



Assessment of Students' Participation on Security Matters in the Management of Universities in North-Central, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the Assessment of Students Participation on security matters in the Management of Universities in North - Central Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The target population of the study was 357, 891, while the sample size used in the study was 2, 275. Questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. Experts validated the instrument; The instrument was pilot tested and subjected to reliability analysis using spilt half method of estimating consistency and the result obtained was 0.86. Mean and standard deviation was used to answered the research questions, T-test was used to test the null hypotheses. The findings revealed that; Students participate fully on the security matters in the universities' management in North-Central, Nigeria. The study recommended among others the need for universities' management to continuously make wide consultations and allowed students to participate on security matters in the management of university in North-Central, Nigeria.

Keywords: Assessment, Students' Participation, Security Matters, Management, Universities.

Introduction

The university is a learning organization and as such attracts students, staff and other stakeholders who have one thing or the other to carry out in the university environment. Hence, the issue of security comes to play. The university exists as a complex organization with heterogeneous identity comprising people from different backgrounds with distinct views and divergent goals that make it susceptible to varied security threats. Oladipo, Awoyinfa and Adefarakan (2018) define security as the degree of protection against danger, damage, loss, and criminal activity. In the same vein, Oni (2016) considers security in the university as the protection of tangible and intangible assets of the institution from all forms of danger. The tangible assets include; the physical structures, books in the libraries, electronic gadgets, all stakeholders, the players involving the regular and occasional visitors to universities. On the other hand, intangible assets include intellectual property, research data, classified information, integrity, peace of mind, the image of the university and so on. The main aim of security according to Tari (2004) is to ensure safety and security of staff, students and visitors, protecting the property and assets of the university, investigating and detecting crime, reducing incidence of reported crimes and the apprehension and prosecution of offenders.

Globally, there is a rising wave of insecurity and the universities are not spared from this problem. The rising wave of insecurity in universities has been a source of great concern recently. In the 60s, 70s and up to 80s, educational environments were relatively peaceful for teaching-learning process to go on without hindrance. However, the situation has changed since in the 90s. Recent happenings have shown that university environments are not so safe for the students and for the school personnel any more due to some threatening security challenges. In line with this Mensah, Baafi,

Arthur, Somuah and Mprah (2019) observed that university campuses are no longer safe havens. Similarly, Enang (2019) noted that university communities in recent times have been infested with all manner of criminalities which, quite sadly, paint an opaque and rather disheartening picture. Abdullahi and Orukpe (2016) and Enang (2019) observed that theft, cultism, kidnapping, rape, room break-in, office break-in, cell-phone snatching, stealing, violent demonstration by students, vandalism and other forms of assaults are major security challenges on campuses. Caleb (2013) also noted that cultism has proved to be a major concern for even existing security agencies on campuses. In the same vein, Oladipo, Awoyinfa and Adefarakan (2018) observed that the existence of cultist groups on campus have made life unsafe and scary to both staff and students. It is asserted that the cultist possesses, in many cases, more deadly and functioning weapons than campus security agencies and often uses supernatural and mystical powers in their activities. Besides, many cult members are users of hard drugs, and can act in unthinkable ways when they are under its influence. Cultists are implicated in robbery, killing of innocent students, as well as academic and non-academic staff, arson, rape, extortion, kidnapping, blackmail and all kinds of inhumane practices. Oladipo et al. (2018) further enumerated the activities of cultists to include, harassing any non-member who snatches a member's girlfriend or sugar daddy (as in the case of a female cultist), harassing female students who refused their advances, as well as, harassing any lecturer who insists on merit for passing examination. They also engage in factional struggles for supremacy that often results in bloody clashes among cult groups, during which period lives are sometimes lost. This has made Ibrahim (2013) to posit that, higher institutions of learning which ought to be ideal places for training of the minds have become war zones where cult groups unleash their terror in the community.

As a way of finding solution to increasing security challenges in universities, the Federal Government of Nigeria in a one-day workshop organized for Deans and Deputy Deans of Students Affairs of Federal Institutions in Nigeria in 2016, on the theme "Towards the effective security/safety on campuses", tasked the participants to take the issue of security seriously by fashioning out solutions to the seeming intractable security challenges facing the nation/university. The workshop was part of the series of security/safety seminars to sensitize management officers in tertiary institutions about security management with a view to reducing insecurity to the barest minimum in the campuses (Idoko, 2017).

Every university has a responsibility to protect itself, the students, staff and other customers who visit the universities for one form of transaction or the other, from all forms of danger. The National School Board Association (2013) identified the responsibility of all schools to include, giving adequate safety and security against disasters, accidents, injuries, as well as, prepare proactive plans that investigate perceived threats and disasters. It is in this regard that every university has a well-established security unit, whereby security personnel are employed to handle the school security and ensure that lives and properties are protected and secured. The duties of these security officers include protection of lives/property, surveillance, gathering and dissemination of security intelligence, among others. University campuses as observed by Schneider (as cited in Abdullahi and Orukpe, 2016) are dynamic environments with constant activity, which require an effective security unit that would address the protection and safe guarding of students, staff, visitors, faculty, property and facilities on campus. Good security services not only help to prevent crimes, but also contribute to a positive image of the institution by creating a safe and welcoming environment for students, staff, and visitors.

The term "security" is simply conceptualized as the condition of feeling safe from harm, danger or peril, the defence, protection and preservation of core values and the absence of threat to acquire values (Francis, 2006). It is quite apparent in this definition that security is about survival and the conditions of human existence. Francis (2006) further affirmed that security embraces non-military



dimension such as environment, migration, ethno-religious and nationalist identities, poverty and human insecurity and disease. While peace refers to the absence of war, fear, conflict, anxiety, suffering and violence, and peaceful coexistence. Essentially, peace focuses on creating and maintaining a just order in society and the resolution of conflict by non-violent means. From these definitions, it is obvious that security and peace are mutually re-enforcing, as the absence of peace entails the absence of security. Also, the existence of peace connotes the existence of security. Based on this premise, security in the tertiary academic institution is simply the protection and preservation of stakeholders in the institution of learning from fear, peril, anxiety and danger that threaten people's survival within the institution and to have a safe working and learning environment.

Maintaining security in any organization is a complex issue and the quality of security services depend on a number of factors, one of which is the caliber of staff. A casual observation indicates that some personnel employed in the security units hardly had any formal training on security matters. As a result, it not only exposes their client to serious security risk but also the security personnel themselves as well, when there are security threats. As a matter of policy, the chief security officer in a university must have basic training in any military or paramilitary organization, however, many other security personnel have no professional training whatsoever on crime prevention, e-security, security intelligence, aborting crime or reading crime motive of prospective intruders. Another major impeding factor in the maintenance of security on campus is that most security personnel on campus do not wield gun and, as a result, university campuses are left vulnerable to the menace of criminal-minded individuals who carry guns and conduct their operations without any hindrance. Besides, most security units lack necessary facilities and modern technologies needed to fight crimes on campus. Security personnel cannot discharge their duties effectively without adequate facilities. It is also observed that most institutions of learning are porous and do not have perimeter fencing, which is critical in preventing access by intruders, securing assets, and protecting personnel or buildings.

Safe-guarding the academic environment for educational activities is very important. It is for this reason that Okebukola (as cited in Youdeowei and Iruoma, 2015) posits that "no safe school, no future for the world". The author gave three reasons to justify this assertion as follows; (i) The dream of harnessing the power of education for achieving goals in health, food, employment, enrolment, energy, security will come to naught. (ii) Without safe schools, education for all will remain a pipe dream (iii) Quality education yearned by all countries of the world will be hindered. Xaba (2014) describes safe school environment as one that is not dangerous and possess no threats to physical, emotional, psychosocial and psychological well-being of the occupants. In other words, it is an environment that is secured and free from threat and danger.

The need to re-position the security personnel in the universities to effectively discharge their duties in relation to the emerging security issues and challenges cannot be overemphasized.

Statement of the Problem

Generally, majority of students in Tertiary Institutions are young men and women, best described as youths, and they constitute the most vibrant and resourceful group in society (Zuokemefa, 2015). They are valuable assets indispensable and invaluable to the growth and development of the society. Youths are fragile, vernal, vulnerable and sensitive to stimulus and can be easily influenced positively or negatively. Students need to form associations and come together as a Union to discover their personal competences, attributes, worth, resilience, assert their opinions on issues, take independent positions, ask questions about issues and express their passion in a well-organized environment. This view is supported by Alada (2011), who stated that it is the Students' Unions that

assist Students to develop their organizational abilities and strength of character that prepare them for higher responsibility in the near future. A good Student Union leadership provides the leverage for the student community to strive into the socio-economic and political spheres of the institution and the larger society.

In Nigeria, university management has been faced with various challenges since early 1980s, including high rates of youth restiveness, poor academic performance, examination malpractices, increasing conflict on campus, and indiscipline among students in universities across the country (Adesoji & Adetoro 2015). Moreover, part of this scenario is that Nigerian students have resorted to cultism, riots, robbery, cybercrime, theft, prostitution, hooliganism, and substance abuse, and have shown a general lack of interest in academic matters during the course of their university education (Alani, Isichei, Oni, and Adetoro, 2010).

Objective of the Study:

The study set out to determine Students' participation on security matters in the management of universities in North-Central Geographical zone, Nigeria;

Research Question

This research question guided the study:

What is the level of students' participation in the management of security matters in universities in North-Central Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the opinions of respondents on the level of students' participation on the management of security matters in the universities in North-Central, Nigeria.

This hypothesis formulated for the study will be tested at 0.05 levels of significance

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was used for this study. The population for this study consisted of all the 12 public universities in North Central geographical zone, Nigeria. The population of the study was 357,891. This comprises of the 357,831 students, 60 management staff in all the public universities in north central geographical zone, Nigeria.

Sample and Sampling Technique

Three states were selected for the study using stratified random techniques. Using proportional allocation method in stratified random sampling technique, the actual number of the public universities selected in each state was taken. The sample for this study was 2,275 respondents. Comprising of 2,245 students' respondents and 30 management staff of the sampled public universities in north central geographical zone, Nigeria.

Instrumentation

The structured and close ended questionnaires was the main tool of collecting data from the students and the management. The questionnaire enabled the researcher to collect a lot of information from the selected population within a short period of time. Each item in the questionnaire addressed a specific objective and the research question. The close-ended questionnaire comprised of a list of all possible alternatives, from which the respondents select the answers that best suited them. The questionnaire



for the students was titled: Questionnaire on Students’ Participation in the Management of Universities (SPMU). The questionnaire targeted at the students with five organized sections. Section (A) of the questionnaire was to seek general information about the students, for instance gender, age, type of school and many others. The respondents were required to indicate their choice of answers by ticking (√) against the choice provided on each sub section.

Method of Data Analysis

The data from the results were interpreted, organized and reported in a narrative form and with the use of tables. The results obtained from the data collected were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and t-test. The significant level of acceptance or rejection for the hypotheses was 0.05.

Table 1
Opinions of Respondent on students’ Participation on the Management of Universities in Security Matters in North –Central Geographical Zone, Nigeria

S/N	Items	Category of Respondents	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	SD
1	Students and management work together to secure the institution	Management Students	08 349	10 778	07 559	01 204	3.27 3.25	1.143 1.194
2	The management is insensitive to security issues	Management Students	01 320	17 815	06 568	01 139	3.03 3.02	1.474 1.334
3	There is security lapses in the institution	Management Students	06 267	07 761	07 576	04 200	3.13 3.26	1.332 1.264
4	Stealing takes place constantly in the school environment	Management Students	06 371	06 752	09 415	01 218	3.57 3.21	1.478 1.216
5	Students’ lives are not secure in our institution	Management Students	07 283	15 855	00 527	03 179	3.10 3.27	1.348 1.278
6	Management is aware of the insecurity of the institution	Management Students	04 352	07 847	00 385	03 233	2.57 3.16	1.633 1.291
7	Students are suspected to be among the perpetrators of insecurity in the institution	Management Students	05 295	05 818	04 410	09 281	2.40 3.14	1.632 1.269
8	Many students have died as a result of insecurity in the institution	Management Students	05 304	03 742	06 425	10 272	3.47 3.22	1.370 1.242
9	Insecurity persisted because students are not involved in decision making	Management Students	11 352	06 747	06 579	01 132	2.83 3.08	1.802 1.305
10	Lecturers are also the victims of the insecurity in the institution	Management Students	09 302	03 735	02 510	09 269	3.80 3.53	1.297 1.222

Table 1 Shows the response of management and students’ Item 1, attempts to find out whether Students and management work together to secure the institution. Finding reveals that 10 respondents representing 33.3% of management staff agreed, while 778 respondents representing students 34.7% agreed, with the statement, Item 2, the analysis attempt to investigate whether the management is insensitive to security issues. The analysis showed that 17 respondents representing 56.7% of management staff agreed, while 815 respondents representing 36.3% of students agreed with the statement. Item 3, sought to find out whether there are security lapses in the institution. The responses showed that 07 management staff representing 23.3% disagreed, 761 respondents representing 33.9% of students agreed with the statement. Likewise, item 4, sought to investigate whether Stealing takes place constantly in the school environment the result showed that 09 respondents representing 30.0% of management staff disagreed, while 752 respondents representing 33.5 % of students agreed with the statement. Item 5 also investigated whether students’ lives are not secure in the institution surveyed. The results showed that 15 respondents representing 50.0% of management staff agreed, while 855 representing 38.1% of students agreed with the statement, However, Item 6, tries to find out whether Management is aware of the insecurity of the institution. The views of the respondents showed that 14 respondents representing 46.7% of management staff undecided, while 847 respondents representing 37.7% of students agreed with the statement. Item 7 tries to find out whether Students are suspected to be among the perpetrators of insecurity in the institution The respondents showed that 09 respondents representing 30.0% of management staff strongly disagreed, while 818 respondents representing 36.4 % of students agreed with the statement. Item 8 tries to investigate whether many students have died as a result of insecurity in the institution. The result revealed that 10 respondents representing 33.3% of management staff strongly disagreed, while 742 respondents representing 33.3% of students agreed with the statement. Item 9 tries to investigate whether Insecurity persisted because students are not involved in decision making. The result showed that 11 respondents representing 36.7% of management statement. staff strongly agreed, while 747 respondents representing 33.3% of students agreed with the Item 10 tries to find out Lecturers are also the victims of the insecurity in the institution. The result revealed that 09 respondents representing 30.0% of management staff strongly agreed, while 773 respondents representing 32.7% of students agreed with the statement,

Hypotheses Testing

This section presents the summary of hypotheses testing in accordance with the raised objective of the study. T-test was used to test the hypotheses of significant different among the management staff and students at 0.05 level of significant. The summary of this analysis is presented as follows

Table 2
Summary T-test Showing no Significant Difference in the Opinion of Respondents on the Level of Students’ Participation in Management of Security Matters in the Universities in North –Central Geographical Zone, Nigeria

Variables	N	Mean	SD	T-cal	Df	Prob	T-critical
Management	30	30.9000	8.35154	0.722	2273	0.470	1.96
Students	2245	31.8192	6.90316				
Total	2275						



From table 2, statistical result of hypotheses testing was presented. The result of the t-test shows that the t-calculated value (.722) is less than the t-critical value (1.96) at 2273 degree of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance. The observed level of significance (P.470) is less than 0.05. This means that there is significant difference in the opinion of respondents on the level of students’ participation in management of security matters in the universities in North –Central geographical zone, Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 3 Presents the Summary of the Hypothesis Tested in the Course of this Study.

Table 3
Summary of Hypotheses Testing.

S/no	Hypotheses statements	Statistical test	Results	Level of significance	Decision
	There is no significant difference in the opinions of respondents on the level of students’ participation on the management of security matters in the universities in North-Central geographical Zone.	T-test	The observed level of significant P.000 is less than 0.05	0.05	Rejected

Discussion of Findings

The study assessed student’s participation on the management of universities in North Central Geographical Zone Nigeria. The issues discussed in the study centered on the Assessment of students’ participation on security matters that concerns them in the management of universities, the respondents believed that through security matters students and management work together to secure the institution. This helps the management to control the security challenges in the institution. They also accepted that the management is sensitive to security issues, taking security matters very seriously, and this improves the students’ academic performance in the institution. This view was supported by Kohn (1998), who maintains that students' cooperation can be enjoyed when they are involved in decision making on classroom matters, for instance, class rules. Discipline can be effective when teachers encourage students' input and sense of having some control. Besides, Page and Page (2000) hold that the essence of disciplining students is to inculcate self-control in them so as to develop positive self-esteem.

Finding also revealed that there is security lapses in the institution, stealing takes place constantly in the school environment, students’ lives are not secured in our institution, and this is a big challenge on the campuses whereby students cause a lots of insecurity in the school environment. The finding is in agreement with Nakpodia (2010) who said students' indiscipline seems to be ubiquitous in the 21st century in Nigerian tertiary institutions. The author saw child's discipline as a part of socialization. With increase in students’ population in our campuses, however, students' discipline problems accentuated and caused more burdens on staff and management. Her conclusion, and in agreement with Anho (2011), was that students' indiscipline has developed into an epidemic in Nigeria and it has plagued schools to series of unrest.

Conclusion

This study sought the opinion of management staff and students on student's participation on the management of universities in Nigeria, specifically on security matters. Based on the findings of the study, it is **concluded** that Students and management should work together to secure the institution on the security matters that concerned them in the university management in North-Central Geographical zone, Nigeria;

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendation was made:

1. Federal Ministries of Education, University Management and Stakeholders in education sector should provide tight security to ensure safe environment for the staff and students.
2. Students should be involved in the security matters of the universities in North-Central, Nigeria.

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