EVALUATION OF STUDENTS-MANAGEMENT CONFLICTS IN PUBLIC TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN OSUN STATE, NIGERIA (2010-2020)

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ABSTRACT

Students-Management conflict is one of the major obstacles to smooth public tertiary education in Nigeria. Despite the myriad of efforts to mitigate students' turbulences in tertiary institutions, the dissention between students and school authorities is unabated and strategies often adopted to eradicate this menace are not efficacious. This study examined students-management conflicts in public tertiary institutions in Osun State, Nigeria between 2010 and 2020. Questionnaire and in-depth interview were used for data collection. Three public tertiary institutions were selected for this study and a total number of 400 questionnaires were retrieved from respondents while interviews were conducted with 15 key informants. Data were presented quantitatively and qualitatively through the use of tables and narratives. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and percentages were used in the analysis of the quantitative data. The study found that these conflicts occurred frequently (91%), are often violent in nature (82%) and that its causes were increase in fees (93.7%), insensitivity to students' demands (91%), poor facilities (75%) among others. Findings through the interviews further revealed that the root cause of the students-management conflicts in the institutions was poor funding by the governments. Some of the effects of the conflicts were disruption of academic calendar (96.5%), closure of the institutions (93%) and ban of students' unionism (87.3%). The study also revealed that 87% of respondents indicated that school authorities often made use of force in handling the conflicts while 86% confirmed that the strategies were ineffective. Based on the findings, the study recommended adequate funding of public tertiary institutions and effective peace education that will equip both the institutional authorities and the students with the necessary skills to prevent or manage conflicts constructively, with a view to realizing conducive and peaceful learning environments.

Keywords: Conflict, Students, Management, Tertiary Institutions

INTRODUCTION

Conflict is a pervasive occurrence in every human society as it manifests itself in different dimensions all over the world. This typical characteristic of conflict has made it to attract high degree of attention and interest in general social history and thought (Idowu, 2005). Like the pre-colonial period, the post-colonial African societies have witnessed several conflicts, most of which arose from diverse religious, political and socio-economic factors and were dysfunctional in nature. The history of Nigeria as an independent state is also replete with occurrences

of conflicts in various parts of the country and the fact that serious responsiveness is not often devoted towards addressing the root causes of these conflicts has made most of them not to be effectively managed (Obadiah and Asamu, 2010).

The early part of the post-colonial period in Nigeria witnessed several students' conflicts against constituted authorities (Dawan, 1997). Some of the historic instances were the protest against Anglo-Nigerian Pact of 1961, unrest at the University of Ibadan in 1971, Operation "Gowon must go" in 1974, University of Benin demonstration in 1976, and "Ali must go" in April 1978, which culminated in the proscription of student unionism in Nigeria by General Olusegun Obasanjo's regime. However, the student body was reinstated by Alhaji Shehu Shagari's regime in 1980 and had its name changed to National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) in 1983 (Aluede et. al., 2005, Adebayo, 2009). There were also students' crises over the proposed introduction of tuition fees and the scrapping of catering services in 1984, the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in 1989 and the deregulation of Nigerian currency in 1992 among others (Aluede, ibid). It is deducible from the foregoing that these conflicts were often times triggered by current national issues, welfare problems, perceived injustice and structural problems (Aina, 1977; Aluede, 2001). Although the causal factors of these conflicts were multi-dimensional, they all had overt and acute implications that were detrimental to effective teaching and learning atmosphere (Robinson, 2014).

In recent time, the unrests are mostly between the students and the managements of various tertiary institutions across the na-

tion. These conflicts often metamorphose to protests, riots, unrests and violent demonstrations, which culminate in loss of lives and property as well as recurrent closure of tertiary institutions (Adeyemi et. al, 2010, Akparep et. al, 2019). The current realities in contemporary Nigerian public tertiary institutions have made them to be prone to conflicts. Apart from the continued struggle for global relevance, these institutions are under strong pressure of modern trends. However, the rising demand for higher education by Nigerian youths without the provision of corresponding resources and facilities in our public institutions by the governments is making learning unconducive. Since many parents and guardians are not economically buoyant enough to afford the cost of sending their wards to private tertiary institutions, students' enrolment into public tertiary institutions has greatly amplified in the last two decades regardless of the reality of high level of infrastructural decay in Nigerian public tertiary institutions (Smah, 2001).

Although it is a truism that conflict is a normal part of human social relations, adoption of a good conflict-handling style by an organization will not only prevent a conflict situation from escalating and having deleterious implications but also increase the level of efficiency in any institution (Fatile and Adejumo, 2011). The fact that conflict is an inevitable phenomenon in any human organization explains why Nigerian public tertiary institutions also experience conflict between groups and stakeholders within their jurisdictions (Brookins, 2016; Shonk, 2021). It is therefore the responsibility of the Management teams or heads of these institutions to be effective conflict managers and ensure the promotion of peaceful co-existence and harmonious relationship on their campuses from time to time (Jubril, 2020). However,

there have been incessant conflicts between the students and the managements of public tertiary institutions in southwestern part of this country in recent years. Given this backdrop, this study examined the students-management conflicts in public tertiary institutions in Osun state and recommends possible ways to mitigate these conflicts in the interest of stable and sustainable tertiary education in our public institutions.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Students-management conflicts have become one of the longstanding impediments to smooth and peaceful public tertiary education in Nigeria. Although the implementation of appropriate conflict-handling strategies by the constituted authority is pivotal to the development of any institution, the prevailing situation in Nigerian public tertiary institutions is a reversal of this reality as many of these institutions are far from experiencing a durable peace. Over the years, these conflicts, which have been recognized as one of the major factors militating against uninterrupted learning on Nigerian campuses, have produced many negative consequences that are inimical to the growth and invaluable obligations of tertiary education in the country (Aluede, 2001). The recognition of students-management conflict as a problem in Nigerian tertiary institutions is based on the incessant nature of this variant of conflict in various institutions across the nation since the inception of University education in 1948. At a point, student unrests reached national level and conscription dimensions that they constituted a serious menace to political authorities and national security (Onwuejeogwu, 1992, Aluede and Aluede, 1999).

Despite the numerous discussions on students' unrest and violence in institutions of higher learning in Nigeria, the dissonance between the students and managements seems to be waxing stronger. The autocratic nature of leadership and administration in public tertiary institutions contributed immensely to the negative peace, discord, violence and instability on campuses. Some institutional heads and administrators adopt stringent measures in their dealings with students. The dynamics of repressive treatment and gestures being accorded to students usually lead to despair and discontentment, which made them to become consistently aggressive and disrespectful. The structures and styles of administration of many institutions of higher learning do not allow students to be taken serious as an integral part of the system and are rarely listened to or involved in the governance of institutions. The rationale behind the adoption of adversarial conflict management strategies by the two parties involved, which often exacerbates the situation, is basically because the managements of higher institutions of learning often times believe that their rights as leaders are endangered while the students feel that their interests and requests are suppressed and jettisoned. Students therefore form the opinion that the management teams are oppressors while the latter operate with the mindset that the former are rabble-rousers. This supposition often generates an atmosphere of displeasure and grievances, which snowballs into violent reactions from students regarding some contentious issues in their various institutions (Adebayo, 2009). Sometimes, institutional efforts to cleanse or replace corrupt students' union leaderships culpable of mismanagement of funds and other illicit cum atrocious activities are repelled with violence by unscrupulous students, leading to insecurity of lives of the management team, as it was the case in one of the notable federal institutions in south-

west Nigeria some years back. Besides, the awareness of an institutional management's preference and support for one of the competing students' political groups struggling for the control of the students' union organization often leads to skirmish whereby the contending political groups are easily provoked to recourse to assault and violence, using different kinds of lethal weapons in their quest for political hegemony (Ayantayo, 2008). The aftermaths of all these abysmal scenarios are very extensive and some of the critical consequences of such situations are endemic cultism and the permeating experience of students-management conflicts in Nigerian public tertiary institutions (Smah, ibid). However, an effective handling of these conflicts will not only result in peaceful co-existence between students and constituted authorities, but also facilitates the realization of the goals of the institutions.

Broad objective
The general objective of the study was to examine students-management conflicts in selected public tertiary institutions in Osun State, Nigeria from 2010 to 2020.

Objectives of the study
♦ Describe personal characteristics of respondents;
♦ Determine the frequency of occurrence of students-management conflicts in the selected institutions
♦ Assess the nature of students-management conflict in the institutions
♦ Identify the causes of students-management conflict in the institutions
♦ Determine the perceived effects of students-management conflicts in the institutions

♦ Ascertain the conflict handling strategies adopted by the authorities of the institutions
♦ Evaluate the effectiveness of the adopted strategies by the authorities of the institutions

LITERATURE REVIEW
Scholars have identified students-management conflict as one of the variants of organizational conflicts in Nigerian public tertiary institutions in contemporary times (Awosusi, 2005; Olaleye and Arogundade, 2013; Jude-Iwuoha et. al, 2014; Osakede et. al, 2018; Ogolo, 2019; Jubril, 2020). This is because incessant students' violent reactions to issues affecting them and other internal problems have greatly affected the growth and effectiveness of public tertiary institutions in Nigeria. (Ekundayo and Ajayi, 2009). Robinson and Nwosu (2014) link the causes of recurring conflicts in our education system to economic realities and corruption in the larger society, which militate against the goals of the tertiary institutions. They further argue that the idea of formulating academic policies and taking critical decisions that affect students without intimating them often ends up in conflicts.

Aluede et. al. (2005) enumerated the policies and factors that trigger students' unrest on university campuses and advances predictions about policies that may produce student protests in the near future. He opined that students learning under unpleasant conditions will be psychologically demoralized and behave in manners disapproved by their institutional authorities. Ajibade (2013) argued that the adoption of autocratic style of leadership by the heads of tertiary institutions in Nigeria frustrates the actualization of students' demands and leads to resistance, rebellion and protests, which not only dis-

rupt the fragile peace on campuses but also hinder the smooth pursuit of organizational goals. It was further emphasized that the authoritarian style of leadership creates a structural lacuna between students and management of tertiary institutions (Akparep et. al, 2019).

Adebayo (2009) examined students-authority conflicts in Nigerian Universities and his study revealed that students-management conflicts occur more frequently in the State Universities than in the Federal Universities. He pinpointed insecurity of lives and property as the major causal factor of the conflicts and recommended situational type of conflict management strategy for the school authorities. However, his work is a generalized discussion on students-management conflicts, as he does not show that an in-depth study of a conflict situation in any of the Nigerian institutions was carried out. Besides, the study of Ogunbodede et. al. (2020) is averse to monocausal explanation and enumerated numerous factors that have generated students' unrests over the years. Based on empirical evidence, it is reasonable to argue that insecurity could not be the only major causal factor of conflicts in all tertiary institutions. Besides, any attempt to lay credence on one factor without discovering other causal factors, with a view to addressing the problem wholistically will pave a smooth way for incessant reoccurrence of Students-Management conflicts in various public institutions of higher learning across the nation.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Conflict theories are indispensable in conflict analysis and they are classified under the broad categories of analytical theories. Although these theories focus on humans and are difficult to test, they are logical in their approach and seek to link relationships between variables. These theories have explanatory and problem solving value and therefore offer invaluable insight into understanding a conflict (Faleti, 2006). Since no single theory can exclusively account for all causal factors in a conflict, both frustration-aggression and human need theories were adopted for this study.

Frustration-aggression theory

The frustration-aggression hypothesis emanated from a small monograph by Dollard et. al (1939). The theory states that "the occurrence of an aggressive behaviour always presupposes the existence of frustration and, contrariwise, that the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression". The theory implies that aggression is often an outcome of frustration. It explains how and why some people or a group of people becomes aggressive during certain situations, and that a persistent frustration usually degenerates into aggression that may lead to violence (Ejezie, 2020). Contrary to the position of realists and biological theorists, the theory therefore explains that aggression is not just a display of a normal reaction or instinct, but it is the effect of frustration arising from the denial of an individual's legitimate desires either directly or indirectly or by the indirect result of the structure of a society. The feeling of disappointment may lead such a person to express his anger through violence that will be directed to those he holds responsible or people who are directly related to them (Faleti, 2006).

A good scenario in which frustration led to aggression was a conflict between the students and authorities of Obafemi Awolowo University in 2010. The students' union leaders appealed and peacefully agitated for a

downward review of a sky rocked acceptance fee and removal of an imposed health insurance fee. Insensitive to their demands, the University management went ahead to introduce a system of payment which frustrated the plans of the union leaders to prevent the fresh students from paying the controversial fees. The frustration of the students' union leaders and the returning students forced them into acts of aggression. The situation degenerated to a violent protest, which culminated into the closure of the University and proscription of the Students' Union government.

Human needs theory

Human Needs Theory assumes that unfulfilled basic human needs such as physical, psychological, social, security, autonomy, recognition, identity and effective participation in the processes that shapes such identities are conflict catalysts (Fisher et al., 2000). The position of this theory is that all humans have basic needs that they aspire to fulfil and the denial or obstruction of these needs by other groups or individuals could affect them immediately or later, thereby leading to conflict. Need theorists such as Maslow (1943), Burton (1972) and Azar (1990) identified a wide range of human needs and agreed that prohibition of these needs hampers the actualization of the potentials of either groups or individuals and subsequently leads to conflict.

The students of public tertiary institutions in Osun state during the period under consideration protested against the managements of their institutions for alleged denial of their basic needs. The poor responsiveness of authorities to their welfare challenges and not being involved in decision making on matters affecting their academic pursuits were also conflict catalysts in the other institutions. Thus, the denial of students' basic social needs, lack of recognition and effective participation in the processes that shape the identity of the students in the study area often led to conflict between the authorities of the institutions and the students.

METHODOLOGY

This study area was Osun state in Southwestern part of in Nigeria. It is bounded to the east by Ekiti and Ondo States, to the north by Kwara State, to the south by Oyo State and to the west by Ogun State. The study was carried out in three (3) selected public tertiary institutions in the state namely; Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife; Federal Polytechnic, Ede and Osun State College of Education, Ilesha. These institutions represent the major public tertiary institutions for academic training and they recorded students-management conflicts between 2010 and 2020. Data were collected through the use of questionnaires and in-depth interview while secondary data were obtained from textbooks, journals articles, and other textual materials relevant to this study. The students' population of the selected institutions and the number of retrieved questionnaires were as under listed:

Institution	Population	No of Questionnaires Retrieved
Obafemi Awolowo University	30102	245
Federal Polytechnic, Ede	9671	85
Osun State College of Education, Ilesha	8644	70

Both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were used to select respondents. The probability sampling method used for collecting quantitative data through the questionnaires was simple random sampling while the non-probability sampling method used to collect qualitative data through in-depth interviews was purposive sampling. A total of 400 questionnaires were retrieved from the selected institutions and used for data analysis while 15 key informants were interviewed. For the interview, five (5) respondents were selected from each of the selected tertiary institutions. These selected respondents comprised Students' Leaders, Lecturers, Deans of Students, Chief Security Officers and Management Staff. The study adopted methodological triangulation that entails the use of more than one method of data collection in the analysis and interpretation of data with a view to enhancing the validity and credibility of the findings as the methods of data collection complement each other. Data collected through interviews were transcribed while the major format for the presentation of data obtained from the fieldwork through questionnaires was Tables. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and percentages were used in the analysis of the quantitative data. The study adopted the explanatory sequential model of the mixed method research design in the presentation of its findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Respondents' socio-demographic characteristics
Majority (74.8%) of the respondents were males (Table 1). This specifies that male respondents outnumbered female respondents. The majority (86%) of the respondents were between 16 and 30 years, while 14% of the respondents are above 31 years old. Besides, majority (54.4%) of the respondents were Christians and most (91%) of the respondents were single (Table 1). The implication of the findings is that most of the respondents were students who are young, energetic and capable of activism.

Frequency of occurrence of the conflicts
Majority (91%) of the respondents agreed that students-management conflicts occurred frequently in the institutions during the period under review (Table 2). Findings from the qualitative data was in consonance with the above results, as all key informants interviewed agreed that students-management conflicts were a recurrent problem in the institutions (Table 2). For example, one of the past Students' Union Presidents said that:

> "The institutions across the state have experienced series of students-management conflicts. Although students were usually conscious of electing cool-headed and peaceful leaders with a view to avoiding face-off with managements, which might lead to closure of institutions that affects their studies and elongate their stay on campuses, these students could not tolerate apparent oppression and injustice. Hence, their attempt to courageously resist any unfair treatment and extortionate tendencies of the managements of the institutions often leads to protests and demonstrations."

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by socio-demographic characteristics

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	299	74.8
Female	101	25.2
Total	**400**	**100.0**
Age		
16-24	239	59.7
25-30	105	26.3
31-35	30	7.5
36 and above	26	6.5
Total	**400**	**100.0**
Religion		
Christianity	178	54.4
Islam	117	29.3
Traditional	65	16.3
Total	**400**	**100.0**
Marital Status		
Single	364	91.0
Married	36	9.0
Divorced	**0**	**0**
Total	**400**	**100.0**

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Similarly, a lecturer corroborated the above statement that:

> "It is quite unfortunate and worrisome that students-management conflicts have become a regular phenomenon in our public tertiary institutions, particularly in this state. For example, the incessant cases of students' unrests and protests at Obafemi Awolowo University at a point got to the extent that some parents were discouraging their wards from choosing the institution while some frustrated rich parents had to transfer their children to private universities to continue their education owing to frequent closure of the institution." (Interview, December, 2021).

Table 2: Frequency of occurrence of students-management Conflicts

Frequency of Occurrence	Frequency	Percentage
Frequent	364	91.%
Not frequent	23	5.7%
Undecided	13	3.2%
Total	400	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Nature of students-management conflicts in the institutions

Majority (82%) of respondents was of the view that students-management conflicts in these institutions were violent in nature while only 18% of respondents opined that the conflicts were not violent (Table 3).

These results, therefore, imply that students-management conflicts not only occurred frequently in these institutions but they were also violent in nature. The in-depth interview with key informants corroborate that the conflicts were frequent and often violent in nature.

Table 3: Nature of the students-management conflicts

Nature of the conflict	Frequency	Percentage
Violent	328	82.0
Not violent	72	18.0
Total	400	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Causes of students-management conflicts in the institutions

Most of the respondents attributed the causes of students-management conflicts in the institutions to fees increment (93.7% and 86.5%), insecurity (86.2%), insensitivity to student complaints (91%), poor or inadequate educational facilities (75.5%), non-involvement of students in decision making on matters affecting them (74.2%), stress (66.2%), unruly behaviour of students (56%) and interference of managements in students' political affairs (57%) Table 4. This confirms that the causal factors of students-management conflicts are multi-dimensional.

The qualitative data gave an explicit explanation of the causal factors. According to another student leader,

> "One of the major causes of conflicts between students and management in all public institution across the state is increment or imposition of fees. For example, the management of an institution within the state increased acceptance fee from N2,000 to N20,000 and also attempted to impose health insurance fees of #1,600 per student in 2010. This ugly development degenerated to a pro-

test because the decision was taken without due consultation with the students' representatives. Besides, there are numerous cases of managements' indifference to students' welfare challenges in virtually all our public tertiary institutions. Our laboratories are poorly equipped, students don't have access to recent materials in the library and there are inadequate and poorly equipped lecture theatres. Students receive lectures and write examinations in unconducive manners, hostel facilities and accommodation are poor and inadequate, health centres are nothing to write home about and until students protest, there may not be prompt response to water and electricity challenges" (Interview, December 2021).

Similarly, a Dean of Students corroborated the above statement and further stated the root cause of the students-management conflicts. According to him:

> "Most of the times, increment or introduction of new fees as well as challenges of water and electricity supply are the major causes of students' lecture boycotts, protests, and demonstrations. But in reality, the root cause of the students-management conflicts across the country is the problem of poor funding of education by the federal and state governments. As a matter of fact, the management of institutions are not only trying to meet up with the present day educational challenges and needs but also absolutely conscious of attaining the vision and goals of these institutions. Thus, the authorities of these insti-

tutions are of the view that if the government cannot adequately fund the institutions, the parents of candidates who chose the institutions and really want a qualitative education that is cheaper than private institutions' charges should be able to afford the reviewed or introduced fees without complaints" (Interview, December 2021).

A management interviewee who aired his position on why students are not often involved in decision making on students' matters informed that students are often impolite and stubborn and that it is difficult to accede to their requests and expectations, which are usually at variance with current economic realities. He further stated that students often abuse the privilege of engaging them on student matters by trying to impose their wills on managements and whenever they perceive that a matter is unfavourable to them and they could not prevail over managements, they would start exhibiting arrogance as well as mobilizing and inciting other students for a mass protest.

A lecturer further stated that the managements of our public tertiary institutions see the students as conservative and supercilious individuals with unrealistic expectations, who always resist any increment in fees but desire and demand the best welfare condition. They believe that students are under their control and must not challenge or revolt against their decisions. They, therefore, see the students as troublemakers and their protests against the so-called oppression as rebellion. He concluded by affirming that one of the adverse effects of underfunding of education is the manifestation of major students' unrests over issues regarding their living and learning conditions on our campuses.

A Chief Security Officer during the in-depth interview revealed that:

> "On several occasions, managements of our institutions in this state are somehow indifferent to early warning signals and the prevention of occurrences of students' protests. They fail to attach importance to students' grievances and demands until things get out of hand. This is probably because members of the management teams have witnessed several unrests in the past and the culture of protest and demonstration by students are not new to them, as they also actively participated in them during their school days."

Another Head of Campus Security also informed that:

> "Although students can be unrealistic and naughty at times, institutional authorities sometimes introduce some policies that have the tendencies of disturbing the peace on campuses without considering what could be the reaction of the students. Besides, managements' interference in student political issues had often led to verbal and physical assaults by students in their efforts to resist any unwarranted or unhealthy influence on the activities within their jurisdiction" (Interview, December 2021).

Table 4: Causal factors of students-management conflicts

S/N	Views	Agreed	Undecided	Disagreed	Total
1.	Increase in tuition fees	375 (93.7%)	15 (3.7%)	10 (2.5%)	400 (100%)
2.	Increased acceptance Fees	346 (86.5%)	20 (5.0%)	34 (8.5%)	400 (100%)
3.	Insecurity of lives and property	345 (86.2%)	41 (10.2%)	14 (3.5%)	400 (100%)
4.	Insensitivity to students' complaints and demands	364 (91.0%)	13 (3.2%)	23 (5.7%)	400 (100%)
5.	Poor or inadequate educational and infrastructural facilities	302(75.5%)	30 (7.5%)	68 (17.0%)	400 (100%)
6.	Non-involvement of students in decision making on matters affecting them	297 (74.2%)	38 (9.5%)	65 (16.2%)	400 (100%)
7.	Academic Stress	265 (66.2%)	46 (11.5%)	89 (22.2%)	400 (100%)
8.	Unruly behaviour of students	224 (56.0%)	164 (41.0 %)	12 (3.0%)	400 (100%)
9.	Interference of managements in political affairs of students	231(57.75%)	25 (6.25%)	144 (36%)	400 (100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Perceived effects of the conflict

The perceived effects of students-management conflicts in the study area were disruption of academic activities (96.5%), closure of institutions (93.7%), ban on Students' Unionism (87.3%), suspension of student leadership (74%), cultism (60.5%) and enmity between students and managements (92%) Table 5. This result, therefore, implies that most of the respondents agreed that all the factors were the effects of students-management conflicts in the institutions with the exception of item 4 that rarely occurred. The in-depth interview conducted corroborates and expatiates on the above effects of students-management conflicts. A lecturer stated that:

> "The protests and unrests by students really affect institutional functions as well as administrative duties and in such atmosphere, learning cannot take place. On several occasions, the management teams of our institutions feel insecure when they are not ready to rescind or compromise their decisions and they perceived that the reactions of students are getting beyond their immediate control. Besides, the feeling that the aggrieved students may be propelled to disrupt some important activities and ceremonies of the institutions, which they know we attract the press as well as eminent personalities, and dent the image of the institutions. These are the major reasons why the most obvious and widely known effects of the students-management conflicts are the closure of the institutions and proscription of the Students' Unions"

Another lecturer interviewee further revealed another negative consequence of students-management conflicts when she stated that

> "The closure of institutions owing to students' unrest drastically affects the earnings of the traders and service providers in the environments of the institutions and the adjoining communities. This is because most of the small and medium scale businesses in and around our campuses rely on the patronage of the students of the institutions for their survival."

One of the student leaders also stated that:

> "Most of the times that students protest with a good cause, particularly over the imposition of some obnoxious policies, the managements of our institutions usually threaten the students' unions' executives and other vibrant students who champion the oppositions with suspension. To be candid, victimization and suspension have neither deterred the strong-willed students from agitating nor abated the cases of students-management conflicts over the years because students cannot endure inhuman and tyrannical inclinations".

A Chief Security Officer interviewed further informed that:

> "Whenever violent protests and demonstrations lead to closure of the institutions, some students refuse to go home but stay with their friends in private hostels in adjoining communities. Cult groups usually take advantage of this particular period to easily influence, tempt and initiate some of these indigent and idle students into cultism to increase their membership. Some female students engage themselves in prostitution currently refer to as "hook-up" business while a good number of stu-

dents go into drug abuse, cyber-crime, fraudulent businesses and money rituals in their quest to get rich quick" (Interview, December 2021).

Table 5: Effects of students-management conflicts in the selected institutions

S/N	Views	Agree	Disagree	Total
1	Disruption of academic activities	386 (96.5%)	14 (3.5%)	400 (100%)
2	Closure of institutions	375 (93.7%)	25 (6.3%)	400 (100%)
3	Ban on Students' Unionism	349 (87.3%)	51 (12.7%)	400 (100%)
4	Destruction of lives and property	153 (38.3%)	247 (61.7%)	400 (100%)
5	Suspension of student leadership	296 (74.0%)	104 (26.0%)	400 (100%)
6.	Cultism	242 (60.5%)	158 (39.5%)	400 (100%)
7.	Enmity between students and managements	370 (92.5%)	7.5 %)	400 (100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Conflict handling strategies adopted by the authorities of the institutions

Only 8% of respondents agreed that managements adopted the dialogue strategy, 14.5% of respondents indicated that the authorities of these institutions employed negotiation while the remaining 87% of respondents revealed that the authorities of the institutions often adopted the use of force as a conflict-handling style (Table 6). This view is in agreement with responses from the in-depth interview conducted. One of the past students' leaders stated that "apart from imposing obnoxious policies on students, the institutional authorities usually take oppressive decisions of employing the services of the army, police and other security agencies to help them prevent the protests and demonstrations by students. This had led to brutality of union leaders and death of innocent students in some cases"

A management interviewee stated that:

"Students, particularly their union leaders are fond of attempting to make the institutions ungovernable for Managements. They are liable to mistaking the authorities' lenience for a weakness and try to dictate for management as well as pose a threat. Hence, Managements have to maintain their stand and exercise their authorities in order not to be accused of incompetence. This explains why we use various lawful means available to us to put things under control" (Interview, December 2021).

This position is in agreement with Obiegbu (1994) who maintains that institutional heads employ the use of force in the management of conflicts. However, this study is at variance with Adebayo (2009) whose work reveals that authorities more often than not adopt dialogue rather the use of force in resolving conflicts.

Table 6: Conflict Management Strategies Adopted by the Authorities of the Institutions

S/N	Views	Agree	Disagree	Total
1.	Dialogue	32 (8.0%)	368 (92.0%)	400 (100%)
2.	Negotiation	58 (14.5%)	342 (85.5%)	400 (100%)
3.	Use of force	348 (87%)	52 (13%)	400 (100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Effectiveness of the adopted strategies by the authorities of the institutions

Only 14% of the respondents indicated that the conflict-handling strategies adopted by the authorities of the institutions were effective while 15.3% of the respondents agreed that they performed well in conflict management (Table 7). However, 86% and 84% of the respondents indicated that the conflict handling strategies adopted by the authorities of the institutions were ineffective and that they did not perform well in conflict management. It is therefore deduced from the results that the strategies adopted to handle the students-management conflicts in the study area during the period under consideration were poor and ineffective. Hence, the authorities of the institutions did not perform well in conflict management. Findings from the qualitative data corroborated the above result as virtually all key informants interviewed agreed that the conflict management strategies were not effective. A lecturer lamented that "the malicious ways by which conflicts involving students and managements are handled have cut off the bond of cordiality between the two parties and that the orientation of the generality of students these days is that any Students' Union Government that has a good relationship with management of its institution has betrayed their trust".

Table 7: Effectiveness of the Conflict Management Strategies Adopted by the Institutions

S/N	Views	Agree	Disagree	Total
1.	The adopted strategies were effective	56 (14.0%)	344 (86.0%)	400(100%)
2.	The authorities of the institutions performed well in conflict management	61 (15.3%)	339 (84.7%)	400(100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2021

CONCLUSION

A careful examination of students-management conflicts in public tertiary institutions in Osun State and the poor learning conditions of these institutions showed that Nigerian public institutions are suffering from chronic underfunding. The population expansion owing to explosion in admissions into public tertiary institutions is beyond the capacity of the available and deteriorating infrastructural facilities. Funding of education in Nigeria is an issue that is likely to generate students' unrests for a long time. Closure of the institutions also contributes to the rise in antisocial activities such as drug abuse, cultism, money rituals and cybercrime. However, since conflict is an inevitable phenomenon in any organization, institutional managements should endeavour to evolve good student friendly policies and adopt non-adversarial conflict handling strategies that would help bring students-management conflicts to the barest minimum.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Nigerian government should adequately fund education. This will help to address the major causes of the conflicts, which often leads to disruption of academic activities and closure of the institutions.

The institutions should build more and strong partnership and linkages with private sectors, international donor agencies and NGOs, which would enhance revenue generation.

Management teams should attend peace and conflict resolution workshops from time to time and always take cognizance of conflict early warning signals in order to prevent the frequent occurrence of students' conflicts and violence.

Students should be involved in governance, particularly in decision-making on matters affecting their living and learning conditions on campus.

The authorities of the institutions should lessen the use of force and embrace dialogue and negotiation for effective management of these conflicts.

Students should always display moral values and emotional intelligence in their relations with school authorities, while managements should ensure usual exhibition of universal core values such as love, fairness, integrity and responsiveness in dealing with their students for durable peace in the institutions.

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