coefficient of Variation, N is the accessible population, and e is the error margin. According to Nassiuma (2000), the coefficient of variation (C) is <30%, while the error margin (e) is fixed between 2–5%. The researcher picked a C of 30 % and an error margin of 2%. Where n is the required sample size, N is the total population of the six universities, C is the coefficient of variation (0.3), and e is the error margin (0.02).



Research Instruments

The study used a structured questionnaire to collect data from Christian Union students. Meanwhile, an interview guide was incorporated to gather information from the Christian Union patrons and a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) for small group Bible Study leaders. The questionnaire was constructed using closed-ended items. The closed-ended items involved the 4-point Likert scale type based on the extent to which the respondents agreed with statements.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics. In descriptive statistics, percentages, means, and standard deviations were applied. In inferential analyses, Multiple Regression and Pearson correlation were computed. Multiple Regression was used to test the influence of independent variables on dependent variables. Pearson correlation was used to measure the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. Since this research utilized mixed methods, qualitative data was finally analyzed thematically and combined with those that were analyzed through quantitative methods. Quantitative data from questionnaires was analyzed using descriptive statistics, and the results were presented in tables containing frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis, whereby responses were grouped into themes.

Findings of the Study

Factor Loading for Socio-Psychological Manipulation

Factor loadings in principal components and factor analysis refer to the correlation between the original and the underlying latent variables or factors. Factor loadings show how much each variable 'loads onto' a specific factor. It means that factor loadings allow us to understand which variables are most closely associated with a particular factor. The subsequent table illustrates the factor loading for socio-psychological manipulation.

Table 1: Rotated Component Matrix^a for Socio-psychological Manipulation Domain

Factor Loading for Socio-Psychological Manipulation

Rotated Component Matrix ^a	Factor loading
The transition from high school to university is a psychologically stressful period, making students vulnerable to cultism	.818



Cultists use dilemma to recruit and exploit the students at this stage in their lives	.764
Most new university students are naive about life and are thus vulnerable to the cultism that manipulates them	.478
Students are coerced into cultism psychologically using methods of mind control such as brainwashing and coercive persuasion	.755
Students enter cultism due to emotional disturbance	.823
Students enter cultic society for psychological support	.431
Cultists make their victims feel helpless by using guilt, punishment, and rewards	.563
Cults achieve control over their members through coercion and social isolation	.564
Cultism brainwashes learners to think they will benefit from good grades from lecturers or senior staff who are already members of the secret organization.	.599
Cultic leaders shift a person’s previous identity and substitute it with a new identity that makes it difficult for them to break away easily	.715

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

The analysis established that the item “Students enter cultism due to emotional disturbance” had the highest loading on the component with a 0.823 coefficient. This was followed by the item, “The transition from high school to university is a psychologically stressful period, making students vulnerable to cultism,” with a 0.818. The item with the least factor loading of 0.431 was the one that stated, “Students enter cultic society for psychological support.” By and large, all the items passed the threshold of acceptance (0.30) and were retained for further analysis.



Descriptive Analysis for Socio-psychological Manipulation and Cultism

A four-point Likert scale was used to measure the responses from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Additionally, percentages, means, and standard deviations were utilized, as captured in the table below.

Table 2: Socio-Psychological Manipulation and Cultism

Statement	SD	D	A	SA	Mean	SD
The transition from high school to university is a psychologically stressful period, making students vulnerable to cultism	8%	24%	44%	24%	2.83	0.87
Cultists use dilemma to recruit and exploit the students at this stage in their lives	1%	17%	57%	25%	3.05	0.67
Most new university students are naive about life and are thus vulnerable to the cultism that manipulates them	4%	13%	56%	27%	3.07	0.73
Students are coerced into cultism psychologically using methods of mind control such as brainwashing and coercive persuasion	4%	10%	49%	37%	3.19	0.76
Students enter cultism due to emotional disturbance	4%	15%	52%	29%	3.06	0.76
Students enter cultic society for psychological support	7%	31%	47%	16%	2.72	0.81
Cultists make their victims feel helpless by using guilt, punishment, and rewards	2%	11%	55%	32%	3.18	0.67
Cults achieve control over their members through coercion and social isolation	3%	6%	56%	35%	3.23	0.67
Cultism brainwashes learners to think they will benefit from good grades from lecturers or senior staff who are already members of the secret organization.	5%	16%	42%	38%	3.12	0.84
Cultic leaders shift a person’s previous identity and substitute it with a new identity that makes it difficult for them to break away easily	1%	10%	41%	48%	3.35	0.70
Socio-Psychological Manipulation Mean Index					3.08	0.42



Socio-psychological manipulation is believed to have adverse effects on one's ability to join cultic organizations. In the analyzed data, 68% of participants confirmed that the transition from high school to university is a psychologically stressful period, making students vulnerable to cultism ($Mean=2.83$; $SD=0.87$). However, 32% disagreed with the assertion. In support of this finding, 82% of the participants affirmed that cultists use dilemma to recruit and exploit the students at this stage in their lives ($Mean=3.05$; $SD=0.67$). Students transitioning from high school to new or different institutions must be aware of such established networks of cults and how they may affect their subsequent spiritual lives. This finding is consistent with that of Wangeri, Kimani, and Mutweleli (2012), who found that first-year students are susceptible, given that they are separating for the first time from their familiar surroundings and people due to their unfamiliar university neighborhood and schedules. One of the CU patrons stated, "New students are influenced socially because of their desire to belong to a new social network. With the many doubts that come with transition, they get encouraged by cults and invited in. Cultists then use this dilemma and naivety to recruit and exploit them."

The cult recruiters prey on new students at their weakest times because of their ignorance of their new surroundings. The research observed that 83% of participants affirmed that most new university students are naive about life and are thus vulnerable to the cultism that manipulates them ($Mean=3.07$; $SD=0.73$). Furthermore, 80% of participants thought that cultism brainwashes learners to believe they will benefit from good grades from lecturers or senior staff who are already members of the secret organization ($Mean=3.12$; $SD=0.84$). This puts susceptible young people in grave danger since they might come into contact with these cult leaders who may end up being recruited. The results are consistent with those of Talbert and Edwin (2008), who observed that first-year students face ambiguity and must judge when and what to do. One of the respondents noted that "Coercive persuasion is used to convince and lure in students, and it is seldom the initiative of the student to join these groups. Cults take advantage of the dilemma of new students.

Cult members capitalize on the psychological distress of their targets and feign to provide them with alternative solutions to their issues. The study established that 86 percent of respondents agreed that students are coerced into cultism psychologically using methods of mind control such as brainwashing and coercive persuasion ($Mean=3.19$; $SD=0.76$). Similarly, a significant proportion (81%) affirmed that students enter cultism due to emotional disturbance



($Mean=3.06$; $SD=0.76$). Cultic recruiters are committed to their goals and use cunning tactics to recruit. The findings are consistent with those of Wallis (2003), who suggests that emotionally disturbed or distressed students are lured into a covert cult by members who pose as affectionate, loving, and understanding people in order to win over the weaker students and enlist them into their groups. The situation is worse for individuals who come from dysfunctional families and are poor, sad, and fearful. One of the respondents observed that “Cults present the offer of ‘Join us to break family poverty, curses, and grant you academic success.’ Cults claim they must bind and break generational curses. Most students are persuaded to join because of issues like lack of success in school, exams, famine, and family poverty.”

It is generally accepted that once a person is recruited into a cult, they are given doctrines that tie them to the point where it becomes challenging to leave. According to the findings, 87% of the participants affirmed that cultists make their victims feel helpless by using guilt, punishment, and rewards ($Mean=3.23$; $SD=0.67$). This perspective was also voiced by 91% of those who claimed that cults achieve control over their members by coercion and social isolation ($Mean=3.18$; $SD=0.67$). This suggests that cults render their followers powerless to take actions perceived as going against the established cultic standards. This finding is consistent with the assertions by Best (2018), who argues that adherents to cults make decisions utilizing a funnel-type paradigm, beginning with the charismatic leader, followed by propaganda, and then limited reasoning. As a result, social influence techniques like compliance, submission, and conformity retain group members inside and psychologically discourage them from leaving. Similar assertions have been put forward by Wallis (2003), who maintains that psychological techniques used by cults to enlist new members include mind-narrowing chants, singing, and expressions, admission and ego-demolition, solitude from family, friends, and the community, regulated permission, sleep deprivation and fatigue, removal of privacy, love-bombing, and hypnosis achieved through meditation and deep relaxation.

It is believed that new members with social and affective vulnerabilities seem to be motivated to join cultic groups. In this study, 63% of respondents affirmed that students enter cultic society for psychological support ($Mean=2.72$; $SD=0.81$). Still, a significant percentage of participants (38%) disagreed with the statement. In addition, 89% assert that cultic leaders shift a person’s previous identity and substitute it with a new identity, which makes it difficult for them to break away easily. Therefore, it is anticipated that psychological tricks and mind control are



the most common strategies for cult leaders to induce a deep-seated nervous dependency syndrome in their followers. According to Oyemwimina and Aibiye (2015), psychological satisfaction is a common reason why students join cults. Moreover, a fundamental psychological factor in cultism is an inferiority complex and a need for social recognition and status. Similar findings were confirmed by Kagema and Maina (2014), who discovered that people who join new charismatic groups do so to get psychological solace but ultimately end up in deception. The socio-psychological manipulation variable had a mean index of 3.08 with a standard deviation of 0.42; thus, this component significantly contributed to cultism.

The qualitative data from SGBS leaders established that cultists tend to take advantage of people in a dilemma. They observed that the transition of undergraduate students from high school to university is an opportune moment for cultists to recruit new members as the students are exposed to many options simultaneously. Cultists trap new believers or those students who are not firmly grounded in their beliefs by offering a form of psychological relief and support. These leaders added that cults entice new believers during dilemmas and moments of anxiety. They further observed that cultists use reverse psychology and other tactics to appear very good to students. Cults tend to pretend and then use peer pressure and group psychology to exert pressure on unsuspecting students.

Transitioning from a non-believer to a believer is a major transition. Cults take advantage of this spiritual transition and manipulate new believers who are unable to distinguish between the right and wrong doctrine. Transition from high school and lack of information, especially regarding spiritual naivety and high expectations, make them vulnerable. When cultic members and groups welcome the first years, they take advantage of the confusion, e.g., financial stress and admiration of others. The group identified manipulation as a major issue influencing people into cults because of soothing and sweet-talking cultists. Cults focus on points of weakness, so students who lack self-esteem, are naïve, or are not confident are vulnerable. It was objected that cults sell fear to students by threatening them with death and other dire consequences.

The cultic groups put up stands and recruit new students during orientation, guided as Christian Union, and masquerade as CU when recruiting new members as though they are joining the CU. A respondent indicated that declaring her stand initially helped her survive and identify with the right people. Cults manipulate students into prolonged fasting, which is attached to promises of blessing and threats of harm to ensure compliance. The respondents



declared that some rituals or practices were used to prove loyalty, including sexual exposure. Cults promised to meet the psychological needs of depressed people who were looking for solace and hope. They use brainwashing, coercion and force to retain their victims. Cults depict themselves as holy and blameless and show recruits the failures of genuine groups, including the Christian Union.

Correlations

The most used method is the Pearson correlation coefficient (r), which measures a linear correlation. The sign of the coefficient denotes whether there is a positive or negative correlation.

Table 3: Correlations for Socio-Psychological Manipulation

		Prevalence of Cultism
Socio-Psychological Manipulation	Pearson Correlation	.628**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	193

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results revealed a statistically significant relationship between socio-psychological manipulation and the prevalence of cultism ($r=0.628^{**}$; $p<0.05$).

Regression Analysis

The model summary table displays the degree to which the model and the dependent variable of the research are correlated. Using regression, one may predict how a dependent variable will shift as it varies.

Table 4: Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.628 ^a	.394	.391	.37113
a. Predictors: (Constant), Socio-Psychological Manipulation				

The model established that 39 percent of the variation in the prevalence of cultism can be explained using the socio-psychological manipulation variable. The residual proportion was 61%, which can be accounted for by other variables excluded from this model.



The statistics used in the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) are a foundation for tests of significance and reveal the degrees of variability in a regression model.

Table 5: Analysis of Variance

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	17.106	1	17.106	124.190	.000 ^b
	Residual	26.308	191	.138		
	Total	43.414	192			
a. Dependent Variable: Prevalence of Cultism						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Socio-Psychological Manipulation						

According to the results, the model is significant at 0.05 alpha level in predicting Prevalence of Cultism, $r^2=0.39$, $F(1,191)=124.190$; $P<0.05$. This demonstrates that the independent variable (*Socio-Psychological Manipulation*) has an overall contributory effect on the prevalence of Cultism.

Coefficients

The link between a predictor variable and the responder is described by regression coefficients, which are estimations of the unknown parameters of the population.

Table 6: Coefficients

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.983	.190		5.178	.000
	Socio-Psychological Manipulation	.683	.061	.628	11.144	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Prevalence of Cultism						



The regression analysis shows that socio-psychological manipulation ($\beta=0.628$; $p<0.05$) significantly affects the prevalence of cultism. This suggests that individuals who get brainwashed and who crave socio-psychological support are highly susceptible to cultism.

Conclusion

The study findings showed that cultic leaders use psychological manipulation and mind control techniques to entice new members and gain their unwavering devotion. They employ strategies like embarrassment, punishment, and rewards to make their victims feel helpless. Also, they take advantage of people's psychological anguish by posing as though they can provide them with alternative solutions to their problems. Due to their lack of awareness of their surroundings, cult recruiters prey on new students when they are most vulnerable. Students moving from high school to new or different institutions need to be aware of these well-established cult networks and how they could damage their lives. Cults deprive their members of the ability to act in a way that would be seen as defying accepted cultic norms since they must conform. The findings revealed that students were subjected to increased brainwashing and manipulation in which they were persuaded that they owed it to their "spiritual dad" and that they could not, for instance, get married or choose the day of their marriages until the new "spiritual dad" says so. Finally, change a person's old identity and replace it with a new identity, making it difficult for them to leave the group because of the neurological dependency syndrome in their followers.

Recommendations

The study recommends the establishment of a university and Christian Union policy framework to mitigate cultism to check religious excesses, which may lead to psychological harm. Furthermore, a code of conduct for internal control of Christian bodies should be developed to mitigate against cultism in universities and society.

The study recommends training first-year students on critical thinking and discernment during orientation to prevent cult recruitment. The CU should create inclusive socio-psychological care groups, discipleship, and counseling programs to help attract and retain members and address members' needs during vulnerable moments of loneliness, transition, grief, pain, and loss. Further, litigation measures and legal suits should be instituted against proven cases of socio-psychological manipulation in the cult recruitment processes and the individuals made to take personal responsibility for their actions.



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