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Amadi Gift Amukeru
Department of Home Science
and Management, Rivers State
University, Nkpolu-
Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt,
River State, Nigeria

Okoroma-Asa Ethel Uloma
Department of Home
Economics, Federal College of
Education (Technical), Omoku,
Rivers State, Nigeria

Anthony Izioma Destiny
Department of Home Science
and Management, Rivers State
University, Nkpolu-
Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt,
River State, Nigeria

Corresponding Author:
Amadi Gift Amukeru
Department of Home Science
and Management, Rivers State
University, Nkpolu-
Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt,
River State, Nigeria

Deviant behaviour and its control in rivers state university, Port-Harcourt

**Amadi Gift Amukeru, Okoroma-Asa Ethel Uloma and Anthony Izioma
Destiny**

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Abstract

This study assessed strategies for the control of selected common deviant behaviours among students in the Main campus of the Rivers State University, Port Harcourt. The study had three specific objectives and one hypothesis, and adopted the survey design. The simple random sampling technique was used to select 75 students and 25 lecturers, making a total number of 100 samples for the study. A questionnaire form designed by the researcher was developed to collect data. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data. Some of the findings include: Sensitization of ladies on appropriate dress pattern (\bar{X} 3.11, 3.20); organization of effective campaigns on the dangers of cultism (\bar{X} 2.72, 2.72); only serious academic-minded students should be admitted into the institution (\bar{X} 2.64, 2.61). Some of the recommendations include that the school authority should review and make more effective its rules and regulations prohibiting deviant behaviours on campus, and there should be an effective early warning system that can occasionally evaluate and report on signs.

Keywords: Rivers State University, deviant behaviours, control, young persons

Introduction

Deviant behaviors or acts can be described as acts or behaviours which negate the acceptable norms, values and standards of any given society. In every society, certain ways of life are unacceptable basically because they constitute impediments to the normal functioning of that society. Hence, everyone is expected to behave in a particular way that does not clash with recognized and acceptable standards and expectations. These are acts which in many societies are prohibited, some in public places (such as smoking). In some cases, murder and violent reactions are referred to as more serious deviant behaviours. However, what constitutes deviant behaviour depends on a particular society. For instance, what is usually referred to as indecent dressing in Africa may not be in the western world.

Among young persons, the tendency to commit deviancy is usually common due to several reasons such as youthful exuberance, delinquent tendencies, and poor youth culture. In Nigeria for example, poor youth culture has been responsible for cultism among youths, robbery, sexual harassments, rape, and most rampant is examination malpractices (Abraham, 2010) [1]. The acts constitute social menaces in the society, and make the society inhabitable for others. For example, the rise in cultism in Rivers State is a major security problem in the state. In the campuses of higher institutions, deviant behaviours have constituted serious problems in the system.

A given society's perception of what constitutes deviant behavior is generally derived from its norms and values considerations. Most societies frown upon excessive sexual promiscuity because it causes difficulties with respect to raising children as well as increased risk of disease transmission. This condemnation is often codified inside of a mythological or religious systems in order to facilitate understanding and exacerbate fear of disobedience (Charon, 2007) [5]. Within the university system, acts such as cultism, sexual harassments and examination malpractices form the most critical and serious codifications of these institutions. However, many young persons are affected by the failure of these institutions to control the rise of ranging deviant behaviours within them.

Various studies focused on the cases of deviancy and delinquent acts by youths, but finding effective solutions to these problems remains a challenge.

As a fast-growing tertiary institution in Nigeria, and the Niger Delta in particular, the Rivers State University (RSU) is confronted with the rise in deviant behaviours/acts synonymous with many indigenous and especially public-owned tertiary institutions in the country. The situation appeared to deteriorate with time, and there seemed no efforts to address these daunting challenges. Hence, the need for an independent study to evaluate possible strategies to control some selected deviant behaviours on campus.

Objective of the study

The main objective of this study was to evaluate strategies for the control of selected common deviant behaviours among students in the Main campus of Rivers State University, Port Harcourt. To achieve this, the study:

1. Examined strategies for the control of sexual harassments among students in the Main campus of Rivers State University, Port Harcourt.
2. Examined strategies for the control of cultism among students in the Main Campus of Rivers State University, Port Harcourt.
3. Examined strategies for the control of examination malpractice among students in the Main campus of Rivers State University, Port Harcourt.
4. Examine strategies for the control of indecent dressing among students in the Main campus of Rivers State University, Port Harcourt.

Materials and Methods

Area of the study: The area of the study was the Main Campus of the Rivers State University, Port Harcourt. The institution is located in Nkpolu-Oroworukwo community in Port Harcourt City local government area of Rivers State.

Population of the study: The population of the study was undergraduate students currently enrolled in different programmes in the institution and the lecturers.

Sample and sampling technique: The simple random sampling technique was used to select 100 students and lecturers for the study (75 students and 25 lecturers). Three students and one lecturer were selected randomly from each department respectively.

Instrumentation: The instrument for the study was a questionnaire form designed by the researcher titled ‘Control of Deviant Behaviours among Students on Campus Questionnaire’ (CDBSCQ). The questionnaire was designed on four-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD) and Disagree (D) with scores 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively.

Data collection and analysis: The data were collected through the direct contact approach, while mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data. An average mean of 2.50 was set as cut-off mark.

Results

Student and lecturers’ strategies for the control of sexual harassments among young persons in the Main Campus of RSU: Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation strategies for the control of sexual harassments among young persons. The table revealed that the respondents accepted all the items because they were above the 2.50 decision level.

The highest mean score was \bar{X} 3.20, while the lowest mean score was \bar{X} 2.61. The standard deviation ranged from 0.64 and 0.70; this implies there were no significant differences in the opinions of the respondents.

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of the students and lecturers on strategies for the control of sexual harassments among young persons in the Main Campus of RSU

Strategies	\bar{X}_1	\bar{X}_2	SD	Decision
Reporting cases of harassments for actions	2.65	2.62	0.66	Accepted
Sensitization of ladies on appropriate dress pattern	3.11	3.20	0.70	Accepted
Effective legal structures within the university are essential	3.18	3.20	0.68	Accepted
Effective complaints committee to address reported cases	2.82	3.13	0.68	Accepted
Punitive punishment without fear or favour for offenders	2.61	3.01	0.64	Accepted
The school management must be involved in championing anti-harassment goal on campus	2.68	3.05	0.66	Accepted
Creating special programmes for respect among students	2.71	2.65	0.64	Accepted
Organize training for staff and students on fighting sexual harassments	3.02	3.11	0.68	Accepted
Utilizing well-publicized materials detailing steps to take	2.91	3.01	0.69	Accepted

Key: \bar{X}_1 = mean score for students, \bar{X}_2 = mean score for lecturers, SD = Standard Deviation

Student and lecturers’ strategies for the control of cultism among young persons in the Main Campus of RSU

Table 2 shows the mean scores and standard deviations on strategies for the control of cultism among young persons. The result showed that all items were accepted because they had mean scores of above the 2.50. The highest mean score

was \bar{X} 3.61, while the lowest mean score was \bar{X} 2.62. The standard deviations ranged from 0.61-0.70, indicating there were no significant differences in the opinions of the respondents.

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of the students and lecturers on the strategies for the control of cultism among young persons in the Main Campus of RSU

Strategies	\bar{X}_1	\bar{X}_2	SD	Decision
Organization of effective campaigns on the dangers of cultism	2.72	2.72	0.70	Accepted
Sensitization programmes to dissuade likely victims	2.62	2.83	0.61	Accepted
Punitive measures should be meted on culprits	3.61	3.23	0.66	Accepted
Effective campus information system	3.31	3.19	0.68	Accepted
Establishment of early warning system in the university	2.82	2.82	0.61	Accepted

Key: \bar{X}_1 = mean score for males; \bar{X}_2 = mean score for females; SD= Standard Deviation

Student and lecturers' strategies for the control of examination malpractices in the Main campus of RSU:

Table 3 shows the mean scores and standard deviations on strategies for the control of examination malpractice among young persons. The results showed that all the respondents accepted items the five items because the mean scores were

above the \bar{X} 2.50. The highest mean score was 3.51, while the lowest mean score was 2.61. The standard deviation ranged from 0.60-0.72 indicating no significant differences in the opinions of the male and female respondents.

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation of the students and lecturers on the strategies for the control of examination malpractices in the Main campus of RSU

Items	\bar{X}_1	\bar{X}_2	SD	Decision
Independent marking committees should be created at faculty levels	3.01	3.25	0.72	Accepted
Defaulters should be punished without favour	3.44	3.51	0.64	Accepted
Lecturers should be punished for engaging in malpractices	3.31	3.16	0.68	Accepted
Emphasis should be on hard work	3.45	3.25	0.66	Accepted
Only serious academic-minded students should be admitted into the institution	2.64	2.61	0.60	Accepted

Key: \bar{X}_1 = mean score for students; \bar{X}_2 = mean score for lecturers; SD= Standard Deviation

Student and lecturers' strategies for the control of indecent dressing in the Main campus of RSU

Table 4 shows the mean scores and standard deviations on strategies for the control of indecent dressing among young persons. The results showed that all the respondents accepted

items the four items because the mean scores were above the \bar{X} 2.50. The highest mean score was 3.61, while the lowest mean score was 3.05. The standard deviation ranged from 0.74-0.96.

Table 4: Mean and standard deviation of the students and lecturers on the strategies for the control of indecent dressing in the Main campus of RSU

Items	\bar{X}_1	\bar{X}_2	SD	Decision
Parents should always dress modestly and act as role model to their children	3.21	3.05	0.78	Accepted
Religious scholars keep preaching tirelessly especially on campus	3.34	3.61	0.74	Accepted
The mass media should use their social responsibility function by promoting importance of decency and negative effect of indecency among youths	3.21	3.36	0.78	Accepted
There should be formation of campus brigades to check the dressing pattern of students	3.55	3.25	0.96	Accepted

Key: \bar{X}_1 = mean score for students; \bar{X}_2 = mean score for lecturers; SD= Standard Deviation

Discussion

The result on the strategies for the control of sexual harassments among young persons the following: reporting cases of harassments for actions; sensitization of ladies on appropriate dress pattern; effective legal structures within the university are essential; effective complaints committee to address reported cases; punitive punishment without fear or favour for offenders; the school management must be involved in championing anti-harassment goal on campus; creating special programmes for respect among students; organize training for staff and students on fighting sexual harassments; and utilizing well-publicized materials detailing steps to take. These findings are in consonance with some earlier studies. For example, Charon (2007) [5] noted that campus sexual assault policies, knowledgeable administrators, and, will ultimately checkmate sexual violence on campuses. Faculty can also incorporate the issue of sexual assault into their curriculum whenever possible and whenever relevant to course content. Faculty and staff can also offer student

workshops facilitated by trained faculty, staff, and students on campus (Fletcher, Benshoff & Richberg, 2003) [6].

More so, the findings on strategies for the control of cultism among young persons showed the following were accepted: organization of effective campaigns on the dangers of cultism; sensitization programmes to dissuade likely victims; punitive measures should be meted on culprits; effective campus information system; and the establishment of early warning system in the university. These findings are in agreement with Emaikwu & Eba (2007) [7] who noted that activities of cult groups on Nigerian campuses can curbed through a well-coordinated effort of stakeholders. Hughes & McCabe (2006) [9] opined that meting out punishments to the offenders will reduce the rate of cult activities in campuses.

The result on the possible strategies for the control of examination malpractice among young persons revealed the following which were accepted by the respondents: independent marking committees should be created at faculty levels; defaulters should be punished without favour; lecturers

should be punished for engaging in malpractices; emphasis should be on hard work, and only serious academic-minded students should be admitted into the institution. These findings are in agreement with Fasasi (2006) [8]. They noted that examination malpractices thrive in many African states because the institutions are weak. If institutions are strengthened, and offenders are brought to book, then the education system can be free from these malaises.

Finally, the findings on control of indecent dressing revealed that parents should always dress modestly and act as role model to their children, religious scholars keep preaching tirelessly especially on campus, the mass media should use their social responsibility function by promoting importance of decency and negative effect of indecency among youths, and there should be formation of campus brigades to check the dressing pattern of students. Abraham (2010) [11] is in agreement with these findings when he noted that a societal and collective commitment to decency is germane to attaining moral suasion among youths.

Conclusion

This study has revealed the strategies to control or curb deviant behaviours among young persons in the Main Campus of Rivers State University, Port Harcourt. However, with the rise in deviant acts in the institution, especially with the high influx of fresh students, it has become significant to address these menaces.

Recommendations

The study consequently recommended

1. The school authority should review and make more effective its rules and regulations prohibiting deviant behaviours on campus.
2. There should be an effective early warning system that can occasionally evaluate and report on signs.
3. Fresh should be given proper orientations on the school rules and regulations, and some 'unknown dangers'.

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