

## **Campus Conflicts Involving Students' and University Management in Nigeria: The Case of the University of Ibadan**

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**ABSTRACT** This study examines campus conflicts involving students' and university management in the University of Ibadan with emphasis on why university students' behave the way they do in conflicts and crisis situations. The study discussed the various types of students' conflicts in the university, the empirical incidents of campus conflicts in Ibadan, the relevant campus conflicts involving university students' and the university management, and or the government and the different factors influencing students' conflicts, with a view to document the most recent conflicts and crises, which hitherto have not been well documented, and thus bridge the knowledge gap that may be created between the past and the present. The study concluded that university students will always behave like the avant-garde reformist or activist in the society because of their youthful exuberance. Recommendations were made that university management should fine-tune their strategies in handling students' behaviours so as to prevent conflicts and crises.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The most intractable form of conflict in most universities in Nigeria is students' conflict. In the last decade, hardly did any university complete its academic session without an incidence of violent conflicts as a result of student grievance. Alimba (2008) noted that in 1971, the first violent students' protest took place at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, and the violent protest led to the death of a student named Kunle Adepeju. Several other students' unrest, hostile and devastating in nature, had thereafter been recorded in the developmental process of tertiary education in Nigeria, thereby making the educational terrain highly inconducive for teaching, research, and rendering of services to the public. The most worrisome aspect of students' unrest is the incessant manner in which they occur and their inherent violent nature. Student conflicts have therefore superseded other forms of conflicts in terms of frequency of occurrence, volatility, and severe effects on the universities and the nation as a whole (Aderinto 1994). There is therefore hardly any administration in the universities that had not witnessed one form of conflict or the other, whether such conflict is internal or external.

Tayo (2006) in his view also posited that there has been preponderance of student-related crises in the Nigerian university system, which is becoming worrisome to many stakeholders. According to him, this ugly development is so recurring that many are conditioned to think that

crisis is an inevitable factor in university education. Based on this, it is estimated that between 1989 and 1977, major unrests and outbursts by Nigerian university students were more than double. Okoge (1992) and Ogunyemi (1994) also noted that the riots (arising from students conflicts) are becoming an endemic feature of the Nigerian educational system and they manifest mainly in Nigerian tertiary institutions. They observed that the loss of lives and destruction of public property as a result of students' conflict is phenomenal. Hence, youth violence on campuses of tertiary institutions generally has increasingly become a worrisome scenario for university administrators, governments and members of the civil society. The reason why this is so is that the tertiary institutions are subsets of the various macro societies and they are a reflection of society's increasing use of violent methodologies to resolve conflicts frustration, and conflict situations. Nigeria, with over one hundred and fifty tertiary institutions, had therefore witnessed unprecedented violent behaviour occasioned by students' involvement in all categories of conflicts and violence.

Mohammed (2005), in a research conducted observed that over thirty-three students' lives were lost between 1986 -1996 and more than seven members of the academic staff were also killed in the process of students' violent conflicts. Rinju (2003) reported that students' unrest always have adverse effects on students, staff members, administrators and institution' goals at large. Lawal (2003) listed the following as

the main consequences of students' unrest in Nigerian schools: Loss of lives; Destruction of public and private property; Disruption of academic programmes; Loss of revenue to government agencies; Distraction of government attention from other important sectors of the economy etc.

From the management point of view, Obianyo (2003) observed that the alarming increase in students' unrest, riots and vandalism, especially at the post primary level, has been mostly blamed on heads of institutions, because they lack adequate skills and knowledge required for checking and managing students' unrest.

### Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

- (i) To examine campus conflicts involving students' and university management in the University of Ibadan, with emphasis on why university students' behave the way they do in conflicts and crises situations.
- (ii) To properly document the most recent conflicts and crises, which hitherto have not been well documented, and thus bridge the knowledge gap that could be created between the past and the present.
- (iii) To proffer possible and more effective ways of managing students' conflicts and crises in the university system.

### STUDENTS' CONFLICTS

Conflict as it were is largely an omnipotent trait of human societies since it is almost impossible to find two parties or more with entirely overlapping interests without experiencing one form of conflict or another. Etadon (2008) stated that conflict can also be described as a situation in which persons or groups disagree over means and ends as they try to establish their views in preference to others. Conflict could, therefore, occur in a society anytime and over any issue. Conflict can also be defined and interpreted as behaviours intended to obstruct the achievements of some other person's goals. In this wise, conflict is based on the incompatibility of goals which arises from opposing behaviours.

Conflict can be viewed at the individual, group or organizational levels. The term could also be used interchangeably to mean crisis. In

relation to students in the university system therefore, the conflict and or crisis generated is often referred to as unrest. However, when the situation is out of control, it may become violent conflict, which is an unlawful use of threat or force that results in the manifestation of despair and desperation.

Unrest has been used by some scholars to denote fight, demonstration, riots, agitation, crisis and protest. It is a state of discontent which creates anxiety and uneasy situation. Hornby (2006) defined unrest as "a state of disturbance in which people are angry or dissatisfied and are likely to protest or fight". Obianyo (2003) succinctly puts it that unrest goes hand in hand with crisis. Basically therefore, unrest is a concept that in practice is so dynamic to the extent that it incorporates the other terms, because it is a phenomenon that graduates from one stage to another. It normally starts from a mere agitation to demonstration, which later metamorphoses into protests, riot, and then into violent crisis. Students' unrest is therefore when students are dissatisfied and are fighting against certain social ills or irregularities at local, national or international levels. Students' unrest, from the psychological point of view, has been ascribed to "generational gap". Ajayi (1989) stated that there is no doubt that youths possess traits of behaviour which seem to completely run contrary to that of the elders of today. This, according to him, is largely due to the fundamental changes within the social system which are manifested in the current craze of dances, songs, dress and social activities of the youths that not only challenge but obliterate the accepted moral values of the society.

Also writing on the psychology of students' unrest, Tamuno (1989) noted that some professional observers associate the problems of students with those of youths. That is, those between the end of puberty and the beginning of full adult life, and seen thus, according to him, the problems concerning a generation gap, the weakening of family and other social bonds, alienation, the urge to demonstrate 'conspicuous manliness' in dress, manners and other forms, in a permissive society, full of idealism, and exuberance are magnified by students. The environment in particular, according to him, also play a prime role in character-molding; and education, taken in wider sense, is another key factor in this respect. All these have therefore

created a long-lasting view that youths, including students, tend to often take risks without the burden of career and family.

Tamuno (1989) also described the wider dimensions of the role of youths and students that in some point to the inherent need of youths to find their own outlook, university students are normally much more disposed than other groups of young people to engage in protest. He further observed that students are marginal, between roles; that is, between security and status derived from their own families and the obligation to find a status of their own, and like all marginal men, they suffer from special insecurities, and also have special capacities to see the imperfections of society. He noted further that students have more freedom than other segments of youths, and adults as well, to act without concern for consequences. According to him, students do not care as such because they do not have economic or social obligations to restrain them from their acts. They therefore have considerable energies and time to use up in whatever they do and in whatever way any of their group chooses to act because the environment of the University, in addition to the easy way of communication among students' on any campus, makes it very possible for those of them who have similar views to find one another.

#### **Demonstration and Students' Unrest**

Students' unrest or conflict violence is often started and expressed by demonstrations. Demonstrations have been accepted all over the world as the method adopted by individuals or groups to show their resentment of unpopular measures which they think adversely affects their interest. Students in particular are noted for exercising this right more frequently than the ordinary citizen. This might be due to their place in a developing society where they form a cream of the reading public. Secondly, they are, because of their status as students, allowed to display their youthful exuberances without undue restraints. It is only when this gets out of hand that the attention of the public and law enforcement agents are drawn on their excesses.

This might be regarded as the right to 'freedom of expression and association'. No one would rebuke students for bringing their grievances to the attention of the university or government authorities through a legitimate weapon

of student power, as long as such demonstrations are peaceful and do not trample upon other innocent people's rights. Nonetheless, students cannot claim any inherent right to demonstrate because they are in institutions of higher learning. Rather, they are like other ordinary citizens, responsible for the consequences of their actions, and if they stage any demonstration which does not conform to the provisions of the law, they could be liable individually and severally for the breach. There have been demonstrations in the Nigerian university system which had left the authorities with no other alternative but to close the institution until normalcy returned to such institutions. There were however, others which were peaceful and left no scars behind.

#### **TYPES OF STUDENTS' CONFLICTS IN THE UNIVERSITY**

Undoubtedly, the university system in general is a microcosm of the larger society and it is also faced with multi-dimensional conflicts, which include conflicts generated by students. Onyeonoru (1996) proposed a definition of such conflict in the university which, according to him, embraces important structural elements of tertiary education and university education in particular. Consequently, three major types of students' conflicts, which often results into unrest have been identified as follows:

#### **Student versus Administration Conflicts**

This type of conflict results from disagreement between the authorities in the university and the students on issues that directly affect the social and academic well-being of the students. Conflicts in this category are due to stringent university rules and regulations, problems of academic curriculum, catering services, water and electricity supply, intra-campus transport system, student union politics, increase in fees etc. Onyeonoru (1996) wrote that these types of conflicts which are mainly intra-institutional often take the form of demonstrations or such protests as boycott of lectures. The demonstrations may be peaceful or violent. A common feature of such protests, however, is that they often began as peaceful demonstrations but end up in violence, especially whenever they involve a clash with the police. Aspects of the violence

may also include destruction of property within the institution, assault of target staff or officials involved in the disputes, disruption of traffic flow and harassment of certain members of the academic community.

Ojo (1995) also observed that during such periods, students show their displeasure through agitation, protests and as a last resort, demonstration. He identified the internal problems responsible for students versus administration conflicts as: stringent university rules and regulations affecting students' behavior on campus like dress code and male-female access to halls of residence, hours of opening and closing of student bar/buttery and university library, representation of students on board and committees of Council and Senate or even representation on Council and Senate itself, the grading system, irregularity in the supply of light, water and health facilities, and (when universities were still operating catering for their students) food service. Others, he noted, are lack of communication and consultation between students and the authorities on a variety of matter.

#### **Student versus Government Conflicts**

Onyeonoru (1996) stated that this type of conflict is often caused by socio-economic or educational policy issues of government that affect the welfare of students directly or indirectly. The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), for example, has consistently made the point that some students' crises are often as a result of government educational policies. The union stated that as far back as 1983, ASUU has stressed the point that students' crises are the outcomes of the inevitable consequence of the educational policies of the government, which dashed the aspirations of the under-privileged for a better future (ASUU 1987).

This type of conflict often affects management in an attempt for management to want to intervene in the matters leading to the conflict or unrest between the students and the government. Such conflicts begin with the students' union issuing a press release objecting to the policies of the government. The statements are typically underlined by an ultimatum ordering the government to rescind the policies, or expect the popular resistance. The strategy employed by the students in the conflicts in this category is by demonstrations or protests as boy-

cott of lecturers which are either peaceful or violent. Such demonstrations or protests sometimes often go beyond the campus gates into the cities. The rationale is to sensitize members of the public on the issues involved. Dzungba (2010) was of the view that such demonstrations, sometimes often go beyond the campus gates into the cities and the rationale is to sensitize members of the public on the issues involved in the conflict, especially when they involve the overall interest of the public.

#### **Incidence of Campus Conflicts at Ibadan**

Campus conflicts involving university management and students in Nigeria and in particular at the University of Ibadan results from disagreement between the authorities and the students. As earlier mentioned, issues in conflict are mainly those that directly affect the social and academic well-being of the students. Some of the factors mainly responsible for such conflicts both in the past and in the present are:

- Campus Accommodation
- Catering Services
- Water and Electricity Supply
- Intra-Campus Transportation System
- Academic Curriculum Issues

A review of some early students-administration conflicts is relevant. In 1957, students at the University College Ibadan, now University of Ibadan, protested the so called curtailment of their liberty when the university authority decided to construct wire mesh burglary proofing round some male halls. The students destroyed the chairs and tables in their rooms in protest. In addition, there was a cry against the ban on the use of electrical appliances in their rooms without the Warden's approval.

Another crisis took place in 1971 when the students of the Nnamdi Azikiwe Hall of the university complained about the inadequate supply of drinks by the Cafeteria Manager at the Hall party of January, 1971. The students demanded that the Manager be removed. When the university authorities were still temporizing on the issue, the students started demonstration that was on for about a week. In the end, the Vice-Chancellor invited the police to the campus to quell the unrest. There was a violent clash between the students and the policemen. The serious crisis eventually resulted in the police shooting on the campus and killing a

student named Kunle Adepeju. This was the very first shooting and killing of a university student in the history of Nigerian university.

As a result, the Federal Military Government of General Yakubu Gowon set up a commission of inquiry whose chairman was Justice Kazeem to investigate the crisis. The commission stated that the crisis was caused as a result of inadequate hostel accommodation and supply of foodstuffs. Other causes were poor catering services, strained relationship between the students and the university authorities, unjust rustication and expulsion of students as well as the use of police to control the students' demonstration. Justice Kazeem also said that the students had not been involved in the administration of universities. Consequently, the students had developed a feeling of alienation. Among others, the commission recommended that live ammunition should never be used in quelling student demonstration.

There was severe crisis at the University of Ibadan during the 1975/76 academic session when the authorities banned students' union politics at the university. A very careful management of the crisis by the administration helped in averting another serious bloodshed. The university again in May 1992 experienced an internal domestic crisis when some students of the institution led by the Student Union President locked the gates to the university and also took the keys to various offices from the Central Porters Lodge where keys to university offices were kept, so that university worker will not be able to enter their offices. Their demands were that:

- (i) The University Senate should reduce cab fares to 50 kobo and its bus fare to 25 kobo as well as reduce the Health Centre fee from #80. 00 to #30. 00
- (ii) The University Senate should scrape the #30,00 Examination Fee and #5.00 for Add and Delete Forms.
- (iii) The students suspended for their part in throwing stones at the car of a former President of the country and his entourage on 2 August, 1991 should be recalled with immediate effect.

The students seized twenty-five official vehicles, took over the electric power station and the campus petrol station. The students also locked up a supermarket located at the petrol station and siphoned petrol from the underground petrol tanks on the campus.

In October 1998 also, final year students of the university protested the prolonged academic year which they feared may cause them to miss the next batch of the National Youth Service Corps Scheme (NYSC). The students trooped out and marched to various Faculties on the campus. They later besieged the Senate building and the Office of the Vice-Chancellor, carrying placards to register their grievances (Guardian October 8 1998).

In March 1999, in the same university, post-graduate students protested the fee hike which ranged from between 100 to 150 percent for academic and professional programmes. The increase in fees sparked off protest among student population who described it as "prohibitive" (Guardian March 8 1999). With the institution administration's resolve to charge undergraduate students new fees, with effect from the 1998/99 session, there was another protracted battle between the students' and the authorities as the students' union rejected the levies. The authorities hurriedly shifted the resumption date for the 1998/99 session amid what they termed "unfavourable security reports" (Guardian April 19 1999).

In May 1999, peace took a flight again as students and the authorities of the University of Ibadan were at daggers drawn over the introduction of special fees and non-provision of adequate facilities (Guardian May 1 1999). The authorities of the university immediately ordered the closure of the institution following students' demonstrations on the decision to introduce the "municipal charges," being the new fees to be paid for water supply, electricity, and the cleaning of students' hostels. Students who had just resumed for the new session were asked to leave the campus and their union suspended. The measures were aimed at forestalling further deterioration of the tense situation arising from the introduction of the levies, especially because the institutions academic calendar for the session had earlier been delayed on account of previous interruptions (Guardian May 4 1999).

Following the disturbances on the controversial fees, a 15-man Ad-Hoc Committee was set up by the Senate to resolve the problem. The students' who demonstrated however later took their protest against the levies to the Oyo State government Secretariat where they called for the immediate intervention of the State Governor, to avert a total breakdown of law and order on the campus. The leaders of the aggrieved stu-

dents' presented a five-point demand on their grievances which anchored on their concern for "equity, justice, and free education in the country". Other demands included the immediate reinstatement, without any conditions attached, of five students rusticated by the university authorities, and revocation of the subsisting suspension order on students' unionism in the university, among others (Post Express June 23 1999).

In the same institution, in December 1999, there was severe students' protest when the authorities of the university banned male students from visiting female hostels in the institution. The problem started when a male student was attacked by a mob on a false alarm raised by a female student that she was to be abducted for ritual purposes.

Irrked by the incessant power failure in the middle of their examination periods in January 2000, students of the University of Ibadan went wild and attacked staffers of the Works and Maintenance Department of the institution. The students invaded the power house in the night-the source of the institution's power supply-and held the staffers on night duty hostage and subjected them to severe beating. Also, in March 2000, there was a protracted strike by the University of Ibadan workers. The strike took heavy toll on the campus as water and power supply to students' hostels and staff quarters were cut off. The unbearable effects of the industrial action triggered off demonstrations against the authorities by the students who unleashed their pent-up frustrations as they trooped out of the campus, chanting slogans and decrying their condition (Comet March 13 2000).

There was another face-off between the authority of the University of Ibadan and the Independent Student Electoral Commission (ISEC) of the institution in January 2001. The students had allegedly conducted an election and sworn-in their officers without following laid down procedures. A legal tussle ensued and once again, the institution exploded with crisis. The authorities considered the election of the new union executives and their subsequent swearing-in as an "act of gross misconduct" (Guardian January 14 2001). The Independent Student Electoral Commission accused the authorities of the university for interfering in the conduct of the students' union elections. The body stated that in as much as the authorities of the university could not conduct elections for members of

Academic Staff Union, the Senior Staff Association and the Non-Academic Staff Union, the authorities did not have the right to interfere in the elections conducted by ISEC, a body constitutionally endorsed to carry out students' election in the institution. The Secretary of ISEC alleged that the intention of the authorities was to implement the International Monetary Fund's obnoxious policies by selecting students approved by them so that the students can pay between #43,000.00 and #51,000.00 per session, the same method they used in year 2000 which resulted in the closure of the university for four months. The face-off took a new dimension as the authorities went to court to ask for the dissolution of the newly elected student union government.

Tension enveloped the university again in January 2001 as aggrieved students of the institution protested against the authorities' suspension of 42 of their colleagues and the planned introduction of tuition fees. Though, the protest was peaceful, the demonstrating students chanted anti-government slogans, castigated the university authorities, particularly the activities of the then Vice-Chancellor. The demonstration disrupted the first semester examinations, and also affected the institution's academic calendar which was already a session behind schedule (Guardian January 12 2001).

In September 2003, students of the university, in their hundreds staged a protest march to the Oyo State Governor's Office, chanting various solidarity songs and denouncing the university authorities. The students protested the deteriorating infrastructures in the institution, including lack of regular water and epileptic power supply. The students of the university also trooped out at about 11:20 pm on Friday, 26 March, 2010, to vehemently protest the incessant power failure and inadequate water supplies to their halls of residence. The students marched round the campus, chanting songs of annoyance against the university authority, and holding candle lights and empty buckets of water, with their sponge, soap, tooth brush and towel, all of which symbolizes their suffering for water and light on the campus. The students decried and condemned in its totality the insensitive attitude of the university authority to their plight and welfare, despite an earlier warning. In the same night, the students bombarded the electrical power house of the Works and Maintenance Department-the source of electricity

generation to the campus-where they chased away the university technical staffs on duty at the power station.

It is worthy of note that due to violent reactions of students to policy decisions, resulting in students' versus administration conflicts, authorities in Nigerian universities has been finding it difficult to maintain peace on their campuses. It has been found that students' attitude is aimed at dictating to the university authorities on how things should be done instead of the other way round. Whenever the Senate- the highest ruling academic body in any university world-wide- takes a decision, the students' union on its own would come up with a different agenda which always run contrary to university authorities' position, whereas the various laws establishing the Universities in Nigeria empowered university authorities to take exclusive decisions on any matter effecting students. Student union leaders, who are always on the contrary, have found it convenient to always maintain that the interest of students' should be paramount or count first, irrespective of what the interests of the university authorities are.

There is however student against government conflicts which, in most cases, is either a fall out from students' against administration conflicts. As earlier mentioned, this type of conflict is often caused by socio-economic or educational policy issues of government that affect the welfare of students directly or indirectly. This type of conflict often affects management in an attempt for management to want to intervene in the matters leading to the conflict or unrest between students and government. Table 1 shows the trend of some of the relevant campus conflicts involving university students' and university management, and or the government, as the case may be, from 1957-1989.

### **Factors Influencing Students' Conflicts**

Some factors have been adduced for the frequent conflicts occurring between university students' and the authorities, which the students themselves capitalize on over the years. These are:

#### ***Media Risk Factors and Conflict Violence by the Youths***

Numerous researches have been conducted on media risk factors and conflict violence by

the youths. Looking at students' conflict from the point of view of violence and the influence of the mass media, Owen-Ibie (1994), reveals that violence had been a feature of most entertainment programmes over the years, which characterized films, drama and even cartoons for children (and youths). In another case, Cassata and Asante (1979) also recorded numerous studies that suggest a strong link between violence as portrayed on television viewing habits of children and adolescents. Similarly, Paul et al. (1979) also presented a series of research reports that showed that there may be a correlation between television viewing and societal aggression and violence. They traced violent conflicts in the context of cartoons which many children are exposed to and show that aggression, conflicts and violence pervade cartoon thematic output. Ode (1988), in another study revealed that several parents in Nigeria linked television viewing to violent acts and other anti-social behaviours. Interestingly, the study focuses on the perception of parents on the attitudes or responses of children to violence on television as an index of societal violence on children and youths themselves.

### ***Public Perception of University Students'***

Generally, the public has soft spot for students hence many of their excesses and minor breaches of the laws are overlooked. The public believes that students' are leaders of tomorrow and the conscience of the nation and that while their leaders and parents can be cowed down through repressive laws, students' would not tolerate any reckless invasion of their rights. This is why the public does not take offence at students' radical and activist behaviours. As a result, university students' have found it very convenient to always embark on demonstrations at the slightest provocation.

As Tamuno (1991) aptly described the situation since the series of students' unrest in 1957, the kind of activism had often been tolerated by the public as an exhibition of youthful exuberance. He stated that University students' had often seen themselves as mirroring their society and behaves as if they constituted the avant-garde reformist ideas; and that in this regard, student activists sought recognition from observers outside their respective institutions of learning. Simultaneously, these same radicals, from

**Table 1: Relevant campus conflicts involving university students' and university management and the government from 1957- 1989**

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Conflict</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Causes</i>	<i>Effects</i>
1	Conflict between students and University authority at Ibadan	November 1957	Curtailement of students' freedom by erecting burglary proof wire, ban on the use of electrical appliances in rooms, and poor quality of food	Rustication of all students on 13 November, 1957 while the ring leaders were expelled. The students union was made to pay 1,158 pounds sterling as fine for damages to the University fence
2	Conflict between University Students and the Administration	February, 1971	Students complained about the Manager of the Cafeteria for being corrupt and inefficiency, for poor productivity and poor public relations in the University	Serious clash between police and students resulting in the killing of Kunle Adejeju. A Commission of Inquiry headed by Justice Kazeem was set-up to look into the matter
3	Conflict by the students against both the University Authority and the Government	1973	Student opposition to the introduction of the National Youth Service Scheme (NYSC) in the country	Serious crisis leading to disruption of private and public property in many Universities and the suspension of academic activities, while many students sustain serious injuries
4	Students' demonstration against University Administration at Ibadan	April, 1975/76 session	Ban on politics and all other student activities, Dissolution of the Students Union, frozen of its accounts and the imposition of a dusk to dawn curfew on the campus. Armed policemen flushed out the Unions official from the campus	Attack on some Professor's homes and the kidnap of a particular Professor of History. The students Union President, Banji Adegboro and some others were expelled. The student union was dissolved
5	Conflict by U.I. students and that of other Universities	February, 1976	Abortive coup led by Lt. Col. Bukar Suka Dimka against the government of Late General Ramat Muhammed. The General was killed during the coup	Four university students were killed during the conflict by the law enforcement agents
6	Intra Campus Bus Service conflict at the University of Benin	1976	Dissatisfaction of the students with the Intra Campus bus service	Serious demonstration against the University Authority and the Government
7	Conflict by students against University Authorities and the Government at Bayero University, Kano	January, 1977	Poor quality of food, inexperienced kitchen staff and unhygienic kitchen conditions	Boycott of lectures, the cafeteria, and serious protest round the campus
8	Conflict by all Nigerian Universities	April, 1978	Announcement by the Federal Government on the increasing in the cost of feeding from 50 kobo to N1.50k per day, and the increase in hostel accommodation per session, from N30.00 to N90.00, with effect from the 1978/79 session	Boycott of lectures and serious demonstrations in all Nigerian Universities. The demonstrations were also held outside the various university campuses thereby disrupting public peace. Some markets and stores were invaded by students during the protest/demonstration
9	Conflict by student of the Bayero University, Kano against the University Administration	December, 1980	Removal of the provisional membership of students' from the Bayero University Act of 1979	The Vice-Chancellor's house was attacked and students besieged and disrupted the Senate meeting of the University. They also destroyed both private and public property in and outside their campus
10	Conflict by the University of Ife students against the University Authorities	May, 1981	Ritual killing of a student – Bukola Arogundade	Three female students and an aged man died, in addition to the killing of Arogundade. Other students and non-students sustained various degrees of injuries. The government set up a Panel of Investigation to look into the matter



**Table 1: Contd.....**

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Conflict</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Causes</i>	<i>Effects</i>
11	Ahmadu Bello University Students' demonstration against the then Minister of Education, Colonel Ahmadu Alli	May, 1986	"Alli Must Go" Episode arising from the governments obnoxious educational policies on the country's educational system	Five Students were reportedly killed by the police who fired live ammunition at them. Universities nationwide were closed down following wide protests and demonstration in all Universities
12	Anti-SAP Riots	May, 1989	Hash Economic measures introduced by the government	Mass violent protests against the measures by University students, and students of other institutions. Many protesters sustained injuries. All institutions were closed down by the government

among the generally quiescent groups of students, often a vocal minority, asked public functionaries for understanding in their endless demonstrations and protests inside and outside their respective campus walls.

#### ***Immunity Created by University Autonomy***

University autonomy is the freedom granted each university to manage its internal affairs without undue interference from outside bodies, persons or government. University autonomy is the reasonable and respectable internalization of the mechanism of university governance and administration, and the right of any university, through its Senate, to design and operate its academic programmes. This type of autonomy has been stretched to give some protection to students' when exercising their rights as students' in a university environment, and thus create the opportunities and avenues for their excessive behaviours which often results in students' unrest, violent conflicts, and crises in the university.

#### ***Concept of Private Property in University Environment***

The concept of private property which must be strictly complied with, even by the police; namely, that university campuses are private property and that the police cannot intrude into activities on the campus unless they are invited in writing by the Vice-Chancellor. The issue of the university being a private property is enhanced by university autonomy, which granted each university the freedom to manage its internal affairs without undue interference from outside bodies, persons or government.

#### ***Escalation of Students' Conflicts by the Mass Media***

Ojo (1995) stated that one of the factors that promote students' unrest is the negative role of the mass media during any students' crisis. He noted that the mass media has, through its highlight or twist of news and events, created a stereotype of the (College) activist as a long-haired, dirty, and anti-intellectual revolutionary. He also maintained that the media has informed, inflamed, compliment, condemned, supported, and rejected actions of students of the 1960s. Consequently, compliments and supports have generally been accorded to conservative and moderate students, while condemnation and rejection has been the lot of radicals or the students' left-of-center. The Mohammed Commission of Inquiry into the Nigerian universities crisis of 1978, in its report, also found that the press coverage of the crisis was a significant factor in the escalation of the crisis and that from the initial stage the "press had egged on the students' into confrontation by sensationalism and distorted appraisal of the issues at stake in the crisis". The Commission's report recommended among others, that editorial comments and newspaper reports should be based on profound research and study.

#### ***Escalation of Students' Conflicts by the Law Enforcement Agents***

According to Ojo (1995), one of the causes of students' unrest in the campuses of the universities is the drafting of the police to the campuses to suppress riots or demonstrations. The presence of the police on the campuses always aggravate students who see them as agents of

government with "little intelligence and no mind of their own, and who are little better than Zombies". On the other hand, the police see the students as over-indulged and pampered boys and girls who engage in excesses instead of facing the task for which they were primarily admitted into the university.

With such divergent views, there has always been fierce conflict and open confrontation between students and the police on any occasion when there is demonstration or student unrest, and the police are invited to quell the demonstration. To send the mobile police force to quell riots on the campus or to disperse demonstrating students always resulted in flaming the demonstrations or riots.

#### **Other Factors Influencing Students' Conflicts**

Some other studies summed up and located the root of students' conflicts and crises among, in such factors, as family disorganization and the consequent poor parental care, economic crises, erosion of university autonomy, adolescent behaviour, youth aggression and pampered self-image of the students, poor funding of universities and the consequent acute lack of social amenities and academic facilities, brain drain and poor attention to students, authoritarian approach of management such as lack of consultation with, and low participation of students in university governance, and poor living and working environment in the institutions generally, among others (Ogunyemi 1992; NUC 1994; Ujo 1994; Tamuno 1991; Ojo 1995; Onyeonoru 1996).

#### **CONCLUSION**

As it were, university students will always behave like the avant-garde reformist or activist in the society because of their youthful exuberance. However, students' conflicts and crises, whatever its causation, negatively affects the roles of any university in achieving the goals of developments set for it by the society. Hence, for students' conflicts and crises to be curtailed, university management and other stakeholders in the university system should fine-tune their strategies for adequacy and effectiveness in the management of students' conflicts. University authorities should, therefore, strategize by setting in motion machineries' for handling stu-

dents' so as to prevent or manage students' conflicts.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The overall management of students will lead to achieving the much desired industrial peace, harmony and development of higher education in Nigeria. It is therefore recommended that:

- (i) There should be considerable improvement in the living and working environment of universities generally.
- (ii) The negative influence of the mass media and the law enforcement agents in reporting sensational news, escalating and flaming students' conflicts respectively, during crises should be avoided. This can be achieved if university authorities put in place appropriate conflict management strategies to handle issues that can precipitate conflicts and crises.
- (iii) Students' should be well represented on the Student Welfare Board and other Committees that deals with the affairs, and their interest should always be well taken into full consideration in the university system. Hence, students' should be encouraged to take part in vigorous discourse on the aspects of their curriculum development and should also be assured that they are part of the national development process.
- (iv) Universities should also encourage constant dialogue with student representatives at all levels. Parties to conflicts should use the democratic norms of dialogue, due process and fairness in resolving their differences. University administrators should therefore put in place adequate machinery for dialogue, for parties in conflicts to discuss their disagreements in a mutual relationship. In this wise, dialogue would be well recognized as the best option for conflict management.

The way and manner in which students are handled will go a long way in determining their psychological perceptions to issues that can precipitate conflicts and crises.

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