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## Prevalence and Causes of Crises in the Universities and the Role of Government in these Crises

This chapter presents an analysis and interpretation of the data collected from students and staff of the university of Ibadan and Obafemi Awolowo University. In this section, a descriptive and inferential analysis of data from staff and student of both institutions are presented. The data analysis indicated four key themes based on the objectives of the study. Under each theme, the students and staff data are presented simultaneously and a critical analysis and interpretation of the data were included. In this chapter, the prevalence, causes and the roles of government in causing crises in the universities are presented and interpreted.

The analysis/presentation starts with exploring the socio-demographic characteristics of the study participants as presented in Tables 3.1 and 3.2 below.

### **Socio-economic and Demographic Characteristics of the Staff and Student Respondents**

Table 3.1 below presents the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the students of both institutions.

**Table 3.1:** Socio-Economic and Demographic Characteristics of the Student Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
University			
Ife	567	59.6	
Ibadan	385	40.4	
<b>Total</b>	<b>952</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

<b>Age</b>			<b>23</b>
16- 20	252	26.5	
21 -25	437	45.9	
26- 30	112	11.8	
31 and above	40	4.1	
No response	111	11.7	
<b>Total</b>	<b>952</b>	<b>100</b>	
Sex			
Male	507	53.2	
Female	430	45.2	
No response	15	1.6	
<b>Total</b>	<b>952</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
Marital status			
Married	299	31.4	
Single	648	68.0	
Divorced	3	0.3	
Separated	2	0.2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>952</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
Religion			
Christianity	796	83.6	
Islam	110	11.6	
Traditional African	2	0.2	
Others	44	4.6	
<b>Total</b>	<b>952</b>	<b>100</b>	
Highest educ. status			
Tertiary	952	100.0	
Total	952	100.0	
Level in university			
Part 1	35	3.3	
Part 2	170	17.8	
Part 3	272	28.6	
Part 4	328	34.5	
Part 5 & 6	87	9.1	
Postgraduate	64	6.7	
<b>Total</b>	<b>952</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Source: Field survey, 2013

According to Table 3.1, students of Ife constituted 59.6 percent of the entire student sample while students of Ibadan represented 40.4 percent of the sample. The table also indicates that the mean age of the student respondents was 23 years. Also, 6.7 percent were postgraduate students indicating that every group of students were captured in the study. The data indicated that most of the respondents were within the age of 25 years indicating that they are young and can be vulnerable.

**Table 3.2: Socio-Economic and Demographic Characteristics of the Staff of Both Institutions**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
University			
Ife	461	57.5	
Ibadan	341	42.5	
<b>Total</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
Age			31
20- 29 years	386	48.1	
30 -39 years	248	30.9	
40- 49 years	142	17.7	
50 years and above	26	3.3	
<b>Total</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>100</b>	
Sex			
Male	325	40.5	
Female	475	59.2	
No response	2	0.2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
Marital status			
Married	260	32.4	
Single	462	57.6	
Divorced	64	8.0	
Separated	16	2.0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
Religion			
Christianity	585	73.0	
Islam	201	25.1	
Traditional African	10	1.2	
Others	6	0.7	
<b>Total</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>100</b>	

Highest educ. level			
Secondary	95	11.8	
Tertiary	707	88.2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
Occupation in the university			
Academic	172	21.5	
SANU	77	9.6	
Technical	127	15.8	
NASU	80	10.0	
No response	346	43.1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
Level of income			
10,000 – 50, 000	155	19.3	
51, 000 – 100, 000	275	34.3	
101, 000 – 150, 000	318	39.7	
151, 000 and above	54	6.7	
<b>Total</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

According to Table 3.2 above, 57.5 percent of the staff (respondents) were from OAU, while 42.5 percent of them were from UI. The table showed that 88 percent of the respondents attained tertiary level of education which is a push factor in generating crises as this group of people can easily carry out an uprising if their rights are trampled on. Importantly, this high level of education may not transform their having liberal views on women's leadership of higher education. In spite of this high educational attainment, there is still low representation of women in leadership positions in the Universities. Also, only 6.7 percent of them earn 151,000 naira (375 US Dollars) and above monthly which explains the constant agitation for salary increase, one of the major reasons for tensions in Nigerian universities. Moreover, women are usually at the bottom of the university echelon and as such, they receive less income than men. As a result, many women may not think of leadership positions because they may not have any money for printing pamphlets for campaigns and may also not have the network and clout that would support them. For instance, some Vice Chancellor aspirants are supported by state governors or other political leaders and women do not have the same privileges.

Table 3.3: Prevalence and Causes of Crises in Nigerian Universities (Students)

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
No. of times university had crises in last 3 years (2010-2013)		
Once	134	14.1
Twice	274	28.8
Thrice	215	22.6
Four times	92	9.7
Five times & above	237	24.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>952</b>	<b>100.0</b>
How serious were the crises		
Mild	239	25.1
Serious	568	59.7
Very serious	145	15.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>952</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Causes of crises		
University management's highhandedness	73	8.9
Non-payment of staff salaries and arrears	163	20.0
Mgt. inability to carry student along in decisions	249	30.5
Increase in school fees	97	11.9
Govt. unpopular policies	234	28.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>952</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Students' opinion on Govt. contribution to crises		
By making bad policies	222	28.1
Non-funding of universities	151	19.1
Imposition of unwanted leaders	56	7.1
Increase in school fees	223	28.3
Increase in petrol price	135	17.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>952</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field survey, 2013

Table 3.3 above examined the prevalence and causes of crises in Nigerian universities. According to the table, 22.6 percent indicated that their universities have had crises four times in the last three years while 24.8 percent indicated that their university has had a crisis five times and above in the last three years and 15.2 mentioned that the crises were very serious. Also, the causes of crises as indicated by respondents were university management's high handedness, non-payment of staff salaries and arrears, university management's inability to carry students along, (to consult students and allow them to participate in decisions on matters concerning them),

government unpopular policies and an increase in school fees and petroleum by government or university authorities. High handedness and an inability to carry students along contributes to these crises and these are men's traits. In a situation where a university experiences four or more crises in three years, it is difficult for the university to achieve the goals of the organization. This makes it imperative to bring women into university leadership to minimize these crises.

**Table 3.4:** Prevalence and Causes of Crises on Nigerian Universities (Staff)

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
No of times university had crises in last 3 years		
Twice	93	11.6
Thrice	147	18.3
Five times & above	562	70.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>100.0</b>
How serious were the crises		
Mild	205	25.6
Serious	508	63.3
Very serious	89	11.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Causes of crises		
University management's highhandedness	39	4.9
Non-payment of staff salaries and arrears	291	36.3
Mgt. inability to carry staff & students along in decisions	56	7.0
Increase in school fees	99	12.3
Govt. unpopular policies	82	10.2
Others	235	29.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Staff' opinion on Govt. contribution to crises		
By making bad policies	226	28.2
Non-funding of universities	90	11.2
Imposition of unwanted leaders	142	17.7
Increase in petrol price	344	42.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source:* Field work, 2013

In table 3.4 above, 70.1 percent of the respondents indicated that their university had a crisis five times and above in the last three years and 11.1 said that the crises were very serious. Highhandedness of university authority and government unpopular policies drove these crises in the universities.

The responses of the staff are not different from those of the students which is an indication that there is a kind of agreement among stakeholders about the causes of crises in the universities which makes it easy to address, that is if the university authorities will listen. My view about this is that if women become university leaders, their empathic and sensitive quality will mitigate some of the issues that cause tension, thereby reducing the high incidence of crises in these universities.

Furthermore, results of the interviews conducted among student leaders on the incidence and extent of crises indicated that there have been frequent crises in the university and that some of these crises were serious resulting in destruction of properties and lives. The incidence of crises in some universities can be so high that the number of months that the university is closed is more than when it is in session. A 23 year-old male student leader had this to said:

Crises has become the order of the day in this university and this breeds confusion and lack of continuity because by the time we come back from strike, it takes time to readjust to school life and this affects our academic performance (Cite your respondent).

In support of this, a 62 years old Dean of a Faculty said:

Crises is very rampant these days in the university. Sometimes, we record up to five or six different crises from different groups in the university- Academic staff, non-academic staff and, students with different grievances, sometimes at the same time (Cite).

This was exactly what a male professor said about crises in the university.

Sometimes even, there may be different forms of crises in a university at the same time such as between academic staff and university management, between university management and students. For instance, in Obafemi Awolowo University here, there was a time that academic staff, non-academic staff and technical staff were all on strike doing rallies together and fighting the university management and which resulted in the closure of the university for quite some time.

When a university is bugged by so many crises, it begins to affect the performance of the students as noted by the student leader above. The issue of performance also includes the performance of lecturers/quality of teaching. This is part of a major problem – the issue of a fallen standard of education. Lecturers have always been blamed for falling standards in education because when students return from a long university closure, the university management is usually interested in maintaining the university calendar and will give lecturers a few months to complete a semester (a normal semester of five months is sometimes reduced to three months). Lecturers try to cope by summarizing their lecturers and management does not even think about these things.

On the causes of these crises, the student leaders generally agree that the main factors were negligence of students' welfare, lack of water, electricity and insensitivity on the part of university management. Infact a 24 year old female student leader (vice president of student union) said it this way:

Crises in this university in particular are caused by negligence on the part of university management towards students' welfare, slow response to students demands and lack of dialogue between students and university management.

In the same way, the staff pointed out that crises in the university were caused by government insensitivity to their needs. The respondents identified the government as not honouring agreements entered by it with university workers as a source of crises. Also, government's undue interference in university affairs causes crises in the universities.

**Table 3.5:** Activities of Government that Cause Crises in Nigerian Universities

<b>Govt. activities</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Change in institution's name	79	8.2
Petrol price increase	194	20.3
Govt. unpopular policies	142	14.5
Increase in school fees	98	10.2
Underfunding of universities	103	10.8
No response	336	40.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>952</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source:* Field survey, 2013

Table 3.5 above presents activities of government that cause crises in Nigerian universities which includes change in institution's name, petrol price increase, unpopular government policies, increase in school fees and the under-funding of universities. This result indicated that the federal government of Nigeria contributes to crises in universities through unpopular decisions and policies. Again, the same problem of highhandedness which men's leaderships are known for was found to be government style of leadership. This signals the importance of women in leadership positions to neutralize these tendencies.



### ***Test of Hypotheses***

**Table 3.6:** Cross Tabulation Analysis of Number of Crises and Government Contribution to Crises in Nigerian Universities (Students)

	Variable	Bad policies	No fund Univ.	Imposition of unwanted leaders	Increase in school fees & fuel price	Others	Total
	Variable	Freq (%)	Freq (%)	Freq (%)	Freq (%)	Freq (%)	Freq.
	Once	46 (38.7)	30 (21.9)	8 (6.6)	35 (29.1)	4 (3.7)	123 (100)
	Twice	70 (29.7)	45 (18.1)	17 (7.0)	68 (28.2)	41 (17.0)	241 (100)
No of times university had crises in the last 3 years	Thrice	42 (22.1)	24 (13.8)	20 (10.7)	33 (17.4)	68 (36.0)	187 (100)
	Four times	31 (40.7)	6 (6.4)	6 (6.4)	16 (21.7)	19 (24.8)	78 (100)
	5 times & above	30 (21.7)	44 (29.7)	5 (3.3)	30 (19.3)	39 (26.0)	148 (100)
	Total	219 (29.1)	149 (15.7)	56 (8.2)	182 (24.1)	171(22.8)	777(100)
		X2cal	X2tab	df	Sig		
Pearson's Chi –Square		122.390	36.415	24	.000		
Number of valid cases		777					

Source: Field survey, 2013 significant at  $p < 0.05$

### ***Test of Hypothesis 1***

#### *The Null Hypothesis (Ho)*

“There is no significant relationship between federal government activities and crises in Nigerian universities”

The table above describes a cross tabulation analysis of number of crises and government contribution to crises in Nigerian universities. According to the table, 38.7 percent of the respondents that said their university had crises once in the last three years attributed it to government unpopular policies. 21.9 percent mentioned no funding of universities as the cause of crises. 6.6 percent indicated the imposition of unwanted leader, and 29.1 percent indicated an increase in the price of petroleum products school fees as the causes of crises. The Chi-Square result showed the calculated value of  $X^{2cal}$  122.390 and  $X^{2tab}$  of 36.415 and df 24 which was significant ( $P < 0.000$ ) at 95 per cent confidence interval

( $P < 0.05$ ). From this statistical analysis, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) was accepted. This meant that there was a significant relationship between government activities and crises in Nigerian universities. Government activities has always been a source of crises in Nigerian universities. ASUU and federal government of Nigeria has been at loggerheads over university autonomy. Government meddles too much into the affairs of the university including imposition of unwanted Vice Chancellors and anti-people policies which infuriates the university communities. This shows that autocratic leadership of men (most leaders in Nigerian larger society are men) also exhibited in the larger society making it necessary for women to be brought into leadership to reduce crises.

**Test of Hypothesis 2: (staff)**

**Table 3.7:** Cross Tabulation Analysis of Number of Crises and Government Contribution o Crises in Nigerian Universities

How does government n generating crises in the university						
	Variable	Bad policies	No fund Univ.	Imp of unwanted leaders	Increase in fuel price	Total
	Variable	Freq (%)	Freq (%)	Freq (%)	Freq (%)	Freq (%)
	Twice	47 (50.5)	0 (0)	46 (49.5)	0 (0)	93 (100)
No of times university had crises in the last 3 years	Thrice	57 (38.8)	90 (61.2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	147 (100)
	5 times & above	122 (22.0)	0 (0)	96 (17.0)	344 (61.0)	562 (100)
	Total	226 (28.2)	90 (11.2)	142 (17.7)	344 (42.9)	802 (100)
		X2cal	X2tab	df	Sig	
Pearson's Chi – Square		657.753	12.592	6	.000	
Number of valid cases		802				

Source: Field survey, 2013. Significant at  $p < 0.05$

The table above describes a cross tabulation analysis of number of crises and government contribution to crises in Nigerian universities. According to the table, 50.5 percent of the respondents that said their university had crises twice in the last three years said that government unpopular policies led to these to crises while 49.5 percent of them said that government increment of petrol price created

crises in the universities. The Chi-Square statistics analysis of number of crises and government contribution to crises in Nigerian universities showed a Chi-Square calculated value of  $X^{2cal}$  657.753 and  $X^{2tab}$  of 12.592 and df 6 which was significant ( $P < 0.000$ ) at 95% confidence level ( $P < 0.05$ ). From this statistical analysis, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) was accepted. This meant that there was a significant relationship between government activities and crises in Nigerian universities. The staff result was the same as the students result above, meaning that both groups representing all university community members believe that government causes crises in the university. This implies that Nigerian government officials should find a way of removing their hands from university affairs. Interestingly, academic staff members who find themselves in government also behave like other government officials who are not part of the university. It is as if as soon as they leave the ivory tower (this refers to the university where academic excellence is upheld, research activities are conceptualized and actualized and the highest level of thinking and initiative/discoveries take place., they forget their experience in the university and begin to treat their colleagues with scorn.

In support of the data from the quantitative method, student leaders and university management staff were interviewed on their views on government role in crises in Nigerian universities. The respondents felt that the federal government of Nigeria generates crises in Nigerian universities through the government non-inducement/no incentives to staff and insensitivity to students' problems and complaints and demands and through policies that worsen the situation of the university community. A 61 year old male Head of Department said:

Yes, government contribute so much to crises in Nigerian universities, look at what is happening presently, they signed an agreement with academic staff union of universities and have since not implemented it and it has brought about the closure of all universities in Nigeria.

Also, a 55 year female professor supported the head of department above and observed that:

Government contributes a lot to crises in the universities because the universities belong to them and so whatever decision they take has an effect on the universities and as such, the university community reacts violently to their negative policies.

This assertion is buttressed by the fact that the government feels that federal universities belong to the government and therefore, they into the affairs of these universities thereby causing crises. This is also why most crises in Nigerian universities happen in public universities and not in private universities. Interestingly, the federal government of Nigeria is in support of university autonomy in words but the government does the opposite in deeds. The system has been politicized and has become crises-prone and with continued insincerity

and corruption, the university system has become a replica of the larger society. The government enters agreements that it never keeps, treats university teachers with levity and refuses to leave the university system alone.

In concluding this chapter, it is important to reflect on the high incidence of crises in universities and the role the government plays in these crises. The study has established that government causes many crises through undue intervention and through actions that are undemocratic and which provoke the staff and students of universities. It has also been shown that these crises are numerous and have become a way of life in Nigerian universities with far reaching implications. Importantly, a university that had two serious crises within three years may not have the time and focus to pursue its objectives. This is part of the problem being experienced by Nigerian universities, It is the same government that causes much of these crises that blames universities for producing poor quality graduates.