

# DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS AND THE MANAGEMENT OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

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## **Abstract**

*This study investigated impact of disciplinary problems on the management of tertiary institutions in Benue State, Nigeria. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was made up of 6,805 academic staff from 12 tertiary institutions of learning in Benue State. A sample of 340 academic staff was drawn from four tertiary institutions of learning using simple random sampling technique. A 10-item structured four-point rating scale questionnaire titled "Impact of Disciplinary Problems Questionnaire (IDPQ)" with reliability coefficient of 0.91 was used for data collection. Data obtained from the field study were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while the Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test of goodness of-fit was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings indicated that students' truancy and sexual immorality have significant influence on the management of tertiary institutions in Benue State Nigeria. It was recommended among others that school administrators should employ very strict security measures to detect students who regularly play truancy and give them serious punishment that will serve as a deterrent to others.*

**Keywords:** Disciplinary problems, students' truancy, sexual immorality

## **Introduction**

Every educational institution is established basically for the purpose of training individuals to become useful and functional in the society. That is why the basic aim of tertiary institutions as stipulated in the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014) is to contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training; develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society; develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments; acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society; promote and encourage scholarship and community service; promote national and international understanding and interaction. Achievement of these objectives has remained largely elusive in the school system due to the seemingly increase in students' indiscipline acts in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in Nigeria.

With recent increase in school enrolment in tertiary institutions in Nigeria in general and Benue State in particular, students' disciplinary problems seem to have accentuated and are causing more burdens for school authorities. In the opinion of Seifert and Vornberg (2012), students' indisciplinary acts have plagued tertiary institutions of learning in Benue State thereby leading to series of unrest. The authors further states that students' discipline is a pre-requisite to almost everything a school has to offer students and this is linked with both the culture and climate of the school thus: "In order for a satisfactory climate to exist within a school, a certain level of discipline must exist".

Disciplinary problems are unaccepted forms of behaviour exhibited by students namely indecent dressing, late coming to school, keeping of bushy hair, noise making in class, littering school environment with urine and papers, refusing to carry out assigned task in school and stealing (Paddy, 2010). Akubue (2011) saw disciplinary problems as undisciplined behaviours among the students which the teacher is likely to encounter in and outside the classroom which include among other things purposeful damage to school property or that of other students, cheating, insolence, unnecessary disturbance in the classroom, aggressiveness exhibited by bullying or fighting others, failure to complete assignments on schedule, truancy, dirty appearance, sexual immorality, insubordination and neglect of school functions. Such disciplinary problem may not give the proper atmosphere that can enhance effective and efficient management of tertiary institutions in terms of performance of administrative functions as well as teaching and learning.

Tertiary institutions according to Adesola, Tolulope and Abiodun (2015) is defined as the level of education acquired after secondary education in tertiary institutions of learning such as Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of education and other institutions of tertiary institutions offering correspondence courses, diplomas and certificates. Management of tertiary institutions on the other hand is concerned with the determination of values inside universities, their systems of decision-making and resource allocation, their mission and purpose, the problems of authority and hierarchies and the relationship of universities as institutions to the different academic worlds (Becher & Kogan, 2012).

In the management of tertiary institutions today, schools' management seem to be finding it increasingly difficult to effectively manage their schools as speculated in the study area by relevant educational stakeholders. In this study, the focus is on truancy and sexual immorality as disciplinary problem which seem to be causing a lot of setback to management of tertiary institutions.

Truancy is any intentional unauthorized absence from compulsory schooling. It also refers to students who attend school but do not go to classes (Jekins, 2011). According to Richard and Laura (2010) increased cases of truancy in schools make teachers feel lazy to go for their lessons hence just few students are found in the class. This tends to affect effective management as well as teaching because only few teachers are able to cover their scheme of work before the end of term. In a study by Edeh (2010), he found that schools with high cases of truancy lose support from the public in terms of financing, truant students end up cheating in examinations to pass of which when caught create problem for the school and that truant students always skip very important school programmes that have adverse effects on the management. Amema (2007:10) posits that "truancy" which is a delinquent act has the following effects such as stealing, dishonesty, sex offenses, disobedience, drug abuse, assault, wickedness, suicide and charms which have negative effects on the child and the management of secondary schools in terms of causing administrative instability, distraction

to school academic programmes, destruction to school properties and tarnishing of the image of the institution.

Sexual immorality is another aspect of disciplinary problem which seem to affect the effective management of tertiary institutions as speculated in the study area by relevant educational stakeholders. Sexual immorality means having many sexual partners (Wehmeier, 2010). It is also the use of one's body for the purpose of remuneration or consideration of any form. It could also be addressed as prostitution (Misi, 2008). Krupp (2006) observes that most female students seduce their teachers into sexual acts all in the name of helping them to pass examinations very well. This tends to affect their level of performance in teaching the students. As observed by Oludunni (2011), the academic programme of any school is negatively affected when they seems to be an increased cases of unwanted pregnancy, rape, hangout between boys and girls or students with teachers. In another perspective, Shoboye (2010) notes that the reputation of institutions with high level of immorality is always as stake because, the parents and the general public becomes afraid to send their wards or children to such schools that may easily corrupt them. Kayode (2011) found that sex attitude of student's lead to a reproach to the school and unwanted pregnancies among girls which create fears in the minds of parents in sending their children to such schools and that school academic activities become highly distracted due to the sexual attitudes of mostly female students.

Troublesome students in institutions of learning make does not teachers react emotionally to the extent of using punishment which sometimes lead to crises in school but also tend to affect the stability of the school. Thus, institutions are expected to be a place where desirable and relevant changes in the behaviours of learners will occur through the transmission of what is worthwhile into the learner rather than been a place where undesirable acts are practiced by some students. Such ugly situations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century institutions may also be applicable to the study area. It is against this background that the researchers were motivated to investigate disciplinary problems and the management of tertiary institutions in Benue State with particular focus on truancy and sexual immorality.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The issue of disciplinary problems in tertiary institutions of learning particularly Benue State has become a daily discussion among educational stakeholders. This is because there is no day that one form of indisciplinary act is not exhibited in one tertiary institutions or the other. School administrators seem to be finding it increasingly difficult to effectively manage their institutions to achieve the aims and objectives of tertiary institutions. Stakeholders of tertiary institutions have also expressed concern on cases of indiscipline which may have not only been responsible for the inefficiency among school administrators in the performance of their functions but also the incessant failure of students in various examinations.

The researcher also observes that most students in tertiary institutions of learning today in the study area hardly stay in class or even school. Some females are sometimes found hanging outside in hid out places with boyfriends performing immoral acts. In some instances, the female students leave the hostel and go outside with men who pick them for sexual purpose. They end up not returning till the next day. There is inconsistency among the student in school as most of the students hardly have time for their studies not even to talk of the school.

Based on these mentioned disciplinary acts of students, the researchers were thus interested in finding out the situation in the study area the ineffectiveness and inefficiency in the management of tertiary institutions today may be due to increased case of disciplinary problems. Thus, the problem of this study stated in a question form therefore is: In what ways do disciplinary problems influence the management of tertiary institutions in Benue State, Nigeria?

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of disciplinary problems on the management of tertiary institutions in Benue State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. ascertain the influence of truancy on the management of tertiary institutions in Benue State, Nigeria.
2. ascertain the influence of sexual immorality on the management of tertiary institutions in Benue State.

### **Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the influence of truancy on the management of tertiary institutions in Benue State, Nigeria?
2. What is the influence of sexual immorality on the management of tertiary institutions in Benue State?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- Ho<sub>1</sub>. Truancy has no significant influence on the management of tertiary institutions in Benue State, Nigeria.
- Ho<sub>2</sub>. Sexual Immorality has no significant influence on the management of tertiary institutions in Benue State.

### **Research Method**

The study adopted descriptive survey design. According to Emaikwu (2011), descriptive survey design is one in which a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analyzing data from a few people considered to be representative of the entire population. The study covered Benue State, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised 6,805 academic staff from 12 tertiary institutions of learning in Benue State. A sample of 340 academic staff was selected from five tertiary institutions of learning using stratified random sampling technique. A 10-item structured on a four-point scale questionnaire titled "Impact of Disciplinary Problems Questionnaire (IDPQ)" was used for data collection. The instrument used for data collection was a four-point rating scale with a response mode of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. The instrument was validated by two experts, one in Educational Management and one in Measurement and Measurement from Benue State University, Makurdi. The reliability of the instrument was conducted on 10 lecturers in two private tertiary institutions that were not part of the sample for the study and a reliability coefficient of 0.91 was obtained which showed that the instrument was reliable to use for the study. Mean and standard deviation were used to

answer the research questions. A mean cut-off point of 2.50 was used for decision making. Any mean score of 2.50 and above was regarded as having the desired influence while any mean score below 2.50 was regarded as not having influence. The hypotheses were tested using chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test of goodness of fit at .05 level of significance.

## Results and Findings

This section presented and discussed the results of the study.

### Research Question One

What is the influence of truancy on the management of tertiary institutions in Benue State, Nigeria?

**Table 1: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of the Respondents on the Influence of Truancy on the Management of Tertiary Institutions**

| Item No                                | Item Description   | SA  | A   | D  | SD | $\bar{X}$   | SD   | Decision     |
|--|--|-----|-----|----|----|-------------|------|--------------|
| 1                                      | Truancy makes lecturers uncomfortable going to class to teach.   | 189 | 120 | 21 | 10 | 3.41        | 0.77 | Agree        |
| 2                                      | Truancy gives institutions bad image.  | 171 | 142 | 11 | 16 | 3.38        | 0.76 | Agree        |
| 3                                      | School administrators and teacher spend time dealing with truancy issues instead of attending to other matters.. | 201 | 108 | 7  | 24 | 3.43        | 0.84 | Agree        |
| 4                                      | Truancy leads to other undisciplinary acts like examination malpractice which affects the status of the school.  | 181 | 136 | 14 | 9  | 3.44        | 0.70 | Agree        |
| 5                                      | Truancy increases teachers' stress thereby making them ineffective in their work performance.                    | 166 | 148 | 19 | 7  | 3.39        | 0.69 | Agree        |
| <b>Cluster Mean/Standard Deviation</b> |  |     |     |    |    | <b>3.41</b> |      | <b>Agree</b> |

Table 1 shows that the mean rating for items 1-5 were 3.41, 3.38, 3.43, 3.44 and 3.39 respectively with their corresponding standard deviations of 0.77, 0.76, 0.84, 0.70 and 0.69. Based on the decision rule, it means that respondents accepted all the items in the cluster that have mean scores above the cut-off point of 2.50. The standard deviation scores of the respondents are small signifying homogeneity for the items raised. The cluster mean of 3.41 was also found to be above the cut-off point of 2.50. This implies that truancy influence the management of tertiary institutions in Benue State, Nigeria.

**Research Question Two:**

What is the influence of sexual immorality on the management of tertiary institutions in Benue State?

**Table 2: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation of the Respondents on Influence of Sexual Immorality on the Management of Tertiary Institutions in Benue State**

| Item N              | Item Description   | SA  | A   | D  | SD | $\bar{X}$ | SD          | Decision       |
|---------------------|--|-----|-----|----|----|-----------|-------------|----------------|
| 6                   | Sexual immorality exposes students to ritual attack which destabilizes the school.   | 192 | 126 | 12 | 10 | 3.47      | 0.71        | Agree          |
| 7                   | Sexual immoral acts among students pose or bad image for the institution.  | 174 | 117 | 21 | 28 | 3.29      | 0.91        | Agree          |
| 8                   | Sexual immorality among students spreads diseases in the school which makes the institution unsafe place for other students. | 137 | 149 | 15 | 39 | 3.13      | 0.94        | Agree          |
| 9                   | Sexual immorality keeps students away from their studies.  | 198 | 129 | 8  | 5  | 3.53      | 0.62        | Strongly Agree |
| 10                  | Sexual immorality causes instability in teaching and learning.   | 212 | 110 | 11 | 7  | 3.55      | 0.66        | Strongly Agree |
| <b>Cluster Mean</b> |  |     |     |    |    |           | <b>3.39</b> | <b>Agree</b>   |

Table 2 indicated that the mean ratings for items 6–10 were 3.47, 3.29, 3.13, 3.53 and 3.55 with their corresponding standard deviations of 0.71, 0.91, 0.94, 0.62 and 0.66. Based on the decision rule, it means that respondents accepted all the items in the cluster that have mean scores above the cut-off point of 2.50. The standard deviation scores of the respondents are small signifying homogeneity for the items raised. The cluster mean of 3.39 was also found to be above the cut-off point of 2.50. This implies that sexual immorality influences the management of tertiary institutions in Benue State.

**Testing of Hypotheses**

**Hypotheses One:**

Truancy has no significant influence on the management of tertiary institutions in Benue State, Nigeria.

**Table 3: Chi-square test of the Influence of truancy on the Management of Tertiary Institutions**

| Opinions | Observed N | Expected N | Residual | Level of Sig. | df | $\chi^2$ -cal | P-value | Decision |
|----------|------------|------------|----------|---------------|----|---------------|---------|----------|
| SD       | 13         | 85.0       | -72.0    | 0.05          | 3  | 254.7         | 0.00    | Sig.     |

|    |     |      |       |
|----|-----|------|-------|
| D  | 14  | 85.0 | -71.0 |
| A  | 132 | 85.0 | 47.0  |
| SA | 181 | 85.0 | 96.0  |

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 85.5.

Table 3 reveals that  $\chi^2=254.71$  at  $df=3$  and  $p=0.00$ . Since  $p$ -value of  $0.00 < 0.05$  at 3 degree of freedom, the null hypothesis which states that truancy has no significant influence on the management of tertiary institutions in Benue State, Nigeria is therefore, rejected. This implies that truancy has significant influence on the management of tertiary institutions in Benue State, Nigeria.

#### Hypotheses 4:

Sexual immorality has no significant influence on the management of tertiary institutions in Benue State.

**Table 4: Chi-Square test of the Influence of Sexual Immorality on the Management of Tertiary Institutions**

| Opinions | Observed N | Expected N | Residual | Level of Sig. | df | $\chi^2$ -cal | P-value | Decision |
|----------|------------|------------|----------|---------------|----|---------------|---------|----------|
| SD       | 13         | 85.0       | -72.0    | 0.05          | 3  | 287.74        | 0.00    | Sig.     |
| D        | 8          | 85.0       | -77.0    |               |    |               |         |          |
| A        | 126        | 85.0       | 41.0     |               |    |               |         |          |
| SA       | 193        | 85.0       | 108.0    |               |    |               |         |          |

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 85.5.

Table 4 reveals that  $\chi^2=287.74$  at  $df=3$  and  $p=0.00$ . Since  $p$ -value of  $0.00 < 0.05$  at 3 degree of freedom, the null hypothesis which states that sexual immorality has no significant influence on the management of tertiary institutions in Benue State was therefore, rejected. This implies that sexual immorality has significant influence on the management of tertiary institutions in Benue State.

#### Discussion of Findings

The first finding of the study revealed that truancy has significant influence on the management of tertiary institutions in Benue State, Nigeria. This finding supports Richard and Laura (2010) who observes that increased cases of truancy in schools make teachers feel lazy to go for their lessons hence just few students are found in the class. This tends to affect effective teaching because only few teachers are able to cover their scheme of work before the end of term. The finding also supports Edeh (2010) who found that schools with high cases of truancy lose support from the public in terms of financing, truant students end up cheating in examinations to pass which when caught create problem for the school and that truant students always skip very important school programmes which have adverse effects on the management.

The second finding of this study showed that sexual immorality has significant influence on the management of tertiary institutions in Benue State. This finding is in agreement with Oludunni (2011) who states that the academic programme of any school is negatively affected when they seems to be an increased cases of unwanted pregnancy, rape, hangout between boys and girls or students with teachers. The result of this study also agrees with Kayode (2011) who found that sex attitude of students leads to a reproach to the school, leads to unwanted pregnancies among girls which create fears in the minds of parents in sending their children to such schools and that school academic activities become highly distracted due to the sexual attitudes of mostly female students.

## Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it was concluded that truancy and sexual immorality have significant influence on the management of tertiary institutions in Benue State, Nigeria.

## Recommendations

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

1. School administrators should employ very strict security measures to detect students who regularly play truant and give them serious punishment that would serve as a deterrent to others.
2. Appropriate school authorities should step up their efforts at making sure that the issue of sexual immorality among the females and males is put to a stop in tertiary institutions. This could be done through regular checking of the students' behaviours and sanctioning them appropriately by rustivating them to serve as deterrents to others.

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