

Factors That Engender Students' Crises in Institutions of Higher Learning

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Abstract: Students' crises in higher institutions have become an endemic social pestilence. They have become so incessant and rampant that every good Nigerian is worried on how to stop the menace or at least minimize them. The study was therefore designed to identify the factors that engender students' crises in institutions of higher learning in Nigeria. The study employed a descriptive survey design. Five research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. A 35 item structured questionnaire was developed, validated and administered to a sample of 6, 875 students out of the study population of 68, 750 students drawn from six institutions in Enugu and Ebonyi States. Mean (\bar{x}) scores were used to answer the research questions while t-test of difference between two means of independent samples was used to analyze the two hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed that unfulfilled needs of students, activities of secret cults, communication gap, youthful exuberances and home background contribute to students' crises in institutions of higher learning. Based on the findings, recommendations were made and the implications of the study highlighted.

Key words: Students Crises • Facilities • Secret cults • Communication gap • Youthful exuberances • Home background • Enugu and Ebonyi States

INTRODUCTION

Nigerian tertiary educational institutions are established with the aim of giving any student who enrolls in them a very sound and qualitative education, to be able to function effectively in any environment in which he/she may find him/herself; so as to become more productive, self-fulfilling and attain self actualization. In the fulfillment of these important goals, the Federal Government of Nigeria [1] in the National Policy on Education (NPE) formulated in 1977 and reviewed in 2004 has as its policy the under-listed among others: (a) the acquisition, development and inculcation of the proper value-orientation for the survival of the individual and society; (b) the development of the intellectual capacities of individuals to understand and appreciate their environment.

With regards to tertiary education, Wokocha [2] stated that these goals are expected to be pursued through: (i) teaching/imparting knowledge and skills (ii) research-discovery of knowledge (iii) dissemination/spreading existing and new information among others. The goals of tertiary education as enunciated above are

crucial for national development. However, researchers such as Emaikwu and Eba [3]; Nwagwu [4]; Okebukola [5] have shown that many of the Nigerian tertiary educational institutions are finding it increasingly difficult to achieve the highlighted goals because of the problems confronting them. One of such problems as identified by numerous researchers such as Atteh [6]; Alabi, Akanbi and Owoade, [7]; Anifowoshe [8] is the problem of students' crises.

Crises according to Fajana [9] are the art of violence resulting from dissatisfaction or situation of disagreement between two parties. Adeyemi, Ekundayo and Alonge [10] describe crises as a situation of tension or people intending to revolt against social ills or irregularities in an organization. Students' crises from the above definitions connote a feeling of dissatisfaction by the students either with the authorities or with the general conditions of the student body. This dissatisfaction is usually manifested in such overt behaviour as boycott of lectures, refusal to take part in examinations, demonstrations and riots. Nkinyangi [11] and Balsvik [12] affirmed that although Students' crises are a global phenomenon, its occurrence in Nigeria in the recent past was on the high side.

Literature Review: According to Odu [13] the origin of students' crises in Nigeria dates back to 1944 when students protested against the British authorities' intention to build a military base in Lagos to help in the Second World War. Since then, students' crises have grown to become a regular occurrence in the country. By the mid-1960s and early 1970s, the form of protest changed from its peaceful, non-violent form to violent and open confrontation with the school authorities and security agencies leading to destruction of lives and properties. In 1978, the introduction of tuition fees in all tertiary institutions in Nigeria led to the students' crises tagged 'Alli Must Go'. The crises were directed at the then Federal Minister of Education, Col. Ahmadu Ali over government educational policies. Since then, students have used several means to express their grievances. Falua [14]; Adeyemi [15]; Adeyemi, Ekundayo and Alonge [10] observed that in recent times, students' crises in higher institutions in Nigeria were precipitated by several factors among which are: increase in tuition fees, cultism, failure of institutions' authorities to listen to students' complaints and poor campus transportation system. Others include non-participation of students in decision making, academic stress, changing value systems of students, contemporary national issues and welfare problems.

Students' crises often lead to the breakdown of law and order, loss of lives and properties and closure of the institutions concerned the closure which according to Adeyemi [15]:

Are very expensive to the country and are highly regrettable, although they appear to be inevitable, since that is the only way by which any particular situation of unrest can be controlled with minimum damage to life and property.

As the saying goes 'there is no smoke without fire' so also there can be no crises without some related factors predisposing them. These factors can be traced to government, university administration, parents and the students, in fact, the entire society. Below are some of the causes of students' crises in the Nigerian tertiary institutions identified by researchers:

Lack of Essential Facilities: Individuals have needs and the university administrators have the potentials of satisfying or frustrating these needs, resulting in an

interaction between personality needs and environmental press described by Ezike [16] as "need-press concept". According to the author, rules and regulations, facilities such as classrooms, library, hostel etc constitute educational press on the students in the sense of exerting directive influence on their behaviour - satisfaction or frustration that in turn leads to disciplined or undisciplined students.

Borrowing from Mullins [17] work on motivation and job performance, there are needs and expectations workers (students) require the organization to fulfill which motivate them to perform better towards the goals of such organization. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the satisfaction of psychological and safety needs are the lowest needs any organization is required to satisfy before expecting good performance from its workers (students). These are the needs for water, food, road, accommodation etc. Mullins [17] described these as "motivational driving force" which the workers (students) require in order to work towards the goals of the organization. It states further that if a person's motivational driving force is blocked before reaching a desired goal, it will lead to what he called 'frustration induced behaviour'- the response to the blockage of desired goal which results in a defensive form of behaviour. Among the defensive forms of behaviours is 'aggression'. Students' angry shouts of rebellion and protests and sometimes destructive actions in almost all institutions of higher learning in the country bears witness to the intensity of their growing sense of frustration and hopelessness on the failure of institutions' authorities to provide basic human needs for them. The number of students in our universities has steadily increased to an explosive level but this has not been matched with equal provision of facilities. Experience over the years has shown that among several possible factors responsible for students' crises in Nigeria, agitation for better utility services and welfare needs is most prominent. Even when there are other reasons, the issue relating to utility and welfare are most usually put at the forefront. Any right thinking person cannot admit that this kind of situation is surprising after all research studies such as those carried out by organizational psychologists such as Abraham Maslow, Douglas McGregor etc have confirmed that there are needs necessary for the survival of man and most especially for promoting positive behaviour of man within its social circle.

Activities of Secret Cults in Higher Institutions: A cult according to Igodo [18] is an assemblage of people who share unconventional ideas and beliefs and involve themselves in eccentric conduct and manifestation mostly shrouded in secrecy. On the other hand, cultism as defined by Umeh [19] is the act of belonging to a secret cult and carrying out secret cult activities.

A brief history of cultism in Nigerian tertiary institutions especially in the forms they exist today as written by Egwu [20] shows that secret cult emerged in institutions of higher learning in Nigeria in the year 1952 when a group of seven students founded the Seadogs Confraternity (Pyrates) in University College of Ibadan (now University of Ibadan). Notable among the founding members of this group is renowned writer, Professor Wole Soyinka. The ideology behind the cult was its utility as a tool to fight for the liberation of black man from the shackles of colonialism among others. Mode of recruitment then was privileged and highly principled.

Egwu [20] explained that, as time went by, infighting and internal wrangling started and ultimately led into splinter groups within the organization. This led to the formation of other groups such as the Buccaneers Confraternity, the Vikings and more recently, the Black Beret, the Daughters of Jezebel etc. Umeh [19] added that today, these secret cults have all discarded the original noble ideas of the foremost founders and are now fighting for supremacy". It can then be deduced that this impulsive desire for supremacy is the reason behind constant cult clashes entailing murders, maiming, rape and all manners of acts of sickening barbarism that our institutions of higher learning are submerged today.

Communication Gap Between Students and School Authorities and Between Students and Government:

Communication is an indispensable instrument in any organization and many authors have conceptualized it as almost a constant factor in every crisis. Obi [21] sees it as a process of meaningful interaction and exchange of information, feelings and ideas among members of a group". Ukeje, Akabogu and Ndu [22] perceive it as the imparting or exchanging of ideas, attitudes and information by use of human abilities or technological media. However, Obi [21] adds that whatever the process, good communication results when the sender and the receiver are in accord over the meaning of a particular message.

Intrinsic in the above concepts is that the basis of communication is sharing or exchanging of information between people, that is, the ability to establish a common ground with another person or group of persons. Okunna [23] noted that this commonness or common ground must be established between the people involved before communication can be effective.

The need for an effective communication between university authorities and the students as one sure way to diffusing tension among students cannot be over-emphasized. Despite these obvious facts, available records show that many managers of Nigerian universities have continued to shut their administrative doors to students' complaints and grievances resulting to students adopting such disapproved social behaviour such as violent protests in registering their anger. This is evident in the University of Nigerian, Nsukka (UNN) students' demonstration of 1981.

Before the violent demonstration took place, the students made known their problems to the authorities through a letter they wrote to the vice-chancellor through the Dean of Students' Affairs, but received no reply either in writing or in action. They equally issued an ultimatum to the institution that they would no longer endure the sufferings after a certain date. The date came and they saw no change, so they started demonstrating which later took dangerous trend and properties were damaged.

The psychological consequences of shutting administrative doors to students' complaints would best be illustrated with a quotation attributed to a University of California student speaking to the Board of Regents as written by Ezike [16]:

We have asked to be heard, you have refused. We have asked for justice, you have called it anarchy. You have accused us of failing to use legitimate channels, but you have closed those channels to us. You and not us, have built a university based on distrust and dishonesty.

Also, in many occasions, government and university authorities take unilateral decisions in policies that affect students' welfare. Yet, one of the principles of communication in an organization is that communication should be passed to the person who needs to know and who is in a position to use the information because it affects his works [21]. If this principle is to be adhered to, it means that policies and actions that affect students'

welfare should always be thoroughly explained to them before they are taken and implemented. It also means that there must be adequate representation of students in universities' policy making bodies so that they would form part of decision makers in at least matters that affect their welfare.

Drawing inference from the uproar generated by the increase in accommodation fees in all federal institutions without prior consultation with the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), an umbrella body of Nigerian students, the Vanguard editorial [24] states:

The leadership of NANS swore never to pay such money and immediately engaged in massive mobilization of students across the country. They were fully prepared to bring all academic activities in federal government-owned tertiary institutions to a grinding halt should Obasanjo led administration refuse to rescind her decision

The paper gave other instances of fee increment, which students have been paying without complaining and that was because they were properly informed of the need to pay such money. The paper further wrote:

As authorities of institutions where these maintenance charges have been introduced engaged the leadership of students' body in dialogue over the need to pay the increment, heavens did not fall when their payment by students took off. Thus, Obasanjo's attempt to unilaterally impose the ten thousand naira fee on students and parents without prior consultations with them is as undemocratic as it is despicable (25).

No matter how good communication might be, if it is sent at the wrong time, it will not only be ineffective but can cause serious management problems. To this end, Obi [21] affirmed that, message may be timely or untimely depending on the urgency of the message and the mutual interest or expectations of the sender and the receiver.

An illustration of this communication gap due to time factor was clarified by Iloegbunam [25] as follows:

The Lagos State University fixed its convocation ceremony on January 12, 1989, but on 11th of January, the acting Vice-Chancellor came and announced to the students that the convocation that

was to be held on the following day had been postponed indefinitely ... In making the announcement ... she said that her intention was simply to prevent rumour mongers from having a field day. But the Acting Vice-Chancellor apparently did not reckon with a possible reaction from other quarters. Students immediately walked off the auditorium protesting the snap postponement, which they alleged held risk, inconveniences and untold financial implications for all those that had to attend the convocation.

These crises were as a result of very short notice for the postponement of the ceremony. Perhaps, if this information was given to the students at least a week earlier, this kind of situation may not have arisen. This would have given the students time to adjust their plans and also to notify their friends and relations of the change in date.

It can be concluded that crises management is an art, which many university authorities and government bodies have not yet perfected. This is visible in the manner many of them distance themselves from students. The result is communication gap, which readily gives rise to mistrust and mutual suspicion - all potential causes of crises. Lecchner and kipter [26] observed that this goes to justify the saying: we shall never be able to remove suspicion and fear as potential causes of war (students' crises) until communication is permitted to flow freely and open across international (university) boundaries.

Youthful Exuberance of Students: There are clear differences between students of yester years and the present day students. Students of the fifties and sixties were usually individuals in their late twenties or early thirties who spent considerable amount of time preparing for admission to universities through private studies. The Rapid Result College and Wolsey Hall of Britain were the most popular preparatory agencies. Thus, before entry into universities, these students were mature, often had a long or brief working experiences and distinct life goals behind them. On the contrary, a review of admission in our higher institutions shows that much of the students' body is made up of early and late adolescents who have no life experiences outside the school system, who are still in the adolescent self crises [25]. According to Rufus [27] social irrelevances of youth behaviour could easily be understood; most of our students are largely adolescents

who love action, confrontation, experiment and adventure. In tandem with this, Ufot [28] noted that much of the student protests, riots and demonstrations may be attributed to youthful exuberances.

Moreover, because many students are immature and with abundant energy, they seem to believe that all scores should be settled violently. The incident reported by Wale [29] points to this fact. According to him, one faithful day (October 10, 1982), Moslem students in Kano Municipality trooped out to destroy a church whose foundation was laid in April 1982. The students' grouse was that the church was too close to the mosque. Incidents like this might have prompted Abdulahi [30] to remark that anything and everything is capable of arousing the sentiments and wraths of students to warrant an unguarded outpouring into the streets to protest.

However, exuberant behaviour of our youthful and adolescent students in some cases brings about major positive changes in our society. Philips [31] noted that young people possess revolutionary and reformist zeal and are prepared to insist on the right to have a say in the organization of their own society. It should be recalled that the students' anti- Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) riot that engulfed the whole nation in 1989 forced the Military Administration of General Badamosi Babaginda to quickly put in place some relief measures and also created job opportunities in the society.

Home Background: A reflection on the success of any university in achieving the desirable behaviours or effective socialization of its students depends largely on the quality of the previous socialization received by such students at the lower levels of education which in turn depends on the quality of socialization received at home. This is to say that, quality of socialization at home dictates the quality of children's behaviour at subsequent stages in life. The university students are the products of home. Their behaviours reflect the nature of their homes.

The term 'home' embraces all aspects of the family including extended family relations. But, in this literature review, 'home' is restricted to parents only.

The home lays foundation for acceptable behaviours. The quality of this foundation determines the quality of subsequent efforts towards desirable behaviours. The extent the home is responsible for undesirable behaviours among university students can be understood by looking at the following social learning theories:

- Bowlby's theory of attachment.
- Observational learning theory.

- Different parental styles.

Bowlby's Theory of Attachment (1969-1988): Social learning theorists believe that social development begins with the first human bond that is sometimes said to lay the foundations for all later relationships - the infant's attachment to the person who takes care of him. The infant wants to be near his mother and if unhappy, he is comforted by her sight, sound and touch. As the young grow older, they venture farther away from the mother, gaining courage for ever more distant explorations. But for quite a while, the mother continues to provide a secured home base, a place to run back should unmanageable threats be encountered.

Bowlby proposed that attachment results because infants are born with a number of interrelated built-in tendencies that make them seek direct contact with an adult (usually the mother). From birth on, the child is well equipped for social interaction.

The Effects of Early Maternal Separation: Bowlby asserts that any disturbance of the initial attachment of the child to the mother will render the person more emotionally insecure in later life. In his view, separation is psychologically dangerous, for the continuity of the child's relationship to the first attachment figure is a necessary element of the child's ultimate mental health. In line with this, Gleitman [32] observed that many of these early deficits persist into later life. A number of studies have shown that in a fair number of cases - although by no means all - there are a number of intellectual deficits, for e.g. in language and abstract thinking, which persist into adolescence and beyond. There are also various long term effects in the social and emotional sphere- heightened aggression, delinquency and indifference to others. Larson and Simons [33] adds:

It has been established that during the first year or so, the infant forms an emotional attachment to an adult caregiver, generally his mother. When securely bonded, the baby relates better to others than do babies who do not enjoy the security of the parental bond. Such bonding needs to be in place by the time the child is three.

What might happen if an infant is neglected during this critical period when his mind is highly susceptible to outside influence? Martha Erickson in Larson and Simons [33], who tracked 267 mothers and their children for over 20 years, expresses this opinion:

Neglect just slowly and persistently eats away at the child's spirit until the child has little or no will to connect with others or explore the world. In cases of profound emotional neglect, capacity to feel empathy may be irretrievably lost. Substance abuse and adolescent violence can be linked to such early life experiences.

In light of all this, it becomes pertinent that we reassess our views on the importance of early social experience. This experience certainly provides a vital foundation upon which further social relationships are built. But experiences in infancy or childhood do not affect adult behaviour directly. Accordingly to Larson and Simons [33], "what happens instead is that each step in a sequence of social development paves the way for the next". The early years are crucial in the sense that certain social patterns are much more likely to be acquired then, such as the capacity to form attachment to other people.

Unfortunately, most parents (especially mothers) cannot afford to provide this necessary obligation to their newborns due to the social and economic conditions in the country today. Families are over-stretched in their efforts to support their children. From very early ages up to the adolescent stage, at which time children enter universities, most parents are absentee parents, being far too busy, so that most children are raised by surrogate (young) 'parents' (house helps) that hardly know what to do with the children.

Socialization: The infant's attachment to his caregiver marks his entrance into the social world. This is the starting point of socialization – the process by which the child acquires the patterns of thought and behaviour that are characteristic of the society in which he is born.

Different theorists emphasize different mechanisms of socialization. Some stress the role of reward and the fear of punishment (reinforcement theory), others point to the importance of imitation or observation (social learning theory). Still others argue for the importance of the child's growing understanding of what he is supposed to do and why (cognitive development theory). In this review, the researcher will discuss observational theory as it relates to child's behaviour.

Bandura's Observational Theory (1977): According to this theory, the child observes another person who serves as a model (usually the parents) and then proceeds to imitate what the model does, thus learning how to do

something he didn't know before. This theory also points out that, imitation may occur even though the observer does not copy the model's action at the time that he sees them (learning without performance).

What this theory implies is that the foundation for most students' deviations or undesirable behaviours that lead to students' crises is copied from home through home socialization. A few illustrations will explain this better. Durumaku [34] in her observation as a teacher in pre-school classes reported that children in Pre-school classes make aggressive utterances like, "I hate you", "I will beat you" etc. She further reported a case where a child hits his classmate with a belt and upon interrogation on why he did so; he replied that his father hits the older siblings with belt. A further illustration of these acquired wicked tendencies through home socialization is the report of Larson and Simons [33] on what gives rise to bullying. According to the report:

In many cases the bully's formative years are marred by poor parental example or by outright neglect. Many bullies come from homes where the parents are cold or uninvolved or have, in effect taught their children to use rage and violence to handle problem. Children raised in such an environment may not see their own verbal attacks and physical aggression as bullying; they may even think that their behaviour is normal and acceptable.

This goes to explain why some students engage in wicked acts such as intimidating others, killing others, engaging in secret cults etc. Some parents cautiously forbid their children from watching violence on television and that is a good thing but parents should even be more cautious when it comes to monitoring their own behaviour as role models for their impressionable children. Watchtower [35] noted that if a parent wants his child to be an adult with a sense of morality and responsibility, someone who is adaptable and who has a positive spirit, he should remember that example in word and deed is the best child education.

Different Parental Styles: The observation learning theory explains socialization from the standpoint of the child who is being socialized and considers how he learns the lessons that society tries to teach him, but different parental styles focus on the general home atmosphere in which the child is raised. According to social psychologists, there are three major patterns of child rearing viz:

- Autocratic pattern
- Permissive pattern
- Authoritative-reciprocal pattern

In autocratic pattern parents control the child strictly and often quite sternly. The rules they (parents) set down are essentially edicts whose infraction leads to severe (and frequently physical) punishment. Nor do they attempt to explain these rules to the child who has to accept them as a simple manifestation of parental power: "It's because I say so, that's why".

Permissive pattern is the extreme opposite of autocratic pattern. In this, children encounter few don'ts and even fewer do's. The parents try not to assert their authority, impose few restrictions and controls, tend not to have set schedules (for say: bed-time or watching television) and rarely use punishment. They also make few demands on the children such as putting toys away, doing schoolwork, or helping with chores. Autocratic parents brandish parental power, permissive parents abdicate it.

Parents who use the authoritative-reciprocal pattern not only exercise parental power but also accept the reciprocal obligation to respond to the child's point of view and his reasonable demands. Unlike the permissive parents, they govern, but unlike the autocratic ones, they try to govern with the consent of the governed.

Parents whose pattern is authoritative-reciprocal set rule of conduct for their children and enforce them when they have to. They are fairly demanding, assign duties, expect their children to behave maturely and 'act their age' and spend a good deal of time in teaching their children how to perform appropriately. But they also encourage the child's independence and allow a good deal of verbal give and take.

Are there any differences between children raised in these three different styles? Gleitman [32] states, pre-scholar were observed in various settings. It was found that children raised autocratically were more withdrawn, lacked independence and were more angry and defiant. Interestingly enough, children at the opposite end of the spectrum had similar characteristics. Thus children whose parents were permissive were not particularly independent and (if boys) were more prone to anger. In addition, they seemed very immature and lacked social responsibility. In contrast, the children raised in the authoritative-reciprocal mode were more independent, competent and socially responsible.

Gleitman [32] further reported the investigation by Baumrind, which had evidence that the parental pattern

experienced when the child was three or four years is related to the way the child behaves in later years. According to the report:

When observed at the age of eight or nine, children whose parents had been judged to be either autocratic or permissive five years earlier seemed to be relatively low in intellectual self-reliance and originality. Once again, the children raised in the authoritative-reciprocal style fared best. They were more self-reliant when faced by intellectual challenges, strove for achievement and were socially more self confident and at ease.

According to the author, the benefit of the authoritative-reciprocal style extend into the high-school years; where this parental pattern is associated with better grades as well as better social adjustments. Larson and Simons [33] noted about the permissive and autocratic patterns of child rearing thus:

Some parents believe that children should be free spirits, naively; they believe that to impose obligations or requirements will place an unfair burden on their offspring and deprive him of his childhood. But their failure to set limits may have disastrous results. These parents do not realize that a boy/girl who receives little discipline may find it difficult to become self-disciplined.

Should parents simply need to be strict, Larson and Simons [33] said, by no means, setting limits is just one aspect of parenting, if taken to an extreme the setting of rigid rules can result in a harsh atmosphere in the home.

One aim of socialization is to instil moral values that are internalized so that the individual will shun transgression because he feels that they are wrong and not because he is afraid of being punished. This is what authoritative-reciprocal pattern of parenting instils in children early in life. These moral values give meaning to life; they establish priorities, set moral boundaries and define rules of behaviours. It has been established that failure to instil these proper values is the height of parental irresponsibility on their children. Ezilo [36] likened this parental irresponsibility to "a time bomb of undisciplined behaviours planted from the family, waiting to be detonated by the stress of adjustment to the university environment". This explains why the activities of social miscreants keep rising: the secret cult members and their killer gangs; the trouble shooters who will

maximize every opportunity to cause trouble; the non-academic students who will always rely on examination malpractice, the rapist and prostitutes etc. These bunches of threats to the university community are given a free rein, hiding under the canopy of institutions of higher learning to cause confusion and students' crisis.

Statement of the Problem: Students' crises in institutions of higher learning had disturbed the minds of educational administrators, parents, government and even fellow students. National Concord Editorial [37] reports that Nigeria's experience has been tagged 'an annual event'.

Frequent students' crises and the subsequent closure of the institutions concerned had made teaching schedules to be disrupted yearly that academic calendar means nothing to students and university teachers. Universities could plan but they could not predict how soon a course of study would last. In Nigeria, a four-year undergraduate program of study could extend to five or more years depending on the frequency of the students' crises.

In an interview with the executive secretary of the National Universities Commission (NUC), Okebukola [38], he was asked what challenges the NUC faces running the Nigeria university system. He replied, "There are serious challenges but the greatest of them is how to maintain a crises free system".

These trends of students' crises are worrisome. They must not be allowed to continue. The image of the higher institutions needs an urgent redemption. The university's tradition as a place of excellence must not die due to students' crises. Thus, the problem of this study is: what are those factors that engender students' crises in our higher institutions of learning?

Purpose of the Study: The main purpose of this study is to identify the factors that engender students' crises in higher institutions of learning. Specifically, the study sets out to:

- Identify the extent to which the unavailability of essential facilities in tertiary institutions leads to students' crises;
- Point out the extent to which activities of secret cults among students in tertiary institutions lead to crises;
- Detect the extent to which communication gap between the students and the authorities as well as that between students and government encourage crises.

- Pinpoint the students' misbehaviours that can lead to students' crises.
- Ascertain the home background factors that engender crises in higher institutions.

Research Questions: The following research questions guided the study:

- To what extent does the unavailability of essential facilities in Nigerian higher institutions lead to students' crises?
- To what extent do the activities of secret cults among students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria lead to students' crises?
- To what extent does communication gap between students and school authorities as well as that between students and government lead to students' crises?
- To what extent do youthful exuberances of students lead to students' crises?
- To what extent do home background factors of students' engender crises in the higher institutions?

Hypotheses:

O1: There is no significance difference between the mean ratings of male and female students on the factors that engender crises in tertiary institutions in Enugu and Ebonyi states.

O2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of students in tertiary institutions in Ebonyi and their Enugu State counterparts on the factors that engender students' crises.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study as it is aimed at verifying the situation of the problem at the period of the study. The sample for the study consists of six thousand, eight hundred and seventy five (6, 875) or 19% of a population of sixty-eight thousand, seven hundred and fifty (68, 750) subjects drawn from six (6) institutions in Enugu and Ebonyi States. Only the second and the third year students were selected as sample as first year students were new and final year students were busy preparing for their final examinations.

The stratified proportionate sampling technique was used in the selection of the sample. Since available data in the institutions were not detailed enough, the researcher

took a Bayesian assumption with respect to distribution of males and females. A pool of registration numbers of the students was used in drawing the samples in the respective institutions.

Data for the study was collected using 'Students' Crises Assessment Questionnaire' (SCAQ). The instrument was developed by the researcher. The instrument was a modified 4-point Likert-Type Questionnaire scored from either direction with forty (40) items made up of two major parts - part I and part II. Part I explored the personal data of the respondents while part II explored the causes of crises in higher institutions. Part II comprised five (5) clusters: clusters A-E. Cluster A contained data on students' needs; cluster B dwelt on secret society; cluster C on communication gap; cluster D focused on youthful exuberances while cluster E dealt on home backgrounds of the students. The responses were rated as follows:

- To a very great extent;
- To a great extent;
- To a little extent;
- To a very little extent

The instrument was face validated by 2 lecturers in the Department of Measurement and Evaluation. It was further subjected to Factor Analysis after a pilot test. A total of five (5) items were dropped after the factor analysis leaving behind thirty-five (35) items. The reliability of the instrument was determined by the use of Cronbach alpha. Summary of the reliability test for the five clusters reveals that clusters A-E yielded alpha of 0.72, 0.74, 0.68, 0.71 and 0.84 respectively, indicating that the test instrument has a very high internal consistency.

The researcher administered the instrument to the sample with the help of Research Assistants.

Method of Data Analysis: Simple mean and standard deviation were used to answer the three research questions.

Decision: Decisions were guided by the following:

- Below 2.00 = Very Little Extent (VLE);
- 2.00-2.49 = Little Extent (LE)
- 2.50-3.49 = Great Extent (GE)
- 3.50-4.00 = Very Great Extent (VGE)

Factors whose mean were equal to or above 2.5 were accepted as strong factors while factors which had mean below 2.5, were considered as weak factors.

Hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested using t-test of difference between means of independent samples at an alpha level of 0.05 because the variables involved have two mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories, namely: male and female; Ebonyi and Enugu States respectively.

RESULTS

Results are presented separately for the various research questions and hypotheses of the study.

Research Question 1: To what extent do the unfulfilled needs of students at institutions of higher learning lead to students' crises?

Responses of the research subjects to the items of cluster A of the instrument were analyzed descriptively using mean and standard deviation. Summary of the data analysis is presented on Table 1.

Summary of result on table 1 indicates that unfulfilled needs constitute a very prominent factor in students' crises. As shown on table 1, the factors of unfulfilled needs yielded a grand mean of 3.01 on the 4-point rating scale. This means that unfulfilled needs of the students in institutions of higher learning contribute to a great extent in engendering students' crises.

Research Question 2: To what extent do cultist activities among students in institutions of higher learning lead to students' crises?

Responses to items of cluster B were used to answer this research question.

Summary of result is presented on Table 2.

Summary of result as presented on table 2 indicates that cult activities on campus are a major cause of students' crises in institutions of higher learning. Elimination of rivalry members was rated highest followed by posing as security risk, then by using members as avenue for examination malpractices and then by rivalry of cult members over female students. The grand mean of this factor is 3.06 meaning that cultists' activities contribute to a great extent in engendering students' crises.

Research Question 3: To what extent does communication gap between students and school authorities as well as that between students and government lead to students' crises?

Table 1: Summary of responses on extent to which unfulfilled needs of students at institutions of higher learning lead to students' crises?

Items	Description of Items	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	Hostel Accommodation	3.24	0.63	G.E
2	Water Supply	3.69	0.47	VGE
3	Toilet facilities	2.81	0.49	G.E
4	Electricity	3.72	0.69	VGE
5	Environmental cleanliness	2.63	0.44	G.E
6	Library books	2.60	0.52	G.E
7	Lecture rooms	2.80	0.73	G.E
8	Library equipment	2.69	0.57	G.E
9	Medical services	2.96	0.61	G.E
10	State of roads in and around the campus	2.64	0.55	G.E
11	Transportation within the campus	3.19	0.56	G.E
12	Maintenance of existing infrastructure	2.78	0.70	G.E
13	Lack of infrastructure	3.32	0.59	G.E
	Grand Mean	3.01	0.58	G.E

Table 2: Summary of responses on the extent to which cultists activities among students in institutions of higher learning lead to students' crises.

Items	Description of Items	Mean	SD	Interpretation
14	Eliminating rivalry members	3.72	0.66	VGE
15	Engaging in ritual murder by secret societies	2.61	0.49	G.E
16	Extortion of fellow students by cult groups	2.72	0.51	G.E
17	Using cult membership as avenue for exam malpractice	3.22	0.72	G.E
18	Enforcing payment of protection fee on non-members	2.63	0.54	G.E
19	Posing as security risks to both staff and students	3.64	0.62	VGE
20	Cult rivalry over female students	2.94	0.55	G.E
	Grand Mean	3.06	0.58	G.E

Table 3: Summary of responses on extent to which communication gap between students and school authorities as well as that between students and government lead to students' crises in institutions of higher learning

Items	Description of Items	Mean	SD	Interpretation
21	School authorities not involving students in decisions that affect their welfare	3.69	0.58	VGE
22	School authorities not responding promptly to students complaints	3.22	0.60	G.E
23	Failure of government and school authorities to explain disturbing issues to students	2.93	0.64	G.E
24	Students ignoring the established channel of communication when presenting their grievances	2.06	0.55	L.E
25	Students failure to lay complain about pressing issues to appropriate authority	1.92	0.48	VLE
	Grand Mean	2.76	0.57	G.E

Cluster C is comprised of items on influence of communication gap between students and school authorities as well as that between students and government on students' crises. Data were also analyzed descriptively on individual items basis using mean and standard deviation. Summary of result is presented on Table 3.

Summary of result on table 3 shows that communication gaps engender students' crises. Factors like school authorities not involving students in decisions that affect their welfare, School authorities not responding promptly to students' complaints and Failure of government and school authorities to explain disturbing issues to students were found to be prominent factors in students' crises. The grand mean of the factor which is 2.76 means that communication gap contributes to a great extent in engendering students' crises.

Research Question 4: To what extent does youthful exuberance of students lead to students' crises?

Data on influence of youthful exuberances on students' crises were gathered with cluster D of the instrument. Summary of data analysis is presented on Table 4.

Summary of data analysis on table 4 shows that youthful exuberances constitute a source of students' crises in institutions of higher learning. The result however indicates clearly that students do not seem to love and enjoy rioting. The grand mean of 2.59 of this factor means that it contributes to a great extent in engendering students' crises.

Research Question 5: To what extent do home background factors of students engender crises in institutions of higher learning?

Table 4: Summary of responses on extent to which youthful exuberances of students lead to students' crises.

Items	Description of items	Mean	SD	Interpretation
26	Students riot because they feel that rioting is the way of youths.	2.87	0.53	G.E
27	Most students seem to love and enjoy rioting.	1.89	0.44	VLE
28	Students' demands are sometimes unreasonable.	2.70	0.49	G.E
29	The destruction of lives and properties during students protest do not help in conveying the seriousness of students' demand to the authority concerned.	2.77	0.64	G.E
30	Some students' crises are as a result of youthful exuberances.	2.74	0.61	G.E
	Grand Mean	2.59	0.54	G.E

Table 5: Summary of responses on extent to which home background factors of students engender crises in institutions of higher learning

Items	Description of items	Mean	SD	Interpretation
31	Homes where parents quarrel, fight, or exhibit other aggressive behaviours in the presence of their children.	2.66	0.42	G.E
32	Homes where children copied bad attitudes such as lying, stealing, alcoholism, dishonesty etc from their parents.	2.66	0.67	G.E
33	Homes where parents are too autocratic or too permissive.	2.78	0.49	G.E
34	Broken homes.	2.65	0.44	G.E
35	Encouragement from dissident parents.	3.15	0.53	G.E
	Grand Mean	2.82	0.51	G.E

Table 6: Test of significance of difference in the mean responses of male and female students on factors that engender students' crises

Factors	Group	Mean	SD	SD _x	t.cal	Alpha	t.crit	Inference
Unfulfilled Needs of Students	Male	3.02	0.57					Upheld
	Female	3.00	0.59	.0139	1.44	0.05	1.96	HO
Cultist Activities among Students	Male	3.064	0.56					Upheld
	Female	3.056	0.60	.0139	0.58	0.05	1.96	HO
Communication gaps	Male	2.73	0.58					Upheld
	Female	2.79	0.56	.137	0.44	0.05	1.96	HO
Youthful exuberances	Male	2.58	0.44					Upheld
	Female	2.60	0.64	.0116	1.72	0.05	1.96	HO
Home background factors	Male	2.83	0.50					upheld
	Female	2.81	0.52	0.0123	1.63	0.05	1.96	HO

Table 7: Test of significant of difference in the mean responses of students in tertiary institutions in Ebonyi State and their Enugu State Counterparts on factors that engender students' crises.

Factors	Group	Mean	SD	SD _x	t.cal	Alpha	t.crit	Inference
Unfulfilled Needs of Students	Ebonyi	3.00	0.59	0.01	1.438	0.05	1.96	Upheld
	Enugu	3.02	0.57	39				HO
Cultist Activities among Students	Ebonyi	3.05	0.57	.001	1.459	0.05	1.96	Upheld
	Enugu	3.07	0.57	57				HO
Communication gaps	Ebonyi	2.77	0.57	0.01	1.45	0.05	1.96	Upheld
	Enugu	2.75	0.57	37				HO
Youthful Exuberances	Ebonyi	2.60	0.53	0.01	1.538	0.05	1.96	Upheld
	Enugu	2.58	0.55	30				HO
Home background Factors	Ebonyi	2.81	0.50	0.01	1.626	0.05	1.96	Upheld
	Enugu	2.83	0.52	23				HO

Cluster E of the instrument was used to collect data on home background factors that may engender crises in schools. Data collected with this section were also analyzed descriptively on individual item basis. Summary of result is shown on Table 5.

Result on table 5 above shows that home background factors are one of the major causes of students' crises in institutions of higher learning. The factors yielded a grand mean of 2.82 in the 4-point scale indicating that it contributes to a great extent in engendering students' crises.

Hypotheses:

HO₁: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female students on the causes of students' crises.

In the instrument, each cluster represents a factor. Hypotheses were therefore tested on cluster basis. The responses of male and female students on each cluster of the instrument were separated and subjected to a t-test of difference between means of samples. Summary of result is presented on Table 6.

Result on Table 6 indicates that for each of the five factors that engender students' crises there is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female students. For each of the five factors, the calculated t-value is less than the critical t-value at an alpha level of 0.05.

HO₂: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of students in tertiary institutions in Ebonyi State and their Enugu State counterparts on the causes of students' crises.

The responses of students in Ebonyi and Enugu States on each cluster of the instrument were separated and subjected to a t-test of difference between means of samples. Summary of result is presented on Table 7.

As shown on Table 7, for each of the six factors that engender students' crises the calculated t-value is less than the critical value indicating that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of respondents from Ebonyi and those from Enugu State.

DISCUSSIONS

Lack of Essential Facilities: Analysis of data on Table 1 shows that all the items in the cluster contribute to a great extent in engendering students' crises. Accordingly, result of hypotheses 1 and 2 were rejected because the calculated t-values were more than the critical values. This implies that both male and female respondents in Enugu and Ebonyi states agreed that lack of essential facilities contribute to students' crises. The findings may be attributed to high population of students in our higher institutions, which have not been matched with equal provision of facilities. The findings are in line with that of Onyecherelam [39] and Ezike [16] who found out that lack of essential facilities causes crises in institutions of higher learning in Nigeria. This finding negates Mullins [17] recommendations on motivation and job performance, which stipulates minimum comfort for workers (student) in an organization. It has been proved by psychologists that the need for food, shelter etc is necessary for the survival of man and most especially for promoting positive behaviour of man within his social circle.

Activities of Secret Societies: The result on Table 2 reveals that all the items in the cluster contribute in engendering students' crises. Accordingly, hypotheses 1 and 2 were rejected indicating that both male and female students in Enugu and Ebonyi states agreed that activities of secret societies contribute significantly in engendering students' crises in our higher institutions.

These findings confirm the motivating factors for joining cult which are for political leeway, quest for academic freedom and for easy access to beautiful women in the campuses.

These findings are in line with the views of Onyecherelam [39], Ezea [40] and Echezona [41] which state that the activities of secret cults in our campuses are sown by the society itself. This is because there is hardly any crime committed in the campuses that has not been born and bred in the society surrounding and enveloping the institutions of higher learning. In other words, the adults within the society provide the modelling stimuli which the youths and the adolescents in our institutions of higher learning emulate and film back to us.

Communication Gap: Data on Table 3 revealed that students' crises are influenced by the first 3 out of the 5 items in this factor. The study shows that students do actually lay complaints about their pressing problems and that they do follow the established channels of communication when laying their grievances.

However, it can be discerned from the result of the first 3 items that students are still having hard times participating in decision making especially in matters involving their welfare. Consequently, item 21 was rated high 'to a very great extent'. Although they are allowed to participate in students' union activities, there is evidence that all key decisions are still the exclusive preserves of the university authorities' decision making organs such as the Senate, Council and Faculties. This is further worsened by non promptness of the university authorities in responding to students' complaints. Also the university authorities and the government do not explain disturbing issues to students or perhaps they do not explain them at the appropriate time. It is also interesting to note that both males and females share a common view in the findings and there is also no significant difference in the opinions of respondents from Ebonyi and Enugu states as shown in the results of the hypotheses.

These findings are in tandem with those of Ezike [16], Okezie [42] and Enyi [43] They all agree that issues relating to decision making and communication are serious enough to generate conflicts in any social organization.

Youthful Exuberances: The findings on Table 4 show that students agreed that 'rioting is the way of the youths'; 'their demands are sometimes unnecessary'; and that 'some students' crises are as a result of youthful exuberances'. However, they disagree with item 26 'most

students seem to love and enjoy rioting'. This indicates that, though, some students take part in students' crises, they do not enjoy what they are doing.

The question one may ask is, 'if students do not love crises, why do they participate in students' crises?' The probable explanation might be because of psychological changes arising from internal pressure of growth and development (this explanation however, does not include the hormonal causes of adolescent behaviour). The problem arises partly because present day university students are hardly grown before they enter university, unlike the case in the olden days. The result is that most students are in their early adolescent stage with its attendance problems.

Another possible explanation may be student's hyper-patriotic nature. Students often choose to champion the cause of the oppressed masses even when such factors are external to them. However, it is amazing that such situations are always remedied once such demonstrations are made. The results of the hypotheses indicate that both male and female students in the six institutions agreed that youthful exuberances of students engender crises in higher institutions.

These findings are in line with those of Anowor [44], Okeke [45] and Enyi [43]. They all agreed that adolescent deviate from behavioural norms in an attempt to exercise their natural endowments. They equally noted that youths and adolescents possess revolutionary and reformist zeal and are prepared to go extra length in their attempt to remedy many ills of the society.

Home Background: The findings in Table 5 indicate that students who are prone to crises already have such behaviours as their ways of coping with life's problems before entering the university. A child, who has been fed on a steady diet of aggression at home, brings the habit to school.

The findings may also be explained from the parental styles of raising some of the students. Some students may not be raised in an autocratic reciprocal method of parenting in which case they were not instilled with the sound moral values early enough in their life. These moral values make children to shun transgression not because they will be punished but because they know that it is wrong. Though, it may be argued that a child may come from good home but may be influenced by peer pressure into joining bad gangs. However, Eya [46] maintained, that "Young people who have developed a relatively strong value structure are relatively immune from peer pressure". Continuing, he stated that, "Peer pressure is only permanently successful when they move into a

vacuum created by absence of character". The home therefore, being the first school of experience for the child makes significant contributions towards the vulnerability or otherwise of the child by the time he faces the challenges of peer pressure.

Another explanation to the findings may be from serious emotional complications resulting from lack of attachment in the early stage of the student's life, perhaps due to early maternal separation. In this case, the student may suffer from severe social inadequacy resulting in being apathetic in his reactions to people. These findings corroborate the outcome of research results by Anadi [47], Onyecherelam [39] and Onyishi [48]. They all concluded that social deprivations in early life of a child have unfortunate effects in later years. The home indeed maintains and stabilizes the adult personality. It is equally interesting to note that both male and female students in the six institutions agreed that home related factors engender students' crises in higher institutions

Recommendations: Based on the findings of this study, the researcher made the following recommendations:

- Government should adhere to the United Nations' Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and United Nations Organization (UNO) criteria for investment in education, which stipulates that 26% of the budgetary provision of a nation should be invested on education.
- Institutions' authorities should make provision of necessary facilities/amenities a priority in their budget.
- Vibrant security system should be entrenched on our campuses. This should include surveillance, intelligence gathering and prompt responses in times of emergency. Students themselves must be involved in this process. Often, they are too afraid to divulge information because of reprisals. To ensure students' cooperation, information must be protected by a guarantee of confidentiality. Security gadgets, which monitor the movements of persons on campuses, can be used to survey and to record activities. Once a cultist is identified, he/she should be summarily expelled.
- Institutions' authorities should always make themselves accessible to students' leaders/representatives for meaningful dialogue. Reasons and justifications for management and government policies and actions that affect students' welfare should always be thoroughly explained to students before they are taken and implemented.

This means that the idea behind these policies and actions should as much as possible be sold to students. Such proper information can be issued through the institutions' house organ like information bulletin, news magazine etc. This calls for free flow of information between the government and students' body nationwide, between the students' leaders and the school authorities and between the students' leaders and the student body. This will reduce misunderstanding and crises arising from communication gap.

- Students should be allowed greater participation in making decisions that affect them especially in the institutions where minor representation is observed. For instance, students should be represented in such committees as the students' disciplinary committees, the programme/curriculum committees etc.
- Students' Affairs officers and law enforcement officials (e.g. police) should compulsorily undergo a course in youths and adolescent psychology.
- Government should promulgate appropriate and enforceable laws to prosecute parents who fight or exhibit aggressive behaviours in the presence of their children.
- Finally, there is need to re-examine the authenticity of the university degree being awarded to graduands. Usually, graduands are given the certificate for the award of university degrees on the basis of their having been found fit in both character and learning. It is necessary that the universities ensure the character aspect of the students who receive the degree and any student who fails to measure up to expectations in moral behaviour should not get the certificate. This measure will help to make the students desist from undesirable acts.

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