



Social Organisations and Undergraduates' Academic Performance: A Theoretical Reflection on the Experience of Lagos State University

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Abstract

Research has shown that the involvement of undergraduates in social organizations enhances their decision-making skills regarding life planning. Some social organizations in the Universities have advantages while a few have harmful effects on learning and human safety. Often, new students in the universities are eager to make new acquaintances. Except faculty members intervene by providing useful information that distinguish useful social groups from those committed to deviant values, new students who are not well protected from harm may be detracted from focus on and success in studies. This paper illustrates that as a consequence of unrelenting frightening pressures, new students who are unwilling to 'belong' are liable to drop out of college or get in trouble. Therefore, universities' managements should encourage partnership among the various social environments, students, parents and faculty members to provide social support that will steer future leaders from veering off from academic pursuits.

Keyword: Undergraduates, Social Organizations, Academic Performance, Lagos, Nigeria.

Modern universities are the loci of the global knowledge economy. The opportunity to transform the world lies in the application of the intellectual resources of universities. For young persons to become successful individuals in a rapidly changing world is a great aspiration. But in many countries around the world, many factors impede universities' ability to make their students successful scholars, professionals, and citizens of the future. Significant among the obstacles is the social environment of the universities in those places. A majority of university undergraduates often become members of external social organizations that run on campus, some of which are good while others are not. Every year, registered campus associations welcome new students into the university community with various intentions, including patriotic, cultural, or political. The accepted conventional media for making new students conversant on values of the university should be its social activities, but that is not always the case. In the course of this process, certain groups within the universities take undue advantage of it to recruit unsuspecting undergraduates into different groups that undermine the academic environment and students' academic performance. The recruitment techniques of such groups are usually juicier, more vigorous, and generally more attractive than those of the registered associations that have

academic missions. Whatever the medium of involvement in campus-based social organizations, the fact of their membership has implications for new students' present academic attainment, development chances and future integration into the mainstream of university life. This article examines the nexus between the social environments and academic performance, focusing on how universities can intervene against the challenges. After a brief literature review, it identifies various issues about social environments, discusses several major problems, and finally offers solutions and recommendations.

Literature Review

In Nigeria, as it probably is elsewhere, many student groups characterise universities at different layers of their social environments. Literary societies, fraternities, and social and dining clubs were just a few of the early organizations that could be found on the college campuses (Kuk, Thomas, & Banning, 2008). While some social groups of students are structured to conform, some others are allergic to campus injustice.

As a result of pervasive tribal sentiments in students' relations and the increasing population of 'wealthy' students to a relatively few 'poorer' students, the 'Magnificent Seven' founded the National Association of Seadogs, a university-based group in 1952 at the University College, Ibadan (Wellington, 2007). This was to combat these societal ills (Owoseni, 2006). It is the only confraternity that has bestridden the Nigerian campuses for almost 20 years like a colossus (Agozino & Idem, 2001).

With time, some members who struggled to live up to the task of being the best in their education pursuit left to form rival confraternities like the Buccaneers Confraternity and the Eye Confraternity thus leading to societal violence including the famous *Operation Wetie* in 1965 (Omoyele, nd). As a result, in the latter part of the 20th century, researchers began to explore the value of student organizations (Nadler, 1997). Although the question of cultism as a potential threat to life and property on and off the university campuses in Nigeria has been studied, its impact on the universities' social environments has not been a specific subject of discourse. In this regard, this paper attempts to use existing scholarship to address the lacuna in the subsequent sections.

More broadly, as Zais (2011) notes, the school environment as the extent to which school settings promote student safety and student health, which may include topics such as the physical plant, the academic environment, available physical and mental health supports and services, and the fairness and adequacy of disciplinary procedures, as supported by relevant research and an assessment of validity. Every individual is born into a social environment and it is only through interaction with that environment that he is able to develop a consciousness of self and affective characteristics (Eyo, 2003). Therefore, the universities' admission of adolescents is the beginning of the final educational transition which started from their individual homes to the primary, through the secondary to the tertiary social environments. Except there is a rhythm between the activities that took place in the earlier two transitional phases (the primary and secondary), the new undergraduates may lose focus.

For the purpose of this paper, the social environments of a typical university are characterized by three main traditional domains: peer interactions, classroom environment, and physical environment. Additionally, because of the critical role which technological globalization plays in the process of learning, this paper identifies the social media environment as the fourth domain.

Social environment in universities

Social environment of a university is shaped by peer interactions, classroom interactions, physical interactions, and social media interactions. While Castrogiovanni (2002) defines a peer group as a small group of similar age, fairly close friends who share the same activities. From this background emerges peer pressure which Ryan (2000) conceives as when people of one's own age encourage or urge the person to do something or to keep from doing something else, no matter if the person personally wants to do it or not. Thus, peer pressure refers to the influence exerted by a peer group in encouraging a person to change his/her attitudes and values in order to conform to group norms (Kirk, 2000). The peer environment of undergraduates offers intense roles which students might be required to play in the course of their daily routine interactions in the same campus residence halls, playgrounds, in class, at social events, while walking through residence hallways. All these provide a frequency of contact among undergraduates that make mutual influence difficult to ignore. The interactions that go on as participants in these different places cause the social environments to be in constant flux and always in the process of continual change.

The new students on the universities' campuses are far away from their parents and older relatives, peers to whom they were accustomed in their neighbourhood schools, playing fields or communities of support. In the university, it is hard for them to develop a network of friendship that will promote their emotional comfort without necessarily worsening their academic chances. As Schrager (1986) reported, a study conducted by Butler compared three high achieving fraternities and three low achieving fraternities and found that the academic achievement of freshmen members tended to be influenced by the attitudes of older members of the organization. In other words, a pledge's concern for academic achievement was modelled after the behaviour of the active members (Schrager, 1986). In this regard, there is a striking semblance between fraternities and their impacts on the academic performance of newer members as induced by the older ones among cult group members at the Lagos State University. The peer-to-peer social environments have their implicit and explicit implications for undergraduate students. Granted that the wind of globalisation is blowing across the world, beliefs and mindsets are in flux. Some of that has ingrained positive values but it has also brought about new challenges.

Out of youthful whims, some undergraduates dress much in the way that is characteristic of street boys. They enjoy this because it is the vogue. Granted that adolescence is a stage in human life when adventure seems unstoppable, young undergraduates enjoy seeking fun. However, some errors whose consequences may last throughout life could be made in the students' quest to gate-crash into adult world or lay claim to high social statuses. For instance, due to peer influence, some adolescent male and female undergraduates, who were on a birthday splash, got drowned at Tarkwa Bay Beach is an artificial sheltered beach located near the Lagos harbour. The students did not tell their parents where they were headed. Their boat capsized, and dead bodies were found a week later.

In the course of negotiating peer group relations, some students deliberately or inadvertently get initiated into cultic groups. Moreover, it is a common sight on Nigerian universities' campuses to find undergraduates misbehaving and using languages unbecoming of educated society. Words and slangs that denigrate the value of the universities' social environments are freely used by some undergraduates. In general, it is true that most teens conform to peer pressure on trends in music, clothing, and hairstyles. Participating in peer group activities is a primary stage of development and adolescents' identities are often closely

associated with that of their peers (Santor et al., 2000). It is against this background that the question of cult recruitment and its ruinous consequences become topical in relation to the social organisation on the universities' campuses. Cult groups exist in different factions. Being peculiar groups whose activities are nocturnal and essentially clandestine, they do not lend themselves to empirical understanding. Therefore, the mutual fear of insecurity from the prowl of opposing cult groups endangers the entire universities' social organisations. This makes the academic performance of undergraduates suffer some setbacks. Here the tragedy that befell a popular undergraduate celebrity helps to underscore the danger inherent in campus cultism. A 400 level student and budding hip hop artist was killed due to his association with campus fraternity in Lagos State University. He was alleged to be a member of a confraternity on the campus. Damoche was shot dead in March 2013 by suspected campus fraternity gangs outside the school premises. In the aftermath of the killing, the Police arrested not fewer than 70 persons in connection with his death (Vanguard, 2013). My supervisee, another student was with Damoche at the campus sports centre some few minutes before he was shot. Through the deceased student's phone contacts that day, the other student was arrested and detained for 29 days. On his release, the police wanted me as his adviser to stand for him as a guarantee that he would be of good conduct. Rather than doing so, I sent for his father. I informed his fathers of the steps I had taken to ensure he did not run into new problems. Earlier, he had denied ever belonging to the group, but on arrest, he confessed to being a member of one of the campus cult groups.

To the extent that affiliation is experience driven (Ryan, 2000), new university students will instinctively crave to belong to some social organisations in their latest social environments. Since peers have a more powerful influence on adolescents as compared to families (Boujlaleb, 2006), and adolescents derive their self-esteem from the group they belong to and they cannot imagine themselves outside the gathering (Haynie, 2002), faculty members and parents should partner to evolve strategic agenda on how these impressionable persons do not fall into the wrong social groups. There is no doubt that peer groups provide a forum where teens construct and reconstruct their identities (Black, 2002). There is no other stage of development that one's sense of identity can be so unstable (Castrogiovanni, 2002). Peer groups have their fine points. Castrogiovanni (2002) reminds faculty members and parents that peer groups provide the following positive experiences for adolescents: (1) the opportunity to learn how to interact with others; (2) support in defining identity, interests, abilities, and personality; (3) autonomy without control of adults and parents; (4) opportunities for witnessing the strategies others use to cope with similar problems, and for observing how effective they are; (5) involved emotional support and; (6) building and maintaining friendships.

It is probably on this premise that Burns and Darling (2002) recognize peer influence as the more subtle form of peer pressure which involves changing one's behaviour to meet the perceived expectations of others. If parents and faculty members recognise that undergraduates' participation in peer group activities is a primary stage of development and adolescents' identities are often closely associated with that of their peers (Santor *et al.*, 2000), they will collaborate to salvage the young citizens from the destructive consequences of going off the academic tracks. With a good partnership, parents can advise their undergraduate-student children to see in their lecturers positive role models than the negative role modelling that often characterise peer group mentoring

Classroom social environment and interactions

The classroom environment is often characterized by student-faculty relationships. The peer-to-peer relation puts the new undergraduates against a massive unfamiliar and heterogeneous population where social contact is infrequent, unlike the relations that characterize the peer-to-peer environment. Here, the new students do a minimum of compulsory departmental and faculty courses together. In the course of attending classes together, students begin to form intra-class secondary dyadic and triadic groups. At the level of common department and faculty, interaction among peers and between faculty and students, particularly during the all-important orientation meetings give rise to critical understanding of new ideas, thoughts, and beliefs on issues that are education-based. In public universities with inadequate infrastructural provisions, mundane issues like inadequate sitting spaces could become a basis of tension. A friend who arrives earlier in class could use his or her school bag to indicate the presence of another undergraduate who had arrived but went to the restroom. In some private universities and even public universities in developed environments, this reason does not exist as a contact for two hitherto unfriendly young persons.

All new students consider information critical for them to know who does what at the department, faculty or the management level. There is no doubt that structured learning occurs within the social classes where students exchange ideas in the presence of a faculty members who guide students on how to acquire the latest intelligence. Therefore, interactions with both faculty members and other students allow for exchange of ideas which play a key role in the shaping of individual thought. Experience has shown that most students acquire their public speaking skills and confidence from the presentations which I encourage students to undertake. For this reason, the stimuli provided by the classroom experiences are probably among the most significant sources of influence during the undergraduate years” (Astin, 1968:50). Since peer group could exert either positive or negative influences on the academic performance on members (Tope, 2011), faculty members have a duty to provide directions that lead to new students being in the company of the peer group that will influence them positively. It is in fulfillment of this onerous task that mentoring and consistent guidance forms a part of the effort which faculty members deliberately make to identify, evaluate, track and encourage the progress of students in school (Mbathia, 2005).

The faculty members can facilitate painless and rapid transition of new students if they encourage class participation of students. If the faculty members recognize students by names and call on them to get involved in group work, informal interests that may develop from that background could facilitate a more rapid and successful transition. As a result of the poverty in most of the developing countries, some classrooms share population characteristics with notable overcrowded markets. The pressure which sizes and overpopulation exert on the teaching and learning atmosphere is not only intimidating to the available facilities; they scare the teacher as well as the new students who probably had seen such a large gathering of students only on their high schools’ assembly grounds. Usually, the university classrooms serve as launch pads for new relationships that will include the individual student as an integral part of the university community. Thus, the peer and classroom environments as well as the physical aspects of the institution for example, the type, size, and location will determine the success of the transition of incoming students into the universities.

Residential social environment

The type of an institution, its size, and location combine to play a significant role in shaping the campus physical environments. The critical components of this phase are the administration, proximity of residences to campus, and the overall ambience of the university. Astin (1968:84) defines the physical environment as “the classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and other facilities directly connected with student life or with the academic program of the institution.” In developing communities of the world, the towns in which universities are sited, the climate of the environments, the topographies and the buildings which serve as residences to the students all come together to form the physical environments of the universities. At inception, the location of the Lagos State University was ideal for scholarship. But as development intensified, the location becomes very unfavorable for a university. The chaos of the environments that surround the university has created a hostile environment around campus. Bad behavior of the outside environment affects the academic environment in the university.

Halls of residence are an important concern within the physical environment of any university for various reasons. It is within them that students spend a bulk of their reading, relaxing and sleeping hours. Except when the structures are conducive to these diverse activities, the facilities might become a source of distractions to the students. Also, the distance between residences and campus buildings often has implications for students’ safety. The usual university tradition is to make accommodation available for administration and faculty offices, classrooms and learning spaces, and resident spaces within the university community. This is necessary to encourage a living-learning-leading theme through connections between faculty and students. In the course of unwinding from the seeming frustrating challenges of a new environment, the new undergraduates often give in to the bait of invitations to social events inside and outside of the university that let unwanted forces take advantage of students.

Social environment through social media

In light of the proportion of time investment of the undergraduate students on online interaction and the emerging consequences of this on scholarship, it has become critical to include the social media environment in the list of social environments of the universities. In this direction, Greenhow, Robelia, and Hughes (2009) say social networking sites (SNSs) have the potential to facilitate interaction, communication, and collaboration, and as a result have been prominently featured in discussions centering on the use of technology to support and amplify educational endeavors. Even though researchers have identified an accelerating use of social software in formal learning contexts (Schroeder, Minocha, & Schneider, 2010), many students can be addicted to online interaction to the detriment of their educational pursuit. Granted that the social media have kept most students away from loneliness, they have also become a source of distraction to students who have become nocturnal human beings who interact with their colleagues throughout the night. The time some students spend online has demonstrably encroached on their classroom presence and concentration. Beyond this, the social media have curtailed behavioral recklessness among many undergraduate students. On the other end, the fear that they are being monitored and their photographs may be captured and posted to the Facebook appears to make students subject them to personal behavior censorship on the universities’ campuses.

On the whole, these three traditional and one modern social media characteristics which influence students within the universities’ settings show that the universities’ environment is shaped by several factors. These are not limited to only those posed by the elements identified above. However, the most important of the influencing factors are the students themselves. Each

individual comes to the university with fairly established values. To find the university's experiences rewarding, rationality will rapidly replace superstition and ignorance. Therefore, there is a need for the new students to unlearn most of their cultural predilections.

Solutions and Recommendations

If education policy makers want the universities to play a critical role in emancipating humanity by giving critical teaching to the next generation, then they should fill the social environments of the undergraduate learners with stimulating provisions that facilitate creativity and critical thinking. The answer to the question do faculty members have an open-door policy with regards to students, or do students make appointments a week in advance according to Davis and Murrell (1993:37–38) provides an enduring solution to the problem of normative interaction between undergraduates and their teachers in the universities' social environments. At the Lagos State University, each faculty member was enjoined by the university management to paste a convenient consultation time for undergraduate students to see their lecturers on their doors. The gainful resolution of most of the undergraduates' crises reside with the faculty members. Most students consider the time as fulfillment of all official righteousness. Individual undergraduate students know the best time their lecturers have time to give attentive ears to their inquiries. Instances abound in which some students have brought their parents to demand what they ordinarily could not have accessed using the best human relations tactics.

Adolescents have always been exposed to peer influence, but the kinds of peer influence that they encounter have changed tremendously in the past years (Howard, 2004). Since lecturers are conscious of the fact that peers can influence everything from what an adolescent chooses to wear to whether or not an adolescent engages in drug related or other delinquent behaviour, as locus parentis, it is part of the duties of faculty members to counsel the at-risk population. Undergraduates should see this effort as a safety intervention and not an attempt to muzzle them. Universities' public spaces belong to all stakeholders in the Universities' project who are brought together by fate to struggle for one interest or the other on that single platform. The onus is therefore on every stakeholder to ensure that the social environment does not constitute an insurmountable challenge for undergraduates to actualise their academic aspirations. However, peer interaction may generate differing effects for males and females. Empirically, Ullah and Wilson (2007) found that the academic achievement of male students decreased with greater amounts of peer interaction. For female students, the results were the exact opposite. As relationships with peers improved, the academic achievement of female students also became better. Considering these outcomes, the type of social organization in which the undergraduate is involved could influence these results.

Level advisers should step up aggressive educational campaigns that sensitize the unsuspecting new students so that they will be navigated away from the cultic potholes that litter the universities' topography. For the level advisers to execute this assignment of guiding these vulnerable young new universities' students from inadvertently joining cult groups, the university management should empower faculty members so that their individual safety is not compromised as they embark on providing safety valves for the new members of the universities' communities. More importantly, parents should partner with the universities' management to ensure that they maintain consistent canceling interactions with their children to keep them away from cultism. Similarly, government should empower the police to stop and check buses which convey students from one location to the other intra-state or inter-state and ask these commuters one-by-one if they are truly on learning expeditions. Young students are

often coerced into cult initiation inside thick forests at night with lots of follow-up intimidation threats. With this kind of routine stop and check strategy, some innocent prospective cultists could be liberated.

The universities as citadels of learning and character should promote good behaviour so as not to ignite unrest on the campuses. As such, faculty members need to show considerable understanding of the pressures of pull and push under which the students try to live their everyday lives and painlessly persuade them to drop some habits that may have untoward effects on their future lives professionally. If students dress badly, the reason for that kind of choice should be clear to the faculty members. Burns & Darling (2002) argue that the subtler form of peer pressure is as peer influence, and it involves changing one's behaviour to meet the perceived expectations of others.

Undergraduate students are mostly adolescents who are developing new ways to see life and society. Some of them take some time to become thoughtful, reflective and self-directing but also accept the authority of others, concerned for and respectful of others, avoid courses of action that are harmful to themselves or others, and maintain higher standards of ethical conduct (Osterman 2000; Schaps, Battistich, & Solomon, 2004). There are so many social organizations on the campus from which undergraduates can freely make their choices. Becoming a member of a club is one of the exciting means by which undergraduates can meet new friends, develop their interests, increase work experience, and enhance their leadership and teamwork skills. The social organisations have their positive and negative input into the balance or imbalance of the social environment which make undergraduates able or unable to competently engage with learning. To meet the multiple needs of undergraduates, numerous social organizations exist on campus. While many obviously enrich the social, cultural and educational experiences of undergraduates, a few endanger the larger University community.

In the past some students avoided being victims of cult initiation by joining religious associations. Today, even inside those associations, cult members are strategically planted to recruit new students. The duty of the faculty members here is to deprogram the students by harmlessly replacing their outlandish and therefore unwanted role-models by their winning peers on the campus whose values are more suitably related to structured career development. Before the teachers can achieve this reversal, they must establish rapport with the students. Achieving this feat can be difficult but it is doable. For example, the teacher model good dress and manners by personal example. Teachers can dress professionally enough to command respect through that authority while they may want to avoid the impression of being pompous and unfriendly with students. To achieve these lofty ideals, teachers should balance fun with professionalism (Grubaugh & Houston, 1990).

Students' peer group gives powerful feedback by their words and actions, which may stimulate or frustrate certain behaviours and attitudes. Usually, worries arise when adolescents attempt to envisage how their peers will respond, and this apprehension plays a dominant role in peer influence. To counter this, universities can partner with parents and address the question of problematic activities of their children that may interfere with their behaviour. Whether parents and teachers like it or not, as it has already been suggested, students define themselves by the groups with which they affiliate. Values that are important to most adolescents include: school learning and achievement; social activities; and whether or not to engage in delinquent activities (Landau, 2002). Therefore, parents and teachers must provide the social support needed to withstand pressure from their peer group. Moreover, parental involvement is the degree to which a parent is committed to his or her role as a parent and to the fostering of optimal child

development (Nyarko, 2011). If parental involvement typically concerns the amount of effort put into child-oriented education versus other activities (Nyarko, & Vorgelegt, 2007), most rational parents will yield to invitation by faculty members to play the critical role of making their children learn effectively in the university. Parental involvement exerts significant influence on a child's academic growth and development (Sheldon & Epstein, 2005). If research has established that children whose parents are more involved in their education have higher levels of academic performance than those whose parents are involved to a lesser degree (Donkor, 2010; Georgiou, 2007), parents have no plausible excuse for non-involvement. It is against this backdrop that this paper urges university authority to engage parents based on the finding that supportive and encouraging parental involvement is typically associated with higher achievement levels (Simpkins, Weiss, McCartney, Kreider, & Dearing, 2006), to provide the necessary home backup for their children's stability on the campuses.

The classrooms are the teachers' instructional theatres. There they could engage their professional training to teach some good behavior and habits to the undergraduate students. The use of language can begin in the classrooms in the course of group assignment defence and beyond to the students' level advisers who should use the informality of their interactions in their offices to reinforce the deprogrammed habits. As an extension of getting to know the students more, the level advisers could invite students' parents to discuss some of their behaviors which the universities' counseling initiatives could not reverse. The faculty members could partner with parents of such undergraduates to get them back to track without any emotional side effects. Moreover, the induction of students should not be once and for all exercise. Since their cultic colleagues are always on the prowl for innocent students to be thumb screwed or forced into cultism, faculty members should make orientation part of daily guidance to new students.

The surrounding geographical area and the town in which the university is situated are as important as the residential environments. The least number of years that a new undergraduate into a university would spend in his hostel surrounding is four years. If students experience unsteady climatic or any drastic change for that matter, such intervention may make the experience of university life very traumatic. Therefore, a town or city that accommodates a university and at the same time provides facilities such as museums, shopping, sports, and concerts is more likely to be a preferred environment for many students. However, these facilities may also constitute many distractions that might affect the attainment of the student's academic aspiration if desirable balance is not struck at the point of construction. Studies have shown that academic performance can be influenced by a student's living environment (Schrager, 1986). Similarly, a study that examined the effects of residence halls provides evidence that living with peers can promote academic achievement by creating a competitive environment where good performance is rewarded by status. These living arrangements also provide the opportunity for informal peer tutoring (Terenzini, Pascarella, & Blimling, 1996). The experience at the Lagos State University does not agree with the above finding. Students who are not members of some specific cult group cannot reside in some localities around the university. Cult groups have residential strongholds. Non-members who live around their enclave do so at his or her own risk.

To avoid unnecessary victimizations, university halls of residence should be located in places where the students are relatively safe. If the planners of the universities' physical environments take cognizance of the possibility that student cultists could take advantage of the seclusion which the strategic location of universities outside the noisy community intervention, the safety of non-cultists will be considered to erect meaningful target hardening devices around

the university premises to guarantee security of life and property on the campuses. While the university should not be located in a noisy area that could undermine academic activities, it is not advisable that it is located also in a wilderness because of the rising rate of kidnapping and bombing in which terrorists are instrumental in the contemporary times. However, university authorities should therefore exercise a delicate balance between the university setting and the environment surrounding it to ensure that the entire social environments combine to make learning an exciting exercise for the students.

There is a need for security surveillance of the universities' neighbourhood in light of the ruinous implications of cultic violence each time opposing cult group takes a revenge on the other. It is not in all cases that casualties are limited to the members of both groups. Many unfortunate individuals had died from stray bullets of the warring cult groups in the neighbourhood of the Lagos State University, for example. It is in light of this that the efforts of the Lagos State University management to police all the nooks and crannies of the campus are most welcomed. The university as a single entity has linkages with its formal characteristics and it is important to understand the link between its formal characteristics and the ambiance of its surroundings. It is in this regard that the need for an understanding of the linkages because they determine the environmental influences which the universities often exert on new students becomes instructive.

To help overcome one of the constraints that characterize social class in terms of enhancing established peer groups, social media can be used as a bridge for gaps that exists in classrooms by establishing a neutral zone in which students can interact with one another (Junco et al., 2011; Krause & Coates, 2008; Kuh, 1993, 2009; Mehdinezhad, 2011; Pike et al., 2011). Tomai et al. (2010) found that students who used social media felt more emotionally connected to their peers because they felt as though they had people to talk to if they had a problem or if they needed help. Further, these peer connections encouraged participation by students who initially felt intimidated by in-class discussions (Arnold & Paulus, 2010; Junco et al., 2011; Rambe, 2008). Teachers and parents can connect to their children and students on social media as a way of keeping in touch and getting to know students.

The students are the major users of the social environment of the universities. For their chances of success to be enhanced, there is need for the reinforcement of the role which the social components play in the learners' life on the campus. At the present time, the transformation of an understanding of educational service has started. This transcends the provided educational product. It embraces the characteristics of the environment in which education is provided (Barlett, 2011; Buela-Casal, 2007; deFilippo, 2012). The social environments of every university have diverse implications which could be positive or negative. At the departmental level, the university should encourage level advisers to aggressively educate the new students and re-educate their older colleagues about the dangers that are inherent in their social environments. This is the only way by which students can access the positive and avoid its negative offerings. Therefore, the preceding life-changing outcomes will be achieved only if the social organizations to which undergraduates belong provide the safety, bonding, and empowerment. Ordinarily, universities which consciously offer a strong sense of community, make undergraduate students less likely to engage in violence or drug abuse. The students' feelings of belonging and involvement in helpful, considerate and empathic relationships with peers and faculty members make students develop wider world views about achievement orientations that drive success and excellence. When institutions of learning provide activities which establish social bonding with students and meet their basic needs, they are more willing to

follow the rules and behave in a way that is in line with the institutions corporate goals and values. Students need to engage their universities more meaningfully and productively. While some scholars believe that the time required to participate actively in student clubs and organizations can interfere with academic studies which will result in lower grades (Huang & Chang, 2004; Mehus, 1932), some others have agreed with Astin (1984) that the more college students are able to connect with their institutions, the more their learning and personal development can enhance the overall college experience.

Conclusion

On the one hand, the universities are the apex institutions of higher education; on the other, they are second homes for adolescent learners. Their diverse social environments have implications for students' present and future possibilities. Academic performance is the consequence of exposure to some measurable instructional delivery in the universities. Some critical variables do interact to determine the extent to which technical knowledge and skills could drive success outside the classrooms especially in the context of the undergraduates' interaction with available social organisations within the university system. The presence of cult organizations and members' activities constitute academic barriers to the pursuit of academic excellence on campus. Cultic organisations have become potent instruments for unleashing havoc on innocent members of the university community and even beyond. In developing societies, evidence abounds about how the sit-tight politicians use student cultists to foment political trouble.

As such, universities in such situations need to take proactive role in countering negative social activities and promoting positive social environment in order to promote academic success. Communities and governments should also allay socio-economic fears of students by providing profitable job and recreational opportunities for them upon graduation. Universities' managements should encourage partnership among the various social environments, students, parents and faculty members to provide social support that will steer students away from activities that will hamper their academic development.

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