

Nature and Management of Students' Misconduct in Off-Campus Residences in Tertiary Educational Institutions in Kogi State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the nature, sources and measures used in managing students' misconduct in off-campus residences in tertiary educational institutions in Kogi State, Nigeria. The study population comprised of students (in off-campus housing), staff of the security units in tertiary institutions in the state, landlords/caretakers and the police. Data were collected through questionnaire (administered to students) and interviews (conducted with landlords/caretakers, security units officials, and the police). Data collected through questionnaire were analysed using frequencies and percentages while responses from interviews were content analysed (manually). Findings of the study revealed nature of students' misconduct in off-campus residences to include thefts, burglary, damaging of properties in rented apartments, use of psychoactive substances and cultism. These were however found to have been caused by greediness/lack of contentment on the part of the students, peer influence, poor parental care, genetic disorder (inherited from parents), and poverty. In managing students' misconduct, the study discovered the use of both formal and informal measures. Although the measures have helped to lessened students' misconduct in the sampled institutions, the school authorities still needs to collaborate maximally with the state ministries of education, youth and social development, health, and the host communities in the areas of adequate provision of on-campus students housing, orientation programme for parents on the need to always inculcate good virtues on their children as well as for students on the need to always be contented, care such as gene therapy for students suffering from inherited gene disorder, and security for adequate monitoring of students activities.

Keywords: Education; Gene disorder; Good virtues; Host communities; State ministries

1. Introduction

The off-campus system of residence is one of the forms of students housing in Nigeria tertiary educational institutions. Others forms of students housing include the collegiate system (where students and faculty are expected to live in the same environment), the dormitories (where students and tutors are expected to live in the same building while academic facilities were provided in the remaining buildings), and halls of residence (otherwise known as hostels or on-campus accommodation-where students live in hostels within the campus) (Agbola, Olatunbara & Alabi, 2001).

Conceptually, student off-campus residences are accommodation located outside the area of land that contains the main building of an educational institution such as universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, etc. Historically, the off-campus accommodation system evolved in Nigeria tertiary educational institutions as a result of increasing number of students being admitted without a corresponding increase in the number of bed space in the on-campus accommodation (Agbola, et al, 2001). For instance, the population of students admitted into the Nigerian universities increased from 55 in 1948 to 1.9 million in 2017 (National Universities Commission, 2018). This had led to overcrowding, poor health, poor academic performance, and squatting in halls of residence; which has forced many students to stay off-campus (Olamola, 1996; Akindele, 1996; Omotayo, 2008; Muslim, Karim & Abdullah, 2012; Ezra, Bijimi & Aliba, 2013; and Owolabi, 2015).

Students residing in off-campus accommodation are expected to demonstrate respect for all members of the local community regardless of the place of residence. They are also to show respect for the area where they live. However, a breach of these will be considered as misconduct. Students' misconduct here means general misbehavior by students to the prejudice of the good name or reputation of their institutions and host communities. Students' misconduct includes any act or omission by students which has the effect of embarrassing or tarnishing or bringing into ridicule the good name of their institutions and host communities. Act or omission that constitute students misconducts include students engaging in thefts, hemp smoking and drug abuse, drunkenness, sexual assault and abuse, betting and gambling activities, cultism, etc (Kogi State University, 2016).

Although studies (Dixon, 1971; Olojede, 1985; Adegbile, 1987; Amole, 1997; and Agbola, et al, 2001; Omotayo, 2008) have been conducted on students housing; but only a few studies on students off-campus accommodation (Adeyemi, 1997; Hensher & Taylor, 1983; Osifuwa, 1996; and Muslim, et al 2012); and even then, most of the studies on students off-campus accommodation focused on features and challenges of off-campus living (Adeyemi, 1997; Muslim, et al, 2012). More so, such studies have neglected the students' misconduct associated with off-campus housing and how such misconducts are being managed. Therefore, this study is conceived to provide information on the natures, sources and management of students' misconduct in off-campus residences in tertiary educational institutions in Kogi State, Nigeria.

This study is significant theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the study will add to the existing body of knowledge especially on student housing/accommodation. Practically, the study is expected to assist policy makers at both the state and federal level on the kind of policies to formulate in mitigating the cases of students' misconduct in off-campus residences. Finally, the findings of this study may be useful for managing students' misconduct in off-campus residences in tertiary educational institutions in other climate.

Theoretical Framework

This study is hung on the General theory of crime, the Genetic trait theory and the containment theory. The General theory of crime was propounded by Michael Gottfredson and Travis Hirsch in 1990. Gottfredson and Hirsch defined crime as acts of force or fraud undertaken in pursuit of self-interest. They equally argue that all crime can be explained as a combination of criminal opportunity and low self control. Gottfredson and Hirschi hypothesized that a child's level of self-control, which is heavily influenced by child rearing practices, stabilizes by the time he reaches the age of eight. Thus, they identified parenting as the most decisive factors in determining the likelihood that a person will commit crimes. According to Gottfredson and Hirschi, children reared in settings of neglect or abuse, for example, will be more likely to commit criminal acts, while children raised in supervised homes, where punishment is a consequence of bad behaviour, will be more likely to withstand temptations toward criminal conduct. In addition to criminal and delinquent acts, low self-control, according to Gottfredson and Hirsch, is manifested in tendencies to be impulsive,

insensitive to other people's feelings, physical (rather than mental), risk oriented, shortsighted, and nonverbal.

Although Gottfredson and Hirsch theory was criticized for being, among other things, tautological, paternalistic and definitionally flawed, its strength lies in its scope and breath as it explain all varieties of criminal behaviour and all the social and behavioural correlates of crime. That is, such widely disparate crimes as burglary, robbery, cultism, drug dealing, murder, rape, theft, smoking, etc which students often engaged in. However the inability of the theory to explain criminal behaviour associated with genetic disorder inherited from parents by children led to the introduction of Genetic trait theory. The Genetic trait theory was put forward by Brennam and Madnick (1993). The theory holds that the criminal traits and predispositions are inherited; and it is passed from generation to generation. The criminality of parents, according to the theory, can predict the delinquency of children. The major criticism of this theory has been the lack of adequate empirical testing. Notwithstanding this, the theory has provided explanation for antisocial behaviour through inheritance of criminal trait from parents.

The containment theory, on the other hand, was used in this study to provide information on ways of curtailing students' misconduct. The theory was propounded by Walter Reckless in 1961. Reckless sees constraints operating inside and outside the individual as limiting individual involvement in criminal activities. He referred to these constraints as inner and outer containments. inner containment, according to him, consist mainly of self-components such as self control, and good self concept, while outer containment represent the structural apparatus in the persons' immediate environment which is able to hold him within bound. Inner containment is seen as resulting primarily from the success of the family at inculcating the good values of society in the minds of its off springs. However, when the family fails, the onus falls on formal agencies of outer containment such as the police, among others, to curtail the individual excesses and by extension help put crime and criminal in checks.

Methodology

This study was carried out between April and May, 2019, in tertiary educational institutions in Kogi State, Nigeria. Kogi state is a state in the North central region of Nigeria. The state is bordered by the states of Nassarawa to the northeast, Benue to the east, Enugu, Anambra, and Delta to the south; Ondo, Ekiti, and Kwara to the west; and Niger and Abuja Federal Capital Territory to the north. The state was chosen for the study because is one of the states with the highest numbers of tertiary educational institutions in the North Central Nigeria (see table 1 below).

Table 1: List of Tertiary Educational Institutions in Kogi State

S /No	Category	State Owned	Federal Owned	Private Owned
1	University	Kogi State University, Anyigba	Federal University, Lokoja	Salem University, Lokoja
2	Polytechnic	Kogi State Polytechnic, Lokoja	The Federal Polytechnic, Idah	-
3	College of Education	(i) Kogi State College of Education, Ankpa (ii) Kogi State College of Education (Technical), Kabba	Federal College of Education, Okene	-
4	School of Nursing	Kogi State School of Nursing and Midwifery, Obangede	-	- ECWA School of Nursing, Egbe - Grimad School of Nursing and Midwifery, Anyigba
5	School of Science Health and Technology	Kogi State College of Science, Health and Technology, Idah	-	-
6	School of Agriculture	-	College of Agriculture, Kabba	-

Source: Kogi State Ministry of Education, Lokoja, Nigeria

As regards research design, study population, samples size and sampling techniques; the study used cross-sectional survey research design. The design was adopted because it helped in eliciting data on students' misconducts in off-campus residences across tertiary

educational institutions in Kogi State. The Study population comprises of students (in off-campus housing), landlords/caretakers, staff of the security units of tertiary institutions, and the police.

As regards sample-size and sampling technique, the study used multi-stage sampling design. First, a list containing all categories of tertiary educational institutions in Kogi State was obtained from the State Ministry of Education. Second, all categories of the Kogi State-owned tertiary educational institutions were purposively sorted out from the list. Third, three categories of the stated-owned tertiary educational institutions were purposively chosen out of the sorted categories. The categories chosen are the University, polytechnics and college of education. These categories were chosen because students reside in off-campus accommodation in the categories more than in others. Fourth, one tertiary institution each was selected from each of the three categories using purposive sampling technique. The institutions selected are the Kogi State University, located in Anyigba, Kogi east (representing University category); Kogi State Polytechnic, located in Lokoja, Kogi central (representing polytechnic category), and College of Education, (Technical) located in Kabba, Kogi west (representing college of education category).

The second stage of the sampling process involved the selection of sample of the study participants. This was done using purposive sampling technique. This sampling technique was adopted because it helped to ensure that the target group is actually reached. The samples selected comprises of four hundred and fifty (450) students (at the rate of 150 per institution), six (6) officials of the security units in the selected institutions (at the rate of 2 officials per institution), thirty (30) landlords/caretakers at the rate of 10 landlords/caretakers per institution), and six (6) police officers (at the rate of 2 police officers per community where the selected institutions were sited). Equal numbers of participants were selected across sample population in order to ensure equity and fairness.

With regards to the methods of data collection and analysis, data were collected through questionnaire and key informants' interviews. Questionnaire were administered to students and interviews were conducted with landlords/caretakers, officials of security units, and the police. Data collected through questionnaire were analyzed using frequencies and

percentages while responses from the interviews were content analysed (manually). The results of both data were however used to produce a single report.

Results and Discussion

In this study, a total of four hundred and fifty (450) copies of questionnaire were administered out of which four hundred and thirty nine (439) representing 97.6% were suitable for analysis and the remaining eleven (11) copies representing 2.4% were invalid and not used in the analysis. The results of the interviews were also presented alongside that of the questionnaire. The results presented are in two parts. Part A centers on the respondents social demographic characteristics (for students only), while Part B focuses on the objectives of the study.

Part A: Analysis of the Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 2: Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	297	67.7
Female	142	32.3
Total	439	100.0
Age (in years)		
Less than 16	23	5.2
16-20	41	9.3
21-25	146	33.3
26-30	83	18.9
31-35	65	14.8
36 and above	81	18.5
Total	439	100.0
Categories of students residing off campus		
Fresh Students	128	29.2
		70.8

Stale Students	311	100.0
Total	439	
Ethnic groups		
Igala	169	38.5
Ebira	88	20.0
Yoruba	93	21.2
Others	89	20.3
Total	439	100.0
Family socio-economic status		
High Class	129	29.4
Middle Class	189	43.1
Low Class	121	27.6
Total	439	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 2 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. From the table, majority (67.7%) were male while the remaining (32.3%) were female. This finding indicates that more male than female resides in off-campus accommodation in the sampled institutions. Current age of the respondents shows that about 33.3 percent were between ages 21-25 years, 18.9 percent were ages 26-30 years, 18.5 percent were ages 36 and over, 14.8 percent were ages 31-35 years, 9.3 percent were ages 16-20 years while the remaining 5.2 percent were less than 16 years. This finding indicates that majority of the students residing in off-campus accommodation in the sampled institutions fall within ages 21-25 years. This age bracket is good for serious academic work and better performance.

On the categories of students residing in off-campus accommodation, findings revealed that majority (70.8 %) were stale students while the remaining 29.2 percents were fresh students. A situation where high number of stale students residing off-campus is not surprising as sampled institutions authorities were found to give preference to fresh men and women in the allocation of on-campus accommodation than stale students. Respondents ethnic groups show that about 38.5 percent were from Igala ethnic group, 21.2 percent were Yoruba, 20.0 percent were Ebira while the remaining 20.3 percent belong to other ethnic groups in Nigeria. This finding indicates that respondents from Igala ethnic group are more

than respondents from other ethnic groups. This is not surprising as Igala ethnic group constitute the largest ethnic group in Kogi State, hence the reason for their dominance.

On the Socio-economic status of family of the respondents, about 43.0 percent were from middle class family, 29.4 percent were from high class family and the remaining 27.6 percent were from low class family. This finding indicate that majority of the respondents were from middle class family. This is not surprising because Kogi State is a civil servant states and civil servants in Nigeria are grouped into middle socio-economic class. There children who are students thus represent their parents' class.

In sum, the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents presented above show that majority of them were male, aged between 21-25 years, stale students, belonged to Igala ethnic groups and were from middle class family.

Part B: Analysis of Objectives of the Study.

Before identifying the form of students' misconduct in off-campus residences, efforts were first of all made to know whether respondents have any close relation/extended family member with whom they could live with in the area where their school is sited/located. The result of the inquiry show that majority (92.7%) of the respondents answered in the negative, meaning that they do not have any relations to live with in their school area, while the remaining 7.3% answered in the affirmative, meaning that they had relations to lived with. Further enquiries were also made from those that have relations in the school areas whether they are living with such relations or on rented accommodation. Finding shows that almost all (96.6%) are living on rented accommodations while the remaining 3.4 percent are living with their relation. For the respondents who are living on rented accommodation, efforts were made to know from them the types of accommodations they are living in; number of students living in a room; methods of securing the accommodation and the amount paid as rent per month. As regards the types of accommodation lived in, findings show that a little more than half (50.3%) lived in single room (of face me I face you type), about 32.4 percent lived in single room (of self contain type), 15.2 percent lived in flat house (most especially one bedroom flat) while the remaining (2.1%) lived in other types of house. On the number of

students living in a room, findings show that about 34.3 percent lived alone in a room, while the remaining (65.7%) lived in a room with two or more students.

With regards to methods of securing the accommodation, findings revealed that majority (60.1%) of the respondents secured their accommodation through friends, while 12.9 percent secured their accommodation through parents/relations. Other sources of accommodation as revealed by the respondents included advertisement by estate agents (8.7%), lecturer (5.3%) students-agents (7.1%) and self efforts (5.9%). On the amount of rent paid by the respondents per annum, findings shows that about 34.4 percent of the respondents paid less than ₦30,000.00, 20.1 percent paid between ₦30,000- ₦50,000, 16.2 percent paid between ₦51,000- ₦70,000, 15.6 percent paid between ₦71,000 – ₦90,000 while 13.7 percent paid between ₦91,000 and over. These amounts as paid by the respondents are significantly higher than the accommodation fee paid by students living in the school hostels; as students living in the on-campus accommodation paid ten thousand naira only as accommodation fee. On this basis, enquiries were made from the respondents on why they preferred off campus accommodation, to on campus housing considering the expensive nature of the former. The results of the enquiry show that most (83.7%) of the respondents preferred off-campus accommodation because of the unhygienic nature of toilets, bathrooms and kitchen as well as the overcrowding and environmental disturbances (such as noise) common on campus halls of residence. While the remaining (16.3%) others said they were not qualified to live in the hostel even if they want to.

In view of the foregoing, efforts were then made to find out from the respondents the nature of misconducts common in off-campus residences, the result of the inquiry is shown in table 3 below:

Table 3: Natures of Students' Misconduct in Off-campus Residences

Natures of Students' Misconduct	Frequency	Percent age
Theft of other tenants properties such as handset/cell phone, food items, clothing materials etc by fellow tenants	79	18.6
Burglary/entering other occupants room illegally	69	16.3
Unruly behaviour such as operating electronic devices such as stereo with loud/excessive noise at night and early in the morning; fighting, harassing other co-tenants, etc	71	16.7
Engaging in non-consensual sexual activity, homosexuality including lesbianism	49	11.6
Involvement in cultism/unlawful association	59	13.9
Use of psychoactive substances such as tramadol, codeine, Indian hems, etc	53	12.5
Damaging of properties in rented apartment	44	10.4
Total	424	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 3 shows the nature of students' misconduct in off-campus residences. The finding from the table 3 above revealed theft of other tenant's properties (18.6%), unruly behaviour (16.7%), and burglary/illegal entering into other occupant apartment (16.3%). Other forms of misconducts as contained in the table 3 above included involvement in cultism/unlawful association (13.9%), engaging in non-consensus sexual activity, homosexuality including lesbianism (11.6%), use of psychoactive substances (12.5%), and damaging of properties in rented apartment (10.4%). Further efforts were made to find out the sources or the factors responsible for the foregoing natures of misconducts among the respondents, the result of the enquiry is shown in table 4 below:

Table 4: Sources of Students' Misconduct in Off-Campus Residences

Sources of Students Misconducts	Frequency	Percentage
Greediness/lack of contentment	73	17.2
Peer influence	81	19.1
Poor parental care	64	15.1
Genetic disorder/inheritance from parents	47	11.1
Defective socialization most especially from primary agents of socialization such as family	51	12.0
Broken homes	41	9.7
Poverty	67	15.8
Total	424	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 4 shows the sources of misconducts in off-campus residences. The findings revealed peer influence (19.1%), greediness/lack of contentment (17.2%), and poverty (15.8%). Other sources of students' misconduct as contained in the table 4 above included poor parental care (15.1%), defective socialization (12.0%), genetics disorder inherited from parents (11.1%) and broken homes (9.7%). The above findings show that students misconducts in off-campus residences is a product of many factors ranging from peer influences to broken homes. These factors are however acting individually or jointly to propel students to engage in wrongful or improper behaviour.

On how students' misconduct are being managed, the results of the interview conducted revealed the use of informal and formal measures (depending on the nature of the misconducts) by the landlords/caretakers. For instance, in the case of burglary, the home of the landlords/caretakers is often the first point of call for many victims whose room were burgled or items stolen. The landlord would normally investigate the reported cases and then attempt to find amicable solution. In most cases, however, the landlord assisted the complainants to identify/find the tenant responsible for the act. Further, in the case of unruly behaviour among co-tenants, the home of the landlord is also the first point of call for many aggrieved tenants who have simply developed a quarrel with co-tenant. The landlord would equally investigate the reported case(s). The standard approach is to give the complainant an

opportunity to present his/her case. The landlord then attempts to mediate between the two parties.

In the case of damaging of properties in the rented apartment by the occupant, both the landlord and tenants would usually agree on the extent of damage caused by the tenant and the level of compensation to be paid to the landlord whose properties have been damaged. Compensation for any damage to properties is usually done in cash. The payment may, however, be spread over a period of time, usually in accordance with an agreed schedule between the parties involved. In a situation where the offending party failed to fulfill his/her promise of paying for the damages caused, the case is often referred to the police or school security unit by the landlords/caretakers, for settlement. This statement was admitted to by both the police and officers of the security units of the sampled institutions. Also, in the cases of homosexuality and cultism, the practice adopted by the landlord is the driving away of the tenant (students) from the house by engaging the services of the police and security personnel thereby abrogating existing landlord-tenant contracts and agreement that gave the tenant temporary permit to reside in the house.

In addition to the aforementioned, the study discovered that landlords/caretakers often organize meetings for tenants (students) from time to time. These meetings serve as fora for discussing problems faced by individual tenants and devising ways of forestalling the future occurrence of such problems. The meetings between the parties offer both groups the opportunity to appreciate each other's concerns. Efforts were also made to find out from the landlords/caretakers on why they so much preferred the informal to formal means of managing students' misconducts. The result of the enquiry revealed that informal means were more preferred because of their cheapness, swiftness and proximity.

Efforts were also made to find out from the staff of the security units of the sampled institutions on measures being used to resolve referred cases (from landlords/caretakers) of students' misconducts. The results of the enquiries revealed the use of multiple measures but formal. For instance, one security officer said:

whenever any case of students' misconducts in off-campus residences is referred to our office either by the landlords/caretakers, what we usually do is to first of all invite the concerned parties, then investigate their claims, and if

the student involved is found guilty, further necessary action is usually taken again such student, depending on the nature of the misconduct.

Enquiries were further made on the nature of misconducts that had been reported to the security units and how they were resolved. The results of the enquiries show misconducts such as non-payment of house rent, damaging of properties in rented apartment, cultism and theft especially of hand set/cell phone. With regards to the measures used, for instance, in the cases of non-payment of house rents and damaging of properties in rented apartment, a security officer states thus:

In the cases of non-payment of house rent and damaging of properties in rented apartment, what we normally do is to first invite the concerned students, give him/her time to pay up (either the house rent owed or for the properties damaged), and if he/she failed to pay within the given time, the information of such student is usually send to the academic office for the suspension of issuance of academic result to the student until he/she made the payment

He went further:

In the case of theft of hand set/cell phone, what we usually do is to invite the owner of the hand set/cell phone and asked him/her to present his/her phone International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) number for tracking. We always do phone tracking in collaboration with the Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps, and it cost ten thousand naira only, to be borne by the hand set/cell phone owner. This measure has helped to recover many stolen hand set/cell phone. After the hand set/cell phone has been recovered, the culprit will thereafter be referred to the students' disciplinary committee for further necessary action, which includes expulsion or rustication.

In the cases of cultism and rape, another security official states that:

what we normally do is to first investigate the case. If there are evidences against the suspected student, the case will then be transferred to either the State Criminal Investigation Department (CID) (a branch of the Nigeria Police Force) or the Department of State Security Service (DSS) for further necessary action which includes prosecution

However in a situation where the cases of students misconducts are directly reported to the police by the landlords/caretakers, what the police usually do, from the interviewed conducted with the sampled police officers, is to first, for instance in the case of non-payment of house rent, invite the parties involved, investigate the claims of the parties, and if true, compel the student involved to pay up within a particular period of time or be prosecuted. In addition, in

the cases of cultism, theft and rape, one police officer submits that: what we always do is to first investigate the case, if there are evidences; we then prosecute the suspect(s).

By and large, the foregoing measures were meant to bring students who have strayed away from the right path back and make the culprit pay for their act of misconducts, thereby serve as deterrent to others. Further enquiries were made on the effectiveness of the measures. The results of the enquiries revealed that the measures have helped to lessened students' misconduct to the minimum in the sampled tertiary educational institutions in the state.

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

This study investigated the nature, sources and measures used in managing students' misconduct in off-campus residences in tertiary educational institutions in Kogi State, Nigeria. Findings of the study revealed nature of students' misconduct in off-campus residences to include thefts, burglary, damaging of properties in rented apartments, use of psychoactive substances and cultism. These were however found to have been caused by greediness/lack of contentment on the part of the students, peer influence, poor parental care, genetic disorder (inherited from parents), and poverty. In managing students' misconduct, the study discovered the use of both formal and informal measures. Although these measures have helped to lessened students' misconduct to the minimum in the sampled tertiary educational institutions, the school authorities still need to collaborate with the state ministries of education, youth and social development, health and the host communities in the areas of adequate provision of on-campus students housing, orientation programme for parents on the need to always inculcate good virtues on their children as well as for students on the need to always be contented, and care such as gene therapy for students suffering from inherited gene disorder predisposing them to criminal behaviour, and security for adequate monitoring of students activities.

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