

**STRATEGIES AND TACTICS OF USING COMMUNICATION TO MANAGE STUDENTS’ UNREST IN NIGERIAN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS**

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ABSTRACT

*This study investigated the causes, effect and management of students' unrest in tertiary intitutions in Nigeria. The paper explored a gender specific protest in which both male and female students trooped into the street to make protest through which they (students) were seeking redress to some salient issues. Nigerians, have for some time been disturbed by the alarming rate at which students' unrest in Nigerian institution of higher learning has led to destruction of lives and properties even, it has in no small way ultimately interrupted the planned academic calendar. The study also investigated the counseling needs of students in Nigeria and particularly both polytechnics and universities. It focuses on four major things such as psychological theories. cognitive dissonance. relative deprivation, campus ecology and managements non-challant attitude to request from students and proffers communication strategies/tactics to manage students' unrest.*

 Keywords: Unrest., Students. Town and gown, Tertiary institution. Communication strategies/tactics.

Word Count: 139

Introduction

In 2016, Google scholars listed 301 results for students' unrests. These results listed some countries such as Nigeria. India, Canada, USA and South Africa among others. It was revealed that there are numbers of reasons while students protested among which this paper spoke on three. Examples of such were Abu-Bakr Tatari Polytechnic (ATAP). Dr Balla Ansari over the violent protest staged by students of the institution, the protest was staged because of the brawl between the polytechnic ASUP and the Rector of the institution. Academic staff boycotted the class and this made the state government to suspend the institution Rector on 28th Septembei-2016.

Accordingly, education provides the platform for the acquisition of knowledge, skills and values for productivity living in the society as a result of these; education equips individuals with the personal capabilities for survival in and contribution to societal development. Globally, socio-economic and political developments are increasingly being driven by the advancement and application of knowledge (Education). This further explains why education in general and higher education in particular is germane to the growth and development of knowledge and economy (World Bank, 1999).

However, higher education is 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 of' Education of (2004) highlights the aims of higher education as follows:

1. The acquisition, development and the inculcation of the proper value-orientation for the survival of the individual and the society.
2. The acquisitions of both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to develop careful mebers of the community.
3. The development of the intellectual capacities of individuals to understand and appreciate their environment.
4. The acquisition of an objective view of the local and external environments, higher institutions in Nigeria are therefore expected to achieve the above aims through teaching research, dissemination of existing new information and pursuit of service to the community and by being a store house of knowledge

Studies of Akinade, ( I 993) Aluede and Awede ( 1999) Awede (7000) Ehiametalor. (1979) show that many higher institution in Nigeria are finding it increasingly difficult to achieve the highlighted aims because of many crises that have rocked the institutions. Such unrests, in the recent times have come to be recognized 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 closures of schools and other attendant problems (Agwinede and Omoregie. 2005).

Fajana (1990) submits that unrest is the act of violence resulting from dissatisfaction or a situation of disagreement between two parties. Alonge (2010) describe unrest as a situation of tension or people intending to revolt against social ills in an organization. Student crisis can therefore be seen as the revolt and rampages by students to show their grievances or press their demands to their school authorities. This study therefore, investigated perceived causes and control of student crisis in the higher institutions. The population of staff, students, union executives and heads of the top management attitude to the core issues in campuses. Olaitan (2004) stated that Nigeria comprises Universities, Polytechnics, Moonotechnics and Colleges of Education. Among this four, Universities education remain the Apex form of education of all tertiary institutions. Theoretically, Aguda (2006) on the other hand stated that the origin of tertiary institutions in Nigeria can be dated back to 1932 when University College Ibadan and University of Nsukka were established as a pivot university and they were sources of pride to all the students and the entire country due to the standard and honour with respect enjoyed by its students. There were free academic sessions, no strike, no protest, no demonstration, no cultism and other vices that could disturb the school calendar. The standard started depreciating in 1944 and thus marked the first student protest in Nigeria. Students of King's College Ikeja, Lagos protested against the British authorities planned use of the College as a base to house the West African colonies to help in the Second World War. The leaders of the protest were late Lt Chief A.Y Eke, Lt Chief Col. Chukwucmcka Odumegwu Ojukwu, Lt Chief Olu Akinfosile, and Victor Orie-Whitey among others. In 1953, the situation turned bloody when the secret cults were introduced by Prof. Wok Soyinka named Pirates Confraternity.

This was called the magnificent seven at the other University of Ibadan (UCI) now called Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. This was formed with the aims of abolishing convention, reviving the age of chivalry, elitism and tribalism and exposing the absurdity of the colonial mentality which forbids students not to wear indigenous dress such as Buba and Agbada for men or Iro and Buba for women. Also, the Pirate Confraternity was formed to boost the GP of students in those days. However, Polytechnics are the products of government white paper "A plan for polytechnics and colleges" which resulted in the creation of thirty institutions in the late 1960s and 1970s. Their formation depended upon the agreement between the department of Education, Science and the local authorities having institutions of sufficient stature to turn to into Polytechnics. It is for these great reasons why most Polytechnics spread all over as they have an amalgam of several existing Colleges because of the high level of theoretical and practical work they carry out. It is equally accepted that they should be compared with the Universities but largely confined their jobs to ordinary honours and higher degrees.

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Universities on the other hand offer only not wide range of discipline but also a wide range of course from doctorate at the highest level to certificate at the lowest. They also tend to preserve the traditions inherited from the constituent colleges and provided courses which are strongly vocational. Polytechnics are in the fore front of devcloping both degree and sub-degree courses to meet the needs of present day industry and commerce since Nigeria had suffered technical education between 1960s and 1980s. Polytechnic education is to be embraced when its formation started as this is the only way at which the country will have technocrats that could meet the resources needs of the nations. However, polytechnic education was not seen as real educational branch nor accessed as a sister educational institution beside University however, education is a social phenomenon that does not exist in isolation without the impact of any given society. Quality and sound education normally starts from the family which cannot be divulged from the society. Every education system is tailored and geared towards producing the child for future use. It enables the child to contribute to the development of thc society. However, society needs to imbibe the desirable values and norms to be emphasized by educational system. When the educational curriculum, vision or targets are faulty, product from such system arc not acceptable to the and society and therefore there is always a very strong connectivity between “town and gown". Strong relationship and collaboration has been established between education and society by various scholars such as Obinaju (2005), Riordon & Rosas (2003) in their write-up reflected that society as a system of inter-related; mutually dependent parts which corporate (more or less) to preserve a recognizable whole and to satisfy some purpose or goal. Social system however, refers to the orderly arrangement of parts of society and plurality of individuals interaction with each other. To perform its functions every society set up various institution and on this note, five major complexes of institutions were identified, familiar institutions, religious, educational, economic and political institution. Emile Durkheim says that the major function of education is the transmission of the society norms and values. He maintained that "society can survive only if there exists among its members a sufficient degree of homogeneity; education perpetuate and reinforces this homogeneity by fixing the child from the beginning. The essential similarities which collective life demands”. Without these essential similarities, co-operation and social solidarity social life will be impossible. The vital task of all society is the creation of solidarity. It therefore involves a commitment to society, a sense of belonging and feeling that the "town" people are important than the "gown" Durkhcim argues that to become attached to the society the child must feel something that is real alive and powerful: which dominates the person and to which it also holds the best part of himself before proceeding to join the gown, a child must have been educated through industry provides this link between the individuals and society. If the history and culture of the society is brought alive to the child, he will come to see that he is a part of something longer than himself, he will develop a sense of commitment to the social group. The school however serves a function which cannot be provided either by family or peer groups. Membership of the family is based on kinship relationship and membership of the peer group on the personal choice.

**Conceptual and theoretical literature review**

 **Tertiary institution**

Tertiary education also refers to as third stage, level and post-secondary education. It is the educational level; following the completion of a school providing a secondary education, the World Bank for example defines tertiary educations as including University as well as institution that teach specific capacities of higher learning such as Colleges, Technical Training Institute, Community Colleges, Nursing Schools, Research labs, Centre of Excellence and Distance Learning Centres. Higher Education is taken to include undergraduate and post graduate education while vocational education and the training beyond secondary education is known as further education in the United Kingdom or continued education in the US. Tertiary education generally culminates in the receipt of certificate, diploma or academic degrees. Nigeria however, is one of the countries that have numerous tertiary institutions in the world. These institutions include Universities, Polytechnics, Monotechnics and Colleges of Education. They are commonly called higher institutions because any of them can be the next stage in education for someone after a successful completion of secondary school. These institutions are owned by the federal, state government and private proprietors. There are three types any of them types of tertiary institutions in Nigeria which are:

**Certified but not accredited.** This means that the institutions are registered as educational institutions but their courses are not accredited by the appropriate bodies such as the National Universities commission (NUC) and Nation board for technical education (NBTE).

**Accredited but not credible**. It means these institution are accredited but not credible in terms of giving admission to applicants who neither do UTME nor their Pre-programs.

 **Accredited and credible.** This means that these institutions are accredited and credible and they have reputation as good educational institution in the country.

The implication of the above is that student unrest is common among these tertiary institutions in Nigeria However, their differences lie in the causes of the unrest. In an accredited and credible institution for an instance, negligence in providing social amenities for the student boarding in the students' community can lead to unforeseen unrest while an accredited but not credible or certified but not accredited institution can be home for cultism and hooliganism that have the tendency for causing chaos and unrest within and outside institution community.

**Student Unrest**

 Student in this context can be regarded as a learner or someone who attends higher educational institutions. In Britain, those attending universities are termed "Students" in the US, and more recently in Britain the term "Student" is applied to both categories: school and university students. In its widest use, students is used for anyone who is learning, this includes mid-career adults taking vocational education or returning to university. When speaking about learning outside an institution "Student" is also used to refer to someone who is learning a topic or who is student of a certain topic or person. In the case of Nigeria however, student is regarded as someone who is attending a secondary education or higher educational institution such as University, Polytechnic, Monotechnic or a College of education. Unrest can be seen as an uneasy or troubled condition; unease or discontent. It can also be regarded as a condition of social disturbance often involving demostrations or rioting. Civil unrest, is a broad term that is typically used by law enforcement describe unrest that is caused by a group of people Schurink (1990) civil disorder is also described as any public disturbance involving acts of violence by assemblages of three or more persons which cause an immediate danger of or results in damage or injury to the property or person of any other individual .Civil disturbance can include the form of protest against, major socio-political problems. It is essentially the breakdown of orderly society, of which examples can include, illegal parades, sittings, riots, sabotage and other forms of crimes. Even on occasions where it is typically intended to be a demonstration to the public or government, such can escalate into general chaos (Schurink, 1990) .

**Town and Gown Collaboration**

It is schools where (gowns) are being produced is being used as an ideology thus determine the dominated culture of the society, influencing what is taught in school and universally. The term "town and gown", are relatively two independently institutions or establishments Wikipedia Encyclopedia (2007) explained that “town” refers to the non-academic community while gown literally refers to the universities or polytechnics and it is like community. It implies that the traditional ancient's seats of learning such as university of Oxford, polytechnics and others called institution community. nob-technics and other called institution, both of which are regarded as one of the world's leading academic Institutions and oldest surviving in the English-speaking world.

"One can as we” University of Nigeria, Nsukka, University of lbadan, Kaduna Polytechnic, Yaba Tech Lagos and The Federal Polytechnic Ilaro among others, all in Nigeria. It is a metaphor, literally used in urban higher education. The term "gown" originated during the Middle Ages in the European universities where undergraduates often held minor clerical status and similar to the collar worn by the clergy man. The gown proved comfortable for studying in unheated and daftly buildings and thus became a tradition in the universities or Polytechnics. The -gown" also served as a social symbol as it was impractical for physical manual work (a comparison can be made with the gown worn by Chinese officials). This investment evolved into the academic long black gown, worn along with hood and cap. The hood often reflects the colours of the colleges and designated the young scholars Universities affiliation. Thus, by their distinctive clothing, the students were set apart and distinguish from the citizen of the town, hence the phrase "town and gown" (Rosa, 2002).

**Theoretical Framework for Students Unrest**

There are many theories that explain the rationale behind students' unrest in tertiary institutions. Mashauri 2013) notes that many researchers have come out with a good number of these conflict theories and some of who are Swindle (1976), Rahim (1980), Benyon and Solomon (1987), Cronk (1987), Festinger (1957), Ehiametalor(1979) and Banning (1978). Some of the theories for the causes of student's unrest are cognitive dissonance, relative deprivation and campus ecology. Others are the structural theory, deprivation frustration theory, the human needs theory and so on. Meanwhile, the theory of relative deprivation has been found to be relevant to the study.

**The Theory of Relative Deprivation**

American sociologist Robert K. Merton has been considered to be among the first, if not the first to use the concept of relative deprivation to explain social deviance, using French sociologist Emile Durkeheim's concept of anomie as a starting point (Wikipedia, last edited on 10 September 2017, at 06:49). Relative deprivation is used to explain a gap between what people get in terms of value capability such as social status, welfare etc. and what they perceived they should get such as value expectations. Onwuejeugwu(1992) as cited by Mashauri (2013) posits that the essence of this theory is that once people's standards of living have started to improve their level of expectations rises. If improvement in actual conditions drop, the urge to revolt emerges because of expectations are unmet and frustration sets in. this theory assumes that once deprivation is removed, a state of normalcy will emerge.

Theorist of relative deprivation observed that it is not just changes and deteriorations in social economic conditions that bring about unrest, but the wide individual or group perception of deteriorating economic conditions. In other words, when perception begins to give rise to frustration, mass discontent, and delusion and so on, then the possibility 'of pubic uprisings or protest is heightened (Ikelegbe, 1992 cited in Mashauri 2013). From Observation, cases of students' unrest in many tertiary institutions in Nigeria and Africa at large reveal that most entering freshmen have extremely high hopes regarding the freedom of speech and actions which they will be able to exercise during their campus life. These hopes according to Ehiametalor (1979) cited in Mashauri (2013) can be explicated as follows:

1. Students expects that they participate in the governance of their institution
2. Student expects that they be provided with good learning/teaching facilities, improved living conditions and other welfare amenities which must be provided by the school authorities.
3. The importance of the a ove is that students’ unrest in most of our tertiary institution can be traces to relative deprivation of the expectation of these students. As observed in these institutions, there are a lot of promises from the management of these institutions in terms of hostel, accommodation and social amenities which most of these students could not enjoy due to inadequacies of the facilities. These, they seek to get within the host communities which seems to be hostile to the tertiary institutions that have taken possession of their resources in terms of land and have not reciprocate with enough corporate social responsibilities. This is where the issue of collaboration between town and gown also emerge.

**Review of Empirical/Literatures**

**Causes of Unrest in Selected Tertiary Institution**

In his research work Odenike (2016) identifies cases of crisis in selected tertiary institution in Ogun state, the crisis between University of Agriculture, Abeokuta with the management of the institution in 1989 escalated into Amolaso community, Ilaro community and student of the Federal Polytechnic and Ilaro community (1997), Ago Iwoye community and the students of OlabisiOnabanjo University in 2005. It can also be traced to Oshiele community and students of Federal college of Education, Oshiele 2008. Another instance is the case of Nasarawa polytechnic and in this case the school was closed indefinitely on the 24 July, 2016 because of a student who was knocked down by a hit and run vehicle driver. Also, case in mind is that of The Federal Polytechnic Ilaro in 1989, there was student unrest because of the shortage of water in the hostel, the then Student Affairs officer Mr Kakulu of the Institution who represented the management of the institution before the student populace could not be able to tackle the problem and thus made the management to close the institution for a number of months. In the protest, students burned the canopies of the institution, hijacked vehicles from car owners and do most worsening things like burning of tires on the road and stealing of goods from shops were not left out. Ditto to these is the 1997 student unrest, this caused both indigenes and students to lose some lives. Also in 2016, another student protest erupted kudos to the management of the institution led by the rector Dr (Arch) Olusegun Aluko who quickly closed down the school and sanction the Student Union Government. Reacting to the factors causing student unrest in institution of the higher learning, Divis, Elcwere,Uyanga (2015) discovered that student unrest has been a lingering and reoccurring issue in the Nigerian educational sector, caused by factors such as cultism, drastic and obnoxious rules and regulation. No provision of basic amenities in campuses, poor funding, government policies and actions etc. it is paramount to state that if relevant authorities give more attention to issues stated above and employs strategies like dialogue in resolving issues of student unrest, much success will be achieved in tackling the problems of student's unrest.

 Collaborating the above Adeycmi (2009) found out that there is a high level of occurrence of student crisis in public universities in the country while it was at low ebb in private universities which suggest that private universities perhaps have a means of solving student crisis. Adeyemi findings also identified cultism as one of the major causes of student crisis as one of the major causes in public universities. Agreed with the findings of earlier researchers like Rayeski and Bryant(1994); Amazon (1996); Tungsley (1997); Jensnen, Van de Vliert and Veenstra(1999). Apart from cultism, other causes of the crisis seem to be institution-based as the crisis could be attributed to the inability of the institutions to provide necessary facilities needed for effective teaching and learning. These findings were consistent with those of others researchers (Amazon, Thompson, Hochwater, and Harrison 1995). In consonant with Adeyemi submission Akewusola, Olumuyiwa, Asykhia (2012) also discovered that there is a higher level of occurrence of student crisis in state owned higher institution than its federal counterpart. The duo noted that the state institutions are usually susceptible or vulnerable to student crisis and that difference may be as a result of different situations in the tertiary institutions in terms of nature of student, resources, leadership, and students' unionism and so on. The reason for the difference may also be because funds allocated to federal higher institutions arc promptly paid and as such the needs of students are quickly met with facilities. More so Aluede, Jimoh, Agiwinede, and Omoregie (2005) brought to the fore those issues that are likely to generate campus unrest especially in the subsequent decades of the millennium; student's campus life issues, poor funding of Nigerian universities by the government and withdrawal of subsidy from petroleum product. Aluede opined that in appreciation of the potential issues that would generate student protest in the nearest future, student services professional would be challenged to evolve strategies that would help to bring the incidence of student unrest in Nigerian universities to the barest minimum.

**Methodology**

Library research was used to generate secondary data for this data

**Findings**

As explained, it was observed by the pane; of directorates of student affairs and student union leaders that lack of communication or communication gap usually caused the student’s unrest. It is therefore observed that there supposed not to be any serious argument between town and gown if the management of each institution can make use of information communication and technology (1CT), use of radio and television as a means of communication to all students, use of computer/laptop to disseminate information, use of print media, publicity, personal and dissemination of information through town crier.

**Conclusion**

Students’ rioting has done untold damage and hardship to the student themselves, the institution concened, parent and public at large. On September 29th 2011, the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCI`) reported the killing of some cultists who were believed to be members of Green Landers by a cult group known as blue landers in Yenagoa, Bayelsa state. This type of incident is so high and alarming that the educationalist has been compelled to investigate its root causes. Students' unrests usually lead to mass destruction of school and staff properties, sustenance of serious injuries and loses of lives thus bringing untold hardship and mysteries to parents and guidance. Many commissions' law and order has been setup to address the causes of students' unrest but unfortunately, none of them had yielded a positive result thereby making this topic to be crucial and national educational problem. In those days, when boarding schools were being established World War II students doesn't settle in the town and thus made their character differs from those living in the towns or villages that hosted those institutions.

**Recommendations**

The establishment of sport units in every tertiary institution will be of great help in curbing student unrest between Town and Gown and as well as Management of Institutions and it will also curb Cultism from our society.

Management of each institution must be ready to provide all the needful materials into their respected universities/polytechnic and communication gap are be bridged. There should also be seminars for students' political functionaries through which enlightens on how to handle student matters should be taught.

 The use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), use of radio or television as means of communication. Use of address system to disseminate information and use of printing media (WhatsApp, EBudde, BBM, Skype, 2go, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter) must not be wiped away as they are the quick way and method to be used if messages are to quickly he circulated.

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