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THE IMPACT OF CHAPLAINCY ACTIVITIES ON THE MORAL DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS IN FAITH-BASED TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

This study sought to appraise the potency of chaplaincy ministry in the practice of carrying out spiritual activities for the wholistic development of students in faith-based institutions of higher learning. Through literature review and the application of the theory of structural functionalism, the paper discovered the traits that await students who experience psychological and behavioural challenges that seem to impede their learning and moral development and the expected roles to be played by the chaplaincy in remedying such challenges. Findings reveal that on the part of the students, the major moral challenges students are facing include drug related addictions, sexual moral failures, poor academic performance, family and parental challenges which could lead to depression and behavioural disorders. Therefore, the paper recommends that all faith-based institutions of higher learning should seek to improve the services of chaplains and develop new paradigms for effective whole-person development of students in their institutions through chaplaincy ministry on campus.

Keywords: Impact, Chaplaincy, Students, Morality, Faith-based Institutions.

Introduction

In a world that is increasingly inundated with individualism, growing insecurity, suicides, and a high crime rate; more than ever before, there is an urgent need to augment government services with those of the chaplaincy. Undoubtedly, a nation's tertiary institutions are microcosms of the larger society and could undeniably, be classified as incubators for the upcoming generation (Bateye, 2010). To reiterate, it is no gainsaying that the educational sector, as epitomised by the tertiary institutions, in the Nigerian society, is confronted with myriad problems, and if caution is not taken, the tertiary institutions, are fast becoming beehives for the perpetration of immoral acts. In view of this, Chaplaincy has been specifically chosen as a means of restoring stability to the contemporary Nigerian educational landscape. William Cox defines the chaplaincy's fundamental task on campus and concept of faith and learning integration to be a deliberate and systematic process of approaching the entire educational enterprise-both curricular and co-curricular from a Christian perspective and letting it be expressed in various academic disciplines (Williams, 2014).

From Cox's point of view, one of the core duties of campus chaplaincy services is support students, as well as the staff of institutions in carrying out co- curricular activities that will assist the students in deepening their studies toward an all-round core value development.

Giles Legood notes that although originally the word chaplain referred to representatives of the Christian faith. It is now also applied to people of other religions or philosophical traditions, such as the case of chaplains serving with military forces and universities (Legood,

1999). Traditionally, a chaplain is a cleric such as a minister, priest, pastor, rabbi, imam, or a lay representative of a religious tradition, attached to a secular institution such as a hospital, prison, military unit, school, labour union, business, police department, fire department, university, or private chapel. J. Norman observed that: in recent times, many lay people have received professional training in chaplaincy and are now appointed as chaplains in schools, hospitals, companies, universities, prisons and elsewhere to work alongside, or instead of, official members of the clergy (Norman, 2014). In addition, a study on Multi Faith Spaces, by the University of Manchester, established that the concept of a multi-faith team, secular, generic or humanist chaplaincy are also gaining increasing use, particularly within healthcare and educational settings (Manchester University, 2012).

It is a truism that school chaplains are a fixture in religious and more recently, secular schools. The responsibility of chaplaincy is to counsel students who have psychological, social, spiritual and academics challenges. Research shows that in religious (faith) schools, the role of the chaplain tends to be educational and liturgical. On the other hand, in secular schools, the role of the chaplain tends to be that of a mentor and a provider of pastoral care services. Chaplains provide care for students by supporting them during times of crisis or need. Many chaplains run programs to promote the welfare of students, staff and parents, including programs to help students deal with grief, anger or depression. Chaplains, also build relationships with students by participating in extracurricular activities, such as breakfast programs, lunchtime groups and sports groups. School chaplains can also liaise with external organizations providing support services for the school (Lakes, 2013). With stagnant incomes and rising prices, putting pressure on independent school budgets, cutting the post of school chaplain can seem an easy saving. Many schools now have pupil support departments with several mentors, whose jobs are to look out for the pupils and always be there to help but they give no religious or spiritual guidance because of multiculturalism and diverse opinions on religion and beliefs. In view of the clearly undefined concept, chaplaincy has been designated to be representative of the Christian faith, or other religious traditions, functioning in the capacity of rendering spiritual advice to prison inmates, hospital patients, or conducting devotional talks to employees of companies. Brian Daly referred to Chaplains as spiritual animators (faith animators or pastoral animators) based on the French concept of *animation spirituelle* or spiritual care (Brian, 2013; Dallaire, 2018, Bearman, et al 2018). Increasingly, schools and colleges now employ full-time Chaplains, many of whom are lay people (Vatican Constitution, 1981). There remain, however, some institutions where Chaplaincy provision is undertaken by a local priest or deacon on a part-time basis, or by a lay person who visits the school regularly, but who does so in a voluntary capacity, and with others who will make up a 'Chaplaincy Team'. In some schools and colleges, the team will include young people and adults. In many places, the shared responsibilities of the lay and ordained demonstrate the best examples of collaborative ministry (Vatican II declaration 1981). Whatever arrangements are made by the school or college, it is important that there is chaplaincy provision within each institution. It is also important that there is a distinction between Chaplaincy and other areas, e.g. religious education, pastoral care and counselling, although the Chaplain may work closely with these and other groups. A Guide to the Employment of Lay Chaplains, will be helpful to institutions in the appointment of part-time and voluntary chaplains (Fowler, 1981). In the case of paid chaplains, either full-time or part-time, schools or colleges are responsible for drawing up job descriptions, arranging line-management structures and providing support through performance management and target setting. When the Chaplain is working

on a voluntary basis, it is recommended that a job description be drawn up and agreed by both the School and the Chaplain; so that areas of responsibility are clear and support and accountability are ensured. It is important that proper induction, and on-going opportunities for training and formation are provided, which should be available to all Chaplains whether ordained, religious or lay, full or part-time, employed or voluntary and should be provided or funded by the employer(James 1995). It is expected that the Diocesan Coordinator for School and College Chaplaincy be made aware of all those working as Chaplains in order that information regarding meetings, courses etc. can be passed on and support offered.

Theoretical Framework

This paper adopted structural functionalism as its theoretical framework. The adoption and usage of this theory is necessary on this work since the theory of functionalism sees the society to be a complex setting or system having every part of it working together for the promotion of stability and solidarity even security. This work being sociological in nature and appraising one of the vital arms of the society which is educational, Robert Merton and Herbert Spencer being one of the strong adherents of structural functionalism and trusted disciples of the great sociologist Emile Durkheim, an outstanding proponent of functionalism, maintain that the society is a structure that has inter-related faculties like the human body. These grafted interrelated parts are designed to work together to achieve the societal and biological necessities of the individuals existing society. In addition, this study will also embrace social disintegration theory, since both social disintegration and structural functionalism theories were developed by Emile Durkheim. Social disintegration theory suggests that the tendency of a society to socially decline or disintegrate over time is due to lapse or breakdown of traditional social support system. Durkheim categorized this disintegration into two parts that is: mechanical and organic solidarity. He argues that mechanical solidarity is a primitive integration based on likeness and intimate interaction of social units that make that society. This integration creates a force of social link aimed at discouraging individual's autonomy. On the same note, it seeks to reinforce collective conscience encompassing all aspects of societal life and activities. Organic solidarity, on the other hand, comprises of more complex and modern social lifestyle based on abstracted interdependence. Social disintegration theory will be used to investigate reasons for the increased social problems among students in selected tertiary institutions.

Structural functional theory on the other hand, suggests that a society is like an organism made of different social institutions that perform diverse functions on behalf of it. Similarly, this theory highlights that most organizations such as universities are large and have complex social units which more often than not are in diametric opposition to each other. Hence, the success of the chaplaincy program debatably depends on competency and interest of the school Vice-Chancellor and concerned personnel in guidance and counselling departments. Structural functionalism theory therefore, advocate for the concept of the order irrespective of the changes of human resource which constantly take place within an organization. This can only take place when there is a strong policy framework guiding the chaplaincy program in tertiary institutions. Equally, the theory will be used to identify courses of conflicts of interest among the various departments that ultimately affect chaplaincy services. This is particularly important as Durkheim suggests that for a society to have a continuing existence over time; all sub-units (department) must work in harmony.

Influence of Chaplaincy ministry on Students and Staff Religious/Spiritual Life

In essence, both religion and spirituality seek to bring answer and stipulate relevant ideas and practices towards achieving a wholesome development of the social, the mental and physical dimensions of humans. According to the words of Andresen, "specific religious doctrines are sometimes promoted in order to strengthen individual and institutional agendas" (Andresen, 2001). This scholarly position is true even when analysed in the context of the functions of campus life chaplaincy services. Chaplains that work in a tertiary institution provides counselling and spiritual guidance for students, they provide do not only enrich the religious or spiritual life of students and members of the staff, their spiritual services also translates into the preparation of emotional atmosphere that enhance improved educational performance of students. Education in its proper context involves spiritual, emotional and physical development that learning within the confine of the classroom cannot satisfy in all sense of absoluteness (Humphrey, et al 2018). Education is often used as an avenue to obtain a certificate in other to enable those who have it to gain employment and job promotion. Chaplaincy is a vital component that can be successfully used in re-awakening the spiritual and moral consciousness of students. Egbert (2013), a renowned campus chaplain and a professor of education and psychology opined that genuine spirituality requires more than mere teaching doctrine by inserting it into the various disciplines and asking students to 'behave in a Christian way, but to practically show them how to do it. Hughes and Sims (2019) observed that chaplaincy in schools faces a myriad of challenges that hinder them from achieving their set objectives. Chaplaincy role often revolve around liturgy teaching and pastoral care. Pickard and Mungai argued that some refer chaplaincy services to as old-time religious values when they are trying to alleviate students' problems which counteract the real intention of chaplaincy. Mungai opines that the wholistic challenges of students on an academic environment increase due to transference of parental responsibilities to surrogate parents who are understandably teachers and house helps. This complacent attitude is as a result busy culture of many parents because they are majorly preoccupied by work schedules which invariably lead to the neglect of children emotional need which result to imbalanced brought up.

When parents neglect their responsibilities of instilling values in to their children especially during their formative years, it cannot but have ripple effect in their future and this reflect on the comportment and keeping of values in the society. Surrogate parents like teachers and house helps cannot be trusted in proper upbringing of any child, because they themselves have some personal life issues they are fighting with and appears unresolved and often time make them compromise their value system.

Influence of Chaplaincy services on Students and Staff Moral Life

In their quest to elucidate the importance of sound moral integration in educational curricular, Warren Nord and Charles Haynes argue that "education is a moral enterprise". In their position, the basic task in accepted moral education is to provide students with the intellectual resources that enable them to make informed and responsible judgments about difficult matters of moral importance (Warren, 2019). In an academic environment that is destitute of moral standard, learning is always in jeopardy, making education a social snare and threatening than of the expected personal and social development. In most developed countries, like in the United Kingdom, Chaplains are required to be highly educated. Research shows that 97.5% had at least a Bachelors' degree and 26.5% a PhD.18 60.8% had undertaken

religious training (e.g. were an ordained minister). They are tested on moral level and should exhibit a high sense of morality and display professionalism as they discharge their duties as they must be of religious leadership understanding (Aune, 2019).

Influence of Chaplaincy ministry on Academic Standard and Commitment of Students

In faith based universities, the operational terms always hang on the concept of integration of faith and learning, with its coordination forming the bedrock of the function of campus life chaplaincy services in such institutions. Thus this endeavour does not seek to impose any beliefs or persuade an individual towards set of beliefs, but brings the needful to the understanding of students. In a true education, students are to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other people's opinion (White, 2001). In a related development, it is discovered that if universities and other educational institutions make chaplain a vital part of their live, they will realize that sooner than later that the spirituality of the environment will be well coordinated and most cancerous and debilitating effects of moral decadence will be substantially than later become a home away from home, a place where parents can be sure that their children are offered the right measure of morality to inoculate them against academic fraud.

Chaplaincy Services and Prevalent Social Vices in Universities

It is seen as a normal phenomenon for students in the university to make new friends and develop a sense of autonomy. However, the reality of the develop of new interpersonal, academic as well as the expectation and demands of the society and parents often time lead students to the exhibition of some kinds of dysfunctional characters. Educational psychologists have realized that transition to university in Nigeria has peculiar social challenges and behavioural consequences traceable to poor and inadequate housing facilities. These involve but the residential accommodations and lecture halls which in most cases are overcrowded, dilapidated and unconducive for learning and living thus preparing ground for diverse unethical activities. Olaore and Ola (2013) maintained that prior to gaining of admissions into universities, the youth was under the control of the parents and guardians, who must have had great influence in their decision making and monitored the activities. However, such youth finds himself or herself in a new environment, the university environment where the gates are widely open for sudden independence, coupled with barrage of campus questionable activities such drug and substance abuse, night clubs around, cults and fraternities and other things of such nature, hence the student is faced with moral challenges that could make or ruin the expectation of the student, the parents and the society.

Campus Life and Drug Abuse: Burden of Chaplaincy Services

Professional educational chaplains whose services extends its tentacles as counsellors and social workers, are faced with the challenges of curbing the practice of drugs and substances abuse among students. Drugs and substances abuse form the primary allies of prostitution. Olaore and Ola (2013) defined prostitution as one of the leading factors of abuse of drug in tertiary institutions. This is the exercise of exchanging sexual activities for money or favour. In the history, prostitutes are popularly known for substance abuse for sexual strength and require shamelessness, boldness and keeping late hours. Thus to avoid sleeping and remain agile, prostitutes are engrossed in all manner of drugs abuse, ranging from cigarette smoking to Indian hemp and those of high class are involved in the constant use of cocaine since harlots are to entertain various kind of men and sustain physical strength along the way. According

to Oyefara, sizeable numbers of adolescent girls are involved in the use of drugs in their various sex industries even on campus. Although some researchers place arguments on whether the drug use among the prostitutes so always result to criminal activities often discovers among teenage prostitutes. In his words sectional survey and in-depth interviews had been conducted… findings show that sex workers are frequently engaged in drug use and criminality but their engagement in criminal activities is not significantly influenced by the use of drugs (Oyefera, 2016). However, the influence of constant abuse of drugs and substance cannot be widely divorced from the criminal activities.

Conclusion

The importance of chaplaincy service is enormous in the development of the school communities and the nation at large and should not be neglected but rather be accepted, implemented and sustained in all educational institutions. The current wave of secularism, which advocates a state of obvious dichotomy between religion and social life, is casting a lot of influence on the factors that determine the life setting and the formulation of priority and moral level among students of tertiary institutions; hence the need for committed spiritual care in the tertiary institutions exists. There is need for the revitalization of a paradigm for instilling moral and academic wholeness has brought to a clearer view, the utmost need for the functions of campus chaplaincy services.

Recommendations

Based on the discourse above, the following recommendations were proffered:

1. Let the faith- based Universities hire more qualified as well as skilled chaplains of diverse fields in order to invest a well-defined and specialized areas of chaplaincy services in their institutions
2. Government owned higher institutions should seek to borrow a leaf from what is obtainable in some private universities in terms of whole-person care; engage the services of trained and qualified chaplains in order to curb the prevalent behavioural disorders in the tertiary instructions.
3. All faith-based institutions should seek to improve the services of chaplains and develop new paradigms for effective whole-person development of students in their institutions.
4. Chaplains in today's post traditional and postmodern societies are expected to be prepared to provide spiritual care to everyone that is associated with the institution of their employment, to students, staff and even extending to the parents and guardians in every possible method.

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