AN ANALYSIS OF CHRISTIAN UNION STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF FACTORS INFLUENCING CULTISM IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA

JAMES OMONDI SIWA

A Thesis Submitted to the Institute of Postgraduate Studies of Kabarak University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award of Doctor of Philosophy in Theology

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Signed:_____ Date:_____

Dr. William Chesaina Kipkoros

Senior Lecturer, School of Education, Humanities and Social Scinces

Kabarak University

Signed:_____ Date:_____

Dr. Japheth Kigen

Senior Lecturer, School of Education, Humanities and Social Scinces

Kabarak University

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DEDICATION

This Research Thesis is dedicated to my wife Dr. Alice Wairimu Omondi and our children: Arch. Brian Siwa Omondi, Steve Waithaka Omondi and Cynthia Ojow Omondi for their tremendous support and prayers which strengthened me to do this study.

I also dedicate this work to the Fellowship of Christian Unions (FOCUS Kenya) for the experience they gave me for many years of working with Christian Unions in Universities in Kenya. During this time, the desire for this study was conceived.

ABSTRACT

Studies show that cultism is prevalent and increasing among students in universities with growing concern due to its destructive results such as suicides, drug abuse, crimes, unrest, homicide, withdrawal from family, academic malpractices, failure, attrition, psychological and financial exploitation, among others. The purpose of this study was to analyze the Christian Union (CU) students' perception of factors influencing cultism in public universities in Kenya. The specific objectives were to analyze the CU students' perception of family background, socio-psychological manipulation, sense of belonging, theological grounding, and peer pressure as factors influencing cultism in public universities in Kenya. The study employed a mixed method research design and was 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 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 findings based on the regression analysis showed that the Christian Union students perceived the factors as influencing cultism in this order of strength: a sense of belonging ($\beta=0.222$; $p<0.05$),theological grounding ($\beta=0.194$; $p<0.05$),family background ($\beta=0.186$; $p<0.05$),peer pressure ($\beta=0.180$; $p<0.05$) and socio-psychological manipulation ($\beta=0.160$; $p<0.05$). The study concludes that family background can determine a student's vulnerability to cultism, cult members take advantage of students psychological anguish by posing to provide solutions to all their problems but manipulate them; cults prey on fragile learners who are emotionally exposed, lonely and seeking for identity; university students who lack adequate spiritual and biblical instruction may be recruited into cults, and cults use peers to source and retain recruits. The study recommends that families should be educated on the dangers of cultism, encouraged to study the Bible, and the freshmen be trained on critical thinking to discern and avoid deception of cultism to prevent recruitment. Moreover, the university Chaplains and CU Patrons should be facilitated to monitor the preachers who come to the University. The CU in universities should develop internal policies to attract and retain their members so as to curb cultism.

Keywords: *Christian Union Students, Cults, Perceptions, Cultism and Public University*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AGM   Annual General meeting

AIDS   Acquired immune deficiency syndrome

CEI   Cult Education Institute

CHU   Chuka University

CIC   Cult Information Centre

CRI   Cult Research Institute

CU   Christian Union

DCI   Department of Criminal Investigation

EU   Egerton University

FOCUS   Fellowship of Christian Unions Kenya

HIV   Human Immuno-deficiency virus

ICC   International Christian Church

IFES   International Fellowship of Evangelical students

IVF   Intervarsity Fellowship

JKUAT   Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

KU   Kenyatta University

KUREC   Kabarak University Research Ethics Committee

MSU   Maseno University

MU   Moi University

NACOSTI   National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovations

NASEC   National students' executive committee

NCCK   National Council of Churches of Kenya

NCM   New Charismatic Movements

NIV   New International Version

SA   South Africa

SCM   Students Christian Movement

SGBS   Small Group Bible study

SPSS   Statistical Package for Social Sciences

TM   Transcendental Meditation

CONCEPTUAL AND OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Christian Union Students: Refers to undergraduate students pursuing various Bachelor's degree programs and are members of the Christian Union which is a registered interdenominational association of Christian students and are affiliated to the Fellowship of Christian Unions (FOCUS). CUs subscribe to the doctrinal basis of the International Fellowship of Evangelical students (IFES) as contained in Appendix VI.

Cult: The term cult   has been used to refer to any group or movement that excludes itself   from mainline faith as taught in the Bible to foster new doctrines and group practices   after the teaching of the founder (Kigame, 2018). Lalich (2017) adds that a cult can be described as a bounded movement committed to a charismatic leader who upholds a transcendent ideology and demands total commitment from members, such commitment is enforced through systems of control and systems of influence. In this study, the term cult refers to campus-based new religious, pseudo religious or non-religious charismatic minority movements whose spiritual devotion, beliefs, spirituality and practices are considered binding on members but repugnant to biblical teaching and social order**.**

Cultism: According to Ajayi, Ekundayo, and Osalusi (2010), cultism refers to the secret rituals by associations whose membership, admission, policy, initiation, and mode of operation are secret and negatively affect both members and nonmembers. Aniekpeno (2017) clarifies 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 refers to the recruitment, involvement, participation, commitment to or spiritual devotion in campus-based new 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**.**

Occultism: Occult refers to hidden interest or practice beyond the natural human senses such as witchcraft, and esoteric or mystical practices aimed at attaining personal power, including fortunetelling, divination, spiritism, magic and demonic forces. In this study occultism is referred to only in the sense of shared components of secrecy and overt rituals related to cultism and the terms cult and occult are not used interchangeably.

Peer pressure: This refers to the social influence students can have on each other due to the desire for acceptance, inclusion, and recognition among their age group and acquaintances.

Perception: Refers to the way students view and interpret the factors influencing cultism.

Public University: This refers to government established and owned secular Universities which are regulated and fully financed by the government through public funds.

Sense of Belonging: Refers to the strong desire to be associated with or attached to a group or community for fulfilment of specific needs such as love, friendship, identity, spiritual, care and concern.

Socio-Psychological Manipulation: This concept refers to the social influence which is aimed at modifying the behaviour of students using mind control tactics.

Theological Grounding: Whereas theological grounding may be construed to refer to the general theological orientation, persuasions and contemporary trends in this study, theological grounding refers to the level of biblical knowledge and spiritual, doctrinal awareness, discipleship and stability of the practice of the Christian faith of a university student.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the background to the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, the scope of the study, the limitations of the study, and assumptions of the study.

1.1 Background to the Study

Cultism, has over the years, made headlines around the world. The stories behind these cults, origins, leaders, and demise are fascinating and often disturbing. Many scholars have described cultism as extreme devotion and enthusiasm to a cause or principle with a religious leaning, whose activities and adherents seem esoteric to non-members (Nnajieto & Ahamefula, 2015). Aniekpeno (2017) concurs with the above authors 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. Ene, Inaja and Ukwetang (2013) defined cultism as the secret beliefs of the groups that are only made known to those initiated into the cults. Additionally, Ajayi, Ekundayo and Osalusi (2010) viewed cultism as a secret society whose activities take place at night and include the use of signs, and oaths; members are bound to total secrecy regarding their involvement.

The term cult has been used to refer to any group or movement that excludes itself from mainline faith as taught in the Bible to foster new doctrines and group practices after the teaching of the founder (Kigame, 2018). Lalich (2017) concurs with Kigame' s assertion and reveals that the term describes a bounded movement committed to a charismatic leader who upholds a transcendent ideology and demands total commitment from members. Lalich further opines that such commitment is enforced through systems of

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control and systems of influence. This study applied the Bounded Choice theory developed by Lalich (2004) to investigate the Christian Union student's perception of factors influencing cultism in public universities in Kenya.

Oyemwinmina and Aibieyi (2015) define a cult as a secret and exclusive group which is committed to a common purpose and whose activities constitute cultism. On the other hand, Ajayi, Ekundayo, and Osalusi (2010) posit that cultism refers to the secret rituals by associations whose membership, admission, policy, initiation, and mode of operation are secret and negatively affect both members and nonmembers.

A study conducted by Smah (2001) in Universities in the Middle Belt Zone in Nigeria, revealed that 67.9 % of the students were aware of the existence of certain cult-related organizations on Campus, whereas a typical campus of Universities in Nigeria could have as many as 40 cult groups. 69.63 % of the students indicated that cult groups operated violently. A study by Ajitoni and Olaniyan (2018) on causes and panacea to the problem of cultism in the Nigerian Education System revealed that cultism was amalady, hindering effective teaching and pleasant learning. A study by Tete (2020) found that cult groups were considered criminal gangs, in Rivers State and Nigeria, and are proscribed by law due to their involvement in criminal activities like kidnapping, armed robbery, assassinations, and extortion.

Cults originally existed as organs of traditional society to maintain law and order and to ensure a high degree of moral decency according to Ajayi, Ekundayo and Osalusi (2010). Chebli, Kallon, Harleston and Mansaray (2007) concur with the above authors that cultism had existed for long without destructive consequences until the twentieth century when the issue of cultism in tertiary education institutions took a negative turn, becoming violent. The authors further reveal that the purposes for joining cult groups included sociological needs (30.0 %), political needs (21.5 %), among others further

asserting that 58.6% of the student respondents indicated that they knew over 21.0 % of their colleagues who were cultic members, whereas 62.9% of staff members stated that they knew students who belonged to specific cult groups. Their findings also revealed that 40.2 % of the students attributed Campus violence to cultism. The above reported that the majority of their respondents, both students and staff, attributed indiscipline, violence, and lawlessness to the impact of cultism. They finally reported that 58.4 % of the students and 56.1 % of the staff respectively recommended banning cultism and blaming cultism as a menace on university campuses. Cultism therefore is a threat to the University students and this necessitates a study particularly the Christian Union students' perception of the factors influencing cultism in public universities in Kenya.

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 at the University of Buffalo where 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. Zaveri (2019), reveals that Pennsylvania State University had suspended a fraternity following the death of a teenager. This happened at an initiation ritual, further positing that fraternities have been associated with deadly parties and hazing rituals as was the case in July 2017, when a former student at Louisiana State University was convicted of homicide and sentenced to three months for his role in the hazing death of an 18-year-old fraternity pledge in the process of initiation ritual.

In the United Kingdom, Wallis (2003) found out that Manchester University student's 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 due to its teaching that non-members were doomed and for requiring members to recruit their friends as proof of their own commitment to the group. Wallis further asserts that the Church of Scientology recruited on campus in Wales among vulnerable, curious and idealistic students. Howarth (1994) of the Cult Information Centre (CIC) concurs and posits that an estimated over 500 cult movements in the United Kingdom searching for intelligent, idealistic, spiritually curious students with good economic prospects.

A study by Rotimi (2005) revealed that fraternities and sororities, are prevalent in American universities where they are referred to as Greek clubs because of their Greek alphabet names and symbols. In agreement with this assertion, Rosenberg and Mosca (2016) also reports that in the USA, a public university in the Middle Atlantic States suspended a fraternity (a cultic group for males only) after one of its initiates committed suicide due to forced sex and snorting of cocaine, indicating that there was rape, hazing, castration, intoxication, stealing and death of nine people between 2006 and 2014 in cultic pledging rituals in universities.

The above authors further reveal that at Denison University, 34% of the students were involved in cultism, 30% at Villanova University were either members of a fraternity or sorority, 35% at Lafayette College, University of North Carolina-Wilmington, 40% at North-western University, Furman University 50%, Bradley University 33%, 51% at Dartmouth were involved in either a fraternity or sorority. In Tulane University 41% of undergraduates were involved in Greek Life, while at Southern Methodist University, over 33% of students at Transylvania University Greek life 53% South-western

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University 37%. William Woods University 41% of students are members, DePauw University 70% of students. Westminster College 42% Lehigh University 43% involved in Greek life. Baker University in Kansas 42% Kettering University 36%. Washington and Lee University, 77% of students, are members of Greek organizations. These reports indicate both the prevalence and the dangers paused by cultism among university students such as death, involvement in drug abuse, crimes including rape, and other forms of immoral acts. This necessitates an investigation into the Kenyan scene so as to establish the Christian Union student's perception of factors influencing cultism. This is aimed at ultimately preventing student participation in cultism and saving lives.

Cultism has been considered a crisis in the Nigerian universities (Omebe & Omobe 2015). Tete (2020) adds 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) agrees with Tete that cultism hinders effective teaching and learning due to violence, chaos and lawlessness. This supports the assertion of Onyemwinmina and Aibieyi (2015) that cultism is a growing social menace in universities in Nigeria. Mediayanose (2016) and Nnam (2014) concur with the said authors that cultism in universities threatens life and peaceful co-existence due to its violent, destructive, and disruptive nature.

Studies have reported that in Sierra Leone universities, there were incidents of cultist activities on campuses, with oath taking, and blood sucking ceremonies, cases of burglary, and rape involving sons and daughters of prominent members of society were committed under the influence of drugs, such as cocaine among others (Uweru, 2010). Uweru further asserts that new cult recruits were forced to eat uncooked food, fight with dogs, wrestle one another, perform acts of bravado, and steal. The danger of cultism is not unique to Sierra Leone. A report by Hampton (2000) indicated that authorities,

former members and students, parents, psychologists, churches, families, and theologians were bothered about an illegal combative cult referred to as the International Christian Church, which had been banned in many United Kingdom and United States universities due to suspected mind control techniques, proselytising, financial extortion, and destruction of families and was considered a dangerous cult accused of recruiting vulnerable students on Cape Town and upcountry campuses. Hampton further noted that the Rand Afrikaans University in Johannesburg banned ICC after receiving complaints and warned students against this dangerous cult which did not allow the youth to withdraw once they joined. Therefore, Bounded choice theory was applied to this study in explaining the risks associated with cultism.

Kenyan universities are not spared of the risk of cultism and according to a Kenya Gazette Notice Vol. XCVII No 10 and Notice No 991 dated 1st March 1995, a Commission of Inquiry led by Bishop Nicodemus Kirima was launched by President Daniel Toroiticharap Moi, the second President of the Republic of Kenya, to investigate allegations of the existence of devil worship in Kenya. The taskforce was to report on the linkage to drug abuse and other anti-social activities and how it had affected learning institutions and measures to deal with the menace. The Commission reported, in part, to the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK) that it had found evidence of students' involvement in cultism. It further revealed that cult recruitment was clandestine, with prospects unaware that they were being lured into a cult.

Studies have indicated that cultism is not only a problem in the Christian faith but is a universal threat which has been reported among other religions as well. As Ahmed (2018) reported, over 58 Kenyan students had abandoned universities to join Islamic terrorist groups in Somalia, Libya, and Syria in a period of three years, further stating that 14 of the students had been recruited into cultic terror organizations that year.

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Njunge (2019) reported that one of the main suspects in the Garissa University attack in 2015, which led to the deaths of 148 students and staff, had been a law student at the University of Nairobi. This underscores the existence and recruitment of students into cultism and terrorism in its various categories and relationship to terror and violence.

Whereas the focus of this study is the public universities, it is acknowledged that students in private universities may also be exposed in their capacities. A report by Kimuyu (2016) indicated that a Strathmore University student had turned himself in after killing a three-year-old child and drinking the blood in a ritual murder linked to a devil-worshiping cult. The student was later found to have committed suicide in Mathari Mental Hospital, where he had been taken for rehabilitation by Kamiti Maximum Prison after developing psychiatric problems (Omenda, 2018). With the above evidence of cultism among university students in Kenya, a study to establish the Christian Union students' perception of the factors responsible for cultism is necessary to address the malady among students.

Nyaga (2017) in a study on youth radicalization in Kenya, found that one of the major effects of cultism is radicalization, and violence, abuse of drugs such as *miraa,* tobacco, bhang, and other hard drugs Nyaga further established that males were more prone to radicalisation than females whereas university students were the most prone learners towards radicalisation. While concurring with this view, Njung'e (2019) stated that cults are associated with cases of radicalization and recruitment into terrorism, with several university students being at the forefront of carrying out cultist and terrorist activities. On the relationship between cults and radicalization, Wallis (2019) indicates that people who have been recruited into cults lose their original self, and all their emotions are suppressed then they are made to commit abhorrent acts and murders. The

Bounded choice theory Lalich (2004) will be of use in explaining the restrictive effects of cultism.

Hassan (2020) posits that cult leaders and recruiters capture the hearts, minds, and souls of the best and brightest students who are active, productive, intelligent, energetic individuals who would be useful for the cult in fund-raising, recruitment of other followers, run cult-owned businesses and even facilitate cult-related seminars. Studies have revealed that cults approach new 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. As Wangeri, Kimani and Mutweleli (2012) found out, a new environment at the university can overwhelm new students because most of them have unexplained fears and reservations about the university. Cultism, therefore, becomes a risk factor for the faith and spiritual stability of students, especially those from unstable families and those who did not have a strong theological grounding prior to joining the university. Thus, the need to establish the Christian Union students' perceptions of factors influencing cultism in public universities in Kenya

1.2 Statement of the Problem

There is evidence that the number of university students engaging in cultism is high and increasing. According to the Fellowship of Christian Unions (FOCUS 2020) annual general meeting report, the Christian union students in Kenya highlighted cultism as 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' loss of productivity, abandoning their

studies, failing their examinations, engaging in crimes, committing suicide, withdrawing from friends and family, engaging in drugs and substance abuses, immoral behaviours and they become a nuisance in the universities. This has been attributed to several factors: family background, socio-psychological manipulation, sense of belonging, theological grounding and peer pressure. 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 a sense of belonging.

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 Young Blood Saints had targeted Kenyatta University, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, and Technical University of Kenya, among others. This study attempted to establish the Christian Union students' perception of factors influencing cultism in public universities in Kenya. This study was important because the way people perceive things determine their subsequent behaviour and thus can mitigate against student vulnerability to cult recruitment.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to analyse the Christian Union students' perception of factors influencing cultism in public universities in Kenya.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The following were the objectives of this study:

i. To establish the Christian Union students' perception of the influence of family background on cultism in public universities in Kenya.

ii. To determine the Christian Union students' perception of the influence of socio-psychological manipulation on cultism in public universities in Kenya.

iii. To establish the Christian Union students' perception of the influence of the sense of belonging on cultism in public universities in Kenya.

iv. To determine the Christian Union students' perception of the influence of theological grounding on cultism in public universities in Kenya.

v. To examine the Christian Union students' perception of the influence of peer pressure on cultism in public universities in Kenya.

1.5 Research Questions of the Study

This study was guided by the following research questions:

i. How do Christian Union students perceive the influence of family background on cultism in public universities in Kenya?

ii. What is the Christian Union students' perception of the influence of socio-psychological manipulation on cultism in public universities in Kenya?

iii. How do Christian Union students perceive the influence of the sense of belonging on cultism in public universities in Kenya?

iv. How do Christian Union students perceive the influence of theological grounding on cultism in public universities in Kenya?

v. What is the Christian Union students' perception of the influence of peer pressure on cultism in public universities in Kenya?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study will potentially benefit the Christian organizations who work among the Christian Unions in public universities to understand better the phenomenon of cultism which might hamper their work in enhancing discipleship in these universities.

The research findings of this study will also be of significance to the university students since those who read the findings of this study will understand some of the factors and the related perceptions. Further, the study will create awareness to university students on the factors influencing cultism and dangers linked to cultism in the university, given that new university students are vulnerable to recruitment into cults. This study will also benefit the university Christian Union patrons to develop strategies for defending biblical doctrine in the Christian Unions and prevent the prevalence of cultism.

The findings of this study will assist the parents in gaining a better understanding of the menace of cultism and causal factors thereby be able to advise their children appropriately when they are joining the universities as fresh students. The findings of this study will inform policy- makers since cultism has been a matter of national interest and concern in the past. This will help restrain the spread of cultism in university campuses as well as in society.

Moreover, the study will add to the field of knowledge in Practical theology and Christian apologetics. Equally, the upcoming researchers may use the findings to establish a knowledge gap for future studies and will form comparative data for other studies done in other universities and contexts.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This study was confined to six selected public universities in Kenya, namely: Kenyatta University, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Egerton University, Moi University, Maseno University and Chuka University. The choice of the six public universities was based on the length of time of their existence and the Christian Union movements established within the universities. The University of Nairobi, being the oldest university in Kenya, was used for the pilot study.

This study was restricted to studying Christian Union students' perception of five factors influencing cultism in public universities in Kenya namely: family background, socio-psychological manipulation, sense of belonging, theological grounding, and peer pressure.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

The study anticipated that some respondents might not give honest responses on perception of factors influencing cultism in public universities in Kenya because of the confidential nature of the subject matter. To overcome this limitation, the respondents were guaranteed confidentiality.

The study was based on personal opinions of the respondents which implies that their responses were examined in relation to the information presented to them and not on their personal information or personal involvement in cultism. The researcher therefore assured the participants of the anonymity of the information they provided.

1.8 Assumptions of the Study

The study assumed that all the respondents would provide open, honest, reliable, and valid responses. It also assumed that all materials used were relevant, reliable, and adequate for the successful completion of this research. Further, the research assumed that the existing literature gap on the Christian Union students' perception of factors influencing cultism in public universities in Kenya was bridged at the end of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This study was an analysis of Christian Union students' perceptions of factors influencing cultism in public universities in Kenya. This chapter encompasses the historical background of cultism, cultism in universities, recruitment and initiation into cultism, categories of cultism, indicators of cultism, biblical perspective of cultism, empirical literature review, theoretical review, and the conceptual framework.

2.2 Historical Background of Cultism

An overview of the historical development of cultism in the church and society was essential for an understanding of the factors influencing cultism and particularly the Christian Union students' perceptions of the factors, which was the purpose of this study.

The Early Church grappled with cultism as early as in the lifetime of the apostles who struggled with issues such as heresies and Gnosticism which was a 1st century pseudo-Christian and great rival of the church well into the 2nd century (Needham, 2002). The author further posits that Gnostics denied the incarnation and the physical resurrection of Jesus contrary to the teaching of the Scriptures. The 4th century Arian Controversy was another cultic and heretic challenge that the church confronted regarding the deity of Christ. Arius who was a priest from Alexandria in the early 4th century asserted that Jesus Christ was a created being and not co-eternal with God the Father, fundamentally challenging the doctrine of the Trinity. The teachings of Arius were condemned as heretical by the Council of Nicea in AD 325. In response, the Council formulated the Nicene Creed, affirming the co-eternity of the Son with the Father. Arianism however did not dissipate but his followers continued to propagate his teachings. This necessitated

another Church Council held at Constantinople in AD 381 during which Arius was condemned and his teachings were labeled heretical. (McGrath, 1996).

The Church grappled with Gnosticism, which offered a dualistic view of the world and emphasized secret knowledge for salvation, rejected Gnostic teachings, asserting the sufficiency of Christ's revelation and the importance of the material world as part of God's creation. The writings of early Church Fathers, assisted in mitigating Gnostic thought (Baker, 2013). Pelagianism, was another heresy which emphasized human free will and denied original sin, arguing that individuals could attain salvation through their efforts. The Council of Carthage in AD 418 formally condemned Pelagianism, reinforcing the doctrine of original sin and grace (O'Collins &Farrugia, 2012).

Docetism was considered heretical because of the claim that Jesus's physical body was an illusion and that he only appeared to suffer and die. The Council of Carthage in AD 418 condemned the teaching as heretic. Nestorianism also arose in the early 5th century, emphasizing a distinction between the two natures of Christ—divine and human. The Council of Ephesus in AD 431 condemned the teaching as erroneous. Catharism emerged in the 12th century promoting dualistic beliefs and viewing the material world as evil and rejecting the sacraments of the Church (Hastings, 2010).

As indicated above, the Early Medieval church also struggled with heretic ideologies such as Docetism, Donatism in the 4th and 5th centuries which held the view that they alone were the one true church that could baptize ordain or celebrate communion as opposed to mainline church which was considered apostate church due to non-biblical teachings (Needham, 2004).Needham further notes that the medieval Neo Pelagianism was another cultic challenge to the renewed belief in the Pelagian heresy that God grants grace to those who do their best thus teaching that salvation was through works and human freewill which later formed the basis for the reformation.

In the later years, the Inquisition, a special court with peculiar powers of prosecution was established in the 12th century as a process for investigating and prosecuting heresy. This continued into the 13th and 14th centuries and later in the 16th century as a means of prosecution and persecution of heredicts especially by the papact and the lay governments of the day. Kerrigan (2014), Dowley (1990), Moore (2011), and Hastings, 2010). Following such occurrences, the church then instituted excommunication as a tool, of social ostracism aimed to maintain communal integrity and deter others from adopting heretical beliefs (Baker, 2013), (O'Collins & Farrugia, 2012). The Prosperity Gospel movement, gained prominence in the late 20th century. It taught that faith, positive speech, and donations to religious causes can lead to financial and physical blessings. (Piper, 2010). Therefore, the Church during the Reformation era and well into the Modern Church was not spared from doctrinal, theological, and spiritual elements of cultism and heresies. The New Age spirituality emerged in the late 20th century, the Emergent Church Movement, also became prominent the late 20th and early 21st centuries and posed a challenge to the church in the modern and postmodern era. (Wright, 2006; Keller, 2008).

Open theism is a theological perspective that arose in the late 20th century as a response to the problem of evil and human free will. The Hyper-Grace movement emerged in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, associated with charismatic movements and emphasized God's grace and downplaying the need for repentance (Brown, 2015). Syncretism which seems to blend different religious beliefs and practices, has posed a challenge to the doctrinal integrity of the church in the recent years. (McGrath, 2011).Universalism or the belief that all people will ultimately be saved, regardless of their beliefs or actions in life is among the contemporary heretic positions informing cultism and dumpening the missional agenda of the church today. There has been a

significant growth of Charismatic, Independent, Spirit churches in Africa, with diverse teachings and the new forms of spirituality some of which are considered cultic (Hastings, 1999).

Studies therefore reveal that heresies which are aspects of cultism, have been of concern in the world for many years. Singer and Lalich (1995) reveal that over 900 American adherents the Peoples Temple led by Rev. Jim Jones died in Jonestown Guyana in South America at his command after they were coerced to take poison in a revolutionary suicide on November 18, 1978. The members believed they were doing God's will and believed in Jim Jones' prophecies. It is reported that the adherents had been often engaged in suicide drills and loyalty tests called White Nights. Hassan (2020) concurs with the above authors that among the dead on that day included a United States congressman Leo Ryan together with four members of the press, the cult leader Jim Jones plus more than 300 children. Haworth (1994) adds that the adherents of Jim Jones were forced to drink poison.

The above cases became the focus of the world's attention for a number of years. As Hunt (2017) posits, during the Jonestown Massacre in Guyana in South America members followed a claim that the Armageddon or end of the world had come. Oxtoby and Segal (2012) agree with Hunt and refers to the matter as a tragedy. Ombati (2019) adds that the people died following what he refers to as a world-rejecting personality and an end-time cult. Hassan (2020) concurs and asserts that Jim Jones, David Koresh, Ron Hubbard, and Sun Myung Moon were leaders of destructive cults where people were manipulated through social psychology methods to make the people loyal and obedient to them without question. This is what Lalich (2004) considers in the model of Bounded choice theory.

Several examples of destructive, totalistic and authoritarian cults, that wreak havoc on both members and society, such as the People's Temple, Aum Shinrikyo, the Children of God, the Unification Church, Scientology, the Watchtower Society, the Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments, the Order of the Solar Temple, followers of Vissarion or Nxivm which was a sex cult led by Keith Raniere. The latter was a cult but disguised themselves as a women empowerment group (Lalich, 2017). Singer and Lalich (1993) added that in Texas, 80 members, including 22 children of the Branch Davidians cult led by David Koresh, were burnt to death at the Waco compound days in 1993. Ombati (2019) adds that the movement was a breakaway sect from Seventh Day Adventist Church. They broke away to protest what they called worldliness in the Church and proclaimed David Koresh as the new end-time Messiah.Oxtoby and Segal (2012) agree that the 1993 suicide of 80 people at the Branch Davidian in Waco Texas indicated a group of people who died anticipating a new world order in which they would be rewarded for their loyalty.

Lalich (2004) revealed that between 1994 and 1997, a total of 74 members of a cult known as the Order of the Solar Temple in Canada, Switzerland, and France died, including infants and children, in what was considered brutal and ritual deaths. Oxtoby and Segal (2012) adds that the Solar Temple cult in the 1990s led more than 70 people to death in Switzerland, France, and Canada. Oxtoby and Segal (2012) also reveal the suicides of 37 members of Heaven's Gate in California in 1997. Lalich (2004) agrees and states that in 1997 in Rancho Santa Fe, California, 39 members of the Heaven's Gate cult committed collective suicide, whereas two more followers of Applewhite committed suicide within six months after that.

China's ministry of public security warned against spiritual courses offered by some Indian religious schools which were mired in sexual assault cases (Introvigne&

Richardson (2001). Lalich (2017) states that the New Age cults emerged with the same goals but disguised under new names. Ombati (2019), reporting on the dangers of cults, reveals a cultic group known as AumShinriKyo in Japan which launched a gas attack on innocent members of the public in protest at what they considered the materialistic society, further revealing that a Taiwanese actress Yi Nengjing, also referred to as Annie Yi, promoted a spiritual course offered by south India-based Oneness University.

Langone (2016) identifies the following as examples of cults: the Church of Scientology, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, the Unification Church, Scientology, The Way International, and Divine Light Mission. Kigame (2018) along with Langone identifies non-African cults to include Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism, Unification Church, among others which pose psychological and physical dangers to their members and others. Martin (2003) identified Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Science, Mormons, and Unity School of Christianity. On the other hand, Ekeayanwu and Igbinoba (2007) found many other cults including Black Beret, Black Ofals, Black Brothers, Black Axe, and Black Scorpion, especially among university students.

According to Lim (2019), In Australia at the University of Sydney students were warned against a dangerous pseudo-Christian cult known as Shincheonji Church of Jesus, which was recruiting people around various universities in Australia, New Zealand, and South Korea, believing that its founder Lee Man-hee is the appointed successor of Jesus Christ. This group preyed on curious young Christians by withdrawing recruits from their families and friends while keeping their operations secret. Their initial teaching is not obviously heretical or a denial of orthodox Christianity, students are often unable to discern that they have joined a cult group. Its methods are highly manipulative. There is a lot of spiritual and social pressure to give a lot of money to these groups, a model of controlling people and those who do not conform to their doctrine are put under a lot of

social pressure, and guilt and time commitment can be overwhelming. The group was placed under scrutiny by the South Korean government due to their lethargy concerning the COVID-19 virus infection.(Sang-Hun, 2020).

According to Lalich (2004), in the year 2000, more than 400 members of the Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments in Uganda were brutally murdered and buried in secret mass graves; another more than 300 were burned to death in a locked church building. Oxtoby and Segal (2012) add that the murder-suicide of 780 members of the movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God in Uganda, was a case of cult death. On March 16, 2000, cult members and their families were assembled in a church hall named Noah's Ark, and all doors and windows were locked, and it was set ablaze, as Cherono (2019) adds, leading to the death of several. Kigame (2018) concurs with Cherono that the dead were set ablaze by Kibwetere who had promised his flock that the world would end on December 31, 1999, to no avail.

In Kenya, there are examples of cults such as Legio Maria, founded in the 1960s by Gaudensia Aoko (Holy Mother) and Baba Simio Melkio Messias Ondeto, the Messiah of the Blacks. Kigame (2018) further asserts that the New Jerusalem Church, a personality cult founded by Mary Akatsa based in Kawangware Nairobi and Western Kenya, King's Outreach Church, popularly known as Repentance and Holiness movement, led by David Edward Owuor among are among other African cults. There have also been concerns in the Kenyan society. According to the Kenya National Assembly official record Hansard (2000), the challenge of cultism attracted the attention of the Kenyan parliament in the year 2000 when a member of parliament for Budalangi sought the attention of Parliament on the matter of cultism concerning bizarre killings in the constituency in which three people had been murdered on suspicion of religious cultism and the MP asked the minister to investigate and expose the people who were practising cultism in the area.

Ombati (2019) reported that a Nigerian pastor was among the people who were questioned over the spread of occultism in Nairobi for luring vulnerable Kenyans into cultism alongside ten other foreigners whose churches had apparently been leading some members into dangerous occult practices. The government had deported at least 20 other foreigners, who had got work permits to work as clerics but were also linked to occult practices.

2.2.1 An Overview of Cultism in Universities

A positive view of cultism states that cult organizations were known to exist in Africa in the 18th century and were a considered a force on the economic and political life of the community and were instruments of traditional administration and guardian of morality in various communities (Nyiayaana, 2011). The author further states that cults served both the spiritual and social needs of their members and were 'institutions for social control through the execution of traditional customs, settlement of disputes, and the dispensation of justice. Kilani (2008) concurs with the said author that cult groups exist in many parts of Africa, and they are referred to as secret societies in most African societies. The secret societies groups or cult groups in traditional African societies were instituted for self and community preservation and enforcing and maintaining traditions, customs, and beliefs, determining ritual behaviour, and regulating social attitudes.

The above authors hold the view that most cult groups in Africa had a religious background, and this explains why certain festivals are concerned with these secret societies or cult groups like puberty rites, and festival for divinities. However, some cult groups are anti-social as they practiced cannibalism and other deadly practices like the EkpeOwo in Ivory Coast or Leopard Society (Kilani, 2008). Rotimi (2005) concurs with Kilani that secret cults have always existed in many parts of Nigeria and are not a new phenomenon in African social formations, adding that these are sociocultural and local

organizations that originally provided mechanisms and structures that defined the role and relationships of their group members. Rotimi further indicates that cultism has become a major social problem in Nigerian universities and reveals that membership of these secret cults provided their members status, economic, social, and political security. Chinwe and Mag (2015) added that secret cult groups are not new in African social formations. As socio-cultural organizations that developed locally, cults traditionally provided mechanisms and structures that defined the role and relationships of each cult's members. Ejike and Orizu (2015) add that cults served the spiritual and social needs of their members and, importantly, acted as institutions for social control. For example, the Nigerian Rivers State Government Law of 2004 identified 103-armed cult groups operating in the state included both University and village-based groups (Birabil & Okanezi, 2017).

The origin of cultism in Nigerian universities can be traced to the Pyrates Confraternity, also known as the National Association of Sea Dogs, that was founded by Wole Soyinka and others at the University of Ibadan in 1953 (Rotimi, 2005). Aniekpeno (2017) concurs with Rotimi that several studies have reported that the Pyrates Confraternity was started by Wole Soyinka and others who were students at the university at that time. Chinwe and Mag (2015) agree with the above authors that these were the founders of campus cultism in Nigeria whose membership was opened to every male student. For about 20 years, the Pyrate became established in all tertiary institutions as a nonviolent group. Oyemwinmina and Aibieyi (2015) posit that the Nigerian Educational Institutions were not associated with secret cults until 1952 when Wole Soyinka and six others, namely: Olumuyiwa Awe, Ralph Opara, TunjiTubi, DaignImokhuede, Pius Olegbe and OluAgunloye formed the Seadogs confraternity known as Pyrates.

Whereas the above authors recorded some positive aspects observed in some African communities, the university campuses have gained less but suffered more from cultism which reported many cases of violence, immorality and lawlessness. Cults begin with noble ideas, but they eventually lose their focus. For instance the original aims of the Pyrates Confraternity such as high academic standards were later abandoned due to doctrinal differences and potential members' inability to attain the standards, so it gradually mutated into a secret cult and many protestant splinter cultic groups (Thomas, 2002). Surajo (2018) concurs with Thomas that these splinter groups included Eiye Confraternity at the University of Ibadan and the Bucanneers, a splinter from the Sea Dogs and up to 53 secret cult groups in Nigerian Universities. According to Molagun (2006), these secret cults developed into terrorism-producing criminals with the sole aim of destruction and as Oyemwinmina and Aibieyi (2015) concur that these were contrary to the original goals that led to their formation. Chinwe and Mag (2015) concur that these secret cults spread from Ibadan University to other University campuses and in the 1980s, confraternities spread over the 300 higher education institutions in Nigeria.

By 1984 when Wole Soyinka dissociated himself from this emerging trend and initiated the abolition of the Pyrates confraternity in all tertiary institutions, the phenomena of violent cults had established themselves and taken a different turn (Chinwe& Mag, 2015). According to Soyinka (2002), the Pyrates wanted to be different from what they referred to as a stodgy establishment and its pretentious products in a new educational institution different from the culture of hypocritical and affluent middleclass, different from alienated colonial aristocrats adding that the confraternity was non-violent, and its activities were never shrouded in secrecy but resembled the sororities and fraternities found in many American university campuses. Soyinka further pointed out that the original Confraternity did not swear any oath of secrecy, nor binding of blood, but the

identities of members were known to both students and staff in the university, but later changed into secret and harmful groups.

The above authors have studied the origin of campus cultism in Nigeria and the ultimate spread to other university campuses. There is a need, however, for a study of cultism in Kenyan public Universities with the view of establishing the Christian Union students' perception of factors influencing cultism in public universities in Kenya. This is because cultism affects the Kenyan universities with consequences which demand mitigation and prevention.

2.2.2 Recruitment and Initiation into Cultism

Given that this study sought to establish the Christian Union students' perception of the factors influencing cultism, an understanding of the recruitment and initiation strategies will be vital. It has been established that the modes of operation in cultism include recruitment, initiation activities and rituals carried out by members (Cherono, 2019). Singer (1994) agrees that cults use deception to recruit and pursue members to gain power and money. In addition researchers such as Wallis (2003); Ross (2014); Wangeri,Kimani and Mutweleli (2012) among other authors posit that cults look for vulnerable students at moments of transition such as moving away from home, new students joining campus, those close to graduation, or those who have just suffered a broken relationship, or lost someone significant to them, or were dissatisfied with their lives in one way or other at the point of suggestion to join a cult. Wallis further opines that cultists employ conversion tactics including indoctrination, or brainwashing are to bind the members to the groups.

Cults target the best among students for their own benefit, and as Lalich (2019) and Hassan (2020) reveal, cults seek intelligent people who are intellectually curious, alert, idealistic, and young people generally make easy targets.

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Wallis (2003) identifies traits of cult recruitment to include psychological conditioning techniques used to eliminate non-cult ideas such as mind narrowing chants, confession to destroy the individual ego, isolation and separation from family, friends and society, reward, and punishment, change of diet, sleep deprivation and fatigue, removal of privacy, love bombing, hypnosis, meditation, peer-group pressure, and rejection of old values. Wallis (2019). Those who ask questions are considered doubters who must be coerced to believe wholeheartedly. They are deemed useless to the movement and are accused of vanity or arrogance if they resist and are shamed into submission. They are then encouraged to either recruit their families and friends or cut all ties with them.

According to Singer and Lalich (1995), cults are led by self-proclaimed and charismatic leaders who demand all veneration, make all decisions, and control most aspects of the personal lives of those who follow them. Lalich (2004) reveals that cult members are normal people of above-average intelligence, come from stable backgrounds, and may not have a history of psychological illness. Hassan (2020) concurs with Lalich that under the right circumstances, even sane, rational, well-adjusted people can be persuaded to believe the most outrageous ideas. Langone (2016) posits that no psychopathology profile has been associated with cult involvement. Haworth (1994), from the Cult Information Centre in the United Kingdom, found out that people do not join cults but rather are recruited by a method rather than a message and people are held in cults because of psychological coercion. Haworth further argues that normal people from normal families are recruited into cults, the victims are usually sincere persons who need love and help, but most likely the cult recruit is from an economically sound family background, has good intelligence, good education and who is idealistic adding that whereas most cults can recruit and control a person in a matter of three or four days, leaving the group is not as easy. Loneliness, depression, and uncertainty expose people

to cults (Curtis, 1993). These are well captured by the Bounded Choice theory which explains the bondage within the cults.

Cults flourish during periods of social and political turbulence and during breakdowns in the structure and rules of the prevailing society (Singer, 1995). Cults use techniques such as love-bombing by which stressed, emotionally vulnerable target cults flood that person with affection, flattery, and validation. Lalich (2004) asserts that cultists use thought-stopping techniques and mind control to increase their members' dependency on the leader through coercive persuasion techniques. Haworth (1994) reveals that this resulted in a potential recruit being broken down physically and mentally and made highly vulnerable to suggestion. This pressure usually continues to a breaking point referred to as snapping by Conway and Siegelman (1995) after which the subject is left in a state of hyper suggestibility where the critical ability is severely impaired. Simultaneously there is usually a sudden personality change, a change for the worse resulting in a bounded reality (Lalich, 2004).

As Oyemwinmina and Aibieyi (2015) also reveal, cult organizations use parties as a gimmick to entice their victims, during which they are held at gunpoint and taken for initiation rites and initiated by force. Rotimi (2005) concurs with the above authors and revealed that during initiation ceremonies, recruits are beaten to harden them and to test their endurance of pain. This is consistent with Ross (2014) of Cult Education Institute (CEI) assertion that cult recruiters intensify on the same people and continue to break them down. Anybody can be tricked whether from good families or from troubled families. This is because many cultists approach through a trusted friend, a co-worker, or someone familiar. It is necessary therefore to caution that no one is invincible since cults attack during moments of difficulty.

Several factors have been advanced as contributing to youth involvement in campus cultism. Rotimi (2005) found out, some of the factors include the lack of strong student unions, erosion of academic culture, among others. Other factors include the need for students to liberate themselves from the bondage of one group over the other, physical abuse and a search for revenge, ignorance, and fear of failing semester examination or academic frustration (Girigiri, 2013). Some students join cults to protect themselves from attack and threats from other cults, to ensure academic success through undue influence, desire to boost one's ego, emulation of parents who are cult members, and also due to the desire to subdue other colleagues by instilling fears into them (Adedayo, 2001).

Oyemwimina and Aibiye (2015) posit that many students join cult groups as an excuse to carry out vengeance or as a reaction to frustrations and social pressure. Ogidefa (2016) opines that some students join campus cults to gain respect and recognition or acquire protection against sanctions from community members. Ogidefa further posits that students join cult groups for reasons based on past negative experiences at the family level and to diffuse frustrations from the family, schools, and society; for wealth and financial assistance, to hide their weaknesses and inferiority complexes carried from parental and home backgrounds.

2.2.3 Categories of Cultism

Although this study focused on the issues of cultism as propagating teachings and doctrines considered repugnant to biblical teaching, an assessment of the existing categories of cultism was important for a better understanding of cult manifestations among university students in Kenya. Scholars have identified several categories of cults. Kahongeh (2019) found out that most cults are affiliated with religion, but there are also psychological, political, commercial and New Age cults, all of which exert brutal control on their members and as Hughes (1993) concurs, cults fall into different categories such

as religious, therapy or self-Awareness, political, commercial, New Age, satanic/ritual abuse cults, among others. On the one hand Langone (2001) established that cults can be psychotherapeutic, political, commercial, and religious. On the other hand, Durotoye and Ajere (2004) found that there are two distinct types of secret cults; the traditional cults which are religious and cultural secret cults, and the modern cults which are those initiated in the universities.

Cults fall into four basic categories: religious, psychological, commercial, political cults (Roads, 1997). Ross (2014) also asserts that there exist one-on-one cults which are characterised by a dominant partner in a relationship such as in the family. It has thus been established that cults can be started around any topic, whether religion, philosophy, or politics (Singer, 1994). Lalich (2019) adds that not all cults are religious, some are political, therapy-based, or focused on self-improvement. Langone (1999) posited that cults may be psychotherapeutic, political, commercial, and religious. Singer and Lalich (1995) observed that cults may be categorized by nine broad themes Lalich (2017): religious, Eastern-based, New Age, business, political, psychotherapy/human potential, occult, one-on-one, and lifestyle or personality cults.

All the above categories of cults have common features which mark them out as pseudo-religious and bounded choice groups which demand the total social, psychological, spiritual and theological attention and radical commitment of the student, taking the place of God in their lives (Kigame, 2018). The Christian Union students, therefore, need to pay special attention to the challenge of cultism in all its manifestations, and especially in as far as it infiltrates the universities and the lives of students.

2.2.4 Biblical Perspectives of Cultism

This section deals with the biblical perspectives of cultism. The Old Testament reveals God's warning against idolatry and worship of any alternative deities, be they spiritual or

material in nature. In the Law, Exodus 20:1-7, Deuteronomy 5:6-11, 13:1-11, 18:20-22 reveal that God placed serious consequences against people following false prophets and dreamers who, upon fulfilment of their prophecies would entice people away from God be they family members, peers, or other agents of socialization such as the religious leaders, capable of influencing people into cultism. Kigame (2018) concurs with this biblical position and referring to 1John 4:1-6 asserts that the Bible holds the view that all teachings and religiosity ought to be tested for truth and if the proponents were proved presumptuous or idolatrous, they were to be put to death and further adds that in biblical view, critical thought and spiritual discernment is required in avoidance of cultism. Lalich (2004) agrees with Kigame's assertion of rational thought and asserts that charismatic leaders of cults do not allow doubts nor give room for questions but are subjective, autocratic, and domineering. Grudem (1994) refers to 2 John 10-11 which forbids the church from receiving false teachers and compares them with the antichrist.

In Isaiah 40:18-20; 44:9-20, the prophet confronted idolatry and false security of the people redirecting them to the ways of the Lord. In Jeremiah 14:14 the prophet castigated the false prophets who were prophesying lies in God's name urging God's people to be discerning and avoid deception. In Ezekiel 13:3-4, the prophet rebuked the false prophets who relied on their own insights rather than on God's word and led the people astray. Micah the prophet also condemned those who exploited the vulnerable people instead called for true prophets who could promote God's justice to the people (Micah 3:11-12). Haggai in his time confronted the personal prosperity which made the people to neglect the house and work of God (Haggai 1:4) inviting the people to repentance and restoration back to God. These prophets among others attempted to refocus people back to right and sound teaching and away from heresies, false prophesies, manipulation, and exploitation of their day.

Martin (2003) remarks that genuine faith, sound biblical teaching and practice help to prevent vulnerability to doctrines taught by cultists. Martin further asserts that many Christian cults are opposed to the Bible as the final authority for faith and practice. He also reveals that whereas cults such as Scientology, Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses claim to be Christian yet they reject the fundamental biblical teachings as the Trinity, the deity and humanity of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, the fallenness of man, salvation through the atoning death of Christ, the person and work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life and in the church, the second coming of Christ, and the last things including the eternity of heaven and hell, they deny the existence of angels, demons but focus on the terrestrial and material world and others are occultic and invoke the satanic powers over their adherents. Kigame (2018) concurs with Martin and adds that cults such as Christian Science and Mormons among others, claim that their writings are from the Bible but contradict and distort the biblical teaching and instead invoke human authority as superior to the Bible. Many cults also cast aspersions on the church's integrity, apostolicity and universality and depict the church as irredeemably apostate as was taught by the Repentance and Holiness movement in Kenya. This agrees with the claims of Sire (2009) that cults twist the Scriptures to propagate their own doctrine while insisting that they are biblical.

Mathew 24:13-15, 24: 4, 23-26, 36-44 records that Jesus warned against false prophets and deceivers who would come among the people, but the believers would discern them by their fruits since they would introduce destructive heresies and deny the sovereign Lord. Jesus also condemned the false teachers' hypocrisy and legalism, terming them misleading and binding to their members. This biblical caution concurs with Lalich (2004) assertion regarding the transcendent belief system used by cultists to portray physical and spiritual salvation as inaccessible to the ordinary adherents when in an

actual sense even the charismatic leaders of these groups have not attained the ideal, they advocate for, yet the charismatic cultic leaders lure their adherents into secret bondage in the pretext of freedom but the followers to end up in bounded reality.

Hale (2007) comments that Jesus warned of apostasy, false prophets, and increased wickedness and admonished his disciples to stand firm and avoid end-time deception from false prophets and false Christ and false messiahs who would perform miracles and deceive many. Some would come predicting the time for his return arguing that no one knew the day nor the time including Jesus and the angels. Hassan (2020) concurs with this biblical position and reports that David Koresh, Jim Jones, and Apple white of Heaven's Gate cult led many to death through this deception regarding the end time and as Hunt (2017) concurs with Hassan that Kibwetere of the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God Church in Uganda was an apocalyptic cult which burned about 1000 people to death inside a church under the guise that end time had come. Adeleye (1999), referring to 1 Timothy 4:1-2 posits that dangerous and perilous times, which Paul warned about in had come and the events and trends indicate the fulfilment of Pauls warning, further positing that the conflict between church and cult were part of the perils. Kigame (2018) concurs with Adeleye and reveals that in 2 Peter 2:1-3; 1 Corinthians 1:12; Galatians 1:1-9, the human tendency to revere and follow human models and heroes such as charismatic leaders instead of following Christ. Kigame further exegetes Acts 4:12, 5:36-37 and faults the cults which provide an alternative means of salvation, yet the Bible asserts that salvation is found only Christ Jesus as opposed to cult leaders who drew a large following such as Theudas and Judas both of whom died, and their followers were scattered.

In Acts 20:28-30, Ephesians 4:13- 14, 2 Timothy 3:1-8 the believers are warned against false teachers from within the Church, such as the Nicholaitans recorded in Revelation

chapter 2 and 3, the peers and familiar people who are associated with deception and who seek to recruit followers after them. The Bible asserts that false teachers are like wolves and were viewed as treacherous, unfaithful, deceptive people, greedy for plunder and exploitative in other ways. According to Keener (2014), the above scriptures express the need for theological grounding as a shield against the allure of falsehood and deception especially in the last days when false prophets would come and would be self-seeking, greedy for money, hateful, with no self-control, brutal, rash, pleasure minded, and legalistic. Lalich (2004) alludes to the misuse of power by authoritative charismatic cult leaders and peers to lure followers for profit while they deceive and manipulate their adherents for material gain. Fleming (2005) asserts that cultists are cunning and deceitful, and they masquerade as Christians whereas they mislead vulnerable people who may be curious and searching for a better life but suddenly end up as captives to the cultists.

As Akaranga and Ongonga (2013) found out, the victims of cultists end up as religious but not spiritual people. They would operate only by the rules, rituals, and regulations of the charismatic leaders. Colossians 2:8, 16-23, indicates the need for caution against being entrapped into bondage through empty and deceptive philosophy and ideology propagated by cults. Lalich (2017) concurs that cults can develop around any subject be it philosophy, religion, political ideology or even commercial interests but ultimately lead to a bounded choice where the followers are not free to question or negate the groups ideologies forced upon them and enforced through stringent systems of control and influence (Lalich, 2004).

In the Bible, the example given in 1 Timothy 2:4, the genuine faith that was in the grandmother, Eunice and in the mother Loice, and dwelt in Timothy which underscores the central position occupied by the family in the spiritual formation of the individual.

Referring to the apostate and exclusive nature of cultists, Martin (2003) posits that in 1 John 2:19; 2 Corinthians 11:13–15; Romans 12:9; 1 Timothy 4:1-5, 1Tim 5:15 Titus 1:10-11; 2:1, 2 Peter 2:1-21 the Scriptures reveal that the false teachers were apostate and promoted strict legalism while they forbid marriage and order strict dietary restrictions. The believers are advised to watch their life and doctrine closely and to persevere in them. This is because cults distort the scripture and cast doubt on the promise of Christ's return and as Sire (2009) states, cultists are not faithful to biblical contexts in their hermeneutics, but they seek to propagate destructive teachings which deny the person of Christ as both human and divine.

In Jude 1-25, the believers are urged to contend for the faith against secret devices of cultic people who preach a form of freedom that brought bondage to immorality and godlessness and deny the lordship of Christ. Adeyemo (2006), while appealing for apologetics in Africa, concurs with this view that cults do not respect the original message of the Scripture, and due to religious pluralism, Christo- paganism, syncretism, and theological liberalism deny the deity of Christ. In Jude's view cultists are rendered as dreamers, immoral, polluters of their bodies, slanderers of celestial beings, who reject authority, are antinomian, legalistic and do not allow critical reasoning, are extortionist, selfish and greedy, they make empty promises, compared with clouds without rain and fruitless trees described as twice dead. Adeleye (1999) concurs with Jude and urges believers to remain faithful, and to stand firm, and hold fast to Biblical teaching. DeSilva (2004) posits that Jude in his epistle, addressed the challenge of itinerant preachers and charismatic prophets whose authority was in themselves and whose message was incompatible with the apostolic teaching and disregarded ethical norms of the Christian faith taught the Bible.

2.2.5 Indicators of Cultism

This section discusses the indicators, or the observable characteristics, of cultism. Researchers have revealed that some cults are reported to have charismatic individual leaders who demand extreme loyalty and demand that the adherents work long hours for little or no pay (Oxtoby& Segal, 2012). Followers are expected to cut ties with family and friends from the past, denounce religious beliefs and practices, or even submit sexually to the leader as happened in the NXIVM cult led by Keith Rennere. Sometimes the leaders demand a willingness to die for the cause. It is also reported that cult members become violent if opposed, criticised, or questioned (Lalich, 2004). Okwe (2002) opines that violence and secrecy are cultist's way of life.

Cults begin as harmless, but later become violent, Salubuyi and Umaru (2018) found out that these groups pledge allegiance to a charismatic and authoritative leader who is obeyed without critical thinking and can control their adherents even in their absence. Members of cultic groups cannot say no to their leader, and they consider outsiders and non-members as evil, lost, and sinners who should either join them or perish. Lalich (2019) posits that cult members are made to believe that they are part of a special elite. So there are things that they are supposed to hold secret, adding that this creates an 'us versus them' mentality or the position that non-members must be recruited so that they either join or be eliminated. Rotimi (2005) opines that cult are very secretive about the details of their group. As observed above, a cult has a charismatic leader, some form of indoctrination program that requires the person to give up their critical thinking and be a loyal, true believer. These leaders make followers believe that if they stray from that path, then they lose their only chance at salvation as propounded by the charismatic leader. (Lalich, 2019). Lalich and Langone (2006) postulate that cultists exhibit excessive zeal and unquestionable commitment to their leader, whose belief system,

ideology, and practices are considered absolute truth. Martin (2014) asserts that the cult leader is always right and commands the exclusive means of knowing "truth", adding that cults produce a sense of dependency among followers.

Cultists are closed-minded and teach their followers not to question nor interact with outsiders but depend on the cult authority structure to tell them what to believe without any personal reflection at all. Some cult leaders claim to be God and demand adoration (Kigame, 2018). According to Lalich and Langone (2006) a cult is manipulative, exploitative and can destroy the victims physically, sexually, or psychologically. Lalich and Langone further noted that cults practice occultic rituals and blood covenants. Cults exhibit a strict form of submission to leadership (Kigame, 2018). The author further reveals that leaders consider themselves absolute, anointed, either as sovereign prophets of God, or God himself to be worshiped. Rotimi (2005) indicates that cultism is marked by a withdrawal from family ties and a break of ties with friends, personal goals, and interests to uphold only such relationships that do not hinder the goals of the group. Cultism is an enclosed group with exclusive sacred ideology, rites, and secret symbols. Cultic activities are sometimes violent and bloody, as Chinwe and Mag (2015); Ajayi, Ekundayo and Osalusi (2010) and Lalich (2004) concur and as depicted in the bounded choice theory of cultism.

Students who join cultism exhibit several effects both individually and corporately, as Coates (2011) found out, involvement in cultism led to 'suicidal and destructive tendencies, anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), cognitive deficiencies, and relationship problems, feelings of loss, guilt and self-blame, and low self-esteem. Ogidefa (2016) asserts that cults are secretive and involve ritualistic practices. As McLaren (2010); Singer and Lalich (1995) pointed out, cultism leads to a form of bondage. Cultism is to blame for some student suicides and violent deaths

(Smah, 2001). As Nyaga (2017) pointed out, radicalization, drug abuse, murder, disturbance, destruction of property, lawlessness, and instilling fear among people can result from cultism. Oyemwinmina and Aibieyi (2015) revealed that mayhem, mutilation and killings, incarceration and expulsions, loss of infrastructure and financial loss, harassment, and chaos, abandoning of studies, serious financial debts, and nervous breakdown are common among cult members.

Surajo (2018) attributes social moral decay to cultism further stating that students' lives, and properties are destroyed and crimes such as armed robbery, rape, kidnapping, black mailing, prostitution, and terror are evident on campuses due to cultism. Arijesuyo and Olusanya, (2011) established that cultism results in a lack of peace and harmony and leads to physical harm, disruption, destruction, and insecurity. Chebli, Kallon, Harleston and Mansaray (2007) concurred that violence on the campus was often linked to cultism. Oyemwinmina and Aibieyi (2015) asserts that loss of peace and a threat to life was observed among cultists (Azelama, Aluede, &Imhonde, 2005; Itedjere, 2006). Birabil and Okanezi (2017) reported that cultists are bound by oath and lose their individual freedom, so they end up in enslaving demands causing some to commit suicide when they fail to meet the demands. Cherono (July 2019) opines that cultism leads to killing, extortion, rape, maiming, and stealing. Pemede and Babatunde (2010) and Molagun (2006) posit that the effects of cultism include increased crime, dampened hopes of parents and innocent students killed. Ogidefa (2016) adds that cults lead to social and moral decadence.

Cults lead to social and psychological disorders such as suicide, depression, diseases, students quit school and others employment, forsaking their spouses, starving children, becoming insane, losing property and money, and even doing the bizarre acts such as worship of fellow human beings even to the point of becoming sex slaves (Kigame,

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2018). Augustine, Ejike and Orizu (2015) found that some students run mad or are killed for failure to strictly keep to the dictates of occult rules and that this spreads even to their families. Haworth (1994) reports drastic personality change rituals and demands. Hughes (1993) reported that psychiatric damage, and floating sensations were experienced by 52% of those surveyed, while 40% suffered from nightmares, 35% from an inability to break chanting rhythms, 21% from self-destructive tendencies, 21% from amnesia, 14% from violent outbursts and 14% from hallucinations.' The study further established that about two years of counselling was needed to outgrow the effects. In concurrence with this finding, Lalich and Tobias (2006) found out that cultism results in anxiety, indecision, worry, fear, insomnia or too much sleep, confusion, guilt, loneliness, flashbacks, shame, obsessive thoughts, depression, suicidal thoughts, identity crises, loss of memory, panic attacks, anger, cognitive deficits inability to think straight, low self-esteem, self-doubt and feeling of regression. Lalich and McLean (2017)concur and add that these people lose trust in anybody nurse suicidal thoughts and experience severe post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD), drug addiction, and prostitution, among others.

2.3 Empirical Literature Review

This section reviewed empirical literature that relates to the five research objectives of the study.

2.3.1 Influence of Family Background on Cultism

The family of origin has been found to determine whether or not someone would join cults. This is discussed in in detail in this section. The role of family relations during childhood and the year's preceding group involvement is viewed by researchers such as Coates (2011), as an important antecedent to joining a cultic group. Curtis (1993) posits that factors such as tenuous, deteriorated, or non-existent family relations and support systems, inadequate means of dealing with exigencies of survival, history of severe child

abuse or neglect, and exposure to idiosyncratic or eccentric family patterns can enhance recruitment into cultism. Comparing the modern ways of living, and the traditional African settings, having to transition away from family, friends and familiar environments is a new phenomenon associated with modernization (Wangeri, Kimani & Mutweleli, 2012).

The lack of proper parental control of children contributes to their susceptibility to cultism. According to a study by Oxtoby and Segal (2012), young people from rich families whose parents gave them everything they wanted become susceptible to cultic groups because cults appear to offer them the strict and demanding discipline with structured goals, something the parents failed to give them. Olajuigbe (2001) found out that parental pampering is the main reason for cultism. According to Mgbekem (2004), some parents love their children to the extent of pampering them when they do a wrong thing instead of scolding them; such parents allow their children to go free from the offences and the children grow up with such negative habits and consequently imbibe criminally oriented behaviour which leads them to join cult groups. In a study done by Ajayi, Ekundayo and Osalusi (2010), in Nigerian tertiary institutions, they agree with the above author that a lack of parental guidance and pampering is a soft spot for entry into cultism. Mediayanose (2016) concurs with this finding that pampering and lack of discipline expose students to cultism.

Chinwe and Mag (2015) identified the influence of parents in a cult, revealing that broken homes and harsh economic situations may induce cultism. Rotimi (2005) opines that the family is a powerful agent of socialization and can play a central role in promoting cultism. Rotimi further states that parents who are members of cults often initiate their children from their homes even before they are admitted into the school and that some homes where the children are abandoned to neighbours get initiated into cults

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without the consent of the parents or guardians. Birabil and Okanezi (2017) add that the home and society from where students come can be where they are readily introduced to negative societal values. On the other hand, Olajuigbe (2001) found that parental pampering is the main reason for cultism. A weak and defective family background motivates students to join cults according to Mgbekem (2004). This is an indication that parenting plays a major role in students getting exposed to cultism. A study of the Christian Union students becomes essential in this regard.

Family challenges such as broken homes, parental negligence, and frustration of children contribute to the spread of cultism as Ogunbameru (2004) found out. Cherono (2019) argues that students from highly religious families interpret all occurrences in the family with a religious leaning especially in the belief in curses. Cherono further notes that students are easily lured into cultism due to their search for quick answers from the charismatic healers, miracle workers and prophets who promise to of deal with life's misfortunes.

Lack of proper socialization by parents may lead to cultism. Epkenyong (2010) highlighted the inability of the modern family to equip children with the effective socialization needed to conform to acceptable cultural norms arguing that children from dysfunctional families are ill prepared to deal with the negative peer group influences which confront them especially in urban centres. Ajayi and Ayodele (2002) agree that students engage in cultism due to the influence by parents, the home background, and family environment. They assert that parents who are members of secret cults will not deter their children from engaging in cultism. According to Surajo (2018) and Girigiri (2013) frustrated individuals from broken homes are susceptible to join cults. Parents who are members of secret cults may not see anything wrong with their children's involvement in cultism, thus aiding recruitment. Loveland (2003) stated that "the interest

of the self depends on the cultural context within which the individual is situated." Ongonga and Akaranga (2013) posited that socialization is a factor which describes human beings and since the family is the basic source of socialization, children are socialised into the faith and spirituality of their parents at home. Once they leavethe home, the society the institutions of learning and the peers take over and continue the socialization process.

Some students join cults because of an inferiority complex, which is a common feature among students from disorderly homes and low-income families; for such students becoming a cultist would help forestall those they consider superior to them from looking down on them (Ejike, 2015). According to Ayinla, Olanrewaju and Muhammed (2018), students are attracted to cultist groups due to their economic situations.

According to Ajayi, Ekundayo and Osalusi (2010) students, who come from homes where codes of good conduct and discipline are strictly enforced, are prone to cultism. Contrary to what the above found out, Olajuigbe (2001) asserted that parental background together with the lack of moral instruction at home and the way the child is brought up could be a factor in accepting membership in a cult.

Children from broken or single-parent homes often miss the much-needed socialization process and, as such, fail to absorb the real social values of society, making them anti-social and aggressive. Consequently, they become vulnerable to cult recruiters (Rotimi 2005). Surajo (2018) agrees that lack of parental guidance and broken families have a drastic negative impact on the upbringing of children, and such children grow up becoming ready candidates for cultism. Ajayi, Ekundayo and Osalusi (2010) concurred with the view that cult members might come from broken homes where child abuse and neglect are common. Ajayi and Ayodele (2002) concurred with this view, adding that family breakdown is one of the causes of cultism on campuses. A student who grows up

in a broken home is therefore exposed to parental negligence and frustration and is easily induced into cultism. Ogunbameru (2004) argued that some university students joined cults to overcome the frustrations they encountered due to a broken home.

Weak and defective family background causes student involvement in cultism in tertiary institutions (Abomaye-Nimenibo, Samuel &Umana, 2020). Ejike and Orizu (2015) add that broken homes, and influence from parents who belong to secret cults are major impetus for cult involvement. Oshodomo (2009) found that there are others who join because they want to create avenues to exhibit and diffuse frustrations from the family.

Oyemwinmina and Aibieyi (2015) underscored that the family and home environment determine the propensity of students to cultism since the exposure of students to secret cults from home makes them sympathetic to cults, whereas, lack of proper upbringing, separation of parents, lack of commitments on the part of parents leads to the replacement of parental authority and love with that of charismatic cult leaders who take advantage to shower them with excessive love. They further reveal that past negative experiences at the family level may expose students to the allure of cultism. Some students embrace cultism as an outlet for their traumatic home experiences, especially where there is a lack of family harmony (Nnajieto & Ahamefula, 2015).

The desire for financial breakthrough, and economic independence from financially weak families may attract students into cults. Oyemwinmina, and Aibieyi (2015) revealed that some students join cultic groups due to the desire for economic gain, further asserting that students join cult groups out of financial and economic frustration. Ayinla, Olanrewaju and Muhammed (2018) assert that the existence of secret cults in educational institutions could be associated with economic situations of students. Ene, Inaja and Ukwetang (2013) concur that the desire for wealth contributes to students' interest in cultism. This is further elucidated by Cherono (2019), who found out that

poverty and the search for prosperity by students from needy families are perceived to influence students to join cults. Wallis (2003) concurred with this view and added that the students are lured to cults due to poverty. Rotimi (2005) asserts that "some individuals see cultism as a channel for making money through unwholesome activities such as prostitution, blackmail, examination racketeering, and other unscrupulous activities."

Wangeri, Kimani and Mutweleli (2012) noted that students from well-to-do families have the resources necessary for smooth transition as opposed to their counterparts coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. This assertion is corroborated by Oyemwinmina (2015), who reported that cult members are given the impression that they would prosper economically more than non-members making students from poor homes to fall prey. This is because such students are promised a better life and access to ways of making money and attaining financial independence from their poor parents. Surajo (2018) argues that the economic handicap of some students is one of the causes of cultism. Nyaga (2017) established that poverty, greed, and wanting to get rich fast caused youth to join unlawful groups.

On the contrary, Girigiri (2013) found out that whereas some may join cults because of the need for financial assistance, cultists themselves go for students with sound financial backgrounds because of the financial support they can get from them in running their illegal cult activities.

Whereas the above authors indicate the needs of the children as influencing recruitment into cultism, Lalich (2019) posits that cults want people who can perform for them, so cultists go for the best and the brightest people and for people with money from wealthy families and university students are the perfect target.

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The above literature discussed the various aspects of the family background as contributing to cultism among students. Most of the studies were in Nigeria and other countries in the world and in Kenya in society. This study however, sought to bridge a gap by seeking to establish among how the Christian Union students' in public universities perceive family background as a factor influencing cultism in Kenya.

2.3.2 Influence of Socio-Psychological Manipulation on Cultism

People do not join cults, rather they are recruited. Wallis (2019) reports 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) adds to the above author's findings, that cults 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 therefore vulnerable because they are breaking from their familiar places and people for the first time in their lives. Talbert and Edwin (2008) concur with the above authors and assert that first-year students are confronted with the 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. 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 endear themselves to the

vulnerable students to enrol into their groups. This 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) agrees with the above author by asserting 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 the issues presented to them. Students who have emotional sickness become vulnerable. Therefore, cults target stressed, lonely, and susceptible students during stressful or traumatic times by promising them friendship and quick solutions to their predicaments (Ajayi & Ayodele, 2002).

Although some university students may join cults to fulfil their subconscious psychological needs, psychological manipulations through the use of mind-control and a deep-seated anxious dependency techniques by cultic leaders may influence (Mediayanose, 2016), Oyemwimina and Aibiye (2015). Many students join cult groups out of psychological frustration. These authors further established that an inferiority complex and a search for social acceptance, and status is a major psychological reason for cultism. A study conducted by Kagema 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 are manipulated.

Singer and Lalich (1995) found out that cults gain control through psychological causes such as isolating and keeping the victim unaware of what is going on and attempting to

psychologically condition them through step-by-step control of the person's social or physical environment and time. As revealed by Okwe (2002), cultists create a sense of powerlessness in their victims by manipulating a system of rewards, punishments, and experiences to inhibit behaviour that might reflect the person's former social identity. They then put forth a closed system of logic and an authoritarian structure that permits no feedback and refuses to be modified except by leadership approval or executive order. This is in line with theory of Bounded choice propounded by Lalich (2004), because once this state is achieved, the victim is no longer free to make independent decisions.

Students in the university may engage in cultism in the hope of gaining academic advantages and accessing other rewards from senior cult members who may be lecturers. Oyemwinmina and Aibieyi (2015) found out that cultists' canvas for members by telling students lies to get them initiated. Some of these lies are meant to make an ignorant student believe that their lecturers who are members can influence their scores after an examination. Ehondo (1993) concurs with the above authors that so many unsuspecting students have been lured into joining secret cult societies through deception, including the promise of becoming one of the untouchables and that once a person is a secret cult member, passing exams without study becomes attainable.

According to Singer and Lalich (1995), cultism presents an ideology which is extreme in its social structure and presents a promise of salvation or transformation through the charismatic leader, systems of influence and control. This ideological extremism exhibits forms of violent outcomes such as physical, sexual, 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.

People who join cults 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. Lalich (2019) concurs with the above author that that a successful induction by a destructive cult displaces a person's former identity and replaces it with a new identity, which may not be one that the person would have freely chosen given a chance.

On the contrary some scholars argue that cult mind control is a fantasy and that exit counselling seeks to overcome a nonexistent problem (Martin 2003). Martin further posits that those who reject the mind control model affirm the ability and responsibility for personal decision-making regarding cultic involvement: and that people can make decisions for themselves. Even when the influence of others may seem well-nigh overpowering, individuals can and do continue to resist such influence.

The the above authors looked at socio-psychological manipulation as a factor influencing cultism, by looking at the role of the charismatic leaders, the methods and techniques they use to manipulate students, and hold them ransom, and the role played by the vulnerable students and the resultant bounded choice. This study sought to build on the findings and went into the institutions to establish first-hand what the perceptions of the said students were on this objective on socio-psychological manipulation as a factor influencing cultism in public universities in Kenya.

2.3.3 Influence of Sense of Belonging on Cultism

Students join such groups in the hope that the cult organization is a place to find people who would readily accept them regardless of their social status. Oyemwimina and Aibiye (2015)   Coates (2011) concurs with the above authors that people join charismatic groups, some of which are cultic, because some of such groups provide certainty and meet the victim's need for friendship, meaning, and belonging. Lalich (2019) noted that people are social animals and that desire to belong to something or be part of something better such as a better world, a better life, better weight, and more money, among others. Girigiri (2013) concurs with the above authors and opines that the desire to belong to a group is a natural human activity and cultists capitalize on this by portraying themselves as the alternative family and draw their recruits deeper and deeper until the cult becomes their newfound family. The victims of such groups then cease to socialize with anyone outside that circle and are locked in or bounded (Lalich, 2004).

University students end up in cultism following the desire for belonging or identification with other people, social group, or any other ideology that may accept and accommodate them Kagema and Maina (2014). The authors further reveal that New Charismatic Movements (NCMs), some of which are cultic, take advantage of situations such as separation, divorce, single parentage, and other disadvantaged situations to try to bring the scattered people from different families together by coming up with fellowships, which reach the person as an individual. Their study Kagema and Maina (2014) reported that 78.4% of their respondents affirmed that they had joined the NCMs in search of identity, a sense of love and belonging, self-acceptance and approval. Rotimi (2005) posits that there are students who engage in cultism because of sense of belonging and the need to be well connected or because they are seeking meaning, direction, comfort, and love within a community. Wallis (2003) concurs with Rotimi that cults seem to

provide an alternative community for the lonely and the alienated members of the institution, some of whom are undecided. This is because cults initially masquerade as friendly and benevolent, cults give gifts, offer scholarships, and seem to really care for their members.

Ogidela (2008) argues that some students join cult groups to identify themselves with a group to make them popular and powerful and achieve prestige, greatness, and political advantage during the university students' union elections. Oshodomo (2009) concurs with Ogidela that some students join campus cults to gain respect and recognition. Ajayi and Ayodele (2002) agree with the above authors that undergraduates joined cult groups for popularity, a name, and political power. Members of these cult groups believe that there is a change in their status after becoming members including "popularity, ego-boosting, sense of belonging and boldness" (Chebli, Kallon, Harleston&Mansaray, 2007).

The sense of belonging therefore seems to be a main incentive that makes students desire to join cults in universities. The above studies, especially in the West and some within the African context, have shown that a sense of belonging to the community contributes to cultism among university students. This study however, aimed at establishing the Christian union student's perception of the sense of belonging as a factor influencing cultism in public universities in Kenya.

2.3.4 Influence of Theological Grounding on Cultism

It has been observed that various cults are effective among those in whom the early seeds of Christianity have been planted. It is much easier for cultists to promulgate their doctrines among young Christians, nominal Christians, and those who have only a passing acquaintance with the Scriptures (Martin, 2003). Students who are not well grounded spiritually and in their biblical knowledge are likely to be captured by cultists.

Olajuigbe (2001) found out that inadequate religious and moral instructions and education can lure undergraduate students into embracing cultism. Aboribo (1999) elucidated that cult leaders manipulate their targets at their weakest point, adding that cultism essentially is a spiritual matter. Aboribo further posits that most doctrinal cults bombard vulnerable people such as the poor, the oppressed and the spiritually weak. Martin (2003) posited that it is much easier for cultists to promulgate their doctrines among young and nominal Christians who may be shallow in their knowledge of the Bible. Martin further opines that such cults like Jehovah's witnesses and Mormons targeted new converts. In his analysis of non-African cults, Kigame (2018) mentions Jehovah's Witnesses, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day-saints or Mormonism, Unification Church, Branhamism and Universal Church of the Kingdom of God as examples.

Akaranga and Ongonga (2013) posit that students who have no spiritual vitality are more prone to religious switching. Some students get recruited into cultism because they do not know any other religion. Akaranga and Ongonga further posit that people who did not have a good religious foundation since early childhood were easily swayed into believing in cultist doctrines and farther away from the true religion. McDowell and Stewart (1982) concurs with the above authors that many people involved in cults were raised in Christian churches but were not well grounded in basic Christian doctrine thus fall prey to the cultists.

In a related study on religious switching, Ongonga and Akaranga (2013) identified some of the reasons for religious switching as including spiritual commitment, the personality of the preacher, among others which hold sway on the spiritually unstable. The level of the students' spiritual grounding will protect them from the onslaught of cultism.

Cherono (2019) intimates that several students at the University of Nairobi have been exploited religiously, either knowingly or unknowingly, further insinuating that this is due to the poor theological grounding of students. This is further asserted by Oyemwinmina and Aibieyi (2015), that the poor spiritual foundation of children will expose them to the menace of cultism. The students come to campus not yet tested in their faith and experience considerable challenges to their prior religious perspectives which are often greatly influenced by their parent's views. If their spiritual foundations were weak, they end up in cults. Students who join public Universities come from various parts of Kenya with different socio-cultural, political, economic, and religious affiliations, and their insight may not be very much different from that of their parents and associates outside the University setup (Ongonga & Akaranga, 2013). Students who were brought up in a non-Christian family and were never taught the way of the Christian faith and who do not have a biblical knowledge therefore are more likely to switch their religious allegiance and may join cults for failure to discern the right from wrong doctrine.

A study conducted by Kagema and Maina (2014) on New Charismatic movements (NCMs) revealed that new charismatic churches know that people in college are vulnerable because of their lack of life experience, their search for truth and something fulfilling, especially in religion. In their study, the above authors revealed that 85.6% of their respondents said that the NCMs provided them with answers for issues such as HIV/AIDS, unemployment, discouragement, homelessness, financial stress, and broken families. Spiritual emptiness was cited by 94.2% of their respondents whereas 88.4% said that the mainline churches were not spiritually satisfying. The above authors reported that 90.6% of their respondents confessed that the NCMs provided a guaranteed future adding that poor conditions and unemployment are pushing people to religious

fringe groups where they may find hope. This goes on to prove that students are thirsty for spiritual nourishment, and they also want answers to various occurrences in life like natural calamities. Members who defect from the main line churches to these movements, and sometimes to cults, are said to do so due to hunger for spiritual satisfaction. Cultists however take advantage of thes needs to manipulate and recruit them. Cherono (2019) adds that new believers or novice and nominal Christians may fall prey to cult recruitment due to their spiritual naivety and ignorance.

Faulty biblical interpretation has been the source of many Christian cults which either quote verses out of their Biblical context to prove their idea or quote just a few verses on a subject without considering all the verses on that subject found in the Bible (O'Donovan, 2016) Sire (2009) concurs with O'Donovan that scripture twisting and selective reading of Scripture to achieve a preconceived agenda is common among Christian cults. A study conducted by Ongonga and Akaranga (2013) on Religious Switching found out that the charismatic personality of the preacher accounted for 15 % of their respondents; theological grounding accounted for 20 % whereas lack of spiritual commitment was 4 %. All the above are aspects of theological grounding which is a significant factor in cultism among university students. Charismatic authority and commitment together with the transcendent belief system in cultism may explain why students with a weak theological grounding may be recruited or attracted to cultism (Lalich, 2004).

In involvement in a charismatic group is viewed as a religious coping mechanism. Coates (2011) states that people join charismatic groups, due to a search for spiritual meaning and identity. The author further asserts that recruitment to charismatic groups happens through pre-existing social networks and interpersonal bonds such as friends recruiting friends, family members recruit each other, and neighbours recruit neighbours

while most converts are usually young, well-educated and from middle- and upper-middle-class social backgrounds. A number join charismatic groups during a time of transition, including adolescence or following a crisis.

The above researchers reported that the lack of a strong theological foundation, lack of teaching from home and church, the selective use and interpretation of the Bible, the promises of spiritual answers and hope, the deliberate recruitment and the attack on new believers before they are established in their faith as among other internal factors of theological grounding or the lack of it that contribute to cultism in public universities. This study sought to add to this knowledge, the Christian Union students' perception of theological grounding as a factor contributing to cultism in public universities in Kenya.

2.3.5 Influence of Peer Pressure on Cultism

Cult recruitment is pyramidal and happens in phases. More than two-thirds of people who get in a cult are either recruited by a friend, a family member, or a co-worker and it is difficult to reject such advances (Lalich, 2019).Lalich further opines that internal peer pressure is critical in understanding cultism arguing that people after a certain age, tend to heed what friends or mates do and do not want to let them down. Lalich adds that in cults people are always reporting on each other, causing conformity with rules and norms through many other cunning ways. Cherono (2019) revealed that several students had been introduced to cults by their peers. Peer group has been reported as a significant factor in university student's involvement in cultism. Oyemwinmina and Aibieyi (2015) concur with Cherono that most students joined various cult groups due to peer group influence and pressure. Peer group influences and pressures are the main factors that make students join campus cults (Ejike, 2015) Mediayanose (2016) concurs with Ejikethat most students joined various cult groups due to peer group influence or

pressure, adding that students who became cultist due to this factor did so, to avoid being considered weak and protect their image among their friends who were cultists.

Nnabuezi (2001), in a study in higher institutions in Enugu State University of Science and Technology and NnamdiAzikiwe University, found that one of the causes of campus cultism included the desire to belong to a peer group. Ufuoma (2007) concurs with Nnabuezi that peer group's influence is a strong force that compels students to join secret cults. The author further adds that the period of adolescence is marked by intense social relationships in any environment they find themselves in. This is in agreement with Ibeh (2005), who asserts that at this age, emphasis is laid on social relationships shifting from parents to peers as the youth break away from dependence and contact with parents, thus shift their reliance to the newly acquired group on campus, which they embrace. In related studies Ajayi and Ayodele (2002); Akinfolarin (2003) and Omoegun and Akanle (2007) concur that peer group influence is one of the factors leading students into cultism. Ajayi, Ekundayo and Osalusi, (2010) and Abomaye-Nimenibo, Samuel, and Umana, (2020), in their studies, established that peer group influence compels young undergraduates to join secret cults.

Peer group are agent of socialization, which is very critical in socializing the individual though not always beneficial, especially in cases such as cultism where values propagated contradict those previously taught (Eguavoen, 2008). In the Bible, the apostle Paul cautioned that bad company corrupts good morals as written in 1 Corinthians 15:33 indicating that not all company is beneficial. Ongonga and Akaranga (2013) found that students are attracted to cults due to their desire not to be undermined by their acquaintances, thus some students also become cultists because their friends are members (Oshodomo, 2009). Lalich (2017) concurs with the above authors and asserts that peer pressure has an immense influence on people. Lalich further gives an example

of a cultic group called Nexium (NXIVM) which was a self-improvement cult, that recruited a lot of young women, thousands of whom took their courses thus making people think it was okay since their friends had done it and added that peer pressure and being convinced by someone trusted was a factor endearing people into cultism.

Foster, Loomis, Szimhart and Wilcox (2003) assert that cults confine people in one place long enough to apply sufficient persuasion to cause them to convert, they use social and peer pressure to keep the recruits longer, while individual relationships may also be used to build one-to-one relationships, which may even be romantic or may just be based on apparent friendship. Cults exclude contrary influence using persuasive arguments. Cults also use social confirmation because everyone else confirms the core message, and contrary thinking is punished as a means of persuasion. In concurrence with this view, Lifton (2012) posits that cults isolate the recruits from familiar environments and associations encapsulate or cocoon them or cut them off then indoctrinate them using peer influence techniques that limit critical thinking.

On the contrary, Oyemwinmina and Aibieyi (2015) posit that students are socialised into cultism by adults they look up to and imitate as mentors and models in society. The authors further argue that highly respected personalities in the society who are cult members give cover to student cultists while cultists who occupy prominent positions in society encourage the young ones to participate in cultism. Mediayanose (2013) adds that influential people, such as university faculty, staff, and other prominent members of the society, are known to belong to secret cults and often serve as mentors to these young cult members and socialize them into cultism. Oshodomo (2009) concurs with Mediayanose that some students join a cult because certain lecturers and administrators are members of secret cults. Ogidefa (2016) agrees that 'godfatherism' is a strong influence together with status imitation and authorities' patronage by lecturers who are

members or patrons and available to assist the student "members to pass their examinations, even to the extent of influencing other lecturers to pass those members that fail their subjects.

The above authors have discussed the socialization into cultism through what Lalich (2004) has referred to as systems of influence through peer pressure used effectively by cultists both to recruit and to retain members. The Bounded choice theory is applicable in the sense that it explains the systems of influence and the system of control used to catch and keep their members. It is the peers who paint a promising image of the cult to endear it to their friends and colleagues. To be able to capture the feelings and opinions of the university student, this study built on this finding and sought to establish the Christian Union students' perception of peer pressure as a factor influencing cultism inpublic universities in Kenya.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

Practical theology bridges the gap between theological study and real-world practice, addressing itself to situations and contexts both within the church and in society (Osmer, 2008), (Smith 2010) adds that Practical theology is an effort to understand and evaluate how faith is lived out in various contexts, by providing insights to inform both practice and theological reflection. A number of practical theological theories have been used to analyze various elements of the study on cultism. The contextualization theory by Bediako (2016) emphasized the importance of contextualizing Christianity within African realities and issues. He added that faith ought to resonate with the lived experiences of Africans. Cultism being a contemporary issue could be studied from a contextual point of view especially in determining the circumstances that lead to its prevalence. The integration and application of theological methods enable theory and practice to meet and deal with how faith is lived out in churches, communities, and

institutions Osmer (2008). He considers practical theology as an interdisciplinary field that seeks to bridge the gap between theological theory and real-life practice, lived experiences of faith communities, engaging with various contexts, social issues, and cultural dynamics. The author advocates various methodologies, including empirical research, reflective practice, and critical theory, to address real-world issues facing faith communities. This study considers cultism as a major issue and the subject of study. Osmer (2008) has identified a framework for practical theology that includes four key tasks: descriptive-empirical, interpretive, normative, and pragmatic. Smith (2010) adds that critical reflection on practices and beliefs, prompts practitioners and participants to examine the underlying assumptions and implications of their actions within a theological context.

A Contextual study brings out some of the cultural and social reasons that draw people into cultism. This is brought out through an examination of specific needs, fears, and aspirations of individuals and communities. A theological reflection on implications of cultism and its impact on faith communities, helping to distinguish between healthy expressions of spirituality and harmful practices such as is the case in cultism. Community engagement which providing support for individuals who have been affected, and fostering healthy spiritual practices. It also helps in advocacy and social justice for vulnerable people exploited by cultists. From a practical theology point of view, communities can advocate for social justice to address underlying issues like poverty, marginalization, and lack of education that may lead individuals to seek belonging in cults. The methodologies can also use the ethical frameworks to engage ethical questions regarding authority, and manipulation. Dialogues and common approaches and solution finding in this theory can help mitigate cultism.

Other theories that can address specific aspects of the study include: Charismatic Leadership Theory which centers on the significance of charismatic leaders in attracting and retaining followers Epley (2015) the author explains how leaders gain legitimacy through their compelling personal qualities and perceived special insights which then endears people to them. Charismatic leaders create a sense of belonging and identity, shaping the beliefs of their followers, which agrees with the bounded choice theory of Lalich (2004).

Conversion and Recruitment theory helps to analyze how individuals are recruited into cults and the conversion experiences they undergo in the cult recruitment and initiation process. Lofland and Stark (2018) proposed a model of religious conversion that identifies stages and social factors influencing recruitment into cults. Singer (2003) focused on the recruitment strategies of cults, emphasizing the psychological techniques used to persuade individuals to join.

Religious Economy Theory which posits that cults exist within a competitive religious marketplace, responding to unmet spiritual needs and societal discontent. As Finke and Stark, (2003) stated, cults flourish by offering alternative spiritual solutions in a pluralistic religious environment, emphasizing choice and competition.

Relational Dynamics Theory also helps to study the interpersonal relationships within cults, particularly the dynamics between charismatic leaders and their followers. Castaño, Bélanger, and Moyano (2022) investigated the relational aspects of cult membership, emphasizing emotional bonds and dependency between leaders and followers. Lalich (2004) and Shaw (2014) explored how relational dynamics shape the experiences of cult members, particularly in terms of loyalty and conformity.

Spiritual Abuse Theory has also been used to examine the ways in which spiritual authority can be misused leading to psychological harm. According to Koch and Edstrom (2022) thus theory provides frameworks for understanding and addressing the trauma associated with cultism.

Social Identity Theory has been used to examine how cults provide a sense of identity and belonging, particularly for marginalized individuals. According to Scheepers and Ellemers (2019) argues for the dynamics of in-group versus out-group identities and how cults reinforce group loyalty and how this theory can be applied in examining how group membership shapes individual identity. Members of cults then find meaning tied to the group and relevance in their identity with the group as opposed to any identity with people outside the group. This is alluded to by the Bounded choice theory Lalich (2004), in which members of a cultic group consider nonmembers as outsiders and lost enemies who need either to come into the fold and be rescued or perish as outsiders. Social identity theory thus highlights how belonging to a cult is construed as fulfilling the psychological needs for identity and community.

Whereas the stated theories may address the identified elements of cultism, and having looked at the theories and their interactions with the study objectives, this study established that the Bounded Choice Theory which was developed by Lalich (2004) was the more inclusive because it blends several interdisciplinary dimensions for assessment of the perceptions of Christian Union students on factors influencing cultism in public universities in Kenya within the specific objectives of the study.

2.4.1 Bounded Choice Theory

Bounded Choice Theory was developed by Lalich (2004) a cult specialist who described the "Bounded Choice Theory" as a model that can be used to examine and analyse cults or high-demand groups. It is a Socio-psychological theory developed to interpret the

behaviour of true believers in a closed, charismatic context. The theory explains the seemingly irrational behaviour of the most dedicated adherents and attempts to consider individual choice within the context of an authoritarian, transcendent, and closed group. As the social dynamic closes in on itself, adherents find themselves living within a bounded reality whose parameters are enclosed and defined by the 'self-sealing system'. 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 bounded. They become irrational in their thoughts, and it becomes difficult for them to exit the group.

The Bounded choice theory is pegged on four main propositions firstly that the charismatic leader is the originator of the group who are charming and manipulative; secondly, cults have a transcendent belief system which is a means to get to some better place and a recipe for change through a transformational process dictated to the adherents through an indoctrination program; thirdly, that cults use systems of control through rituals or study sessions to lock one in so that they adopt a new worldview and new behaviours requiring one to cut off from the past. The members are then controlled through stringent rules and regulations, and fourthly, cults use systems of influence through peer pressure where older members model for the new members how they are supposed to behave such that before they know it, they are enveloped in a new exclusive reality. From that moment on, Lalich asserts that the adherent is not open to any other explanations and the mind has completely closed in and is glued to this new worldview as their only hope.

The bounded choice theory was therefore used to study the Christian Union students' perception of the factors influencing cultism such as family background, socio-psychological manipulation, sense of belonging, theological grounding and peer pressure.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

The purpose of the study was to examine the Christian Union students' perception of factors influencing cultism in public universities in Kenya. Mugenda and Mugenda (2007) define a conceptual framework as a hypothesised model that identifies the concepts being studied and the relationships,

As shown in Figure 1 below, the independent variable comprises factors influencing cultism such as family background, socio-psychological manipulation, peer pressure, sense of belonging and theological grounding. Marks of cultism such as mind control, obedience to charismatic leaders, exploitation, enslaving nature, and extra biblical doctrines is the dependent variable. In this study, cultism will depend on factors such as family background, socio-psychological manipulation, peer pressure, sense of belonging and theological grounding moderated by mass media, gender, and community environment and university management as the intervening variable.

Figure 1 below is a diagrammatic representation of Christian Union students' perception of factors influencing cultism in public universities in Kenya.

Figure 1

Relationship between Christian Union students' perceptions of factors influencing cultism and prevalence of cultism

Independent Variable   Intervening Variable   Dependent Variable

Family Background
- Dysfunctional families
- Cultic family environments
- Poor families
- Stable families
- Poor families
- Stable families

Socio- Psychological Manipulation
- Mind control techniques
- Vulnerability
- Crave for socio-psychological support
- Force and deception

Peer Pressure
- Rebellion from parents
- Recruitment by peers and friends
- Status and acceptance
- Modelling by superiors

Sense of Belonging
- Identify with Group or community
- Gain power and prestige
- Receive Love and acceptance,
- Protection

Theological Grounding
- Low Biblical knowledge
- Church dogma and religiosity
- Charismatic leaders influence
- Low personal spirituality

Cultism
- Obedience to charismatic leaders
- Mind control and bounded choice
- Exploitation and manipulation
- Enslaving nature
- Extra or non-biblical doctrines

Other factors Influencing Cultism
- Gender differences
- Mass Media
- Community environment
- University Management

Source: Author (2024)

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a detailed description of the research methodology which includes description of the research design, location of the study, target population, sample size and sampling procedures. The chapter also describes the data collection tools, piloting, validity and reliability of the instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures, and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Design

The study made use of a mixed research design that involved the use of qualitative and quantitative data collection tools. Bell, Bryman and Harley (2018) posit that qualitative research method through interview is applicable in understanding people's thoughts and views on a given social issue. Research using mixed methods contains aspects of both qualitative and quantitative research designs (Dawadi, Shrestha, &Giri, 2021). Using a mixed method enabled the researcher to gather and examine qualitative as well as quantitative information in this study thereby leading to more insightful findings. Therefore, it was relevant in supporting data collection for the five objectives. On the other hand, quantitative research involved collecting numerical data that can be counted. In this study, quantitative data was collected through questionnaire. The quantitative information was useful in showing how the Christian Union students perceived factors influencing cultism in public universities in Kenya. Using mixed research design, the Christian Union students were given questionnaire, the Christian Union patrons were interviewed while the small group Bible study leaders were subjected to Focus Group

Discussion (FGD). The study made use of this approach because of its usefulness in offering in-depth analysis using qualitatively and quantitatively collected information.

3.3 Location of the Study

The study was carried out on the main campuses of six public Universities in Kenya, namely: Kenyatta University located 1°10'50.0"S, 36°55'41.0"E in Nairobi county within Nairobi region, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) located 1.0914° S, 37.0117° E in Kiambu county within Central region, Moi University located 0.2867° N, 35.2939° E in Uasin Gishu county within Rift Valley region, Egerton University located 0.3714° S, 35.9410° E in Nakuru county within Rift Valley Region, Maseno University located 0.0048° S, 34.6001° E in Kisumu county within Nyanza region and Chuka University located 0.3191° S, 37.6572° E in Tharaka-Nithi county within Eastern region of Kenya. Location maps of these public universities are provided in Appendix F.

These public universities were selected because cases of cultism have been reported in them (FOCUS Kenya 2020), Kenya Police Service (2018). Furthermore, the student population in these universities are derived from all the seven regions in Kenya, thus a representation of the whole country. These public universities are well established in Kenya and have been in existence for between 15 and over 50 years. The universities were also accessible to the researcher.

3.4 Population of the Study

The study population is the group from which the sample is taken (Kombo& Tromp, 2006). The study targeted fifty-five thousand six hundred (55,600) Christian Union students in public universities in Kenya (FOCUS Kenya 2022). The accessible population of the study was ten thousand nine hundred (10,900) Christian Union students

in the six selected public Universities in Kenya namely: Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT), Kenyatta University (KU), Moi University (MU), Egerton University (EU), Maseno University (MSU) and Chuka University (CHU). Besides a sample of 220 Christian union students, the study also included six (6) Christian Union patrons from the six universities, one from each university and sixty (60) small group Bible study leaders ten (10) from each of the Universities.

The Christian Union students were selected for this study because of the theological nature of the study and the fact that these students, by being members of the Christian Unions, subscribe to and affirm the doctrinal basis of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students worldwide as indicated in Appendix VI. They, therefore, would understand the subject of cultism from a biblical standpoint. Furthermore, the CU members are often the target for the cultists who seem to seek those already spiritually or religiously conscious.

The Christian Union patrons were selected because they are the custodians of Evangelical spirituality among Christian Unions in the Universities. The small group Bible study leaders were selected because of the strategic role they play as peer leaders among the Christian Union students who meet weekly for prayers and Bible studies and who may have interacted and helped protect other students from the cultist advances. The accessible population of the study by the university was as indicated in table 1.

Table 1

Accessible Population of the Study

University	Christian Union students		
	Male	Female	Total
Kenyatta University	1232	1846	3078
Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology	1267	845	2112
Egerton University	918	1375	2293
Moi University	490	562	1052
Maseno University	639	426	1065
Chuka University	780	520	1300
Total	5326	5574	10900

Source: FOCUS Kenya, (2021-2025)

3.4.1 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Only those participants above 18 years old were included in the study. Persons who were below 18 years were excluded from the study.

3.5 Sample Size and Sampling Procedures

The researcher used a simple random sampling method to select the subjects (Christian Union students) at the university level. Simple random sampling ensures that every element in the population is given an equal chance of being selected for the study (Oladipo, Ikamari, Kiplang'at, and Barasa (2015). Once the sample size was determined, a stratus was created per university using stratified random sampling. The sample was then distributed proportionally. The researcher then used the purposive sampling method to select six (6) Christian Union patrons, sixty (60) small group bible study leaders 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 purpose of purposive sampling is

to sample participants in a strategic way so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions that are being asked (Bryman, 2012). Oladipo, Ikamari, Kiplang'at, and Barasa (2015) recommend that the number of respondents for a focus group should be eight (8) or ten (10), further asserting that if the group is more than eight or ten, it will impede interaction and participation.

A sample is a smaller number of a population that shall be used to make conclusions of the whole population, and it will help in making estimates of unknown characteristics of the larger population (Saunders, Lewis, &Thornhill, 2012).

The sample size was calculated and determined using the formula propounded by Nassiuma (2000), which is 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 sample size, C is Coefficient of Variation, N is accessible population, and e is error margin. Nassiuma (2000) suggested that coefficient of variation (C) is <30% while the error margin (e) is fixed between 2-5%. The researcher picked 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). Therefore, using the formula, the sample size for the study is two hundred and twenty (220), as shown in Table 2. Johnson and Christensen (2012) asserted that a good sample is one that is representative of the population from which it is drawn.

Table 2

Proportionate Sample of Christian Union Students per University

University	Male	Female	Total
Kenyatta University	25	37	62
Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology	26	17	43
Egerton University	18	28	46
Moi University	10	11	21
Maseno University	13	09	22
Chuka University	16	10	26
Total	108	112	220

In addition, sixty (60) small group Bible study leaders and six (6) Christian Union patrons from the six universities were included in the sample. Therefore, the total population of the respondents for this study was two hundred and eighty-six (286) as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Distribution of the Respondents in the Study

Respondents	Total
Christian Union students	220
Small Group Bible Study Leaders	60
Christian Union Patrons	6
Total	286

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

Data was collected using questionnaires for Christian Union students, interviews with Christian Union patrons, and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) for small group Bible study leaders. The discussion guide was used to capture data from small group Bible study leaders. A questionnaire in hard copies were used to collect data from the Christian Union students. Therefore, the study adopted the triangulation technique of data

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collection. The technique involves collecting data from different sources and checking information collected from different sources for consistency of evidence (Mertens, 2005; Johnson and Christensen, 2008).

Questionnaires are ideal because they are a fast and convenient way of collecting data, and a good tool for protecting the participant's identity (Abawi, 2013). Cooper and Schindler (2006) highlight that a questionnaire is advantageous in data collection as it enables data collection from a large sample, upholds confidentiality, saves time, and minimises interview bias. The questionnaire comprised of both open-ended and close-ended questions. 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. The responses to the items were scored as follows: 1-Strongly Disagree (SD), 2-Disagree (D), 3- Agree (A), and 4-Strongly Agree (SA). The instrument for the Christian Union students is attached as Appendix II.

The questionnaires were divided into seven sections i.e. A, B, C, D, E, F, and G with the first section having questions on the respondents' demographic information and the other five sections presenting questions based on the study objectives. Section G was used to generate data on cultism in public universities in Kenya. Data was collected through physical printable questionnaires after which data was transcribed into Excel worksheets and stored in a retrieval system in a computer hard drive. The physical questionnaires were stored under lock and key in an office cabinet. The collected data was securely kept in electronic files protected by passwords and would be subsequently deleted upon completion of the research.

A Focus Group Discussion was used to solicit information from the small group Bible study leaders. The FGD targeted sixty (60) small group Bible study leaders, ten (10)

from each of the six universities. A private meeting room in each of the five universities that could accommodate ten participants were arranged. Data from the ten participants was captured using a Discussion Guide, and this took place during a specially planned time. The FGD sessions took one hour. According to Babbie (2011), a discussion guide provides a structure for capturing information during a structured interview. It comprises of two components: instructions to the interviewer on how to proceed through the questions and a set of written questions directed to respondents. Focus Group discussion was used due to its ability to bring out the feelings and testimonies of the respondents in an open discussion forum. A Focus Group Discussion guide for small group, Bible study leaders, is attached as indicated in Appendix III.

Qualitative data was collected using an interview guide to gather data from the university C.U patrons. The study also used an interview guide because it was able to gather more qualitative information than a questionnaire and it is also not restrictive in terms of responses (Dul&Hak, 2015). Furthermore, iinterviews are recommended because they are more personal, allow more control in the order and flow of questions, have higher response rates, and help study a phenomenon in depth (Kerlinger, 2000; Kothari, 2004). Interviews are excellent means of getting the perceptions, meanings, and definitions of situations and constructions of reality from participants (Punch, 2005).

Interviews of Christian Union patrons took advantage of privacy and confidentiality for the respondents since it was conducted in a private set up. With their permission, their responses were recorded and transliterated. The researcher had a face-to-face interview with the University Christian Union patrons. The interview guide was semi-structured and contained themes on Christian Union students' perceptions of the influence of family background, socio-psychological manipulation, sense of belonging, theological grounding and peer pressure, on cultism. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) assert that

semi-structured interviews increase the comparability of responses, ensure that each participant addresses the same general topics, and reduces the chances of the researcher being biased when conducting the interviews. The collected data was then used to provide additional information that supplemented the data provided by the Christian Union students. The interview guide for the University Christian Union patrons is attached in Appendix IV.

3.7 Piloting of the Instruments

According to Cooper and Schindler (2006), pilot testing is important in establishing the validity and reliability of research instruments utilised in research as it enhances face validity. The piloting of research instruments was done at the University of Nairobi, which was not targeted by this study. Piloting was conducted on 10% of the respondents. This implied that 22 students participated in the study which represented 10% of the sampled population which is generally recommended by social researchers (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The research instruments were thus pilot tested at the University of Nairobi to obtain an independent group of respondents who would not participate in the main study. The University of Nairobi was chosen because it ensured that students involved in the piloting of the instrument had similar background and characteristics as those involved in the main study and therefore, most likely answered the questionnaire in the same way as those in the study. The pilot testing sought to find out whether the questionnaire formulation and the language used would be understood by the participants. According to Murray (2003), piloting is important because it helps to identify ambiguities of the items and vague questions for improvement. This data was useful in checking clarity of questions in the questionnaire.

3.7.1 Validity of the Instruments

Jackson (2011) describes validity as an indicator of an instrument that measures what it purports to measure. Sekaran and Bougie (2016) define validity as the magnitude to which a tool of research measures the right thing as it ought to measure. They also assert that validity is determined judgmentally and can be achieved through a panel of people who critic the standards of the instrument. The researcher therefore took the objectives and tools for expert judgment to the two university supervisors, who checked the face and content validity of all the three instruments. The researcher also subjected the questionnaires, and the interview guides to peer validation. The piloted questionnaire was scrutinized to identify items that were not clear to the students. Such items were modified to improve the face validity of the instrument.

3.7.2 Reliability of the Instruments

Babbie (2011) describes reliability as a matter of whether a particular approach applied repeatedly on the same object could produce the same result every time. To ensure reliability, the researcher conducted a pilot exercise of the tools before the actual fieldwork at the University of Nairobi located 1.2795° S, 36.8159° E in Nairobi County within the Nairobi region in Kenya. University of Nairobi was used to obtain an independent group of respondents with similar background and characteristics but did not take part in the main study. The reliability coefficient of the instruments of this study was estimated by computing Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2007) a reliability coefficient of 0.7 and above is reliable. This was interpreted as indicating that the questionnaire is consistent and reliable for use in data collection. This is because the use of Cronbach's Alpha enables the researcher to obtain the internal consistency from the administration of a single form of test once to gauge its reliability

(Suter, 2006). Therefore, the result was reliable since the coefficient was 0.833 and this exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.70.

3.8 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher first obtained clearance from Kabarak University Research Ethics Committee (KUREC. The researcher thereafter applied and processed a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovations (NACOSTI). The researcher then presented the authorization letter and research permit to the County Commissioners, County Directors of Education of the sampled counties, and to relevant officers of the sampled Universities to be allowed to collect data. The researcher thereafter visited the sampled universities for introduction and authorization to collect data from the Christian Union students, small group Bible study leaders and University Christian Union patrons. Arrangements were then made on when to undertake the study.

On the agreed date, the researcher visited the respondents and collected data using the questionnaire, Focus Group Discussion guides and Interview guides. During the study, the researcher administered the questionnaires to the Christian Union students with the help of trained research assistants. The small group Bible study leaders were excluded from responding to the questionnaire since they participated in the FGD separately as this gave them opportunity for more detailed and open-ended responses. The respondents took 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The FGD sessions took one hour and were held in an appropriate venue within the institution.

The researcher worked with trained research assistants who were mandated to take notes during interviews with the key informants using discussion guides. The answers to questions during the interview were recorded with the consent of the respondents. The

face-to-face interviews took about one hour per interviewee. The interviewer established a pre-arranged venue within the university precincts for the interviews.

The researcher and the trained research assistants ensured the completeness and integrity of the data during data collection by using electronic and physical questionnaires to capture and store data for analysis. Recording of data electronically and transcription were used to capture the responses of the participants. The researcher also aligned the key variables in the questionnaire, FGD guide and Interview guide to ensure integrity during data collection. The researcher-maintained neutrality during data collection and ensured both genders were sampled. The hard copies of data collected and analysed will be discarded through shredding and cross-shredding as per the Kabarak University procurement and disposal policy upon completion of all requirements for the data and the study. Electronically stored data will then be permanently deleted as provided for in the university policy.

3.9 Data Analysis Procedures

The collected data was first screened through to ensure that the questionnaires were duly filled according to the instructions provided. This was helpful in the removal of questionnaires that were not properly completed. Since both qualitative and quantitative data were generated, the methods used to analyse data were both qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative data was analyzed by use of content analysis whereby responses were grouped into themes. To strengthen the report, direct quotations and excerpt from thematic coding was utilized in presentation of the findings. Quantitative data collected through questionnaires was analyzed using descriptive statistics in the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 26.0 and the results were presented in tables of frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations.

The study also used inferential statistics in the form of multiple regression analysis to check the relationship between independent, intervening and dependent variables. Pearson correlation was also used to measure the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. This was aimed at the proper analysis of the quantitative data generated from the Christian Unionstudents' questionnaire.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Ethical consideration is an essential part of research and should not be overlooked (Saunders, Lewis &Thornhill, 2012). Before data collection the researcher sought clearance from Kabarak University Research Ethics Committee (KUREC) and obtained the research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovations (NACOSTI). The researcher then presented the authorization letter and research permit to the County Commissioner, County Director of Education of the sampled counties, and relevant university officers of the selected public Universities and was permitted to collect data.

Before commencing the study, the researcher explained the aims of the study clearly stressing that participation was voluntary, and respondents were free to withdraw from the study should they feel uncomfortable with the research instruments. To ensure confidentiality of information availed by the respondents the researcher protected their identities by assigning them code numbers. The respondents were not expected to give their names or any other information that could reveal their identity. The researcher informed and clarified to the respondents, the study objectives, and the kind of data to be gathered in line with the ethical principle of informed consent. The respondents were assured of full privacy and anonymity of the information provided. The respondents were not required to identify themselves when filling the questionnaire to ensure anonymity.

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The researcher also informed the respondents that the information provided was purely for academic purposes.

To ensure the privacy and confidentiality of the participants, the researcher kept physical materials in a setting with restricted access and also delete any personal information from the research tool. Further, to ensure confidentiality of information availed by the respondents, the researcher will protect their identity by assigning them code numbers. The respondents will not be expected to give their names or any other information that could reveal their identity.

The principal investigator declared no conflict of interest in this study. There was no conflict of interest between the researcher and the universities nor with students because the researcher is not an employee in the selected Universities nor has any direct association with the students.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

Data analysis is the procedure of modifying, analyzing, and cleaning raw data in order to obtain useful, pertinent information that aids researchers in drawing accurate conclusions. This chapter presents the results of the data analysis as well as presentations and discussions based on the study objectives which were: to establish the Christian Union students' perception of the influence of family background on cultism in public universities in Kenya; to determine the Christian Union students' perception of the influence of socio-psychological manipulation on cultism in public universities in Kenya; to establish the Christian Union students' perception of the influence of the sense of belonging on cultism in public universities in Kenya; to determine the Christian Union students' perception of the influence of theological grounding on cultism in public universities in Kenya; to examine the Christian Union students' perception of the influence of peer pressure on cultism in public universities in Kenya.

In this study, data was analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics. In descriptive statistics, percentages, means and standard deviations were applied. In inferential analyses, factor analysis, diagnostic tests, correlations, and regression were computed. The study began by analyzing response rates and demographic data. Furthermore, by using principal component analysis, validity of items was determined. Finally, Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis was computed to make inferences. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically and combined with those that were analyzed through quantitative methods. Data was interpreted and discussed in light of the independent variables being investigated.

4.2 Response Rate

This section provides an overview of how the completed questionnaire, focus group discussion and interview schedules were returned for analysis. As Skalland (2011) asserts, the response rate is the primary measure for validity and quality. A poor response rate can jeopardize data quality and substantially degrade the reliability and applicability of findings (Schoeni et al., 2013; Kellerman and Herold, 2001). The results in Table 4 show the response rate.

Table 4

Response Rate

University	Number of expected Questionnaires	Number of actual returned Questionnaires	Response (%)
Kenyatta University	62	56	90
JKUAT	43	38	88
Maseno University	22	20	91
Egerton University	46	39	84
Chuka University	26	22	85
Moi University	21	18	86
Total	220	193	88

The researcher issued 220 questionnaires to the Christian Union students, out of which 193 were returned fully completed. This gave a response rate of 88%. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a response rate of 50% and above is adequate while 60% is good whereas 70% and above rate is very good. In the social sciences, the appropriate range for response rates might range between 30% and 70% (De Vaus, 2013). Moreover, Rogelberg and Stanton (2007) proposed that higher response rates ensure the statistical

reliability of gathered data and alleviate concerns regarding incomplete responses. It is generally recognized that a high response rate is significant in research since it increases the generalizability of the findings. According to the study, the response rate was 88%, implying that greater data consistency and accuracy were observed. Therefore, this study met the criteria for consideration as very good for analysis.

Meanwhile one Christian Union Patrons from each of the six selected universities participated in the interview guide sessions giving a response rate of 100%. The researcher also conducted focus group discussions (FGD) in all six universities. In addition, the small group bible study leaders were also interviewed, and their responses were analyzed and integrated with quantitative data. In this study, all the interview schedules gave a response rate of 100%.

4.3 Demographic Data

Although demographic information can take many different forms, it often describes how certain traits are distributed throughout populations. In this research, demographic data encompassed respondents' gender, age, length of stay at the University, denominational affiliation and period as a born-again Christian.

4.3.1 Respondents Gender

The gender was analyzed descriptively to ascertain the pattern of distribution of respondents. Table 5 shows the results of the analysis.

Table 4

Distribution of CU Students by Gender

	Frequency	Percent
Male	95	49.2
Female	98	50.8
Total	193	100.0

The above table indicates that the gender distribution of the respondents was 49.2% male and 50.8% female. This implies that the number of males and females who participated in the study were almost the same although females were slightly more by 1.6%. The analysis shows that there was no significant difference in proportion between the sampled male and female participants. In this regard the study was gender impartial and balanced thus representing the views of both sexes. This also implies that the sample was representative enough to be generalized in similar populations. Dickinson, Adelson, and Owen (2012) maintain that attaining the representativeness of the body from which the research sampling is generated is an achievable goal and enables investigators to show that their results are generalizable to other groups with comparable characteristics adding that gender balance and gender perspectives, improves the scientific quality and societal value of research.

4.3.2 Comparison between Age and Gender

The cross-tabulation technique was used to compare the respondents' ages and genders. In social research, age analysis is crucial. This is because a person's age will frequently impact how much they know and have experienced about a topic or issue. Table 6 shows this finding.

Table 5

Age and Gender Cross Tabulation

			Gender		
			Male	Female	Total
Age	18-22 years	Count	47	80	127
		% of Total	24.4%	41.5%	65.8%
	23-27 years	Count	46	18	64
		% of Total	23.8%	9.3%	33.2%
	28-33 years	Count	2	0	2
		% of Total	1.0%	0.0%	1.0%
Total		Count	95	98	193
		% of Total	49.2%	50.8%	100.0%

Age is a crucial factor to consider in this study while attempting to understand cultism. This is because people of the same generation frequently have identical values, beliefs, and behaviours. A comparison of respondents' age and gender established that 41.5% of the female respondents were between 18-22 years while 24.4% were male participants. In addition, 23.8% and 9.3% were male and female respondents within 23-27 years, respectively. Finally, it was noted that only 1% of male participants were between the ages of 28-33 years. This result is consistent with that of Zhaoyang et al. (2018), who stated that most human behaviors occur in social environments that are regulated by age. Additionally, social contacts rank among the most significant experiences in daily living. People pick friends and partners, exchange emotional and practical support with others, face and resolve conflicts with others, and gain information and expertise via daily social contacts.

4.3.3 Length of Stay at the University

The length of stay at the current university was analyzed between, less than one year to more than four years. Table 7 illustrates this assessment.

Table 6

Length of Stay at the University and Gender Cross Tabulation

			Gender		
			Male	Female	Total
Length of Stay	Less than 1 year	Count	13	14	27
		% of Total	6.7%	7.3%	14.0%
	2 Years	Count	16	26	42
		% of Total	8.3%	13.5%	21.8%
	3 Years	Count	28	29	57
		% of Total	14.5%	15.0%	29.5%
	More than 4 Years	Count	38	29	67
		% of Total	19.7%	15.0%	34.7%
Total		Count	95	98	193
		% of Total	49.2%	50.8%	100.0%

The analysis of the length of stay at the university revealed that 34.7% of the participants had stayed more than 4 years. This was followed by 29.5% and 21.8% of the participants who had 3 years and 2 years respectively. Cultism is a societal crime that is pervasive in the educational system. It can be assumed that a person will be able to fully comprehend what goes on, particularly concerns regarding cultism, the longer they stay in a learning environment. Justice (2016) asserts that Africa has developed into a breeding ground for many criminal and deviant behaviors. Most students in these universities stay longer than three years before graduating. One of these escalations is the ongoing trend of secret cult activity.

4.3.4 Denominational Affiliation

The study's goal in this section was to compare participant gender and religious affiliation to better understand it. This finding is shown in Table 8.

Table 7

Gender and Denominational Affiliation Cross Tabulation

			Denominational Affiliation				
			Roman Catholic	Protestant	Pentecostal	Other	Total
Gender	Male	Count	4	56	31	4	95
		% of Total	2.1%	29.0%	16.1%	2.1%	49.2%
	Female	Count	6	63	26	3	98
		% of Total	3.1%	32.6%	13.5%	1.6%	50.8%
Total		Count	10	119	57	7	193
		% of Total	5.2%	61.7%	29.5%	3.6%	100.0%

The analysis of denominational affiliation revealed that 61.7% and 29.5% were Protestants and Pentecostal affiliates, respectively. Finally, the Roman Catholic participants represented 5.2% of the sample. Among the 3.6% others, it was discovered that it represented those from *Wakorino* and *light of God* denominations. The study of religious perspectives helps us understand how a person becomes susceptible to cultism by religious inclination. Bussell (1985) asserts that, with the exception of Eastern cults, a comprehensive investigation of all major modern cults reveals that they all had their origins in evangelical churches or evangelical leaders. The Moonies' founder, Sun Myung Moon, grew up in a Presbyterian missionary family. A review of the previous 150 years demonstrates that many of the more established, older cults, such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Christian Scientists, have evangelical beginnings.

4.3.5 Period as a Born-Again Christian

A comparison was made between male and female respondents pertaining to the period they have been born again. Table 9 shows the results.

Table 8

Period as a Born Again Christian and Gender Cross Tabulation

			Gender		
			Male	Female	Total
Time period	Less 1 year	Count	4	2	6
		% of Total	2.1%	1.0%	3.1%
	1 -2 years	Count	4	8	12
		% of Total	2.1%	4.1%	6.2%
	2-5 years	Count	31	31	62
		% of Total	16.1%	16.1%	32.1%
	More than 5 years	Count	56	57	113
		% of Total	29.0%	29.5%	58.5%
Total		Count	95	98	193
		% of Total	49.2%	50.8%	100.0%

The data analyzed established that 58.5% and 32.1% were the majority of the respondents who had up to 5 years as born-again Christians. Additionally, 6.2% and 3.1% of participants had up to 2 years as born-again Christians. According to Roberts and Yamane (2015), religion is a social control mechanism and bolsters social order. People who practice religion learn moral principles and behavior in society. They further posit that various civilizations' cultures, morals, and social systems are shaped by religion and support community organization.

4.3.6 Reliability Tests

Internal reliability of instruments was done using Cronbach's' alpha technique. The results for the five independent variables and one dependent variable are provided in Table 10 below:

Table 9

Internal Reliability Test

Variable	No. of items	Cronbach's alpha	Decision
Family Background	10	0.877	Reliable
Social-Psychological Manipulation	10	0.798	Reliable
The Sense of Belonging	10	0.812	Reliable
Theological Grounding	10	0.877	Reliable
Peer Pressure	10	0.801	Reliable
Prevalence of Cultism	10	0.879	Reliable

Since the variables loaded coefficients between 0.798 and 0.879, the variables fetched reliable data. Therefore, there was internal consistency of data. The result was reliable since the coefficient was 0.833 which exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.70.

External Reliability was done using test-re-test techniques. In this type of analysis, a similar questionnaire was given to the same respondents twice. Thereafter, a correlation coefficient was computed. The findings are presented in Table 11.

Table 10

External Reliability

Variable	Test 1 (mean)	Test 2(mean)	Pearson (r)
Family Background	2.99	3.05	0.790[**]
Social-Psychological Manipulation	2.98	3.04	0.739[**]
The Sense of Belonging	2.96	3.11	0.702[**]
Theological Grounding	3.24	3.34	0.846[**]
Peer Pressure	3.12	3.05	0.821[**]
Prevalence of Cultism	3.03	2.98	0.794[**]

According to the pilot study results, the mean for Family Background tests 1 and 2 were 2.99 and 3.05. This was accompanied by Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.790. This indicates that there existed a correlation between the two tests. Similarly, Social-Psychological Manipulation returned a significant correlation between test 1 and 2.

(r=0.739; p<0.05)**.** The Sense of Belonging and Theological Grounding were also correlated significantly (r=0.702; p<0.05 and r=0.846; p<0.05) respectively. Finally, Peer Pressure and Prevalence of Cultism variables significantly correlates with their respective tests (r=0.821; p<0.05) and (r=0.794; p<0.05) respectively. Largely, the findings confirmed the external reliability of the instrument was assured.

4.4 Diagnostics And Data Verification

Diagnostic analytics is the process of using data to determine the causes of trends and correlations between variables. It can be viewed as a logical next step after using descriptive analytics to identify trends.

4.4.1 Factor Analysis for Construct Validity

To ascertain whether data are appropriate for factor analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test for sphericity were used.

Table 11

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity

Variable	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		
		Approx. Chi-Square	*df*	Sig.
Family Background	0.778	259.904	45	.000
Socio-Psychological Manipulation	0.794	413.085	45	.000
Sense of Belonging	0.778	528.385	45	.000
Theological Grounding	0.829	336.243	45	.000
Peer Pressure	0.748	377.446	45	.000

The KMO test evaluates how suitable the sample size is for dimension reduction. High values (close to 1.0) generally indicate that a factor analysis may be useful with the research data. If the value is less than 0.50, the results of the factor analysis probably

won't be very useful (Kaiser, 1974). In this research, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin statistic was 0.778, 0.794, 0.778, 0.829 and 0.748 for Family Background, Socio-Psychological Manipulation, Sense of Belonging, Theological Grounding and Peer Pressure respectively. This indicates that all the items designed to measure the five independent variables were useful in factor analysis. Additionally, Bartlett's test of Sphericity is used to test the null hypothesis that the correlation matrix is an identity matrix. An identical correlation matrix indicates that the variables are unrelated and not appropriate for factor analysis.

Therefore, it determines whether there is an overlap between variables that may be summed up by a few components. Park (2021) asserts that a significant Bartlett's test of sphericity is necessary before factor analysis can be used. This study found significant Bartlett's test in all five independent variables. This suggests that there is a substantial degree of correlation in the data, which is necessary for factor analysis to be effective.

4.4.2 Factor Loadings

Factor loadings in principal components and factor analysis refer to the correlation between the original and the underlying latent variables or factors. Essentially, factor loadings show how much each variable 'loads onto' a specific factor. This means that factor loadings allow us to understand which variables are most closely associated with a particular factor. Subsequent tables illustrate the factor loading for the variable that were investigated.

4.4.3 Factor Loading for Family Background Domain

Table 12

Rotated Component Matrix[a] for Family Background Domain

Rotated Component Matrix[a]	Factor loading
A student from a dysfunctional home is made vulnerable to cultism	.555
A student with a history of serious child abuse and violence is vulnerable to cultic recruitment	.615
Parents who are cult members could initiate their children into cultism	.739
Cultic neighbors may initiate children in the neighborhoods	.576
Divorce and separation of parents cause students to join cults	.448
Moral decadence in the home encourages students to join cults	.600
Students join cultic groups to overcome family problems	.604
The lack of proper parental care for children leads them to cultism	.647
Students are joining cult groups because of financial distress or poverty at home	.663
Students join cultic communities due to a lack of parental discipline	.647

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

As a general rule, a variable should have a rotated factor loading of more than 0.30 in order to be considered important (Tavakol and Wetzel, 2020). In this study, all the items had a factor loading between 0.448 and 0.739. Remarkably, the items: "The lack of proper parental care for children leads them to cultism and Students join cultic communities due to lack of parental discipline" had an equal factor loading of 0.647. This implies that these items have equal underlying measurements towards cultism. The item that had the highest factor loading (0.739) was the one that specified that "Parents who are cult members could initiate their children into cultism." According to this finding, all the items were retained for subsequent data analysis.

4.4.4 Factor Loading for Socio-Psychological Manipulation

Table 13

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

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Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization
a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

According to the analysis, it was 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 then 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.

4.4.5 Factor Loading for Sense of Belonging

Table 14

Rotated Component Matrix[a] for Sense of Belonging Domain

Rotated Component Matrix[a]	Factor loading
The need to associate with others makes students join cult movements	.474
Cultic affiliates take advantage of circumstances such as divorce and separation or broken relationships to recruit new members who are seeking care and support	.804
Students are tempted to enter cultism in pursuit of social identity and acceptance	.775
Cults appear to give the alienated individuals an alternate fellowship and sense of community	.850
Students enter cult groups to become famous or popular	.912
Cults seems to give members a favorable feeling	.773
Cults appear to give their followers spiritual warmth	.812
Students join cultism to realize electoral advantages during student union elections on campus	.653
Students enroll in cultism to transform their social status	.451
Cults target vulnerable students when they are emotionally exposed	.656

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 4 iterations.

According to the finding, items that loaded extremely high in the component include "Students enter cult groups to become famous or popular, Cults appear to give the alienated individuals an alternate fellowship and sense of community as well as that Cults appear to give its followers spiritual warmth with coefficients of 0.912, 0.850 and

0.812 respectively. It was consequently ascertained that all items loaded above the benchmark of 0.30 and were retained to be used in subsequent analysis.

4.4.6 Factor Loading for Theological Grounding

Table 15

Rotated Component Matrix[a] for Theological Grounding

Rotated Component Matrix[a]	Factor loading
Insufficient religious instruction can entice undergraduates to embrace cultism	.720
Cultists quickly indoctrinate Christians with superficial Scriptural knowledge	.671
Individuals who have not had a strong spiritual base are vulnerable to cultic admission	.812
Weak spiritual foundations of young persons will persuade them to cultism	.763
Students are enrolling in cult groups with the hope of a better life and realizing worldly power.	.631
New recruits are susceptible to cultism because of their lack of religious grounding	.585
The absence of spiritual commitment to a church of sound doctrine may invite a student to cultism	.789
Twisting of scripture and misinterpretation or selective reading of the Bible makes many students find comfort in entering cult groups	.728
It is assumed that cultic movements offer solutions to unfulfilled desire for spiritual meaning.	.376
Students are attracted to cults by charismatic leaders who are revered and venerated	.711

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

According to the research, the item, "Individuals who have not had a strong spiritual base are vulnerable to cultic admission" had the highest coefficient of 0.812, while the item: "It is assumed that cultic movements offer solutions to unfulfilled desire for spiritual meaning" had the least coefficient loading of 0.376 coefficient. It was also observed that five items had approximate similar loadings of about 0.7 coefficients: "Insufficient religious instruction can entice undergraduates to embrace cultism (0.720); Weak spiritual foundations of young persons will persuade them to cultism (0.763); The absence of spiritual commitment to a Church of sound doctrine may invite a student to cultism (0.789); Twisting of scripture and misinterpretation or selective reading of the Bible makes many students find comfort in entering cult groups (0.728); Students are attracted to cults by charismatic leaders who are revered and venerated (0.711)." In conclusion, all the items were retained for further data analysis since they surpassed the threshold of 0.30 coefficient.

4.4.7 Factor Loading for Peer Pressure

Table 16

Rotated Component Matrix^a for Peer Pressure

Rotated Component Matrix^a	Factor loading
Students are attracted to cultism because some lecturers belong to secret cults and act as their godfathers or guardians	.806
Students are socialized into cultism by the adults they look up to and emulate in society as their heroes and models	.757
Students receive cult introduction from their peers and friends	.576
Students join cult groups to avoid being considered weaklings by their peers who belong to cults	.743
Students joined cult groups to safeguard their identity among their cult friends and to fit in	.495
Students are vulnerable to entering cultism because of the transition and changing social interaction from parents to peers on campus	.613
Youth consider membership in underground cults to be a symbol of pride	.742
Comrade peer pressure persuades young people and students that entering cultism is good	.631
Some students have become cultists because their mates are part of the cult community, and they look happier	.706
Peer group members and friends who are in cults are very persuasive in recruiting	.671

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

The findings indicate that the item "Students are attracted to cultism because some lecturers belong to secret cults and act as their godfathers or guardians" loaded with the highest coefficient of 0.806. Furthermore, four items were within the same measurement domain (0.7 *coefficients*). These include "Students are socialized into cultism by the adults they look up to and emulate in society as their heroes and models (0.757); "Students join cult groups to avoid being considered weaklings by their peers

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who belong to cults (0.743); "Youth consider membership in underground cult to be a symbol of pride (0.742); "Some students have become cultists because their mates are part of the cult community, and they look happier (0.706)."

Furthermore, *three* items were within the same measurement domain (*0.6 coefficients*). The items include: "Students are vulnerable to entering cultism because of the transition and changing social interaction from parents to peers on campus (0.613); "Comrade peer pressure persuades young people and students that entering cultism is good (0.631); "Peer group members and friends who are in cults are very persuasive in recruiting (0.671). Finally, the item with the least factor loading was "Students joined cult groups to safeguard their identity among their cult friends and to fit in" with a loading coefficient of 0.495. Principally, all the items surpassed the loading threshold of 0.3 and were retained for further analysis.

4.5 Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analytics is the method of finding patterns and relationships utilizing both recent and old data. The fundamental qualities of a data collection can be quantified and described by a researcher using descriptive statistics. They enable investigators to arrange, simplify, and synthesize data as a result of which they act as the foundation for data analysis.

4.5.1 Family Background and Cultism

The first objective of the study was to establish the Christian Union students' perception of the influence of family background on cultism in public universities in Kenya. Percentages, averages, and standard deviations were used to examine the trends of the variable as presented in Table 17.

Table 17

Family Background and Cultism

Statement	SD	D	A	SA	Mean	SD
A student from a dysfunctional home is made vulnerable to cultism	2%	18%	64%	17%	2.94	0.65
A student with a history of serious child abuse and violence is vulnerable to cultic recruitment	6%	34%	45%	15%	2.68	0.80
Parents who are cult members could initiate their children into cultism	2%	7%	57%	34%	3.22	0.66
Cultic neighbours may initiate children in the neighbourhood	1%	11%	61%	26%	3.12	0.63
Divorce and separation of parents cause students to join cults	3%	31%	51%	15%	2.77	0.72
Moral decadence in the home encourages students to join cults	2%	17%	58%	23%	3.00	0.69
Students join cultic groups to overcome family problems	3%	17%	51%	28%	3.05	0.76
The lack of proper parental care for children leads them to cultism	2%	9%	50%	39%	3.25	0.70
Students are joining cult groups because of financial distress or poverty at home	2%	10%	47%	41%	3.27	0.71
Students join cultic communities due a lack of parental discipline	5%	30%	46%	20%	2.79	0.81
Family Background Mean index					3.01	0.37

As presented in Table 17 above, family background plays a critical role in shaping the lives of its members. The results indicate that 81% affirmed (*Mean*=2.94; *SD*=0.65) that a student from a dysfunctional home is made vulnerable to cultism. In addition, 66% of participants were of the view that divorce and separation of parents causes students to join cults (*Mean*=2.77; *SD*=0.72). This suggests that dysfunctional families may incline

their members to cultism because they lack fundamental values of life to follow. These views are consistent with those of Ajayi, Ekundayo and Osalusi (2010), who presented the view that cult members might come from broken homes where child abuse and neglect are common. Similar views are stated by Coates (2011) who believes that the role of familial relationships during childhood, as well as previous group membership in the prior year, is a significant antecedent to joining a cultic group. The C.U. patrons who were interviewed indicated that that:

> *Students who have suffered depression and are from family backgrounds where they have experienced divorce and separation were easily swayed into cults. Moreover, cults seem to offer explanations and promise a home. That parents can easily recruit their children into cults if they are members. Parental authority over their children could contribute. The promise of quick answers – instantaneous healing in which the physical expression of touch is a requirement including the use of anointing oil!*

Early childhood experiences could affect the character of an individual later in life such that they can easily be recruited to cultism. According to the results, 60%, of the participants agreed that a student with a history of serious child abuse and violence is vulnerable to cultic recruitment (*Mean*=2.68; *SD*=0.80). Moreover, 81% (*Mean*=3.00; *SD*=0.69) of the respondents affirmed this view by observing that moral decadence in the home encourages students to join cults. This finding agrees with that of Surajo (2018), who argues that lack of parental guidance and broken families have a drastic negative impact on the upbringing of children, and such children grow up becoming ready candidates for cultism.Interviewed CU patrons indicated that:

> *Students who have suffered depression and are from family backgrounds where they have experienced, divorce and separation were easily swayed into cults. I have struggled journeying with students from cultic backgrounds and dysfunctional families suffering acute depression.*

The environment where members of the society dwell affect whether they can withstand cultism or not. In the research, 91% of participants agreed that parents who are cult members could initiate their children into cultism (*Mean*=3.22; *SD*=0.66). In a similar vein, 87% of these participants affirmed that cultic neighbours may initiate children in the neighbourhood (*Mean*=3.12; *SD*=0.63). This implies that the society from which individuals originate can be a place where they are easily exposed to undesirable societal vices such as cultism. According to Rotimi (2005), parents who are members of cults frequently initiate their children from home even before they are admitted to school, and some households where children are abandoned to neighbours have their children initiated into cults without the approval of the parents or guardians. The participants affirmed that:

> *Some children go into cults in search of father figures especially girls who never had a father figure at home, or those with tattered relationships with their fathers are attracted to cults. Cultic groups term themselves as solution bringers- e.g., father and mother figures, those from humble families, student's situations are taken advantage of.*

Cultism is seen by many as an alternative route to problem-solving of daily challenges. In this study, 79% of respondents asserted that students join the cultic groups to overcome family problems (*Mean*=3.05; *SD*=0.76). In addition, 88% were of the opinion that students are joining cult groups because of financial distress or poverty at home (*Mean*=3.27; *SD*=0.71). This means that individual could find themselves in cultic organizations so that they can find financial freedom. The findings of this study agree with those of Oyemwinmina and Aibieyi (2015), who found that some students join cultic groups in search of financial and economic gain, and others join cultic groups out of financial and economic discontent. Furthermore, research by Oyegoke (2003) confirms that cult members are misled into believing that they have a better chance of

being financially independent than non-members. This technique easily wins over students from low-income families. They are informed that the only way to live comfortably and have access to so many opportunities for making money on campus is to join a cult organization.

The *interview* results established that the search for quick fixes and faster solutions makes them end up in cultism. Respondents affirmed that:

> *Many unsuspecting students are told that God at times is a little late! They end up in witchcraft, drugs, and substance abuses. This especially takes place in single parented homes. Parents would want to propagate the cult agenda but not to the extreme of offering the ultimate price. Cults seem to provide answers and solutions to all problems at home. They seem to have answers to past traumas and prescribe the dos and don'ts. Cults appeal to abandoned people since they seem to explain situations and occurrences and give reasons why things happen the way they do. They seem to provide a home for the ostracized since they exhibit a high life, money, and hope. Cults present the offer of Join us to break family poverty, curses and gain academic success. Cults state they are the only ones who can bind and break generational curses.*

It is widely held that parental care and discipline influence children's attitudes toward cultism. In light of this study, 66% of participants acknowledged that students join cultic communities due to lack of proper guidance and parental discipline (*Mean*=2.79; *SD*=0.81). Similar observations were recorded by 89% of those who opined that lack of proper parental care for children leads them to cultism (*Mean*=3.25; *SD*=0.70). The findings are consistent with those of Surajo (2018), who found that a lack of parental direction and shattered families have a significant detrimental impact on children's upbringing, and that those children grow up to be the perfect targets for cultism. Generally, the family background mean index was 3.01 with a standard deviation of 0.37. This shows that this factor was thought to be significantly related to cultism. The

results from the patrons' interview found that student who lack the warmth, love, belonging and acceptance of the home, are captured by cults who pounce on them and seem to provide free offers, love bombing promises. The patron said that:

> *Cults took advantage of family challenges to recruit students. Students in search for meaning, family friendship or even money can be drawn into cults. Students who feel ostracized from family may find a home in cults.*

The results from Small Group Bible Study (SGBS) leaders indicated that strict parents may force their children to join cults while they are young and lack strong scriptural understanding. Some however, argued that the family's impact could only go so far since university students were adults and their joining of cults in university could partly be their own decision.

They maintained that abuse in childhood could contribute to cultism though there was disagreement with some arguing that there is an age after which the children cannot blame parents and so parental recruitment is limited. It was noted that weak family histories inspire students to join cults such as poverty, parental absenteeism, separation, and divorce which force the students from such home environments to seek for hope and promise of better future which cultists promise to offer. Cultists were said to jump in, masquerading as a solution to the crisis.

The participants affirmed that students who have no family at all are also exposed to cultism since cults become their new family. Busy parents who are committed and lack time with children can contribute while loose family bonds, and the lack of cohesion can determine. The team acknowledged that upbringing of the children can expose one to cultism, children of parents who are from cultic groups will tend to introduce them to their cultic churches in the name of seeking for help from the Men of God whom they view to have solutions to all their problems. Students may join the Cultic groups if the

parents are also cultic. Lack of support from families may trigger one joining cultic group in search of solace and love. Parents who don't care who their children associate with, whether they attend the CU while on Campus or whichever church they fellowship with while away from home, expose their children to cults. Violence during early childhood may motivate students to join cultic groups to find peace, love and acceptance. They observed that the desire for revenge especially those who have experienced violence from family and friends may cause them to join cultic groups.

Bible study leaders affirmed that some students join cults to overcome family problems e.g. poverty, and unconducive environments. Parents who are cultic tend to influence their children to join cultism for continuity in instances where the cult is a family business. Students inherit their faith and believes from their parents. Students from dysfunctional families join cultism because they are looking for hope, and fulfilment missed in their families. Those in pursuit of hope, home and support are susceptible to cultism as it offers such.

The participants also affirmed that those who lack doctrinal grounding from home and church are inspired to join. Those who lack discipleship and training in church theology thus lacking strong roots are inspired to join cults. The fear of unemployment and the desire to make life easier makes students join cults to find a solution.

Wrong treatment by family can cause movement into cults in search of a conducive home environment, sense of love and belonging which breeds a sense of loyalty, friendship, and fellowship. They observed that some students were looking for father figures   or mother figures in the case of single parentage where only one parent loved, and one felt discriminated or not favoured. Parental discrimination and favouritism of children and social exclusion was viewed as a major contributor to cultism. Some of the respondents however rejected the notion that students from cultic families join cults

arguing that some did not. The respondents observed that some students may join due to hard financial conditions at home in search of resources.

Money is one of the reasons people join cults. This is usually the benefit promised either by a friend or lover in a cult. Cults promise money and fame which attracts students or children to the group. The level of parental authority over the children influences the children to join the cult. When they enter, there is a tendency to be in love and hooked into the group as an escape route away from domineering parents.

The focussed group discussions indicated that spiritual family background and cult tendencies such as any parent in cult gives a very high probability for the children to join cults. An upbringing devoid of good guidance and scripture can make one fall into cultism. It was observed that people from families with financial problems can be manipulated due to the needs. Introduction by friends and brainwashing especially on those from spiritually shaky background. The groups were of the view that students may resort to cults for solace, encouragement, and support.

4.5.2 Socio-Psychological Manipulation and Cultism

The second objective was to determine the Christian Union students' perception of the influence of socio-psychological manipulation on cultism in public universities in Kenya. 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 and results are summarized in Table 18.

Table 18

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 in Table 19 above, 68% of participants affirmed 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 claiming that the transition could not fully explain the enrolment into cults, arguing that every student had the freedom to make their own decisions at that point in life, and so they should be held accountable. 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). It is critical that students who are transitioning from high school to new or different institutions are 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 were separating for the first time ever from their familiar surroundings and people due to their unfamiliar university neighborhood and schedules. The interview results from a patron indicated that:

> *New students because of their desire to belong to a new social network, are influenced socially. 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 revealed that 83% of participants affirmed that most new university students are naive about life and are thus vulnerable to the cultism that manipulate them (*Mean*=3.07; *SD*=0.73). Furthermore, 80% of participants were of the view that cultism brainwashes learners to think 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 danger since they might come into contact with these cult leaders and may end up being recruited. The results are consistent with those of Talbert and Edwin (2008), who emphasize that first-year students face ambiguity and must judge when and what to do. The cultists take advantage of this predicament to deceive and enlist the students at this time in their lives. Patron interview results indicated that:

> *Coercive persuasion is used to convince and lure in students, and it is seldom the initiative of the student to join these groups. They are convinced and recruited. The patron added that social evils such as LGBTQI and other moral concerns have been raised among those involved in cultism.*

Similarly, FGD groups reported that there were negative talks against the CU and the promises of greater personality and materials beyond the Bible. They noted that cults take advantage of the dilemma of new students. Cult members capitalize on people's psychological distress and act as though they can provide them with alternative solutions to their issues.

The study established that 86% 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). It is evident that cultic recruiters are committed to their goal and use cunning tactics to attain their objectives, which people need to be conscious of. The findings are consistent with those of Wallis (2003), who reports that emotionally disturbed or distressed students are lured into a covert cult by members who pose as affectionate, loving, and understanding people to win over the weaker students and enlist them into

their groups. Things get worse for individuals who come from dysfunctional families and are poor, penniless, sad, and fearful, things get worse. A patron noted that:

> *Cults present the offer of Join us to break family poverty, curses and grant you academic success. Cults state 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.*

The respondents were generally acceptable to the fact that once a person is recruited into a cult, they are given doctrines that bind them to the point where it is challenging to leave. According to the finding, 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 pronounced 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 that of Best (2018), who reiterates that adherents to cults make decisions utilizing a funnel-type of 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 tactics 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. The patron interviews revealed cases where brainwashing and manipulation were evident in which students were told that they owed

it to their 'spiritual dad' that they cannot for example even marry or set the day of marriage until dictated by the new 'spiritual dad'.

It is believed that new members with social and affective vulnerabilities seem to be a motivation for joining cultic groups. In this study, 62% of respondents affirmed that students enter cultic society for psychological support (*Mean*=2.72; *SD*=0.81). Nevertheless, a significant percentage of participants (38%), disagreed with the statement that students entered cults for psychological support. This gives credit to the bounded choice theory which explains the fact that the students are recruited using other techniques outside their own choice. In addition, a majority of 89% avow that 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. 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. The authors further state that 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 being misled. Finally, the socio-psychological manipulation variable had a mean index of 3.08 with a standard deviation of 0.42. This led to the conclusion that this component significantly contributed to cultism. C.U. patrons indicated that:

> *Charismatic preachers also target Christian Union leaders. If you ask any of the leaders who their mentors and preachers are, you realize that they have a huge influence on them and they target the leaders mainly.*

The qualitative data from FGD of the 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 into the fold as the students are exposed to many options at once. Cultists trap new believers who are not firmly grounded in their biblical beliefs. The respondents observed that the major targets among the fresh cohorts of students were those the new believers.

They participants observed that cultist lure students by offering a form of psychological relief and support. They further noted that first year or fresh students and new believers find cults ready and waiting to recruit them. The team added that cults entice new believers during dilemma and moments of anxiety. They observed that cultists use reverse psychology and other tactics to appear very nice to students. It was observed that cults tend pretend and then use peer pressure and group psychology to exert pressure on unsuspecting students.

Transition from a non-believer to a believer is a major transition and cults take advantage of this spiritual transition and manipulate new believers who do not yet know right from wrong doctrine. Transition from high school and lack of information, especially in terms of spiritual naivety and high expectations make them vulnerable. When the cultists welcome the new first years they take advantage of the confusion e.g., financial, stress, admiration of others etc. and offer a solution. Cultists present themselves well and are notably well dressed.

The group identified with manipulation as a major issue influencing people into cults because of soothing and sweet-talking cultists. This depends on background too. They can even confuse strong Christians but the attempt to fit into the campus life. Cults focus on points of weakness and so students who lack self-esteem, are naïve or not confident

are vulnerable. It was however 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 guised as Christian Union and masquerading as CU when recruiting new members as though they are joining the CU. A respondent in the FGD indicated that declaring their stand at the beginning helped them to survive identifying with the right people before the cult recruiter catch up. They agreed that cults manipulate student into prolonged fasting which weakens them. Prolonged fasting is attached to some 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 exposures.

The respondents said that cults promised to meet the psychological needs of depressed people who were looking for solace and hope. They concurred with the use of brainwashing, coercion, or force to influence students who would not have the whole truth concerning the group. Money and food were used by cultists as a bait. Cultists depict themselves as holy and blameless and they show recruits the failures of the genuine groups including the Christian Union.

Some students are manipulated psychologically to join. They are preached to a different doctrine they were not aware of. Some of the tactics used are those of fear of damnation. Some are made to feel helpless without the group. Their leaders have understood the needs such as poverty and so they incline their sermons towards poverty alleviation, financial breakthrough. "If you believe this or do this you will not be poor," they say. They offer students food and refreshments to address the difficult financial constraints campus students face.

4.5.3 Sense of Belonging and Cultism

The third objective was to establish the Christian Union students' perception of a sense of belonging as a factor influencing cultism in public universities in Kenya. The statements from which the data were gathered and rated on a four-point Likert scale. Percentages, means averages, and standard deviations were applied to compute the statistics as presented in Table 19.

Table 19

Sense of Belonging and Cultism

Statement	SD	D	A	SA	Mean	SD
The need to associate with others makes students join cult movements	3%	19%	58%	20%	2.94	0.71
Cultic affiliates take advantage of circumstances such as divorce and separation or broken relationships to recruit new members who are seeking care and support	0%	12%	54%	34%	3.22	0.64
Students are tempted to enter cultism in pursuit of social identity and acceptance	2%	10%	52%	36%	3.22	0.69
Cults appear to give the alienated individuals an alternate fellowship and sense of community	4%	17%	54%	25%	3.00	0.75
Students enter cult groups to become famous or popular	5%	16%	49%	31%	3.05	0.80
Cults seem to give members a favorable feeling	7%	19%	50%	23%	2.89	0.84
Cults appear to give its followers spiritual warmth	12%	20%	42%	25%	2.80	0.95
Students join cultism to realize electoral advantages during student union elections on campus	8%	32%	42%	18%	2.70	0.85
Students enroll in cultism to transform their social status	4%	15%	53%	27%	3.04	0.76
Cults target vulnerable students when they are emotionally exposed	2%	10%	51%	38%	3.24	0.69
Sense of Belonging Mean Index					3.01	0.46

People are thought to join cults out of a desire to fit in since doing so seems to give them a false sense of security within a social group. According to the results, 78% of respondents established that the need to associate with others and seek approval from their peers makes students join cult movements (*Mean*=2.94; *SD*=0.71). In a similar vein, 88% affirmed that students are tempted to enter cultism in pursuit of social identity and acceptance (*Mean*=2.22; *SD*=0.69). Given that humans are social beings by nature, it is thought that the detrimental socialization brought about by cultism may eventually have an adverse effect on an individual's well-being once they have been indoctrinated. The conclusion is in line with that of Girigiri (2013) and Coates (2011), who emphasize that the desire to fit in with a group is an inherent human behaviour. Cultists take advantage of this by positioning themselves as the alternative family and recruiting new members until the cult becomes their new family. Additionally, they contend that members of cults do so because some offer assurance and satisfy the victims' needs for companionship, purpose, and belonging. The patrons during the interviews stated that:

> *There are instances when students may join cults because their home churches are unwilling to meet their needs. In addition, cultic recruiters take advantage of individual circumstances such as, sickness, bereavement, broken relationships, divorce, and separation to recruit new members, promising them a place to feel at home and find answers to their deep questions. They manipulate by giving a justification as to why all these things happen. They explain a way out of everything and the vulnerable are promised support.*

Similar views were propounded by interviewed participants who cited that 'cult acts as a parallel to Christianity but in darkness'. Some cults such as Young Life International, are purely based on fun. Bible study is done during hiking's and retreats and picnics. These activities warm up the members. They further posited that prevailing conditions, such as challenges at the family level, are capitalized on by the charismatic leaders to

indoctrinate new followers. In the current study, 88% of the participants acknowledged that cultic affiliates take advantage of circumstances such as divorce and separation or broken relationships to recruit new members who are seeking care and support (*Mean*=3.22; *SD*=0.64). In support of this observation, 89% asserted that cults target vulnerable students when they are emotionally exposed (*Mean*=3.24; *SD*=0.69). Considering the fact that cultic movements appear to offer instant approval, support, and community, those going through a crisis in life or feeling lonely and alienated are especially susceptible and become a target of these cultic groups. The point of view in this investigation is consistent with that of Kagema and Maina (2014), who maintained that New Charismatic Movements, some of which are cultic, take advantage of circumstances like separation, divorce, single parenthood, and other disadvantageous situations to attempt to reunite the dispersed members of various families by creating fellowships that cater for specific individual needs. The FGD in one university stated that:

> *Cults seem to give members a favorable feeling, spiritual warmth. They give the students half-truths that are used to manipulate them. The truth would set one free. They show students that they belong and influence them to fit in. Cults guard and protect their followers from perceived difficulty from outside. They are promised that they shall be rich both here on earth and in heaven.*

Cultism is thought to use love bombing techniques to give its adherents false impressions of affection so they may feel confident and accepted. In this study, 79% of the participants agreed that cults appear to give the alienated individuals an alternate fellowship and sense of community (*Mean*=3.00; *SD*=0.75). In congruence with this observation, 73% agreed that cults seem to give members a favorable feeling (*Mean*=2.89; *SD*=0.84). Therefore, it suggests that people from abusive or otherwise uncaring settings may easily be lured into joining a cult. The findings support those of

Rotimi (2005) and Wallis (2003), who underscore that students join cults out of a sense of belonging and a desire to be socially linked. Additionally, they claim that some of the lonely members seem to find an alternative group in cults. This is because cults often put up an attractive facade when they first start out; they distribute presents, offer scholarships to students, and generally seem to care about the people who join them. The interviews from one patron revealed that in cults there is no place for pain. The participants stated that:

> *They believe that everything must be good, such as money wealth and good health and good feeling. All is good in their health, wealth, and academics. They preach prosperity. Their common belief gives them warmth and happiness.*

The drive to recruit bright and wealthy members drives some cultic groups to recruit celebrities and students from educational institutions to further their mission. The current study established that 80% affirmed that students enter cult groups to become famous or popular (*Mean*=3.05; *SD*=0.80). This observation was also observed by 60% of those who asserted that students join cultism to realize electoral advantages during student union elections at campus so that they can emerge victorious (*Mean*=2.70; *SD*=0.85). The finding implies that some people are willing to get into any type of cult in the hopes of gaining social status and respect. This finding is comparable to that of Ogidela (2008), who contends that some students join cults in order to identify with an affiliation that will make them influential and well-liked and help them achieve prestige and fame. These cults hold that joining causes a change in their social standing, including an ego boost and increased popularity. The interviews from the sampled participants indicated that:

> *Cults get those seeking self-gratification, fame and popularity and seek to meet and address these needs in a network of likeminded people. Further, some students graduate but remain and can be spotted within campus serving the purpose of recruitment and networking for cult groups.*

Getting social standing and popularity seem to drive individuals to join cultism. In this study, 80% of participants affirm the assertion that students enroll in cultism to transform their social status (*Mean*=3.04; *SD*=0.76). A similar view was observed by 67% of those who attested that cults appear to give their followers spiritual warmth (*Mean*=2.80; *SD*=0.95). In another study, Kagema and Maina (2014) found that 78.4% of their participants joined new charismatic movements NCMs in pursuit of identity, and feelings of affection and belonging, acceptance of themselves and approbation. Individuals enter some social groups or any other organization that accept and accommodates them. The findings established that the Sense of Belonging mean index was 3.01 with 0.46 standard deviation. This confirms the significance of this variable in impacting cultism. The interviews indicated that some students are tempted to enter cultism in pursuit of identity, love, and acceptance of themselves. They stated that:

> *When questions like why am I poor? Arise and students begin to search for answers, cults seem to give them an answer. When trust in God is at it's lowest and they begin to ask, why did God allow this? Cults seem to offer quick solutions to such complex questions.*

The finding from FGD indicated that the need to be unique, famous, or popular attracted students to the cultic groups to stand out from the crowd and be unique. Some students may express their rebellion of authority by joining cultic groups in the hope that this may make them famous or popular. The student leaders noted that since humans are social beings, their inherent search for identity pushes them towards cults that may exude unity and communion. Students therefore mistakenly assume that joining cults will make them feel accepted. Isolated and alienated students may be pressured to join cultic groups to have and identity within the social setting of the group. They added that cults often offer new members a chance to express their gifts or talents when they feel like they are denied the opportunity in other mainstream denominations or churches.

The respondents further reported that as a means of attracting new members, cults offered students a cordial welcome and paid great attention to the individual at the beginning, an aspect that may not be present from the previous denominations that students may have been to therefore, they easily join the cults. Cultic members take advantage of individual circumstance and promise elusive solutions. Some individuals join cultism in pursuit of identity and a sense of assurance and meaning. Some students join cultic groups in search of accommodation, acceptance, and understanding them too. The need to belong or to associate with others makes students join cult movements especially confused first years who are trying to find their way. This is because cults do not brand themselves as a cult so they cannot be identified easily. They tend to behave like normal Christians and cannot be easily identified. Cults were observed as able to study the prevailing culture and enhance association since they do not declare and blend with the targeted community.

The leaders further opined that cultic affiliates take advantage of individual's circumstances such as divorce and separation, to recruit new members. Students are tempted to enter cultism in pursuit of identity, love, and acceptance of themselves. The cults often appear so warm and welcoming, loving, and identity is noticed. Gifted students such as singers, healers who feel ostracized within the existing Christian groups join some of the cultic groups so as to use their abilities and gifts more freely. Being given the chance denied elsewhere such as to preach sing etc. thus portraying the cult as able to provide all one needed in normal religion.

4.5.4 Theological Grounding and Cultism

The fourth objective was to determine the Christian Union students' perception of the influence of theological grounding on cultism in public universities in Kenya. The four-point Likert scale was employed to rate the accuracy of the arguments. Ultimately,

standard deviations, means, and percentages were obtained for each sub-variable. The results are captured in Table 20.

Table 20

Theological Grounding and Cultism

Statement	SD	D	A	SA	Mean	SD
Insufficient religious instruction can entice undergraduates to embrace cultism	1%	18%	50%	31%	3.10	0.72
Cultists quickly indoctrinate Christians with superficial Scriptural knowledge	4%	21%	44%	32%	3.03	0.81
Individuals who have not had a strong spiritual base are vulnerable to cultic admission	1%	18%	47%	34%	3.13	0.73
Weak spiritual foundations of young person's will persuade them to cultism	2%	19%	52%	27%	3.05	0.72
Students are enrolling in cult groups with the hope of a better life and realizing worldly power.	1%	22%	41%	36%	3.12	0.78
New recruits are susceptible to cultism because of their lack of religious grounding	3%	20%	48%	30%	3.04	0.77
The absence of spiritual commitment to a church of sound doctrine may invite a student to cultism	2%	22%	44%	33%	3.07	0.78
Twisting of scripture and misinterpretation or selective reading of the Bible makes many students find comfort in entering cult groups	2%	23%	38%	38%	3.11	0.81
It is assumed that cultic movements offer solutions to unfulfilled desires for spiritual meaning.	7%	21%	50%	22%	2.87	0.82
Students are attracted to cults by charismatic leaders who are revered and venerated	3%	25%	37%	35%	3.04	0.84
Theological Grounding					3.06	0.44

According to the findings in Table 20, a solid theological foundation enables one to resist any false teaching spread by cultic groups. According to the study, 81% agreed that insufficient religious instruction can entice undergraduates to embrace cultism (*Mean*=3.10; *SD*=0.72). The finding also confirmed that 76% of these participants stated

that cultists quickly indoctrinate Christians with superficial scriptural knowledge (*Mean*=3.03; *SD*=0.81). It demonstrates that cultism may readily recruit adherents by exploiting persons who are not firmly founded in Christianity. These findings corroborate Martin's (2003) finding that cults find it far easier to propagate their teachings among young Christians, nominal Christians, and those with merely a cursory experience with the Scriptures. Individuals who are not spiritually and biblically grounded are more likely to be recruited by cultists. The interviews from patrons affirmed that:

> *A weak religious base offers a soft landing for cults for example lack of Sunday school teaching and training. This is because what children are exposed to in the early stages of their lives shapes them.*

They also observed prosperity gospel sermons, manifestation and impartation topics entice students. Some cults offer trainings on how to speak in tongues. They restated that:

> *Cultic members believe that the CU does not offer noisy and psyched up preachers while cult leaders are performers and induce a lot of fake hope. Finally, cultic groups prefer noisy preachers to cool preachers. They term their preachers as men of God who are miracle workers and prophets. Such preachers are full of fake hope.*

The extent of a person's spiritual basis and knowledge of Christianity may determine their susceptibility to cultic recruitment. The study established that 81% opined that individuals who have not had a strong spiritual base are vulnerable to cultic admission (*Mean*=3.13; *SD*=0.73). Similarly, 79% of the sampled participants acknowledged that the weak spiritual foundations of young persons will persuade them into cultism (*Mean*=3.05; *SD*=0.72). This means that how well an individual understands biblical teachings determines their susceptibility or not to cultic admittance. This study agrees

with that of Aboribo (1999), who stated that cult leaders control their victims at their weakest spot, and that cultism is basically a spiritual affair. According to Aboribo, most philosophical cults target individuals who are vulnerable such as the destitute, the oppressed, and the spiritually weak.

Interviews from CU patrons showed that scripture twisting is very common in cultism, adding that:

> *Specifically, cultic preachers quote text in the Bible out of context and use it preach what people want to hear, what is appealing. They tend to take some appealing scriptures to the congregant and leave out others. They further reiterated that individuals who are not committed to a certain church might simply embrace any sort of teaching they encounter.*

The results revealed that the absence of spiritual commitment to a Church of sound doctrine may invite a student to cultism. Comparably, respondents affirmed that new recruits are more vulnerable to cultism because they lack a strong theological foundation. Further patron interview results established that patrons had a problem with the way scriptures are quoted out of context by such cultic groups and the preaching that seeks to please the itching ears. Furthermore, they decried the lack of exposure to true doctrines as making students vulnerable to cultism such as drilling students to speak in tongues. In an interview, a CU patron gave an example of a speaker who came to their service and manipulated students using dress code such as rugged and tight jeans, hence some students identified with them.

Individuals who are not committed to a certain church might simply embrace any sort of teaching they encounter. The results revealed that 77% of the respondents agreed that the absence of spiritual commitment to a church of sound doctrine may invite a student to cultism (*Mean*=3.07; *SD*=0.78). Comparably, 78% of respondents (Mean=3.07;

SD=0.77) agreed that new recruits are more vulnerable to cultism because they lack a strong theological foundation. This conclusion is consistent with that made by Akaranga and Ongonga (2013), who assert that learners who lack spiritual life are more likely to change religions. Due to their lack of knowledge of other religions, some students are drawn into cults. Furthermore, according to Akaranga and Ongonga, those who did not have a strong theological foundation during their early years were more likely to stray from the real religion and become persuaded by cultist ideas.

In an effort to secure their financial future, some people may be compelled by socioeconomic circumstances to join cultic societies. As per the findings, 77% affirmed that students are enrolling in cult groups with the hope of a better life and realization of worldly power (*Mean*=3.12; *SD*=0.78). Comparable results, 72%, support the idea that many people believe cultic organizations provide answers to the unfulfilled demand for spiritual meaning to an individual (Mean = 2.87; SD = 0.82).

Many cults have emerged because of incorrect Bible interpretation. This study revealed that 76% of participants alluded that twisting of scripture and misinterpretation, or selective reading of the Bible, makes many students find comfort in entering cult groups (*Mean*=3.11; *SD*=0.81). This view was supported by 72% of those who thought that students are attracted to cults by charismatic leaders who are revered and venerated (*Mean*=3.04; *SD*=0.84).According to Coates (2011), individuals join charismatic associations in pursuit of spiritual identity and significance, enrolment in charismatic societies occurs through existing social connections and interpersonal ties, such as colleagues recruiting friends, family members recruiting one another, and neighbours recruiting neighbours. Largely, theological grounding is observed to influence cultism in public universities (*Mean* =3.06; *SD*=0.44). An interviewee stated that:

Cults catch students who have a superficial knowledge of the scriptures and that individuals who have not had a strong religious base would be vulnerable and that student with inappropriate spiritual foundations as children might be exposed to cultism.

The patrons stated that the spiritual father ideology which states that people must listen to new father figures in the churches. In the light of this new phenomenon, they called on the students to seek to be well grounded in faith. The findings from SGBS leaders indicated that a large majority of the respondents argued that the theological grounding and foundation of students was the biggest determining or causal factor ("mother of all") on the propensity of students joining cults in university. Those that lack sufficient understanding of the scripture are susceptible to cultic doctrines. Students with weak theological grounding are attracted to cult members who seem to have a higher and stronger spiritual connection to God.

It was revealed that cults intentionally misinterpret and manipulate the scripture. Students who have a low understanding of scripture fall prey to the cults since they cannot distinguish lies from truth. Cults tend to prioritize different aspects of scripture such as material possessions or certain books of the Bible. A lack of understanding of all aspects of scripture or a weak scriptural foundation by undergraduate students causes them not to identify these disparities in the cultic teachings when they join the cults.

The participants observed that cults use the same Bible in a warped way to propagate a certain doctrine. Nominal Christians or cultural Christians with no personal faith are easily caught. They observed that a foundation as good as the building. (Eph. 4:14). This lack of knowledge becomes a risk factor. The role of preachers is critical since some twist the scriptures to their end.

The respondents also affirmed that lonely students who lack fellowship are lured into such groups for companionship. The team observed that young believers were vulnerable to cultism. The group observed that cultists are obsessed with obedience to a charismatic leader to the extent of failing to distinguish the leader from God. They reported that they had observed some form of financial exploitation from cultic groups.

They further alluded to the fact that cultists are very defensive, and people involved in cults do not allow questions regarding their faith and easily get infuriated against critics. That. They observed that there were some special language jargons and intonations common among cultists that would distinguish them from the rest. That those who are not conversant with scripture are lured more easily than those with a deeper knowledge of the Bible and could easily be manipulated. The FGD alluded to the fact that pressing financial situations of the family may contribute to the student's sympathy for cultic advances since these groups promise some kind of prosperity. Students from extreme family challenges may find solace in some of the cultic groups that promise assistance.

They were unanimous that parents who are engaged in cults may introduce their own children to the groups. In addition, they affirmed that lack of belonging to a Church makes an individual vulnerable to cultism. Preachers from cultic group relies on a very specific portion of scripture that suites the members. Lack of accountability and discipleship structures expose students to cult recruitment. This is especially true of those who are not committed to a church or fellowship. They however denied that students join cults in such of fame.

Participants aver that a lack of sufficient Biblical knowledge can be a major factor that can cause one to be easily lured in. Some believers who are nominal and only church goers can be lured in because they lack grounding and a strong foundation. They noted

that cults tend to manipulate Biblical passages to address specific needs. They thus manipulate scriptures to make members feel like a superhuman or God.

Some students are attracted by the power their leaders display on the television. When the leader raises their hand, and everyone falls. They want to acquire world power and dominion. Cults were noted to take one thing and make an entire theology and philosophy out of it. They attract students using examples of other cultic members who are purported to have already succeeded. They dwell on the money-based scriptures. They claim to anoint the future of their members. They dwell on the unknown. They know what you are looking for, and they promise to deliver it.

The respondents maintained that even some of those with good theological grounding can be recruited into cults. They further insinuated that cults may target Christians and especially those who are zealous, faithful, and prayerful are also attracted and lured in deliberately because their input would help the cults to spread.

Respondents observed that the leaders of the Cultic groups are not faithful to the Holy Scriptures but preach what the congregations want to hear. The congregation doesn't question what the man of God preaches due to lack of knowledge. Preachers of Cultic groups twist the scripture to suit the interest of congregants. Preachers in cultic groups indoctrinate members who do not have enough knowledge of the scripture. The use of "altar" language, also known as "*madhabahu*" is a common feature among cultists. Some are told to "*Fungua M-Pesa*" for money to flow in.

4.5.5 Peer Pressure and Cultism

The fifth objective was to examine the Christian Union students' perception of the influence of peer pressure on cultism in public universities in Kenya. The Table 22 displays the results of the descriptive analysis. Percentages, means, and standard

deviations were used. Additionally, a four-point Likert scale was used to measure the variables.

Table 21

Peer Pressure and Cultism

Statement	SD	D	A	SA	Mean	SD
Students are attracted to cultism because some lecturers belong to secret cults and act as their godfathers or guardians	8%	38%	42%	11%	2.57	0.79
Students are socialized into cultism by the adults they look up to and emulate in society as their heroes and models	3%	10%	60%	27%	3.10	0.69
Students receive cult introduction from their peers and friends	7%	12%	52%	28%	3.01	0.83
Students join cult groups to avoid being considered weaklings by their peers who belong to cults	3%	21%	57%	20%	2.93	0.71
Students joined cult groups to safeguard their identity among their cult friends and to fit in	3%	17%	58%	23%	3.01	0.70
Students are vulnerable to entering cultism because of the transition and changing social interaction from parents to peers on campus	4%	13%	53%	29%	3.07	0.76
Youth consider membership in underground cults to be a symbol of pride	2%	19%	42%	37%	3.15	0.77
Comrade peer pressure persuades young people and students that entering cultism is good	2%	18%	58%	23%	3.01	0.69
Some students have become cultists because their mates are part of the cult community, and they look happier	2%	13%	58%	26%	3.08	0.69
Peer group members and friends who are in cults are very persuasive in recruiting	5%	15%	50%	30%	3.04	0.80
Peer Pressure Mean Index					3.00	0.40

The findings on Table 21indicated that the older generations serve as mentors and models to the younger ones, and any doctrine they spread is easily transmitted to the younger generations. It was established from the finding that 53% supported the statement that students were attracted to cultism because some lecturers belong to secret cults and acted as their godfathers (*Mean =*2.57; *SD*=0.79). It was, however, noted that 47% of the participants disagreed with the statement, expressing a contrary view regarding the influence of lecturers in recruitment to cults. This negates the position expressed by scholars such as Ehondo (1993), Oshodomo (2009), Mediayanose (2013), Oyemwinmina and Aibieyi (2015), and Ogidefa (2016) who held the view that the lecturers played a central role in cult recruitment in Nigerian universities. This implies that the Kenyan student scene was slightly different in perception of the role of university faculty in the prevalence of cultism.

Furthermore, 87% of the participants reiterated that students are socialized into cultism by the adults they look up to and emulate in society as their heroes and models (*Mean =*3.10; *SD*=0.69). This suggests that those in positions of authority who are constantly sought to for advice are quick to promulgate any new ideology connected to cultism can have adverse effects on the masses. This result is consistent with that of Lalich (2017), who notes that cult recruiting is hierarchical and occurs in stages, adding that more than two-thirds of people who join cults are either recruited by friends, family, or coworkers, and it can be challenging to turn down such attempts. Lalich further stated that internal peer pressure is essential in advancing cultism, contending that individuals beyond a certain age tend to take their friends' or partners' actions into consideration and do not want to disappoint them.

The patrons agreed that students are carried away by some errant lecturers who are viewed as role models and pace setters. They indicated that it was very possible for

senior staff who are involved in cultism to recruit students. He indicated that by virtue of seniority, the students are attracted and value their opinions as true. Some lecturers who are members of cultic groups influence their students to join cultism by even assisting them to register.

The recruitment of university students into cults was observed to be significantly influenced by peer groups. In this research, 80% of the participants cited that students receive cult introduction from their peers and friends (*Mean* =3.01; *SD*=0.83). Introduction to cultism is largely influenced by mates as cited 84% of those who affirmed that some students have become cultists because their mates are part of the cult community, and they look happier (*Mean* =3.08; *SD*=0.69). This finding is in line with Cherono (2019), who found that numerous students had been exposed to cults through their friends. The peer group has been cited as a key contributor to university students' cult membership. Because of the influence and pressure from their peers, most students joined numerous cults.

The interviews established that recruitment by peers is quite efficient due to common interests. It is thus responsible for the vast spread and growth of cults in the university. They affirmed that:

> *Cults have a structured introduction and their referrals to higher levels are made by peers for the inquisitive ones. Friends, peers, and classmates can be used to lure them in with testimonies of how successful and fulfilled the groups are making them feel good. They make you feel at home and can buy you food. The "Food, Fun & Fellowship" movement. Also, students grow and learn from each other.*

The influence of peer groups is a powerful element that pushes students to join secret cults. Considering this development, 77% of the participants agreed that students join cults in order to avoid being viewed negatively by their cult-affiliated peers. In a similar

vein, 81% of respondents claimed that students joined cults to fit in and maintain their identity amongst their cult peers. The findings support the assertion by Mediayanose (2016) that the majority of learners join cults as a result of peer pressure or influence. The author further notes that students who join cults for this reason do so to prevent themselves from being perceived as weak and to uphold their reputation among their fellow cult members.

The patrons interviewed reiterated that:

Comradeship is a strong word and philosophy. Comrades cannot go wrong is a mantra that strengthens cults on campus. A combination of comrade mantra and peer pressure influence is a strong force. They further posited that they join cultic group to safeguard their identity with cultic friends; they even know each other by how they dress, and they try to safeguard their identity.

The patrons also pointed out that there exists a relationship between cultism, sex, drugs and substance abuse. Finally, they posited that:

Peers who look attractive yet are members of cults become marketers for the cults. The peers ask each other for example, what is your new tongue identity and they then exchange notes and short messages and WhatsApp messages in tongues.

The respondents expressed that the main reason why students join cults is because they are exposed to completely novel social dynamics. The study's findings revealed that 82% of respondents believed that many students were at risk of joining cults because of the shift in social interactions away from parents and toward peers while attending higher education institutions (*Mean* =3.07; *SD*=0.76). To ratify this assertion, up to 81% of the participants stated that comrade peer pressure persuades young people and students that entering cultism is good (*Mean* =3.01; *SD*=0.69). This suggests that because of the effect of present society dynamics and traits, students are at danger of being convinced to

become part of cultic organizations. The findings support the theory by Ongonga and Akaranga (2013) that students are drawn to cults because they want to avoid being discredited by their friends. As a result, some students join cults because their peers are followers. The discussions with the FGD consider peer influence to be an identity issue. They indicated that:

The cultists seem to find corporate strength when together. Some of them have identity markers such as dress, appearance, and uniformity which they try to safeguard. Whereas parents appear to have authority, control, and monitor their actions by supervision while at home, the students joining campus from high school, come to the university with a rebellious mindset and soon they finally adopt a liberal lifestyle from their new social groups in campus.

The desire for social identification and peer pressure appears to be the driving factors behind people joining cultic organizations. According to the study, up to 79% of the participants affirmed that youth consider membership in secret cult to be a symbol of pride (*Mean* =3.15; *SD*=0.77). Furthermore, 80% of participants cited that peer group members and friends who are in cults are very persuasive in recruiting (*Mean* =3.04; *SD*=0.80). This implies that individuals may end up joining cults that appear to offer immediate acceptance, love-bombing, and attention in an effort to establish relationships with others with whom they believe they have something in common. The current findings support the arguments put forward by Foster, Loomis, Szimhart, and Wilcox (2003) that cults keep members in one place for a long enough period of time to persuade them to convert, that they use peer and social pressure to keep members longer, and that they can also use individual relationships to develop one-to-one relationships, some of which may even be romantic or simply based on apparent friendship. Peer pressure has typically been identified as a factor that determines cultism (*Mean* =3.04; *SD*=0.80). Interviewees with patrons also affirmed that:

Some students even fear to profess the old-time religion because of peer pressure. They further opined that changing social interactions from parents to peers affected the student's attitude due to the influence of their peers.

They observed that students were always inviting each other to their churches, some of which are cultic and because students are curious, they end up trying out and then they get recruited.

The findings from the FGD with small group Bible study leaders made a case for the need of impart critical thinking and discernment among Christians to identify cults and avoid being lured into cultic movements. Lecturers or student leaders may attribute their success whether financial or social to being part of a cult. This tempts students to emulate them by joining the cultic groups in order to achieve said success. The peers to the students have a better understanding of the trends and attractions of their targets thus it is easy for them to ensnare the students into joining their secret cults.

In their search for their place in the university environment, students find it difficult to refuse the invitation to join cults to avoid being left out or isolated from their peers. The distance and separation from family and parents causes peers to take precedence as the primary form of counsel to students. The respondents posited that overprotective parents may also cause students to become vulnerable to their peers due to the sudden change in the social structure of the students who previously had no experience in making their own decisions. The sudden separation from their families, therefore, leaves them open to the influence of their peers.

The SGBS leader in the FGD agreed that lecturers can influence students by causing them to question their beliefs. They observed that some students join cults because they are attracted by other students who are attracted to cults to be one of the worthies and with bravado. Some join cults to sustain friendships. Peer pressure can be an influence

because some people are looking for meaning and purpose in life and cultic groups tend to present solutions. They added that there are some online charismatic preachers who are very influential on students.

4.5.6 Prevalence of Cultism

A descriptive analysis of cultism was carried out using percentages, means and standard deviations. The prevalence of cultism was assessed based on the occurrence of signs like blind loyalty to charismatic leaders, limited choice and mind control, exploitation and manipulation, nature-enslaving practices, and extra- or non-biblical teachings.

Table 22

Prevalence of Cultism

Statement	SD	D	A	SA	Mean	SD
Violence is often associated with cult members	8%	38%	41%	12%	2.58	0.80
Exclusively believe that outsiders or non-members are lost sinners	10%	22%	40%	27%	2.85	0.93
Mind control techniques such as brainwashing and coercion are prevalent	2%	11%	52%	35%	3.19	0.70
Obedience to charismatic leaders is prevalent	3%	6%	56%	35%	3.23	0.67
Control by an authoritarian, charismatic living and unquestioned leader	1%	12%	50%	37%	3.22	0.69
Leaders taking sexual advantage and exploitation of their followers is prevalent	5%	16%	59%	21%	2.96	0.74
Enslaving and bounding structure on their faithful is prevalent	2%	9%	57%	32%	3.18	0.67
A break of family ties or disregard for family life is prevalent	3%	15%	52%	31%	3.11	0.74
The use of non-biblical or extra biblical doctrines and prophesies are dominant	2%	10%	47%	41%	3.28	0.70
Sacred transcendent ideology and series of secret rituals are widespread	2%	12%	55%	31%	3.13	0.70
Prevalence of Cultism					3.07	0.47

The prevalence of cultism has been associated with different indications. In this research, 53% of the sampled participants affirmed that violence was frequently associated with cult members (*Mean* =2.58; *SD*=0.80). Despite this assertion, 46% disagreed with the statement. Furthermore, 67% affirmed that cultic groups exclusively believe that outsiders or non-members are lost sinners (*Mean* =2.85; *SD*=0.93). This suggests that cults initially start off harmlessly before turning violent and influencing the judgment of their new members. This conclusion is consistent with that of Salubuyi and Umaru (2018), who discovered that these organizations swear allegiance to a charismatic and powerful leader who can compel followers to act in a certain way, even in absentia. Cult members are unable to reject their leader, and they view others and outsiders as violators who must either join them or suffer because they are wicked and depraved.

The interviews found that cults can become physically violent or otherwise if criticised. The cultic group does not allow opposition for they believe they know everything. Cult members might be forced to adhere to the ideas of the cult in several ways. According to the study 87% of participants state that mind control techniques such as brainwashing and coercion are prevalent (*Mean* =3.19; *SD*=0.70). In addition, 91% affirmed that obedience to charismatic leaders was prevalent (*Mean* =3.23; *SD*=0.67). This demonstrates that after cult members are brainwashed to obey their charismatic leaders completely, they reach a stage where they are unable to employ reason. Rotimi (2005) asserts that cult members keep information about their organization exceedingly private. As was noted above, a cult has a charismatic leader, some sort of indoctrination program that demands the members to give up their critical thinking and be faithful, true believers, and these leaders convince followers that if they wander from that path some harm or misfortune will befall them. The interviews established that there was a lot of secrecy about the affairs and activities in cultic groups. A CU patron emphasized that:

> *They are very secretive; they don't share in-house information with everyone. They hold their teachings so dearly and they follow the teachings to the letter. They don't expose their teachings anyhow unless they want to win you to their group.*

The cultic leadership is known to exhibit a type of leadership that aims to indoctrinate and coerce its devoted followers. As per the findings of the study, 87% affirmed that control by an authoritarian charismatic living and unquestioned leader was prevalent (*Mean* =3.22; *SD*=0.69). In another dimension, 80% of the participants affirmed that these leaders usually take sexual advantage and exploit their followers (*Mean* =2.96; *SD*=0.74). This indicates that given the charismatic leader's level of brainwashing, the followers are left with little choice but to comply with these requirements to be accepted. According to Lalich and Langone (2006), members of cults show tremendous zeal and unwavering devotion to their leader whose beliefs, ideologies, and practices are regarded as absolute truth. Correspondingly, Martin (2014) observes that the cult leader is always believed by their followers to have right to exclusive access to "truth," and he or she also controls the methods of understanding that truth.

In relation to the Christian Union, one patron said that:

> *Cults do not believe that the CU is spiritual enough for them. They believe outsiders (non-cultic members) are not born -again. They think they are more spiritual than any other person. They feel they are very spiritual and feel other people are not spiritual or charismatic. The self-declared student prophet withdraws from the rest.*

Charismatic leaders, particularly those connected to cults, have a well-organized system for recruiting and retaining their followers. The results established that 89% of the participants avowed that enslaving and bounding structure on their faithful is prevalent in the university (*Mean* =3.18; *SD*=0.67). This finding was supported by 88% of respondents who said that extra-biblical or non-biblical teachings and prophecies are

most common with cultism (*Mean* =3.28; *SD*=0.70). This perspective is reinforced by Kigame (2018), who made the case that cultists are narrow-minded and instruct their adherents to neither question nor engage with outsiders but rather rely only on the cult leadership to dictate what they should think without any sort of independent thought. Some cult leaders demand worship and make claims to being God.

The interview data revealed that some cultic groups were using some mind control processes such as the use of prerecorded tongues and the use of some learned secret and special vocabularies and jargons among them. One of the Patrons, regretted that:

> *Learned and recorded tongues were common practice among cultic groups in the University. These groups target freshmen though occasionally they target senior students too.*

Numerous activities that are anti-social and against normative patterns of society have been realized with cultism. Cultism is characterized by secret ideologies and rituals that are constantly performed. According to the study, 86% cited that sacred transcendent ideology and series of secret rituals were widespread among cultic groups (*Mean* =3.13; *SD*=0.70). Furthermore, 83% of respondents acknowledged that these activities such as the break of family ties or disregard for family life, were prevalent (*Mean* =3.28; *SD*=0.70). This therefore characterizes cultism. Generally, the prevalence of cultism had a mean of 3.07 and a standard deviation of 0.47. This shows that it was agreed that cultism was prevalent with the indicators under investigation as dominant. The findings are in line with those of Rotimi (2005), who claims that cultism is characterized by separation from friends, family, and personal ambitions and interests in favor of maintaining only those relationships that do not interfere with the group's objectives. The interview by patrons also pointed out that:

> *Cultism tends to condemn non-members as lost and they pay total allegiance to their leaders, noting that cults condemned other groups and saw themselves as exclusive of others who were not their members.*

They further observed that these cultists take fasting and personal prayers to extremes. Cults adopt extreme behaviors such as extended periods of prayer and fasting, extreme forms of prayer and extreme forms of evangelistic engagement during which they recruit new members. In relation to the Christian Union, patrons and the FGD:

> *The cults do not believe that the CU is spiritual enough for them. They believe outsiders (non-cultic members) are not born gain. They think they are more spiritual than any other person. They feel they are very spiritual and feel other people are not spiritual or charismatic. The self-declared student prophet withdraws themselves.*

The findings indicated that cults lay emphasis on dressing, prayer, special speech, and were more were more sensitive to the devil than to God. The patrons also hinted that cult promised an alternative fellowship and community for members. They mentioned the Jesus A-Z JAZ cult that was very liberal especially regarding dressing. A patron also mentioned 'U-turn' -meaning young and free cult whose belief was that once saved you can do anything with your body since you are eternally secured, alluding to Gnostic teachings.

The results from the SGBS leaders indicated that cults give new inductees half-baked information only for the new member to find out what is required of them once they are already inducted, which is normally too late. It may require members to change their lifestyles and names to exude status to the outside world. Cultists can be violent if opposed. Some members commented that cults can be violent if opposed, and they easily unleash condemnation and curses on their opponents. They don't like being opposed and claim to have the authority to curse.

Participants stated that cultic groupings are very secretive about the details of their group. They give half the information without full details. They say what it takes to enter at initiation but later put very high demands. Furthermore, members are unable to come out even after they discover the truth since these groups use threats to keep them in.

Charismatic living and unquestioned leader-they cannot say no to their leader nor question them. The said charismatic leaders are esteemed as those with power for impartation, gifting. Cults are exclusive and believe that outsiders and non-members are lost sinners who should be either converted to join them or perish.

Participants observed that that there was obedience to and obsession with an authoritative charismatic leader who is really trusted, and members can do anything commanded by their leaders. They also observed the man of God syndrome where members had to change their names and adopt that of the leader. Titles such as Papa and father were commonly used to refer to the leaders.

They reported that the adherents were known to do very demanding tasks in absolute obedience to the man of God and not the God of Man. They were of the view that deception and secrecy was common, accompanied by manipulation and mind control techniques. They noted that cults too students to desolate places such as forests and would hypnotize them using sleep deprivation, where they would sleep for very few hours to weaken their ability to think critically and then brainwash them and coerce them.

They also reported that students were exploited financially to give to the leader while they became even poorer. They expressed awareness of sexual abuse in exchange for healing in some of the groups. However, the patrons decried the difficulty in detecting the cultic leaders and expressed a need to pray and consult the Holy Spirit to grant them

discernment. Finally, they posited that cults withdrew students from friends and then worked on them, exploiting them financially, physically, psychologically, and sometimes sexually.

The respondents stated that cultic groups believe that they are right always and if opposed, they tend to be repulsive especially if one holds a different opinion. Sometimes they are ready to fight, or they withdraw altogether. Cultic members believe in their leaders so much and do whatever they are told by their leaders. They think and believe that outsiders are always wrong and lost sinners who should join their groups. This makes it difficult for them to interact with non-cultic members. They are themselves holy Joes. It is difficult to change their thoughts and mind regarding what they believe in.

They noted that some are manipulated and forced to do things against their will. It was further observed that cults use 'spiritual magnet' to capture the members. Some are threatened and forced physically to participate in their affairs with reference to spiritual forces. Some cultists lure students using finances, sex and food.

Participants reported that members of cultic groups feel they are more spiritual than others, since they pray more, focus on prophecy on what they benefit. Such groups they intimated do not accept negative criticism about their group, but they like to be affirmed.

It was observed that many of the cultic groups used some special material viewed as over and above the Bible. They have some secrets that are known only to them. They seem to be very convincing and have some power and sweet tongues and once someone is convinced it becomes difficult to bring them back. They are persuasive and they brainwash. They tend to focus more on attacking people who oppose them. They persecute nonmembers and threaten members from revealing their secrets.

Use of deception and secrecy, mind control methods such as manipulation, brainwashing and coercive persuasion, alienation and withdrawal from family and friends, financial, physical, psychological, and sometimes sexual exploitation are prevalent. They exhibit obedience to some rules and regulations that they cannot deviate from.

The respondents reported that there were cults that took the form of a ministry, had good music with professional singers beautifying the group they were in. They look attractive in order to lure CU members and other students. In their efforts to beautify their group, they condemn others including CU. Cultic association members were said to believe that the leader is always right and is helping them. So, if the leader says they need a particular amount of money from them, the member will give in submission and obedience. Participants also mentioned that some cult leaders had sexual or carnal knowledge with members alleging that the act would offer them deliverance from their perceived bondages and oppression.

4.6 Correlations Analysis

A statistical technique called correlation analysis is used in research to quantify an association between two variables and to evaluate how strongly two variables are linearly correlated (Mukaka, 2012). In contrast to a low correlation, which indicates a weak association between the two variables, a high correlation indicates a strong relationship. In this research, Pearson correlation was run at 0.05 alpha, 2-tailed, and the findings presented in Tables 24-27.

4.6.1 Correlations for Family Background and Cultism

The most typical approach to gauge a linear correlation is via the Pearson correlation coefficient (r). The coefficient's sign indicates whether the association is positive or negative.

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Table 23

Correlations for Family Background and Cultism

		Prevalence of Cultism
Family Background	Pearson Correlation	.580[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	193

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

These results established that there exists a statistically significant relationship between Family background and prevalence of cultism (r=0.580[**]; $p<0.05$). This suggests that families that are dysfunctional and also with cultic environments have a contributory effect to the prevalence of cultism. This result is consistent with that of Coates (2011), who emphasizes that a person's family of origin influences their decision to join or not join a cult. Researchers believe that becoming involved in a cultic organization can be attributed in large part to the influence of family dynamics during childhood and the year before joining the group.

4.6.2 Correlations for Socio Psychological Manipulation and Cultism

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

Table 24

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 statistical and significant relationship between socio-psychological manipulation and prevalence of cultism (r=0.628**; p<0.05). This suggests that individuals who get brainwashed and who also crave for socio-psychological support could be easily recruited to cultism. Individuals are not drawn into cults; instead, they are enlisted through various channels. The results are consistent with Wallis's (2019) findings, which show that cult professionals use psychological manipulation and the same techniques to entice new members and gain their unwavering devotion. Wallis goes on to say that members of cults are recruited and targeted rather than merely joining them. They are pampered, wooed, informed how unique they are, and told how much of an impact they could have on the movement.

4.6.3 Correlations for Sense of Belonging and Cultism

The most commonly used technique is the Pearson correlation coefficient, which calculates a linear correlation. When there is a positive or negative association it is shown by the sign of the coefficient. The results are provided in Table 25.

Table 25

Correlations for Sense of Belonging and Cultism

		Prevalence of Cultism
Sense of Belonging	Pearson Correlation	.638**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	193

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

The results recognized a statistical and significant relationship between a sense of Belonging and the prevalence of cultism (r=0.638**; p<0.05). This suggests that individuals may become caught in cultism in an effort to have a sense of belonging to a prominent organization through acquiring power and prestige, affection, and acceptance.

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The results are consistent with those of Girigiri (2013), who highlights that people naturally want to fit in with a group. Cultists take advantage of this by presenting themselves as the alternative family and gradually enticing new members to join them until the cult becomes their new family. After that, the victims of these cults are confined or locked up and stop interacting with anyone outside of their immediate circle.

4.6.4 Correlations for Theological Grounding and Cultism

The Pearson correlation quantifies how much two normally distributed random variables are related or dependent on one another. The direction of the association is indicated by the sign of r. If r is positive, the tendency is for both variables to rise when one rises. Table 26 shows the results of the analysis.

Table 26

Correlations for Theological Grounding and Cultism

		Prevalence of Cultism
Theological Grounding	Pearson Correlation	.599[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	193

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

The results recognized a statistically significant relationship between Theological Grounding and prevalence of cultism (r=0.599[**]; p<0.05). This means that low biblical knowledge, church dogma and religiosity and low personal spirituality could affect the prevalence of cultism. People in which the early seeds of Religion have been superficially sown have been discovered to be susceptible to a variety of cults. It is simpler, according to Martin (2003), for cults to spread their beliefs among young Christians, nominal Christians, and people who have only a cursory familiarity with the

Scriptures. Cultists are prone to seize students who lack a strong spiritual foundation and a solid understanding of the Bible.

4.6.5 Correlations for Peer Pressure and Cultism

The Pearson correlation measures the degree to which two randomly distributed variables with normal distributions are connected or dependent. The sign of r indicates the association's direction. If r is positive, both variables have a propensity to increase as one does. The analysis's findings are presented in Table 27.

Table 27

Correlations for Peer Pressure and Cultism

		Prevalence of Cultism
Peer Pressure	Pearson Correlation	.612[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	193

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

It was revealed that there exists a statistically significant relationship between peer pressure and the prevalence of cultism (r=0.612[**]; $p < 0.05$). This implies that individuals can be successfully recruited by their peers so that they can be accepted in society. Peer groups are important socialization tools, but they are not always helpful, particularly in situations like cults where the ideals being spread run counter to what has previously been taught. According to Oyemwinmina and Aibieyi (2015), a number of pupils were exposed to cults through their friends. According to reports, cultism among university students is significantly influenced by peer groups.

4.7 Diagnostic tests for Multiple Linear Regression

The main assumptions underlying multiple regression models must be satisfied. In this research, the following diagnostic tests were linearity, homoscedasticity, and independence of errors, normality, and multi-collinearity tests.

4.7.1 Linearity Test

The algorithm for linear regression makes the assumption that the parameters of the independent variables and the dependent variable Y have a linear relationship. Analyzing for linearity determines if one or more predictor variables adequately account for the dependent (or criterion) variable. Figure 2 presents the assessment's findings.

Figure 2

Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual

Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual

Dependent Variable: Prevalence of Cultism
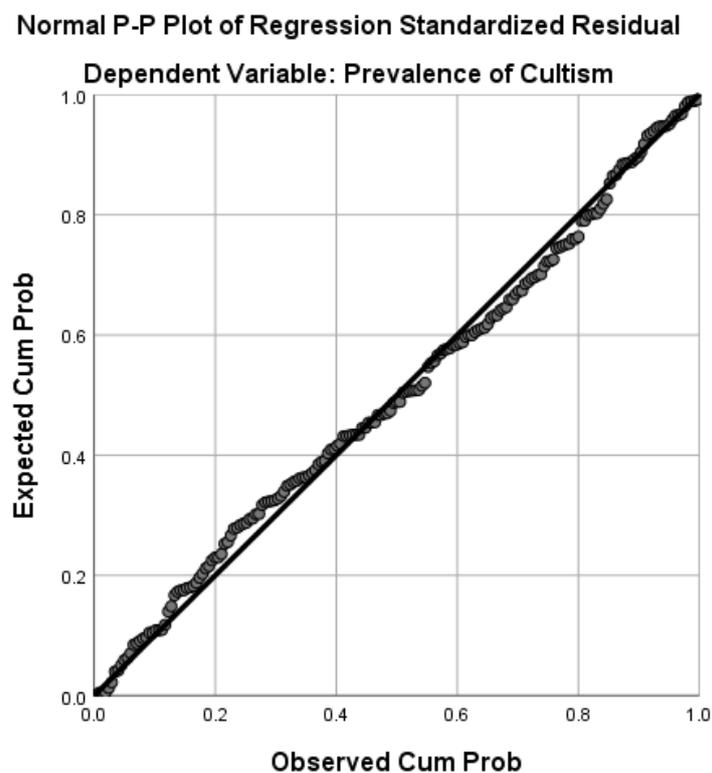
According to figure 2, the observed data points follow the regression line. This suggests that each predictor variable and the response variable have a linear relationship.

4.7.2 Testing for Independence of Errors

In this research Scatter plots and Durbin-Watson statistic were used to examine the independence of errors involving independent variables.

Figure 3

Scatter Plots
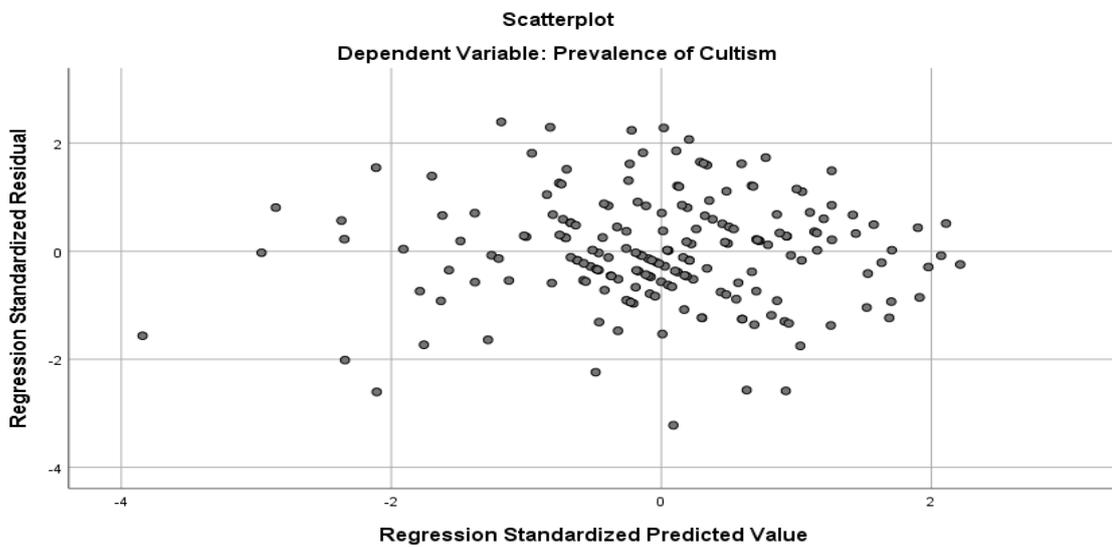
To check independence, constantly plot residuals versus any temporal factors, any physical variables, and any technique-specific variables. The absence of independence is suggested by a pattern that is not random. The fact that the data in this study is dispersed at random suggests that the observations are independent.

4.7.3 Durbin-Watson Test

In conventional research that relies on the independence of the observations, autocorrelation might be problematic. If the model is not properly described, autocorrelation of the regression residuals can also happen in a regression study. This finding is displayed in Table 28.

Table 28

Durbin-Watson

Model Summary[b]		
Model	R	Durbin-Watson
1	.759[a]	2.032

a. Predictors: (Constant), Peer Pressure, Family Background, Sense of Belonging, Theological Grounding, Socio-Psychological Manipulation

b. Dependent Variable: Prevalence of Cultism

The Durbin-Watson statistic ranges from zero to four, with a value of 2.0, indicating zero autocorrelation. In this research, the Durbin-Watson statistic is 2.0 indicating that the residual are uncorrelated.

4.7.4 Heteroskedasticity Tests

Heteroskedasticity refers to situations where the variance of the residuals is unequal over a range of measured values. When running a regression analysis, heteroskedasticity results in an unequal scatter of the residuals (also known as the error term). In statistics, heteroskedasticity is seen as a problem because regressions involving ordinary least squares (OLS) assume that the residuals are drawn from a population with constant variance. If there is an unequal scatter of residuals, the population used in the regression contains unequal variance, and therefore, the analysis results may be invalid. In this research, White and Breusch-pagantests were used to test the presence of the Heteroskedasticity. A Breusch-Pagan test follows the below hypotheses:

4.7.5 Hypothesis

The null hypothesis ($H0_1$): Signifies that Homoscedasticity is present. The alternative hypothesis: (H_a): Signifies that Homoscedasticity is not present (i.e., heteroscedasticity exists). The result for heteroscedasticity is presented in Tables 30 and 31.

White Test for Heteroskedasticity

In a regression model, White's test statistical procedure examines if the variance of the residuals is equal.

Table 29

White Test for Heteroskedasticity[a]

White Test for Heteroskedasticity[a,b,c]		
Chi-Square	*Df*	Sig.
30.538	20	.062

a. Dependent variable: Prevalence of Cultism

b. Tests the null hypothesis that the variance of the errors does not depend on the values of the independent variables.

c. Design: Intercept + IV1 + IV2 + IV3 + IV4 + IV5 + IV1 * IV1 + IV1 * IV2 + IV1 * IV3 + IV1 * IV4 + IV1 * IV5 + IV2 * IV2 + IV2 * IV3 + IV2 * IV4 + IV2 * IV5 + IV3 * IV3 + IV3 * IV4 + IV3 * IV5 + IV4 * IV4 + IV4 * IV5 + IV5 * IV5

In testing the presence of heteroscedasticity, the white test indicates a non-significant p value, χ^2 (20) =30.538, p>0.01.We fail to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that homoscedasticity exist in the data set since the variance of residuals are equal. In other words, it can be determined that heteroscedasticity is absent which can be problematic when present in the data set.

4.7.5.2 Breusch-Pagan Test for Heteroskedasticity

A statistical test termed the Breusch-Pagan test is used to determine whether a linear regression model contains heteroskedasticity. Table 31 establishes the findings.

Table 30

Breusch-Pagan Test for Heteroskedasticity[a,b,c]

Chi-Square	Df	Sig.
2.511	1	.113

a. Dependent variable: Prevalence of Cultism

b. Tests the null hypothesis that the variance of the errors does not depend on the values of the independent variables.

c. Predicted values from design: Intercept + IV1 + IV2 + IV3 + IV4 + IV5

In testing the presence of heteroscedasticity, Breusch-Pagan Test statistic shows a χ^2 (1) =2.511, p>0.01. The study fails to reject the null hypothesis and concludes that Homoscedasticity exists in the data set. This implies that the residuals are distributed with equal variance. It is believed that the presence of Heteroscedasticity makes a regression model less dependable. In Addition, it means the standard errors will be underestimated, and the T-statistics and F-statistics will be inaccurate.

4.7.6 Multicollinearity Test

Multicollinearity is a statistical concept where several independent variables in a model are correlated. Multicollinearity among independent variables will result in less reliable statistical inferences.

Table 31

Collinearity Coefficients[a]

Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
Family Background	.592	1.691
Socio-Psychological Manipulation	.412	2.427
Sense of Belonging	.431	2.323
Theological Grounding	.515	1.941
Peer Pressure	.482	2.076

a. Dependent Variable: Prevalence of Cultism

A metric known as the variance inflation factor (VIF), which assesses the degree of correlation between the predictor variables in a regression model, can be used to identify multicollinearity. The rule of thumb is that VIF should be less than 10 for the model to be acceptable in statistical inference (Murray et al; 2012). Multicollinearity causes the standard errors of some or all of the regression coefficients to increase, which makes statistical inferences implausible. In this study, all the predictors were not highly correlated and therefore independent of each other. Specifically, the VIF for Family Background, Socio-Psychological Manipulation, Sense of Belonging, Theological Grounding and Peer Pressure were 1.691, 2.427, 2.323, and 1.941. and 2.076 respectively.

4.8 Regression Analysis

After the study satisfied several key assumptions required for multiple linear regression analysis, the next step was to perform the analysis and interpretations made. The estimation of associations between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables is the goal of regression analysis, which consists of a range of statistical techniques. It can be used to determine how well variables are related to one another as well as to predict how they will relate in the future.

4.8.1 The Model Summary

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

Table 32

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.759[a]	.576	.565	.313

a. Predictors: (Constant), Peer Pressure, Family Background, Sense of Belonging, Theological Grounding, Socio-Psychological Manipulation

The model established that 57% of the variation of prevalence of cultism can be explained using peer pressure, family background, sense of belonging, theological grounding, and socio-psychological manipulation variables. The residual proportion was 43% which can be explained by other indicators outside the model.

4.8.2 Analysis of Variance

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

Table 33

ANOVA[a]

Model	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	25.025	5	5.005	50.895	.000[b]
Residual	18.389	187	.098		
Total	43.414	192			

a. Dependent Variable: Prevalence of Cultism

b. Predictors: (Constant) Peer Pressure, Family Background, Sense of Belonging, Theological Grounding, Socio-Psychological Manipulation

According to the results, the model is significant at 0.05 alpha level in predicting Prevalence of Cultism, r2=0.57, F (5,187) =50.895; P<0.05. This demonstrates that all the independent variables (*Peer Pressure, Family Background, Sense of Belonging,*

Theological Grounding, and Socio-Psychological Manipulation) have an overall contributory effect on Prevalence of Cultism.

4.8.3 Regression 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. In order to create models that predict a significant dependent variable from a group of predictor factors, regression is typically used.

Table 34

Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	-.111	.207		-.534	.594		
Family Background	.233	.078	.186	2.998	.003	.592	1.691
Socio-Psychological Manipulation	.174	.081	.160	2.159	.032	.412	2.427
Sense of Belonging	.229	.075	.222	3.064	.003	.431	2.323
Theological Grounding	.206	.070	.194	2.924	.004	.515	1.941
Peer Pressure	.210	.080	.180	2.632	.009	.482	2.076

a. Dependent Variable: Prevalence of Cultism

The regression analysis shows that family background contributes significantly to the prevalence of cultism ($\beta=0.186$; $p<0.05$). These results are consistent with those of Akomaye (2018), who found that many factors, including family size, parental marital status, family type, and family structure, had a substantially impacted on students' propensity to engage in cult activities. Similarly, Socio-Psychological Manipulation ($\beta=0.160$; $p<0.05$) and Sense of Belonging ($\beta=0.222$; $p<0.05$) significantly affects the prevalence of cultism.

The results are consistent with those of Fayokun (2011), who draws the conclusion that social, economic, political, and educational complaints are the root cause of campus cultism. Fayokun also notes that students are drawn to cults because they have needs that make them more likely to associate with activist groups. Finally, theological grounding ($\beta=0.194$; $p<0.05$) and peer pressure ($\beta=0.180$; $p<0.05$) each contributes significantly to the prevalence of cultism. These results support those of Okpechi(2014), who asserts that peer pressure or influence is a significant factor in students joining cults; friends and peer groups are among the main sources of this phenomenon. It was also discovered that students' propensity to join covert cults is significantly influenced by peer pressure. The regression analysis showed that the Christian Union students perceived the factors as influencing cultism in the following order of strength: sense of belonging ($\beta=0.222$; $p<0.05$),theological grounding ($\beta=0.194$; $p<0.05$),family background ($\beta=0.186$; $p<0.05$),peer pressure ($\beta=0.180$; $p<0.05$) and socio-psychological manipulation ($\beta=0.160$; $p<0.05$) respectively.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the findings of the study, conclusion, recommendations, and suggestions for future research. They are presented based on the study's objectives on perceptions of the participants who in this case are Christian Union students, Christian Union patrons and small group Bible study leaders. In this section, both qualitative data and quantitative data is used in presentation.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

The study analyzed the Christian Union students' perceptions of factors influencing cultism in public universities in Kenya. The study was based on five objectives namely: To establish the Christian Union students' perception of the influence of family background on cultism in public universities in Kenya; To determine the Christian Union students' perception of the influence of socio-psychological manipulation on cultism in public universities in Kenya; To establish the Christian Union students' perception of the influence of the sense of belonging on cultism in public universities in Kenya; To determine the Christian Union students' perception of the influence of theological grounding on cultism in public universities in Kenya; To examine the Christian Union students' perception of the influence of peer pressure on cultism in public universities in Kenya. The study findings indicated that Christian Union students perceive family background, socio-psychological manipulation, sense of belonging, theological grounding, and peer pressure as factors that influence cultism in public Universities in Kenya.

5.2.1 Family Background and Cultism

The members of a family are greatly influenced by their family background. The findings of this study show that participants perceived that a student from a troubled household is more prone to recruitment to a cult. Additionally, participants believed that student cult membership is influenced by parental divorce and separation. This suggests that since they lack guiding principles for living, students from broken families may be more inclined to join cults. Participants who were interviewed claimed that students who have experienced domestic challenges and come from families where there has been divorce and separation are easily persuaded to join cults. One CU patron claimed he had trouble attending to students with problems in adjusting due to severe depression and those from dysfunctional families and cult backgrounds. Cults seem to provide explanations and promise a home. Additionally, respondents confirmed that if parents are members, they may easily attract their children into cults.

Childhood experiences may have a lasting impact on a person's character, making them more predisposed to cult recruitment later in life. The majority of participants concurred, according to the findings, that a student who has a background of extreme child abuse and violence is more likely to be recruited by cults. Similarly, other respondents supported this idea by noting that moral depravity in the home may expose children to cults. According to those who participated in the interviews, students who have struggled with depression and come from families where there has been divorce or separation are more susceptible to being persuaded to join cults. One of the patrons interviewed reported that students from cultic backgrounds and broken families were suffering from extreme depression.

The environment in which people in a community live impacts on whether or not they can resist cultism. In the study, a significant number of respondents concluded that parents who are cult members could introduce their children to the religion. In a similar vein, some of these individuals said that cultic neighbors might introduce children to cultism in their neighborhood. This suggests that people may be more easily exposed to harmful social vices in their home societies. According to the findings of the interviews, certain children, particularly females who didn't have a father figure at home or those with strained relationships with their fathers, are drawn to cults in the quest for father figures. Those from low-income families who find themselves in difficult circumstances are used by the cultic groups that pose as problem solvers, such as father and mother figures.

Many people view cultism as an alternative method of overcoming problems that arise on a daily basis. The majority of respondents to this study claimed that students join cultic groups to get over family issues. In addition, a few of the participants believed that students were joining cults due to poverty or financial hardship at home. This implies that a student could end up in cultic groups in search of financial freedom. The results of the interviews showed that people who look for quick cures and efficient answers often find themselves in cults. They end up engaging in drug use, substance abuse, and witchcraft, particularly in homes with only one parent, this occurs. Cults appear to have answers and fixes for all domestic issues. They offer advice on the dos and don'ts and appear to have solutions for past tragedies, since cults appear to explain events and circumstances and explain why things occur the way they do, they appeal to abandoned people who are seeking sympathy. Since the cult leaders portray a high life, wealth, and hope, they appear to give a home to the marginalized. The respondents who made this observation stated that cults often make the offer: "Join us to break family poverty,

curses, and for academic success." Generational curses must be bound and broken, according to cultists, and this can only be done by them.

It is widely believed that parental guidance and discipline have an impact on their children's perceptions of cults. Participants agreed that students enter cultic communities as a result of lax parental control in the light of this study. Participants who believed that children's lack of sufficient parental care led them to cultism noted similar observations. According to the interview results, cults prey on students who don't have the warmth, love, acceptance, and sense of belonging that comes from family and pounce on them with what appear to be free offers and love bombing promises. The respondent claimed that cults used family difficulties to entice new members. Cults might attract students who are looking for money, family, friends, or even significance in their lives. Cults could be a place where students who feel isolated from their families feel at home. This was in tandem with the findings of Wallis (2007) who asserted that lonely students are a target of cultists. The mean index for family-related background was 3.01 overall, with a standard deviation of 0.37. This demonstrates that family background was considered to have a strong influence on cultism in public universities in Kenya.

5.2.2 Socio-psychological Manipulation and Cultism

It was thought that socio-psychological manipulation has a negative impact on a person's capacity to join cultic organizations. Several of the sampled participants in the data analysis agreed that the change from high school to college is a psychologically trying time for students, leaving them open to cultism. Many of the participants agreed that cultists use dilemma to enlist and take advantage of students at this point in their lives, which lends weight to this study. High school graduates who are transferring to new or different universities must be aware of these well-established cult networks and how they could impact their future spiritual life. According to the interview findings from the

respondents, new students are socially impacted due to their desire to be a part of a new social network. Students in transition experience a lot of doubts, which inspires cults to encourage and invite them inside. Then, cultists take advantage of their predicament and innocence to enlist and abuse them.

Due to their lack of awareness of their surroundings, cult recruiters prey on new students when they are most vulnerable. According to the study, most first-year university students lack life experience, which makes them susceptible to cults that manipulate them. Additionally, majority of the participants agreed that cultists brainwash students into believing that they will profit from good grades from professors or senior staff members who are already members of the covert organization. This seriously endangers young people since they might interact with these cult leaders and end up getting recruited.Fundamentalists take full advantage of this situation to mislead and recruit students at this crucial stage. The results of the interviews suggested that coercive persuasion is utilized to persuade and entice students, adding that it is uncommon for students to take the initiative to join these cults. They are persuaded, then recruited or hired. The respondent also mentioned that students who are involved in cults have expressed moral worries about social ills like LGBTQI and other issues. In a similar vein, they stated that a break from high school regulations, promises of better things, flattery used in cults, and disparaging remarks made about the CU contribute. They offer greater comfort, personality, and resources outside of the Bible as a carrot, but cults profit off new students' predicament.

Cult members exploit people's psychological misery by presenting themselves as having alternative solutions to their problems. According to the study, the majority of respondents felt that students are psychologically forced into joining cults utilizing mind-control techniques like brainwashing and coercive persuasion. Similarly, a sizeable

percentage agreed that emotional instability leads students to join cults. Students need to know that cultic recruiters are devoted to their aim and employ deceptive strategies. The participants in the interviews mentioned that cults appeal of "Join us to break family poverty, generational curses, and gain academic success." Generational curses must be bound and broken, according to cults. Most students are encouraged to sign up because of problems such as academic failure, exams, famine, and family hardship.

It was noted that once someone had been drawn into a cult, they were taught doctrines that bind them to the point that it was difficult for them to exit. The majority of participants agreed that cults use shame, punishment, and rewards to make their victims feel helpless from within. Participants who asserted that cults gain control over their members through force and social isolation shared this view as well. This shows that 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. Interviews revealed that students were subjected to increased brainwashing and manipulation in which they are 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.

It is thought that joining cults may be motivated by new members' social and emotional vulnerabilities. Respondents to this study agreed that students join cults to find psychological assistance. Additionally, a higher percentage claim that cult leaders change a person's old identity and replace it with a new identity, making it difficult for them to leave the group. To create a deep-seated neurological dependency syndrome in their followers, cult leaders are likely to use psychological deception and mind control as their primary methods. According to the findings of interviews from patrons and Focus Group discussions, charismatic preachers also approach Christian Union officials for recruitment.

5.2.3 Sense of Belonging and Cultism

Students are believed to join cults out of an urge to fit in because doing so appears to give them an illusion of safety within a social group. The findings showed that respondents agreed that students join cult movements because they feel the urge to socialize and seek praise from their classmates. Participants agreed that students are lured to join cults in search of social approval and identity. Given that people are social creatures by nature, it is believed that after a person has been indoctrinated, the harmful socialization caused by cultism may eventually have a negative impact on that person's wellbeing.

The interviews from patrons and Focus Group discussions demonstrated that there are situations when students may join cults because their home churches are hesitant to accommodate their demands. Additionally, they said that cult recruiters exploit personal problems including disease, loss of a loved one, broken relationships, divorce, and separation to lure in new members by giving them a place to feel at home and offer answers to their deepest issues. Cults deceive their members by providing an explanation for why all these things occur. They offer the weak support and explain how to get out of every situation. Participants who expressed similar opinions claimed that cults function as a parallel to Christianity but in darkness. Cults that are solely oriented on enjoyment include Young Life International which uses hikes, retreats, and picnics, Bible studies to warm themselves up to the targeted recruits.

Charismatic leaders are known to take advantage of current circumstances, such as difficulties within the family, in order to influence new followers. Participants in this study agreed that cultic affiliates exploit situations like divorce, separation, or broken relationships to enlist new members who are looking for support and care. They said that susceptible pupils are targeted by cults when they are emotionally exposed, as evidence

for this observation. People who are going through a crisis in life or who feel alone and alienated are especially vulnerable and become a target for these cultic groups because cultic movements appear to offer quick approval, support, and camaraderie. Interviews from patrons and Focus Group discussions with small group Bible study leaders claimed that cults appear to give members a positive sense of spiritual warming. They manipulate the children by telling them only a portion of the truth. They encourage pupils to blend in by demonstrating their belonging. Cults guard and shield its adherents from perceived external difficulty. They are promised that they will be wealthy both on earth and in heaven.

It was noted that cults utilize love bombing tactics to offer their members a false sense of attachment, so they feel secure and accepted. Participants in this study concurred that cults seem to offer socially isolated people an alternative kind of fellowship and sense of community. Most of the participants concurred that cults appear to provide members with a positive feeling, which is consistent with this observation. As a result, it implies that those who have experienced abuse or are in other uncaring environments may find it easy to be persuaded to join a cult. The interviews made clear that there is no room or place for pain in cults. They believe that everything must be positive, including money, wealth, good health, and positive feelings. All is good in their health, wealth, and academics. Cultists preach prosperity with a common belief that gives them warmth and happiness.

Some cultic groups use celebrities and students from universities to achieve their goals because of a desire to enlist intelligent and occasionally rich followers. The results of this study showed that participants agreed that joining cults is a way for students to gain notoriety or popularity. This remark was supported by individuals who said that students join cults in order to get an advantage during student union elections on campus and win.

This statistic implies that some people are prepared to join any cult to pursue respect and social prestige. According to the interviews with the sampled participants, cults attract those looking for fame, popularity, and self-gratification and try to meet and address these needs in a group of like-minded individuals. Additionally, they claimed that some graduates were seen on campus, recruiting new members and setting up contacts for cults. People appear to join cults to gain social status and popularity. The majority of study participants agree with the claim that students join cults to elevate their social position. Those who testified that cults appear to give their followers spiritual warmth reported a similar experience. This is because people join organizations that welcome and accommodate them, including social groupings. Overall, the results showed that the mean index for sense of belonging was 3.01 with a standard deviation of 0.46. This demonstrates how important this factor is in cultism and how it influences it. According to the interviews, some students are drawn to cults in search of self-acceptance, self-love, and identity. Cults appear to offer children a solution when they start looking for answers to questions such as; "why am I poor?" when a person's faith in God is at an all-time low and they start to wonder: "Why does God allow this?" This is because cults appear to have answers.

5.2.4 Theological Grounding and Cultism

It was noted that a person can withstand any false teaching propagated by cultic organizations if they have a strong theological foundation. Participants in the study concurred that inadequate religious training could provide room for undergraduates to join cults. The results also supported a claim made by several of these participants, who said that cults easily indoctrinate Christians with a casual understanding of the Bible. It highlights how easily cults can enlist followers by taking advantage of people who are not securely rooted in Biblical faith. As a result, cultists are more prone to recruit those

who lack a strong spiritual and biblical foundation. The results of the interviews demonstrated that a weak religious foundation, such as a lack of Sunday school instruction and training, provides a smooth landing for cults. They also noticed that sermons on the prosperity gospel and issues related to manifestation and impartation attract students. Some cults provide instruction in speaking in tongues. While cult leaders are actors and spread a lot of false promises, the CU does not supply obnoxious and hyped preachers. Finally, cultic groups choose raucous preachers over quiet ones. Their preachers are said to be men of God who perform miracles and are prophets. Such preachers exude false optimism.

The depth of a person's spiritual foundation and understanding of Christian teaching may impact how open they are to being recruited by cults. The study found that participants believed those without a solid spiritual foundation were more likely to be admitted into cults. Similarly, a sizable number of participants agreed that young people's spiritual underpinnings will influence them toward joining cults. This implies that a person's susceptibility to cult admission depends on how well they comprehend biblical teachings.

Interviews from patrons and the Focus Group discussions with small group Bible study leaders revealed that scripture twisting is a typical practice in cults. Particularly, cultic preachers use texts from the Bible that have been taken out of context to preach what people will want to hear and find appealing. Scriptures "appealing" to the congregation are often taken and others omitted. They emphasized once more that people who do not have a strong church affiliation can readily accept whatever teaching they come across. The study's findings showed that participants largely concurred that the absence of a student's spiritual ties to a church with strong doctrine may serve as an invitation to cultism. Similarly, respondents concurred that because new members lack a solid

theological foundation, they are more susceptible to cultism. The FGD and interviews revealed an issue with the preaching that caters to eager ears and the fact that such cultic groups use texts out of context. Furthermore, they decried the lack of exposure to sound teachings leaving students open to cult practices like teaching them to speak in tongues. One of the patrons used the example of a speaker who attended their event and influenced students by dressing in tough, tight jeans, which led to some of them identifying with him.

To secure their financial future, some people may be compelled by socioeconomic circumstances to join cultic societies. According to the results, respondents agreed that students were joining cults in the pursuit of a better life and to attain worldly power. Comparable outcomes, according to a part of proponents of the notion that many people think cultic organizations might satisfy a person's unmet need for spiritual fulfillment.

Due to faulty Bible interpretation, numerous cults have emerged. Participants in the study acknowledged that many students find comfort in joining cults because of the Bible being misinterpreted, twisted, or read only in certain ways. Participants who held the belief that charismatic leaders who are revered and adored draw students to cults supported this point of view.

In public universities, theological grounding was found to have a significant impact on cultism (Mean = 3.06; SD = 0.44). The interviews suggested that cults target students with only a superficial knowledge of the scriptures, that those without a strong religious foundation would be vulnerable, and that students with unsuitable spiritual backgrounds as youngsters would be exposed to cultism. Patrons criticized the spiritual father concept, which requires students to listen to new father figures in churches. They emphasized the importance of students having a strong religious foundation.

5.2.5 Peer Pressure and Cultism

The older generations act as role models for the younger ones, who quickly assimilated doctrines they propagate. The conclusion that answers implied that certain professors were members of a secret cult and served as the students' godfathers led to the conclusion that students were drawn to cultism. However, a few of the participants disputed the assertion. The participants also reaffirmed how society's adults, who serve as both role models and idols for young people, socialize them into joining cults. This shows that those in positions of authority who are frequently asked for guidance are quick to spread any new ideology, which if it is linked to cultism can have negative repercussions on the students.

According to interviews from patrons, some cultic academics who are looked up to as role models and pacesetters are responsible for students being led astray. According to him, senior staff members who are engaged in cults might easily recruit students. The patron suggested that because they are more experienced, the children are drawn to them and value their judgment. Some professors who belong to cultic organizations encourage their students to join them by helping them register, which is one way they do this.

It has been noted that peer group has a substantial impact on the recruitment of university students into cults. In this study, most participants mentioned that students often hear about cults through their classmates and peers. According to the study, some students have turned to cultism since their friends are a part of the cult community, and they appear happier. The respondents further stated that most children joined a variety of cults due to peer pressure. The interviews of CU patrons and FGD alluded that peer recruitment is highly effective because of shared interests. Peer pressure thus plays an enormous role in cult growth and dissemination in the university. He confirmed that cults have an organized introduction and that their recommendations to higher levels were

made, for those who are curious, by peers. The interviewees also underlined that friends, peers, and classmates may be leveraged to entice them in with testimony of how successful and fulfilled the groups are, which makes them feel wonderful. In addition to helping a person feel at home, they can provide food. The "Food, Fun, & Fellowship" movement. Furthermore, friends are employed as recruiters because students develop and learn from one another.

Peer pressure is a significant factor in encouraging students to join cults. The participants agreed that students join cults in light of this trend in order to avoid having their peers who are also members of cults judge them harshly. Respondents asserted that students similarly joined cults in order to blend in and keep their individuality among their cult friends. Interviewees emphasized that comradeship is a powerful word and that the maxim "Comrades cannot go wrong" is a catchphrase that feeds campus cults. Peer pressure influence combined with the "comrade mantra" is a potent force. They further contended that members of the cult join in order to protect their identity and the identities of their cult colleagues. They even claim to recognize one another by their clothing. The CU patrons also brought up a connection between cultism, sex, narcotics, and substance addiction. They further reported that peers who are cult members and have good looks work as marketers for the cults. The peers converse in languages, for instance, asking each other: "What is your new tongue identity."

Students are mostly drawn to cults because they are exposed to strikingly new social dynamics. The results showed that participants thought that the shift in social relations away from parents and toward peers while attending institutions of higher learning put many students in danger of joining cults. The participants affirmed this claim by saying that strong peer pressure influences students and young people to believe that joining a cult is beneficial. This implies that students run the risk of being persuaded to join cultic

organizations due to the impact of current social dynamics and trends. Peer pressure is seen as an identity issue by those who were interviewed. Together, the cult members appear to be more powerful. They aim to protect some of their identity markers, such as clothing, look, and conformity. While at home, parents may appear to have authority over their children and supervise their behavior, but when high school students first arrive on campus, they have a defiant attitude that gradually gives way to a liberal one as they become a part of a new social group.

Students joining cultic organizations seem to be motivated by a desire for social identification and peer pressure. Respondents in the study confirmed that youngsters view belonging to a secret cult as a source of pride. The majority of interviewees also mentioned that friends and peers in cults are very effective recruiters. This suggests that people can join cults that seem to offer instant acceptance, love-bombing, and attention to connect with people they think they have things in common. Peer pressure is frequently cited as a component in cultism (Mean = 3.04; SD = 0.80). The individuals interviewed confirmed that due to peer pressure, certain students even hesitated to profess their original beliefs and join cults. Additionally, they claimed that the shift in social connections from parents to peers was having an impact on the students' attitudes because of the influence of their peers. They claimed that college students frequently invite one another to their churches, some of which are cultic, and that because they are intrigued, many of them decide to test out before being recruited.

5.3 Conclusions

The study made conclusions based on the research objectives:

A student from a broken household is more susceptible to cultism. In this regard, parental divorce and separation could lead to student cult enlistment. Therefore, because they lack guiding principles for living, broken families may lead their members into join

cults. An individual's character may be affected by early events in life to the point where they are more susceptible to being enlisted in cults. Whether a community member can resist cultism depends on the environment in which they live. More precisely, parents who are cult members might convert their children to the cultic group. Many people view cultism as an alternate method of overcoming problems that arise daily. Cults appear to have answers and fixes for all domestic issues. They offer advice on the dos and don'ts and appear to have solutions for past tragedies. Cults might attract students looking for money, alternative to family, friends, and significance.

It is realized that socio-psychological manipulation affects a person's likelihood of joining cultic organizations. Due to their lack of knowledge of their surroundings, cult recruiters prey on new students when they are most vulnerable. Students who are 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 ensuing spiritual life. Members of cults take advantage of people's psychological anguish by posing as though they can provide them with alternative solutions to their problems.

Students need to be aware that cult recruiters are dedicated to their purpose and are employing ingenious strategies to achieve their objectives. Finally, cults use systems of control such as embarrassment punishment, and rewards to make their victims feel helpless. To create a deep neurological dependency syndrome in their followers, cult leaders are likely to use psychological deception and mind control as their primary methods. Cults prey on fragile learners who are emotionally exposed because they are more likely to succumb to the temptation to join a cult in search of social identity and acceptance. Love bombing techniques are said to be used by cults to give their members a false sense of affection, so they feel secure and accepted.

University students who lack adequate spiritual instruction may turn to cults. Furthermore, cults can easily take root when there is a poor religious foundation, as in the case of a lack of Sunday school instruction and training. Cultic preachers employ Bible passages taken out of context to preach what is enticing to listeners. Additionally, people who are not devoted to a particular church or to a church of sound doctrine could just accept any teaching they come across. Some students may be pressured by socioeconomic conditions to join cultic communities to safeguard their financial future. In pursuit of a better life and the realization of worldly power, students were joining cult groups. Cults target students who are new in their Christian faith and thus have a cursory familiarity with the Bible, and who lack a solid religious foundation or may have been exposed to cultism as youngsters. This is because cults target people who have not had a strong religious foundation.

Peer group has been found to have a substantial impact on the recruitment of university students into cults. Cults have a structured introduction, and recruitment process for those who are interested, peers can refer them to higher levels. Individuals join a cult to protect their identities among cult friends. Students who are exposed to wholly new social dynamics are more likely to join cults. Cultists appear to gain corporate power through upholding identification indicators, like attire and looks. As a result, it would seem that social identity and peer pressure are part of what motivates students to join cults.

5.4 Recommendations

The study makes the following recommendations:

5.4.1 Recommendation for Policy

This study recommends the formulation of a national and university level policy framework and legislation to check religious excesses and cultism which may lead to radicalizations and deaths. The University management and student affairs professionals should strengthen regulatory and policy frameworks for the registration and monitoring of religious organizations, clubs and associations to ensure such groups are transparent and not secretive in their doctrinal, religious, spiritual extremist practices which may be detrimental to students 'physical, social and spiritual wellbeing. This will assist in pre-empting cultic advances and mitigate the menace. This will ensure that disciplinary proceedings are instituted against cultists who abuse, exploit and manipulate of exert harm on students. The Church and the universities should subsequently embrace the establishment of a church code of conduct as a means of self regulation and mitigation against cultism both within the church, in universities and the society. The universities should employ more trained chaplains to help safeguard students in the universities from cultism. Chaplains need to monitor the religious groups that operate in the universities including vetting the doctrines of the preachers who access the University.

The study recommends the establishment and/or strengthening of psychological, pastoral and spiritual care and counselling services in the universities in order to address the social, psychological, and spiritual effects of cultism among students especially the victims of cult recruitment, cult escapees and those at risk of cultic abuses. The Christian Unions should also enhance broad based discipleship programs, mentorship, peer counselling and spiritual formation programs that integrate apologetics, biblical teaching,

discernment, critical thinking and emotional intelligence to abate cultism. This will assist the students in overcoming peer influence and the search for identity and belonging used by cultists. This will make the CU to be the alternative home the students in need of love and care.

This study recommends practical theology based trainings and refresher short courses for various stakeholders such as pastors for capacity building and equipment to enable them offer special pastoral care of the spiritual, emotional, and psychological healing needs of those impacted by cultism. It is further recommended that university chaplains, Christian Union patrons, student affairs professionals, churches and para church organizations working in universities should be trained on the dynamics and prevalence of cultism in universities. This will enhance their vigilance to mitigate cultism.

The study further recommends pre university development trainings through seminars, and conferences and webinars in order to disseminate the findings of this study to families, churches and to potential university students. This will expose families to the realities of cultism in universities and prepare the children before they join the universities as new students. This training should especially also pay special attention to students from dysfunctional and broken families who may already be suffering from the effects of such backgrounds or are vulnerable to cult suggestibility on campus.

The study recommends that the Christian Unions through their leadership and patrons should enhance the spiritual orientation during new students' orientation, so as to receive Christian students into the CU. Plans should then be put in place to nurture, protect and caution against cult recruitment on campus and their associated harm. This should be accompanied with aggressive evangelism, follow up of all new believers, knowing that new believers are an immediate, direct and easy target for cultists.

The study recommends that the Fellowship of Christian Unions FOCUS Kenya and the Christian Union leadership in the universities should assist students to identify with or join doctrinally sound churches for better equipping and doctrinal discipleship and mentorship. This will meet the need for biblical discipleship, mentorship, fellowship, and theological grounding. Furthermore, it is recommended that the CU Patrons ensure that every Christian Union provides balanced and rich services as a remedial home church for their members, where the needed pastoral and social care and spiritual support is available to the CU members and the students on campus. This will mitigate against the cultic appeals to vulnerable students seeking identity, belonging, community, alternative family, and searching for fun, food, fellowship, and feel-good moments, a technique that cultists use to recruit needy, lonely, and withdrawn and vulnerable students.

This study recommends the establishment of a broad based Cult Watch Committee, to be chaired by the Christian Union patrons, in every university to research and provide information, training and education to students in order to stem the prevalence of cultism. The study further recommends the formation of Kenya University Christian Union Patrons Association to provide a platform for national dialogue of cultism in Universities in Kenya and for capacity building. This will mitigate against cult recruitment and initiation to ensure that students have a place to run to when confronted with the risk of cult recruitment.

5.4.2 Recommendation for Further Research

The study suggests that the following areas be investigated:

Future studies on cultism and student susceptibility could benefit from a longitudinal research design to track the development of students over time, particularly from high school through university. This approach would allow researchers to explore how early-life experiences, such as parental divorce or household dynamics, influence students'

likelihood of being recruited into cults. A mixed-methods approach would also be valuable, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews to capture both the broader trends and the deeper, personal experiences behind students' decisions to join cults.

There is a need for further conceptual exploration of social identity theory in the context of cult recruitment. While peer pressure and the desire for social acceptance are key drivers of cult membership, future research should focus on refining the understanding of how students' quest for social identity directly correlates with their vulnerability to cultism. This could involve expanding existing models to integrate additional factors such as the role of personal insecurities or the influence of specific peer groups.

There is a significant knowledge gap in understanding the psychological manipulation tactics used by cults to recruit vulnerable students. While the study touched upon the role of psychological manipulation, future research could provide a more detailed analysis of the specific methods cults employ, such as brainwashing, love bombing, and emotional exploitation, to create a neurological dependency in their followers. This would help to clarify how these tactics specifically target students who are emotionally or mentally vulnerable. Future research could focus on how financial instability, career uncertainty, or a desire for upward mobility can lead students to seek refuge in cultic organizations, thus providing a clearer link between socioeconomic factors and cult membership.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Letter of Introduction

Dear Respondent,

<u>Re: Invitation To Participate In A Research As A Respondent</u>.

I am a PhD student (Practical Theology) at Kabarak University, collecting data to enable me to complete my studies. I have kindly selected you to participate in this survey whose purpose is to study the Christian Union students' perceptions of factors influencing cultism in public universities in Kenya.

I gratefully invite you to freely and honestly fill in the questionnaire which will take you about 30 minutes. I would like to assure you that the information I receive from you shall be treated with utmost confidentiality and shall be used for academic purposes only. Please do not indicate your name anywhere in the questionnaire to ensure objectivity in the study. Kindly note that your participation will be voluntary, and you can pull out of the participation any time should such need arise.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

James Omondi Siwa

Email: Osiwa@kabarak.ac.ke,

Tel. 0720467662

Appendix II: Christian Union Students' Questionnaire

Section A: Demographic Data

Instructions: Kindly put a tick where it is appropriate

1. Indicate your gender   Male ( ) Female ( )

2. Indicate your Age: …………….

3. How long you have been in this University

   ( ) <1 Year

   ( ) 2Years

   ( ) 3 Years

   ( ) >4 Years

4. Indicate your Denominational Affiliation.

   ( ) Roman Catholic

   ( ) Protestant

   ( ) Pentecostal

   Other please state………………………………………

5. Are you a born-again Christian? YES ( )   NO ( )

   If yes, how long have you been born again?

      ( ) Less 1 year

      ( ) 1 -2 years

      ( ) 2-5 years

      ( ) More than 5 years

Section B: Influence of family background on Cultism in Public Universities in Kenya

Rate the following statements by ticking appropriately.

(1= SD=Strongly Disagree; 2= D=Disagree; 3= A=Agree; 4= SA=Strongly Agree)

No	Statement	1 SD	2 D	3 A	4 SA
1.	A student from a dysfunctional home is made vulnerable to cultism				
2.	A student with a history of serious child abuse and violence is vulnerable to cultic recruitment				
3.	Parents who are cult members could initiate their children into cultism				
4.	Cultic neighbours may initiate children in the neighbourhood				
5.	Divorce and separation of parents causes students to join cults				
6.	Moral decadence in the home encourages students to join cults				
7.	Students join the cultic groups to overcome family problems				
8.	The lack of proper parental care for children leads them to cultism				
9.	Students are joining cult groups because of financial distress or poverty at home				
10.	Students join cultic communities due lack of parental discipline				

Section C: The Influence of Socio-Psychological Manipulation On Cultism In Public Universities In Kenya

Rate the following statements by ticking appropriately.

(1= SD=Strongly Disagree; 2= D=Disagree; 3= A=Agree; 4= SA=Strongly Agree)

No	Statement	1 SD	2 D	3 A	4 SA
1.	The transition from high school to university is a psychologically stressful period, making students vulnerable to cultism				
2.	Cultists use dilemma to recruit and exploit the students at this stage in their lives				
3.	Most new university students are naive about life and are thus vulnerable to the cultism that manipulate them				
4.	Students are coerced into cultism psychologically using methods of mind control such as brainwashing and coercive persuasion				
5.	Students enter cultism due to emotional disturbance.				
6.	Students enter cultic society for psychological support				
7.	Cultists make their victims feel helpless by using guilt, punishment, and rewards				
8.	Cults achieve control over their members by coercion and social isolation				
9.	Cultism brainwashes learners to think they will benefit from good grades from lecturers or senior staff who are already members of the secret organization.				
10.	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				

Section D: The Influence of the Sense of Belonging on Cultism in Public Universities in Kenya

Rate the following statements by ticking appropriately.

(1= SD=Strongly Disagree; 2= D=Disagree; 3= A=Agree; 4= SA=Strongly Agree)

No	Statement	1 SD	2 D	3 A	4 SA
1.	The need to associate with others makes students join cult movements				
2.	Cultic affiliates take advantage of circumstances such as divorce and separation or broken relationships to recruit new members who are seeking care and support.				
3.	Students are tempted to enter cultism in pursuit of social identity and acceptance.				
4.	Cults appear to give the alienated individuals an alternate fellowship and sense of community.				
5.	Students enter cult groups to become famous or popular				
6.	Cults seems to give members a favourable feeling				
7.	Cults appear to give its followers spiritual warmth				
8.	Students join cultism to realize electoral advantages during student union elections at campus				
9.	Students enrol in cultism to transform their social status				
10.	Cults target vulnerable students when they are emotionally exposed				

Section E: The Influence of theological grounding on cultism in Public Universities in Kenya

Rate the following statements by ticking appropriately.

(1= SD=Strongly Disagree; 2= D=Disagree; 3= A=Agree; 4= SA=Strongly Agree)

No	Statement	1 SD	2 D	3 A	4 SA
1.	Insufficient religious instruction can entice undergraduates to embrace cultism				
2.	Cultists quickly indoctrinate Christians with superficial Scriptural knowledge				
3.	Individuals who have not had a strong spiritual base are vulnerable to cultic admission				
4.	Weak spiritual foundations of young persons will persuade them to cultism				
5.	Students are enrolling in cult groups with the hope of a better life and realizing worldly power.				
6.	New recruits are susceptible to cultism because of their lack of religious grounding.				
7.	The absence of spiritual commitment to a Church of sound doctrine may invite a student to cultism				
8.	Twisting of scripture and misinterpretation or selective reading of the Bible makes many students find comfort in entering cult groups				
9.	It is assumed that cultic movements offer solutions to unfulfilled desire for spiritual meaning.				
10.	Students are attracted to cults by charismatic leaders who are revered and venerated				

Section F: The Influence Of Peer Pressure On Cultism In Public Universities In Kenya

Rate the following statements by ticking appropriately.

(1= SD=Strongly Disagree; 2= D=Disagree; 3= A=Agree; 4= SA=Strongly Agree)

No	Statement	1 SD	2 D	3 A	4 SA
1.	Students are attracted to cultism because some lecturers belong to secret cult and act as their godfathers or guardians				
2.	Students are socialized into cultism by the adults they look up to and emulate in society as their heroes and models				
3.	Students receive cult introduction from their peers and friends				
4.	Students join cult groups to avoid being considered weaklings by their peers who belong to cults				
5.	Students joined cult groups to safeguard their identity among their cult friends and to fit in				
6.	Students are vulnerable to entering cultism because of the transition and changing social interaction from parents to peers on campus				
7.	Youth consider membership in underground cult to be a symbol of pride				
8.	Comrade peer pressure persuades young people and students that entering cultism is good				
9.	Some students have become cultists because their mates are part of the cult community, and they look happier				
10.	Peer group members and friends who are in cults are very persuasive in recruiting				

Section G: Prevalence Of Cultism In Public Universities In Kenya

Rate the following statements by ticking appropriately.

(1= SD=Strongly Disagree; 2= D=Disagree; 3= A=Agree; 4= SA=Strongly Agree)

No	Statement	1 SD	2 D	3 A	4 SA
1.	Violence is often associated with cult members				
2.	Exclusively believe that outsiders or non-members are lost sinners				
3.	Mind control techniques such as brainwashing, and coercion are prevalent				
4.	Obedience to charismatic leaders is prevalent				
5.	Control by an authoritarian charismatic living and unquestioned leader				
6.	Leaders taking sexual advantage and exploitation of their followers is prevalent				
7.	Enslaving and bounding structure on their faithful is prevalent				
8.	A break of family ties or disregard for family life is prevalent				
9.	Use of non-biblical or extra biblical doctrines and prophesies are dominant				
10.	Sacred transcendent ideology and series of secret rituals are widespread				

END

Appendix III: Focus Group Discussion Guide For Small Group Bible Study Leaders

Section A: Demographic Data

Instructions: Please tick where necessary

Please indicate your gender.   Male   ☐   Female ☐

For how long you have been in this university

☐ <1 Year

☐ 2Years

☐ 3 Years

☐ >4 Years

SECTION B: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

- Self-introduction and background

- Discussion on indicators of cultism

- Highlight the five objectives of the study

- Condense role perspective on family background and cultism

Facilitator's welcome, introduction, and instructions to participants

Welcome: I take this opportunity to welcome you to this Focus Group Discussion

Introduction: This Focus Group Discussion is designed to evaluate Christian Union students' perceptions of factors influencing cultism in Public Universities in Kenya

The Focus Group Discussion will take one and half hours and tape recording will be used for ease of data recovery.

The Core Rules

- You do not need to speak in any given order

- There are no correct answers or incorrect answers

- You need not agree with other people's views in the group

Preliminary Question

Are you aware of the characteristics and dangers associated with cultism?

Guiding Questions

This research classifies factors that influence cultism into Family background, Socio-psychological manipulation, the sense of belonging, theological grounding, and peer pressure

Influence of Family background on cultism. Justify.

    i. How does coming from a dysfunctional home make student susceptible to cultism?

    ii. In what ways do students with a history of serious child violence become vulnerable to cultic recruitment?

    iii. Explain why parents who are cultic members introduce their children to cultic religion

    iv. How do weak family histories inspire students to join cults?

    v. Students join the cultic groups to overcome family problems. Explain.

    vi. Describe any other factor(s) that influence cultism in public universities in Kenya.

Socio-psychological manipulation influences cultism. Comment.

    i. The transition from high school to university is a psychologically stressful period, making students vulnerable to cultism

    ii. Cultists use this dilemma to recruit and exploit the students at this stage in their lives

    iii. Most new university students are naive about life and are thus vulnerable to the cultism that manipulate them

    iv. Students are coerced into cultism psychologically using methods of mind control

    v. Students enter cultism to fulfil psychological needs of the subconscious

    vi. Students enter cultic society for psychological support

The sense of belonging influences cultism. Explain.

    i. The need to belong or to associate with others makes students join cult movements

    ii. Cultic affiliates take advantage of individuals circumstances such as divorce and separation to recruit new members

    iii. Students are tempted to enter cultism in pursuit of identity, love, and acceptance of themselves

    iv. Cults appear to give the alienated individuals an alternate fellowship or community.

    v. Students enter cult groups to become famous or popular

    vi. Cults seem to give members a favourable feeling

Theological grounding influences cultism. Assess.

    i.   Insufficient religious instruction can entice undergraduates to embrace cultism

    ii. Cultists quickly indoctrinate Christians with superficial Scriptural knowledge.

    iii. Individuals who have not had a strong religious base are vulnerable to cultic admission

    iv. Inappropriate spiritual foundations of children will persuade them to cultism.

    v.   Students are enrolling in cult groups with the hope of a better life and realizing world power.

    vi. The absence of spiritual commitment to a Church of sound doctrine may invite a person to cultism

    vii. Twisting of scripture to suit them makes many Christians find comfort in entering cult groups

Peer pressure influences cultism. Examine.

    i.   Students are attracted to cultism because some lecturers belong to secret cult

    ii. Students are socialized into cultism by the adults they look up to and emulate in society

    iii. Students receive cult introduction from their peers

    iv. Students joined cult groups to avoid becoming considered weak

    v.   Students joined cult groups to safeguard their identity among their cult friends

    vi. Students are vulnerable to entering cultism because of the changing of social interaction from parents to peers on campus.

    vii. Comrade peer pressure persuades young people that entering cultism is good and cool.

Cultism in Public Universities in Kenya

Name characteristics of cultism that enable you identify those already in it. A few examples have been given below.

- Cultists can be violent if opposed.
- They are very secretive about details of their group.
- Charismatic living and unquestioned leader-they cannot say no to their leader

- They are exclusive and believe that outsiders and non-members are lost sinners who should be either converted to join them or perish
- Obedience to and obsession with their authoritative charismatic leaders
- Use of deception and secrecy is common
- Mind control: manipulation, brainwashing and coercive persuasion
- Alienation and withdrawal from family and friends
- Exploitation financial, physical, psychological, and sometimes sexual, exploitation is prevalent
- They exhibit obedience to some rules and regulations that they cannot deviate from

End

Appendix IV: Interview Guide For Christian Union Patrons

1) How long have you been in university as patron for the Christian Union?

☐ <1 Year

☐ 2Years

☐ 3 Years

☐ >4 Years

1) **Characteristics of cultism in Public Universities in Kenya**

Name characteristics of cultism that could be useful in identifying those already in it. Examples are provided below:

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………..……

➤ Cultists can be violent if opposed.

➤ They are very secretive about details of their group.

➤ Charismatic living and unquestioned leader-they cannot say no to their leader

➤ They are exclusive and believe that outsiders and non-members are lost sinners who should   be either converted to join them or perish

➤ Obedience to and obsession with their authoritative charismatic leaders

➤ Use of deception and secrecy is common

➤ Mind control: manipulation, brainwashing, and coercive persuasion

➤ Alienation and withdrawal from family and friends

➤ Exploitation financial, physical, psychological, and sometimes sexual, exploitation is prevalent

➤ They exhibit obedience to some rules and regulations that they cannot deviate from

(Below are factors influencingcultism in public universities in Kenya) comment on each factor

Section A: Family Background Influencing Cultism

1) How does a dysfunctional home make a student from them susceptible to cultism?

    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………

2) In what way does a student with history of serious child violence become vulnerable to cultic recruitment?

    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………

3) Explain why parents who are cultic members instigate their children into cultic religion

    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………

4) How do weak family histories inspire students to join cults?

    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………

5) Why do students join the occultic groups to overcome family problems?

    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………

6) Describe any other factor(s) that influence cultism in public universities in Kenya.

………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

Section B: Socio-Psychological Manipulation Influencing Cultism.

(Comment on how these factors influence cultism).

7) The transition from high school to university is a psychologically stressful period, making students vulnerable to cultism…………………………………………………

....

....

8) Cultists use this dilemma to recruit and exploit the students at this stage in their lives…………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

9) Most new university students are naive about life and are thus vulnerable to the cultism that manipulate them……………………………………........................…

....

....

10) Students are coerced into cultism psychologically using methods of mind control such as brainwashing, manipulation and coercive persuasion ....

....

....

11) Students enter cultism to fulfil psychological needs of the subconscious...........

....

....

12) Students enter cultic society for psychological support……................................

....

....

Section C: The Sense Of Belonging Influencing Cultism

(Comment how these factors influence cultism).

13) The need to belong or to associate with others makes students join cult movements

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14) Cultic affiliates take advantage of individuals circumstances such as, sickness, bereavement, broken relationships, divorce and separation to recruit new members

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15) Students are tempted to enter cultism in pursuit of identity, love, and acceptance of themselves…………………………………………………………………………….....

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16) Cults appear to give the alienated individuals an alternate fellowship or community...

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17) Students enter cult groups to become famous or popular......................................

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18) Cults seem to give members a favourable feeling ....

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19) Cults appear to give its followers spiritual warmth...

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Section D: Theological Grounding Influencing Cultism.

(Comment on how these factors influence cultism).

20) Insufficient religious instruction can entice undergraduates to embrace cultism

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21) Cultists quickly indoctrinate Christians with superficial Scriptural knowledge

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22) Individuals who have not had a strong religious base are vulnerable to cultic admission…………………………………………………………………………………

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23) Inappropriate spiritual foundations of children will persuade them to join cultism…………………………………………………………………………………

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24) Students are enrolling in cult groups with the hope of a better life and realizing world power………..

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25) The absence of spiritual commitment to a Church of sound doctrine may invite a person to cultism…………………………………………………………………

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26) Twisting of scripture to suit them makes many Christians find comfort in entering cult groups………………………………..

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Section E: Peer Pressure Influencing Cultism.

(*Comment how these factors influence cultism*).

27) Students are attracted to cultism because some lecturers belong to secret cult

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28) Students are socialized into cultism by the adults they look up to and emulate in society

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29) Students receive cult introduction from their peers

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30) Students joined cult groups to avoid becoming considered weak

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31) Students joined cult groups to safeguard their identity among their cult friends

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32. Students are vulnerable to entering cultism because of the changing of social interaction from parents to peers on campus

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33) Comrade peer pressure persuades young people that entering cultism is good

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END.

Appendix V: Commission For University Education Accredited Public Universities-November 2017

No	University	Year of Award of Charter
1.	University of Nairobi	2013
2.	Moi University	2013
3.	Kenyatta University	2013
4.	Egerton University	2013
5.	Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology	2013
6.	Maseno University	2013
7.	Chuka University	2013
8.	Dedan Kimathi University of Technology.	2012
9.	Kisii University	2013
10.	Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology	2013
11.	Pwani University	2013
12.	Technical University of Kenya	2013
13.	Technical University of Mombasa	2013
14.	Maasai Mara University	2013
15.	Meru University of Sc.& Tech.	2013
16.	Multimedia University of Kenya	2013
17.	South Eastern Kenya University	2013
18.	Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology	2013
19.	Laikipia University	2013
20.	University of Kabianga	2013
21.	Karatina University	2013
22.	University of Eldoret	2013
23.	Kibabii University	2015
24.	Kirinyaga University	2016
25.	Machakos University	2016
26.	Murang'a University of Technology	2016
27.	Rongo University	2016
28.	Taita Taveta University	2016
29.	The Co-operative University of Kenya	2016
30.	University of Embu	2016
31.	Garissa University	2017
32.	Alupe University	2022
33.	Kaimosi Friends University	2022
34.	Tom Mboya University	2022
35.	Tharaka University	2022
36.	National Defence University-Kenya	2021
37.	Open University of Kenya	2023

Source: https://cue.or.ke/ (2023)

Appendix VI: IFES Doctrinal Basis

The doctrinal basis of IFES shall be the fundamental truths of Christianity, including:

- The unity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the Godhead.

- The sovereignty of God in creation, revelation, redemption, and final judgement.

- The divine inspiration and entire trustworthiness of Holy Scripture, as originally given, and its supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.

- The universal sinfulness and guilt of all people since the fall, rendering them subject to God's wrath and condemnation.

- Redemption from the guilt, penalty, dominion, and pollution of sin, solely through the sacrificial death (as our representative and substitute) of the Lord Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God.

- The bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead and his ascension to the right hand of God the Father.

- The presence and power of the Holy Spirit in the work of regeneration.

- The justification of the sinner by the grace of God through faith alone.

- The indwelling and work of the Holy Spirit in the believer.

- The one holy universal Church which is the body of Christ and to which all true believers belong.

- The expectation of the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Source: https://ifesworld.org/en/beliefs/ (2023)

KABARAK UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS
COMMITTEE

ADULTINFORMEDCONSENTFORM

STUDYTITLE:

AN ANALYSIS OF CHRISTIAN UNION STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF
FACTORS INFLUENCING CULTISM IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA

PI: James Omondi Siwa

Affiliated Institution: Kabarak University

Co-Investigator(S):   Dr. William Koros, PhD.

                                                     Dr. Japheth Kigen, PhD.

Affiliated Institution(S):   Kabarak University

Introduction

You are invited to participate in this research study being undertaken by the above listed investigators. This form will help you gather information about the study so that you can voluntarily decide whether you want to participate or not. You are encouraged to ask any question regarding the research process as well as any benefactor risk that you may accrue by participating. After you have adequately been informed about the study, you will be requested to either agree or decline to participate. Upon agreeing to participate in the study, you will be further requested to affirm that by appending your signature on this form.

Accepting or declining to participate in this study does not in any way waive the following rights which you're entitled to:

a) Voluntary participation in the study.

b) Withdrawing from the study at any time without the obligation o having to give an explanation.

c) Access to services which you're entitled to.

A copy of this form will be provided to you for your own records should I continue YES/_____NO_____

This study has been reviewed and approved by Kabarak University Research Ethics Committee (KUREC)

Purpose of the Study?

The purpose of the study is to analyze the Christian Union students' perception of factors influencing cultism in public universities in Kenya. These will include the following areas:

- Influence of family background on cultism
- Influence of socio psychological manipulation on cultism
- Influence of sense of belonging on cultism
- Influence of peer pressure on cultism
- Influence of theological grounding on cultism

To facilitate this analysis you are requested to voluntarily answer question(s)

Inclusion/exclusion criteria and sample size

- The study will target 55,600 Christian Union students in public universities in Kenya. The accessible population of the study will be 10,900 Christian Union students in the six selected public Universities in Kenya namely: Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT), Kenyatta University, Moi University, Egerton University, Maseno University and Chuka University. The study will also include one Christian Union patron and 10 small group Bible study leaders from each of the selected public universities.

- The sample size for the study will be 220 Christian Union students, 60 small group Bible study leaders and 6 Christian Union patrons from the six universities, making a total of 286 respondents to be included.

- Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria: Only those participants above 18 years of age will be included in the study. Persons below 18 years will be excluded from the

study. Those unwilling to participate in the study will also be excluded.

What Participants can expect

Once you agree to participate in the study:

- The researcher will seek the indulgence of the respondents only in terms of their time and will request a maximum of one hour for the completing of the questionnaire, focus group discussion and interviews respectively. Focus Group Discussion will be used to solicit information from the small group Bible study leaders, an interview guide will also be used to gather data from the Christian Union patrons.

- Second, a qualified and well-trained interviewer will ask you questions in a private place where you will feel comfortable. In case there is any question you feel uncomfortable responding to, you will not be coerced to respond. The questions will be on the following areas: (list the areas below)
    - Influence of family background on cultism
    - Influence of socio psychological manipulation on cultism
    - Influence of sense of belonging on cultism
    - Influence of peer pressure on cultism
    - Influence of theological grounding on cultism

- Third, after the interview, the following procedures will be done :
    - The researcher and the assistants will proceed to the data analysis using the data provided. The data will be used only for the academic purpose and will pose no risk to the respondents. All information and source will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

- Last, you are requested to provide your contact details (phone number or any other reliable form of contact). This will help reach you in case new information regarding the study emerges.

- The contact details you will provide shall remain confidential to the lead researcher(PI).

What Potential Risks associated with participation in this Study?

- This study poses no personal risk to the participants since it is a low-risk study. Only the time and participation are required and will be most appreciated.

Privacy & Confidentiality

- To ensure confidentiality of the respondents will not be expected to give their names or any other information that could reveal their identity. The respondents are assured of full privacy and anonymity of the information provided. The respondents will not be required to identify themselves when filling the questionnaire to ensure anonymity. The researcher assures the respondents that the information provided will be purely for academic purposes.

- Confidentiality of information given by the respondents will be assured by protecting their identity using assigned code numbers given by the researcher. Sampled respondents will not be required to give their names national Identity Card numbers or any other information that could disclose their identity.

- The collected data will be securely kept in electronic files protected by passwords and subsequently deleted upon completion of the research. The data collected and analysed will be discarded after successful defense of the findings, publication of necessary journal articles and papers and after all necessary academic use of the data and final submission to the Kabarak University repository.

- Hard copies of the completed questionnaires will be disposed of by shredding and cross shredding whereas electronic data will be deleted permanently according to the Kabarak University disposal policy upon completion of the study as provided in the University disposal policy and timelines.

- In case you aren't comfortable answering any of the questions during the interview because of feeling embarrassed or uncomfortable, it will be within your rights to decline. Otherwise every measure has been taken to ensure that the interview is conducted in a private area with minimal to no interference so that you feel comfortable.

Benefits of participating in the Study

i. This study will potentially benefit the Christian organizations who work among the Christian Unions in public universities to better understand the phenomenon of cultism which might hamper their work in enhancing their work of

discipleship in these universities.

ii. The research findings of this study will also be of significance to the University students since those who read the findings of this study will understand some of the factors and the related perceptions and this may affect their own perceptions of cultism.

iii. This study will also benefit the university Christian Union patrons to develop strategies for defending biblical doctrine in the Christian Unions.

iv. The study will create awareness to university students on the factors influencing cultism and dangers linked to cultism in the university given that fresh university students are vulnerable to recruitment into cults.

v. The findings of this study will also assist the parents in gaining a better understanding of the menace of cultism and causal factors thereby be able to advise their children appropriately when they are joining the universities as fresh students.

vi. The findings of this study will inform policy makers since cultism has been a matter of national interest and concern in the past.

vii. Moreover, the study will add to the field of knowledge as upcoming researchers may use the findings to establish a knowledge gap for future studies and will form comparative data for other studies done in other universities and contexts.

Cost of participating in the Study?

- Only your time and responses will be required.

- Participation will be voluntary and free with no financial exchanges anticipated.

For further Questions / Concerns:

- Intheeventthatyouneedfurtherclarificationorquestionsregardingyourcontinue dparticipation in the study feel free to contact James Omondi Siwa- Tel. 0720467662. Osiwa@kabarak.ac.ke.

- In case of concerns regarding your rights and/or obligations as a research participant do not hesitate to contact the secretary Kabarak University research Ethics Committee (KUREC) – kurec|@kabarak.ac.ke

What Alternative Options are Available to Me?

- The decision on whether to participate or not is voluntary. You will be free to withdraw from the study at any point during the study without providing any explanation.

How the findings of this Study will be communicated or shared?

- This is academic research, and the findings will be presented to the School of Education Humanities and Social Sciences (SEHSS) at Kabarak University and to the Institute of Post Graduate studies Kabarak University (IPGS).

- The findings will thereafter be available in the University Library repository and may be published in refereed journals.

- Institutions and individuals may access the principal investigator on availed contacts as may be necessary.

Statement of Consent

I have comprehensively read the consent form or/the information has been comprehensively read to me by the researcher. I have understood what the study is about and all the questions and concerns that I had have been responded to in a clear and concise manner. The study benefits and foreseeable risks have been explained to me. I totally understand that my decision to participate in this study is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw at any point during the study.

I freely consent to participate in this study.

Signing this form does not in any way imply that I have given up the rights am entitled to as a participant.

I agree to participate in this research   Yes_____No_____

I agree to provide my contact details for follow-up   Yes_____No_____

Participant's Name _____

Participant'sSignature_____Date_____

Appendix VIII: Location Maps
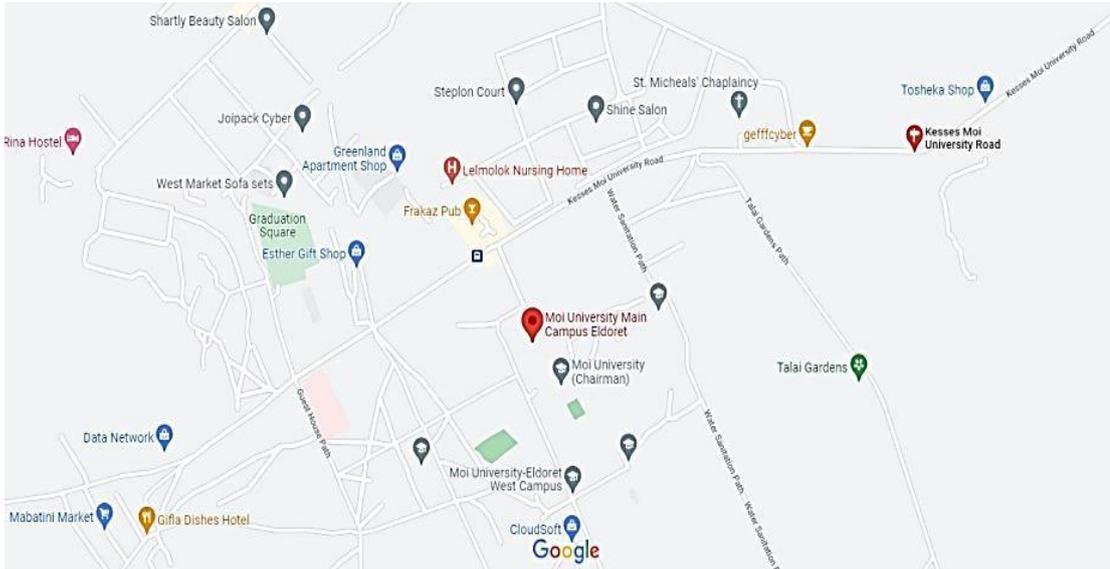
Moi University

Source: Google Maps
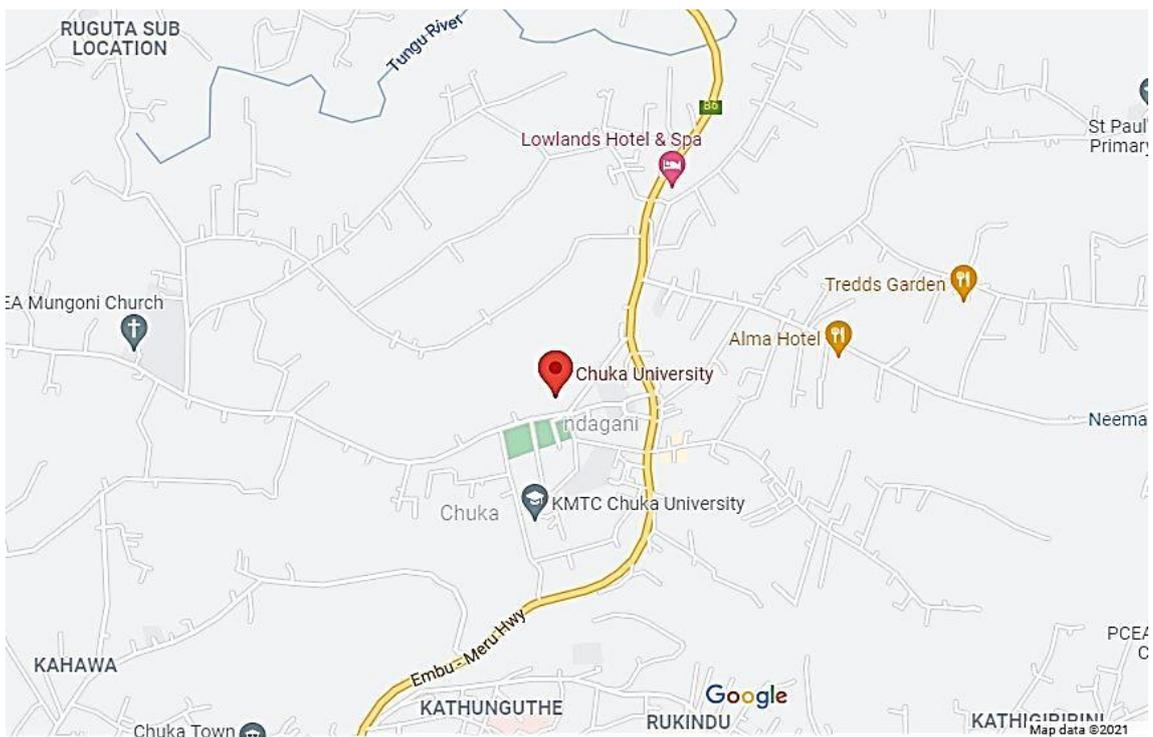
Chuka University
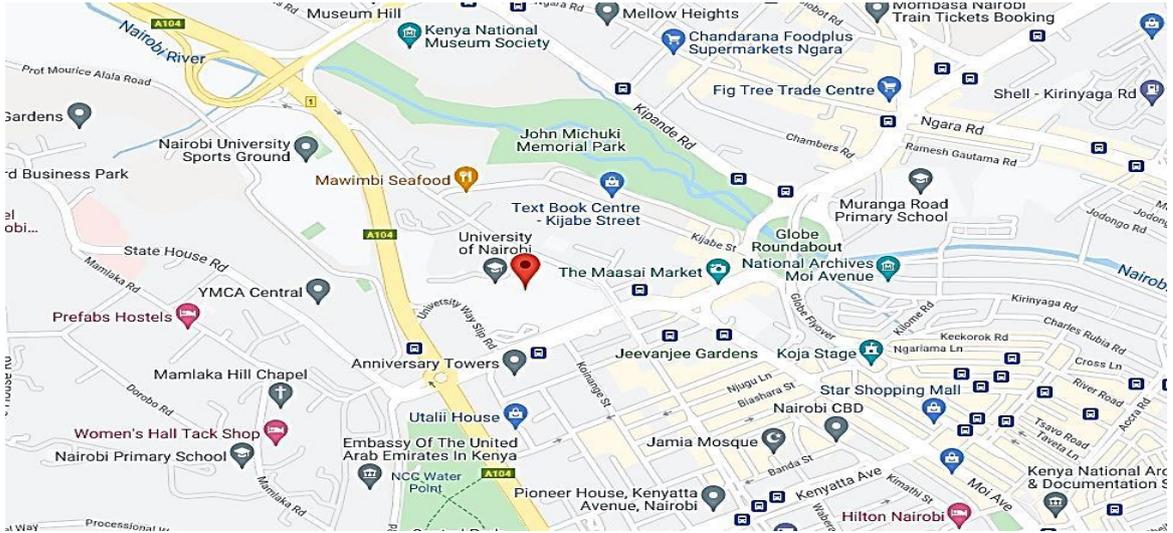
Source: Google Maps
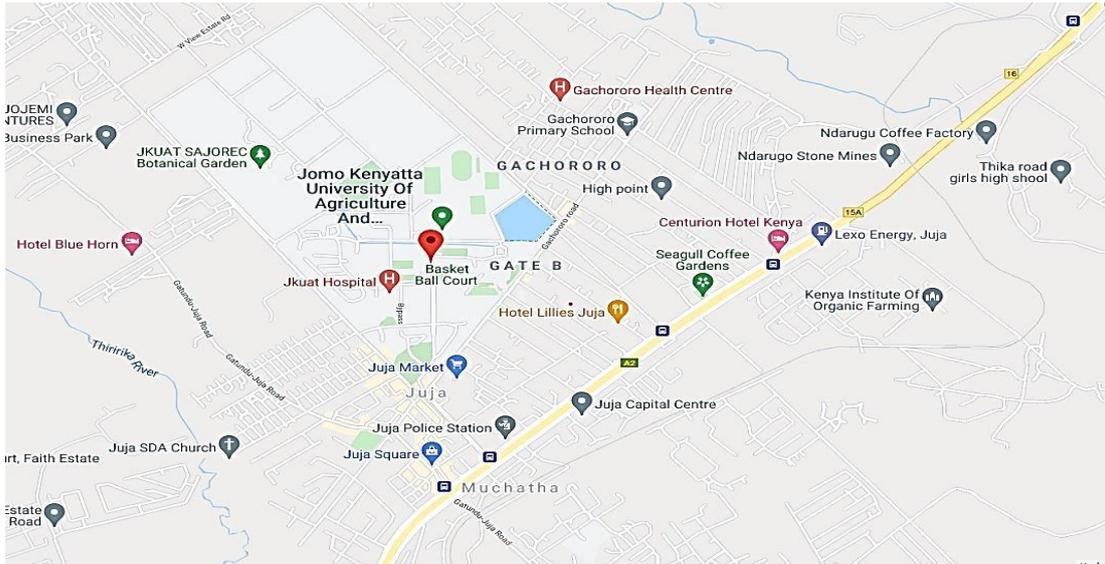
JKUAT University

Source: Google Maps
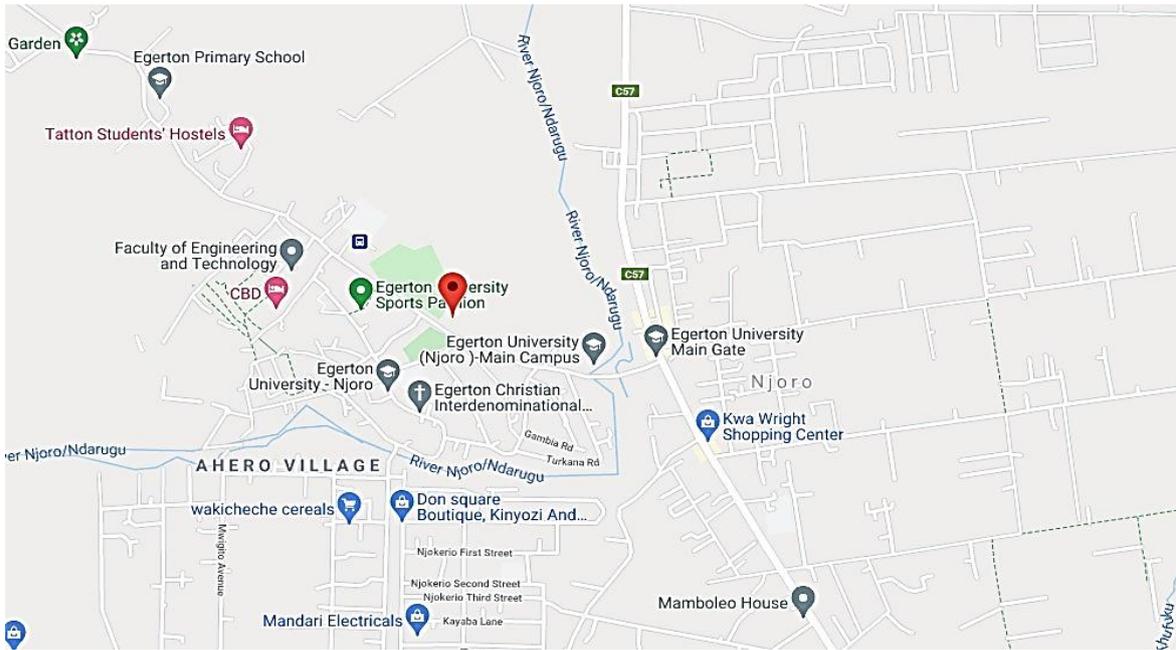
Egerton University

Source: Google Maps

University of Nairobi

Source: Google Maps.

Maseno University

Source: Google Maps

Kenyatta University

Source: Google Maps

Appendix IX: KUREC Clearance Letter

KABARAK UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Private Bag - 20157   Tel: 254-51-343234/5
KABARAK, KENYA   Fax: 254-051-343529
Email: kurec@kabarak.ac.ke   www.kabarak.ac.ke

OUR REF: KABU01/KUREC/001/05/03/23   Date: 13th March, 2023

James Omondi Siwa,
Reg. No: GDT/M/1608/09/16
Kabarak University,

Dear James,

RE: AN ANALYSIS OF CHRISTIAN UNION STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF FACTORS INFLUENCING CULTISM IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA.
This is to inform you that *KUREC* has reviewed and approved your above research proposal. Your application approval number is *KUREC-050323.* The approval period is *13/03/2023 – 13/03/ 2024.*
This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements:

i.   All researchers shall obtain an introduction letter to NACOSTI from the relevant head of institutions (Institute of postgraduate, School dean or Directorate of research)
ii.   The researcher shall further obtain a RESEARCH PERMIT from NACOSTI before commencement of data collection & submit a copy of the permit to **KUREC.**
iii.   Only approved documents including (informed consents, study instruments, MTA Material Transfer Agreement) will be used
iv.   All changes including (amendments, deviations, and violations) are submitted for review and approval by *KUREC*:
v.   Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to *KUREC* within 72 hours of notification;
vi.   Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risk(s) or affected safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to *KUREC* within 72 hours;
vii.   Clearance for export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions and submit a copy of the permit to KUREC;
viii.   Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal and;
ix.   Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days upon completion of the study to *KUREC*

Sincerely,

Prof. Jackson Kitetu PhD.   1 3 MAR 2023
KUREC-Chairman

Cc   Vice Chancellor
        DVC-Academic & Research
        Registrar-Academic & Research
        Director-Research Innovation & Outreach
        Institute of Post Graduate Studies

As members of Kabarak University family, we purpose at all times and in all places, to set apart in one's heart, Jesus as Lord.
(1 Peter 3:15)
Kabarak University is ISO 9001:2015 Certified

Appendix X: NACOSTI Research Permit

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: 867540

Date of Issue: 12/April/2023

RESEARCH LICENSE

This is to Certify that Rev.. JAMES OMONDI SIWA of Kabarak University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Kiambu, Kisumu, Meru, Nairobi, Nakuru, Uasin-Gishu on the topic: AN ANALYSIS OF CHRISTIAN UNION STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF FACTORS INFLUENCING CULTISM IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA for the period ending : 12/April/2024.

License No: NACOSTI/P/23/25095

867540

Applicant Identification Number

Director General
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Verification QR Code

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See overleaf for conditions

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Appendix XI: Authorization Letters from Counties

Tharaka Nithi County

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND NATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

Telegrams:"DISTRICTER",Chuka
Telephone: Chuka 630005
Fax No. 630356
Email:cctharakanithi@gmail.com
While replying please quote

COUNTY COMMISSIONER
THARAKA NITHI COUNTY
P.O. BOX 22 - 60406
KATHWANA

Ref: TNC/ED/VOL11/285

8th August, 2023

Vice chancellor
CHUKA UNIVERSITY

RE: AUTHORISATION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH - DATA COLLECTION

JAMES OMONDI SIWA

The above named person is a PHD student at KABARAK UNIVERSITY and is in the process of carrying out data collection to enable him complete his studies. He is hence authorized to carry out data collection in your institution, Chuka University.

Please accord him and his team the necessary support.

Please inform officers under you on the same.

JULIUS TOO
For: COUNTY COMMISSIONER
THARAKA NITHI COUNTY

Kiambu County

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
State Department of Early Learning and Basic Education

Telephone: Kiambu (office) 0768 970412

Email:directoreducationkiambu@yahoo.com
When replying please quote

KBU/CDE/DEPT 8/VOL.I

COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
KIAMBU COUNTY
P. O. Box 2300
KIAMBU

26th May, 2023

Rev. James Omondi Siwa
Kabarak University
Private Bag
KABARAK

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Reference is made to NACOSTI letter Ref. No. NACOSTI/P/23/25095 dated 12th April, 2023.

You have been authorized to research on **"An analysis of Christian Union students' perceptions of factors influencing cultism in Public Universities in Kenya"** for a period ending 12th April, 2024.

Please accord him the necessary assistance.
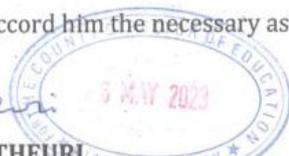
AGNES THEURI
For: COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
KIAMBU COUNTY

MY EDUCATION, MY FUTURE　　　　　　*MY EDUCATION, MY FUTURE*

Nairobi County

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND CO-ORDINATION OF NATIONAL ADMINISTRATION
STATE DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNAL SECURITY AND NATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

Telegrams............................
Telephone: Nairobi 316845, 341666
When replying please quote

COUNTY COMMISSIONER
NAIROBI.
P.O. Box 30124-00100
NAIROBI

REF: ED 10/6 VOL. XXVII (10)   22nd May 2023

James Omondi Siwa
Kabarak University

RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Your letter dated 19th May, 2023 refers.

This office has no objection and authority is hereby granted to conduct research on "**Analysis of Christian Union Students' perceptions of Factors Influencing Cultism in Public Universities in Kenya**" in Nairobi County for the period ending 12th April 2024.

KIAMBI J. KIMATHI
FOR.COUNTY COMMISSIONER

Cc: All Deputy County Commissioners
       NAIROBI COUNTY

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

State Department for Early Learning and Basic Education

Email: cdeuasingishucounty@gmail.com
    : cdeuasingishucounty@yahoo.com
When replying please quote:

County Director of Education,
Uasin Gishu County,
P.O. Box 9843-30100,
ELDORET.

Ref: No. MOE/UGC/TRN/9/VOLL. IV/272

14ᵀᴴ Aug , 2023

JAMES OMONDI SIWA
KABARAK UNIVERSITY,
P.O Box 20157
KABARAK.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION.

In reference to your Licence Ref no. **NACOSTI/P/23/25095** dated 12th April, 2023 from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI), you are hereby granted the authority to carry out research on "*Analysis of Christian union students 'PERCEPTIONS OF FACTORS INFLUENCING CULTISM IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA, Period Ending 12th April, 2024,"* Within Uasin Gishu County.

We take this opportunity to wish you well during this data collection.

Andrew Mibei
For: County Director of Education
UASIN GISHU.

FOR: COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
UASIN GISHU COUNTY

1 4 AUG 2023

P.O. Box 9843 - 30100, ELDORET
TEL: 053-2063342 / 0719127212

SGS

Nakuru County

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
Ministry of Interior and National Administration

Email: ccnakurucounty@yahoo.com
         ccnakurucounty@gmail.com

COUNTY COMMISSIONER
NAKURU COUNTY
P. O. BOX 81
NAKURU

When replying please quote:
Ref. No. CC. SR. EDU 12/1/2/VOL.VII/55

2nd June, 2023

Deputy County Commissioners
NAKURU COUNTY

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION – REV. JAMES OMONDI SIWA

This is to confirm that the above named who is a student of Kabarak University has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Nakuru County on the topic: **"AN ANALYSIS OF CHRISTIAN UNION STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF FACTORS INFLUENCING CULTISM IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA"** in Nakuru County, Kenya for the period ending: **12th April, 2024.** NACOSTI License No. is **NACOSTI/P/23/25095.**

Please accord him all the necessary support to facilitate the success of his research.

ABRAHAM CHEPKECH
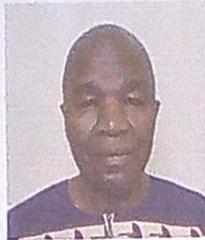**FOR: COUNTY COMMISSIONER**
NAKURU COUNTY

Kisumu County

Approved to
Carryout Research
in Kisumu County

For :County Director of Education
Kisumu County
P.O Box 575 - 40100,
KISUMU. 28/4/2023

Ref No: 867540

Date of Issue: 12/April/2023

RESEARCH LICENSE

This is to Certify that Rev.. JAMES OMONDI SIWA of Kabarak University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Kiambu, Kisumu, Meru, Nairobi, Nakuru, Uasin-Gishu on the topic: AN ANALYSIS OF CHRISTIAN UNION STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF FACTORS INFLUENCING CULTISM IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA for the period ending : 12/April/2024.

License No: NACOSTI/P/23/25095

867540

Applicant Identification Number

Director General
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR
SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY &
INNOVATION

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Appendix XII: Evidence of Conference Participation

KABARAK UNIVERSITY

Certificate of Participation

Awarded to

James Omondi Siwa

for successfully participating in the 13th Annual Kabarak University International Research Conference held from 12th – 16th October 2023 and presented a paper entitled *"The Christian Union Students' Perception of the Influence of Family Background on Cultism in Public Universities in Kenya."*

Conference Theme

Contemporary Issues in Theology and Family

Prof. Frederick Ngala
Dean School of Education,
Humanities and social sciences

Dr. Moses Thiga
Director – Research, Innovation
and Outreach

Kabarak University Moral Code

As members of Kabarak University family, we purpose at all times and in all places, to set apart in one's heart, Jesus as Lord.

(1 Peter 3:15)

Kabarak University is ISO 9001:2015 Certified

KABARAK UNIVERSITY

Certificate of Participation

Awarded to

JAMES OMONDI SIWA

For successfully participating in the 13th Annual Kabarak University International Research Conference held on 26th October 2023 and presented a paper entitled *"The christian union students perception of the influence of theological grounding on cultism in public universities in kenya."*

Conference Theme

Paradigm shifts in religion and family in the post-COVID-19 Era

Prof. Frederick B.J.A Ngala
Dean, School of Education
& Director Music
Performance

Dr. Phillip Nyawere
Ag.Director - Research,
Innovation and Outreach

Kabarak University Moral Code
As members of Kabarak University family, we purpose at all times and in all places, to set apart in one's heart, Jesus as Lord.
(1 Peter 3:15)

Kabarak University is ISO 9001:2015 Certified

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Appendix XIII: List of Publications

Christian Union Students' Perception of Family Background as a Factor Contributing to Cultism in Public Universities in Kenya

James Omondi Siwa[1]; William Chesaina Kipkoros[2]; and Japheth Kigen[2]
Email: omondi.siwa@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examines the Christian Union students' perception of family background as a factor influencing cultism in public universities in Kenya. Studies have shown that cultism is prevalent among university students, resulting in suicides, drug abuse, crimes, unrest, withdrawal from family, academic malpractices and failure, attrition, and psychological and financial exploitation, among others. The study was conducted in six public universities in Kenya and employed a descriptive research design guided by the Bounded Choice Theory. It established that the nature of family background contributes significantly to the prevalence of cultism and that the setting in which a student lives affects their disposition toward cultism. Dysfunctional families and cultic households seem to foster the recruitment into cultism. Cults use expressions of overwhelming love, also referred to as "love bombing" techniques, to give their members a false sense of affection to feel secure and accepted. The study recommends that families be educated on the dangers of cultism, the importance of understanding the biblical truth, and solid parental care. Since Christian Union (CU) members hail from diverse family backgrounds, the CU should organise targeted discipleship programmes to help debrief and reorient students to sound biblical teachings. Furthermore, the CUs should provide a support system for their members from economically disadvantaged backgrounds to shield them from the allures of cultists. In addition, the study underscores the need for preemptive education, training, and psychological and spiritual counselling intervention to enhance family values.

Keywords: Christian Union Students, Perceptions, Cultism, Family Background and Public Universities

THE CHRISTIAN UNION STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE INFLUENCE OF THEOLOGICAL GROUNDING ON CULTISM IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA

Authors
James Omondi Siwa[1]; William Chesaina Kipkoros[2]; Japheth Kigen[3]
Main author email: omondi.siwa@gmail.com

(1.2.3) Kabarak University, Kenya.

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Abstract
The purpose of this study was to analyse the Christian Union (C.U.) students' perceptions of the influence of theological grounding on cultism in public universities in Kenya. Studies have shown that cultism is prevalent among university students, resulting in suicides, drug abuse, crimes, unrest, withdrawal from family, academic malpractices, failure, attrition, psychological and financial exploitation, among others. The study employed a descriptive research design. The study was carried out in six public universities in Kenya. A sample of 220 C.U. students was selected through simple random and stratified sampling methods. The study further included 60 small group Bible study leaders and 6 C.U. Patrons selected through purposive sampling. The study was guided by Bounded Choice Theory. This study established that theological grounding was perceived as contributing significantly to cultism (β=0.194; p<0.05). The study concludes that lack of adequate spiritual instruction may turn students to cultism since cults target students with a cursory familiarity with the scriptures, who lack a solid religious foundation, and who have been exposed to cultism as children. The study recommends training on cultism and on Bible study to enable students to attain spiritual strength prior to joining university. The Christian Unions should provide social support and discipleship for their members to shield them from cult recruiters. University Chaplains and C.U. Patrons should vet all preachers who come to the university to mitigate against cultic doctrines and practices.

Key terms: Christian Union students, cultism, theological grounding, perceptions, and public universities.

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