

*Isiaka Abdulaziz,
Alexander Olushola Iyekolo,
Abdulrasaq Olatunji Balogun*
Nigeria

Causes and Management Strategies of Violent Activities in Tertiary Education Institutions in North-Central Nigeria

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Abstract

The presented descriptive study involved three hundred and sixty five (365) lecturers and one thousand one hundred and sixty two (1,162) students selected from twelve (12) tertiary education institutions spread across North-Central Nigeria, making a thousand five hundred and twenty seven (1,527) respondents for the study. The main instrument used to obtain data for this study was adapted questionnaire, two research questions and three hypotheses were formulated. The hypotheses were tested using the t-test statistical technique at 0.05 level of significance. Sociologists, religious leaders, the government, homes and school management should embark on enlightenment campaign programs.

Keywords: *causes, management strategies, violence, tertiary education institutions*

Introduction

Background to the Study

Around the world, educators always strive to reduce violent activities in schools and improve students' conformity to the rules and regulations guiding the operations of Nigerian tertiary education institutions. However, in spite of these efforts, violation of rules still occurs. The school environment is a part of society that is not independent of what happens in the larger society (Daramola, 2012). It is a known fact that series of violence, crimes and killings of innocent students

witnessed in the larger society today occur in the tertiary education institutions of the Federation (Adobayero, 2015).

The act of violence is a behavioural disorder that manifests itself among students of tertiary education institutions. In Nigeria, e.g., there are reports of students engaging in raping of fellow students, stealing, kidnapping, cultism, terrorism and suicide bombing. Students also organize destructive activities such as riot, arson and theft. These are behaviors that do not conform to social norms, rules and regulations of schools and are perpetrated mostly by students (Osasuwa, 2010). *The Punch*, Sunday April 29, 2012, reported that two professors and 20 others were killed at Bayero University, Kano, as a result of a bomb blast which seriously affected the academic activities of the University for a period of time. Violence like this is the greatest social crime committed in tertiary education institutions in our country today. Cultism, e.g., is a social crime which is rampant in universities, colleges of education and polytechnics in our country. It is a social menace which is not restricted to higher education institutions alone. It is a common phenomenon that characterizes the entire levels of education, so much that secondary schools are not exempted (Jekayinfa, 2003). *The Nigeria Tribune Newspaper* of February 26, 2013, reported that four students of Nassarawa State University, Lafia, were allegedly shot dead during a violent protest over water scarcity and power cut in the institution. During the violent protest, the students barricaded the roads and the main entrance to the university, and trapped down the travelers who were coming from Abuja, Kano and Kaduna to the eastern part of the country.

In the past, the sound and sight of bomb explosions were alien to most adult Nigerians when they were growing up except the ones they heard from other countries and the ones they probably watched in movies. In those days, any time a bomb-related story was read in the newspapers, it was mostly from another country. Then, throwing bombs was attributed to countries at war, especially those in troubled spots in the Middle-East. Today, what used to be a foreign culture has been gradually domesticated in some areas of Nigeria (Yusuf, Amali, Bello and Isiaka, 2012).

The growth of insecurity in Nigeria manifests itself in the form of increasing rate of robbery, raping, maiming and killing of innocent people on the road, in their houses and even inside places of worship. Even killing for ritual purposes has continued to be on the rise despite the fact that the nation has embraced the computer age (Makinde, 2012). Political violence is on the increase, and many Nigerians have been mowed down by the bullets of assassins settling political scores. Kidnapping has become a lucrative business in the country; there are no exceptions, as people of high and low status are abducted daily for ransom by

armed youths. It is axiomatic to say that security is central to development, and the national transformation agenda of the current administration will come to naught if there is no solution to the menace of violence and insecurity ravaging the country. Nigeria has been caught in the web of violent crimes, and efforts to disentangle the nation from these social maladies have been futile. This has made the problems sink deeper into the recesses of the country and even now it affects school environments which were once peaceful and fully academic.

John and Osasuwa (2010) noted that violent crime can be a serious social problem enhanced by the intent of the perpetrator. Definitely, criminal offenders intend to harm others. They thereafter take away the properties that do not belong to them. Criminal intention and actions break social norms in school by violating the law of the school and they oppose government institutions such as the police and other paramilitary agencies. Crime against persons and properties in school is called violent school crime. They are crimes that lead to killing of innocent citizens in tertiary education institutions and destruction of a huge number of school properties without any tangible reason, e.g., the unlawful and intentional killings of school children and destruction of school properties in some parts of northern Nigeria by gunmen mostly under the name: Boko Haram sects, and the replication of such acts in the East by the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), which is associated with the kidnapping of innocent citizens, violence, militancy and insurgency in the Niger Delta, which are forms of school crime now experienced in Nigeria.

The Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin, lost two students including Abimbola, a final year student from the University of Ilorin, who visited his friends in the above-mentioned institution, who were shot dead in renewed violent activities which caused stampede in the academic community. These students could not be identified by the authorities. Eventually, the corpses of the shot students were deposited at the University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital (UITH), Ilorin, (Ashiru, 2003). *The Punch Newspaper Friday*, January 27, 2012, revealed that the authorities of the University of Ilorin had identified students who had been expelled for allegedly belonging to violent groups. This was in reaction to the increase in the number of deaths, shootings and threats to lives and properties of the students and university staff. Pemedede (2000) reported that the problem of violent activities like killing, rape, maiming, stealing and other social vices in our tertiary education institutions have permanently imprinted the issue of school insecurity in the mind of the average Nigerian. Ogunsaya (2000) reported that violence on campuses emerged as a result of socially unacceptable explosion of immorality in the media, importation of foreign culture, internet and junk magazines, which overwhelm

the youth so much that they fall prey to their effects. In view of this, Mohammed (2004) asserted that the level of hooliganism among students of tertiary education institutions has risen sharply. Osazuwa (2010), as cited in Wole Soyinka (1968), opined that cultism is a major factor responsible for the increasing rate of violence and crime in Nigeria. Sequel to its existence, the country has been thrown into a theatre of bloodletting and tension arising from concomitant armed robbery, assassination, ritual murder, arson, piracy, sexual harassment and rape and other crimes such as election malpractice, examination malpractice and prostitution. All these crimes wax stronger and stronger in our society due to the hydra-headed monster known as cultism. Daramola (2012) stated that armed robbery and hired killing are all the offspring of cultism.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study was to determine the causes and management strategies of violent activities among students of tertiary education institutions in North-Central Nigeria. Specifically, the purpose of this study was:

1. to find out the causes of violent activities among students of tertiary education institutions in North-Central Nigeria.
2. to find out lecturers' experience of the possible management strategies of violent activities in tertiary education institutions in North-Central, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed to guide the study:

1. What are the causes of violent activities among students of tertiary education institutions in North-Central Nigeria?
2. Is there any difference in lecturers' and students' experience of the availability of violence management strategies in tertiary education institutions in North-Central Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

Based on the research purposes and research questions, the following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

- HO1: There is no significant difference in the causes of violence activities among students of tertiary education institutions in North-Central Nigeria.
- HO2: There is no significant difference in the experience of male and female students of the causes of violence in both federal and state-owned institutions in North-Central, Nigeria.
- HO3: There is no significant difference in violence management strategies available in federal and state institutions in North-Central, Nigeria.

Methodology

This study is a descriptive survey focused on the causes of violent activities and management strategies among students of tertiary education institutions in North-Central Nigeria.

The population for this study consisted of all students and lecturers of Nigerian tertiary education institutions, while the target population were all undergraduate students and lecturers of all the tertiary education institutions in the North-Central Zone of Nigeria. Twelve (12) tertiary education institutions were purposively selected because all the institutions selected are prone to violent activities. The purposively selected institutions were four universities, four polytechnics, and four colleges of education from the existing tertiary education institutions in North-Central, Nigeria. The institutions were located in the following states: Plateau, Nasarawa, Niger, Kogi, Benue and Kwara States.

One thousand five hundred and twenty seven (1,527) respondents were randomly selected from the institutions. From these twelve (12) tertiary education institutions selected, the simple random sampling technique was used to sample the respondents. The names of departments were written on some pieces of paper, wrapped, mixed together and put in a cap while the students were asked to pick the wrapped pieces at random. The students of the departments whose names were written on the drawn pieces of paper were to serve as sampled respondents in both the federal and state tertiary education institutions in North-Central Nigeria.

From the purposively selected institutions, the proportionate sampling technique was used to sample students and lecturers for this study. The numbers of sampled lecturers and students from each institutions are presented in Table 1. Consequently, private tertiary education institutions were not included in the study because violent activities are not so common in them, whereas violent activities in both federal and state institutions occur quite regularly.

Table 1. Sampling plan of institutions in North-Central Nigeria

S/N	States	Institutions	Lecturers' population	Students' Population	Sampled Lecturer	Sampled Students	Total sampled
1	Plateau	University of Jos, Jos	723	19,113	48	146	194
2	Kwara	Kwara State University, Malete.	251	9333	17	71	88
3	Nasarawa	Nassarawa State University, Lafia.	538	11,029	36	84	120
4	Niger	Ibrahim Babangida University, Lapai	337	8,875	24	68	92
5	Niger	Federal Polytechnic, Bida	627	13,311	42	102	144
6	Kwara	Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin	593	25,998	39	199	238
7	Nasarawa	Nassarawa State Polytechnic, Lafia	471	10,849	31	83	114
8	Benue	Benue State Polytechnic Ugbokolo, Otukpo.	321	9,707	21	74	95
9	Niger	Federal College of Education Kontagora	511	10,586	34	81	115
10	Kwara	Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin	201	9,011	13	69	82
11	Kogi	College of Education, Ankpa, Kogi State.	377	12,799	25	98	123
12	Plateau	College of Education, Gindiri	531	11,431	35	87	122
		Total	5,481	152,036	365	1,162	1,527

The required sample size table (Appendix B) was used to select three hundred and sixty five (365) respondents, who were lecturers from these twelve (12) institutions for this study, while one thousand one hundred and sixty two (1,162) respondents, who were students, were also sampled. Altogether, one thousand five hundred and twenty seven (1,527) respondents were selected. The random sampling technique was used to select students from 300 and 400 levels. The choice of these levels of students is justified by the fact that they stayed and interacted with one another in the institutions (campuses) for a required period of time. The total number of students in all the tertiary education institutions located in

North-Central Nigeria is nine hundred and twenty five thousand two hundred and sixty one (925,261).

Data were collected with the use of a questionnaire. The questionnaire was adapted from Dickson, Anna and Diana (2008), with psychometric properties, such as face and content validity as well as the reliability index of 0.78. The first questionnaire was titled Causes of Violent Activities in Tertiary Education Institutions Questionnaire (CVATIQ). The second questionnaire was titled "Violent Activities and Management Strategies Questionnaire" (PMVAQ). The questionnaires were divided into four sections: A, B, C and D.

The data obtained were analyzed using SPSS 20.0 window version. Research question 1 was answered using mean score and standard deviation. Research questions 2 and 3 were answered using frequency count and percentage. Research questions 4 to 7, which had corresponding hypotheses, were tested using inferential statistics at the 0.05 level of significance.

Data analysis and results

Research Question 1.

The lecturers' and students' responses to items 1–12, which addressed causes of common violent activities in tertiary education institutions, were collated on statistical coding sheets. The set of data was subjected to descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation).

Table 2. Mean rating and standard deviation of the causes of violent activities in tertiary education institutions

S/N	Items description	No	Mean	Std deviation	Rank
1	Violent activities are caused by the following: sudden increase in school fees by the school authority	1520	3.14	.92	1 st
2	Improper management of institution administration	1520	2.3	.91	11 th
3	Unstable public utility on campus.	1520	2.27	.94	8 th
4	Inadequate water supply on campus	1520	2.43	1.33	5 th
5	Unconducive learning environment	1520	2.31	1.08	7 th
6	Actions of security men toward students on campus	1520	2.38	1.04	6 th
7	Mismanagement of funds meant for development of campus	1520	2.82	1.06	4 th

S/N	Items description	No	Mean	Std deviation	Rank
8	Lecturers' negative attitudes towards students, i.e., victimization	1520	2.06	.88	10 th
9	Lecturers' nonchalant attitudes towards lectures	1520	1.59	.93	12 th
10	Influence of mass media such as home video, violent films, etc.	1520	2.95	.97	2 nd
11	Peer pressure in violent demonstrations/ activities	1520	2.95	.90	3 rd
12	Parental influence such as giving their wards arms and ammunition to engage in violent activities, such as guns and other dangerous weapons.	1520	2.29	1.02	9 th

Table 2 indicates the causes of violent activities in tertiary education institutions. Twelve items were prepared, which addressed the causes of violent activities in Nigerian tertiary education institutions. The statement that addressed the sudden increase in school fees by the school authority ranked 1st with the mean score of 3.14 and the standard deviation of 0.92. The influence of mass media such as home video and violent films ranked 2nd with the mean score of 2.95 and the standard deviation of 0.97. Peer pressure in violent demonstrations/ activities ranked 3rd with the mean score of 2.95 and the standard deviation of 0.90. Lecturers' nonchalant attitudes towards students (victimization of students) ranked 12th with the mean score of 1.59 and the standard deviation of 0.93.

Table 3. The availability of violent activity management strategies in tertiary education institutions in North-Central Nigeria

S/N	Items	Available	Not available
13	Presence of security agents (stop and search mechanism)	736(48.4%)	784(51.6%)
14	Strict control of admission policy	406(26.7%)	114(73.3%)
15	Defined punishment for violent groups (suspension, rustication and incarceration)	592(38.9%)	928(61.1%)
16	Improvement in media	751(49.4%)	769(50.6%)
17	Serious campaign through banners, billboards, conferences, workshops and symposiums	606(39.9%)	914(60.1%)
18	Discouraging godfatherism among lecturers, students and politicians	457(30.1%)	1063(69.9%)

S/N	Items	Available	Not available
19	Define rewards for intentional withdrawal from violent activities.	312(20.5%)	1208(79.5%)
20	Monitoring of unionism on campus by management	594(39.1%)	926(60.9%)
21	Involvement of judiciary in curbing violent activities and godfatherism in tertiary education institutions.	661(43.5%)	859(56.5%)
22	Constitution of students disciplinary committee	818(53.8%)	702(46.2%)
23	Anti-violent activity sensitization forum	632(41.6%)	888(58.4%)
24	Guidance and counseling unit	863(56.8%)	657(43.2%)
25	Implementation of dress code on campus	601(39.5%)	919(60.5%)
26	Violent activities and its implication as a course in general study courses in tertiary education institutions	274(18.0%)	1246(82.0%)
27	Identification of individuals (i.e., ID Card on campus)	956(62.9%)	564(37.1%)

Table 3 shows that out of the 358 lecturers and 1162 students that responded to item 13

(Presence of security agents, stop and search mechanism) 736 (48.4%) picked available while 784 (51.6%) picked Not Available (NA).

The reaction of the lecturers and students to item 14 (strict control of admission policy) shows that 406 (26.7%) picked available while the remaining 114 (73.3%) picked not available.

The reaction of the lecturers and students to item 15 (define punishment for violent groups, suspension, rustication and incarceration) shows that 592 (38.9%) picked available while the remaining 928 (61.1%) picked not available.

Finally, this section pointed out that the responses of the lecturers and students to item 27 (identification of individuals (i.e., using ID card on campus) shows that 956 (62.9%) picked available while the remaining 564 (37.1%) picked not available.

Hypotheses Testing

Table 4. The difference in the experience of lecturers and students of the causes of violent activities in tertiary education institutions

Variables	No	Mean	Std	df	Cal t-value	Sign2-tailed	Decision
Lecturers	358	32.86	9.72	1518	6.05	0.00	H0 ₁ rejected
Students	1162	28.99	10.84				

Critical level sig = 0.05

Table 4 shows the calculated t-value 6.05 with 1518 degree of freedom computed at the 0.05 alpha level of significance (0.05), hypothesis 1 is rejected, and this implies that there is a significant difference in the experience of the lecturers and students of the causes of violent activities in tertiary education institutions in North-Central Nigeria. This is in favour of the lecturers, with the mean score of 32.86, which is greater than the mean score of the students (28.99).

Table 5. The experience of male and female students of the causes of violent activities in tertiary education institutions

Variable	No	Mean	Std.	Df	Cal-t-value	Sig 2-tailed	Decision
Male	790	28.78	10.84	1160	0.97	0.33	Ho3 accepted
Female	372	29.44	10.84				

Critical level sig = 0.05

Table 5 reveals that the calculated t-value is 0.97 with 1160 degree of freedom computed at the 0.05 alpha level of significance. Since the calculated level of significance (0.33) is greater than the critical level of significance (0.05), the hypothesis is accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the experience of the male and female students of the causes of violent activities in both federal and state-owned tertiary education institutions in North-Central Nigeria.

Table 6. The difference in the experience of lecturers and students of both federal and state tertiary education institutions of the available management strategies of violent activities in North-Central Nigeria

Variables	No	Mean	Std	Df	Cal t-value	Sig 2-tailed	Decision
Lecturers	358	21.12	5.55	1518	0.09	0.93	H02
and Students	1162	21.08	6.23				Accepted

Critical level sig = 0.05

Table 6 shows that the calculated t-value is 0.09 with 1518 degree of freedom computed at the 0.05 alpha level of significance. Since the calculated level of significance (0.93) is greater than the critical level of significances (0.05), hypothesis 2 is accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the experience of the lecturers and students of tertiary education institutions of the availability of management strategies of violent activities in North-Central Nigeria

Discussion of the Findings.

The findings of this study reveal that the composition of the respondents in this study was proportionately sampled. The mean rating of 3.14 and the standard deviation of 0.92 of the total respondents ranked first while the mean score of 1.59 and the standard deviation of 0.93 ranked low. This shows that violent activities in Nigerian tertiary education institutions face numerous challenges, of which a sudden increase in school fees is one of the causes of violence in Nigerian schools.

This implies that both the lecturers and students had different views as far as the causes of violent activities in tertiary education institutions are concerned in North-Central Nigeria. Makinde (2012), Ogunsanya (2000) and Pemedede (2010) expressed views similar to the ones in the presented study.

Conclusion

The following conclusions were based on the findings of this study:

Firstly, that the nature and causes of violent activities in our tertiary education institutions are: a sudden increase in school fees by the school management, improper management of school administration, unstable public utilities on campus, inadequate water supply on campus, unconducive learning environment, actions of security men towards students on campus, mismanagement of funds meant for the development of campus, lecturers' negative attitudes towards students, i.e., victimization, influence of mass media such as home video, violent films, peer pressure, involvement in violent demonstration/activities and parental influence such as giving their wards arms and ammunition to engage in violent activities such as guns and other dangerous weapons.

Secondly, the students' involvement in decision making could help in managing violent activities in tertiary education institutions. Presence of security agents, guidance and counseling unit, and defined serious punishment for violent groups so that students can be useful for one another and for society at large.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were based on the findings of this study:

A sociologist, being an expert in school crime analysis and control, should be involved in managing violent activities in Nigerian tertiary education institutions.

Sociologists can be employed as consultants in schools to be able to manage the affairs of the students in the school environment.

To reduce the rate of violent activities, focus should be on the home, which is the first agent of socialization. Parents should provide their children with both psychological and material support. By so doing, children will not be involved in any act of violence. Parents need to exhibit good behaviour to serve as role models to their children. Owing to the fact that students resort to violent activities as a result of their inability to cope with the tasks set by the school, the school curriculum should be readjusted to merge with the reality of economic planning in order to expand their skills and to demonstrate their talents apart from the academic aspect of school life. If this is done, it will help to reduce unemployment, which can lead to frustration, which in turn makes our youth take up immoral violent activities.

The government and school management should embark on enlightenment campaign programs to educate parents on the adequate ways of catering for their children, and to advise them to avoid any form of bad gang. It is, therefore, essential for the government to enact codes of conduct to deal with parents and students who violate the rule and regulations of society. Meanwhile, the government should sponsor the training of more counselors and social workers, for them to be able to effectively monitor and treat violent activities in tertiary education institutions. Likewise, more counsellors should be employed in tertiary education institutions in order to counsel the youth (students) to take up subjects they are good at, so as to prevent failure at the end of their school year. This could improve students' behaviour, which will prevent them from dropping out of school.

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