Perceived Causes and Control of Students' Crises in Higher Institutions in Lagos State, Nigeria.

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Abstract

The study investigated perceived causes and control of students' crises in higher institutions in Lagos State, Nigeria. The population comprised all students, staff, students' union executive members and heads of the six sampled higher institutions. Four structured questionnaires were used to collect data from 954 samples used for the study. A test-retest method with a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.84 was used to determine the reliability of the instruments. Data collected were analyzed using percentages, frequency counts, correlations analysis and t-test through the SPSS package. The findings revealed the following: state- owned higher institutions were more prone to students' crises than federal institutions; increase in tuition fees and inadequate attention to students' welfare were major causes   of student crises whiles stable and moderate tuition fees was perceived as a good control measure to curb students' crises. It was recommended that more funds be allocated to higher institutions and students should be involved in decision-making particularly on issues affecting their welfare.

Keywords: Causes, control, students, crisis, higher institutions.

1. Introduction

Education provides the platform for the acquisition of knowledge, skills, habits and values for productive living in the society. As a result of this, education equips individuals with the personal capabilities for survival in and contribution to the societal development. Globally, socio-economic and political developments are increasingly been driven by the advancement and application of knowledge (education). This explains why education in general and higher education in particular is germane to the growth and development of knowledge and economy (World Bank, 1999). To this end, higher institutions of learning are established to give students sound and qualitative education so that they can become more productive, self-fulfilling and attain self-actualization.   This is why the National Policy on Education (2004) highlights the aims of higher education as:

(a) the acquisition, development and inculcation of the proper value – orientation for the survival of the individual and society;
(b) the development of the intellectual capacities of individuals to understand and appreciate their environments;
(c) the acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to develop into careful members of the community; and
(d) the acquisition of an objective view of the local and external environment.

Higher institutions in Nigeria are expected to achieve the above aims through teaching, research, disemination of existing and new information and the pursuit of service to the community and by being a store house of knowledge.   However, studies (Akinade, 1993; Aluede and Aluede, 1999; Aluede, 2000; Ehiametalor, 1979) have shown that many higher institutions in Nigeria are finding it increasingly difficult to achieve the highlighted aims because of many crises that have rocked the institutions. Such unrests, in recent times, have come to be recognised as one of the most visible perennial problems of significance when compared with other social vices like cultism, examination malpractices, drug abuse and so on leading to indefinite closure of schools and other attendant problems (Aluede, Jimoh, Agwinede and Omoregie, 2005).

Crisis according to Fajana (1990) is the art of violence resulting from dissatisfaction or situation of disagreement between two parties.   Adeyemi, Ekundayo and Alonge (2010) also describe crisis as a situation of tension or people intending to revolt against social ills or irregularities in an organization.   Student crises can therefore be seen as the revolts and rampages by students to show their grievances or press their demands to their school authorities.

Also other studies (Falua 2004; Ojedele and Ilusanya 2006, Akinyemi 2002 among others) have shown that student crisis has been an unstable situation of misbehaviour, boycott of classes, disturbance, wanton destruction and the extreme danger that could be perpetrated by students over the years.   It has led to breakdown of law and order, disturbance of public peace, loss of lives and property. However, as future leaders, students fail to realize that no meaningful development can take place in a crisis-ridden system caused by militancy and rampage.

The origin of students' crisis in Nigeria dates back to 1944 when students protested against the British authorities' intension to build a military base in Lagos to help in the second world war.   Since then, students' crises have grown to become a regular occurrence in the country.   By the mid-1960s and early 1970s, the form of protest changed from its peaceful, non-violent form to violent and open confrontation with the school authorities and security agencies leading to destruction of lives and property. In 1978, the introduction of tuition fees in all tertiary institutions in Nigeria led to the students' crisis tagged 'ALLI MUST GO'.   Since then, students have used several means to express their grievances.

In recent times, it has been observed that students' unrest in higher institutions in Nigeria was precipitated by several factors: increase in tuition fees, cultism, failure of institution authorities to listen to students' complaints and poor campus transportation system. Others include non-participation of students in decision making, academic stress, changing value systems of students, contemporary national issues and welfare problems (Falua, 2004; Adeyemi 2009, Adeyemi, Ekundayo and Alonge 2010). All these have led to the breakdown of law and order, loss of lives and property. What could be responsible for these crises? What control measures can be taken to prevent occurrence of such crises? This paper examines the causes and control of student crises in tertiary institutions in Lagos State.

2. Statement of the Problem
Students' revolts and crises leading to breakdown of law and order, closure of schools, expulsion of students from schools and destruction of lives and property among others have been a major issue of serious concern to school authorities, parents, government and even students themselves. Students who could have been more useful to themselves, their parents and the nation at large become drop outs or die during the crises thereby leading to a waste of human resources. Moreover, incessant closures of schools have limited the ability of higher institutions in Nigeria to give students a very sound and qualitative education which is a major reason for the establishment of higher institutions. Despite the measures taken over the years in curbing student crises, the menace seems to be on the increase.   Therefore, this study is basically focused on identifying the perceived causes and control measures in curbing the menace of students' crises in tertiary institutions in Lagos State.

3. Research Questions
Based on the foregoing, the following research questions are stated:
1. What is the level of occurrence of students' crisis in tertiary institutions in Lagos State?
2. What are the causes of students' crisis in tertiary institutions in Lagos State?
3. What control measures could be used to prevent or resolve students' crisis in tertiary institutions in Lagos State?

4. Research Hypotheses
The following hypotheses will guide the study:
1. There is no significant difference between the occurrence of students' crises in federal and state tertiary institutions in Lagos State.
2. There is no significant relationship between causes of students' crises and control measures used to curb students' crisis in tertiary institutions in Lagos State.

5. Methodology
5.1. Research Design
A descriptive survey design was used for the study. This is mainly because data were collected over a large area for the purpose of making description about the causes and control of students' crises in tertiary institutions in Lagos State.
5.2. Population and Sample
The population consists of all students, academic and non-academic staff, students' union executive officers in all the tertiary institutions (federal and state colleges of education, polytechnics and universities) in Lagos State. Stratified random sampling technique was used in selecting one federal institution each (University of Lagos Akoka, Yaba College of Technology, Yaba and Federal College of Education (Technical), Akoka and one state institution each (Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos State Polytechnic, Ikorodu and Michael Otedola College of

Primary Education, Noforija-Epe). However, in selecting the 954 samples used for the study, simple random sampling technique was used and they are distributed in table 1 below:

Insert table 1 here

5.3. Instrument

The main instruments used for this study were 4 structured questionnaires administered to four (4) groups – the students, the Students' Union Executives, the academic and non-academic staff as well as the Chief Executive Officers of the higher institutions. Section A of the questionnaire elicited response from the respondents on personal information such as sex, age, name of institution and so on while section B elicited information on tuitions, leadership styles of heads of institutions, government policies, school environment, hostel accommodation and welfare facilities, teaching and learning facilities, community relationship, students unionism and participation, campus cultism and a host of other causes of students unrest. The instruments also inquired about the number of times of occurrence of students' unrest and control strategies that could be used in preventing or controlling the malaise.

5.4. Validity and Reliability of Instruments

The content validity of the instrument was determined by research consultants and experts in test and measurement who matched each item of the questionnaire with the research questions and hypotheses to ascertain whether the instrument actually measured what it was supposed to measure. The reliability of the instruments was determined through the test-retest reliability co-efficient. In doing this, a pilot study was carried out in 6 tertiary institutions in Ogun State. The pilot institutions shared similar characteristics with the study samples. Those institutions include: Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta; Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ijebu-Ode; Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, MoshoodAbiola Polytechnic, Ojere-Abeokuta, Federal College of Education, Osiele-Abeokuta and Tai Solarin College of Education, Omu-Ijebu. The instruments were administered to 4 (2 male and 2 female) students union executive members, 10 (5 male and 5 female) students in each of the 6 selected institutions, 10 (5 male and 5 female) academic and non-academic staff, as well as 6 (1 each) Students Affair Officers of each of the selected tertiary institutions in Ogun State. After a period of two weeks, the instruments were re-administered to the same respondents. The data collected on the two tests were collated and analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment reliability. A correlation coefficient 'r' of 0.84 was obtained indicating that the instruments were reliable and suitable for the study.

5.5. Administration of the Instruments

Research assistants were employed in the administration and retrieval of the instruments from the respondents in the institutions selected for the study.

5.6. Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, t test and Correlation analysis while the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

6. Results

The results of the study are presented below:

6.1. Research Question 1: What is the level of occurrence of student unrests in tertiary institutions in Lagos state?

Insert table 2 here

6.2. Research Question 2: What are the causes of student unrests in tertiary institutions in Lagos state?

Insert table 3 here

6.3. Research Question 3: What control measures could be taken to resolve student unrest in   tertiary institutions Lagos state?

Insert table 4 here

6.3.1. Test of Hypotheses

6.3.2. Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between the occurrence of students' crises in the federal higher institutions and state higher institutions in Lagos State.

Insert table 5a here
Insert table 5b here

6.3.3. Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between causes of students' crisis and control measures used to curb students' crisis.

Insert table 6a here

Insert table 6b here

7. Discussion of findings

The findings of this study revealed a higher level of occurrence of students' crises in state-owned higher institutions than their federal counterparts.   This shows that state higher institutions are usually susceptible or vulnerable to students' crises.   This difference may be as a result of different situations in the tertiary institutions in terms of the nature of students, resources, leadership, student unionism and so on. The reason for the difference may also be because funds allocated to federal higher institutions are promptly paid and as such the needs of students are quickly met with facilities. The findings corroborate the studies of Ibukun (1997) and Oyeneye (2006) who lamented the growing shortage of funds and learning resources in the Nigerian tertiary institutions. Meanwhile Ajayi & Ayodele (2004) argued that there was an increase in the proportion of total expenditure devoted to education, but this was seen to be grossly inadequate considering the phenomenal increase in student enrolment and increasing cost, which has been aggravated by inflation. Besides, Ajayi and Ekundayo (2006) remarked that the Nigerian government over the years has not met the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recommendation of 26% of the total budget allocation to education sector. Aina (2007) posited that government attention to education is still very low. The apparent shortage of funds available to tertiary education has been responsible for high tuitions, declining library, social and laboratory facilities which cumulate into students unrests in most tertiary institutions in the country.

It is worrisome to note that the resources allocated to education are in short supply. Lecture halls, laboratories, students' hostels, library space, books and journals, office space are all inadequate (Ochuba 2001). To the World Bank (1994) and Adeyemi (2009), the necessary equipment for teaching, research and learning are either lacking or inadequate and in a bad shape to permit the institutions the freedom to carry out the basic functions of teaching, learning and research.

The study also revealed that students' violent reaction to national issues and internal problems such as secret cultism is largely contributing to students' unrest in Nigeria. According to Ibukun (1997), Akindutire (2004), Smah (2007),   Viatonu and Jegede (2007) the result of student militancy, cultism on campus and violent unionism has been the disruption of normal academic activities, constant closure of institutions, removal of school heads, loss of lives and property on campuses among others.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has brought to the fore the menace of student crises; that it is not an issue that can be handled with levity as the outcome of such crises have not been in the interest of the students, the institutions, the parents and even the society at large. This therefore calls for more seriousness in handling issues concerning studenrs particularly those that have to do with their welfare. Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that authorities in higher institutions should make use of dialogue with the students in order to avert crisis thus bridging the gap between students and school authorities.

Funds provide the essential purchasing power with which education acquires its human and physical inputs. Tertiary institutions in Nigeria lack the financial resources necessary to maintain educational quality in the midst of significant enrolment explosion. UNESCO recommended 26% of the total budget of a nation to be allocated to education but the Longe commission of 1991 observed that the percentage of budgetary allocation to education has never exceeded 10%. Governments should therefore allocate more funds to tertiary institutions so that they can be more effective in their day-to-day operations. Higher institutions should also seek alternative sources of revenue generation to augment what the government allocates to them. There must also be an effective monitoring of the management of funds presently being allocated to the sector, as efforts should be intensified to improve on what is currently being allocated to the system.

As a means of ensuring effective management of funds, it is hereby suggested that reliable accounting system should be established in every tertiary institution in Nigeria to guarantee accountability, honesty and transparency.

Furthermore, if quality is to be enhanced in our nation's tertiary institutions, the infrastructure base of the system needs to be improved upon. The present situation calls for an urgent need for the government to make available enough funds for the rehabilitation of existing facilities. Governments should intensify efforts in providing more physical facilities in the tertiary institutions. Besides, corporate bodies, philanthropists and alumni associations should also assist in the provision of these facilities to aid effective teaching-learning activities in order to achieve the academic goals of tertiary institutions for national development. There is need for a serious expansion of physical facilities and equipment to meet the increasing student population. However, there is also the need to take serious look at the maintenance culture, which is lacking in an average Nigerian, as this will go a long way in reducing the rate of decay of the existing facilities.

In order to reduce the extent of volatile and militant students' unionism on campus, it is suggested that students be involved in decision-making particularly on issues that border on their welfare and academic development. Authorities of institutions should avoid being high-handed with students but always be accessible to them.

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Appendix

Table 1: Distribution of Samples according to Institutions

S/N	Federal Institutions	Students		Students Union Excos		Academic & Non-Academic Staff		CEOs	TOTAL
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female		
1.	University of Lagos, Akoka.	50	50	4	4	25	25	1	**159**
2.	Yaba College of Technology, Yaba.	50	50	4	4	25	25	1	**159**
3.	Federal College of Education (T), Akoka.	50	50	4	4	25	25	1	**159**
	State Institutions								
1.	**Lagos State University, Ojo.**	50	50	4	4	25	25	1	159
2.	**Lagos State Polytech-nic, Ikorodu.**	50	50	4	4	25	25	1	159
3.	**Michael Otedola College of Primary Education, Noforija-Epe.**	50	50	4	4	25	25	1	159
	TOTAL	300	300	24	24	150	150	6	954

Table 2: Occurrence of students' unrest in Lagos state tertiary institutions

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
UNILAG	98	10.3	10.3
LASU	282	29.6	39.9
YABATECH	106	11.1	51.0
LASPOTECH	215	22.5	73.5
FCE-TECH	147	15.4	88.9
MOCPED	106	11.1	100.0
TOTAL	**954**	**100.0**	

Table 3: Perceived causes of student unrests in tertiary institutions in Lagos state.

Variables	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Tuition related causes	205	21.5	21.5
Leadership related causes	108	11.3	32.8
Government policies and related causes	95	10.0	42.8
Students welfare related causes	120	12.6	55.4
Teaching-learning facilities related causes	60	6.3	61.7
Community related causes	48	5.0	66.7
Students unionism related causes	102	10.7	77.4
Campus cultism related causes	96	10.1	87.5
National issues and related causes	62	6.5	94.0
Staff issues	58	6.0	100.0
Total	**954**	**100.0**	

Table 4: Perceived control measures of student unrests in tertiary institutions in Lagos state.

Variables	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Stable and moderate tuition	224	23.5	23.5
Students' friendly and effective leadership	105	11.0	34.5
Good government policies and adequate funding	39	4.0	38.6
Considerate students welfare	137	14.4	52.9
Efficient teaching-learning facilities	81	8.5	61.4
Cordial community relations	42	4.4	65.8
Cultured and motivated students unionism	60	6.3	72.1
Total ban on campus cultism	53	5.6	77.7
Good governance and effective social security	56	5.8	83.5
Students' participation in administration	116	12.2	95.7
Dialogue with parents and other stakeholders	41	4.3	100.0
Total	**954**	**100.0**	

Table 5a: Descriptive Statistics of Occurrence of Student Crises in Federal and State tertiary institutions in Lagos State

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
FEDERAL	30	4.30	29.00	11.4667	5.81771
STATE	30	9.20	48.30	20.3300	9.59516
Valid N (listwise)	30				

Table 5b: Paired Sample Test of Occurrence of Student Crises in Federal and State tertiary Institutions in Lagos State

	Paired Differences							
			Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation		Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	-8.86333	5.92059	1.08095	-11.07412	-6.65255	-8.200	29	.000

Table 5a shows that the mean score of the occurrence of students' crisis in federal institution is 11.4667 while it is 20.3800 for state institutions with a maximum score of 48.30 as against 29.00 for the state. The standard deviation is 5.81771 for federal and 9.59516 for state. Thus, the mean occurrence of students' crisis is greater in state institutions. The mean difference is found to be statistically significant at 0.05 level of significant as shown in Table 5b. Therefore the null hypothesis of no significant difference between the occurrence of students' crisis in state and federal institutions in Lagos State is rejected.

Table 6a: Descriptive Statistics of Occurrences of Student Crises in Federal and State tertiary institutions in Lagos State

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
CAUSES	10	48.00	205.00	95.4000	45.74616
CONSEQUENCES	10	39.00	224.00	91.3000	57.21315
Valid N (listwise)	10				

Table 6b: Correlations between Causes and Control of Student Crises in tertiary institutions in Lagos State.

		CAUSES	CONSEQUENCES
CAUSES	Pearson Correlation	1	.789[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.007
	N	10	10
CONTROL	Pearson Correlation	.789[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	
	N	10	10

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 6a shows the descriptive statistics of causes and control of students' crisis. The maximum value for causes is 205.00 while it is 224.10 for control with a mean of 91.3000 as against 95.4000 for causes. The standard deviation is 45.74616 and 57.21315 for causes and control respectively. The relationship between the causes and control is strong and statistically significant at 0.001 and 0.05 levels of significant with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.789 as shown in Table 6b. Therefore, the causes of students' crisis and the control method taken are highly related for both the federal and state tertiary institutions. The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between the causes and control measures to curb student crises is rejected