

INFLUENCE OF INDISCIPLINE ON THE MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN BENUE STATE

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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of indiscipline on the management of public universities in Benue State. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 2,208 academic staff of public universities in Benue State. A sample of 221 academic staff from 2 public universities was used for the study. A-10 item structured questionnaire developed by the researcher titled "Indiscipline and the Management of Public Universities Scale (IMPUS) was used for data collection. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions while the chi-square (χ^2) test of goodness of fit was used to test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance. The result of the study was that there is significant influence of cultism and examination malpractice on the management of public universities in Benue State. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that the university management should work in corroboration with the efforts of law enforcement agencies to fish out cultists among students and allow them face the full punishment of the law accordingly. In addition, the university authorities should be very

strict on the policy of rustication or expulsion of students caught involved in examination malpractice so as to serve as deterrent to others.

Keyword: Indiscipline, Management, Public Universities, Cultism and Examination Malpractice

The school is expected to be a place where desirable and relevant changes in the behaviours of learners will occur through the transmission of what is worthwhile into the learner. In our contemporary society today, there seem to be a tremendous increase in cases of indiscipline among students in many institutions of learning and particularly universities in Benue State. Students' indiscipline seem to be everywhere in the 21st century in Nigerian universities. Students' discipline is a part of socialization with recent increase in school enrolment; students' disciplinary problems have accentuated and therefore seem to be causing more burden on teachers and school administrators.

Students' discipline is a pre-requisite to almost everything a school has to offer students (Seifert & Vornberg, 2002:34). Seifert and Vornberg further linked discipline to both the culture and climate of the school thus: "In order for a satisfactory climate to exist within a school, a certain level of discipline must exist". The doctrine of school discipline according to Nolte (2000) and Barrell (2008) is based on the concept of "locoparentis" which allows school authorities full responsibility for children's upbringing, the right of discipline and control. In effects, teachers have the right to punish students who contravene school rules. Nolte (2000) and Barrell (2008) refer to discipline as a systematic instruction given to a disciple and/or a student. To discipline means to instruct a person to follow a particular code of conduct. Usually, the phrase "to discipline" carries a negative connotation. This is because enforcement of orders that is, ensuring that instructions are carried out is often regulated through punishment.

Reyes (2006) maintained that to be discipline is subject to content, either a virtue, which may be referred to as discipline procedure or an endemism for punishment, which may also be referred to as disciplinary procedure. Reyes further stated that school discipline refers to regulation of children and the maintenance of order ("rules") in schools. These rules may, for example, define the expected standards of clothing, timekeeping, social behaviour and work ethics. The term may be applied to the punishment which is the consequence of transgression of the code of behaviour. For this reason, the usage of school discipline sometimes means the administration of punishment to erring students rather than behaving within the school rules.

Indiscipline is misbehaviour in any or all of the following areas; respect for school authority, obedience of rules and regulations, and maintenance of established standards of behavior (Thornberg, 2008). In the opinions of Paddy (2003),

indiscipline in universities are unacceptable forms of behaviours exhibited by some students such as keeping of bushy hair, late coming to school, indecent dressing, littering the school environment with urine, papers and objects, noise making in the classroom, stealing and refusing to conform to assigned task by the school authority. Okorodudu (2005) described disciplinary problems as those unethical and unacceptable behaviours of students in universities that are capable of jeopardizing their academic performance and achievement. According to him, such disciplinary problems include truancy, cultism, drug abuse, examination malpractice and sexual immorality among others.

Agbenyega and Salifu (2005) reported that university administrators perceived indiscipline as an issue affecting their administration and prevented the provision of congenial atmosphere for effective teaching and learning. In addition, it tarnished the image of the university before the outside world, thus discouraging donors, parents and other interest groups from having interest in such university. As observed by Enoch (2003), universities today have rather become grounds for guerilla warfare, much anti-social behaviour and breeding grounds for unacceptable behaviours by students and some teachers rather than being a place where desirable and relevant changes in the learners' behaviours will occur. In Nigerian universities and the study area in particular, according to Okoson in Magwa and Ngara, (2014), the acts of indiscipline which include cheating in examinations and cultism were on the increase. This has appeared to be seriously affecting the effective and efficient management of universities in the study area.

Management is defined as that field of human behaviour in which managers plan, organize, staff, direct and control human and financial resources in an organized group effort in order to achieve desired individual and group objectives with optimum efficiency and effectiveness (Markson, 2001). The management of universities refers to the means by which universities are planned, coordinated, staffed, operated, organized and managed (Ogbogu, 2013). Becher and Kogan (2002) posited that management of university is concerned with the establishment of values in a university, a system of decision-making and resource allocation, the mission and purpose, the patterns of authority and hierarchies and the relationship of university as an institution to the different academic world. The increased incidence of cultism and examination malpractice in Nigerian universities has indeed hampered the effective realization of the institution objectives (Ede and Adayi, 2003).

Cultism is defined as any form of organization whose activities are exclusively kept away from the knowledge of others. Such activities are carried out at odd hours of the day and they often clash with the accepted norms and values of everyday life (Ogunbameru, 2004). Ogunbameru further stated that cult activities have been made illegal but the practices continue due to loopholes in the system. This makes it difficult for university authorities to prove allegations of membership in secret cults and the danger posed by returning cultists to campus after serving their

punishment. Cultism as speculated by educational stakeholders particularly in the universities in the study area has negative consequences on the effective management of Universities. Onikpe in Ezra (2014) maintained that cultism “contaminates” the school environment and jeopardizes the educational process. According to him, there can be long-standing effects such as physical, emotional and psychological implications for both teachers and pupils including, distress, reduced self-esteem, risk of depression and suicide, reduced school attendance, impaired concentration, fear and a diminished ability to teach by teachers and learn by students.

Adekoye (2003) stresses that cultism leads to outbreak of violence on secondary schools and its attendant destruction of lives and properties. Similarly, Nwadike (2003) observed that cultism detracts from our natural honour and educational credibility. It reduces the credibility of such schools and also lessens the value of the certificates awarded in such institutions. Haruna (2016) found that cultism has significant effects on the management of universities in terms of making the university very unsafe for teaching and learning. In a similar vein, Dauda (2006) observed that secret cults have made the university a very dangerous environment. As a result of the disturbances generated by cult members, the academic calendars of most universities have been disrupted. Dauda further stated that violent clashes between rival cult groups have resulted in the maiming and death of students and staff of universities thereby causing instability in the management of universities.

Another area of concern expressed by relevant educational stakeholders that seem to influence the management of universities is increased examination malpractice. Examination may be seen as an act of administering a standard instrument of measurement on students in order to test their knowledge or their ability or suitability for what they are being tested for. Through examinations, individual learner’s attainment level can be positively or objectively proved or ascertained and that anything contrary to this is examination malpractice (Aminu, 2006). According to Kilani (2006) examination malpractice forces the teachers to lower the standard of their assessment. A situation where a teacher is confronted with majority of students who came in with false results falling massively may force him to lower his marking standard which also affect the standard of education in that school.

In the opinions of Jegede (2006), one serious implication of examination malpractice is that it leads to withholding of results, cancellation and even closure of such schools if discovered that the management aided such practice in that school. This case of indiscipline has been the case with many universities which seem to have resulted to ineffective and inefficient management of universities. Universities in Benue State seem not to be an exception of this problem. Moreover, Mohammed and Gyallesu (2006) found that examination malpractice tarnishes the image of the school, leads to cancellation, withholding of students results and closure of such schools mostly when discovered that school authorities were involved in such act. This has been the case with most public universities in Nigeria and other countries of world of

which the study area seems not an exception. This is what has motivated the researchers to investigate the influence of indiscipline on the management of public universities in Benue State with particular focus on cultism and examination malpractice.

Statement of the Problem

Concern has been expressed by stakeholders in the study area over the increased cases of indiscipline in Nigeria universities particularly in the Benue State which seemed to have negative or positive influence on the management of universities. This is because, in most universities in the area, the relevant educational stakeholders of universities have expressed concern and are worried over cases of indiscipline which may have been responsible for affecting university management. In the same vein, public observation by concerned individuals in the study area also reveals that students in most universities in the study area engage in cult activities and examination malpractice which may have been the reason for ineffective and inefficient management of universities in the study area.

The researchers have also observed that there have been irregularities in the management of universities especially in the area of planning, coordination, staffing, directing, controlling and evaluation. Teaching and learning has also seemed ineffective, the university environment seems very uncondusive and unsafe for smooth running of university programmes, university properties and facilities are destroyed. In respect to the above, one may ask, what could be the reason behind these irregularities in the management of universities? Could it be as a result of lack of funds or school administrators' inabilities in enhancing effectiveness in the management of universities? Or could it be as a result of increased cases of indiscipline in the universities?

This study has set out to critically examine the status-quo in universities in Benue State, Nigeria where university administrators seem to be largely held accountable for irregularities in the management of their universities. Thus, the problem of this study stated in question form is therefore: In what ways does indiscipline influence the management of public universities in Benue State, Nigeria?

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of indiscipline on the management of public universities in Benue State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. ascertain the influence of cultism on the management of public universities in Benue State, Nigeria.
2. determine the influence of examination malpractice on the management of public universities in Benue State.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions.

1. What is the influence of cultism on the management of public universities in Benue State, Nigeria?
2. What is the influence of examination malpractice on the management of public universities in Benue State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at .05 level of significance.

Ho₁. Cultism has no significant influence on the management of public universities in Benue State, Nigeria.

Ho₂. Examination malpractice has no significant influence on the management of public universities in Benue State.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey research design according to Olayiwola (2007) is a research method that describes a given state of affairs at a particular time. The study is confined to Benue State which comprises 23 local government areas. The state has two public universities namely: Benue State University and University of Agriculture, Makurdi. The population of the study comprised 2,208 academic staff of the two public universities in Benue State. A sample of 221 academic staff from the two public universities were used for the study. A-10 item structured questionnaire developed by the researcher titled "Indiscipline and the Management of Public Universities Scale (IMPUS) was used for data collection. The questionnaire was validated by three experts, two in Educational Management and one in Measurement and Evaluation all from the Faculty of Education, Benue State University, Makurdi. A pilot study was conducted on 30 academic staff of one public university in Nasarawa State that was not part of the sample for the study and a reliability coefficient of .83 was obtained which proved that the instrument was reliable for usage. The data collected was analyzed using simple descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation to answer the two research questions. A mean cut-off point of 2.50 was used for decision making. Any mean score of 2.50 and above was regarded as having the desired influence while any mean score below 2.50 was seen as not having an influence. The hypotheses were tested using chi-square (χ^2) test of goodness of fit at .05 level of significance. The decision was that if the calculated (χ^2) value was greater than the critical table value, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted and vice versa.

Results and Findings

This section presented and discussed the results of the study.

Research Question One

What is the influence of cultism on the management of public universities in Benue State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of the Respondents on the Influence of Cultism on the Management of Public Universities in Benue State

Item No	Item Description	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1	Cultism creates social tension in the university.	103	99	8	11	3.33	0.77	A
2	University properties are destroyed by cultists during their violence.	89	101	21	10	3.22	0.80	A
3	Students and university staff are killed during cult clashes on campus.	120	85	9	7	3.44	0.72	A
4	Teaching and learning is disrupted during cult violence on campus.	117	96	3	5	3.47	0.64	A
5	There is feelings of fear and insecurity among students and staff of the universities during rival cult's war on campus.	107	97	13	4	3.39	0.68	A
Cluster Mean						3.37		A

Data on Table 1 showed that the mean rating for items 1-5 are 3.33, 3.32, 3.44, 3.47 and 3.39 respectively with their corresponding standard deviations of 0.77, 0.80, 0.72, 0.64 and 0.68. The standard deviations are small which shows that there is homogeneity in respondents' responses for the items raised. Based on the decision rule, it means that respondents agreed with all the items in the cluster which mean scores were above the cut-off point of 2.50. The cluster mean of 3.37 was also found to be above the cut-off point of 2.50. This implies that cultism influence the management of public universities in Benue State, Nigeria.

Research Question Two:

What is the influence of examination malpractice on the management of public universities in Benue State?

Table 2: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation of the Respondents on the Influence of Examination Malpractice on the Management of Public Universities in Benue State

Item No	Item Description	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
6	Lecturers of the university feel discouraged in going for lesson when their in increases cases of examination malpractice.	113	78	14	16	3.30	0.88	A
7	Increased cases of examination malpractice tarnish the image of universities.	106	80	24	11	3.27	0.85	A
8	Increased cases of examination malpractice affects students enrolment as most parents' loss confidence in sending their children to universities.	139	71	7	4	3.56	0.65	A
9	Universities that have cases of examination malpractice produce half-backed graduates who will end up been on useful to the society.	115	91	12	3	3.44	0.66	A
10	Universities known with increased cases of examination malpractice are denied awards of excellence.	111	101	5	4	3.44	0.63	A
Cluster Mean						3.40		A

Table 2 indicated that the mean ratings for items 6–10 are 3.30, 3.27, 3.56, 3.44 and 3.44 with their corresponding standard deviations of 0.88, 0.85, 0.65, 0.66 and 0.63. The standard deviations are small which shows that there is homogeneity in respondents' responses for the items raised. Based on the decision rule, it means that respondents accepted all the items in the cluster which mean scores were above the cut-off point of 2.50. The cluster mean of 3.40 was also found to be above the cut-off point of 2.50. This implies that examination malpractice influence the management of public universities in Benue State, Nigeria.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses One:

Cultism has no significant influence on the management of public universities in Benue State, Nigeria.

Table 3: Chi-square test of the Influence of Cultism on the Management of Public Universities in Benue State

Opinions	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	Level of Sig.	df	χ^2 -cal	P-value	Decision
SD	9	55.3	-46.3	.05	3	159.15	0.00	Sig.
D	8	55.3	-47.3					Rejected
A	97	55.3	41.8					Ho₁
SA	107	55.3	51.8					
Total	221							

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 55.3.

Table 3 revealed that $\chi^2=159.15$ at $df=3$ and $p=0.00$. Since p -value of $0.00 < .05$ at 3 degree of freedom, the null hypothesis which states that cultism has no significant influence on the management of public universities in Benue State of Nigeria is therefore, rejected. This implies that cultism has significant influence on the management of public universities in Benue State of Nigeria.

Hypotheses 4:

Examination malpractice has no significant influence on the management of public universities in Benue State.

Table 4: Chi-Square test of the Influence of Examination Malpractice on the Management of Public Universities in Benue State

Opinions	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	Level of Sig.	df	χ^2 -cal	P-value	Decision
SD	6	55.3	-49.3	.05	3	168.77	0.00	Sig.
D	9	55.3	-46.3					Rejected
A	93	55.3	37.8					Ho₂
SA	113	55.3	57.8					
Total	221							

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 55.3.

Table 4 revealed that $\chi^2=168.77$ at $df=3$ and $p=0.00$. Since p -value of $0.00 < .05$ at 3 degree of freedom, the null hypothesis which states that examination malpractice has no significant influence on the management of public universities in Benue State of Nigeria is therefore, rejected. This implies that examination malpractice has significant influence on the management of public universities in Benue State of Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The first finding of the study indicated that cultism has significant influence on the management of public universities in Benue State of Nigeria. The result agrees with the opinion of Adekoye (2003) who stressed that cultism leads to outbreak of violence on secondary schools and its attendant destruction of lives and properties. Similarly in agreement with the finding, Nwadike (2003) observed that cultism detracts from our natural honour and educational credibility. It reduces the credibility of such schools and also lessens the value of the certificates awarded in such institutions. Supporting this finding, Haruna (2016) found that cultism has significant effects on the management of universities in terms of making the university very unsafe for teaching and learning. This finding also corroborate with the views of Dauda (2006) who observed that secret cults have made the university a very dangerous environment. As a result of the disturbances generated by cult members, the academic calendars of most universities have been disrupted. Dauda further stated that violent clashes between rival cult groups have resulted in the maiming and death of students and staff of universities thereby causing instability in the management of universities.

The second finding of this study revealed that examination malpractice has significant influence on the management of public universities in Benue State of Nigeria. This finding corroborate with the views of Kilani (2006) who stated that examination malpractice forces the teachers to lower the standard of their assessment. A situation where a teacher is confronted with majority of students who came in with false results falling massively may force him to lower his marking standard which also affect the standard of education in that school. Similar with the finding, Jegede (2006) opined that one serious implication of examination malpractice is that it leads to withholding of results, cancellation and even closure of such schools if discovered that the management aided such practice in that school. Moreover, Mohammed and Gyallesu (2006) found that examination malpractice tarnishes the image of the school, lead to cancellation, withholding of students results and closure of such schools mostly when discovered that school authorities were involved in such act.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it was concluded that cultism and examination malpractice as indisciplinary problems has significant influence on the management of public universities in Benue State of Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended as follows;

1. The university management should work in corroboration with the efforts of law enforcement agencies in fishing out cultists among students and allow the face the full punishment of the law accordingly.

2. The university authorities should be very strict on the policy of rustication or expulsion of students caught involved in examination malpractice so as to serve as deterrent to others.

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