

Curbing Rustication of Students through their Participation in Decision-making on their Disciplinary Matters.

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Abstract: Rustication of students in Nigerian Universities ranges from different levels of suspension to outright expulsion. This can be occasioned by negative activities on the campus such as examination malpractice, wanton destruction of school property, impersonation, plagiarism of project work and worst of all, cultism, with their attendant poor academic performance. This paper surveys the possible effect of inclusion of students in the decision-making concerning their disciplinary matters as a means of curbing the excesses that lead to their rustication and thereby enhancing the overall goal achievement in universities. The study is based on a test-retest result of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient statistic ($r= 0.64$), followed by frequency count and percentages along with chi-square analysis of pooled responses to questionnaire items administered to Principal Officers and Students' Union Executives of nine universities in South Eastern States of Nigeria. Chi-square values of 29.53 for Principal Officers and 14.83 for Students' Union Executives when compared to table value of 9.24 for 5 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance confirm the need for students' participation in decision-making on their disciplinary matters. Indeed, the researcher recommends this approach since the students who know themselves better are in a greater position to effect self discipline.

Keywords: Chi-square values. Disciplinary matters, goal achievement, rustication of students.

I. Introduction

Qualification for graduation requires that the graduating students be found worthy both in character and learning. However, a good number of the present generation of students fall short of this requirement as they are easily carried away by the freedom in the university environment and readily fall prey to anti social activities on campus. Cultism in Nigerian universities for example, has led to the demise of many students including some innocent ones. Many researchers have indicated that the more the involvement of students in the decision-making of affairs that affect them, the greater is the goal achievement (Washburn and Hammand 1982; Nadeem 2008; Dimitri 2005; Okumbe 1998; Ukeje et al 1992; Adeniyi 2000; Oni 1997; Uyanga 1989).

Disciplinary measures can be more effective if the students themselves are fully aware of the implications through their involvement in disciplinary matters and their consequent application of self-regulation. (Zimmerman 1989; Montalvo and Torres 2004; Akomolafe and Ibijola 2011; Schunk and Zimmerman 1998; Wallace 1994; Hill and Jones 1995). This study investigates the perceptions of both Students' Union Executives and University Administrators on students' participation in decision-making on their disciplinary matters as a means of enhancing goal achievement in the universities.

II. Research Method

Design of Study

The design of the study is a descriptive survey in which data collection involves a target population from nine Universities. This design is considered appropriate because the events being studied have already taken place. That means the students' involvement or non- involvement in decision-making in those Institutions is an already existing situation.

Area of Study

The study was carried out in nine Universities in the South Eastern States of Nigeria comprising of Abia, Imo, Anambara, Enugu and Ebonyi states.

Population of Study

The population of study consists of all 138 Principal Officers and Students' Union Executives of the nine Universities in the South Eastern part of Nigeria. This is made up of 49 Principal Officers and 89

Table 1: Population of study

S/No.	State	Federal Universities	No. of Principal Officers	No. of Student Union Executives	Total	State Universities	No. of Principal Officers	No. of Students' Union Executives.	Total
1.	Abia	Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike	5	9	14	Abia State University, Uturu	6	10	16
2.	Anambra	Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka	6	9	15	Anambra State University of Science and Technology, Uli	5	10	15
3.	Ebonyi	-	-	-	-	Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki	5	11	16
4.	Enugu	University of Nigeria Nsukka	6	9	15	Enugu State University of Technology, Enugu	5	10	15
5.	Imo	Federal University of Technology, Owerri	6	10	16	Imo State University, Owerri	5	11	16
Total	5	4	23	37	60	5	26	52	78

Source: Data collected from the Institutions

Students' Union Executives in both State and Federal Universities in South Eastern States of Nigeria.

The distribution of the target population and the Universities involved are shown in Table 1 above.

Sample and Sampling technique

A purposive sampling technique was used consisting of the entire 138 Principal Officers and Students' Union Executives of the nine Universities in the South Eastern States of Nigeria. The choice of using the entire population is informed by the population being relatively small.

Instrument for data collection

The instrument for data collection was a researcher-made questionnaire called students' participation in decision-making and goal achievement questionnaire (SPIDAQAQ) used for two groups of respondents-Principal Officers and Students' Union Executives. The questionnaire was divided into two sections A and B. Section A focused on bio-data comprising of name of institution, proprietorship of the institution and status of the respondent. Section B focused on students' participation in decision –making with participation in Disciplinary matters as a subset.

The response to the statements were a modified four-point Lickert (1971) scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4 points, Agree (A) = 3 points, Disagree (D) = 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) =1 point. All responses under Strongly Agree and Agree were collated and taken as “Agree” while responses under Disagree and Strongly Disagree were collated and taken as “Disagree”.

Validation of the Instrument

The face and content validity were determined by giving the questionnaire items to experts in measurements and evaluation. Their inputs were requested in checking the relevance, correctness and any ambiguity of items to ensure that the questionnaire items elicited the required responses. Their contributions were used to review and modify the questionnaire items, resulting in 6 items on students' participation in disciplinary matters.

Reliability of Instrument

To ascertain the reliability of the instrument, the validated items were subjected to a pilot test. This was done by administering the instrument on a total of 15 Students' Union Executives and 6 Principal Officers of University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, as they were not part of the main study.

A test-retest method of two weeks interval was used to determine the reliability of the questionnaire items over time. The scores from the two tests were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Statistic. This yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.64 which was considered adequate for the study.

Administration of the Instrument

The questionnaires for the Principal Officers were personally administered by the researcher while those of the Students' Union Executives were administered by 9 research assistants who were properly briefed on how it should be done. They also assisted in the retrieval. The administration and retrieval of the questionnaires were accomplished within one month with about 90% return rate.

III. Results and Discussion

Table 2 contains the responses of Students' Union Executives on 6 questionnaire items regarding students' participation in decision-making on their disciplinary matters. Between 70.6%-90.9% agree on students' membership of disciplinary committee, disciplining members who engage in impersonation,

Table 2: Perceptions of Students' Union Executives on Students' Participation in Decision-Making on Students' Disciplinary Matters and Goal Achievement.

S/N	Questionnaire item	Students' Union Executives					
		Agree		Disagree		Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%
1	Students' membership of disciplinary committee	63	71.6	25	28.4	88	100
2	Making rules and regulations on students' discipline	28	31.8	60	68.2	88	100
3	Disciplining students who destroy school facilities	36	40.9	52	59.1	88	100
4	Disciplining members who engage in impersonation	78	88.6	10	11.4	88	100
5	Disciplining members who plagiarize research projects	79	89.8	9	10.2	88	100
6	Punishing members who engage in social vices	80	90.9	8	9.1	88	100
	Total	364	68.9	164	31.1	528	100

disciplining members who plagiarize research projects and disciplining members who engage in social vices such as cultism, while 68.2% disagree on Students making rules and regulations on students' discipline and 59.1% disagree on disciplining of students who destroy school facilities. The areas of students' disagreement may be seen from the viewpoint that rules and regulations are permanent features of a University while students come and go. Also, destruction of school facilities may occur in a mob action during students' riot resulting in a surcharge

Table 3: Perceptions of Principal Officers on Students' Participation in Decision-Making on Students' Disciplinary Matters and Goal Achievement.

S/N	Questionnaire item	Principal Officers					
		Agree		Disagree		Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%
1	Students' membership of disciplinary committee	10	27.8	26	72.2	36	100
2	Making rules and regulations on students' discipline	10	27.8	26	72.2	36	100
3	Disciplining students who destroy school facilities	3	8.3	33	91.7	36	100
4	Disciplining members who engage in impersonation	0	0	36	100	36	100
5	Disciplining members who plagiarize research projects	0	0	36	100	36	100
6	Punishing members who engage in social vices	2	5.6	34	94.4	36	100
	Total	25	11.6	191	88.4	216	100

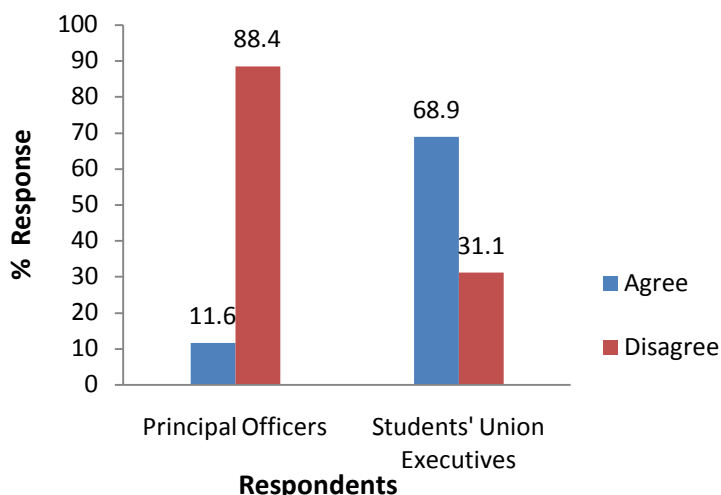


Fig. 1 Perceptions of Principal Officers and Students' Union Executives on Students' Participation in Decision-Making on Students' Disciplinary Matters and Goal Achievement.

for all students in a way that may not suit them. On the other hand, table 3 shows that Principal Officers are in total disagreement of students' participation in their disciplinary matters with response of 72.2%-100% on the various questionnaire items which signifies maintenance of the status quo. The aggregate of these results are displayed in the bar chart of Fig.1

Table 4: Chi-square Analysis of the Responses of Principal Officers and Students' Union Executives on Students' Participation in decision-Making on Students' Disciplinary Matters and Goal Achievement.

Item	Agree	Disagree	Total
Principal Officers			
Students' participation in Decision-making on being members of disciplinary committee	10 (4.17)	26 (31.83)	36
Making rules & regulations on students' discipline	10 (4.17)	26 (31.83)	36
Disciplining students who destroy school. Facilities	3 (4.17)	33 (31.83)	36
Disciplining members who engage in impersonation	0 (4.17)	36 (31.83)	36
Disciplining members who plagiarize research projects	0 (4.17)	36 (31.83)	36
Punishing members who engage in social vices	2 (4.17)	34 (31.83)	36
Sub-total	25	191	216
Students' Union Executives			
Being members of disciplinary committee	63 (60.67)	25 (27.33)	88
Making rules regulations on students' discipline	28 (60.67)	60 (27.33)	88
Disciplining students who destroy school facilities	36 (60.67)	52 (27.33)	88
Disciplining members who engage in impersonation	78 (60.67)	10 (27.33)	88
Disciplining members who plagiarize research projects	79 (60.67)	9 (27.33)	88
Punishing members who engage in social vices	80 (60.67)	8 (27.33)	88
Sub-total	364	164	528

Principal Officers

Chi-Square Cal = 29.53

Chi-Square Critical = 9.24

d.f = 5, α = 0.05

Students' Union Executives

Chi-Square Cal = 14.83

Chi-Square Critical = 9.24

d.f = 5, α = 0.05

However, chi-square values in table 4 affirms the need for students' participation in decision-making of their disciplinary matters as a means for greater goal achievement.

IV. Conclusion

The perceptions of Principal Officers and Students' Union Executives on students' participation in decision-making on their disciplinary matters as a means of curbing rustication of students in Universities has been investigated and discussed. The results show a great willingness by the students' Union Executives for participation of students in their disciplinary matters. This is supported by chi-square values evaluated from responses of both Principal Officers and Students' Union Executives to questionnaire items.

In line with increasing global practice, the researcher recommends the participation of students in decision-making on affairs that affect them, including disciplinary matters, as a means of inculcating self-

regulation in the students, reduce the rate of students' rustication and enhance overall goal achievement in the universities.

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