

STUDENT UNREST IN NIGERIAN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS: AGE AND SEX AS DETERMINANTS

BY

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Abstract

This study investigated two psychogenetic factors-sex and age -as causes of student unrest in Nigerian Tertiary Institution. The instrument used was the student Unrest Questionnaires (S.U.Q) which was distributed to five hundred subjects from three of the Kwara State owned tertiary institutions.

The data collected was analysed using X^2 statistic. The result showed that male and female, old and young students in Nigerian tertiary institutions share similar opinions about student unrest. Some recommendations which could help both school administrators and the government in reducing student unrest in Nigerian tertiary institutions were made.

Introduction

Tertiary institutions are established within the society to play certain roles which differ from institution to institution, and in some cases, from society to society. They are also formal organizations that are established to achieve specific objectives. They therefore have sorts of formal structures within which individuals (staff and students) with varying degrees of responsibilities-in the organization must work collectively to achieve the organization's objectives. In the process of combining efforts, the individuals must interact (Ogunsaju, 1993). During interaction and transaction among individuals, there could be conflict - between the students and the head (for example vice chancellor of a University, provost of a college of Education, Rector of a polytechnic, e .t. c.) or school authority, or between the students and the government. This conflict is what is mostly referred to as "Student Unrest".

The students' union of the various tertiary institutions in the country stand as an avenue through which students' opinions are presented to the various authorities. The formation of West African Student Union (WASU) in 1925 under the leadership of Chief Ladipo Solanke started the beginning of students' unionism in Nigeria (Kofoworola, 1986). This historic students' union could be said to be a partner in the establishment of the premier University College, Ibadan in 1948 as it demanded for a University in West Africa The Fourah Bay College which was founded in Sierra-Leone in 1827 by the Church Missionary Society (CM. S) Played notable roles in the history of higher education by opening the way to higher education for students from all the former British Colonies which included Nigeria (Fafunwa, 1974).

The Ashby Commission which was specifically requested "to conduct an investigation into Nigeria's need in the field of post School Certificate and Higher Education *over* the next twenty years" (from 1960 to 1980) led to the proposal of two new Universities at Lagos and Zaria, in addition to the existing ones at Ibadan and Nsukka (Adesina, 1977).

In order to provide the needed technical man power, and to prepare students for University admissions, various tertiary institutions were established by both State and Federal Governments in Kwara State, for instance, the establishment of the first state-owned tertiary institution - the Kwara State college of Technology (now Kwara state Polytechnic was first conceived by the state government during the first development plan between 1970 and 1974 As an

offshoot of this tertiary institution. Kwara State College of Education, the second State-owned tertiary institution was established in Ilorin in September, 1974. It was christened "school of Education" and administered by the Kwara State College of Technology, Ilorin. By 1976, the College was completely detached from its parent body. And in 1978, the name was changed to Kwara State College of Education, Oro. A separate Kwara State College of Education was however established at Oro in 1981. Presently, there is no single state in Nigeria without a tertiary institution.

Student Unrest in Nigerian tertiary institutions is getting so common that writers and researchers are now beginning to think seriously on it especially when considering the effects it has on the quality of education the students of these institutions receive. The alleged falling standard of education could be due to student unrest in our tertiary institutions as it gives no room for adequate coverage of the course outline (Abdulkareem, 1992).

The nature of the students, as the youths who do not share the firm conviction in the traditional unquestionable obedience of youths to adults' bidding (Fagbounbe, 1983) could be a contributory factor to student unrest. Other factors may include lack of freedom and consultation between the students and those in position of authority, and non-utilization of adequate administrative styles by the institution's heads.

The purpose of this study is to find out the causes of student unrest in Nigerian tertiary institutions. The study is therefore intended to provide necessary information on the causes of student unrest in Nigeria, basing our analysis on the information collected from the students of selected Nigerian tertiary institutions.

There are about one hundred and nineteen (119) tertiary institutions in Nigeria today. However, this study only concentrates on three of the Kwara State-owned tertiary institutions:

1. Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin
2. Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin, and
3. Kwara State College of Education, Oro

The study only involved the regular students in each of the three chosen tertiary institutions of learning in Kwara State. The study did not involve the student undergoing sandwich programmes and part-time courses as the regular students are found to be more involved in student Unrest than the other groups of students.

What Is Student Unrest?

The term "Student unrest" has been perceived in a number of ways. Odetara (1991) views it from two perspectives. The first is between the students and the school authority, while the second is between the students and the government.

Oloko (1986) also perceives student unrest as a situation in which students in higher institutions resort to the use of threat or violence against people or property in an attempt to resolve issues or conflicts. He opines that the causes of student unrest may be related to students themselves, lecturers, school administrators, on one hand and public authorities on the other hand.

Ajibade (1993) categorises the causes of student unrest into internal and external factors. He says internal factors are those arising from the institutions' internal administrative policies like students'

welfare - feeding problem, accommodation problem, inter-campus transportation problem, rising in tuition and other fees, shortage of basic facilities (water, light etc.) lack of involvement on matters that affect them and a host of others. Internal problems therefore, are those that emanate from issues that are exclusive to happenings on the campuses.

External factors that are causing student unrest in tertiary institutions are those that arise from outside the institutions' internal administrative policies, i.e. problems, relating to accommodation and national and international politics. On national and international issues, Bereday (1983) says that student in tertiary institutions often protest to correct internal government abuses or what he calls "domestic cleavages". He says that in some occasions, students have even toppled the government they opposed. According to him, this was the case in these two countries in 1960: the overthrow of Manderes in Turkey and the removal from power of Sigman Rhee in Korea.

Fagbounbe (1983) explains that in 1961, a few months after political independence was achieved in Nigeria, the students of the then University College, Ibadan, protested against the Anglo-Nigerian Defence pact with Great Britain. The pact was viewed by the students of the University College as a veiled form of perpetuation of British rule in Nigeria.

On international issues, Ajibade (1983) maintains that: Students have complained about the spending spree surrounding the hosting of ECOWAS summit conferences, in Abuja in 1991. Students had at one time or the other quarried the "big brother" role Nigeria play to other African Countries. Nigerian students have consistently waged war against the government of South African and its apartheid policies (up .39-40).

The police or security agent is one other external factor causing student unrest in Nigeria. This is because; students are always easily provoked at the sight of police on or around the campus. Newswatch of June 5, 1989 reported that after the closure of the Lagos State College of Education (LACOED). Ijanikin, the police were sent to calm the campus of Lag06 State University (LASU), Ojo, with the fear that the students of LASU may stage a sympathy demonstration in protest against the closure of LACOED. It was reported that the students demonstrated against the presence of police on their "calm campus". LASU's information officer, Rosemod N. Oyeyinka was quoted as having said: "the police had ignited the demonstration as they had no problem with the University (p. 19).

Oki (1990), while discussing the part played by security agents in causing indiscipline in schools, says: "It has been found that the interference of the agents at any sight of tension in the institutions has often degenerated into conflicts. The general mistrust between the students and the police usually aggravates already tensed situation and so is the general dislike on both sides" (p. 148).

Sample and Sampling Procedures

Three tertiary institutions in Kwara State were purposively chosen and used as the sample for this study. They are the Kwara

State polytechnic, Ilorin, Kwara State college of Education, Ilorin and Kwara State College of Education, Oro.

The sampling procedure followed this order: Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin was chosen as the only state-owned Polytechnic. Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin was chosen to represent the teacher training (N.C.E. awarding) tertiary institution in the State capital and College of Education, Oro, was chosen to represent the teacher training (N.C.E awarding) tertiary institution outside the state capital.

Five hundred (500) subjects were selected from all the sampled schools. Two hundred subjects (one hundred Males and One hundred females) were selected from Kwara State Polytechnic. One hundred and fifty subjects (with seventy -Five males and Seventy-five females) were selected from Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin while one hundred and fifty subjects (with seventy -five males and Seventy -five females) were selected from Kwara State College of Education, Oro.

Instrumentation.

The instrument used in collecting data for this study was the student Unrest Questionnaire (S.U.Q). It consisted of four (4) sections (A to D). Section "A" contained personal information on the respondents, it included respondents' sex and age - range Section "B" was on the causes of student unrest, Section "C" was on effects of student unrest, and section "D" was meant to collect information on the possible solutions to the problems of student unrest

Hypotheses

The following Null hypotheses were tested using the chi-square statistics. The two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

HO1: Sex does not significantly influence student perception on causes of student unrest in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions.

H02: there is no significant difference between the perception of students in Nigerian Tertiary Institution on the causes of student unrest based on age.

Data analysis and Results

The analysis of data and results are in tabular form. Demographic Data: Distribution of respondent by institutions, sex and age-range.

Table 1: Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin

Variables	Respondent	Percentage
Male	100	50%
Female	100	50%
Total	200	100%
Ages 16-35 Years	170	85%
35 Years & Above	30	15%
Total	200	100%

Table 2: Kwara State College Of Education, Ilorin

Variables	Respondent	Percentage
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Male	75	50%
Female	75	50%
Total	150	100%
Ages 16-35Years	147	98%
35 Years & Above	3	2%
Total	150	100%

Table 3: Kwara State College Of Education, Oro

Variables	Respondent	Percentage
Male	75	50%
Female	75	50%
Total	150	100%
Ages 16-35Years	120	80%
35 Years & Above	30	20%
Total	150	100%

Table 4: Contingency table of respondents by sex on causes of student unrest in Nigeria Tertiary Institutions with observed and expected frequencies and calculated chi-square value.

Male		Female		d. F	Calculated X ² value	Critical X ² value
O	E	O	E	2	5.898	5.99147
5	2.838	1	3.162			
93	98.863	116	110.137			
16	12.298	10	13.701			

The first hypothesis compared the opinion of respondents on the basis of sex In table iv above, the observed and expected frequencies of both male and Female respondents, as well as calculated chi-square value and critical value were presented.

It can be seen from the table that the calculated chi-square value is 5.898, and critical chi-square value is 5.99147.

The calculated chi-square value is lower than the critical chi-square value therefore the hypothesis which stated that sex does not significantly influence student perception on the causes of student unrest in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions was accepted

Table 5: Contingency table of respondent by age on causes of student unrest in Nigerian Tertiary institutions with observed and expected frequencies and calculated chi-square value and critical chi-square value

16-35 years	36yrs%Above	d. F	Calculated X ² value	Critical X ² value
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O	E	O	E	2	1.280	5.99147
4	4.372	1	0.628			
184	185	28	26.607			
28	26.235	2	3.765			

The second hypothesis is designed to test for significant difference in the opinion of respondents concerning causes of student unrest on the basis of their age-range.

In table v above, the observed and expected frequencies of respondent between ages 16 and 35 years and those of 36 years and above were presented alongside the calculated chi-square and critical values. The table shows that the calculated chi-square value is 1.289 this value is lower than the critical chi-square value of 5.99147

Hence, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the perceptions of student in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions on the causes of student unrest based on age was accepted.

Conclusion

The results of this study have shown that male and female students in Nigerian tertiary institutions were not significantly different in their opinion or perception of causes of student unrest in Nigerian tertiary institutions. This shows that both males and Females shared the same opinion concerning the causes of student unrest in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

The study has also revealed that students in Nigerian tertiary institutions who were between ages 16 and 35 years as at the time of this study, and who could be regarded as younger group of students, have the same opinion on the causes of student unrest, with students who were 36 years and above. This is to say that, there is no significant difference between the perception of older (36 year and above) students and younger (16 - 35 years) students on causes of student unrest in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

The Nigerian students, both males and females, old and young have agreed that such factors as inadequate academic facilities like ill-equipped libraries and laboratories, students' youthful exuberance, lack of adequate communication between the students and school authorities, delay in meeting student' demands by the school authority, and students' reaction to government policies, cause student unrest in Nigerian tertiary institutions. They have also agreed that student unrest leads to such unhealthy consequences as incessant closure of Tertiary Institutions, destruction of valuable school properties, and even death of students and/or innocent citizens.

Recommendations

In order to reduce, or if possible, stop the frequent occurrence of student unrest in Nigerian tertiary institutions, the following recommendations should be adopted for actions.

One, a forum should be created where student union officers could meet regularly with the school authorities and the Government to discuss issues affecting students' well-being This forum will go a long way in bridging the communication vacuum between the three bodies. This

recommendation is in line with the suggestion by Odetara (1991) that, in order and to bridge the communication gap between the student body and the school authorities, there is need for improved student - staff and student - Government relationships

Two, the (welfare) conditions of students should be improved. Towards this end the State and Federal Government should endeavour to provide more funds to tertiary institutions. Ikoku (1990) has the same idea when he suggested that one way to deal with student unrest is for the Government to improve on the funding of tertiary institutions in order for them to be able to operate normally.

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