



Influence of Catholic Universities on Moral Conduct of Students in Catholic Universities in the South East Zone of Nigeria

Christian Nwakanma, PhD

Department of Business Education, Faculty of Education, Madoona University Okija Campus, Anambra state

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ABSTRACT: This paper investigated the influence of catholic universities on moral conduct of students in catholic universities in the south east zone of Nigeria. Madonna University was chosen as catholic university in the south east zone of Nigeria. One research question and one hypothesis guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was used for this study. Population of this study comprised of 8,000 students obtained from the three campuses of Madonna University Nigeria. Sample size of this study is 150, which comprised 6 males and females students obtained from 10 departments in Madonna University Nigeria. Instrument for data collection is a researcher developed questionnaire titled “influence of catholic universities on moral conduct of students in catholic universities in the south east zone of Nigeria” was used. The instrument was validated by two experts from Imo state University Owerri. Crobach alpha statistical technique was used to ascertain the reliability coefficients. The reliability coefficients were 0.78 and 0.98 which shows that the instrument is reliable to be used for this study. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data generated, while chi-square test was used to test the hypothesis. It was recommended from this study that government should assist in providing more teaching and learning facilities in catholic universities. This would enable private universities provide more sound teaching and learning to students in catholic universities in Nigeria especially in the south east zone of Nigeria. Also, catholic universities should inculcate more moral training on their students. This would help to reduce promiscuous living among youths in Nigeria especially in the south east zone of Nigeria.

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KEY WORDS: Management of Education by the white Christian Missionaries in Nigeria, Return of Schools to Voluntary Agencies in Nigeria, History of higher education in Nigeria, Influence of Catholic Universities on restoration of Moral Conduct in Catholic Universities in Nigeria.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is the weapon a nation can use to surmount their economic problems and stand great among League of Nations. Peters (1978) defined education as the transmission of worthwhile knowledge to those who committed to it. It is Whawo who said that education is the pivot in which individuals can use to solve their personal, immediate and extended families problems. Peters, identified further that education involves the acquisition of knowledge and understanding in cognitive perspectives that are physically and intellectually expressed.

Education chastises and make an individual engage one occupation or the other to earn a living. According to Anyaogu (2021). Education is the eye and the road in which an individual uses to actualize his or her future dreams. Education is a light that shines in both home of the poor and the rich especially, when it is backed up with devotion, deep and creative thinking. Education does not measure up with ignorance, it outshines ignorance and stands as bench mark in which an individual or groups could use to achieve their legitimate endeavours.

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Management of Education by the White Christian Missionaries in Nigeria

The history of education cannot be complete without stating in details how education started in Nigeria. The waves of education heated Nigeria when Nigeria was in the Dark Age. White Christian Missionaries from Europe, Portugal and others, that settled in Sierraleone visited Nigeria in 1802. The aim of white Christian Missionaries were to train the Victorian minds that paid nothing from the services of White Christian missionaries usually at a subsidized rate.

The white Christian missionaries, settled in Badagry in 1802. They built the first church, school and hospitals in Badagry before spreading their missions to Abeokuta, Oyo, Edo and Delta state. It is important to state here that the white Christian missionaries that settled in Badagry came to Nigeria with three missions. These missions include:

1. Incultation of English language proficiency to Nigerians in order to interpret Nigerian languages to the white Christian missionaries. Crude oil, palm kernel oil, red oil were the businesses that permeated between the white Christian missionaries and Nigerians among others.
2. Liberating Nigerians from the shackles of ignorance, illiteracy and proper hygienic practices.
3. Incultation of the right skills and attitudes to some Nigerian citizens to serve as catechists, lectors and interpreters of the Bible.
4. Incultation of the skills of serving as clerks, messengers to Nigerians that devoted themselves to serve in different administrative offices in Nigeria Urakpa (2005).

Education, commerce and evangelism grew from strength to strength in Nigeria especially in the west. The reasons for establishing schools in the west and other parts of Nigeria, by the white Christian missionaries were to train Nigerians especially children and adults of school age on good moral conduct, proper hygienic practices, business skills and Christian religion. Education and Christianity hinged on human socialization and were used to draw the minds of many Nigerians that could work as clerks in most colonial government offices in Nigeria. In the vein Nigerian youths that were opportune to embrace the white man's education were trained on how to read and write perhaps, on how to interpret the bible Obi (1985). The white Christian missionaries felt that education was the antidote to salvage idolatry, idiosyncrasy and illiteracy in Nigeria. However, strict disciplinary measures were used to forestall indiscipline's and corruption that were beholding in many Nigerian societies. In a bid to restore discipline Nigerian citizens especially, those in primary and secondary schools built by white Christian missionaries such as, Methodist, Christ church, Siemence, Presbyterians, and Roman Catholic Church, manage their schools in line with their doctrines or ideologies. These are reasons why in many Nigerian churches especially, the orthodox churches, there must be Roman catholic, Siemence or Anglican primary schools, these are strategies used by White Christian missionaries to restore morality, quality teaching and learning during their evangelical and trade missions in Nigeria.

It is very significant to note that the white Christian missionaries instituted various church doctrines in many denominational churches to inculcate good morality and proper conducts to both humanity and fellowship in one God. The moral suasion instilled in the lives Nigerians, paved way for good behaviour of students from denominational schools. The proper attitudes and conducts established by white Christian missionaries to Nigerians, gained much roots in many Nigerian society in general. History of Nigerian education evolution have it that the established standards permeated and held in high esteem during conducts of curricular and co-curricular activities in various schools owned by the white Christians missionaries schools in Nigeria.

It is evident that Nigerian children of school age that were schooling in religious denominational primary schools before the war, were conscripted into the army, the aftermath of the war fused in bad living conduct that were contacted by adults that were conscripted into the army during the war Fafunwa (1974). It was on a very sad note that many Nigerian youths that were conscripted into the army were immersed into many promiscuous living when the war ended in 1978. Indiscipline, such as stealing, fighting, rape, smoking cultism among others were uncontrollable in many Nigerian primary schools especially when the Christian missionaries fled back to their homes because of tragedy the war. Schools that were formerly administered by the white Christian missionaries were engrossed with indecency such as interdenominational rivalries, bribery, rape, stealing, and cultism, molestation of teachers, poor teaching and exorbitant charges on school fees by school administrators in voluntary agencies schools. In a bid to control these bad behaviours, following the amalgamation of north and south in 1914, the governor general of Nigeria Lord Lugard in 1914 to 1916 brought so many revolutions to Nigerian schools ranging from uniform standard of practice that hinged on the same curriculum and administration coupled with the establishment of regional education boards and agencies Taiwo (1980 & Okonkwo1991).

Not quite long after independence in 1960, Nigerian government procured policies to use education to foment national unity as a bid for integration of Nigeria as one entity. On may16, 1970, the takeover of primary and secondary schools owned by individual and religious organizations was carried out by the defunct mid-western state. Other states in south and Northern Nigeria equally took over schools from voluntary agencies before the end of 1970 decade (Lewis 1965 & Ogunsanya 1980). Upon these strategies, validation decree was promulgated in 1977 to give legal backing to all schools that were taken over by different states in Nigeria Ogunu (2004). Reasons for takeover of schools from individuals and religious organizations were to grantee uniform standards to education, secularization of education, fair distribution of educational facilities and reduction of the cost of education in Nigeria.

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Upon these strategies, immorality did not hold sway in Nigerian schools. Importance of school distribution cannot be over emphasized hence, schools are supposed to be sited to areas where students in communities that are closely inhabited should have access to education. After takeover of schools by different state governments in Nigeria, there are over concentration of schools in some communities or areas while in other places, schools are sparsely distributed. Schools are mostly sited in states or communities that are nearer to the houses of those at the helm of political power than the opposition parties. This is the reason why good number of federal universities and colleges of education are abundantly found in the North part of Nigeria than in the South where partisan politicians are in swift opposition (Coleman 1968, Bourdon 1973 & Durojaiye 1987). Voluntary agencies moved on with the crusade of return of their schools that were formerly managed by the white Christian missionaries in Nigeria.

Return of Schools to Voluntary Agencies in Nigeria

According to Ogunu (2004) part of the reasons why voluntary agencies agitated for return of their schools were as a result of government inadequate funding to education, restore morality, training of young adults that will entrench atmosphere of peace, social value to humanity and love of the nation among others. History have it that, after series of disagreements, Nigerian government resolved to hand over schools that were formerly managed by the white Christian missionaries to voluntary agencies Aderelgebe (1972)

After Nigerian government have returned schools to the voluntary agencies, there were still high degree of immorality among children and adults of school age. However, there was still the need for moral training or re- establishment, since the war has brought in waves of immorality that were incursions to the breakdown of law and order in Nigerian society.

Nigerian society needs the best from their children in schools. The need for the first catholic university was nursed with frantic ambition nursed by a catholic Rev. Father in the south east. The move to open the first catholic university in Nigeria under federal government approval was a thorny issue, but it was granted at last. This gesture, motivated other well-meaning Nigerians to scout for their own private universities' and their requests were granted by the federal government of Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

After the white Christian missionaries have gone back to their home. The system of education in Nigeria were engulfed with serial imbalances ranging from funding, inter-denominational rivalries, colonialization of education to the north part of Nigeria. Other imbalance in public primary, secondary and tertiary institutions were cultism, rape, stealing, absenteeism, thugry, indecent dressing and examination mal- practice. In view of these backlashes in public primary, secondary and tertiary institutions, the need to establish catholic universities in the south east zone of Nigeria was backed upon to circumvent and proffer solution to the vagaries of inordinate attitudes prevailing in public tertiary institutions.

History of Higher Education in Nigeria

Higher education in Nigeria is made up of universities, polytechnics and colleges of education offering courses in many areas such as teacher education, engineering, medicine, agriculture, humanities, law, commerce among others. The first higher education in Nigeria was Yaba Higher College. Yaba college was established in 1932. Nigerians desire to own more higher education led to the acceptance of Asquit and Elliot Commission in 1943. Asquit and Elliot commission fast tracked the establishment of Universities in Nigeria. Consequent, In 1948 three years after Asquit and Elliot commission were considered, University college Ibadan was founded as an affiliate of the University of London. Ibadan University college continued delivery of education as the only university in Nigeria until 1960 (Jubril 2003). Because Nigeria is in dire need for higher education, Nigerian government commissioned an inquiry known as Ashby commission of 1960 was commissioned to advise government on various needs of higher education for its first two years of independence. Before the federal government of Nigeria could have finished perusing at the Ashby commission of enquiry, the University of Nigeria Nsukka was founded on the same year with Ashby commission of 1960 as the first regional university in the east part of Nigeria. Asquit, Elliot commission gave light for establishment of universities in Nigeria.

Ashby commission of enquiry gave more light on how to address the challenges of establishing universities in Nigeria. Following the recommendations made by Ashby commission, first, second, third, and fourth generation universities were established by the federal, state and private organizations in Nigeria up to May 29 1999. It is on this premise that both the fifth generation universities are developed in Nigeria. Even in this new age, sixth and 7th generation universities are awaiting approval by the federal government of Nigeria. The purpose for the establishment of higher education in Nigeria were for quality teaching and learning (Ajayi, & Ekundayo, 2006). In view of these novel venture, the attitude of higher education managers towards fund diversion, hijack of funds, inability of lecturers to discharge their teaching responsibilities equitably, coupled with students restive activities such as, cultism, rape, cheating in examination, stealing tugging among others, gave rise for the establishment of private university in Nigeria in which the first private university to be approved in Nigeria was a catholic university under the supervision of national universities commission. There are several moves by private individuals to establish more universities in Nigeria, owing to the fact that Nigerian public universities are still constrained with inadequate facilities and equipment to augment with the teeming population of youths that yearn for university education in Nigeria coupled with low moral rectitude exhibited by both students and lecturers in public universities which retards expectations of public universities in quantum and novelty Akintoye (2004).

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Influence of Catholic Universities on restoration of Students Moral Conduct in catholic universities in Nigeria

In 1999, the law for the establishment of private university was signed and approved by the federal government of Nigeria after sustained pressures mounted for approval of the first Catholic university in Nigeria on then military president of Nigeria general Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida in (1999). Before the opening of private universities in Nigeria, many Nigerian public universities were in academic and administrative quack mire. Stealing, lesbianism, hormo-sexualism, rape, thuggery and cultism were the canker warms tormenting Nigerian students in public universities. The wake of the first private catholic university in the south, east and west part of Nigeria, fast tracked decency in education and morals. Sound catholic doctrines deeply immersed in good morals, quality teaching and learning were used to forestall the ugly trends of unruly behaviours observed among adults of school ages Edeh (2004). Private universities that were spreading the crusade of good moral conduct and quality teaching and learning in line with National Universities Commission's approval and directives in Nigeria include:

1. Madonna University Nigeria Elele River State and Okija Anambra state
2. Caritax University Enugu state
3. Tansian University Umunya, Anambra state
4. Godfrey Okoye University Enugu, state
5. Spiritan University Nnoch, Abia state
6. St. Peters University Achina, Anambra state
7. Shanahan University Nkpo Anambra state
8. Claritian University, Nekede, Imo state
9. Amadeus University Umuahia, Abia State

It is worthy to note that catholic universities have brought decency in education and morals. It is evident that catholic universities have engendered sound academic practices that reflected so well in the conduct of first degree and PG examinations. Strict examinations laws were established to put a stop to examination mal-practice and other examination related misconducts in Nigerian catholic universities. It is on this premise that degree and PG certificates acquired by students in Catholic universities are the best among equals.

Catholic universities educational ideologies have paved way for quality teaching and moral rectitude on both students that are still schooling and those that have graduated from catholic universities Onyewenyi (2010). Catholic universities have not only engendered quality teaching and learning to their students, there are entrepreneurship, self-handicraft programmes established by private universities to enable graduated students fit very well in the society after graduation Purisma (2015). Also, in catholic private universities there are work study programmes organized to help indigent students fend for their needs in catholic universities. These strategies have endeared positively to many students and graduates from catholic universities. These are the reasons why many graduates of catholic universities are not job seekers rather, jobs looks for them.

METHODS

This paper investigated the influence of catholic universities on moral conduct of students in catholic universities in the south east zone of Nigeria. This study is in the south east zone of Nigeria. Madonna University was chosen as catholic university in the south east zone of Nigeria. One research question and one hypothesis guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was used for this study. Population of this study comprised of 8,000 students obtained from the three campuses of Madonna University Nigeria. Sample size of this study is 150, which comprised 6 males and females students obtained from 10 departments in Madonna University Nigeria. Instrument for data collection is a researcher developed questionnaire titled 'influence of catholic universities on moral conduct of students in catholic universities in the south east zone of Nigeria' was used. The instrument was validated by two experts from Imo state University Owerri. Crobach alpha statistical technique was used to ascertain the reliability coefficients. The reliability coefficients were 0.78 and 0.98 which shows that the instrument is reliable to be used for this study. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data generated, while chi- square test was used to test the hypothesis.

RESULTS

1. **Research Question one:** What are the moral conducts taught by catholic universities in the south east zone of Nigeria?

Table 1: shows the moral conducts taught by catholic students in the south east zone of Nigeria.

S/N0	Item statements	Male 75			Female 75		
		X	SD	Decision	X	SD	Decisions
1.	No stealing in the hostel	3.7	0.2	Agree	4.00	0.01	Agree

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2. Fight is restricted in Catholic universities	3.6	03	Agree	3.00	1.00	Agree
3. Orientations are conducted to restrict students from inordinate behaviours.	3.6	0.3	Agree	3.40	0.60	Agree
4. All actions of cultism are expunged in catholic universities.	3.8	1.1	Agree	3.77	1.23	Agree
5. Students are told to embrace respect to constituted authorities	3.5	0.4	Agree	3.27	0.73	Agree
6. Rape is not allowed in catholic Universities.	3.5	0.5	Agree	3.24	0.73	Agree
7. Ganging is not allowed in catholic universities.	3.9	1.0	Agree	3.77	1.12	Agree
8. Students comes to classroom on time	3.4	0.5	Agree	4.00	0.01	Agree
9. Hiding from school activities is not allowed in catholic Universities.	3.6	0.3	Agree	4.00	0.01	Agree
10. Gossiping is not allowed in catholic universities.	3.6	1.1	Agree	3.80	1.20	Agree
11. Smoking is not allowed in catholic universities.	3.7	0.5	Agree	3.27	0.73	Agree
12. Examination mal- practice is not allowed in Catholic Universities.	3.8	1.1	Agree	3.28	0.72	Agree
Cluster Mean	43.7	0.1	Agree	38.8	0.2	Agree

Test of hypothesis

Table 2; shows chi -square hypothesis test on the moral conduct of students in catholic universities in the south east.

Respondents	N	X	SD	X0-cal	Xe- crit 0.05	Decision
Male students	75	43.7	0.1	82.5	3.54	reject
Female students	75	38.8	0.2			

Table 2: Shows that $X_0 - \text{cal} = 82.5$ is greater than $X_e - \text{critical}$ of 3.54 at 0.05 alpha level. The null hypothesis was rejected that there was no significant difference in the opinion of male and female students on moral conducts of students in catholic universities in south east zone of Nigeria.

DISCUSSION

This study is on the influence of catholic universities on moral conducts of students in catholic universities in the south east zone of Nigeria. The finding of this study reveal that there is no significant difference on the opinion of male and female students the moral conducts of students in catholic universities in the south east zone of Nigeria. This is further proved by Edeh (2004) that, Sound catholic doctrines deeply immersed in good morals, quality teaching and learning were used to forestall the ugly trends of unruly behaviours observed among adults of school ages. Little wonder (Onywuenyi, 2010 & Purisma, 2006) identified that Catholic universities educational ideologies have paved way for quality teaching and moral rectitude on both students that are still schooling and those that have graduated from catholic universities. Catholic universities have not only engendered quality teaching and learning to their students, there are entrepreneurship, self-handicraft programmes established by private universities to enable graduated students fit very well in the society after graduation.

In catholic private universities, there are work study programmes organized to help indigent students fend for their needs in catholic universities. These strategies have endeared positively to many students and graduates from catholic universities. Onywueny & Purima further identified that these are reasons why many graduates of catholic universities in Nigeria are not job seekers rather, jobs looks for them.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It was recommended from this study that government should assist in providing more teaching and learning facilities in catholic universities. This would enable private universities provide more sound teaching and learning to students in catholic universities in Nigeria especially in the south east zone of Nigeria.
2. Catholic universities should inculcate more moral training on their students. This would help to reduce promiscuous living among youths in Nigeria especially in the south east zone of Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

In the recent past in Nigeria, education from the primary, secondary to tertiary education levels were particularly held very tight in the hands of government because schools were forced out from the hands of voluntary agencies. Immediate takeover of schools from the government coupled with the 1970 war that immersed many youths and teachers into different promiscuous living brought in unhealthy rivalries in public schools. Stealing, rape, fighting, smoking, cultism, bullying of weaker students were the inordinate practices ravaging both students and teachers in public schools, coupled with the politicization of education where many universities, colleges of educations, primary and secondary schools were established in the home of politicians in power at the detriment of students whom their parents and their relatives did not win political power. Nonetheless, two decades after opening of private universities and perhaps catholic universities, managing catholic universities by the missions were taken as a venture towards evangelization and inculcation of morality and discipline. On that gesture, catholic missions and private individuals took bold steps, questing for approval of private catholic universities to restore moral training and decency in academics to students in Nigeria. Work study and skill acquisition programmes have been established in catholic universities to enable students get self-employment before searching for white collar jobs in Nigeria. Professional courses that were new in university curriculum have been approved by NUC to be embraced by private cum catholic universities in Nigeria these have enabled catholic universities add value for the development of Nigerians economy despite the trajectories observed in Nigerian economy.

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