

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Background to the Study**

The history of university education in Nigeria could be said to date back to the commencement of the University College, Ibadan in the 1947/48 academic year on the basis of the recommendations of the Elliot Commission Report (Adesina, 1981). The mandate of universities, according to the National Policy on Education (NPE) Federal Republic of Nigeria, (2004), is basically to produce and sustain human capital in order to further the economic, social and technological development of the country. The three main functions of a university are (i) to impart manpower skills through, (ii) teaching, to pursue knowledge through organized research, and (iii) to contribute to national and international dialogue and criticism (community services).

Despite the laudable objectives of university education in Nigeria, its aims and obligations are not fully realised due to some problems encumbering the system. Some observed problems in the management of Nigerian universities, according to Ekundayo and Ajayi (2009), include: finance, deteriorating infrastructure, brain-drain syndrome, erosion of university autonomy, deteriorating quality of graduates due to perceived poor quality of input, volatile and militant students' unionism, cultism, and political interference by the government in power. The combined effects have accounted for the

seeming low level teaching and practical exercises, low research activities, and output and feeble community services that have resulted in declining quality of education. Prominent among these problems are students' crises and persistent student and management conflict which have become a stigma in the history of Nigerian universities.

Conflict and its management are an inevitable friction in an organisation. Conflict could be defined as an incompatibility of goals or values between two or more parties in a relationship combined with attempts to control each other which could result in antagonistic feelings toward each other. The incompatibility or difference may exist in reality or may be perceived by the parties involved. Basically, conflict is what occurs when two or more parties have divergent interests over distribution of resources or issues touching on their development. Ejiogu (1990) states that conflict is a normal part of human social interaction.

The Nigerian university system, being a social and dynamic organisation is not immune to conflict. Over the years, it has experienced one form of conflict or the other among its stakeholders such as student–student, student–staff, staff–authority (government or university management) and student–authority (government, university management, or police) as shown by various researchers (Ojo, 1995; Aluede, Jimoh, Agwinede and Omoregie, 2005; Adeyemi, 2009; Ekundayo and Ajayi, 2009; Adebayo, 2010). Sometimes,

conflict can also occur between university and its host community. Most of the conflicts have resulted in crises because of poor management and became violent with consequences which include: disruption of academic calendar due to frequent closure of universities, loss of lives and destruction of property, lack of recognition for certificates by local and international employers of labour and general indiscipline among students which have rendered the universities ungovernable. This situation has constituted insecurity and obstruction to university development in Nigeria.

Conflict will always occur, but a well-managed conflict will not degenerate into crisis (Ojo, 1995). Researchers have opined the fact that conflicts do not just occur, but always have antecedents which, if mismanaged by the use of poor or weak conflict management mechanisms, could turn into crises (Azenabor, 2005; Aluede et al, 2005; Alabi, 2010; Fatile and Adejuwon, 2011). The literature on conflict antecedents has shown that conflict in Nigerian universities are linked with multi-various factors among which are: the governance system of the country, proliferation of universities, corruption, inadequate funding, university autonomy, brain drain, ineffective communication between students and university management, and non-inclusion of students in decision-making process.

A critical examination of Nigeria's political history in the past five decades reveals that there has been a predominant military rule in the country. Although, the earliest manifestation of students' crises

was during the pre-independence era when the students mobilised against the British colonial masters who decided to use the campus of Kings' College as a base to cater for the West African Frontier Force recruited from West African colonies during the Second World War. The students were eventually relocated to Obalende, Lagos. Though the students were not formally organised under a union, they made history on the matters of students' crises. The military dispensation which covered the period between 1966-1979 and 1983-1999 in Nigeria political history witnessed diverse forms and dimensions of authoritarian leadership styles. Most government programmes and policies were not only imposed but were backed up with decrees which were draconian in nature.

Nigerian students also became militarised by the virtue of long military rule in the country and were forced to rise up and challenge the national issues considered to be 'inhuman' (Azenabor, 2005). An instance was government's attempt at increasing university tuition fees following the decline in oil revenue which provoked serious students' protests throughout the country in April, 1978 which was christened 'Ali Must Go'. At least 20 students died during the confrontation with the police. The National Union of Nigerian Students (NUNS) was banned and several journalists and university lecturers who criticised the government's handling of the issue were arrested and detained. Some were even dismissed from office. Some street miscreants also used the protests as cover for extensive looting and arson. The introduction of the Structural Adjustment

Programme (SAP) in 1986, deregulation of the currency in 1992 and the withdrawal of subsidy on petroleum and allied products in 1988 were among the root causes of students' crises in the political history of Nigeria. In addition, the carry over effect of long military rule had adversely affected the psyche of Nigerian youths and, consequently, the trend of youth violent activities in Nigerian universities. This trend has since been witnessed in the current dispensation (1999 to date).

The endemic corruption in Nigeria has made it difficult for the government to implement most policies targeted at fulfilling its obligations for basic student welfare in its educational system including the universities. With pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), students started bearing the sole burden of feeding themselves because meal subsidies were scrapped. Coupled with this burden borne by students, there was also rise in inflation, increase in the price of crude oil and unstable exchange rate. These factors have contributed to weaken academic morale not only of students but the whole university personnel. Nigerian universities seem to be inadequately funded. While the Federal Government spent about N3.7 billion on education, it spent N6.2 billion on defence between 1987 and 1990 (Azenabor, 2005). Also, the United Nation Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) recommendation of 26% of the annual budget allocation to education could not be met; the Federal Government is only spending between

11% and 13% of its annual budget on education (Ekundayo and Ajayi, 2009).

Owing to inadequate funding, university education in Nigeria has undergone tremendous changes for the worst. The proliferation of universities in Nigeria, accompanied by unprecedented growth in enrolment without corresponding expansion in infrastructure, has led to the deterioration in institutional facilities and services. The expansion in enrolment during the oil boom in the 1970s, coupled with the political pressure of the 1980s and early 1990s, marked the beginning of the decline in the quality of university education. The number increased from six in the 1960s to 128 universities, 40 federal, 38 state and 50 private universities (NUC, 2014) as at the time of this study. Correspondingly, the total student population of Nigerian universities grew from 1,395 in 1960 to over 500,000 in 2014.

The number of candidates seeking admission into the Nigerian universities has also increased from 975,060 in 2002 to 1,503,931 in 2012 (Akpanuko, 2012), thus increasing the cost of education due to expansion in university facilities in order to accommodate the increased population. The issue of deteriorating facilities in Nigerian universities has been linked not only to poor university funding but also with the maintenance culture of both the staff and students. The resultant effects are contributing immensely to the deplorable condition and destruction of the available facilities. In addition, it is

very important to note that various categories of physical facilities are significant in improving the quality of education thereby contributing to academic achievements. The school buildings, classrooms, hostel accommodation, furniture, libraries, laboratories, recreational equipment, apparatus and other instructional materials contribute to academic achievements.

The growth in enrolment, coupled with non-corresponding expansion in facilities, equipment and material resources has resulted in undue stress on the available facilities. There is overcrowding in classrooms, a situation that could result in rowdy and unruly behaviour among students whereby some students might be jostling for seat or space, some might even hang outside, thus creating unnecessary distractions and other obscene activities around the campus. These circumstances have negative effects on the teaching-learning process and have been known to cause grievances among Nigerian students. The management styles in Nigerian universities also have their consequences. University students have also challenged some perceived administrative deficiencies on the part of the university authorities. In recent times, students' crises have been precipitated by issues such as non-inclusion of students in the decision-making process of the university, sudden change in university policies, university management high handedness on student matters, lack of effective communication between university management and students, and invitation of the police by university managers in crisis situations.

Many researchers (Ojo, 1995; Onwurah, 2000; Aluede et al, 2005) have recognized that the degree of students' involvement in the decision-making process is inversely related to the occurrence of students' crises. Over the years, Nigerian students had protested over some decisions made by the university management on the basis of not being included in the matter which affects them. Instances include the decision of the university management to ban student unionism on campus, regulating/restriction of movement to certain areas (male or female hostel) and general movement on campus that are time bound.

The presence of conflict in an organisation is not a signal that all is not well, but could be due to poor or wrong application of management principles in directing the affairs of such an organisation. For instance, conflict could bring a positive change of direction into an organisation otherwise experiencing deterioration. The management of such an organisation could be forced to embrace ideas or principles that ordinarily would not have been taken but for the conflict. Unfortunately, students' crises have been conceived and portrayed mostly as a negative and disruptive process (Fatile and Adejuwon, 2011). Little importance has been attached to democratic transformation that conflict could bring to the university community for qualitative improvement in both the students' lives on campus, managerial skills and experience of university management. The negative or dysfunctional aspect of conflict is due to the approach employed in managing it. In Nigerian universities, most conflict



situations (boycott of classes and peaceful protests) have turned violent with undesired consequences due to the application of weak or poor conflict management mechanisms employed by university management. The resultant effect of the ineffective conflict management mechanisms in handling students' conflict has brought about the phenomenon of students' crises in universities.

Ojo (1995) defines students' crises as the rampage caused by students in pressing home their demands on certain issues with university authorities. The issue of students' crises is a universal phenomenon. The nature and causes show slight differences depending on the locality. A number of observations show that students' unrest has become a world-wide phenomenon (Arijesuyo, 2011). On the 10<sup>th</sup> of November 2010 in the United Kingdom, university students staged a protest against increase in tuition fees by the Conservative Liberal Democratic coalition government. The protest was jointly organised by the National Union of Students (NUS) and the University College Union (UCU) involving large student population. The protest was violent and cases of vandalism were reported by university management and police. The summary of students' conflict in universities in South West Nigeria is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1**

Students' Crises in Universities in South-West, Nigeria (2000-2010)

<b>Year</b>	<b>Universities</b>	<b>Reason(s) for Crises</b>	<b>Target to which crisis is directed</b>
2000-2005	UNAD, OAU, UI, UNILAG, LASU, AAU, OOU	Killing of students, increase in petroleum pump price, anti-cult campaign by students, increase in school fees, suspension of student leaders, cult activities, introduction of maintenance fees and hostel privatization.	Police, Federal government, student cultist, university management and Vice-Chancellor.
2006-2010	UNILAG, OAU, OOU, UI, AAU, LASU	Corruption in the country, increase in school fees, students' activism, protest over continuous ASUU strike, academic issues and religious inclination.	Federal government, university management, host community, state government and Christian students.

## Key of Abbreviations:

UI = University of Ibadan

UNILAG = University Of Lagos

OAU = Obafemi Awolowo University

LASU = Lagos State University

OOU = Olabisi Onabanjo University

AAU = Adekunle Ajasin University

UNAD = University of Ado-Ekiti (now EKSU, Ekiti State University)

Source: All African.com/stories

The need to be proactive towards providing mechanisms for fair and timely management of students' crises has resulted in the application of different conflict management mechanisms in universities such as accommodation, avoidance, compromise, compulsion and collaboration. Premised on the enormous challenges of effectiveness and promptness in handling students' crises via appropriate conflict management, certain inbuilt mechanisms are statutorily established in Nigerian universities' management system as preventive measures.

In 1974, the Nigerian university registry was restructured to provide for the office of Dean of Students' Affairs against the former Student Affairs Officer to see to the leadership and welfare matters of students and to respond to conflict situations. This administrative structure is committed to advocating students' rights from the university management and the staff and to oversee the students' disciplinary matters. The Dean of Student Affairs is responsible directly to the Vice-Chancellor of the university, a situation which eliminates strict bureaucracy in decision-making process. Under the student affairs division, there are statutory board members and committees such as student management, the student welfare boards, administrative panels on disciplinary matters like cult-related issues and other students misconduct and guidance and counselling unit. Aside from the established student affairs department in the university, there is also liberty for the students to run a government through which their voices could be heard. The

Students' Union Government is run on democratic principles to allow the students participate and take decisions on matters that affect them in the university community.

In furtherance of the above, and the enormous challenges of students psychopathological behaviour coupled with the realization that the traditional scope of **career guidance** has proved inadequate in meeting the evolving scope of complex human developmental challenges. That is, psychological, personal, social, academic, and vocational, a precarious need for the review of the existing career guidance programme had become apt. Hence, in 2007, the NUC established the Department of Students' Support Service.

The creation of this new outfit which comprises six components (counselling and human development center and service, university clinic, hostel accommodation, sporting and recreational facilities, communication and campus environment) gave prominence to the establishment of guidance and counselling. In a follow-up action at re-defining the vision, mission, and programme objectives of undergraduate counselling services, in 2012, the NUC issued new guidelines for the establishment of Counselling and Human Development Centre(s) in Nigerian universities as a critical component of the support centre. Major striking features of the policy paper were the *review of programme objectives and services with wider scope intended to meet the emerging human developmental challenges rather than mere career guidance as was previously*

*conceptualized*. The enabling policy instrument which will henceforth serve as benchmark for university accreditation exercise (NUC, 2013) was formally presented to Vice-Chancellors on 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2013 by the Honourable Minister of Education, Professor Ruqayyatu Ahmed Rufai.

The assumption of this researcher is that conflict or crisis prone situations could be averted or minimized if the conflict management mechanisms such as accommodation, avoidance, compromise, compulsion and collaboration are fully functional and effective in the universities. On this premise, this study was conducted in the realisation that there is an obvious gap to be filled in the management of students' crises which explains the reason(s) for the failure of existing mechanisms in Nigerian universities. In addition, the study aimed at finding the reason(s) for such failures. The study specifically examined the current trends and dimensions of students' crises between 2000 and 2010 and their consequences on the governance of the university system. It also assessed the effectiveness of the conflict management mechanisms (accommodation, avoidance, compromise, compulsion and collaboration) employed by university management in curbing students' crises with a view to proffering suitable approaches to solving the problems of students' crises in universities in the South-West, Nigeria. The role played by external security agencies (police and military) was also examined and useful suggestions on the 'right attitude' to exhibit during students' crises were proffered.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Some observations have shown that the phenomenon of students' crises has persisted since the establishment of Nigerian universities despite ownership (federal, state or private universities) and size. It is still occurring in the universities given much effort by stakeholders to stop its occurrences. Each year, resources (both human and material) are wasted due to undesired consequences of students' crises which hamper the atmosphere conducive to meaningful teaching-learning process as a result of closure of universities.

Several solutions have been proffered by different researchers such as improvement in university funding, management overhauling through Total Quality Management (TQM), curriculum reforms and retention of quality teaching staff. More worrisome is the fact that despite the preventive and control mechanisms inbuilt into the students' management practices in the universities, it appears students' crises have remained unabated. Students' crises are a negative feedback and consequence of inappropriate or ineffective conflict management mechanisms that are employed by university management in handling students' conflicts.

At the time of this study, observation showed that students' crises still occurred in some universities in South-West, Nigeria. These are University of Ibadan, Ibadan; Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife; Lagos State University, Ojo; Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti and Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye. The causes of these crises

range from poor welfare services, increase in school fees to cultism and have been manifesting in form of unrest, protest and cultism.

This study was therefore conducted to further examine in a broader sense the conflict management mechanisms employed by university management with a view to determining their effectiveness in curbing students' crises.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study derives its theoretical justification from the Systems Theory and Social–Conflict Theory.

### **Systems Theory and the Educational System**

The Systems theory was formulated by Ludwig von Bertalanfly in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to explain how organisations function. Contributors to the development of the Systems School include Mary Parker Follet and Chester Barnard. Ludwig's diary (as cited in Oyebade, 1995) explains systems as complexes of elements standing in interaction.

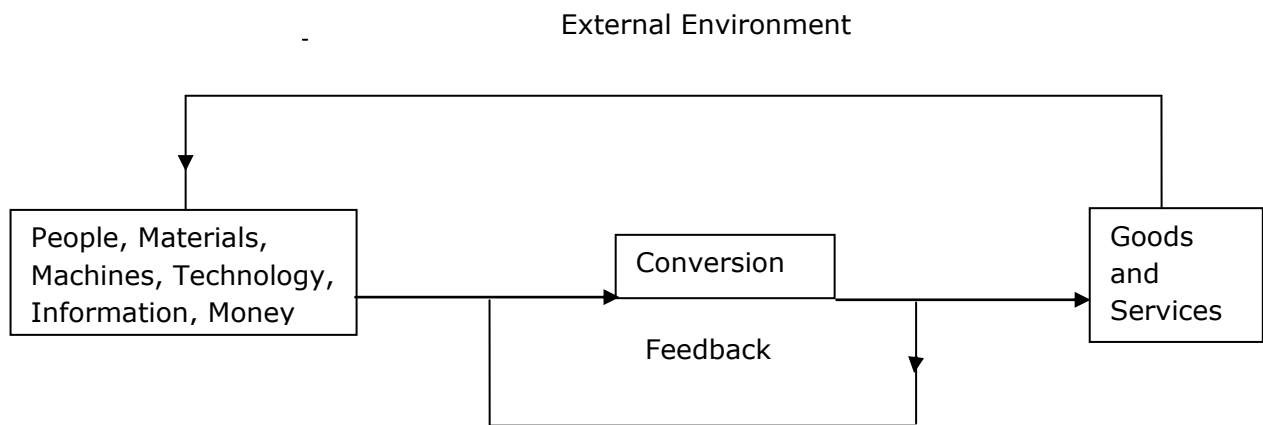
The three important aspects of a system are:

1. components of organisation that are arranged in orderly manner;
2. organisation's parts that are interdependent; and
3. the interaction among the components of an organisation that is directed towards the accomplishment of predetermined goals.

The proponents of the theory place emphasis on the interdependence and inter-relatedness of all units within the society and consequently of the organisation within the society. Similarly, the theorists assume that the systems and their subsystems in order to survive must be open. That is, they must have the capacity to relate to and exchange resources with their environment which is the supra system. This can be contrasted with a closed system which is not related to or does not exchange resources with its environment. It is characterised by entropy, which are disorganization, confusion and decay.

The Systems School of thought elaborates on the view of the classical and the organic school by suggesting that organisations should be viewed as open social systems. Burnes' diary (as cited in Millett, 1998) expatiates further that in an open system, organisations are affected by a number of factors that occur in the external environment which are capable of affecting factors which exist in the internal environment. The illustration is presented in Figure 1.





**Figure 1:** A basic model of an Open System

Source: Lawal, A. A. (1993). *Management in focus*. Lagos: NAS Printing Company, 37.

The input supplies the system with required materials for operation. These are in form of men, money, materials, time, information and machines. The input goes through conversion process and transforms to marketable goods and services as output which provides the environment with outcomes of the transformation in form of feedback. The feedback provides an avenue for assessment of output and for corrections to be effected in the system where necessary. The environment acts as boundary to the system and supplies required inputs into it. Against this background, this theory is relevant to the study in the following ways:

1. the research assumes that the university, as an organisation, is an open system where the structure is composed of units/components that are interrelated and interdependent.

Each unit/component is a subsystem of one another with activities that are consciously coordinated toward a common purpose. Each subsystem has a boundary which is the environment (supra system).

2. the activities are activated and organised in form of systems cycles whereby the units/components receive supplies of materials for operation from the environment as inputs, the input is transformed or converted through a process into marketable products and services which are discharged into the environment.
3. the efficiency or inefficiency of the organisation depends on the system of organisations rather than the personality of individuals who work in the system or the work itself.

The university as an organisation receives input from the environment (society) in form of people, materials, machines, technology, information and money. Therefore, using the various units that make up the structure of the university, it can be shown that there exists a link among each unit which establishes their dependence and interrelatedness as an open social system. This is represented in Figure 2.



The management of university education is at two levels: external and internal. The external level is the control of the universities by the federal government through the National Universities Commission (NUC), the body charged with the coordination and regulation of university management in Nigeria. The main objectives of the NUC are to ensure the orderly development of university education in Nigeria, its high standard and adequate funding. The internal level of university management involves the Visitor who is usually the Head of Government that established such university. The Visitor (the President in case of federal university and Governor in case of state university) comes to grace the convocation ceremonies and thus uses the occasion to address the academic community on matters of the moment. The Governing Council is headed by the Pro-Chancellor whose members are appointed by the government. Apart from external members of Council (solely appointed by the government) there are also internal members of Council (appointed by the university through elections). They are responsible for the administrative functions in the area of goal setting, policy formulation, staff development, budget approval and liaison activities with the government.

The Vice-Chancellor is the head of the university by law and the custodian of the administrative power of the university. The Vice-Chancellor heads the Senate which is the highest decision making body charged with the regulation of the academic activities of the university in conformity with NUC guidelines and the law. It should be noted that the manner in which all other inputs (materials,

machines, technology, information and money) in the university system are utilised is a function of the coordination and control of these management cadres.

The contributions of Mary Parker Follet in 1940 on modern theory suggest that the interest of individuals must be integrated with that of the organisation. This assertion presupposes that the personalities expected to occupy this macro level must aim at achieving the same goals as the university itself. Once the interest of the university management is at variance with the goals and visions of the university, there would be a focal shift in the administrative approaches and consequently the ultimate output of such a system. Olurode (2001) asserts that most Vice-Chancellors have not been able to effectively manage the resources available to them. This is because most Vice-Chancellors have acquired unlimited power to manipulate university resources. There is a high rate of corruption in the university system because of non-democratic control of the university administration. In addition, some Vice-Chancellors are too sensitive to criticism and do not see themselves accountable to anyone in the university.

The problem of university governance is no doubt a big challenge to Nigerian universities. Unfortunately, our universities are not free from unnecessary interaction, control, dictation and piloting from high quarters (Olurode, 2001). This prevailing situation makes it difficult for university administration to maintain continuity in its policy implementation, operational systems and procedures. Thus, in managing and administering the university system, experienced

professors with impeccable and internationally reputable academic background could be appointed as the Vice-Chancellors of the institutions. Sanni (2008) emphasizes that the precious life of a student can be unwittingly cut short through bad administration: for an example, the ill-advised invitation of anti-riot police on campus to curb students' crises.

Barnard (1948) considers a formal organisation as a system by which activities of two or more people are consciously coordinated toward a common purpose. The university system operates in a formal setting to achieve its goals being an organisation established by law. The interactions (information, communication and decision-making) among the macro levels are directed at managing university personnel and students towards the achievement of university goals. The university personnel are consciously coordinated by their respective unions like Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU) and Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU).

The unit responsible for students' management in the university is the Student Affairs headed by the Dean who is directly responsible to the Vice-Chancellor. He/she is involved in the administration of students in these areas: academic management (admissions, curriculum, relevance and examination), welfare services (student support services such as functional basic equipment and facilities, clinic, hostel accommodation), co-curricular activities, discipline and general control (Ipaye and Awere, 2013). It is worth noting that system theorists elaborate on the view of the classical and the

organic schools by suggesting that the efficiency or the inefficiency of an organisation depends on the system of organisations rather than the personality of individuals who work in the system or the work itself. School effectiveness researchers have reached consensus on the criteria for school effectiveness. Six different models are proposed as follows:

- 1. goal model:** this model assumes that a school is effective if it can accomplish its stated goals within the given inputs. This model is widely used in evaluating schools through the students' achievement.
- 2. the process model:** this model assumes that a school is effective if its internal functioning is smooth and healthy. The criteria for determining an effective school internal functioning are: (a) the student control, (b) the school environment provided for students, (c) the involvement provided for students, (d) the behaviour of lecturers, (e) the academic development of students, and (f) classroom management.
- 3. the system resource model:** this model sees an effective school as the one that can acquire the resources it needs.
- 4. the strategic consistency model:** it defines a school as effective when all its strategic areas are minimally satisfied and the school actions are largely responsive to the demand of the strategic constituents.
- 5. the legitimacy model:** states that schools strive for legitimacy with the external public in order to enhance their longevity and avoid being selected out of the environment.

**6. the organisation model:** it contends that a school is effective if it can learn how to make improvements and to adapt to its environment. The proponents of the model argue that the impact of environmental changes and the existence of internal barriers to the school functioning are inevitable and therefore it is very important to the school.

Considering the state of Nigerian universities on the basis of these models, specific factors should be taken into consideration by university managers. Such factors include professional leadership, shared vision and goals, attractive learning environment, concentration on teaching-learning process to achieve all round expectations, positive reinforcement, monitoring of students' performance, conscious students' right and responsibilities, parent/school partnership and school based personal development. Efficiency and effectiveness in the university depend greatly on the role of its leadership. According to Middlehurst (1995), leadership is the domain of those in certain positions of power like Vice-Chancellors, registrar, deans, heads of departments, directors, coordinators and others.

In addition, Babajide (2012) states that the smooth running of higher education depends on division of labour, the sharing of knowledge, ideas and the integration of social roles. A single individual or group of men cannot possess the entire skills, capabilities, creativity and ingenuity needed to ensure effective management, infrastructure



transformation and human technical and moral development. Ujomu (2001) opines that stability within the university can only be attained through effectiveness and legitimacy. External efficiency refers to the success of the university in meeting the cultural, social and economic objectives outlined or assigned by the society. On the other hand, internal efficiency deals with the success of the university system and its individual units in meeting specific operational targets within the resources made available to the system.

Within the university system, efficiency defines the level and extent of meeting its goals in the context of economic and social policies. Efficiency requires not only versatility and relevance, but prudent and visionary resource management within the university system. Leslie (1975) observes that stability within the university system can only be attained through effectiveness and legitimacy (it presupposes that effectiveness precedes efficiency, accountability), valued training, protections and stability. On the other hand, legitimacy is the foundation upon which the exercise of university authority rests. According to this school of thought, it could be inferred that any deficiency in the system could hamper the efficiency of the whole organisation. Against this background, the research suggests that there may not be any meaningful transformation in the lives of students on campus if the student affairs department is not well structured and equipped with both human and material resources.

In a subtle way, all the areas involved in student management are also interrelated and dependent. For instance, there may not be a conducive environment for teaching-learning process where basic facilities such as water, power and classrooms are not adequate. On the contrary, where they are available and there is no discipline and general control of students on campus, the facilities could be abused. The situation could also degenerate into lawlessness and feeling of insecurity on campus. Though, this study is emphasising on the articulation of each unit in a university system in order to provide an enabling teaching and learning environment for the students it is also of utmost importance that staff (academic and non-academic) affairs should not be neglected. The university personnel serve not only as primary vehicles for the inputs, but channels through which they are transformed.

Therefore, on the basis of the Systems theory, the research is buttressing the fact that each unit in a university system is not independent of the other; the units complement one another for the stability of students and the university. For instance, any unchecked conflict in one could affect the other as a subsystem unit and constitutes a threat to the university system. This in turn, could affect the society as a supra system because the feedback is sent back into it. If these anomalies are corrected and deliberate measures geared towards the modification of different activities take place in each unit of the university system, conflict could be reduced and incidences of students' crises stamped out of the campuses.

## **The Social-Conflict Theory**

Conflict can be defined as the disagreement over incompatibility of goals or values between two or more parties in a relationship combined with attempts to control each other which could result in antagonistic feelings toward each other. Social-Conflict theory was propounded by Karl Marx (1818-1883) in collaboration with Fredrick Engels and others. It posits that on account of many facets of incompatibility and exploitation of individuals in their groups and collectivities, conflicts abound in the society. The theory says that though conflict is often said to be functional for organisations, literature on conflict is deficient (with minor exceptions) in three major areas. These are:

1. there is no clear set of rules to suggest when conflict ought to be maintained at a certain level, when reduced, when ignored and when enhanced;
2. there is no clear set of guidelines to suggest how conflict can be reduced, ignored or enhanced to increase organisational learning and effectiveness; and
3. there is no clear set of rules to indicate how conflict involving different situations can be managed effectively.

There is no one single definition for conflict but most definitions involve two factors which are:

- a. there are at least two independent groups – the groups that perceive some incompatibility between them, and

- b. the groups that interact with each other in some way (Putnam and Poole, 1987).

Other definitions of conflict include: a process in which the party perceives that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another party (Wall and Callister, 1995) and as an interactive process which manifests in incompatibility, disagreement or dissonance within or between social entities (Rahim, 2002).

Rahim (2002) identifies two types of conflicts: substantive and affective. Substantive involves disagreement among group members about the content of the tasks being performed or the performance itself (Jehn, 1995). This type of conflict occurs when two or more social entities disagree on the recognition and solution to a task problem including differences in ideas, opinions and viewpoints (Rahim, 2002). Affective conflict deals with interpersonal relationships or incompatibilities not directly related to achieving the groups function (Amason, 1996; Jehn, 1995). Studies have shown that there exists a positive correlation between substantive conflict and task performance. Organisational conflict, whether substantive or affective, can be divided into intra-organisational and inter-organisational. Inter-organisational conflict occurs between two or more organisations (Rahim, 2002). An instance is when different businesses compete with one another. Intra-organisational conflict is conflict within an organisation and can be classified further on scope (departments, work teams, individuals). Other classifications are interpersonal which refer to conflict between two or more individuals

(not representing the group they are a part of). Interpersonal conflict occurs between members of the same group and is divided into intergroup and intragroup conflict. Intergroup conflict occurs between groups, while intragroup conflict occurs among groups. On the nature of conflict, Rahim (2002) reiterates that conflict, as an interactive process, does not preclude the possibilities of intra individual conflict (a person can interact with self and also interact with others). The interaction can result in conflict when the following exist:

- a. a party is required to engage in an activity that is incongruent with his or her needs or interests;
- b. a party holds behavioural preferences, the satisfaction of which is incompatible with another person's implementation of his or her preferences;
- c. a party wants some mutually desirable resources that are in short supply such that the wants of everyone may not be satisfied fully;
- d. a party possesses attitudes, values, skills and goals that are salient in directing its behaviour but are perceived to be exclusive of the attitudes, values, skills and goals held by the other(s);
- e. two parties are partially exclusive in behavioural preferences regarding their joint actions; and
- f. two parties are interdependent in the performance of functions or activities.

The basic assumption of these definitions is that conflict can relate to incompatible preferences, goals and not just activities. It should be recognised that in order for conflict to occur, it has to exceed the threshold level of intensity before the parties experience any conflict. This principle of threshold is consistent with Barons (1990) in Rahim (2002) contention that opposed interests must be recognised by parties for conflict to exist.

### **Conflict Management Approaches**

Conflict management theorists propose that conflict management is needed in the contemporary time to handle conflict in organisation and not conflict resolution (Rahim, 2002). The proposition was founded on the fact that conflict is inevitable in an organisation and cannot be eliminated. The researcher explains further, that, the presence of conflict in an organisation could sometimes be valuable and does not suggest that all is not well with the organisation. The argument was an attempt to fault Wall and Callister's (1995) approach to handling conflict which falls within the realm of conflict resolution and is inconsistent with scholars' suggestions that conflict has both functional and dysfunctional outcomes, (Jehn, 1995; Mitroff, 1998; Pelled, Eisenhardt, and Xin, 1999).

Scholars opine that conflict in top management is inevitable and is usually valuable. Conflict at senior levels surrounding appropriate paths of action (substantive, cognitive or issue-oriented) is essential for effective strategic choice. Wall and Callister's (1995) approach to

minimizing conflict involves reduction or termination of conflict which could amount to throwing out the baby with the bath water. Conflict management does not necessarily imply avoidance, reduction or termination of conflict; it involves designing effective macro-level strategies to minimize the dysfunctions of conflict and enhancing the constructive functions of conflict in order to enhance learning and effectiveness in an organisation. Several conflict management scholars (Amason, 1996; Jehn, 1995; and Rahim, 2002) suggest that conflict management strategies involve recognition of the following:

1. Certain types of conflict which may have negative effects on individual and group performance may have to be reduced. These conflicts are generally caused by the negative reactions of organisational members (such as personal attack of group members, racial disharmony and sexual harassment).
2. There may be other types of conflict that may have positive effects on individual and group performance. These conflicts relate to disagreements relating to tasks, policies, and other organisational issues. Conflict management strategies involve generation and maintenance of a moderate amount of these conflicts.
3. Organisational members while interacting with each other will be required to deal with their disagreements constructively. This calls for learning how to use different conflict handling styles with various situations effectively.

Rahim (2002) suggests three criteria derived from literature for effective conflict management mechanisms viz:

- a. Organisational learning and effectiveness:** Conflict management strategies should be designed to enhance organisational learning. According to Luthans' diary (as cited in Rahim (2002) it is expected that organisational learning will lead to long term effectiveness. Conflict management mechanisms should be designed to enhance critical and innovative thinking to learn the process of diagnosis and intervention in the right direction.
- b. Need of stakeholders:** The need and expectations of the strategic constituencies (stakeholders) should be satisfied to attain a balance. Mitroff (1998) suggests that the right stakeholders should be picked to solve the right problems. Sometimes multiple parties are involved in a conflict in an organisation and the challenge of conflict management would be to involve these in a problem-solving process that will lead to collective learning and organisational effectiveness. It is expected that this process will lead to satisfaction of relevant stakeholders.
- c. Ethics:** Mitroff (1998) is a strong manager of ethical management. He reiterates that a wise leader must behave ethically and the leader should be open to new information and be willing to change his or her mind to do so. Similarly, subordinates and other stakeholders have an ethical duty to speak out against the decisions of supervisors when consequences of these decisions are likely to be serious. To

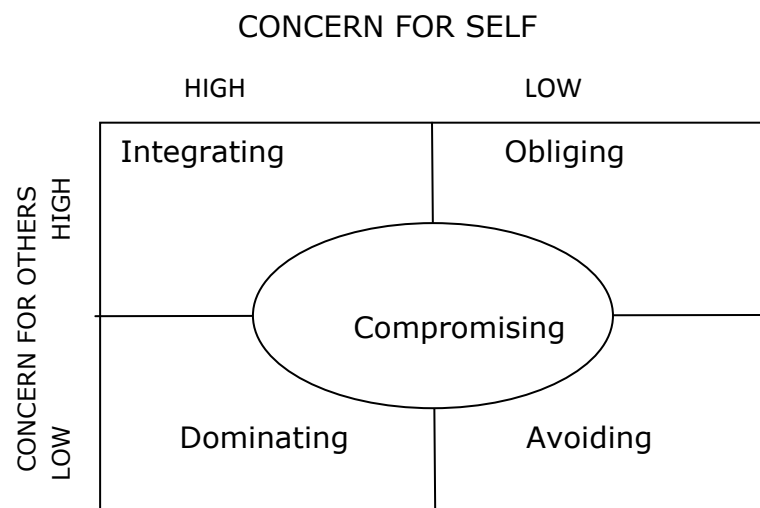


manage conflict ethically, organisations should institutionalise the positions of all stakeholder advocates including the environment. Only if these advocates are heard by decision makers in organisations would there be an improved record of ethically managed organisational conflict (Rahim, Garret and Buntzman, 1992).

Several models have been proposed by researchers on conflict management. Blake and Mouton (1964) classified styles of handling interpersonal conflicts into five. These are: forcing, withdrawing, smoothing, compromising, and problem-solving. Khun and Poole's model (2000) classifies conflict management styles into distributive and integrative. The Meta-taxonomy model developed by De church and Marks (2001) examines the literature available on conflict at the time and established a 'meta-taxonomy' that encompasses all other models. The researchers argue that all other styles have inherent in them two dimensions—activeness (the extent to which conflict behaviours make a responsive and direct impression rather than inert and indirect impression) and agreeableness (the extent to which conflict behaviours are pleasant and relaxed rather than unpleasant and strained impression).

High activeness is characterised by openly discussing differences of opinion while fully going after their own interest. High agreeableness is characterised by attempting to satisfy all parties involved. The study concluded that all activeness did not have a significant effect on conflict resolution effectiveness, but the agreeableness of the

conflict management style has a positive impact on how groups feel about the way the conflict was managed regardless of the outcome. Rahim (2002) notes that there is an agreement among management scholars in the opinion that, there is no one best approach to how decisions can be made or led, or how to manage conflict. The theorist creates a Meta –model for conflict styles based on two dimensions. These are: concern for self and concern for others. Within this framework are five management approaches which are: integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding and compromising. This research considered Rahim’s meta-model on conflict management as a base for managing conflict between university management and students in the university. This is presented in Figure 3.



**Figure 3:** The Dual Concern Model of the Styles of Handling Interpersonal Conflict

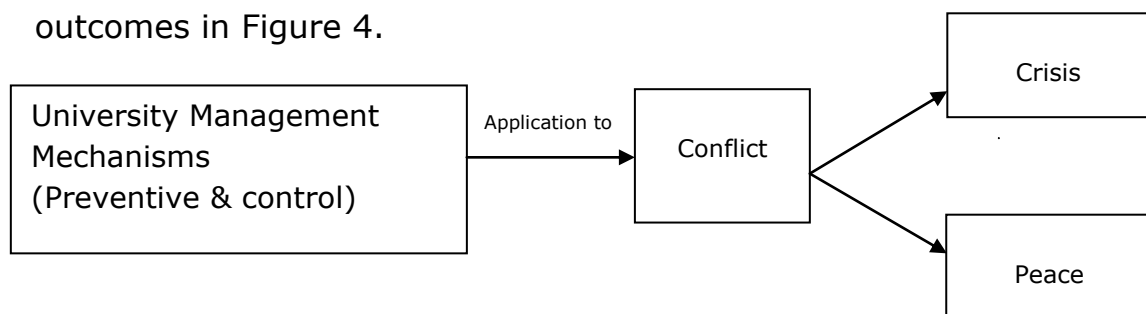
**Source:** Rahim, M. A. (2002). Towards a theory of managing organisational conflict. *The International Journal of Conflict Management*, 13(3), 219.

In the context of this study, therefore, this model explains that instances where the management approach has both high consideration for university norms and culture and high concern for students' interest in handling students' crises is integrating style and is associated with problem solving. Obliging style is prevalent where university management approach has low concern for university norms and culture by playing down the differences and emphasising commonalities in order to satisfy the interest of students. On the contrast, the situation where university authority uses force or coercive method to win their position over student interest is dominating style. The avoidance style is associated with procrastination on the part of the university authority. In this situation, management of the university engages in buck-passing and consequently fails to satisfy either students or self. The compromising style or give-and-take approach involves both university management and students giving something to make a mutually acceptable decision.

Two conditions are suggested for conflict management to be effective. The traditional approach affirms that effective conflict management involves changes at the macro level in the organisation so that substantive conflict is encouraged and affective conflict is minimized at the individual, group, intergroup and organisational levels. To achieve this, there must be changes in leadership, culture and design of an organisation. The contemporary conflict management scholars' approach agrees that there is no one best

approach to managing conflict. Hence, they proffer contingency or situational approach which is the hallmark of contemporary management. This is supported by the Decision theory of leadership. It considers two situations: the quality of decision (the extent to which it will affect important group processes) and acceptance of the decision (the degree of commitment of employees needed for the implementation). The theory suggests that when the decision quality and acceptance are both low, the leader should use autocratic style. On the contrary, if the decision quality and acceptance are both high, the leaders should use participative style. Effective leadership depends on matching leadership styles with situations and failure to match the two variables could lead to ineffective leadership.

The basis for the social-conflict theory in this study is expatiated in the general model of management styles and conflict outcomes in Figure 4 and the specific model of management styles and conflict outcomes in Figure 4.



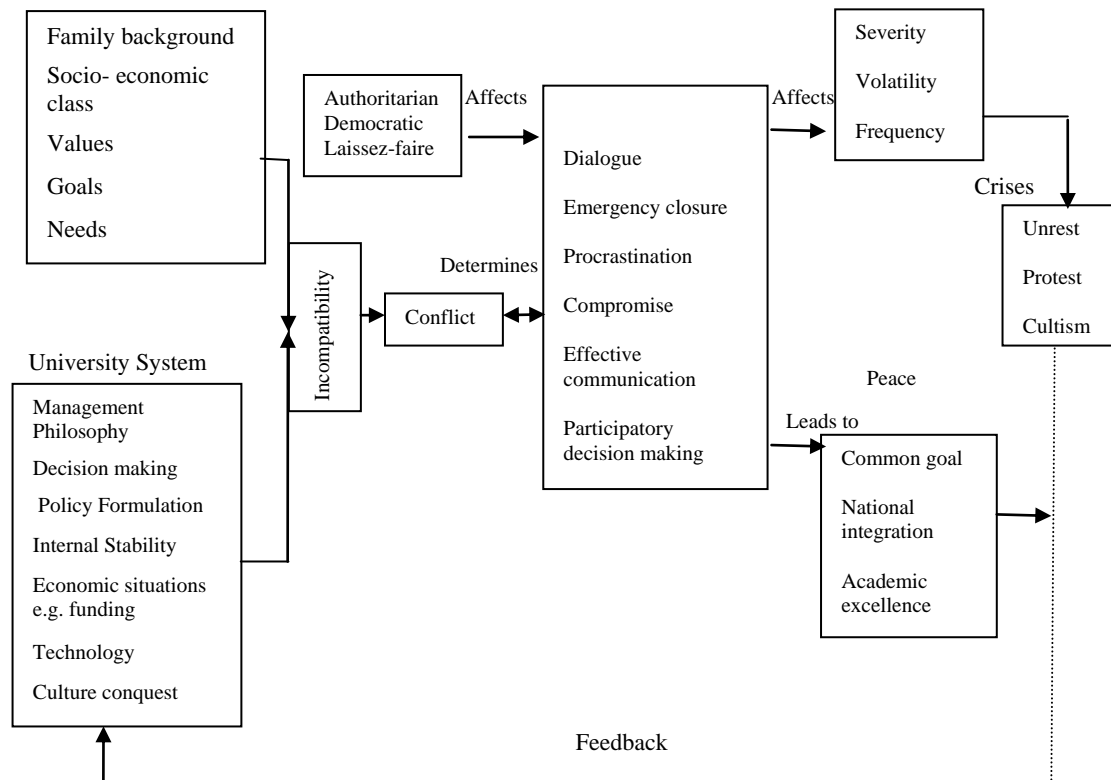
**Figure 4:** A General Model of Management Styles and Conflict Outcomes

**Source:** Fieldwork (2013)

From the model, this study assumed that university management has an inbuilt structure for preventing students' conflict. The creation of the Student Affairs Unit is to handle student matters and monitor their overall well-being on campus. In addition, there is the creation of the Department of Students' support services in Nigerian universities to ascertain the quality of these components: counselling and human Development Centre and Services, university clinic, hostel accommodation, sporting and recreational facilities, communication on campus environment in Nigerian universities. These measures are to checkmate the challenges of students' psycho-pathological behaviour coupled with the realization that the traditional scope of career guidance has proved inadequate in solving all forms of deviant behaviours of students.

The university has the Security Unit. This unit is responsible for providing security on campus as well as maintaining relative peace. In conflict situation, university management has put in place measures which include dialogue, emergency closure of university, invitation of police, rustication/suspension of offenders, compromise, effective communication between university management and students and stakeholders' intervention. The underlying assumption of this model is that, in a broader sense, the application of these methods to conflict situation could be determined by the nature of the conflict. Crisis could occur when a conflict is poorly handled and persist for too long a period of time. On the contrary, a timely

intervention in conflict situations with the adoption of suitable conflict management mechanisms could lead to peace on campus.



**Figure 5:** Specific Model of Management Styles and Conflict Outcomes

**Source:** Adapted from Koontz, H. (1980). *Management book of further reading*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 293.

The self-developed management styles and conflict outcomes model (Figure 5) is a modification of Neghardi and Estafen Model. The model shows the interface between students as an entity and university system on one hand and the leadership style and conflict management approaches on the other hand. The degree of harmony among these variables determines the conflict outcomes. The model

focuses on the interactions among students (who are possessed by the indispensable elements that influence their ways of life). This is evident in their attitudes, behaviours, values, ideas and reactions to conflict situations and university system (contained in it are essential interactive elements that determine management practices). Due to the incompatibility in these control elements, conflict is inevitable between these two variables. However, in this study, an independent variable in the form of leadership style is introduced. This variable contains basic leadership styles which are the fulcrum of managerial decision-making processes. They also have direct relationship with conflict management approaches that university managers can use to handle students' grievances.

Leadership, according to Hall (1991), is defined as a special form of power that entails influence which is attributed to the followers. The essence of organizational leadership is considered as an influential increment over and above mechanical compliance with the routine directions of the organization. Jedo (2007) views a leader as a person with some influence over others, who exercises such power for the purpose of influencing their behaviour for the realization of common objectives. He identifies three common basic approaches to leadership. These are:

**The Trait Approach:** This is any distinctive physical or psychological characteristic of an individual to which his behaviour can be attached. They include intelligence, wisdom, courage, adaptability, tolerance and emotional stability.

**The Situational Approach:** This simply means that leadership depends on the particular situation. It posits that a person must possess some peculiar qualities that a given situation demands in order to succeed as a leader under that condition.

**The Behavioural Approach:** The approach views a leader according to his patterns of behaviour. This shows that leadership is based on what a leader does and not who he is. Thus, the leader's behaviour that is observable by others makes up his leadership style.

This study interchanges management styles with leadership styles where necessary since they are interrelated and inseparable. Leadership function suggests that in order for a group to operate effectively, someone has to perform two major functions; these are task- related and social function.

Fiedler's diary (as cited in Lawal 1993) opines that leadership style refers to a leader's manner of acting in a work situation. And that leadership style is contingent on the personality of the leader. Likert developed four leadership styles ranging from System 1 through System II and System III to System IV.

**System I: Exploitative or Authoritarian leadership** - The manager makes all related decisions and uses threats or punishment in getting things done. He has no trust and confidence in subordinates.



**System II: Benevolent, Authoritative leadership** – The manager still issues orders but subordinates are given some flexibility in carrying out the task with carefully prescribed limits and procedures.

**System III: Consultative Management style** - The manager sets goals and issues general order after discussing them with subordinates. Rewards, rather than threats or punishments, are used to motivate subordinates.

**System IV: Participative Management** – This is the most favoured management style. It is characterized by extensive use of the group-decision method in which each person is given wide opportunity to exercise discretion for the overall good of the organization.

Lawal (1993) stresses that it is more important for a leader to know how to strike a balance between developing mutual trust, respect for subordinate ideas and their feelings and getting work done. Rensis' diary (as cited in Lawal 1993) concludes that System IV is the most desirable form of management. Various leadership theories have emerged over time given different approaches to leadership and who a good leader should be. The three basic elements in leadership which form parts of its characteristics are:

**Authority:** This is the right conferred on the leader in an organization to make decisions in the course of discharging his official duties. Through this, subordinates are required to accept, abide by and comply with the decisions and is necessary to compel

them to accept. Herbert Simon's diary (as cited in Jedo 2007) refers to authority as the power to exert decisions which guide the actions of another. It is the power to exact obedience and enforce compliance. Authority requires two individuals: the leader or the superior and the subordinate or the follower.

**Power:** This has to do with force or strength of character that enables things to happen as expected and at the appropriate time. Power is the force behind authority in administration. It is the capacity to mobilize, activate, stimulate and inspire others to keep moving towards the achievements of the set objectives or the desired results. In essence, power is employed to restore, sustain, enhance and maintain authority. A leader's power could be legitimate, referent, expert, and reward, coercive, upward and lateral.

**Responsibility:** Responsibility means trust in such a way as to make things occur at the right time in order to achieve the desired result. It is the ability to execute duties in accordance with due process based on laid down procedures. The capacity to respond favourably to any situation (call and sacrifice to duty) is indicated by responsibility. It is a mark of maturity, know-how and expertise in carrying out functions based on credibility, reliability, dependability and trustworthiness. A responsible leader is expected to be transparently accountable, trusted, original, creative, versatile,

imaginative, and resourceful among others in his occupation of the 'I am ok', - You're ok life position (Ejiogu, 1989).

Research has shown that how leaders behave impacts on their effectiveness. Fiedler's diary (as cited in Lawal 2004) suggests that since there is no 'best way' to act in any situation, there is no one correct type of leader. The best leadership styles depend on the situation. When leaders find themselves in a crisis situation, their affection is largely determined by their levels of emotional and social intelligence. The ability to manage one's emotion, empathize with others and provide clear direction in time of crisis is critical to the success of leaders during emergency.

Common observation has shown that, though students' activism has greatly reduced on campus due to the suspension of active unionism, students could still be of greater assistance in dealing with their own matters. The students who wear the shoes, therefore, know best where it pinches. The line of communication should be clear and distinct, even where discipline is involved, explanation should be given at the appropriate time. Most times, university managers use delay tactics to incite crisis on the campus. Aniagolu's diary (as cited in Onah 2004) expresses that responsible leadership is a panacea for crises in the universities. University management has to be a collective responsibility for it to be effective and efficient. In addition, he opines that team spirit is needed to guide the stakeholders of universities. Soyombo's diary (as cited in Olurode

2004) expresses that campus violence also constitutes a direct challenge to the administrative capability of the university administration. Some university administrations have lost their jobs on accusation of incompetence in the management of student activities associated with campus violence. Examples abound in the removal/sacking of university administrators at the University of Lagos, in the late 1970s, OAU in 1999 and Olabisi Onabanjo University in 1999. Given the stated circumstances, the question now arises as to the type of leader that can steer the university ship to achieve successful conflict management in time of students' crises. Kehinde (2008) opines that a crisis provides the leader with the platform to get things done that are required in a way and offer the sense of urgency to accelerate their implementation.

In this study, conflict management approaches are the main independent variables influencing management practices. These approaches determine whether a conflict would result to crisis or peace and the nature of such occurrence. In addition, the nature of crisis is seen independently affecting university effectiveness, in the sense that whatever conflict outcome is sent back into the environment as feedback into the university system. This usually influences the philosophical goal, stability and quality of its product. Fatile and Adejuwon (2011) establish that students' crises are a negative feedback in the university due to their resultant effects in educational system. In addition, conflict outcomes are recognised as

a product of conflict management mechanisms rather than being an independent variable.

The art of conflict resolution or conflict management is grounded on the fundamental principles of management process outlined by Frederick Taylor's diary (as cited in Rahim, 2002). The scholar opines that conflict management is different in meaning to conflict resolution. According to him, conflict resolution refers to resolving or eliminating the dispute to the approval of one or both parties. Whereas, conflict management is an on-going process that may never have a resolution in institutions such as the universities. University system is dynamic in nature with 'living being' input that could be influenced consciously or unconsciously at any moment by their emotions and needs. This condition would not permit rigidity in management.

Conflict could be said to be didactic in action in that another conflict could occur in the process of resolving one. For instance, students that are protesting could be asked to vacate their halls of residence by the university management. This instruction is usually given a time ultimatum attached with it. Students being who they are (sometime ego-driven and egocentric) could refuse such order. This action could prompt the university authority to invite the police and, in reaction, infuriate the students emotionally. It is safe to conclude that an otherwise peaceful protest could be violent in these circumstances.

## **Skills required in managing conflicts**

Ejiogu (1990) enumerates conflict management skills required by conflicting parties to manage conflicts as:

- **Understanding:** this is the ability to perceive and interpret things based on knowledge in order to be in agreement.
- **Conceptualizing:** this is the ability to generalize about something as a result of experience.
- **Sensitivity:** this has to do with care and understanding of needs and requirements.
- **Analytical power:** this involves close examination of things in order to discover more about it.
- **Objectivity:** this is the ability to view things without being influenced by personal emotions or prejudices.
- **Planning:** a method of doing something that is worked out in advance.
- **Being initiative and proactive:** the ability to act and make decisions without help or advice of other people.
- **Observation:** the ability to carefully watch and record something as it happens.
- **Effective communication:** this is the exchange of information between parties in order to produce desired results.
- **Being empathetic:** the ability to identify with and understand someone else's feelings or difficulties.

- **Persuasiveness:** the ability to make someone to do something especially by reasoning or pleading.
- **Honesty and enthusiasm:** the ability to be morally upright and have passionate interest or eagerness to do something.
- **Flexibility:** the ability to change or be changed according to circumstances.
- **Result-oriented:** taking a course that supports an outcome
- **Patience:** the ability to endure or being in provocation without annoyance.

### **Students' Crises Due Process and the Rule of Law**

The importance of the rule of law as panacea to students' crises in Nigerian universities is indescribable. Laws and statutes of the university are published in the University Student Handbook of Information. Some relevant guidelines in the documents relate to process in the context of this study and refer to the rights of students to proper legal procedures and natural justice, while the rule of law involves binding or enforceable rule by authority which governs common practices on campus.

Students are part of the university community and have the right of lawful access to university resources other than personal or other areas to which the university restricts access in the exercise of its normal responsibilities (e.g. the Cash offices, for the purpose of protecting public finances, or staff offices where files are kept, for the

purpose of protecting personal privacy). All staff and students have the right to a safe environment at all times. On the other hand, the university has the right to go about its business and not be subjected to unreasonable disruption or increased cost associated with the conduct of its business and delivery of services to students, staff and the wider community. In recognition of this analysis, university management has equipped students with the University Student Handbook of Information which is reviewed yearly or as demanded by situations. This handbook contains all rules and regulations, laws, statutes and other instructions as deem fit by different universities to serve as guidelines for students and to respect their fundamental rights as contained in Chapter Four of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999 Constitution) as amended. Some of these rights include; 'Right to life', 'Right to dignity of human person', 'Right to personal liberty', 'Right to fair hearing' 'Right to freedom of expression' and 'Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion'. This action is in accordance with Obaseki's diary (as cited in Sanni 2008, 74) who counsels that:

*a university student is a priceless asset and he is on a threshold of useful service to the nation, we cannot afford to destroy him by stigmatising him with guilt of offences unless proved guilty before a court.*

Therefore, in the light of the stated circumstances, students cannot be accused of violating any university rules and regulations whenever



crises occur unless such action contravenes his/her rights. It therefore presupposes that, such an action, even when perceived to be an offence by the university, the due process and the rule of law demand that such an individual be taken to court and tried. It should be noted that no right is absolute; therefore, the fundamental rights of everyone, including students, are subject to other interests such as public safety, public order, public morality, interest of defence and purpose of protecting the rights and freedom of other persons.

### **Research Objectives**

The general objective of this study was to appropriately conceptualise the problem of students' crises and management mechanisms of universities in South-West Nigeria with a view to significantly stemming the occurrence of these crises in tertiary institutions in the future. The specific objectives were to:

1. determine the trends of students' crises in universities in South-West Nigeria,
2. identify the dimension of students' crises in universities in South-West Nigeria,
3. ascertain the quality of students' support services available in the universities in South-West Nigeria,
4. identify the prevailing conflict management mechanisms adopted by the universities in South West Nigeria,

5. assess the effectiveness of the conflict management mechanisms employed by university management in curbing students' crises in South- West Nigeria,
6. determine the relationship between leadership style and the occurrence of students' crises in universities in South-West Nigeria, and
7. establish the relevance or otherwise of police involvement in crises control in the universities in South West Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions were raised to guide this study:

1. What is the trend of students' crises in universities in South West Nigeria?
2. What are the dimensions of students' crises in the universities in South-West Nigeria in South-West Nigeria?
3. What is the quality of students' support services available in the universities in South-west Nigeria?
4. How effective are the conflict management mechanisms employed by the university management in curbing students' crises in South-West Nigeria?
5. What is the relationship between university management leadership styles and the occurrence of students' crises?
6. How relevant is police intervention in students' crises management?

## **Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between federal and state universities in the prevailing conflict management mechanisms adopted for students' crises management.
2. There is no significant relationship between the quality of students' support services available in the universities and effective management of students' crises.
3. There is no significant relationship between university management leadership styles and frequency of students' crises.
4. There is no significant relationship between the involvement of police and effective students' crises management.

## **Scope of the Study**

The study covered public universities in South-West Nigeria. It examined the effectiveness of conflict management mechanisms that were employed by university management in curbing students' crises in South-West Nigeria between 2000 and 2010. The variables employed in the research are students' crises and conflict management mechanisms in universities in South West, Nigeria.

## **Significance of the Study**

The reputation of Nigerian universities in relation to instability on campuses as a result of students' crises appears to have been tarnished. It should be noted that students are usually the victims

(losers) in time of crises. They suffer loss of lives, disrupted academic calendar, loss of recognition and emotional instability. The findings of this study should expose the students to the norms that should prevail when expressing their displeasure or discontent over issues in university governance. This was achieved through discussions in the focus groups.

The expectation is that the findings should assist the university authorities by analysing past management approaches adopted during students' crises with a view to improving students' crises management and subsequently offer suggestions on better means of handling such crises whenever they occur. In addition, data generated would provide the platforms for the acquisition of necessary knowledge and skills needed to work through crisis situations.

The results should sensitise federal and state governments on their appropriate roles in managing students' crises in universities in South-West in Nigeria. To this end, the output should help in highlighting areas where its policies with regard to students' management are defective. This should help the government to make necessary amendments to policies in the subsequent formulations, planning and implementation in managing university education in the country in order to improve the standard of education in the country.

Arguably, certain research gaps should be filled in the literature, premised on the discourse that will emanate from the study. The empirical evidence generated should hopefully improve the approach of preventing and or managing students' crises. It will also chart a new course for further investigation into the problem of students' crises in the Nigerian universities by complementing the existing data. This would propose solutions to improve stability in other universities that are prone to students' crises.

### **Operational Definition of Terms**

The following are the technical terms used in the study. They are explained in the context in which they are used in this report.

- 1. Students' crises:** These are situations in which students are involved in personal or institution- wide conflicts which include increase in fees, poor welfare, poor handling of students' grievances, cultism and stringent university rules and regulations.
- 2. Conflict:** This is a situation of disagreement or clash between students and university management due to differences in ideas, values, interests, and beliefs.
- 3. Students' support services:** These are the resources (human and material) that are available for use by the university authorities in enhancing students' welfare thereby preventing and controlling students' crises.
- 4. Students' input:** These are factors that characterise students' personality traits which sometimes influence behaviours or

perceptions exhibited by them. Examples include family background, socio economic status of their parents, values, orientations, beliefs and goals.

- 5. Conflict management mechanisms:** These are methods adopted by university management in settling students' conflicts.
- 6. Grievance factors:** These are conditions that make students angry or resentful toward university authorities whenever they feel the treatment meted to them is unfair.
- 7. Macro-level:** This is the management level in the university that includes all personnel who make decisions for and on behalf of students.
- 8. Mephistophelian relationship characterized by Fiendishness:** This is the ability of a person being cunning and wicked in a relationship.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter examines previous studies and opinions of scholars on students' crises and management mechanisms.

Related literature was reviewed under the following subheadings:

1. Nature of Students' crises
2. Dimensions of Students' crises
3. Conflict Management Mechanisms (Preventive and Control measures)
4. Leadership Behaviour and Management Styles

#### **Nature of Students' Crises**

This study examined the nature of students' crises in the context of its trend and pattern. Recent studies have given empirical evidences in support of the claim that students' crises are more volatile than they were in the last two decades. Adeyemi's (2009) study investigated the causes, consequences and control of students' crises in public and private universities in Nigeria. The study population comprised all the 81 universities in the country from which a sample of nine universities (six public and three private) was taken. The respondents were 1460 (850 members of staff and 610 students) from public universities and 635 (420 members of staff and 215 students) from private universities. The study employed stratified random sampling technique and the data gathering instrument used was a questionnaire. Data were analysed using percentages, t-test

and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The study established the fact that students' crises are more volatile in Nigerian universities due to the major factor of cultism. Other factors identified are institutional based that are due to inability of the university to provide needed facilities such as classrooms, functional libraries with current books, laboratories with reagents, accommodation system, good roads, water and electricity. The study concluded that the level of occurrence of students' crises was higher in public universities than in the private universities and that it appears the private universities have a better way of managing the crises probably due to absence of student unionism.

In another study, Adebayo (2010) investigated the relationship between university students and the police. The researcher adopted the historical design. Findings revealed that the high volatility in students' crises in the present time characterised the relationship between the students and the security agents particularly the Police. The study described the relationship as 'Mephistophelian characterized by Fiendishness', a relationship that acts as a catalyst for students' crises in Nigerian universities. The study observed that the strained relationship was due to the insensitivity of the university administrators to the plight of the students. Other factors that were also identified can be regarded as material factors and include inadequate provision of classrooms, libraries, hostels, good roads and non-inclusion of students in matters affecting them were regarded as provocative factors. The research concluded that to



reduce death of students, police and other security personnel should not be invited to the campuses to quell students' riots: If there is any pressing need for their invitation, the institutions must have to be closed at least for 24 hours. The recalcitrant students should be forcibly ejected by the institution's security agents. Even if the police men are invited, those despatched to the campus or scenes of students' protest should not carry lethal weapons. This measure will forestall and prevent the incidence of 'accidental discharge' in the face of provocation by the students.

Similarly, Smah (2008) employed three social survey types (2001, 2006, and 2008). It employed a combination of qualitative and quantitative analytical techniques to reveal patterns of association among security variables, insecurity indicators and concerns. The study showed that increased drug use, cultism, murder, assault and academic cheating incidents show the extent to which 'coping and success channels' are being renamed in the Nigerian university system. Campus security governance is highly unaccountable and incomplete.

Adeyemi (2009) and Adebayo (2010) studies are consistent with Smah's (2008) and Ayodele and Adewunmi (2007) studies on causes of students' unrest in Nigerian universities with much emphasis on cultism as the arrow head of students' crises in Nigerian universities. Oyebade's study (1996) reveals that students' crises occurred in the universities more than other higher institutions in the country and

were very rampant in the military era. The study also revealed that university authorities adopted more of brute (force) method which could be regarded as authoritarian to manage the problem of students' unrest in the universities during the military regime.

The high volatility of students' crises in the present time is revealed in the findings of Anifowoshe (2008). The study answered the question on the elements involved in students' crises in the Nigerian universities. According to the study, the present day university system comprises mostly youths and adolescents who are naturally susceptible to violence. The study indicates the personality of the family patterns which moulds the youth and the particular cultural and regional environment that the individual has come from as the bases for the impulsive characteristics of the university students. There is the violence-prone individual and also the violence-prone social setting. When these situations intersect, then an open violence is unavoidable.

Ayodele and Adewunmi's (2007) study compares the incidence and management of conflicts in secular and non-secular tertiary institutions in South West Nigeria. The study employed a validated self-designed questionnaire administered on 60 staff members and 240 students that were randomly selected from two secular and two non-secular tertiary institutions in the sampled area. Data collected were analysed using frequency counts, percentages, t-test and Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics. The findings revealed

that conflict is common to both secular and non-secular tertiary institutions. Going by the aforementioned, these researchers opine that conflict is inevitable in every university irrespective of beliefs or ownership though not desired. Deters (2010) utilizes archival methods to historically analyse the primary documents from two local newspapers: *The Toledo Times and The Toledo Blades*. The study also utilized archival editions of the student newspaper (*The Collegian*) at the University of Toledo in Spain. The primary documents include correspondences, speeches, memoranda, Student Body Government resolutions, Faculty/Senate resolutions, and newsletters to show the evolution of student protests at the University of Toledo (Spain). The study observed that:

- Students' protests have been a recurring phenomenon throughout the history of the universities.
- Student protest tactics shifted from relatively peaceful rallies to more radical tactics that often involve disruption of academic calendars, destruction of property and violence.
- Certain structures such as student representative in governance, effective communication channel between the management and students, proper roles of law enforcement agencies and wise administrative leadership within the university can prevent the incidences and support of massive students' protest that could turn violent.
- There were protests against university policies and what the protesters viewed as repression of students by the administration. There were controversies surrounding students'

rights, representatives and code of conducts as well as rallies for free speech.

The study concluded that, sound administrative leadership, a solid foundation for students' rights and representations, proper law enforcement roles and effective communication channels could contribute to the prevention of violent unrest.

### **Dimensions of Students' Crises**

Previous studies on the dimension of students' crises in South- West Nigerian universities obviously point to incessant activism with undesired consequences for both the university system and the society. Existing literature (Oyebade, 1996; Ojo, 1995) summarise some causes of students' crises as due to national and international issues (for example the Structural Adjustment Programme, SAP; the attempt to ratify the Anglo-Nigerian Defence Pact), and educational problems which had been categorized by other studies such as Ojo (1995), Oyebade (1996), Aluede et al (2005) and Adeyemi (2009) as material factors. Such problems include cost of living, subsidy on petroleum products and general increase in school fees. Several studies have been conducted by many researchers in an attempt to explain reasons for the inadequacy of materials that seem to be common among the universities in Nigeria. The most fingered is the under-funding of the public university system by the government (Oguntoye and Alani, 1998). Babatope (2010) examines the problems of facilities in universities in South-West Nigeria. The study

population consisted of all academic staff in 10 public universities in South-West Nigeria. Using a self-designed questionnaire administered on 500 academic staff members that were randomly selected from 10 universities, the data were analysed using frequency counts and percentages. The findings showed that financial support to the universities by the government was not adequate and that universities were not provided with adequate facilities. The study highlighted that staff and students maintenance culture also contributed to high destruction of the available facilities.

Alimba (2007) investigated the causes, the effects and the management patterns of students' unrest in tertiary institutions in Adamawa State, Nigeria. The study deviated from the normal way of identifying causes, the effects and the methods of managing students' crises as presented in the past. Rather, it focused on the seriousness of the factors causing students' unrest, the manner in which the events frequently occur and the methods often used by school administrators in the management of the phenomenon. A survey research design was adopted and a questionnaire titled 'Students Unrest Questionnaire' (SUQ) was used to collect data. Data were analysed using percentages, frequency counts and weighted mean of 3.00 was used as cut-off point. The study found that increase in school fees, inadequate facilities for teaching and learning, communication breakdown between school authorities and students' representatives, poor leadership style of school authority, rustication and expulsion of union leaders, accommodation problem

and security problems on campus are very serious factors causing students' unrest in tertiary institutions.

In another study, Alabi (2010) examined the concepts of conflicts and crises and their antecedents in Nigeria. It suggested some of the reasons for conflict in the universities as due to competition for scarce resources, perceived goal incompatibility, drives for autonomy and academic freedom, management styles of universities, differences in values, life styles, politics and national issues. This assertion presupposes that the university system is also affected by the economy of the society and it is not also funded accordingly. The researcher made a clarification of the causes of crises in Nigeria and concluded that poverty and unjust allocation of the available resources are reasons why conflict and crises have been occurring in Nigerian universities. These studies further elaborate the view of this research that the university is not a closed system and cannot exist on its own; rather, its survival depends on the environment (the society).

However, these studies negate the findings of Adebayo (2009) who observes that students' crises in universities are due to insecurity of lives and property. Adebayo (2010) researched into the student-authority conflict in Nigerian universities. The study employed a self-designed instrument designated Student-Authority Conflict (SAC) with a reliability coefficient of 0.825. The instrument was administered in 30 universities and 600 respondents through the

simple and purposive random sampling techniques. The study lends credence to the findings of Adeyemi (2009) that the major cause of students' crises in public universities in South-West Nigeria aside from cultism is students' demand on university authorities to listen to their complaints. Adeyemi's (2009) study also revealed that apart from cultism, other causes of students' crises are institution-based and they could be attributed to the inability of the institutions to provide necessary facilities needed by students. This fact is further buttressed by Ekundayo and Ajayi (2009) that the Longe Commission of 1991 observed that the percentage budgetary allocation to education did not exceed 10% as against the recommended 26% by the UNESCO (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation). For example, in 2007, education sector was allocated 11% of the national budget, 13% in 2008, 8% in 2009 and 6% in 2010. The researchers opined that it is worrisome from these given data to imagine the influence of paucity of funds on the governance of the universities, especially when the universities have not been granted autonomy.

Obasi's findings (2002) revealed that students are aware of the financial state of their universities and their incapability to provide the expected material needs: and that the students are moderately in support to share some financial burden of the university. This study therefore, further investigates why material factors are still causing students' crises despite students' awareness of the financial incapability of the university system. The researcher's assumption

presupposes that, according to Maslow (1954), human beings have needs that affect their behaviours in order to achieve self-actualization. These needs are deficiencies which must be fulfilled by the environment in order to avoid conflict. This assertion is supported by Okotoni (2003) who identifies youthful exuberance on the part of the university students as one of the major factors that could cause conflict in an academic environment. This fact is established by Akintayo's (2008) finding that there is a high rate of moral decadence among university students which could be traced to poor parenting.

Several studies have lent credence to the fact that parents are no longer taking proper care of their wards as it used to be in the last two to three decades. Ojo (1995) concludes that there is erosion in both moral and cultural values of students in the modern time. The studies assert that most students were and are still being catered for by foster mothers or hired servants. This was due to the economic downturn in the country in the late 70s which forced both parents (father and mother) to be engaged in paid employment to the detriment of their children. However, it should be noted that these studies are consistent with the study carried out by Omari and Mihyo (1991) which observed that it is true that students are not mature and have little experiences in operating with bureaucracies which make their demands to more often lack realism by being spontaneous and badly timed. Omari and Mihyo (1991) examine the pattern and causes of recurrent students' unrest in four African



universities (Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe), with a view to delineating the role of students' protests on the democratisation and processes of maintaining quality education and the sustenance of quality student life on university campuses. The universities were selected to give diversity in size, growth patterns, variety and intensity of students' crises. Data were collected personally through preliminary observations on students' unrest in the sampled universities by the researchers and members of their team which was sent through correspondences and exchange of primary documents. The study categorised the causes of students' crises in Africa to be due to political process issues, academic issues, welfare issues and managerial allotted issues.

Alani (1992) and Awosusi (2005) gave some of the reasons for the continuous students' crises in Nigerian universities as proliferation of universities, outrageous higher population of students and economic recession. The universities in Nigeria are witnessing increase in the placement of students due to the surge in the demand for education by the society. Ajayi (1992) affirms that it is regrettable that in spite of the high enrolment figures recorded yearly in the universities, there is no corresponding increase in the facilities provided to meet these challenges. In most of these universities, there is no new building to create additional classrooms or lecture theatres; even the ones that are available at the inception of the universities are obsolete and antiquated.

## **Conflict Management Mechanisms (Preventive and Control Measures)**

Literature on university conflict management mechanisms suggests a number of conditions that can promote effective conflict management. Putnam and Poole's diary (as cited in Alabi 2010) suggests a focus on the problem rather than personal or emotional issues. Their studies suggest that conflict management does not connote a rigid approach that suits all situations; on the contrary, a lot of concerted efforts should be exerted to prevent or arrest a serious crisis situation.

Okotoni (2003) studied conflict management in secondary schools and expresses that conflict can occur among students and staff of secondary schools despite the fact that secondary school students are mostly youth who are mostly affected by youthful exuberance and impatience. They are easily aggrieved especially when expected resources are not adequate, or, are lacking. Unlike in the university, most conflict among secondary school students are always directed at their teachers. Sometimes, a conflict could arise between the principal and the teachers due to individual characteristics of employees and difficulties in getting along with one another on the basis of their job requirements or formal interactions.

Robbins (1998) identified the source of conflict that concerns mutual task independence and the extent to which two units in an organisation depend upon each other for assistance, information,

compliance or other coordinative activities to accomplish their respective tasks effectively and structurally. In this study, one of the bases for considering the university as a system is due to its interrelatedness and dependency of each unit that forms the structure of the university. It therefore implies that one of the sources of conflict in the university could be structurally derived.

Okotoni (2003) raises the importance of upbringing and family background as a factor that influences the perception and the manner in which secondary school students would react to conflict situations. The researcher affirms the moral decadence in the society due to careless and non-challant attitudes of parents who are not at home most of the time. Most parents have neglected the upbringing of their children to 'maids' in their pursuit of money and means of making ends meet.

The research concludes by recommending persuasive ad not an imposed communication in school crisis management and buttresses that this method could apply to rational and emotional intelligence of students to change their behaviour in favour of peace. This study is also in support of this opinion because secondary school students are basically the inputs supplied into the university system. In addition, whatever characters they grow up with will one way or the other follow them into the system and may be difficult to change (university system permits more freedom than the secondary school system).

Adeyemi (2009) identifies three conflict management strategies. These are dialogue strategy, emergency strategy and neglect strategy. Dialogue strategy involves all forms of round-table agreement with the students by the university authorities. This could occur at any point in the conflict process. The students could make their demands known through any form of agitation such as class boycott, blockages of access roads and carrying of placards in which their expectations would have been written. Sometimes, these demands are passed forward through the organized body of students in the universities known as Students Union. Depending on each university, sometimes the demands go directly to the university authorities through the Dean of Student Affairs. The outcome of this process could trigger students' crises depending on the result.

Most of the time, it has been found that, students' crises in the past were triggered off not necessarily by the negative responses of the university authorities to students' demands, but the 'perceived meaning' read to their demand by the authorities (Ojo, 1995; Oyebade, 1988). Consequently, crises that ought to be prevented become inevitable because students want to affirm relevance and be recognized by the university authorities. This mechanism though has been adjudged as the most preferable so far, yet it has been subjected to a lot of criticism. Omari and Mihyo (1991) observed that students have not fully understood this process. This could be due to defective communication system existing in the university system.

Emergency strategy involves the invitation of armed security personnel, particularly the Police. This mechanism, most of the time, is responsible for the violent aspect of students' crises; and could also lead to closure of these institutions to avert what the authority calls 'further breakdown of law and order' on campus. This strategy has been critically examined by various researchers and condemned in all its ramifications (Ojo, 1995; Oyebade, 1988; Onwurah, 2000; Adeyemi, 2009; Adebayo, 2010; Alabi, 2008). According to these researchers, students see protest as an inalienable right, a way of expressing their grievances to the appropriate authorities. It is regarded as a potent vehicle through which their feelings, pulse, perception and grievances could be expressed and felt.

However, in contrast, the police regard protest as breakdown of law and order, and it is an unacceptable way of challenging the right of security agents. In defence of their high-handedness against demonstrating students, the police have cited the 'proclamation of law', which enables them to disperse by force, all persons who have unlawfully assembled for demonstrations. Their action in curbing demonstrations is therefore in defence of the law. Another explanation given for the police-students relationship is the poor education standard and poor training of police staff. This has certainly accounted for their inability to cope with mob psychology as well as equip them with the expertise required for crises management.

Negligence strategy involves all forms of neglected or avoidance attitudes by the university authorities to students' agitations. In the conflict process, every demand goes through stages. It is expected by the students that, whichever way the request is interpreted, it is 'human' to get a feedback. But when this is not done, students are aggrieved and feel undignified. This strategy has also received condemnation from the findings of various researchers. They argued that 'silence' on the part of the university authorities could be misinterpreted by the students. This will make it possible for them to give diverse meanings which may be contrary to the intention of the university authorities. For instance, the authorities may mean to use the delay tactics probably due to the non-availability of the requested substance; the students may term it to be outright 'No' and embark on crises to confirm their suspicion.

Onwurah (2000) examines the effective measures that could abate the problem of students' crises at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The study revealed that aside from the material factors necessary for the students due to their functional characteristics, the university authorities' non-inclusion of students in decision-making particularly those that affect them seems to be the major cause that triggers off students' crises in the universities. The study also lends credence to the mechanisms employed by the university authorities to manage conflict situation which is the matter under investigation by the research. Other management strategies identified include imposition of authority, inviting parent-teachers association to mediate, signing

agreement with parents and students to promise to be of good conduct, prohibition of students' unionism, involving students in decision-making process, provision of necessary facilities and equipment, use of effective communication and use of effective leadership behaviour.

Esharenana and Sylvester (2006) investigated the pattern of conflict management in Nigerian university libraries. They employed descriptive survey design and questionnaire to gather data from para-professional and professional staff of three Nigerian university libraries. Findings from the study showed the personal characteristics of the respondents. Majority of the respondents perceived conflict as positive and that it can be stimulated by library managers; majority have experienced conflict with their colleagues followed by those who experienced conflict with their boss(es). The study concluded that interpersonal conflict ranked highest in the type of conflict experienced in the libraries and that the major fact taken into consideration during conflict resolution is organisational goals. Accommodation ranked highest as technique of conflict avoidance. The study recommends that library managers should deal with conflicts as soon as they arise.

In another study, Salawu (2010) examined the manifestations and causes of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria. The study observes that both religious and ethnic factors are present in the majority of social conflicts the Nigerian people have witnessed. One of the very

important causes of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria is the breakdown of social control that have characterized the African societies such as the family income, education, law, religious and political system that care for the well-being of all citizens. The study concludes that the malfunctioning of these social controls has greatly increased ethnic communal conflict in Nigeria. For instance, the inability of many homes to make ends meet with the family income tends to increase immorality, broken homes and divorce leading to a large number of youths who are available and could be employed for execution of ethno-religious conflicts.

The long military intervention in politics tends to encourage and legitimize the use of force and violence as instruments of social change and attainment of set goals and demands. As a result of this hang-over from the military era, the use of coercion and force in settling conflicts has become a tradition in Nigerian body politics. The study affirms that two strategies are employed by Nigerian governments to tackle the problem of ethno-religious conflicts each time they occur. The coercive methods deal with the deployment of troops to the areas of conflict with the objective of controlling the crises. In light ethno-religious conflict, conventional police are the first to be drafted to the scene. Sometimes they could be assisted by mobile policemen in case the convectional troops cannot cope. But in a very serious ethno-religious conflict, government may be forced to make use of combined military force made up of the army, navy and airforce. The coercive method is usually associated with many vices



such as raping, beating, and in some cases shooting of innocent citizens. The other method is the judicial method where commissions are set up to analyse the situation and make appropriate recommendations. Members of the commission would visit the scene to get first-hand assessment of the extent of the crises. The research proposes new management strategies for the control of this social phenomenon because of the ineffectiveness of the conflict-management techniques. The failures in the two techniques are that they have created bitterness than bring relief.

In view of this, the government is cautioned to move from conflict resolution to the stage of conflict prevention and be more committed to the provision of adequate and effective security that should respond promptly to these conflicts. The current study also supports the findings of these researchers in the sense that these two strategies are also employed in the universities, which is not a surprise at all. The university system is part of the social system and is likely to mirror what happens in the larger society. There are instances where police have been drafted to control students' crises in the universities that had resulted not only in beating of innocent students but sometimes shooting at them. The university system also employed the judicial commission in the past. The panels which were set up in the past to inquire into the problems of students' crises included the Kazeem Commission (1971), Mohammed Commission (1978), Belgore Tribunal (1981), Abisoye Commission (1986) and Akanbi Commission (1986). In another dimension, Omorogbe,

Obetoh, and Odion (2010) examine the phenomenon of domestic conflict among couples in Esan speaking area of Edo state. The study specifically addresses the main causes of the problem and the management strategies adopted in the resolution of the conflicts. The methodology employed was Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and in-depth interviews. It reveals that the major variables found to be responsible for domestic conflict include revelation of concealed pre-marital history, wife's attitude towards in-laws, management of spouse's income, and participation of spouse in politics.

The study declares that conflict is a condition of disharmony within an interaction process which usually occurs as a result of clash of interests between the parties involved in some form of relationship. Such a clash of interest could occur because either the parties involved in the relationship are pursuing incompatible goals or they are using incompatible means to pursue their chosen goals. The researcher encourages couples themselves to 'bury the hatchet' (mutual resolution) based on couples' voluntary evaluation of the situation irrespective of their 'rights' and obligations. Secondly, where conflict has escalated, there should be recourse to higher authorities such as family members, Imams and Pastors.

In line with this study, this research admits that student/university management relationship cannot be likened to that of husband/wife; because of the obvious fact that student/university management has a life span unlike the couple relationship which is expected to be

'forever'. Students, once admitted into the university, are already counting days when their relationship would end. Despite this scenario, there are some similarities between husband/wife relationship and student/university management in relation to their background. It is believed that husband and wife do not come from the same parents which implies that they have different backgrounds. The backgrounds could influence their beliefs, values, goals and perceptions of events which make conflict inevitable between them. Another implication of this fact is that, children being the product of this institution where conflict is incessant could be aggressive, intolerant and conflict-prone.

This assertion corroborates Olurode's (2004) that some students are conflict prone because they are brought up in an environment of constant conflict. Against this background, this study is reiterating that student/university management conflict could be minimized if either of the parties learns to act fast in conflict situation by 'burying the hatchet' and seeking resolution instead of looking for who is right or wrong. The conflict issue should be the centre of focus and not the personalities (superordinate/subordinate issue) without reminiscing about the past. On the contrary, where amicable settlement cannot be reached, a third party, for example, parents, religious leaders, but not the police, could be invited to mediate in the conflict issue.

A similar study by Ramani and Zhimin (2010), surveys conflict management resolution mechanisms in public secondary schools in Nairobi, Kenya. It uses descriptive and exploratory research design.

The sample comprised principals, representatives of Boards of Governors, class teachers, students and education officers. They were used to investigating the understanding, perceptions and impact of conflict resolution mechanisms in their respective schools.

The research instruments included a questionnaire and an interview schedule. The data collected were subjected to qualitative and quantitative analyses using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and presented in percentages, frequency distribution tables and charts. The findings show that the concept of 'conflict management' refers to an act and also a process of resolving disputes between two or more parties with the view of coming to resolution. Also, when students are faced with a conflict of personal nature, majority of them deal with the conflict through constructive approaches. The study points out that when students react as a group, they are likely to be influenced by group behaviour which in most cases is very destructive. This could be a factor that contributes to destructive scenes especially when resolution of conflicts between groups of students and the school administrators or teachers does not find an amiable ground. Effective communication is therefore essential in analysis of conflicts in public schools as well as in identifying their root causes. The study recommends that school administrators and teachers should embrace pen system whereby students would be allowed to air their views and the areas of conflict discussed openly. The school should also seek to educate all stakeholders on the best way of solving conflicts.

Fatile and Adejuwon (2011) examined conflict and conflict management in higher institutions of learning with specific reference to Nigerian universities. The study observes that students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria engage in conflict because of one reason or the other. The outcomes of such crises are prolonged academic activities, destruction of lives and property which renders school environments completely insecure for serious academic activities. These are not beneficial to students, the institutions and the society at large. It recommends that the school authorities should be more democratic in handling crises in higher institutions. In addition, Nigerian leaders and the management of tertiary institutions also need to create avenues for discussing and designing a popularly accepted non-violent strategy for managing conflicts in the tertiary institutions in the country. The study concludes that conflict is an inevitable outcome of human, group and state interactions. Therefore, maintaining a cordial relationship between students and school authorities, and involving students in decision-making process in schools appear to be the most effective strategies for resolving crisis in tertiary institutions.

The current study agrees with the previous works of these researchers that the university authorities need to operate an open door system whereby students would be free to access the university management at any stage in conflict times to eliminate suspicious feelings on the part of the students and democratic governance on

the part of the university authorities. Also, the university should design crisis management plan which would be monitored by experienced crisis management team. The crisis-management plan should be all encompassing covering pre-conflict, conflict and post conflict periods. This current researcher suggests that school authorities should be trained in human psychology and relevant fields that deal with human emotions and reactions.

However, it is expedient to also consider the issue of management of students' crises in relation to its future characteristics. Aluede (2001) examines the policies and factors that had in the past and at the present precipitated students' unrest in Nigerian university campuses. The study reveals that the current issues about Nigerian students include revolt, protest, unrest, violence and incessant closure of schools for months which have become regular features of Nigerian universities. The study emphasises that the incessant occurrences of students' crises seems to affect the scope of areas that should be covered and the content of courses in the school curriculum. The study enumerates those issues that are likely to generate student unrest, especially in the subsequent decades of this millennium and globalization as poor funding of Nigerian universities by the government and withdrawal of subsidy from petroleum products. In view of this, the current research therefore challenges the students' services professional to evolve strategies that would help to bring the incidents of students' unrest in Nigerian universities to the barest minimum.

This assertion has buttressed the notion by this study that there is still a gap in students' crises management which borders on the effectiveness of the management conflict mechanisms employed by university management. Therefore, in response to this clarion call, this current research also investigated the quality of students' support services available in the universities to prevent crises from erupting and if crises had occurred, the control measures to minimize their consequences for the present and in the future.

### **Leadership Behaviour and Management Styles**

The success of any organization is, to a large extent, a function of its leadership. Leadership is not just an essential part of the process of management; it is an integral part of the social composition and culture of an organization. Alabi (2010) observes that the leadership and administrative expertise of the university authorities is very relevant for the application of what mechanisms to employ in times of crises. The researcher opines that management competencies of university managers determine, to a large extent, the severity of conflicts within the university irrespective of the origin of the conflict. Also, managers who have tendencies to authoritarianism and dogmatism are particularly conflict-prone. The study is not devaluing the other strategies; rather it is emphasizing the fact that all other mechanisms cannot be effective without the driving force of the university authorities, one of the facts that were investigated by this study. In another study, Alimba (2007) reveals that the management

approaches that are often used by school authorities in managing students' unrest are invitation of police to intervene, closing down of institutions by authorities and suspension/rustication of student leaders.

Another factor identified as one of the major causes of students' crises in Nigerian universities is bad leadership. Adeyemi (2009) examined the management crises in tertiary institutions in Ondo State using a self-designed questionnaire on 520 students and 240 lecturers in two institutions: Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba and Rufus Giwa Polytechnic, Owo. The study showed a significant relationship between causes of students' crises and management styles adopted to curb them.

Ekong's (2001) study investigated and identified the contributions of various management styles adopted by the Vice-Chancellors of 11 Nigerian universities from 1992 to 1999. The study focused on the spate of strikes and work stoppage by industrial unions, class boycotts and rampages by students, government closure of crisis-ridden and non-compliant universities, the loss of teaching and learning time and complete disorganization of the university activities. The Overall Average Management Score (OAMS) calculated indicated a positive correlation between management styles and university stability. The study also found that the prevailing management style adopted by most Vice-Chancellors then was autocratic style, and consequently resulted in the closure of most



universities at the time. The study indicated that most Vice-Chancellors at the time were dictators who were probably influenced by the prevailing military era at that time. This current study investigates the prevailing management styles of the Vice-Chancellors of universities in South-West Nigeria vis-à-vis the present democratic dispensation. It should be noted that Nigeria, as a country, has been enjoying a stable democratic government since 1999.

Alani (1992) observes that universities themselves are engrossed in management crises due to the gap between policy formulation and policy execution. At times, the university authorities are called upon to implement policies which are made outside them; the reason being that the political leaders use education to propagate their political creed or beliefs. This dictates the general direction of events in the entire society which includes the education sector. Consequently, most decisions made for and on behalf of the university will be more political than educational. This anomaly is corroborated by the findings of Fabiyi and Uzoka (2012). The researchers adopted a descriptive survey design to examine how the universities plan to discharge their assignment in offering quality education with respect to the state of physical facilities, so as to face increase in placement of students with a view to meeting up with global competition. The study population consisted of all the tertiary institutions in Lagos state, the sampled universities were one federal and one state university in the State. The respondents were the

heads of departments in the planning of physical facilities and heads of various academic departments in the universities. The findings of the study reveal that the heads of departments agreed that they were not involved in the identification and provisions of facilities in their departments, and the choice and provision of such facilities are usually in the hands of a higher authority. Ironically, one of such decisions is the appointment of the Vice-Chancellors who happens to be the ultimate executor of government policies in the universities.

Chinelo (2012) carried out a survey research on the types, causes and management of role conflict between university professional and academic administrators that may become destructive. The administrators were the Vice-Chancellors, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Registrars, Librarians, Bursars, Deans of Faculties and Postgraduate Schools, Directors of programmes and services, and Provosts of Colleges and Heads of Departments. The study employed stratified random sampling technique to select eight universities comprising three states, two federal and three private universities. Three research questions were raised and answered using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistical tool. The study revealed the existence of role conflict between academic and professional administrators with respect to task and communication. It emphasised that the structure of a university like any other organisation is influenced by a number of factors which include the size, the nature of the environment and the characteristics of its technology. The structural causes of conflict include work

interdependence, mutual dependence on limited resources, differences in units and subunits orientations and goals and differences in status and jurisdictional ambiguities. The non-structural causes referred to personal or behavioural characteristics. Such characteristics include differences in background, personal traits, values, communications, perceptions, attitudes, emotions and viewpoints. The research concluded that appropriate management strategy should be designed to minimize, resolve and avoid role conflicts among units in the management cadres in the university. The researcher suggests that conscious efforts should be made to maintain peace and harmony among all Nigerian university administrators.

Giving the aforementioned, this study agrees with these suggestions because each unit in the university system is interrelated and dependent upon one another. Where there are conflicts between one unit and the others, for example the library, there is every possibility that it would hamper the smooth running of the office. Major decisions would be difficult to take because there would be communication gap and distortion in information due to confusion, lack of cooperation, and bitterness which are characteristics of conflict situation. Unfortunately, students would be the losers in this conflict because each unit in the university system has one thing or the other to do with students (they use the library most than any staff). Where there is no direct connection with students, for

example, the human resource department and works, the ultimate goal pursued is also to the benefit of students.

Okotoni (2003) investigated the management of conflicts in the administration of Secondary schools in Osun State, Nigeria. The study identified the various ways that conflicts manifest in the administration of secondary schools in the state. The effects of conflicts in school administration were equally examined. Quantitative and qualitative data were generated from both primary and secondary sources. The study showed that administration of secondary schools in the state was hampered by high rate of conflicts. The causes of conflicts in those schools included inadequate welfare package for workers, administrative incompetence, personality clashes, role conflict and non-involvement of students in school administration. The study found that most of the school administrators were not knowledgeable in conflict management and the absence of laid down procedures for conflict management in most schools contributed to the high rate of conflicts and industrial actions in schools. It concluded that the issue of conflict management has reached a point where effective use of relevant strategies can no longer be ignored.

Ajibade (2012) investigated students' crisis in tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria. The researcher reviewed the causes and management styles adopted in those institutions to respond to students' crises. The study provided answers to four questions about

the phenomenon of students' crises which are: (1) what are the factors responsible for students' crises? (2) What measures were adopted to manage students' crises? (3) How effective were such measures? and (4) what are the alternative means of managing students' crises?

The research acknowledges the five related factors associated with wider Nigerian crises which are the authoritarian governance arising from erosion of institutional autonomy, infrastructure collapse and social distortion due to poor funding, poor motivation of staff who have a major obligation for the moral character and well-being of the students, the impact of the wider moral crisis on the staff and students of tertiary institutions and the precarious socio-psychological mental state of students as youths in social change and their consequent disposition to immediacy. Other factors include: declining economic conditions which have affected students' lives and studies, poor communication between students and institution authorities, poor funding of tertiary institutions, insufficient and ageing of social amenities and academic facilities, socialisation influence, brain drain and poor attention to students, ideological and political reasons and secret cult activities. However, the study identifies rebellion on the part of students as a contributory factor of students' crises in Nigerian educational institutions apart from the aforementioned. In addition, it affirms the volatility and the unstable nature of students' crises in educational institutions in Nigeria.

The research buttresses that most of the heads of tertiary institutions in Nigeria adopt authoritarian/autocratic leadership style by not listening to the yearnings and aspirations of the students. Further, they are lackadaisical in terms of provision of basic amenities such as water, power and health facilities which act as constraint for students realising their goals and dreams and consequently erupting in crises. The forms include immediate closure of institutions with an ultimatum requesting the students to vacate their halls of residence and suspension/dissolution of students' union executives, rustication or expulsion of students and the use of police force. The study concludes that the measures adopted to curb students' crises in Nigerian educational institutions are regulatory and repressive in nature which rather than help to militate against the problems of students' crises, it further aggravates the phenomenon. The alternative measures suggested in the study are the democratic style of crisis management which entails the use of dialogue with students by authorities of tertiary institutions, involvement of students in decision-making, bridging of communication gap between students and authorities and setting up of welfare committees to attend to student matters.

However, the current study differs on the alternative measures of democratic styles as suggested; rather it proffers situational approach which entails dealing with crises as the condition demands. This assertion is based on the fact that students' crises are premised on the 'element of surprises' and have not been known to be the

same in nature and dimension. Therefore, the same measures cannot be rigidly followed by all educational institutions in Nigeria.

Other management crises are due to population explosion, political instability, inadequate data and ethnic pressures as corroborated by Oloyede (1999) who asserts that most violent conflicts in Nigerian universities have been traced to rights issue, greed, predatory rule, autocracy and unresolved grievances. Alani (1992) postulates that a large group of people are complex to manage than small ones hence increase in population in the universities may inhibit the administration's drive towards effectiveness and efficiency due to economic exigencies. School administrators often find themselves in dilemma where they want to satisfy individual needs of staff members and at the same time function within the laws of the educational system. The study proposes that decisions that are made in the educational system should not serve only political interest, but the efficiency and effectiveness of the system. Common observation shows that the position of the Vice-Chancellor is itself a source of crisis in the university system (it is subject to the dictates of the powers that be and not necessarily by merit). This current researcher feels that the position of the Vice-Chancellor is not supposed to be political because he/she is responsible for setting the key values and direction of the university by laying down infrastructure, policies and guidelines for the different functions of the organization. This study also looks into the issues of the personality of the university authorities. This current research is of the opinion that the

personality of the university authorities could determine their leadership styles; and consequently, the choice of the best conflict management mechanisms to employ in time of conflict. It should be noted that there cannot be any 'best style' for a leader but that effective leadership behaviour is dependent on a number of conditions such as the leader's power, level and status of subordinates, and the favourableness of the situation.

### **Appraisal of Literature**

This study has reviewed various studies and writings of scholars on the nature of students' crises, the causes of students' crises and the conflict management mechanisms employed by the university authorities to manage students' crises across universities in the country and outside.

Under the review of studies on the nature of students' crises, most findings reveal that students' crises are volatile, violent and have high level of occurrence in the universities (Oyebade, 1995), particularly in the public universities (Adeyemi, 2009; Adebayo, 2010). A common observation from the studies reveals that, cultism is a major factor that is causing students' crises in the universities aside from material and educational factors which are institutional based. The researchers in these studies unanimously agree that consequences of students' crises in the last decades are not palatable; they range from loss of lives to destruction of property, closure of institutions, disruption in academic calendars, loss of



university image, lack of recognition for certificates, poor quality of university graduates and loss of confidence in the university educational system by most stakeholders.

On the other hand, the reviewed literature on conflict management mechanisms showed that researchers had different perspectives. Some of the conflict management mechanisms include dialogue, compromise, invitation of armed security personnel particularly the Police, neglect of the situation, use of brute force, setting up of panels or commissions of enquiry, closure of institutions, placement of ban on student unionism, asking students to present letters of promise of good conduct from their parents, charging students some levies to repair damaged university property, rustication and suspension of students, as the case may be. Some researchers see conflict as not beneficial while some agree that non-occurrence of conflict in the universities is itself not beneficial. The school of thought argues that conflict is beneficial and necessary in the universities; this is because it would bring the attention of the university authorities to the conflict issues, and probably bring a solution so, it will provide a new directive for the good governance of the university system. From the perspectives of the researchers, some scholars agree on focusing on the problems in the universities that could facilitate conflicts. Such factors include under-funding, population explosion, university internal crises and external factors such as political instability in the country and governmental

influences for effective management of students' crises in the universities.

Some researchers argue that it is better to focus on the personal or emotional issues such as the personality of the university authorities particularly the person of the Vice-Chancellors and their leadership ability. This study did not focus on the general problems of these universities; on the contrary, it discusses the relevance and quality of the institutional resources available to manage students' affairs in the university and the occurrence of students' crises. It also examined the effectiveness of the conflict management mechanisms used in the universities using leadership style as a major factor that determines the choice of the conflict mechanisms to employ in time of crisis. This study further investigates the above issues reviewed with a view to identifying their areas of disparity with the present situation and the influence of modern technology on students' crises. This is with a view to proffering suitable conflict management mechanisms that could be adopted to tackle the issue of students' crises in universities in South-West Nigeria.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **Research Design**

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. It investigated the current trend of students' crises and the effectiveness of the conflict management mechanisms employed to curb their occurrences in universities in South-West Nigeria.

#### **Population**

The population comprised all the universities in the South-West States of Nigeria. The States are Ondo, Ogun, Osun, Oyo, Ekiti and Lagos. According to 2012/2013 Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) brochures, there are 14 universities made up five federal, nine state universities in the area. According to the National Universities Commission (2013), there are 128 universities in different States across the country.

#### **Samples and Sampling Technique**

The researcher employed the stratified random sampling method to select the samples. The universities used in the geographical area are: Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye; Federal University of Technology, Akure; University of Ibadan, Ibadan; Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife; and Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti. The universities were selected based on state equitable basis and their past records of involvement in students' crises. A total of 950 final year students participated in the study. This figure was

proportionately drawn to cut-across faculties from the universities sampled. A total of 225 academic and non-academic members of staff were included in the study. This number was drawn from the segment of those not below first degree holders among the academic staff and non-academic staff in the management cadre, and those directly connected with student affairs administration in the sampled universities. The summary is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2**

Summary of Sampled Participants

	<b>University</b>	<b>No. of Students</b>	<b>% of Students</b>	<b>Total No. of Staff</b>	<b>% of Staff</b>
1	OOU	269	28.3	27	12.0
2	OAU	233	24.5	57	25.3
3	UI	156	16.4	51	22.7
4	EKSU	178	18.7	36	16.0
5	FUTA	114	12.0	54	24.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>950</b>		<b>225</b>	
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1175</b>			
	<b>Total</b>				
	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>100</b>			

**Key**

OOU = Olabisi Onabanjo University

OAU = Obafemi Awolowo University

UI = University of Ibadan

EKSU = Ekiti State University

FUTA = Federal University of Technology, Akure

**Source:** Author

## **Research Instruments**

The study employed two types of data gathering methods, namely; questionnaire and the Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Two types of questionnaire were generated namely; 'Students' Crises and Conflict Management Mechanisms in Universities Questionnaire (SCCMMUQ)' and 'Quality of Students' Support Services Questionnaire (QSSSQ)'. Items on QSSSQ were questions adapted from the NUC minimum academic standard guidelines for universities. The SCCMMUQ is divided into Sections A and B. Section A is made up of the bio-data of the participants which comprise name of institution, type of institution, status, sex, age (for staff and students), work experience and qualifications (staff only) while Section B comprises items designed to elicit responses from both staff and students on the causes of students' crises and conflict management mechanisms.

This section also collected data on the relevance of police intervention as a way of managing conflicts. The QSSSQ is subdivided into five parts, namely: counselling and human development centre and service; university clinic; hostel accommodation; sporting and recreational facilities; communication and campus environment. The SCCMMUQ was drawn on a 4-point Likert type scale of Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree, while, the QSSSQ was drawn on a 6-point scale of Very Good (6), Good (5), Average (4), Poor (3), Very Poor (2) and Non Existent (1). The two sets of questionnaire were administered on the university staff and final year students in each university.

A Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and interview were targeted at the students' union officers, the academic staff in position of authority such as: Heads of Departments, Deans of Faculties, Dean of Student Affairs, academic and administrative planners, and halls of residence keepers. The interview was structured to generate information on the nature of students' crises, its dimensions and consequences, and conflict management mechanisms used to manage the conflicts identified in a particular university.

### **Validity of the Instrument**

To determine the validity of the instruments used in this study, the questionnaire were given to lecturers in the Department of Educational Administration, University of Lagos, some experts in educational management as well as the researcher's supervisors, who carefully examined the items in the questionnaire.

### **Reliability of the Instruments**

The reliability of the instruments was established through a test-retest method. A pilot test was conducted at Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba. This was carried out by administering 50 copies of both questionnaire each to a set of 30 students and 20 staff members of the university. The same instruments were re-administered two weeks after on the population. The correlational coefficients of 0.78 and 0.82 were obtained respectively from the two sets of questionnaire using the Pearson Product- Moment Correlation statistical tool. The instruments were therefore adjudged to be reliable.

### **Method of Data Collection**

The researcher personally administered 1,175 copies each of the questionnaire through the efforts of two research assistants in each of the universities. The research assistants were trained for a week by the researcher on methods of administering the questionnaire before they embarked on the job. Copies of the instrument were distributed to final year students and the selected academic and non-academic staff cutting across at least four faculties selected in each of the universities. A total of 1,175 copies of questionnaire were finally retrieved from the five universities.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

The data collected were analysed using both the descriptive and inferential statistics. The six research questions were answered using descriptive statistics, such as percentages, mean and standard deviation, while the four research hypotheses were tested using inferential statistics such as t-test, chi-square, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation and Principal Component Analysis (PCA) (where only those factors with minimum of 1.0 Eigen value were extracted). This is the conventional cut-off point for factor extraction. If the rule is relaxed, more factors could be extracted. Eigen value is the value of a variable in an equation that gives a solution which complies with the condition existing within the system boundaries.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The data generated were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Each of the hypotheses was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The results are presented in two parts based on the general questions and the hypotheses that guided the study.

#### Answers to Research Questions

**Research Question One:** What is the trend of students' crises in universities in South-West Nigeria?

In order to answer this question, the number of times students' crises occurred in each university for a particular year was summarised and tabulated across the universities sampled. The results are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3**

Occurrences of Students' Crises in Universities in South West Nigeria (2000–2010)

Institutions	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total	%
OAU	*			*				*		*		4	18.2
UI	*		*	*					*	*	*	6	27.3
FUTA	*	*										2	9.1
OOU		*		*		*			*	*		5	22.7
EKSU	*				*	*				*	*	5	22.7
Total												22	100
<b>Average</b>												<b>4</b>	

Key: \* Indicates that students' crises occurred in the particular university that year.



Table 3 shows that the sampled universities in the study area recorded a total of 22 students' crises within the period (2000-2010). The University of Ibadan had the highest record of occurrences of students' crises accounting for 27.3% in 10 years. The result further indicates that Olabisi Onabanjo University and Ekiti State University closely followed with five (22%) occurrences of students' crises respectively. The Federal University of Technology, Akure recorded the least students' crises with two occurrences accounting for 9.1% in the corresponding period. It can be concluded that all the universities sampled have witnessed an average of four occurrences of students' crises during the period under study.

**Research Question Two:** What are the dimensions of students' crises in the universities in South-West Nigeria?

The mean and standard deviation of responses on the parameter for explaining causes of students' crises were subjected to factor analysis involving the Principal Component Analysis (PCA). The analysis of result is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4:**

## Fundamental Parameters of Students' Crises in the Universities

Variables	Mean	S.D.	Factors						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	
1. Increase in school fees	3.00	1.01	0.778						
2. Poor welfare	3.17	0.87	0.689						
3. Ban on Student unionism	2.73	1.05	0.675						
4. Cultism	2.68	1.11	0.562						
5. Inadequate recreational facilities	2.83	0.98		0.717					
6. Non release/untimely release of results	2.79	0.99		0.709					
7. Non-consultation with students on matters affecting them	2.95	0.98		0.577					
8. Political interference by government	2.86	1.62		0.533					
9. University management often surcharge students for vandalising school property	2.88	1.64			0.742				
10. University management quest to meet international standard	2.88	0.93			0.718				
11. University management handling of students' grievances	2.96	0.93			0.502				
12. Students' crises are to show intolerance and ego	2.73	0.99			0.487				
13. University students' quest for material acquisition	2.87	0.95				0.720			
14. Over exposure to criminal/inciting activities through the Internet	2.84	0.98				0.684			
15. Corruption	2.88	1.64				0.532			
16. Baseless Students' demands	2.63	1.02					0.747		
17. Students' crises occur frequently among undergraduates	2.96	1.56					0.515		
18. University management often employs inappropriate approaches in handling students' grievances	2.82	0.98					0.413		
19. Stringent university rules and regulations	3.09	0.91							0.750
20. Religious intolerance	2.69	1.05							0.509
<b>Total Eigen Values</b>			<b>2.19</b>	<b>2.06</b>	<b>1.88</b>	<b>1.54</b>	<b>1.49</b>	<b>1.14</b>	
<b>% Variance</b>			<b>10.97</b>	<b>10.32</b>	<b>9.37</b>	<b>7.72</b>	<b>7.44</b>	<b>5.71</b>	
<b>Cumulative % Variance</b>			<b>20.97</b>	<b>31.29</b>	<b>40.66</b>	<b>58.38</b>	<b>65.82</b>	<b>78.5</b>	

**Key:**

**Factor 1:** Increase in school fees, poor welfare, ban on student unionism and cultism.

**Factor 2:** Inadequate recreational facilities, non-release/untimely release of results, non-consultation with students on matters affecting them and political interference by government.

**Factor 3:** University management surcharging students for vandalising school property, university management quest to meet international standard, university management handling of students' grievances and students' crises are to show intolerance and ego.

**Factor 4:** University students' quest for material acquisition, over exposure to criminal/inciting activities through the Internet and corruption.

**Factor 5:** Baseless students' demands, students' crises occur frequently among undergraduates and university management often employs inappropriate approaches in handling students' grievances..

**Factor 6:** Stringent university rules and regulations and religious intolerance.

**Analysis**

In Table 4, 20 items were extracted and grouped into six factors on the basis of their relative importance for explaining causes of students' crises. The total variance contributed by the six factors was 78.5%. The remaining 21.5% was due to variables not included in the analysis and extraneous factors which were beyond the control of the researcher. Further, it is observed that the mean of the variables decreased from top to bottom (i.e. from factor 1 to factor 6). Hence, in order of importance, variables in factor 1(increase in school fees,

poor welfare, ban on student unionism and cultism) had mean scores of 3.00, 3.17, 2.73 and 2.68 and contributed 10.97% of 51.53%. In converse, stringent university rules and regulations and religious intolerance with mean scores of 3.09 and 2.69 respectively constituted least in explaining the dimensions of students' crises.

**Research Question Three:** What is the quality of students' support services available in universities in South–West Nigeria?

Table 5 presents the views of participants on the quality of students' support services in their universities.

**Table 5**

Quality of Students' Support Services Available in the Universities

<b>Student support Services</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Rank</b>
1.Availability of bill boards, posters, bulletins and other information media	5.00	1.01	1 <sup>st</sup>
2. Frequent dialogue and involvement of students in matters affecting them	4.58	0.57	2 <sup>nd</sup>
3. Availability of operational university clinic with basic equipment for diagnosis and treatment of common diseases	4.36	0.51	3 <sup>rd</sup>
4. Counselling and human development centre and service	4.28	0.66	4 <sup>th</sup>
5. Availability of student information handbook with adequately stated procedure for seeking redress	4.00	0.34	5 <sup>th</sup>
6. Provision of suggestion boxes	4.00	0.34	5 <sup>th</sup>
7. Campus safety and security	4.00	0.34	5 <sup>th</sup>
8. Availability of intra/inter campus transport system	4.00	0.34	5 <sup>th</sup>
9. Availability of regulated food and provisions of vending outlets	3.89	0.47	9 <sup>th</sup>
10. Adequacy of electricity (power) supply	3.46	0.74	10 <sup>th</sup>
11. Periodic public lectures on issues relevant to students	3.38	0.69	11 <sup>th</sup>
12. Provision of functional equipment and facilities for student services	3.13	0.81	12 <sup>th</sup>
13. Availability of fire-fighting equipment	3.00	0.28	13 <sup>th</sup>
14. Adequacy of hostel accommodation and required facilities for university hostel occupants	2.99	1.12	14 <sup>th</sup>
15. Functional and well maintained toilet facilities	2.72	0.60	15 <sup>th</sup>
16. Adequacy of water supply with appropriate reticulation	2.63	1.06	16 <sup>th</sup>
17.Adequacy and variety of facilities for sports and recreational activities in the university	2.29	1.02	17 <sup>th</sup>

Table 5 indicates that in terms of quality of students' support services available in the university, bill boards, posters, bulletins and other information ranked first with a maximum mean score of 5.00, frequent dialogue and involvement of students in matters affecting them ranked second with a mean score of 4.58, while availability of operational university clinic with basic equipment for diagnosis and treatment ranked third with a mean score of 4.36.

**Research Question Four:** How effective are the conflict management mechanisms employed by university management in curbing students' crises in South-West Nigeria?

In order to answer this question, data collected from the responses to the questionnaire on conflict management mechanisms were subjected to Principal Component Analysis (PCA). The analysis is presented in Table 6.

**Table 6**

## Conflict Management Mechanisms Adopted by the Universities

Variables	Mean	SD	Factors			
			1	2	3	4
1. Dialogue	3.28	0.91	0.732			
2. Effective communication	3.11	0.96	0.689			
3. Religious leaders' intervention	2.70	1.02	0.514			
4. Suspension/Rustication of offenders	2.56	1.74	0.512			
5. Conviction of offenders	2.74	1.01	0.490			
6. Ban on students' unionism	2.47	1.09		0.771		
7. Participatory decision making	2.77	1.07		0.761		
8. Setting up of panels of enquiry	2.90	0.96		0.527		
9. Parent/Teacher involvement	2.77	1.07		0.466		
10. Compromising stand	2.73	0.98			0.887	
11. Neglect of students grievances	2.42	1.12			0.650	
12. Emergency closure	2.52	1.05				0.719
13. Invitation of armed personnel (police) at any instance	2.54	1.11				0.706
<b>Total Eigen Values</b>			<b>2.87</b>	<b>2.03</b>	<b>1.12</b>	<b>1.04</b>
<b>% Variance</b>			<b>21.97</b>	<b>15.58</b>	<b>8.58</b>	<b>7.96</b>
<b>Cumulative % Variance</b>			<b>21.97</b>	<b>47.55</b>	<b>65.13</b>	<b>75.10</b>

**Key:**

**Factor 1:** dialogue, effective communication between university management and students, religious leaders' intervention, suspension/rustication of offenders and conviction of offenders.

**Factor 2:** ban on student unionism, participatory decision-making, setting up of panels of enquiry, parent/teacher involvement.

**Factor 3:** compromising stand on crisis issue between students and university management and neglect of students' grievances.

**Factor 4:** emergency closure of university and invitation of armed personnel.

The analysis presented in Table 6 indicates that four factors in order of effectiveness were extracted from the 13 items on the questionnaire with the total percentage variance of 75.10%. It is observed that items in factor 1 (dialogue, effective communication, religious leaders' intervention in any conflict situation between university authority and students, rustication/suspension of offenders and conviction of offenders) were the most effective conflict management mechanisms adopted by the sampled universities with total Eigen value of 2.87 and mean scores of 3.28, 3.11, 2.70, 2.56 and 2.74 respectively. The least effective variables for managing student conflict were emergency closure of university and invitations of armed personnel (police), while the variables in between the topmost and the least were ban on student unionism and participatory decision-making between university management and students.

**Research Question Five:** What is the relationship between management leadership styles and the occurrence of students' crises?

A correlation analysis was used as presented in Table 7.

**Table 7**

Leadership Style and Frequency of Students' Crises in Universities

	<b>Frequency of students' crises</b>	<b>Authoritarian approach</b>	<b>Democratic approach</b>	<b>Laissez-faire approach</b>
Number of times students' crises occurred	1.00			
Authoritarian approach	.066*	1.00		
Democratic approach	0.047**	-0.447**	1.00	
Laissez-faire approach	0.001	-0.191**	0.417**-	1.00
			0.168**	

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level \*\* Correlation is not significant at 0.05 levels

The analysis reveals that the authoritarian approach of the university authority to student affairs management has significant positive correlation with the frequency of students' crises. The correlation is significant at 0.05.



**Research Question Six:** How relevant is police intervention in students' crises management?

The assessment of police involvement in crises control in the universities was analysed using Chi-Square test of goodness of fit. The result is presented in Table 8.

**Table 8**

Police Intervention in Students' Crises

<b>Response</b>	<b>Observed N</b>	<b>Expected N</b>	<b>Residual</b>
Yes	432	503.0	-160.0
No	743	503.0	160.0
Total	1175		
Chi-Square			101.789**

Significant at 0.05 level

Analysis presented in Table 8 reveals that the observed frequencies of participants who answered in the affirmative were 432 and those who were of the opinion that the involvement of police in crises situation is not necessary as 743. The Chi-Square test shows that those who were not in support are significant at 0.05 level. This implies that intervention of police in students' crises is not necessary.

## Testing of Hypotheses

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference in the prevailing conflict management mechanisms between federal and state universities.

Table 9 shows the t-test analysis of the prevailing conflict management mechanisms employed by the universities.

**Table 9**

Prevailing Conflict Management Mechanisms between Federal and State Universities

Variables	N	Mean	Variance	Calculated t	Critical t	Remark
Federal		35.58	6.82			
	1175			0.094	1.645	Not Significant
State		36.25	5.67			

$P < .05$ ;  $df = 1173$

Table 9 indicates that the calculated t-value of 0.094 is less than the critical value of 1.645 with degrees of freedom of 1004 at  $P < .05$ . This shows that there was no significant difference in the prevailing conflict management mechanisms adopted by universities; hence, the null hypothesis was accepted.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant relationship between the quality of students' support services available in the universities and effective management of students' crises.

As shown in Table 10, data on the occurrences of students' crises and quality of students' support services available in the universities for managing students' crisis were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

**Table 10**

Frequency of Students' Crises and Quality of Students' Support Services available in the Universities

Variables	N	X	SD	Df	Probability	
					r-cal	Value
Students' crises management		57.24	1.11			
Quality of students' support services available in the universities	1175			1173	-0.093	.003

P < 0.05

The frequency of students' crises and quality of students' support services available in the universities is presented in Table 10. The Table shows that there was a negative significant correlation at 0.05 level between quality of students' support services available in the universities and effectiveness of handling students' crises. Since the calculated value is .003 and is less than 0.05, therefore, the

hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between quality of students' support services available in the university and effectiveness of students' crises management was rejected.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant relationship between university management leadership styles and frequency of students' crises.

In testing this hypothesis, correlation statistics was employed to find the relationship between each of the four different leadership styles (authoritarian, democratic and laissez-faire) and the frequency of students' crises as presented in Table 11.

**Table 11**

University Management Leadership Style and the Frequency of Students' Crises in the Universities

	Frequency of Students' Crises	Authoritarian Approach	Democratic approach	Laissez-faire Approach
Number of times students' crises occurred	1.00			
Authoritarian approach	.066*	1.00		
Democratic approach	0.047**	-0.147**	1.00	
Laissez- faire approach	0.001**	-0.191**	0.417**	1.00

\* Correlation is significant at 0.05 level

\*\* Correlation is not significant at 0.05 level

The relationship between university management leadership style and the frequency of students' crises in the universities was established as presented in Table 11. The analysis reveals that the authoritarian leadership approach to students' management had significant positive correlation with the frequency of students' crises. The correlation is significant at 0.05 level. The positive correlation implies that, the more authoritarian university leadership approach to students' management is, the more likely there will be students' crises. The other leadership styles had no significant relationship with students' crises. Table 11 further shows that all the leadership styles proposed in the study had significant positive or negative correlation with one another, hence the hypothesis was rejected.

**Hypothesis 4:** There is no significant relationship between the involvement of police and effective students' crises management. The analysis of the data collected from opinion of participants using Chi square is presented in Table 12.

**Table 12**

Involvement of Police in Students' Crises Management

<b>Involvement of police</b>					
<b>In Students' crises management</b>	<b>Observed</b>	<b>Expected</b>	<b>Df</b>	$\chi^2$	<b>P value</b>
Yes	432	503.0	1004		
No	743	503.0		201.79*	0.001
Total	1175				

\*Significant at 0.05 level

Table 12 shows that there was a significant relationship between police intervention and effectiveness of students' crises management. Hence, the hypothesis was rejected at 0.05. This implies that police intervention could go a long way in quelling the volatility of students' crises.

### **Summary of Findings**

In the light of the analysis carried out on the six questions and four hypotheses formulated for the study, the following major findings emerged:

1. The universities sampled had a total of 22 occurrences of students' crises with an estimated average of four occurrences per university within a period of 10 years. The University of Ibadan and Obafemi Awolowo University were the two topmost universities in the ranking of students' crises during the period of study with records of six and four occurrences of students' crises respectively.
2. The major risk factors involved in students' crises dimensions in universities studied were increase in school fees, poor welfare, ban on student unionism and cultism, while stringent university rules/regulations and religious intolerance ranked least among the causes of students' crises. Other factors that could cause students' crises are inadequate recreational facilities and surcharging of students by university management.

3. A significant relationship was established between quality of students' support services available in the universities and effectiveness of students' crises management. In terms of quality of students' support services available in the university, availability of bill boards, posters, bulletins and other information ranked first, while frequent dialogue and involvement of students in matters affecting them ranked second. Availability of operational university clinic with basic equipment for diagnosis and treatment ranked third.
4. The prevailing conflict management mechanisms adopted by federal and state universities in the study area were not significantly different. In other words, the prevailing conflict management mechanisms were similar irrespective of ownership of the universities.
5. It was also established that, a direct relationship exists between university leadership styles and frequency of students' crises. In other words, the more autocratic the leadership style becomes, the higher the propensity for students' crises.
6. The study identified five conflict management mechanisms in the order of effectiveness as dialogue, effective communication between students and university management, intervention of religious leaders in conflict situation between university management and students, rustication/suspension of offenders and conviction of offenders. The least effective conflict management mechanisms are emergency closure of universities and invitation of armed security personnel (Police).

Ban on student unionism and participation of students in university decision making process are neither effective nor ineffective.

7. This study has shown that the involvement of police in students' crises management does make a difference.

### **Discussion of Findings**

From the data analysed, the findings of this study reveal that the sampled universities had witnessed at least four occurrences of students' crises in the last ten years. These findings confirm the assertion of previous researchers that conflict is inevitable in any human organisation (Ojo, 1995; Oyebade, 1996). However, the finding negates that of Onwurah (2000) and Anifowose (2004) which showed that the occurrences of students' crises in Nigerian universities had reached an alarming rate and thus called for declaration of state of emergency. The explanation that could be advanced for the opposing findings on the trend of students' crises in Nigerian universities could be ascribed to the democratisation of Nigerian universities governance and the adoption of social re-engineering of students' union leadership by the various universities through local and international conferences.

Discussants at the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) ascertained that the positive interactive effects of these democratisation and social re-engineering strategies in the universities must have yielded positive



dividends that had facilitated student-management peaceful co-existence in the universities studied.

To further corroborate the above, finding from the tested hypothesis one showed that there was no significant difference in the prevailing conflict management mechanisms between federal and state universities in South West Nigeria. The finding of this study supports the views of Ayodele and Adewunmi (2007) and Adeyemi (2009) that conflict was common to both federal and state universities. The reason that could be deduced for this finding is not far-fetched. It is obvious that both federal and state universities are public universities, though, with different ownership.

It can be safely concluded that the federal and state universities are directly under the supervision and control of the National Universities Commission (NUC), an important arm of government in the area of development and management of university education in Nigeria. This assertion implies that since both universities are controlled and monitored under the same umbrella, there may not be much difference in the administrative policies exhibited by them. However, Adebayo (2010) differs in his own submission that student-authority conflict occurs frequently in the state universities than in the federal universities. This view may not be unconnected with the disparity in funding status of the state and federal universities with the corresponding negative impact on most state universities to respond to their students' welfare needs.

From the analysis of data in response to the dimensions of students' crises in universities in South-West Nigeria, the findings of this study reveal that increase in school fees, poor welfare services, ban on student unionism and cultism ranked topmost among the critical causes of students' crises in the universities studied. The least factors are university stringent rules and regulations, and religious intolerance. The findings are in consonance with Adeyemi (2009) and Ajayi (1992) who assert that students' crises occur due to the deplorable financial situation in universities and the failure of authorities to provide basic welfare services; a situation which could trigger off crises spearheaded by cultism. Similarly, Ojo (1995) and Aluede (2001) corroborate these findings by ascribing students' crises to poor financing of Nigerian universities and the inability to meet students' welfare needs.

The bandwagon effects of ban on students' union and poor student welfare services provided by university managers and the attendant students' crises are enunciated by Arijesuyo (2011). According to the researcher, the proposed frustration-aggression hypothesis explains the link between students' violent behaviour, crime, and cultism as a retaliatory strategy by the students to press home their demands on university authorities. The researcher posited that aggression and violence have become the only option for students to force the authorities of their universities to respond to their pressing needs. Similarly, inability of institutional managers to meet the expected

demands of students coupled with poor maintenance culture is other ancillary reason for the persistence of students' crises in the universities. These reasons explain why students would always resist any increment in chargeable fees by university management to meet the financial obligations required for the myriads of students' welfare needs.

On the quality of students' support services available in the universities in South West Nigeria, the study reveals that most of the universities in the study area have made considerable efforts in providing quality structures and services both to prevent and control students' crises in their universities. For instance, the study has affirmed that there is adequate provision of bill boards, posters, bulletins and other information media such as student information handbook and guidelines for seeking redress through suggestion boxes. While it could be concluded that most universities are faring well in the provision of basic students' support services with respect to health care service delivery for diagnosis and treatment of common diseases, and counselling and human development centre. Evidence from FGD shows that universities in South-West Nigeria need to gear up and meet the minimum standard performance indicators prescribed by NUC. For instance, this study has attributed students' crises to poor welfare among one of the most potent factors of students' grievances in universities.

This view is further supported by Ekundayo and Ajayi (2009) who opined that it is regrettable that in spite of the high enrolment figures recorded yearly in the universities there is no corresponding increase in the level of preparedness for adequate facilities provided to meet this challenge. Also, Alani (1992) and Awosusi (2005) observed that the continuous students' crises in Nigerian universities were due to proliferation of universities and higher population of students cum economic recession.

In another dimension, Babatope (2010) blamed both students and staff of the universities on the use of the facilities available. The finding of the study revealed that though, these facilities were obsolete yet, there is the need to be cautious in maintaining them. This researcher is of the opinion that once there is adequate care for these facilities, their life span can be prolonged and made to serve more people.

This study also found significant relationship between the quality of students' support services and effective crises management. The hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between quality of students' support services available in the universities and the effective crises management was therefore negated. This implies that the more preparation the university management is able to make in terms of provision of necessary facilities and services, the less the likelihood of students' crises in the universities.

The study has further revealed a downward trend in the frequencies of students' crises across the sampled universities in the last 10 years. This development could be explained in terms of openness, frequent dialogue and involvement of students in matters affecting them as confirmed by the students at FGD who affirmed that student representatives were always involved in management Committees/Boards on students' welfare and other decision-making bodies and processes. It was also gathered that Students' Union representatives now feature prominently in most university management meetings for dialogue and negotiations to prevent conflict or crises situation on regular bases.

Statistical analysis shows that dialogue, effective communication, religious leaders' intervention in any conflict situation between university management and students, such as rustication/suspension of offenders and conviction of offenders were the most effective conflict management strategies in the sampled universities. It can also be inferred that structures and processes of Nigerian universities in handling the management of student affairs are virtually the same irrespective of the university ownership status. This study agrees with Schmid's diary (as cited in Alabi 2010) who asserts that conflict management is an interference in an on-going conflict process in such a way that processes are intervention strategies between university management and students in such a way as to:

1. reduce the level of violence and destruction;
2. prevent the vertical escalation of crises towards the use of weapons that could be destructive; and
3. prevent the horizontal expansion of crises into other areas.

This researcher concludes that the tendencies of university management to operate participatory strategies in university governance have further yielded positive results in the reduction of students' crises in recent years. Research question five seeks relationship between university management styles and occurrence of students' crises in the study. The finding identified five effective conflict management mechanisms to be dialogue, effective communication, intervention of religious leaders in conflict situation between university management and students, rustication/suspension of offenders and conviction of offenders. This research further found that the conflict management mechanisms adopted by university management were ineffective in curbing students' crises in universities and therefore called for change in these measures to avert the incidences of students' crises in Nigerian universities.

This study affirms that there was a relationship between university management styles and frequency of students' crises in the universities surveyed, and hence hypothesis three which states that there is no relationship between university management styles and frequency of students' crises was rejected. The study thus reveals a

positive correlation between university leadership styles and frequency of students' crises.

The situation analysis presented by this finding shows that the conflict management mechanisms adopted by the university could be grouped under two subheadings, viz: preventive mechanisms through democratisation process of communication and dialogue by stakeholders, while the second style involves punitive styles which may take the form of autocratic styles as the last option when all means of negotiation have failed. This finding thus corroborates the assertion of Ekong (2001) who advocated that conflict and leadership management styles adopted are usually determined by the circumstances of the crises and the fallout of negotiation. Miner's diary (as cited in Alabi 2008) opines that management skills of university managers determine to a large extent the severity of conflicts within the university irrespective of the origin of the conflict, and that managers who have tendencies to be autocratic and dogmatic are particularly conflict prone.

Research question six sought the relationship between involvement of police and effectiveness of students' crises management. The finding in the study shows that 65.9% respondents agreed that police intervention was not necessary in students' crises management. Further test also reveals no statistically significant relationship between police intervention and effective students' crises management. The view agrees with Smah (2008) who reiterated that

students view police involvement in students' unrest as an interference in the internal affairs of the university.

Also, discussants during the FGD suggested that police should be left out of students' crises management because of their ineptitude in crisis management, which often escalated students' crises rather than quell it. The FGD further denounce the behaviour of policemen in students' crises management based on the fact that students' attitude sometimes get out of hands to an extent that some scrupulous students can take the law into their hands and seize the crisis period to destroy university property and even kill and maim fellow students. This action may be precipitated by some animosity earlier harboured against the management or fellow students. It was further argued that the presence of police could instil some fears into such students and bring normalcy.

Some students argued that there is a natural hatred between students and the police due to the police poor approach to students' crises in times past. Students see police man/woman as a corrupt member of the society and that he/she could take sides with the management to further aggravate their pains. The presence of police alone irritates the students who believe that they are not criminals but free citizens who are just expressing their fundamental rights to freedom of expression.



## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter presents the summary, conclusion and recommendations as well as suggestions for further studies.

#### **Summary**

The study examined the relationship between students' crises and conflict management mechanisms in universities in South-west, Nigeria. The effectiveness of conflict management mechanisms in universities was the focus of the study. Relevant literature on the variables of the study was reviewed both conceptually and empirically. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population comprised all academic and non-academic staff and students in all public universities in South-West, Nigeria. The sample consisted of 950 students and 225 staff members selected using stratified random sampling.

Three research instruments were used for data collection. The Interview Guide used for Focus Group Discussion, Students' Crises and Conflict Management Mechanisms in Universities Questionnaire (SCCMUQ), and Quality of Students' Support Services Questionnaire (QSSSQ). The data obtained were analysed using descriptive statistics, and inferential statistics such as t-test, Chi square, Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Principal Component Analysis (PCA). The result of the analyses showed that

there were 22 occurrences of students' crises in the universities sampled during the last 10 years. The University of Ibadan recorded the highest number of students' crises during the period, while the Federal University of Technology, Akure had the lowest record of students' crises. Also, a significant relationship was established between quality of students' support services available in the universities and effectiveness of students' crises management. In addition, the study showed that the involvement of police in students' crises management does not necessarily make a difference. Based on the findings, the implications of the finding for policy and practice were identified.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Findings from the study showed that public universities in South West Nigeria had experienced at least four incidences of students' crises in the last 10 years; and that increase in school fees, poor student welfare, ban on student union and cultism ranked topmost among the dimensions of students' crises in the sampled universities.
2. The study confirms that most universities in South-West Nigeria adopted virtually the same conflict management mechanisms, viz: dialogue, effective communication, religious leaders' intervention, rustication/suspension of offenders and

conviction of offenders. While it was statistically established that federal and state universities were not significantly different in terms of frequencies of students' crises, it was however confirmed that a direct relationship exists between the quality of students' support services and students' crises management.

3. The study also reveals a significant relationship between university leadership style and the frequency of students' crises.
4. The study declares in the order of effectiveness that dialogue, effective communication between student and university management, intervention of religious leader in conflict situations between students and university management, rustication or suspension of student offenders are the most effective. While, emergency closure of university, invitation of armed security personnel (police) are the least effective means of curbing student crisis in the universities.
5. The study has established that invitation of police during students' crises does not in any way curb it. On the contrary, this action aggravates the situation.

### **Implications of the Findings for Policy**

The study found that in the last 10 years, the frequency of students' crises in universities in South-West Nigeria has greatly reduced. The current low trend of students' crises in these universities could be as

a result of a combination of many factors which may include the democratisation of university governance and the social re-engineering of students' union leaders by the various authorities through local and international conference attendance. The positive interactive effects of these democratisation and social re-engineering strategies adopted by the universities as confirmed during the FGD must have yielded positive dividends that had facilitated student-management peaceful co-existence. The implication of this is that university managers should always focus more on preventive strategies through student leadership education as a means of working on the psyche of students for enhancing their growth and development potentials.

The bandwagon effects of ban on students union, poor students' welfare services provided by university management and the attendant students' crises have been identified in the study. This could be due to the under-funding of these universities by their owners. This condition could hinder university management from providing adequate resources that will make life on campus comfortable as expected by the students. This circumstance could make conflict natural and unavoidable between students and university management. The implications of the above analysis call for more funding for public universities in Nigeria. For example, the Longe Commission of 1991 observed that the percentage budgetary allocation to education did not exceed 10% as against the

recommended 26% by UNESCO (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization). In 2007, the education sector was allocated 11% of the national budget, 13% in 2008, 8% in 2009 and 6% in 2010. University managers would therefore not be able to cope with their obligations for academic and welfare needs of students due to under-funding.

The study also observed that most of the universities in South- West Nigeria barely meet the NUC minimum requirements for students' support services in terms of provisions for bill boards, bulletins, university clinic, Guidance and Counselling unit, inter/intra campus transport system, campus safety and security. Some universities are not adequately prepared in terms of welfare services; hostel accommodation, water, power, sports and recreational facilities. The imbalance in these required structures could also facilitate grievances between students and university management. This simply implies that authorities of Nigerian universities should endeavour to provide these essential facilities to comply with NUC standard. NUC should enforce compliance of universities with its policy mandate on quality of students' support services available in the universities through its accreditation exercises.

There is also the need for university management to strengthen and empower student management structures and processes in order to give prominence to student managers in Nigerian universities.

Democratisation of university governance through accessible and effective communication channel should be evolved to encourage openness and students participation in university policy issues.

### **Implications of the Findings for Practice**

The adopted conflict management mechanisms are virtually the same for most universities in South West, Nigeria. This implies that, they are likely to have the same results and experience the same situations in managing students' crises in their different universities. These circumstances could be dangerous because observation shows that these universities are not exactly alike in all ramifications. For example, in terms of accommodation, some universities operate satellite campuses while others are 'off' campus. It can also be argued that most students' crises are situational, that is, causes of crises are peculiar to each university and differ from one university to the other.

Leadership styles of the administrator of any organisation dictate the atmospheric tone of an organisation. This is because leadership styles of the manager have a significant influence upon the operational efficiency and corporate performance of such organization. The university management styles and the frequency of students' crises are confirmed to be related in this study. Common observation from the study suggests that management styles in universities in South West Nigeria are embracing dialogue,

participatory decision-making and effective communication. It is not surprising therefore to observe in the study that the frequency of students' crises has greatly reduced during the period studied. The implication of this is that, administrative policies and decisions through a proactive administrative leadership can prevent the incidences and support of massive students' protest that could turn violent.

This study confirms that police involvement in the management of students' crises is not necessary. The implication is that the Nigerian police can still not be trusted, probably due to the way they have handled students' crises in the past. Therefore, invitation of the police should be avoided where possible, and should be made the last option where expedient. The onus is on the university management to look inward and further fortify its internal security system through provision of more equipment and training both at local and international levels.

Going by the aforementioned, the following recommendations are made:

The universities should ensure that more funds are generated internally to complement government funds in order to meet the university expenses for provision of more educational facilities and students' welfare services which usually trigger off campus crises.

In line with the findings of this study which have shown a direct relationship between leadership style and frequency of students' crises, it is being advocated that university managers should be engaged in an open and democratic leadership as a means of promoting commitment of students and disciplinary tone of the university.

University authorities should endeavour to resolve students' crises through its in-built internal structures and established procedures before they escalate beyond the competences of the managers.

In universities where not yet practised, academic newsletters and other avenues for disseminating information should be used to prevent rumours and increase administrative transparency on campus.

### **Contributions to Knowledge**

The study has contributed to the existing knowledge and literature in the following ways;

1. It has provided information on the frequencies of occurrence and severity of students' crises in Nigerian universities.
2. The study has shown that effective conflict management mechanisms can reduce the occurrences of students' crises to the barest minimum; a factor that is hinged on open and administrative leadership style.



3. The study established that democratic conflict management mechanisms employed by university authorities combined with high quality students' support services will promote peace in Nigerian university campuses.
4. The study developed workable framework for effective management of students' crises in Nigerian university.

### **Suggestions for Further Studies**

Based on the findings of this study, there are endless attractions for future research. To this end, the following suggestions are advanced for further studies:

1. This study can be replicated in other parts of the country, to ascertain its effectiveness in the improvement of students' management. This could help to harmonize the conflict management mechanisms obtained in other universities.
2. The focus of this study could also be expanded to cover more variables such as institutional size, structure and campus administrative polices as correlates of students' crises.

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## APPENDIX I

### Students' Crises and Conflict Management Mechanisms in Universities Questionnaire (SCCMUQ) (Staff/Students)

Dear Respondent,

This Questionnaire is designed to collect data on Students' Crises and Conflict Management Mechanisms in universities in South-West Nigeria.

You have been chosen as one of the participants in this Ph.D work. Kindly answer the following questions. The exercise is purely for academic purposes and your responses will be treated with strict confidence.

Thank you for your cooperation.

#### Part A: Background Information

1. Name of Institution: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Type of Institution: Federal ( ) State ( )
3. Status of Participant: Student ( )  
Student Union Official ( ) Academic Staff ( )  
Non Academic Staff ( ) Hostel Staff ( )  
Security staff ( ) Others (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Sex: Male ( ) Female ( )
5. Age: 16-20 years ( ) 21- 25 years ( )  
26-30 years ( ) 31 years and above ( )

#### For staff only

6. Work Experience: 1-10 years ( ) 11-20 years ( )  
21-30 years others (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
7. Qualification (s) with dates: WASC ( )  
Diploma (OND/HND) ( ) 1<sup>st</sup> Degree (B.Sc) ( )  
B.Sc (Ed) ( ) B.A. ( ) B.A. (Ed.) ( ) LL.B ( )  
2<sup>nd</sup> Degree M.Sc ( ) MA ( ) M.Ed ( ) Ph.D ( )  
Professional (ICAN ACA, ACII, COREN) Others (please specify)

## Part B

The underlisted are precipitating factors of students' crises in the universities as perceived by staff/students. Please tick as appropriate for your university.

Key: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

- |   | SA | A | D | SD |
|---|----|---|---|----|
| 1. Stringent University rules and regulations   |    |   |   |    |
| 2. Poor welfare services  |    |   |   |    |
| 3. Increase in school fees  |    |   |   |    |
| 4. Ban on student unionism  |    |   |   |    |
| 5. Cultism  |    |   |   |    |
| 6. Religious intolerance  |    |   |   |    |
| 7. Non-consultation with students on matters affecting them before actions are taken by the university authority  |    |   |   |    |
| 8. Inadequate recreational facilities   |    |   |   |    |
| 9. Non-release of results/ untimely release of result   |    |   |   |    |
| 10. Political interference by the government  |    |   |   |    |
| 11. Corruption in the country   |    |   |   |    |
| 12. Over exposure to various criminal/inciting activities such as pornographic and detective films through the advent of modern technology such as Internet and GSM |    |   |   |    |
| 13. University students' quest for material acquisition instead of academic distinctions due to societal expectation and values                                     |    |   |   |    |
| 14. University authority's handling of students' grievances by overlooking their demands  |    |   |   |    |
| 15. University authority's quest to meet up with international standard without adequate consideration for the capability of the system to achieve this feat        |    |   |   |    |



16. University authorities often surcharge all the students for vandalizing school property irrespective of the extent of damage on campus during crises **SA A D SD**
17. Students' crises most of the time are to show students' intolerance and ego
18. University authorities often employ inappropriate approach to solve students' crises in the university
19. Students' demand on the management most of the time are baseless and lack merit
20. Students' crises occur mostly among undergraduates

The most potent factor that is causing student's crises in my university is Serial No \_\_\_\_\_

The least potent factor that is causing students' crises in my university is Serial No \_\_\_\_\_

### **Conflict management mechanisms and Students' crises**

21. Are you aware of the conflict management mechanisms existing in your University? Yes ( ) No ( )
22. Do most students' grievances with university authority lead to crises in the university? Yes ( ) No ( ) Sometimes ( )
23. How many times have students' crises occurred in your university in the last 10 years 0 – 5 ( ) 6 – 10 ( )  
11 – 15 ( ) Above 16 ( )

**Can the following conflict management mechanisms put an end to students' crises in your university?**

**SA A D SD**

24. Dialogue between university authority and students in conflict situation
25. Emergency closure of university
26. University authority's neglect of students' grievances
27. Compromising stand on conflict issues between university authority
28. Effective communication between university authority and students
29. Participatory decision making between university authority and students
30. Parent-Teacher Association involvement in management of students' affairs
31. Invitation of armed security personnel (police) at any instances of students' conflict
32. Ban on student unionism
33. Religious leaders' intervention in any conflict situation between students and university authority
34. Setting up of commissions of enquiry to mediate in crisis situations
35. Suspension/rustication of offenders
36. Conviction of offenders

**Can the following leadership styles encourage frequent students' crises?**

**SA A D SD**

37. The authoritarian approach of the university authority to students' affairs management
38. The use of avoidance (ignoring the situation) by the university authority
39. The involvement of university students in decision making at the management level
40. University management ability to listen and tolerate divergent views from committees set up to promote students' welfare

**Effective students' crises management in the university  
Can the following mechanisms be adopted to manage  
students' crises effectively?**

**SA    A    D    SD**

41. The authoritarian approach of the university authority to student affairs management
42. The use of avoidance (ignoring the situation) by the university authority
43. The involvement of university students in decision making at the management level
44. Setting up of Tribunals and Commissions of inquiry
45. Encouraging university authority to undergo special trainings and seminars on students' crises management
46. Ban on student unionism
47. University authority's democratic approach to students' agitation instead of a laissez faire approach
48. The university authority's approach to students' crises should be based on the nature of such crises
49. The involvement of religious leaders in time of crises
50. The involvement of parents in time of crises
51. University management should ensure adequate provision of academic facilities and update the obsolete ones
52. University management and lecturers should create academic atmosphere that is free, secure and comfortable for learning
  
53. Could the invitation/intervention of the police in crisis situation be regarded as inevitable?  
Yes (    )    No (    )

If yes, state reason(s) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your cooperation.

## APPENDIX II

### Quality of Students' Support Services Questionnaire (QSSSQ)

Dear Respondent,

This Questionnaire is designed to collect data on Students' Crises and Conflict Management Mechanisms in universities in South-West Nigeria.

You have been chosen as one of the participants for this Ph.D work. Kindly answer the following questions. The exercise is purely for academic purposes and your responses will be treated with strict confidence.

Thank you for your cooperation.

#### Section C

This section assesses the level of preparedness of university in providing quality structure and schemes for managing students' crises. The scores range from 0 to 5; where 0 is Non-existent, 1 is V. Poor, 2 is Poor, 3 is Average, 4 is Good and 5 is V. Good.

S/N	Facilities/ Services	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor	Non Existent
1	<b>Counselling and Human Development Center and Service</b>						
2	Provision of functional equipment and facilities for educational services						
3	<b>University Clinic</b> Availability of operational university clinic with basic equipment for diagnosis and treatment of common diseases						

		<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Very Poor</b>	<b>Non Existent</b>
	<b>Hostel Accommodation</b>						
4	Adequacy of hostel accommodation and required facilities for university hostel occupants						
5	Adequacy of water supply with appropriate reticulation						
6	Adequacy of electricity (power) supply						
7	Functional and well maintained toilet facilities						
8	Availability of regulated food and provision of vending outlets						
9	Availability of fire-fighting equipment in the hostels						
	<b>Sporting and Recreational facilities</b>						
10	Adequacy and variety of facilities for sports and recreational activities in the university						
	<b>Communication</b>						
11	Availability of student information handbook with adequately stated procedure for seeking redress						
12	Frequent dialogue and involvement of students in matters affecting them						

13	Periodic public lectures on issues relevant to students	<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Very Poor</b>	<b>Non Existent</b>
14	Availability of bill boards, posters, bulletins and other information media						
15	Provision of suggestion boxes						
	<b>Campus Environment</b>						
16	Campus safety and security						
17	Availability of intra/inter campus transport system						

## **APPENDIX III**

### **Students' Crises and Conflict Management Mechanisms in Universities Questionnaire (SCCMUQ)**

**(For staff)**

#### **Interview Guide**

**The following questions would serve as a guide in the interview section:**

1. What are the changes that have occurred in the nature of students' crises in your university in the last one decade in terms of
  - (a) Its frequency?
  - (b) Its volatility?
  - (c) Its occurrence?
2. Are the causes of students' crises in this university the same in the last one decade?  
If Yes, why?  
If No, why not?
3. What is the trend in the consequences of students' crises in comparison with what obtained in the last one decade in the university?
4. Are the conflict management mechanisms employed by the university subjected to the whim and caprices of the government of the day?  
If Yes, why?  
If No, why not?
5. Are the conflict management mechanisms still in use in the present time in your university?  
If Yes, why?  
If No, why not?
6. What is the influence of the Vice- Chancellor's leadership style on the volatility of students' crises in the university?
7. What are the measures commonly applied by the university authority in time of students' crises in the university?

8. Which of the conflict management mechanisms could be described to be the best and why?
9. Could the invitation/intervention of security agents such as the police in students' crises management be regarded as inevitable?  
If Yes, why?  
If No, why not?
10. Could the conflict management mechanisms approach employed in handling students' grievances in your university be regarded as effective?  
If Yes, why?  
If No, why not?



## APPENDIX IV

### Cases of Students' Crises in Universities in South-West Nigeria from 1995 – 2011

S/N	Date	Universities	Reason (s)	Target to which crisis is directed
1	Dec. 1995	NANS - Most universities in the country	Murder of Ken Saro Wiwa and nine others	Federal Government
2	May 1997	LASU, UNILAG, OAU, U.I	Increase in School fees	Federal Government
3	July 1999	OAU	Increase in School fees	University Management
4	Jan 2000	UNAD	The killing of a part one student	Police
5	May 2000	OAU	Inclusion of Military in newly constituted Governing Council of Universities	Federal Government
6	July 2000	UI, UNILAG	Protest against the increase of the pump prices of petroleum products	Federal Government
7	Sept. 2000	UNILAG	Seizure of Coca Cola truck due to the ban placed on its product	Police
8	Nov. 2000	LASU	Anti-Cult campaign by students	Student Cultists
9	Feb. 2001	LASU	Increase in School fees	University Management
10	Feb. 2001	AAU	Increase in School fees	Vice Chancellor
11	May 2001	OOU	Activities of cultists on campus such as killing and disturbances	Student Cultist
12	April 2002	LASU	The murder of a student named Mufutau by Cultist	Student Cultists
13	May 2002	UI	Introduction of Maintenance fees	University Management
14	May 2003	OAU	Hike in chargeable fees/ Suspension of four students Leaders for allegedly destroying the university property	University Management
15	Jun. 2003	UI	Cultism activities	Student Cultists

16	Feb. 2003	LASU	Increase in petrol prices	Federal Government
17	Jun. 2003	OOU	Feud between students and the Vice Chancellor over cult activities	Vice Chancellor
18	Aug. 2003	UNILAG	Students protest increase in school fees	Management
19	Sept. 2004	UNAD	The plan by the State Government to replace the Acting Provost of the college by a Catholic Priest	State Government
20	Jan. 2005	UNILAG	Protest against hostel privatization	University Management
21	Feb. 2005	UNAD	Increase in School fees	University Management
22	July 2005	OOU	The alleged killing of police by members of the OPC	Host Community
23	Feb. 2006	UNILAG	Corruption in the Country	Federal Government
24	May 2007	OAU	Students demanded for the Necessary one-week lecture free week	University Management
25	Sept. 2008	OOU	The alleged killing of a student by indigenes	Host Community
26	Oct. 2008	UI	Increase in School fees	University Management
27	Feb. 2009	Most Universities in the country	NANS directive to spur students into action on matters that directly affect them	Federal Government
28	May 2009	UI	Protest over the lingering ASUU strike	Federal Government
29	July 2009	OAU	Student activism	University Management
30	Aug. 2009	AAU	Protest over continuous ASUU strike	Federal Government
31	Sept. 2009	LASU	Internal disputes involving student and management	University Management
32	May 2010	UNILAG	Alleged killing of some students by police	Federal Government
33	Aug. 2010	UI	Religious inclination	Christian Students
34	Aug. 2010	UNAD	Academic issues	University Management

35	Dec. 2010	LASU	Protest over the continuous feud between ASUU chapter of the school and the State Government	State Government
36	Jan. 2011	OOU	Protest the unending strike by their lecturers	Federal Government
37	Feb. 2011	OAU	Increase in tuition fees	University Management
38	April 2011	OAU	Increase in chargeable fees	University Management

**Key of Abbreviations:**

- UI = University of Ibadan
- UNILAG = University of Lagos
- OAU = Obafemi Awolowo University
- LASU = Lagos State University
- OOU = Olabisi Onabanjo University
- AAU = Adekunle Ajasin University
- UNAD = University of Ado-Ekiti (now EKSU, Ekiti State University)
- NANS = National Association of Nigerian Students

Source: All African.com/stories