

**IMPACT OF MATERIALISM ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF
CHRISTIAN YOUTH IN KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

This study explored the impact of materialism on the academic performance of Christian youths in Kaduna State, Nigeria. The primary aim was to assess how materialistic tendencies affect the academic outcomes of Christian youths in the region. The total population comprised of Christian youths in Kaduna State made up of three Senatorial Districts are 2,636,388. Six hundred and fifty-one (651) respondents were randomly sampled to represent the total population. Descriptive survey design was used for the study and questionnaire instrument was employed to collect data. The finding revealed that, materialism among Christian youths in Kaduna State adversely affects their academic performance, leading to low life satisfaction, poor engagement, and difficulty in mastering course content and achieving academic goals. The study recommends that, the government should implement policies that promote value-based education and moral development among youths. Educational institutions should integrate character education programs into their academic frameworks to foster a culture of integrity, discipline, and academic excellence.

Key Words: Academic, Performance, Moral, Materialism, Christian Youth

Introduction

Materialism, defined as the excessive value placed on material possessions, wealth, and social status, has become a growing concern in contemporary society, particularly among young people (Adeyemi, 2021). In Nigeria, the influence of materialism is amplified by rapid urbanization, technological advancements, and the pervasive nature of social media, which often glorifies wealth and luxury. Christian youth in Kaduna State, like their peers globally, are increasingly exposed to these materialistic values, which can conflict with the Christian

virtues of humility, contentment, and self-discipline. This phenomenon raises critical questions about the potential effects of materialism on their academic performance and overall development.

Academic performance is a key indicator of educational success and is influenced by various factors, including socio-economic background, family support, motivation, and access to educational resources (Okonkwo, 2020). However, the growing allure of materialism introduces new challenges, as students may become more focused on acquiring wealth and social recognition than on their academic responsibilities. In Kaduna State, where economic challenges and social inequalities persist, Christian youth may feel pressured to pursue material wealth as a means of self-validation and social mobility, often at the expense of their education. This shift in focus can lead to decreased academic performance, absenteeism, and even higher dropout rates.

Christian teachings emphasize the importance of education as a pathway to personal growth, service to the community, and spiritual fulfillment (Eze, 2019). The Bible advocates for diligence, hard work, and the pursuit of wisdom, all of which are essential for academic success. However, the infiltration of materialistic values into the lives of Christian youth poses a significant threat to these teachings. Materialism could diminish intrinsic motivation, as students become more preoccupied with external rewards than with the pursuit of knowledge. This conflict between spiritual values and material desires can create internal struggles that negatively impact students' academic focus, mental well-being, and overall performance.

Materialism, often defined as the preoccupation with acquiring and possessing material wealth and physical comfort, has become a dominant cultural force in contemporary society (Ogunleye, 2020). Among youths, particularly Christian youths, materialism poses a significant challenge as it often contradicts the core teachings of Christianity, which emphasize contentment, humility, and spiritual growth. The increasing exposure of young people to media-driven consumer culture, social media influence, and peer pressure has intensified their desire for material possessions. This growing materialistic inclination can lead to a shift in values, where the pursuit of wealth and status becomes more important than spiritual and moral development.

Christianity, as a faith, advocates for a life of simplicity, selflessness, and devotion to God (Adebayo, 2019). Biblical teachings warn against the love of money and material wealth, highlighting the transient nature of material possessions compared to eternal spiritual rewards. For instance, Matthew 6:19-21 admonishes believers to store up treasures in heaven rather than on earth. However, many Christian youths today find themselves caught in the tension between these teachings and the allure of a materialistic lifestyle. This conflict often leads to spiritual dissonance, where young Christians struggle to balance their faith with societal pressures to attain wealth and status.

The impact of materialism on Christian youths is multifaceted, affecting their relationships, mental health, and overall well-being (Nwankwo, 2021). Materialistic values often promote self-centeredness and competition, leading to strained relationships with family, peers, and the broader Christian community. Moreover, the relentless pursuit of material wealth can result in anxiety, depression, and dissatisfaction, as young people constantly compare

themselves to others and feel pressured to meet societal standards of success. For Christian youths, this pursuit can also weaken their faith and commitment to religious practices, as they prioritize material gains over spiritual growth.

One of the most concerning impacts of materialism among Christian youths is its impact on their academic performance (Okeke, 2022). As young people become more focused on acquiring wealth and maintaining a certain lifestyle, their commitment to education often diminishes. Academic success requires discipline, hard work, and long-term focus—qualities that are frequently compromised when materialistic pursuits take precedence. Christian youths who prioritize material wealth may neglect their studies, leading to poor academic outcomes and limited future opportunities. This trend not only affects their individual prospects but also undermines the broader educational and developmental goals of their communities.

Furthermore, materialism challenges the moral and ethical foundations of Christian youth (Chukwu, 2020). The desire for quick financial success can lead young people to engage in unethical behaviors such as cheating, fraud, and other dishonest practices. These behaviors are in direct contradiction to Christian values of integrity, honesty, and righteousness. As materialistic values permeate their lives, Christian youths may find it increasingly difficult to uphold these moral standards, leading to a gradual erosion of their character and spiritual identity. This moral decline poses significant challenges for the Christian community, which relies on the youth for its future leadership and growth.

Kaduna State, with its diverse population and significant Christian community, presents a unique context for examining the impact of materialism on academic performance (Bako, 2022). Christian youth in this region face multiple influences, including economic hardships, peer pressure, and exposure to materialistic lifestyles through media. These factors can shape their attitudes towards education, potentially prioritizing short-term material gains over long-term academic achievements.

Statement of the Problem

Materialism has become an increasingly dominant value among youth globally, including in Nigeria, where rapid social and economic changes have intensified the desire for wealth and material possessions. Among Christian youth in Kaduna State, the influence of materialism poses a significant challenge to their academic pursuits. The pursuit of material wealth often competes with the principles of discipline, diligence, and intellectual growth traditionally emphasized in both Christian teachings and educational systems. As young people are constantly exposed to materialistic values through social media, peer influence, and societal expectations, there is growing concern that their academic focus and performance may be compromised, leading to poor academic outcomes and diminished educational aspirations.

Despite the well-established importance of academic achievement for personal and societal development, there is limited empirical research on how materialism affects the academic performance of Christian youth in Kaduna State. Many students are observed to prioritize financial gain, social status, and material acquisitions over their educational responsibilities, resulting in absenteeism, lack of concentration, and reduced academic performance. This trend raises questions about the extent to which materialistic attitudes hinder

academic success and how Christian values, which emphasize contentment and hard work, are being undermined by the pressures of materialism.

Objective of the Study

This study is aimed at examining the impact of materialism on the academic performance of Christian youths in Kaduna State, Nigeria.

Research Question

One research question guided the study

1. What is the impact of materialism on the academic performance of Christian youths in Kaduna State, Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis

The hypothesis as stated and tested at 0.05 level of significance

1. There is no significant difference between the opinions of male and female respondents on the impact of materialism on the academic performance of Christian Youths in Kaduna State Nigeria”.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design and the target population are Christian youths from Kaduna State made up of three Senatorial Districts. Simple random sample population of 651 respondents out of 2,636,388 was used for the study. A structured questionnaire was the instrument employed for data collection. The data analysis was based on the responses from 651 respondents out of the sampled 704 Christian youths, representing (92%) of the administered questionnaire that were successfully returned. The respondents were purposively sampled from 11 local government areas of the States. The vetted questionnaire was administered by the researcher with the help of five research assistants. The data was analyzed using Version 20 of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The mean scores for the items were based on four-point rating scale and the midpoint average for decision for items or variables was fixed at 2.50. This implies that, a mean score of 2.50 and above indicates agreement (positive response) with the suggested notion of items while mean score of below 2.50 implies disagreement (negative response). The hypothesis was tested with t-test statistics at 0.05 levels of significance.

Results

Research Question1: What is the impact of materialism on the academic performance of Christian youths in Kaduna State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Opinions of the Respondents on the Academic Impact of Materialism on Christian Youths

S/N	Item Statements	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1	Desire for material things has exposed Christian youths to low life satisfaction	180	299	93	79	2.89
2	Coping with situations that make them feel unstable academically	179	231	143	98	2.75
3	Poor school performance	240	198	151	62	2.95
4	Inability to master course contents	316	235	71	29	3.29
5	Favourable academic home environment enhances the learner's motivation	281	192	85	93	3.02
6	Poor academic engagement	319	116	102	114	2.98
7	Poor academic achievement	419	103	95	34	3.39
8	Desire for luxury at the expense of education	336	190	73	52	3.24
9	Lower academic grade	217	340	57	37	3.13
10	Inability to achieve the desire academic goal	323	194	90	44	3.22
Cumulative mean						3.08

Decision mean = 2.50

The results presented in the Table 1, indicate mean response values of 2.89, 2.75, 2.95, 3.29, 3.02, 2.98, 3.39, 3.24, 3.13, and 3.22, with an overall cumulative mean of 3.08. Since this cumulative mean exceeds the benchmark value of 2.50, it indicates that materialism significantly impacted the academic performance of Christian youths in Kaduna State.

Research Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference between the opinions of male and female respondents on the impact of materialism on the academic performance of Christian youths in Kaduna state, Nigeria”.

Table 2: Independent Sample t-test on the impact of Materialism on the Academic Performance of Christian Youths

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	t-Value	DF	P-Value
Male	313	3.1054	1.0493	0.05931	1.28	649	0.076
Female	338	2.997	1.09625	0.05963			

Calculated $p > 0.05$, calculated $t < 1.96$, at df 649

Table 2 indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between the opinions of male and female respondents regarding the impact of materialism on the academic performance of Christian youths in Kaduna State. This conclusion is based on the calculated p-value of 0.706, which exceeds the 0.05 level of significance, and the t-calculated value of 1.28, which is below the critical t-value of 1.96 at a degrees of freedom (df) of 649. Consequently, the null hypothesis is retained.

Finding

Materialism among Christian youths in Kaduna State adversely affects their academic performance, leading to low life satisfaction, poor engagement, and difficulty in mastering course content and achieving academic goals.

Discussion of Findings

Impact of materialism on the academic performance of Christian youths in Kaduna state, Nigeria

The main objective of this study was to examine the impact of materialism on the academic performance of Christian youths in Kaduna State, Nigeria. From the analysis of the data obtained, the findings of the study indicate that materialism among Christian youths in Kaduna State has a detrimental impact on their academic performance. Materialism, which involves placing a high value on material possessions and financial success, often distracts students from their academic responsibilities. When students prioritize acquiring wealth or the latest trends over their studies, their academic focus diminishes, resulting in lower grades and reduced academic achievement. This observation aligns with Adebayo (2019), who asserts that materialistic tendencies can shift students' priorities away from educational attainment, thereby undermining their academic performance and overall growth.

Furthermore, the study highlights that materialism contributes to low life satisfaction among Christian youths, further affecting their academic engagement. Constantly seeking material wealth often leads to dissatisfaction, as students may feel unfulfilled despite their efforts to acquire more possessions. This dissatisfaction can result in emotional stress and a lack of motivation, both of which are critical for academic success. Adebayo (2019) similarly notes that materialistic individuals often experience lower life satisfaction because their sense of self-worth is tied to external possessions rather than internal growth, which in turn hampers their academic engagement and persistence.

In addition, the study found that materialistic values hinder students' ability to master course content and achieve their academic goals. The time and energy devoted to pursuing material wealth often come at the expense of academic preparation and intellectual development. Christian youths influenced by materialism may struggle to concentrate on their studies, leading to poor comprehension and retention of course materials. Adebayo (2019) supports this view, arguing that materialism can diminish essential academic virtues such as discipline, diligence, and critical thinking, all of which are necessary for academic excellence. Therefore, the study emphasizes the need for Christian communities and educational institutions in Kaduna State to promote values that prioritize academic commitment and personal growth over materialistic pursuits.

The findings from the hypothesis result in Table 2, revealed a significant difference between the opinions of male and female respondents regarding the impact of materialism on the academic performance of Christian youths in Kaduna State, Nigeria. This shows that male and female respondents perceive the influence of materialism on academic performance differently, possibly due to varying social experiences, expectations, and pressures related to material wealth within their respective gender groups. However, this finding contradicts the assertion of Ogunleye (2020), who argues that materialism affects all members of society

equally, regardless of location, gender, religion, or social status. Ogunleye's perspective emphasizes the pervasive nature of materialism as a societal challenge that transcends demographic boundaries, while the present study indicates that gender differences may play a role in how materialism impacts academic performance, particularly among Christian youths in Kaduna State.

Conclusion

Based on the finding of the study, it can be deduced that materialism among Christian youths in Kaduna State has a negative impact on their academic performance. The excessive pursuit of material possessions and wealth often distracts students from their academic responsibilities, resulting in poor academic outcomes. This constant desire for material gain reduces students' commitment to their studies, leading to lower grades, incomplete tasks, and diminished intellectual development. Furthermore, the focus on materialism undermines essential academic values such as discipline, perseverance, and critical thinking, which are crucial for academic success.

Similarly, materialism contributes to low life satisfaction and poor engagement among Christian youths, further hindering their academic performance. The continuous pursuit of material wealth often leads to feelings of dissatisfaction and stress, which negatively affect students' mental well-being and motivation to excel academically. As a result, many students struggle to engage fully in their studies and face difficulties in mastering course content and achieving their academic goals.

Recommendations

Based on the finding and conclusion of the study, it has been recommended that:

- i. The government should implement policies that promote value-based education and moral development among youths.
- ii. Educational institutions should integrate character education programs into their academic frameworks to foster a culture of integrity, discipline, and academic excellence.

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