

Tertiary Education for Peace and Unity in Selected Nigerian
Universities

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Abstract

This study investigated management of tertiary education for *peace* and unity in Nigeria. The research design adopted for the study is the descriptive survey. Fifty lecturers and 100 students were randomly selected from Al-Hikmah University and Ekiti State University as respondents in the study through purposive sampling technique. An instrument titled “Management of Tertiary Education for Peace and Unity Questionnaire (MTEPUQ) was used to elicit relevant information from respondents. The instrument was validated by two experts in Educational Management and Educational Measurement and Evaluation, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin. Test, re-test method was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument 'r'-0.73. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentage and mean rating were used to answer the research questions, while t-test statistical tool was used to test the hypotheses at $p < 0.05$ level of significance. The results indicated that economic factor was the major function of universities with 85 (57%) points. Tertiary education in Nigeria moderately contributed to peace and unity with mean of 2.67 and 2.56 respectively. There was no significance difference in lecturers and students perception about management of tertiary education for peace (cal. t-value (1.15) < critical t-value (1.96)) and unify (cal. t-value (1.34) < crit. t-value (1.96)) in Nigerian universities. The study recommended that the role of tertiary institution should include ensuring unification of Nigerian regions and promoting a bond of kinship among Nigerian diverse ethnic groups.

Key words: Management, Tertiary Education, Peace, Unity, Nigeria

Introduction

It is a truism to assert that education is the most potent tool for peace and unity in a nation. It is through effective teaching and learning that education is made possible. Education helps in the development of individuals in terms of cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. The three levels of education in a nation's educational system are primary, secondary and tertiary. The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (1980) refers to tertiary education as the level of education that belongs to the third order or degree or ranking in the third place of the educational system. In Nigeria, however, section eight of the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) refers to tertiary education as the education given after secondary education in universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, monotechnics, including institutions offering correspondence courses.

The background of tertiary education in Nigeria started with the efforts of Missionaries who started elementary education in Nigeria in order to spread the gospel. The establishment of Fourah Bay College in 1827 in Free town after the abolition of slave trade in 1787 gave a Nigerian Freed slave-Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther an opportunity to receive tertiary education. The setting up of Eliot Commission in 1943 by the colonial government in Nigeria and the sending of delegate to West Africa by the secretary of state in 1946 to observe and make situational reports and recommendation on the establishment of one or more university colleges in West Africa led to the establishment of the University College, Ibadan in 1948. A development on tertiary education was made in 1959 when the Ashby commission was appointed to carry out an investigation on Nigeria's needs in the field of post-secondary school Certificate and Higher Education from 1960-1980. The commission proposed among others that University College, Ibadan be upgraded to a full University status and all the Universities in the country should be national in nature under the control of National Universities Commission (NUC). This made the University College, Ibadan to become a full University in 1962, in addition to University of Nigeria Nsukka which was established in 1960.

Management is the organization and mobilization of all human and material resources in a particular system for the achievement of identified objectives in that system. If critically examined, the human resources in the school system would compose of staff (teaching and non-teaching) and students, the material resources within the school system could be classified as "monetary" and "non-monetary" such as assets like

land, furniture and fittings, equipment and buildings. It is the responsibility of the management to ensure maximum utilization of the available resources (human and material), for the achievement of the goals of the institution of establishment (Ogunsaju, 2000). The functional level of Nigeria universities include conservative, innovative, political and economic. Efficiency and effectiveness of these indices will go a long way in achieving university goals.

According to Maiwada (2001), peace education is socialization aimed at inculcating virtues of tolerance, cooperation, patience, good interpersonal and other values of integrity, honesty, hard work, humanness and the brotherhood of mankind. Peace education also includes conflict resolution. Peace and justice can be achieved by creating opportunities for interaction among people of different culture, race, language and social interaction. Peace, though an abstract spatial fruit, is a social force which its absence in an individual can devastate not only the individual, but also entire society (Abdullahi, 2006). Unity refers to the state of being one; harmony of opinion, interest or feeling. By implication, it is only when there is peace and unity that stability can emerge in an institution. Appreciation of individuals' different cultural values through the general courses being offered by students in all Nigerian tertiary institutions is a step towards promoting national unity through advancement of learning and transmission of different cultural values in the country (Taiwo, 2006). The concept of unity states that unity, not conflict, is the central governing law of life and that once unity is established, conflicts are often prevented or easily resolved. Danesh & Danesh (2002) defined unity as a conscious and purposeful condition of convergence of two or more unique entities in a state of harmony, integration, and cooperation to create a new evolving entity(s), usually, of a same or a higher level of integration and complexity. The animating force of unity is love, which is expressed variably in different conditions of coexistence.

Graduates of senior secondary schools struggle to gain admission into tertiary institutions. This indicates that, perhaps, people have realized the significance of higher education as a means for social mobility, self-development and self-actualization (Akinnubi, 2010). There is no gain saying the fact that there seems to be a general perception in Nigeria that only higher degree can promise a good future. It is on this note that the Federal Republic of Nigeria National Policy on Education spells out the goals of tertiary education as:

- (a) To contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training;
- (b) To develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society;

- (c) To develop the intellectual capacity of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments;
- (d) To acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of society;
- (e) To promote and encourage scholarship and community services;
- (f) To forge and cement national unity; and
- (g) To promote national and international understanding and interaction (FRN, 2004:30)

Peaceful coexistence between people bring about unity, and this can only be achieved when people agree to organize themselves into one solid community. Abdullahi (2006) maintains that peaceful coexistence is necessary for the preservation of the centrality and integrity of the society's common interest. Peace is not just a state of the human mind which is personal, but also that which could be interpersonal, inter communal, inter regional, international and therefore global. By this assertion, it is obvious that a state of peace in tertiary institution would greatly enhance attainment of vision and mission statement. Hence, this study investigated management of tertiary institution for peace and unity in Nigeria.

The Problem

Tertiary institution in Nigeria is a conglomeration of people from different clans, races and background in which its ineffective management results into a state of conflict. A total absence of conflict would be unbelievable, boring and a strong indication that conflict is being suppressed. The occurrence of killing and fighting on campuses of Nigerian tertiary institutions are major concerns to stakeholders in education, as these menace often militate against achieving the goals of tertiary education.

Student unrest is a factor that is bedeviling effective teaching and learning which often results into closure of campus for a given period of time. There are cases of confrontations between students and university staff on campus in which security personnel often come to aid so that peace and tranquility can return to campus. This study therefore, examined the management of tertiary education for peace and unity in some Nigerian universities.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- 1 . What is the functional level of tertiary education as practiced in some Nigerian universities?

2. To what extent has management of tertiary education brought peaceful coexistence in some Nigerian universities?
3. To what extent has management of tertiary education brought unity in some Nigerian universities?

Hypotheses

The study was guided by the following research hypotheses:

Hop There is no significant difference in lecturers and students perception about the management of tertiary education for peace in Nigerian universities. Ho₂: There is no significant difference in lecturers and students perception about the management of tertiary education for unity in Nigerian universities.

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was used in this study. Also, 50 lecturers and 100 students were selected were selected from Al-Hikmah University and Ekiti State University as respondents in the study through purposive random sampling technique. An instrument titled "Management of Tertiary Education for Peace and Unity Questionnaire (MTEPUQ) was used to elicit relevant information from the lecturers and students. MTEPUQ contains two sections-A and B. Section A sought information on the demographic data of the respondents in the areas of name of institution, status and sex while Section B contains 20 items on management of peace and unity in some Nigerian universities. Modified 4-point Likert-type scale of Strongly Agree (SA) -4points, Agree (A)-3 points, Disagree (D)-2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD)-1 point was used in data coding. The instrument was validated by two experts in the area of Educational Management and Educational Measurement and Evaluation, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin. Test re-test method was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument through a pilot study conducted and this yielded a coefficient value of 0.78. The researchers personally administered the instruments on the respondents in the sampled universities. Descriptive statistics such as frequency count, percentage and mean rating were used to answer the research questions raised in the study while t-test statistical method was used to test the research hypothesis formulated in the study at $p < 0.05$ level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1

What Is the functional level of tertiary education as practiced in some Nigerian universities?

Table1: Functional level of tertiary education

S/N	Items	Frequency	%
1.	Conservative	9	6
2.	Innovative	44	29
3.	Political	12	8
4.	Economic	85	57
	Total	150	100

As shown in Table 1, economic function has the highest frequency with 85 (57%) points, while conservative has the least frequency with 9 (6%) points. Innovative and political functions are not too popular among the respondents with 44 (29%) and 12 (8%) points respectively.

Research Question 2

To what extent has management of tertiary education brought peaceful coexistence in some Nigerian universities?

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1	Management of tertiary education brings peaceful coexistence among students on campus	34	95	12	9	3.03
2.	It helps to inculcate the spirit of having no quarrel.	54	83	7	6	3.23
3.	It helps to eliminate abuse of wealth and power.	45	82	18	5	3.11
4.	Courses offered at tertiary education helps to promote peace.	23	71	43	13	2.69
5.	The vice-chancellor/provost ensures that lecturers do not miss lectures.	34	89	5	22	2.90
6	Activities of the students are monitored by the security personnel on campus.	43	98	6	3	3.21

7	There is no occurrence of violence on campus.	3	23	81	43	1.91
8	Orientations are often organized for students to prevent unrest on campus.	23	34	76	17	2.42
9	Tertiary education helps to reduce political violence in Nigeria.	34	95	12	9	3.03
10	Managers of tertiary institutions often meet with the students and lecturers to strategize ways of ensuring peace on their campuses.	54	83	7	6	3.23
	Overall Mean					2.67

Mean: > 3.00 = High, Mean: 2.50 - 2.99 = Moderate, Mean: 0.00-2.49 = Low

From Table 2, management of tertiary education for peace in Nigeria was moderate with a mean 2.67. This implies that tertiary education in Nigeria moderately contributed to peaceful coexistence.

Research Question 3

To what extent has management of tertiary education brought unity in some Nigerian universities?

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1	Management of tertiary education forges and cements national unity.	13	34	76	27	2.22
2.	It promotes national understanding and interaction.	5	23	68	54	1.86
3.	It promotes international understanding and interaction.	45	39	44	22	2.71
4.	It helps in formation of Alumni association.	51	76	12	11	3.11
5.	It helps in achieving institution's mission and vision.	24	76	45	5	2.79
6	It helps in developing team spirit among students.	34	99	5	12	3.03
7	It helps in developing team spirit among lecturers	15	23	67	45	2.05
8	Students of different ethnic backgrounds are united under a single association	38	50	54	8	2.79

9	Lecturers of different ethnic backgrounds are united under a single association	15	81	44	10	2.67
10	Courses offered at tertiary education helps to promote unity.	18	32	88	12	2.37
	Overall Mean					2.56

Mean: > 3.00 = High, Mean: 2.50 - 2.99 = Moderate, Mean: 0.00-2.49 = Low

Based on the result in Table 3, management of tertiary education for unity in Nigeria was moderate with an overall mean of 2.56.

Hypotheses 1

Ho,: There is no significant difference in lecturers and students perception about the management of tertiary education for peace in Nigerian universities.

Respondents	N	Mean	df	Calculated t- value	Critical t- value	Decision
Lecturers	50	3.16	2.11			Ho:
			148	1.15	1.96	Accepted
Students	100	2.72	1.99			

As shown in Table 4, the calculated t-value (1.15) is less than the critical t-value (1.96) at 0.05 and for 148 degrees of freedom. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. It can be inferred that there was no significant difference in lecturers and students perception about the management of tertiary education for peace in Nigerian universities.

Hypothesis 2

Ho2: There is no significant difference in lecturers and students perception about the management of tertiary education for unity in Nigerian universities.

Table 5: Management of tertiary education for peace in Nigeria

Respondents	N	Mean	df	Calculated t- value	Critical t- value	Decision
Lecturers	50	2.62	1.29			Ho:

148 1.34 1.96 Accepted

Students	100	1.02	0.991
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Table 4 indicates that the calculated t-value (1.34) is less than the critical t-value (1.96) at 0.05 level of significance and for 148 degrees of freedom. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. This implies that there was no significant difference in lecturers and students perception about the management of tertiary education for unity in Nigerian universities.

Discussion of Findings

In this modern age of science and technology, education is the major economic development of the developed and developing world. This view is supported by the report of the commission on the Review of higher education in Nigeria (1991:57) when it recommended that the focus of our education at this point in our development is to orientate Nigerians to a production rather than a consumption culture by effectively programming our educational system with a bias towards science and technology. Tertiary education is referred to as innovative because it is an instrument for technological, economic, political and personality changes. The education system is, therefore expected to be a preserver of old method of doing things and the major source of new knowledge, skills and ideas, particularly in this age of science and technology (Mohammed, 2006).

Effective management of tertiary education in Nigeria is meant to reduce conflict which would make university administration be focus thereby achieving their institutional goals. Appreciation of individual's different cultural values through the general courses being offered by students in all Nigerian tertiary institutions is a step towards promoting national unity through advancement of learning and transmission of different cultural values in the country. This is especially appreciated when one realises the fact that education itself has been sociologically defined as cultural transmission and renewal (Adeyinka, 2000).

Unity is a process of working together cooperatively, physically and mentally to achieve specific objective. In tertiary institution for instance, the school manager should involve their subordinate in decision making process, in order to enjoy their cooperation. Staff often cooperates with leaders to ensure the effective implementation of educational goals if their consent is sought. Contrived inter-ethnic tensions are deliberate tactic of all bankrupt ruling classes to prevent the popular unity that could put an end to mass deprivation. Ethnicity is understandable in terms of elite conflict of group interest the allocation of centralized material resources and it will continue as long as extreme inequalities persist.

Effective management of tertiary education in Nigeria will go a long way in ensuring that peace is maintained which will invariably foster peace in the country. Unity depicts a state of harmony, integration, and cooperation to create a new evolving entity, usually, of a same or a higher level of integration and complexity (Danesh & Danesh, 2002). There is no gain saying the fact that level of unity in tertiary education has great impact on the entire nation since graduates from tertiary education are actively involved in the societal affairs.

Conclusion

Nigerian tertiary institutions are the third level of Nigerian educational system, the first two being primary and secondary education levels. This level of education is playing vital role in maintaining unity among various ethnic groups in Nigeria through exposure to appreciate individual's different cultural values, production of united elite who come together to associations and clubs, attendance at national conferences and workshops and formation of National Youth Service Corps (NYSC).

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- i. To play the role of maintaining peace and unity, the goals of Nigerian tertiary institutions should be expanded.
- ii. In addition to its traditional role of teaching, conducting research and publications and participating in community development, the role of tertiary institution should include ensuring unification of Nigerian regions and promoting a bond of kinship among Nigerian diverse ethnic groups. This is in line with the recommendations made during the IV26 UNESCO conference on the Development of Higher education in Africa.
- iii. The rigidly followed admission and recruitment policies of some tertiary institutions, especially the state-owned tertiary institutions, should be reviewed to give room for more consideration of non-indigenes of their states. This will go a long way in unifying Nigerians from various States.
- iv. The scope of the existing general courses should be increased to include courses that will show appreciation and respect for various ethnic groups. This would make the students and staff to understand and respect the cultural values of other regions apart from their own.
- v. The federal government should subsidise fees paid in private universities in order to increase access to such institutions. This

will encourage youths of various ethnic backgrounds to meet at federal higher institutions where they unit on the same purpose.

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