A COMPENDIUM OF RESPONSE TO

Student Unrest

IN AFRICA UNIVERSITIES

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in Africa Universities

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Research Justification

Student activism has been a crucial force for social change in universities. To this end, students around the world have been at the forefront of movements to promote democracy and human rights. In recent years, student activism has been used to fight social inequality, funding problems, balancing political ideologies, promises and quest for identity, especially among the subalterns, people of colour formerly colonised and those facing systematic, epistemic, cognitive, and structural exclusion. While the fight at first value appears noble, desirable, and doable, the praxis of student activism in the 21st century among some countries in the Global South, most especially in Africa, presents ambivalence marked with thuggery, arson, and criminality. Universities in Africa have become unsafe sites for students, academics, and other stakeholders. It is against this background that the book was conceptualised with the intention to problematise destructive student activism. The book documents various case studies in the African continent on how students have practised, re-imagined and reconstructed to ensure the relevance of universities in peace-making initiatives. Thus, this research-based book argues that in the midst of student unrest within universities, alternative situational responses are available, doable and achievable, underpinned with critical consciousness, geared to make universities relevant to meet the demands of the 21st century's sustainability needs.

The chapters presented in this research-based book were galvanised firstly, by placing a call for abstracts under the management of the two Editors, where proposals for the chapters were requested and peer-reviewed. Suitable abstracts were considered, and authors were requested to submit full articles within a given time. Upon the submission of the full chapters through the publisher's online management system, Editorial members scrutinised the submissions to identify suitable and thought-provoking chapters. At this stage, some chapters were

recommended for peer review, while some were rejected. Before the peer-review process, a plagiarism test was conducted through Turnitin by the publisher, alongside the editors and analysed with the help of an academic integrity specialist, to ensure all chapters are free from plagiarism. Chapters within the considerable similarity index were accommodated and sent for double-blind peer review, undertaken by independent qualified reviewers across universities in Africa.

After the peer-review process, some articles were rejected, while some were accepted with minor corrections and some with major corrections. For those with minor and major corrections, the review reports, including reviewers' comments, suggestions, and corrections, were sent to the respective authors within a given timeline and with a mandate to return the chapter and a table of responses (changelogs). These were critically scrutinised with consideration to the reviewers' report. Acceptance letters were issued to the authors for the accepted chapters, and those rejected were also informed accordingly. However, the editorial process was conducted through the publisher's online management system, which is open and transparent, with opportunities for authors to track the progress of their submissions.

In conclusion, this book provides a comprehensive overview of the problem of student unrest in universities. It offers some practical solutions that can be implemented to help prevent, manage and quell such social unrest.

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Cias T. Tsotetsi

Foreword

Student activism has a long history, in higher education in particular. In South Africa, as in other countries in the region, some of whom are covered in the chapters in this volume, student activism was a pivotal part in events which has shaped history in those countries, as was the case in other countries, such as the Penguin Revolution in Chile the past decade. However, despite student activism being an important part of higher education in South Africa and other countries in Southern Africa, student activism has never proceeded to a high position on the Higher Education research agenda (see Wolhuter, 1997, 2014). Accounts and reflections on activism have largely been limited to university rectors and deans relating their personal experience of student activism (e.g. Habib, 2019; Herman, 2020; Jansen, 2018). Welcoming as these may be, the historic and present role (where student activism and the call for the decolonization of higher education are intertwined) of student activism in higher education asks for serious consideration of this topic by scholars of higher education. It is in this regard that this book fills a very concern-raising lacunus.

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CHAPTER 1:
DECOLONISING THE STUDENT-MANAGEMENT DICHOTOMIES IN SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES: CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

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Abstract

Student unrest is unabated in South Africa, with numerous consequential deficiencies in the actualisation of the set pre-determined goals and objectives of the universities. Some of these consequences are disruption of classes during the protest, burning of private and public properties, shutting down universities as measures to curtail unrest and even loss of lives. Observations, experiences, and literature linked the problem to disharmony and disunity among the university stakeholders, most especially between the students and the university authorities. This study is underpinned by decoloniality as a philosophy to enhance peace in the system. The study is located in a transformative paradigm and designed using participatory research, which involves student leaders, university management staff, university security personnel and lecturers from three selected universities in South Africa. Semi-structured interviews were used to elicit participants' information, and thematic analysis was deployed to make sense of the data. The study found that the lack of solidified

structures, effective passage or communication flow, and dichotomies from government funding are major challenges hindering the effective management of student unrest. The study also found that inclusive decision-making and effective communication, and the creation of a dialogical forum between the university stakeholders are possible solutions. Therefore, the study recommends that universities ensure inclusive decision-making and effective communication in the university system and that universities should also create a forum where dialogue among stakeholders will be entertained.

Keywords:

Decoloniality, student unrest, universities, inclusive decision-making, effective communication

INTRODUCTION

Student unrest is not a new phenomenon in Africa, it is a continental problem, with protests taking place in countries such as Nigeria, Ghana and Kenya, Zimbabwe, and South Africa, among others. In the 1970s and 1980s, student protests played a key role in the struggle against military dictatorships in some West African countries, apartheid in South Africa (Balsvik, 1998; Hari, 2014; Momoh, 1996; Nkinyangi, 1991), and recently, students have been at the forefront of movements for democracy and human rights in countries such as Burkina Faso, Kenya, Sudan, among others (Engels, 2015a; Engels, 2015b; Fomunyam, 2017; Handique, 2020; Harsch, 2009). In South Africa, the student protests of 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 to 2022 have given way to a new wave of protests over issues such as racism, Gender-based violence (GBV) and the need for decolonisation, tuition fees, payment of allowance and bursary allocations, including security issues across campuses and their environs (Anjum & Aijaz, 2014; Calitz & Fourie, 2016; Dayimani, 2021; Laurore, 2016; Mahali & Matete, 2022; Mavunga, 2019; Mutekwe, 2017; Myers, 2008; Olagunju *et al*., 2022; SABC News, 2021; Vıatonu *et al*., 2018). Though student protests

can be a positive force for change, the negative effect of student unrest seems to be more than the positive disposition in terms of university stability and or instability arising from the unabated student protests. However, the literature cited above confirms that student unrests across many South African universities cause a great disruption to the functionality of universities and the lives of those who rely on them, which is the essence of this study.

The management of student protests has become increasingly challenging in recent years. This is due to several factors, including the growing use of social media to organise protests (Hoves & Dube, 2022), the burgeoning cost of university education (Calitz & Fourie, 2016), the general feeling of dissatisfaction among students across the country, inadequate facilities and resources, and discrimination against minority groups (Alexander, 2010; Rao & Wasserman, 2017)). In some cases, students have even taken to protesting against symbols of colonialism, such as statues and monuments (Holmes & Loehwing, 2016; Rao & Wasserman, 2017). In South Africa, the management of student protests has been made more difficult by the fact that many universities are still struggling to come to terms with their transformation from, for example, institutions that previously served the needs of white students to ones that are more representative of the country's black majority. One can also argue that this is because many of these institutions are still reeling from the effects of colonialism and are yet to truly decolonise their campus culture. As a result, students are often frustrated by the lack of progress being made in terms of equality, equity and inclusion. This process has often been fraught with tension and conflict which has made the management of student unrest complex, given its multi-faceted perspectives. Therefore, it requires a careful balancing of the often-competing interests of students, universities, governments and society at large.

Observations, personal experiences and literature show that the majority of students interest during and after the protest is linked to allegations

relating to systematic coloniality, allegedly inflicted by the university authorities or its managerial process. The students do not also hide their momentary calls for university decolonisation. Various students' protest between 2021 and 2022 in universities such as the University of the Free State, Walter Sisulu University, University of KwaZulu-Natal, University of Pretoria, Durban University of Technology and Nort-West University revolved around the quest against perceived marginalisation, student deregistration, an inclusive management system that could accommodate the students in the decision-making process and provision of modern educational facilities such as computers, internet facilities, among others (Bhengu, 2021; Dlamini *et al.*, 2021; Mahlangu, 2021; Majozi, 2022; SABC News, 2021). Based on this, there is an urgent need to decolonise university management and its managerial process that creates a more inclusive, participatory decision-making process, promoting social justice and equity and encouraging critical development of students who can constructively challenge the status quo. In order to address this, the place of decoloniality as a theoretical framework for this study is imminent.

Theoretical framework

Decoloniality is a term that has been used in recent years to describe the process of undoing the legacies of colonialism (Chandanabhumma & Narasimhan, 2020; Kerner, 2014; Zembylas, 2022). In Africa, decoloniality has been taken up as a way to resist continued forms of imperial control and to assert African agency and autonomy from the western hegemony and practices (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015; Ndlovu, 2013; Manyike & Shava, 2018). This has also been taken up within university education as a way to challenge Eurocentric curricula and pedagogies (Stein, 2019; Zembylas, 2018). Although, decoloniality is a complex and multi-faceted concept. The term can be used to describe individual and collective efforts to resist colonial oppression, challenge Eurocentric ways of thinking, and promote social justice. This is an

important part of the African experience that cuts across the education system, and it has the potential to transform university education.

On the other hand, Zembylas (2018) and Posholi (2020) perceived decoloniality as an approach to knowledge and power that challenges Eurocentric, colonialist thinking. It is based on the belief that knowledge should be produced from the perspectives of those who have been marginalised by colonialism. Decoloniality also challenges the idea that there is a single, universal way of knowing. Instead, it recognises the importance of multiple ways of knowing and being in the world (Ahenakew, 2016). That is, the decolonial movement is not just about correcting past injustices; it is also about creating new ways of understanding and relating to the world. Though it is an ongoing process that requires continuous effort and engagement, there seem to be many different paths towards understanding and or conceptualising decoloniality. There is no one way to do it; it is an unfolding process that looks different to everyone based on people's focuses and backgrounds. However, what seems unanimous and important in the concept is the commitment to critically examining power structures and challenging colonial assumptions and narratives.

However, decolonising the university system is a process of removing the colonial structures and systems that perpetuate inequality, leading to so many anti-oppression and anti-colonial movements such as student and staff protests. This includes everything from the curriculum and its implementation process that accommodates more voices from less powerful stakeholders such as students and other subordinates (Heleta, 2016; Le Grange, 2020). Based on this, one can argue or propose that a decolonised university is a socially just university that accommodates everyone, regardless of their background and identity, and promotes an equitable and inclusive institution that celebrates diversities. For example, a decolonised university adopts more inclusive and culturally relevant curricula, diversifies its faculty and staff, and creates spaces for critical dialogue about race, colonialism, and imperialism.

This approach is relevant to this study since it is about undoing the legacies of colonialism and creating more equitable and just societies. Therefore, it is important to create a university system that recognises the power dynamics created by centuries of colonial rule, which will help address the root causes of unrest, which are often related to inequalities that have been perpetrated by the "powerfuls" in the university system. Adopting a decolonial approach will also offer a vision for a more inclusive and just society, which can be appealing to students who are seeking change and consequently reduce their agitating urges and practices. This will not only promote relative peace and tranquillity in the system, but will create more equitable and just societies.

Main objective

Based on the above analysis, the following main objective was formulated to direct the study.

- That study aims to decolonise the student-management dichotomies that will ensure relative peace and tranquillity in the South African university system.

Sub-objectives

In order to address the objective of the study, the following two sub-objectives were raised to guide the study:

- The study explores the major challenges of managing student unrest in South African universities.
- The study investigates the possible solutions as fundamental ways of decolonising the spate of student unrest in the universities.

METHODOLOGY

This section deals with the methodological process that was employed in conducting this research. The method includes the choice of research

approach paradigm, the research design, participants and the selection method, the instrument, and the method of data analysis, including ethical considerations, was discussed.

Research Paradigm and approach

Transformative paradigm was selected. The transformative paradigm is appropriate because the study intends to transform the space of social unrest in the university system into peace and tranquillity. This is also consistent with the use of decolonial perspectives, which is also an agent of change. The transformative paradigm is a way of thinking about change and emphasises the need to transform both individuals, communities and the systems (Jackson *et al.*, 2018; Romm, 2014). It is based on the belief that change must be holistic, which requires the people facing the problem to come up with creative solutions that address the root cause. This argunment informs the choice of qualitative research approach of the study. The qualitative research approach is a scientific method used to gather data through direct observation and interactions in natural settings (Becker *et al.*, 2002).

This type of research is often used in research that deals with human beings and social phenomena because it allows researchers to study people in their natural environment and understand their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours (Mohajan, 2018). The qualitative research approach has helped researchers answer questions about why people behave the way they do, what factors influence their behaviour, and how they think and feel about various issues (Kincheloe, 2011). This also assisted the researcher in getting into the mind of the people facing the problem at hand, that is, the participants, to share their challenges and possible solutions based on their thought and experiences. This aligns with the argument that the qualitative research approach has the ability to provide rich, detailed data about participants' lives and experiences (Astin *et al.*, 2014).

Research design and method of data collection

This study adopted participatory research as a research design for the study. Participatory research design is a kind of research where the people that face the problem become co-researchers and participants in the process of finding solutions to the problems (Bergold & Thomas, 2012; Finn, 1994). Participatory research has been used in various fields, such as education, health, community development, and environmental issues (Calderón, 2004; Kondo *et al.*, 2019; Simonsen *et al.*, 2017). These designs may be applied in various ways according to the field in which they are used, but all participatory research designs have some common elements. These common elements include the belief that those who are affected by a problem are best equipped to find solutions to that problem, that researchers work with community members to identify problems and develop solutions, empower community members by giving them a voice in the research process and through qualitative data collection methods, such as interviews and focus groups, among others, to gather data (Godfrey-Faussett, 2022; Kanyamuna & Zulu, 2022; Sattler *et al.*, 2022).

This informs the choice of data collection method. The instrument used to collect data was interviews. Semi-structured interviews were used to elicit information from the participants, not only because it resonates well in implementing qualitative research and participatory research design, but because it enables researchers to structurally inquire from the participants to share their experiences, views and thoughts regarding the problems and how the problems are to be solved. This is in line with Ruslin *et al*. (2022) that a semi-structured interview enables a coherent and pre-determined question for understanding issues and problems.

Participants and selection of participants

The participants for study include twelve participants equally distributed across three universities in South Africa. The universities were randomly selected across three provinces. They are student leaders, university

management staff, lecturers and security officers –- three student leaders, one from each selected university; three management staff, one from each selected university; three lecturers, one from each selected university, and three security personnel, one from each selected university. Student leaders were considered important for the study because they are mostly the instigator of student protests and have experience with the problems of the study. The management staff was also the major target of the students when they protest; the lecturers also share the effect when students engage in protests and boycotted classes. On the last note, security personnel is also important, because they are the ones responsible for protest control on the university campuses. The purposive sampling technique was used to select the participants because they all possess the needed characteristic and experiences needed to provide solutions to the problem. This is in line with the argument that purposive sampling is a type of non-random sampling that involves selecting units (people, organisations) for inclusion in a study based on specific characteristics, which allows the researcher to select participants who are most likely to provide information relevant to the research question (Denieffe, 2020).

Method of data analysis

This study adopted thematic analysis to make sense of the data. Thematic analysis is a method of analysing data, usually in the form of interviews, observations and focus group discussions that focuses on identifying and understanding recurring themes within the data (Keane *et al.*, 2012). Themes are typically analysed and interpreted in relation to one another and can provide insights into the overall meaning of the data. Thematic analysis is a method of analysing qualitative data by identifying and coding common themes and patterns that emerge from the data and can be used to understand the experiences of participants (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). This method enables researchers to analyse data based on themes and how the research question or the objectives were structured. This also enables the researcher to

understand how the themes relate to one another and what they might mean concerning the research question and or objectives. In the actual sense, six steps of doing thematic analysis of Braun and Clarke (2006) were adopted. The steps include familiarisation with data, identifying initial codes, searching or identifying themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming the themes, and then writing the reports. These steps were followed, and the report is presented below.

Ethical consideration

This issue of research ethics was adequately followed and observed. The study was approved by the ethical committee of Walter Sisulu University with protocol number: FEDREC 03-11-21. The consent of the participants was sought for; they indicated their interest in participating in the study willingly after a concerted effort was made to explain the research, the process and the approaches employed to them. Their freedom to withdraw from participating at any time should they feel uncomfortable was granted, and their identities were ascertained and protected. Their responses were coded in such a way that no one could link their statement to them, and their statements were represented with pseudonyms such as SL1, SL2 and SL3 and student leaders; MS1, MS2 and MS3 for management staff; L1, L2 and L3 for lecturers and SP1, SP2, and SP3 for security personnel.

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This section presents the data analysis based on the principles of thematic analysis as indicated above. The data was presented following the research objectives. Each objective has two themes based on the participants' statements. This is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Thematic representation of data based on the research objectives

Main Objective: The study aims to decolonise the student-management dichotomies that will ensure the presence of relative peace and tranquillity in the South African university system.	
Sub-objectives	**Sub-themes**
1. To explore the major challenges of managing student unrest in South African universities.	1. Structural and communication laxities. 2. Haphazard release of student funding.
2. To investigates the possible solutions as fundamental ways of decolonising the space of student unrest in the universities	1. Inclusive decision-making and communication. 2. Creation of a dialogical forum.

Objective 1, theme 1: Structural and communication laxities

The data collected shows that universities are not mostly operating within an established structure, most especially a structure that is put in place to handle, manage, prevent or control student unrest before it degenerates into protest and crisis. These arise in the participants' statements as indicated below.

> *SP1: "Student unrest is not solely caused by students' mistakes; the institution does not respond to the needs of students. When students send their complaints (faculty-related issues) to the management, no-one attends to their issues, leading to student protest and unrest."*

> *SP2: "There is no uniformity in dealing with students from different campuses of the same institution, because other campuses implement resolutions while some don't, and that exacerbates the spirit of strikes."*

> *SL1: "Student issues that are not taken seriously by the institution where recurrent operational problems are left unattended – no plan in place to*

correct the recurrent problem of students who will have debts even though they were aided by Funza Lushaka bursary."

SP3: *"Gap between students and their departments leads to the escalation of matters that could have been dealt with at a departmental level."*

MS1: *"Impatience within the system leads to strikes, because students fail to appreciate that to correct things is a process that takes time, most especially when there is no structure on the ground to curtail students' excesses."*

The structure shows in the statement by SP1, who alleges that university management does not respond in time to student issues, which mostly leads to protests. This is also similar to SP2's argument that there seems to be a lack of uniformity in dealing with students from different campuses of the same university. This may indicate the fact that there is no established structure responsible. The statement of SL1 confirms that there are no plans in place to correct or control student problems, most especially with financial support for students who are in debt. SP3's statement shows that there is a relationship gap between the students and their departments, which makes it difficult for many issues related to students to be addressed at the formative stage. The statement of one of the management staff, MS1, also confirms that there are no structures on the ground to curtail students' excesses.

Note that on the structure, communication is also deficient as indicated in the following participants' statements:

L1: *"So now, this type of communication or the power issue as, as per university you'll find that if the university does not communicate certain things in some campuses, students may fight with leadership in various campuses only to find that solely the decision has been taken by the institution, but the leadership in various campuses may not necessarily know about that."*

> *L2:* "But also, they fail to communicate with students to give reasons as to why the fees are going up. They even fail to communicate with their management so they can advise their management to say okay, look, as we are raising fees, these are the reasons; please explain to the students."

> *MS2:* "The other one will also be the issue of communication and power. Right, the university has got three campuses. Of the three campuses, the power is based in Bloemfontein. On its own, it has some challenges in any other campus that is not where the resolutions of the institution may cause students to protest."

The above statement from L1 shows that communication and power differentials are one of the major issues causing unrest. The issue here is that the majority of universities in South Africa have more than one campus with different levels of managerial systems. This, according to participants L1 and L2 is a challenge, because most of the reasons for students' unrest may have been settled by the institutional management, but other campuses are not aware before it becomes an issue. This still boils down to deficient student management structures in the system. However, the issue of communication is not only between the management to students, but also it is ineffective among the management of various campuses within a university.

Objective 1, theme 2: Haphazard Release of Students Fundings

From all indications, the issue of student funding from various funding sources, especially government bursaries and financial aid, is a challenge to managing student unrest in the university system. The below statements attest to this.

> *SL2:* "Most students come from low-income families. Therefore, they may not be able to afford to pay for their studies, because it is expensive. The regular and unnecessary hike on fees leads to anger in students, and they protest."

L3: "A sort of dependency on the government and given the socio-economic status of the most students in abundance as well as entitlement Entitlement so meaning that the government does not fulfil its role, now because students are not able to go to Pretoria where the government or funding matters are being settled or effected, what they do is the nearest target becomes the university so I would rather say the issues of NSFAS (National Student Financial Aid Scheme) funding and Funza Lushaka are the ones that really cause, cause uh these tensions."

MS3: "The same applies to the issue of the allowances that they need to get because now the government also gives them money for travelling and [stutters] I mean travelling and accommodation. So, if the government fails to fulfil that, students resort to the university as the nearest target."

MS1: "Let us take, for example, NSFAS (National Student Financial Aid Scheme). Most of our strikes in this university and other universities at the beginning of each year are occasioned by NSFAS, which the management normally does not have control over."

L1: "Uh, I think honestly, and truly, the biggest problem that students have is with money. It's not, yes there might be a crisis now and then, teaching and learning, but usually, the problem is with funding. And then when they don't get the funding, they claim that they are hungry and they cannot do their work."

From SL2's statement above, the issue of funding is long, because the students, most especially those from low-income backgrounds, find it difficult to pay their fees, which makes them depend so much on the government findings. On the part of the government, they have made the students be dependent on the funds and feel entitled whenever there is a delay in the payment of those funds and other allowances. The statement by MS3 also supports the fact that lack or delay in the release of students' allowances contributes to the challenges of managing student unrest. In the same vein, MS1 also mentioned the issues of government funding, such as NSFAS, as a major reason for student protest. This is because the release of the funds to the students, every

year used to come late, and students seem to suffer to meet up with university registration and other payments due to the delay. The statement by L1 also confirms that when students do not get this money, they get hungry, which probably affects them.

The following statement from SL3 also shows that students lack some educational resources because of lack of money, which may have disadvantaged them one way or the other.

> **SL3:** "Students need enough resources to study and complete their courses but there is no money to get them. Resources like computers, lab equipment, furniture, residential areas, and others, must be made available for students in the universities. However, lack of resources erupts violence and anger between students and university management, leading to unrest."

> **L2:** "I think the biggest problem is with funding. It becomes tricky because funding is not controlled inside the university, but it becomes a problem when they say they are going to deregister students because they haven't paid while waiting for the funding."

> **SP2:** "They have not been funded, and registration is closing. They are frustrated because they got the funding approved; it is just that the money is not there. And then again towards June, July. June, July there, beginning of the second semester, it's the funding again. They will be waiting for their funds, and they did not receive their book allowance. They have not received their food allowance. They are hungry and cannot do their work, so I think the funding part is the main reason for this student unrest."

> **SL1:** "The other one is consistently increasing schools and lack of financial aid to students; you find that these institutions raise their fees on an annual basis."

However, this issue of funding, according to all participants, is not controlled by the university, but the students used to see the university as the only contact to the government agencies responsible for their funding. Therefore, when they are having an issue, they result in

protesting against their university. The statement by L2 confirms that the university does not control the funds, but students fight the university, most especially when the university plans to deregister them as a result of that. This is also confirmed by SP2 that this situation is used to make students frustrated and leads to protests. On another note, the persistent increase in tuition fees by the university also contributes to the challenges of managing student unrest in the university, because it also contributes to students not having enough funds to cater for their schooling.

Objective 2, theme 1: Inclusive decision making and communication

Based on the principles of participatory research, participants are made to also propose solutions to their problems as indicated in objective two. Among these solutions is that universities must ensure inclusive decision-making and effective communication among all the stakeholders, including the funders. See the below statements.

> **SL1:** *"The institution should avoid taking decisions before consulting with students. We also need to be informed on time about any decisions taken by the institution before the rule is applied. This will allow students to digest and voice their concerns regarding the rule and revisit it for amendments before it is implemented."*

> **L1:** *"The university management must always ensure they carry the students' leaders (since they are students' representatives) along in school fees decision-making and not solely making school fees decisions."*

> **SL2:** *"I suggest that there must be adequate representation at departmental and faculty levels, that is, student representatives and student societies must be active."*

> **MS1:** *"I think a more collaborative approach will assist with funding. For me, if funders have challenges or they want to cut, dispense or give students what is due to them, I would rather say the information to both*

the university and students will be reported such that they are aware of, or in any case will be in terms of what they will do because of one, two and three."

SP1: *"We need a committee that consists of these stakeholders such as funders, the university management and the students, in that way, you are touching the three key spaces."*

L3: *"I think communication is important, but the other thing I think this is about is having a committee that also has people from other campuses which includes students in the small decision-making committee. That way, they can raise the challenges they have about with hostels or computer labs in ways that can be mitigated peacefully."*

In finding solutions to the challenges of managing student unrest, SL1 suggests that all stakeholders must be carried along in the decision-making process. This is not also far from the recommendation by L1 that university management must carry students along in their daily university operations. In the statement by SL2, there must be an adequate representation of students at the departmental and faculty levels to enable students to get involved and know the happenings. MS1 also recommends collaboration among the stakeholders, which is also a way to ensure inclusivity in the management process. In the same vein, SP1 and L3 propose a committee system that comprises all stakeholders with the statement that communication is also important in the process of ensuring effective management.

The statement by SP2 below also confirms the need for an effective communication system among the stakeholders. That is, there must be communication between the university and the students to address the issues bothering the students at all times.

SP2: *"There must always be communication between the university and the students. When there are genuine situations, students request the university management to urgently respond to, the university management should do that in time without delaying such communications."*

> **MS3:** *"Funders need to communicate to both students and the university, in that way, it becomes easier, so we don't get caught up with student protest; when both are aware, we can prepare and try to manage students on why they do not get their allowances."*

> **SL3:** *"Communication is key, and you need to be organised. If you are talking money, we know that students need to register in January. The university should liaise with external funders and tell them when registration starts and ends. Would you be able to? Would you have funded students at that time? If they say no, we will provide letters to the students that they can produce as proof that they did get the funding. In that way, if the funding is not there, they get a letter of assurance that they are going to get the funding if it is still in process so that they can use that to register."*

As recommended by most of the participants, communication cannot be underestimated in the process of managing student unrest in the university system. This is supported by MS3, who said that the funders need to communicate to both the university and the students on the funding status of the students to avoid student protests and other conflicts. In the analysis by SL3, the importance of communication in the process of managing or controlling student unrest is also made known. From the participants' statements, one can argue that inclusive decision-making and an effective communication system are one of the solutions to the challenges of managing student unrest.

Objective 2, theme 2: Creation of a dialogical forum

Apart from inclusive decision-making and communication, the creation of a forum that will allow effective dialogue among the university stakeholders on issues that could lead to student unrest, is also prescribed by the participants. See the statements below:

> **SP1:** *"I am proposing more of a collaborative approach of solving them not from one particular point but the multiple points I have indicated where all stakeholders are brought together to dialogue at one table to find solutions."*

L3: "If management is prepared to dialogue with them, to sit around, for instance, the management can even call what is called an Imbizo in Xhosa, a gathering of many people. They can be called in an institutional hall where staff members, including management, are prepared to dialogue on issues."

L2: "There should be an established forum to talk about these normal problems that normally bring them to strike action. Let there be a space to listen to what they have to say, let there be discussions, you know? Just discussions with the student leadership."

SL2: "I think the possible solution would be to have some kind of forums. More especially with the student leadership wherein there will be some kind of "Indaba" (dialogue) where students are brought in because most of the time, students feel that they are not being listened to."

From the statement by SP1 above, the place of collaboration where stakeholders should be brought together to dialogue on issues is sacrosanct. This is also supported by L3, that university management should be prepared to dialogue with the students at all times. In the same vein, L2 also suggests that there is a need to establish a forum where issues bothering students could be talked about to find lasting solutions to them. The statement by SL2 also suggests that there is a need for a forum that includes student leaders for dialogue. This is not also far from the statement by SP3 below.

SP3: "Engage the students to let their leadership understand, and then they will be able to communicate that to the student body, hopefully. Not just student leadership but university open forums like student affairs, where people will be invited from outside to inform students some of these things better such as the issue of funding from NSFAS."

SL1: "Create a platform, invite people that need to come and talk, have forums to talk, have some "indabas" (dialogue) with us, have some activities that make students understand that you understand their concerns and you want to solve them."

> **MS1:** *"I still direct it to the institution to say that we must communicate and dialogue with students and adopt new technology management methods."*

The above statements by SL1 and MS1 agree that there is a need for a dialogical forum where the critical stakeholders will be engaged in solving student unrest problems. This means that the creation of a dialogical space as a solution is common to the statement by the participants.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This finding is presented based on the objectives and the sub-themes that emanated from the data presented above. That is, objective 1 came up with two findings, while objective 2 came up with two findings as well.

Objective 1, finding 1: Structural and communication laxities

From the above analysis, the study revealed that there is a weak structure in universities to respond to issues related to student unrest. Not only that, the lack of effective passage or communication flow in the university system, is one of the challenges responsible for the student unrest in the university system. This finding is consistent with Cheloti *et al*. (2014) that the communication gap is one of the propellers of student unrest in Kenya schools. In the findings of Okolie and Etaneki (2020), it was also discovered that ineffective communication contributes to the persistent student unrest in universities in Nigeria. Therefore, this finding does not contradict what happens in some other African countries, which calls for serious university transformational agenda through the decolonial movement.

Objective 1, finding 2: Haphazard release of students fundings

Based on the above analysis, the study found that government funding is one of the major challenges that is making student unrest difficult to manage in South African universities. This is not limited to the delay in payment of government bursaries to the students, students' inability to understand how the funders work and the inability of the universities to educate students on the funding systems. This is also consistent with the findings that inadequate fundings and financial aids contribute to why students protest and cause riots in tertiary instructions (Anjum & Aijaz, 2014; Muli, 2012). This also confirms the recommendation that government should ensure that university education is adequately funded (Wangenge-Ouma & Cloete, 2008).

Objective 2, theme 1: Inclusive decision-making and communication

Based on the above analysis, the study found out that for peace and tranquillity to reign in the university, devoid of student unrest, the place of inclusive decision-making and effective communication is not negotiable. That is, inclusive decision-making and effective communication are found as one of the solutions that could be used to manage student unrest in the university system. This confirms the views of Zembylas (2018) and Posholi (2020) on the need for decoloniality, which is an approach to knowledge and power that challenges Eurocentric, colonialist thinking and is based on the belief that knowledge should be produced from the perspectives of those who have been marginalised. This finding also complements the need for decoloniality as a process that accommodates more voices from less powerful stakeholders such as students and other subordinates (Heleta, 2016; Le Grange, 2020). Not only that, but Luescher-Mamashela (2013) also supports the finding that students should be included in the decision-making process of their institutions.

Objective 2, theme 2: Creation of a dialogical forum

Based on the above analysis, the study found out that the creation of dialogue between the university stakeholders, including students, is needful and becomes one of the solutions to the challenges of managing student unrest. This dialogical forum is expected to comprise all stakeholders in charge of student funding, both from outside the universities and within. This will give voices to the voiceless and recognise the marginalised, which is in line with the decolonial agenda as conceptualised by Dalvit (2021). This is also consistent with the findings by Watson *et al*. (2017) that the space of dialogue in the workplace is significant to conflict management because dialogue give room for conflicting parties to come together and share their stories to find solutions. The findings by Mariene (2012) also confirm that lack of dialogue is responsible for student unrest in many universities; therefore, they must practise the use of dialogue in solving problems.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study has actualised its proposed objectives, which was to decolonise the space of student unrest in the university system by looking at the challenges of managing student unrest and its possible solutions. The study, based on the above findings, concludes that the major challenges hindering the management of student unrest which equally propel student unrest, are lack of solidified structures and effective passage or communication flow, and delay and or irregular government funding. On the other hand, the solutions, according to the above findings, are inclusive decision-making and effective communication and the creation of dialogue between the university stakeholders, including students. These solutions become a point of recommendation that universities in South Africa must create an inclusive platform where students and other stakeholders are involved in the university's decision-making process and establish an effective communication system, where information is passed to the subordinate without distortion. Secondly, the universities

should also create space to welcome dialogue between the university stakeholders, including students, towards peaceful university operation.
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CHAPTER 2:
INVOLVEMENT OF SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION LGBTIQ+ INDIVIDUALS IN STUDENT ACTIVISM

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Abstract

Protests in various institutions of higher education by students are common practices. However, students who are usually seen as being fully involved and even leading in some cases are heterosexual students. The limited availability of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex queer, plus (LGBTIQ+) students may be related to pronounced rates of violence and discrimination against LGBTIQ+ people. These are also happening in many countries, including South Africa, despite constitutional support of LGBTIQ+ individuals' rights. This paper presents the involvement of South African higher education LGBTIQ+ individuals in student activism. The present study was based on oppression and social justice theory, as LGBTIQ+ students are usually oppressed communities with implications for social justice attainment. The researchers followed a descriptive phenomenological design. The study participants comprised 21 LGBTIQ+ individuals recruited using a modified snowballing technique. Data were collected using WhatsApp text messages and analysed guided by Colizzi's steps for analysis of descriptive phenomenological studies. Data indicated variation in how LGBTIQ+ individuals involve themselves in student activism. The variation includes full involvement, non-involvement and conservative way of involvement. Findings further suggest that most students involved fully in student activism are members of the Student Representative Council. Those who are uninvolved or engaged in the conservative way of involvement are afraid of stigma, discrimination and victimisation. There is a need for the active protection of LGBTIQ+ students in higher education to ensure they enjoy the same rights as all other students.

Keywords:

Activisim; descriptive phenomenology; institution of higher education; LGBTIQ+ students, oppression and social justice theory, South Africa

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This chapter presents the involvement of LGBTIQ+ students in activism in South African higher education institutions. Student activism is one of the common practices in higher education. Student movements on campuses mostly initiate student activism, and they have played a historical role in reshaping the culture and the climate of universities to ensure equity of treatment and inclusion of all minorities. This is particularly true in the Global North, where there has been a rise in student organisations for sexual minorities within universities (Garvey, Sanders & Flint, 2017). Universities in African countries are lagging due to the stigma, prejudice, and discrimination that members of the LGBTIQ+ community still experience at universities and in communities at large.

In this chapter, the researchers introduced the general experiences of LGBTIQ+ individuals on campuses, especially concerning student activism. The following sections of this study will highlight the theoretical framework, research design, context, participants, data collection, data analysis and presentation of the findings. In the finding section, the researchers present varied ways of being un[involved} in student activism. The un[involvement] includes being fully involved, uninvolved, and using alternative ways of activism, especially when related to their rights as LGBTIQ+ students on campus. Finally, the researchers discuss their findings in relation to existing literature and recommend ways to improve the involvement and safety of LGBTIQ+ people in student activism.

LGBTIQ+ STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Several instances globally indicate the involvement of LGBTIQ+ students in protest. For example, the University of Rhode Island (URI) in Rhode

Island, United States, has a history of intimidation and harassment and has a generally negative campus environment as far as minority groups such as LGBTIQ+ students are concerned. Alumni and current students indicated that the university has a homophobic climate (Pantalone, 2011; Blomquist, 2012). The university is reported to have been in the top ten most homophobic campuses in the United States twice (Pantalone, 2011; Blomquist, 2012). Many LGBTIQ+ students feel that the university administration has not done enough to combat discrimination to ensure their safety on campus. In response, the student leaders engage in protests, fighting for the fair treatment of LGBTIQ+ students, students with disabilities, and racial minorities (Blomquist, 2012).

The student leaders later received a written response that the administration would address the issues raised. However, at some point, the students felt that the university had not done enough. Consequently, on 8 September 2010, students staged a peaceful sit-in protest in the 24-hour library area on the campus. They indicated that they would continue the protest until the university met its requirements of improving the university environment for LGBTIQ+ students, students with disabilities, and racial minorities (Blomquist, 2012).

Besides the University of Rhode Island, Johns Hopkins University (JHU) in Baltimore, Maryland, also engaged in the protests for transgender students. Several people gathered at Johns Hopkins University to protest the transphobia that students experience in respect of university policies (Limpe, 2021). The protest resulted in policy reforms to promote gender inclusivity in the university by affirming the various names and pronouns of students (Limpe, 2021).

Apart from the international universities, South African universities also engage in protests for LGBTIQ+ individuals. On 9 March 2016, the Rhodes Must Fall exhibition, "Echoing voices from within," was disrupted by members of the Trans Collective of the University of Cape Town (UCT), a student-led organisation that prioritises the rights of transgender,

gender non-conforming, and intersex students (Hendricks, 2016). The Trans Collective staged dramatic nude protests that disrupted the event and prevented the exhibition from being opened to the public (Hendricks, 2016). The complaint was that only three out of the more than 1,000 images used in the exhibition featured a trans person's face. Consequently, the exhibition was shut down (Hendricks, 2016). However, the Must Fall movements have been accused of removing and eliminating voices of marginalised sexual and gender identity groups such as queers (Davids & Matebeni 2017). This was shown by excluding gay students from discussions (Andrews, 2020).

It was not only marginalisation that the gender and sexual non-binary students experienced, but also physical attachment, which was evidenced by the assault of a lesbian student by one of the male students during the 'Fees Must Fall' movement in South African universities (Lujabe, 2016).

The above situations indicate that not all students are free to participate in such activism because of the institutional culture. Institutions of higher learning have a culture that is either inclusionary or exclusionary, depending on how people are classified. For example, the (non)inclusion is based on the individual's colour of skin, gender, class or even sexuality (Preston & Hoffman, 2015). Cornell, Ratele and Kessi (2016) highlighted that students in higher institutions of learning experience some form of discrimination based on race, class, gender and sexuality. A lot of harm is still directed toward gender non-conforming individuals at several institutions of higher learning, particularly in African countries (Mogotsi, Nduna, Mavhandu-Mudzusi, & Mthombeni, 2017). Despite improvements for LGBTIQ+ students in higher education, marginalising policies and an exclusionary climate are still evident on campuses (Broadhurst, Martin, Hoffshire & Takewell, 2018). Most South African higher education institutions have an exclusionary culture owing to the apartheid history attached to them. As much as there is intersectional

exclusion, there is also exclusion due to people's sexual orientation and gender identity (Preston & Hoffman, 2015).

Studies indicate that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer LGBTIQ+ individuals experience prejudice and discrimination in communities (Mwaba, 2009; Ould & Whitlow, 2011; Mavhandu-Mudzusi & Sandy, 2017). The experience is also rolled out to the institution of Higher Education. LGBTIQ+ students in higher education institutions are frequently victimised. The victimisation includes rejection, physical abuse, and, in some cases, murder. These experiences not only tend to lead to the isolation and exclusion of LGBTIQ+ people but also cause them to hide and reject their sexual orientation (Mavhandu-Mudzusi & Ganga-Limando, 2014; Mavhandu-Mudzusi & Sandy, 2017). According to Garvey *et al*. (2018), the climate at higher education institutions may negatively influence students' academic success. Furthermore, their experience prevents them from enjoying the environment and participating fully in campus activities.

This was documented by authors such as Hare (2019) and Kiguwa and Langa (2017), mentioning that some of the student activism happening in the universities to address rape incidences at the universities, also illuminated the cries of gender and sexual non-binary individuals who experienced discrimination on campuses. However, the fear of stigma and discrimination forces LGBTIQ+ students to hide their status and try to convince others that they are straight. A sense of belonging plays an important role at higher education institutions in promoting students' attainment of their full academic potential and their participation in various activities.

The above situations and experiences may impact LGBTIQ+ individuals' participation or visibility in student activism. A limited number of studies focus on the experiences of LGBTIQ+ students who participated in such activism.

ABOUT THIS RESEARCH

This research explored the involvement of South African higher education LGBTIQ+ individuals in student activism. The study sought to answer the following question: How is the involvement of LGBTIQ+ individuals in student activism?

Theoretical framework

The study was guided by the social oppression theory narrated by Hardiman and Jackson (1997). Hardiman and Jackson (1997) state that social oppression occurs when one social group, whether deliberately or unintentionally, abuses another social group for its own gain. Social oppression differs from the simple brute force, in that it is a complex system involving ideological control as well as dominance and control of the society's social institutions and resources, resulting in a position of privilege for the agent group, relative to the target group's disenfranchisement and exploitation. Institutions, including government, industry, education, and religion, are notable shapers of social oppression. In an oppressive institution run by individuals or groups who promote or collude with social oppression, the execution of institutional laws and processes has oppressive implications (Hardiman & Jackson, 1997). The framework involves acceptance and resistance stages (Hardiman & Jackson, 1997). The acceptance stages denote the internalisation of the dominant culture's thinking system, whether conscious or unconscious. The messages regarding the nature of their group identity, the superiority of particular social groups, and the inferiority of LGBTIQ+ groups have been "accepted" (Hardiman & Jackson, 1997). The resistance stage involves a heightened awareness of oppression and its effects on LGBTIQ+ groups. The major goal of most targeted persons (LGBTIQ+) at the resistance stage is to break the cycle of collaboration and purify their minds of oppressive beliefs and attitudes. During the resistance stage, targets frequently learn that they

have become proactive and possess certain power, albeit not of the same type or quantity as members of dominant social groups.

In the context of this chapter, the LGBTIQ+ are oppressed by society (oppressor) because of their gender and sexual orientation. This may be referred to as social oppression, where LGBTIQ+ students are harassed and discriminated. The acceptance stage in this book chapter is the LGBTIQ+ organisations or initiatives. The resistance stage is when LGBTIQ students engage in student activism to voice their concerns about their oppressive beliefs and attitudes in higher education institutions (Hardiman & Jackson, 1997).

Design

The study followed a qualitative research approach focusing on descriptive phenomenology design. Descriptive phenomenology is most relevant in exploring and describing individuals' lived experiences (Christensen, Welch & Barr, 2017). The choice of descriptive phenomenology was considered most relevant as the study aimed to understand the lived experiences of LGBTIQ+ regarding involvement in student activism. As there are different traditions of descriptive phenomenology, this study focused on the tradition of Edmund Husserl. Husserl's (1989) descriptive phenomenology is underpinned by the fact that the human's lived experience shapes individuals' understanding of their life world (Christensen, Welch & Jennie Barr, 2017; Dahlberg, Drew & Nystrom, 2001) When referring to this study on LGBTIQ+, it may mean that, the students experience in higher education institutions shape their decision regarding involvement in student activism. Husserl's descriptive phenomenology in focuses on the principles of natural attitude, intentionality, and phenomenological reduction.

Husserl considers the natural attitude or a person's view and perception of life or context through previous incidences and experiences as the individual conclusion of what the world looks likes and how things are

supposed to be (Dahlberg, Drew & Nystrom 2001; Hemberg, 2006). This principle of how previous experience and knowledge determines a person's reality of the world around them, may be very relevant to LGBTIQ+ individuals, where the experience of discrimination and violence in the different situations on campus may also shape that involvement in student activism may lead to a similar experience. For example, some LGBTIQ+ students have experienced stigma and discrimination while engaging in sports activities on campus. The second Husserl principle relevant to this study is intentionality, which focuses on the consciousness of something and how the person consciously reacts to that something (Gurwitsch, 1984). In this study, it may mean the conscious knowledge of the presence of violence, and even mob violence against LGBTIQ+ which may make people always think that when heterosexual students are gathered, there might be some attack on LGBTIQ+ individuals, though, for some, it might be an opportunity for all the students' rights including gender and sexual non-binary individuals. These types of consciousness will influence the involvement of LGBTIQ+ individuals in student activism.

RESEARCH CONTEXT

The study was conducted in the public universities of South Africa. South Africa has twenty-six public universities (Universities South Africa [USAf], 2019) and there are profound inequalities in how LGBTIQ+ individuals are treated. Rural-based universities highly discriminate against LGBTIQ+ individuals, making it difficult for most students to come out (Netshandama, Mavhandu-Mudzusi & Matshidze, 2017). On the other hand, like Witwatersrand, Pretoria, and Cape Town, located in big cities, the LGBTIQ+ have opportunities to live openly and join the vibrant campus LGBTIQ+ movements (Hendricks, 2016, Nduna Mthombeni, Mavhandu-Mudzusi & Mogotsi, 2017). However, although some universities seem to be inclusive of LGBTIQ+ students, there is still evidence of homophobia and transphobia coupled with discrimination

(Davids & Matebeni, 2017; Lujabe, 2016). The stigma and discrimination against LGBTIQ+ individuals and the silencing of their voices exist, regardless of the 1996 Constitution of South Africa, which promotes non-discrimination based on gender and sex. The Constitution advocates for freedom of association and expression (Human Rights Watch, 2011).

Participants

Participants of this study were LGBTIQ+ individuals from different public universities in South Africa. To recruit participants, the researchers used snowballing technique. The principal investigator (the first author for this chapter), because of her involvement in LGBTIQ+ research, has contact with three LGBTIQ+ individuals involved in one of her collaborative research projects, with researchers from various universities in South Africa. The principal investigator called the three LGBTIQ+ individuals via cell phone (as the study was conducted during the COVID-19 period) and explained information about the study. She provided them with the following inclusion criteria: (i) being a member of the LGBTIQ+ community, (ii) being 18 years and above, and (iii) having been to one South African university for at least two years. The three initial links were requested to recruit and refer other participants who meet the criteria to the principal investigator or send their contact numbers. The referred participants were given information about the study, including confidentiality issues, voluntary participation, and withdrawal from the study at any time if they felt they did not want to continue. For those who agreed to participate, an arrangement was made regarding a suitable time to call for conducting the interview. Their continuation in the study was considered consent to participate in the study.

Twenty-one participants of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations from different universities were recruited and participated in the study. The number was determined by category saturation. Pseudonyms are used to ensure confidentiality. The institution's names are not mentioned to protect the institution and the possibility of linking

participants to the university. The biographical data of the participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Participant biographical data

Pseudonym	Age in years	Identify as	Number of years on campus
Vhonani	27	Lesbian	4
Mmbidi	25	Gay	4
Matto	23	Queer	4
Malindi	24	Transgender man	4
Jane	22	Lesbian	3
Shengi	24	Transgender woman	4
Majola	21	Lesbian	2
Mogale	24	Gay	5
Piet	24	Transgender woman	4
Anna	28	Transgender woman	5
Mavhungu	25	Transgender woman	4
Lucky	23	Transgender woman	3
Phila	23	Transgender man	4
Meiki	24	Lesbian	5
Maina	24	Bisexual woman	3
Zodwa	26	Gay	4
Tsidi	26	Transgender man	3
Shony	27	Queer	4
Lindy	33	Intersex	8
Metsi	30	Lesbian	6
Kack	26	Transgender man	5

Data Collection

Data was collected through telephonic individual unstructured interviews from 28 April to 5 May 2022. The reason for using telephonic interviews was that the study was conducted during the fourth wave of COVID-19 infections in South Africa, which started on 15 April 2022 (Statistics South Africa, 2022). Telephonic interviews are also time and cost-effective as travelling to various universities would have demanded more travel time and transport fees. The fact that most of the universities in South Africa are now using blended learning methods, mostly online than in contact classes, it would have also been difficult to reach some of the participants.

The interviews were recorded using cell phones following participants' permission. Each interview was initiated with questions related to biography, such as age, preferred identity, and their number of years on campus. These were followed by the following central question: May you kindly share your experience participating in student activism since you joined the university? This was followed by probes depending on the responses. The probes assisted the researchers in ascertaining aspects of the natural attitude, intentionality, and phenomenological reduction in line with Husserl's descriptive phenomenology. Each interview lasted between 25 to 45 minutes.

Data Analysis

Before data analysis, all the audio recordings were shared among the team of researchers for verbatim transcription and preliminary data analysis guided by Colaizzi's (1978) seven steps of data analysis for descriptive studies. Each researcher had three transcripts. In step one, the researchers individually read each transcript several times to understand the entire content. During this stage, all the researchers were requested to bracket their thoughts, feelings, and ideas, which could arise based on their previous experiences regarding the involvement of

LGBTIQ+ students in activism (Colaizzi, 1978). In the second step, each researcher highlighted all significant statements from transcripts related to participants' responses on participation or non-participation in activism and their reasons for such choices. In step three, each researcher formulated the meanings of the significant statements. The researchers categorised relevant statements and checked their meanings to develop themes (Beck, 2019).

In step four, the formulated meanings were sorted into categories, clusters of themes, and themes (Beck, 2019). In step five, all the researchers met to share and discuss their categories, clusters of themes and themes, which led to a proper description of emergent themes concerning the study phenomena, which is the involvement of South African higher education LGBTIQ+ individuals in student activism (Maher, Hadfield, Hutchings, & De Eyto, 2018). In step six, the researchers described the fundamental structure involvement of South African higher education LGBTIQ+ individuals in student activism. In the final step, study findings were validated by the principal investigator by calling some of the participants and sharing the emergent themes and the supporting quotes as part of member checking to ensure the results' credibility (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell & Walter, 2016). The final findings were composed of three emergent themes with relevant subthemes.

Findings

Results are presented according to the emergent themes along with different subthemes and relevant quotes from participants' narratives in relation to the involvement of LGBTIQ+ students in activism. The emergent themes are (i) Active involvement in activism, (ii) Non-involvement in student activism and (iii) Involvement in indirect means of activism.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN STUDENT ACTIVISM

Participants raised their involvement in student activism and their experience thereof. The intention for involvement is to ensure that, as part of the student community, they should fully support the general university activism. This is shown in the following participant's statement:

> **Vhonani:** *I am fully involved in the activism as we are part of a recognised political structure. I picket with all other political structures when fighting for students' rights. When fighting for common students' rights, we are united even with other political structures.*

Though other LGBTIQ+ students were fully involved sometimes, they became targets of suspension, which made them reluctant to participate further:

> **Mmbidi:** *I was involved in the riots with other students. In fact, I led the activism. But in the end, I was the only one suspended from the university. But this did not stop me. When I was admitted to the other university, I told myself that I would only focus on the battles for the benefit of LGBTIQ+ individuals and nothing else.*

Participants mentioned that during their participation, they end up becoming targets. The other challenge is that sometimes, during their involvement in the activism, they are forced to be voiceless due to stigmatisation.

> **Matto:** *It is not easy for us to be fully involved in the mass student activism. I was involved in one. However, the moment I raised my voice to add our demand as LGBTIQ+ individuals, I was instructed to shut up and informed that we do not need "Stabane" to say anything. I was informed that I must first sort out my confusion of not knowing whether I am a male or female before trying to solve real-life issues.*

The same experience was uttered by Malindi as follows:

> *Being a member of the LGBTIQ+ community is like being cursed. Instead of other students supporting our activism, they will use discriminatory words against us when they pass. It is so painful. This makes us suffer in silence, because involvement in activism worsens our situation.*

Besides the stigmatisation which occurs when LGBTIQ+ students initiate the activism to air their discontentment, heterosexual students support the perpetrators of violence against the LGBTIQ+ community.

> *Jane: At a time when one of our members was assaulted, and the security did nothing to assist her; we wanted to strike against the security. Instead, the university's heterosexual students supported what was done to the lesbian women and mentioned that if we continued to strike, we would worsen the situation as they were just tolerating us as LGBTIQ+ students. If we are willing to see fire, we should continue with our fights.*

Besides the negative treatment from heterosexual and cisgender students, there is limited support from LGBTIQ+ individuals, which weakens their voices.

> *Shengi: We initiated the campaign to voice our dissatisfaction to the university management because of how we are treated as LGBTIQ individuals. Only a few of us were involved; the rest of the LGBTIQ+ students mentioned they didn't want to be victimised; therefore, they could not join us. They mentioned that they have not come to school to fight. This always weakens our voices because we are divided.*

Even when some LGBTIQ+ individuals are engaged in student activism, a lack of support by other LGBTIQ+ communities weakens their voices, as indicated by Phila:

> *Phila: Unfortunately, we, as an LGBTIQ+ community, are divided. We were once approached by one of the lecturers involved in the LGBTIQ+ project regarding gender-neutral toilets. Instead of us agreeing, other individuals were in support of the idea, whilst others opposed*

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> *mentioning that because they are not completely "out" and using the toilets will out them. Others were afraid that they could be targeted. Therefore, the university ends up not having a gender-neutral toilet.*

The lack of unity among the LGBTQI community is attributed to divisions amongst class, gender, sexual orientation, and race.

> **Mohale:** *Participation in protest was also determined by race, gender, class and culture. For example, queer people were seen as generally well-off, not knowing that some might be from poor backgrounds. Being poorer and having to deal with a whole lot of issues, such as sexuality and access to higher education, requires the economic needs they cannot meet.*

Some LGBTIQ+ students participate in order to show face while not fully engaged.

> **Majola:** *You need to be there to show that it is a collective protest. We would go there and sing their slogans and chants. I was not involved in violent behaviour and disruption. All I could do mostly was sing their songs to demonstrate having placards. That is where I remember my involvement (Majola, 21 years, Lesbian).*

However, what is evident is that mostly those LGBTIQ+ individuals who are members of the Student Representative Council (SRC) are involved in the activism. Even though they are involved, the focus is on the rights of all students, not raising any concern specifically for the LGBTIQ+ community on campus.

> **Vhonani:** *I realised that nobody is going to fight for us. What I did, was mobilise the students to sign the petition to allow the LGBTIQ structure to be recognised as one of the university structures. What we needed were 100 signatures. It was not easy, but we ended up being recognised. After the recognition of the LGBTIQ+ structure, at least I was nominated to be part of the student representative. I was able to voice our cries as an LGBTIQ+ community on campus and get recognition. We were able to push for the rights of LGBTIQ+ individuals among other students'*

demands and even submit a memo to the principal demanding that the lecturers victimising LGBTIQ + individuals are taken to task.

Though there is evidence that some LGBTIQ+ students are involved in the activism, there are participants who are not involved at all in the activism.

NON-INVOLVEMENT IN STUDENT ACTIVISM

The non-involvement of LGBTIQ+ students is the second emergent theme from data analysis. The participants highlighted several reasons for their non-involvement in activism. One of the reasons for non-involvement is fear of being victimised and assaulted, as indicated by the following participants.

> *Mogale: We never make any activism for our rights as LGBTIQ individuals. Even picketing we do not do. We are afraid of what will happen to us, as you know how our university students regard gender and sexual diversity.*

> *Mavhungu: Whenever there is activism on campus, I ensure that I leave the campus. I fear they might come and pull me out of the room to join them or even assault me for not joining them. When students are involved in activism, they are so ruthless.*

For some participants, the fear is based on previous experience when engaging in a riot.

> *Piet: When I was still in secondary school, I did not mind being involved, but the moment I came to the tertiary institution and saw how one of the activisms related to not wanting a gay lecturer changed to a riot against all LGBTIQ+ individuals on campus. They wanted all the gender and sexual non-conforming individuals to leave the campus because they were a disgrace to the university and community. I told myself that I would never engage in any of the students' activism, even if the course was to fight for our rights (Piet, 24, years, Transgender male).*

Besides the fear of victimisation, participants like Lucky are afraid of being arrested and going to prison.

> **Lucky:** *I never participated in any student arrest. I was very much afraid. My greatest fear was what would happen to me as a trans woman in prison if I got arrested. Whenever there was a strike, I would stay at home until the strike was completely over.*

Due to the above negative experiences, LGBTIQ+ resorts to an alternative means of activism which still ensures their rights as LGBTIQ+ students are recognised.

INVOLVEMENT IN ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF ACTIVISM

Results indicate that LGBTIQ+ students are involved in passive or indirect activism. They want the university to recognise their presence and also their needs. Instead of staging formal activism, which can affect the day-to-day running of the institute of higher education, they indirectly show their dissatisfaction through approaches such as prides.

> **Meiki:** *What we are involved in is fighting for our rights. Instead of staging mass activism, we usually host the awareness in the form of pride. During the pride, we usually invite LGBTIQ+ people from the community to increase visibility. The surprising part is that the heterosexual students will just be there as spectators but not supporting us.*

Besides hosting and engaging in prides, some participants mention the use of awareness campaigns to ensure that people understand the LGBTIQ+ community.

> **Vhonani:** *It is not easy to be involved in activism as LGBTIQ+. People are not willing to support us. At the time, we wanted to host an anti-stigma and discrimination campaign, and we were expected to work with HIV/AIDS peer educators and health promoters. The moment they saw us putting up our tent, they all decided to pack away their tent and the*

boxes and return to the HIV/AIDS unit, mentioning that they could not work with gays and lesbians. The HIV/AIDS coordinator had to conduct an emergency diversity management workshop for the health promoters and peer educators so that they could understand gender and sexual diversity. They only joined us during the second day of the campaign.

The awareness campaigns are hosted in different forms, including hosting sports tournaments:

Phila: Instead of being involved in activism, our focus is on increasing awareness-raising. When we saw high stigma and discrimination on campus, we hosted a sports tournament called 'Reabapala'. Kicking stigma and discrimination against LGBTIQ+. The official opening of the campaign was attended by the college management, the deputy minister of sport, members of student representative councils, and students from our university and neighbouring institutions of higher education. During the formal event, we had speakers from different sections, followed by signing a pledge to ensure that there was no stigma and discrimination against LGBTIQ+ individuals. The formal event was followed by sports tournaments such as soccer, netball, and indoor games, including chess. By doing so, we are raising awareness and indirectly fighting for our rights as an LGBTIQ+ community (Phila, 23yrs, Transgender male).

Some participants highlighted that instead of engaging in activism, LGBTIQ+ students organise dialogues or workshops in order to inform people about sexual and gender diversity.

Maina: We only host workshops and dialogues on gender and sexual diversity and invite academics who are experts on LGBTIQ+ topics to come and present. By doing that, we are trying to make the university aware of our needs. We use such platforms to recommend what we want the university to do. We make the university know our needs and usually see some of the implementations in the form of policy and university statements on homophobia and transphobia.

Some students mention that they usually host debates with heterosexual students.

> **Zodwa:** *I am the leader of debates. I usually organise debates with heterosexual students and LGBTIQ+ students. As a team, we make sure that the heterosexual and cisgender students take the side of defending LGBTIQ students and vice versa. This usually contributes to attitude change as each person needs to utter supportive points to win.*

Participants mentioned that involving in academic symposiums is another way they ensure that their pleas are heard as LGBTIQ+ students.

> **Mukondi:** *I also participated in a symposium on destabilising heteronormativity in institutions of higher learning, which was a project in partnership with the Universities of South Africa, Venda, and Witwatersrand. The symposiums are hosted at the University of Venda and involve the university staff, students, and members of local communities, traditional healers, leaders, and youth.*

Besides the symposium, LGBTIQ+ individuals mentioned that they use academic writing to ensure that their voices are heard by the greater academic community in the form of special journal issues and the contribution of chapters in books.

> **Shony:** *As an LGBTIQ+ group, we do not like to fight. We only need to be recognised and respected like all other students. Instead of fighting, I am involved in Net10. I am involved in a network of ten universities where a group of academics works with students to run workshops, symposiums, and seminars around the campus and write special issues and book chapters. I was part of a special issue on Destabilising Heteronormativity published in 2017 by the South African Journal for Higher Education. I am also involved in a book project: (Un)silence LGBTI experiences and identities in institutions of higher learning in South Africa. This is how we advocate for our writing.*

Instead of engaging in total activism, some participants mentioned picketing to ensure that their demands as LGBTIQ+ students are met:

> *Lindy: We do not stage the university activism. What we usually do if we want our needs to be heard is that we write petitions to relevant people, such as the transformation manager, to request a transformation. For example, when we were frustrated about being discriminated against in the bathrooms because we could not enter the male toilets and the men would not understand a lady in the male toilets. When we enter female toilets, there is no urinal, so it becomes an issue. We started to request structural reform so that the university could provide us with gender-neutral toilets (Lindy, 33 years, Intersex).*

The other participants indicated that they would rather protest on social media due to fear of participating in physical activism than participating directly in protests on campus.

> *Kack: LGBTQI+ students participate in social media conversations on issues that affect LGBTQI+ individuals, not in actual protest. This is an interesting development observed recently through the use of the internet. Movements in students protest do not represent the needs of LGBTQI+ students.*

Due to obstacles experienced, when LGBTIQ+ individuals arrange awareness campaigns or advocacy, they end up piggybacking on existing events.

> *Vhonani: Instead of being fully involved in the activism and bringing the university into disrepute, we did indirect campaign piggybacking on the other campaigns such as HIV AIDS programmes. I remember when we planned to stage the campaign on anti-stigma and discrimination against LGBTIQ+ individuals. The university management turned down our application at the last moment. What was so painful was that we were using external funds to host the campaign. After the rejection, we devised a plan with the HIV/AIDS coordinator to focus on anti-stigma and discrimination against HIV/AIDS, people with disabilities, and other discriminated individuals. We then had our tent where we provided information about the LGBTIQ+ community and requested people to sign a pledge to support LGBTIQ+ individuals and desist from stigma and discrimination.*

In extreme conditions, when LGBTIQ+ individuals realise their voices are not heard and their rights are continuously violated, they lobby for support from established organisations.

> **Metsi:** *Sometimes, it does not help to be involved in the activism as LGBTIQ+ students. What help is hosting an advocacy campaign and involving other established structures? In order to gain recognition, we invited Amnesty International and people from the Gender Commission. They were able to listen to our pleas and then inform university management. That way, we were safe, knowing that the law was on our side. However, after that, we were targeted by the university structures and management, mentioning that we were dragging the name of the university.*

DISCUSSION

This study's findings indicate no uniformity in how LGBTIQ+ students engage in activism on campus. Some students engage fully in student activism, while others try not to be engaged. Some use safer methods of engaging. The study indicates that there are participants who actively engage in student activism in the fight for the common rights of all students. Students mentioned that for their safety, they joined the activism and participated mainly in singing the struggle songs, chanting, and holding placards, because their non-involvement may create another problem.

This involvement of LGBTIQ+ students was also documented by Hendricks (2016), highlighting the involvement of multi-gender organisers of the student movement at the University of Cape Town. However, the student involvement is because of the participant's status as a member of the students' representative council. The same was documented by Beukes and Francis (2020), highlighting that at the height of the Fees Must Fall movement, there was a call to address issues of

gender equality at universities through the inclusion of LGBTIQ+ members in student affiliations.

Though all the participants staged the activism, it seems that the LGBTIQ individuals ended up being the ones who were targeted and suspended. Besides the suspension, the LGBTIQ+ individuals were discriminated against by the heterosexual students. Therefore, the engagement of LGBTIQ+ individuals in general university activism compromises their safety as they are stigmatised, discriminated, and even called derogatory names. The findings of stigma and discrimination against LGBTIQ+ students on campus concur with Blomquist (2012) and Limpe (2021), indicating homophobia and transphobia by the university community. Even in the generalised students' activism, such as the "Fees Must Fall" where most of the university students in South Africa were involved in the mission of eradicating the payment of registration and study fees, there was an indication that the voices of marginalised sexual and gender identity groups were excluded from the discussions (Davids & Matebeni, 2017; Andrews, 2020).

Stigma and discrimination during the activism hinder some LGBTIQ+ individuals from participating in student activism. The fear is real as documented by Lujabe (2016) that during the Fees Must Fall activism, the leader abused a lesbian activist. Though the students may have issues that may need to be solved through activism, LGBTIQ+ students choose to suffer in silence as they know they will not be supported. For example, when lesbians were assaulted on campus in one of the South African rural-based universities in front of security officers, and the LGBTIQ+ students started activism, the heterosexual students supported the perpetrators instead of supporting them.

Though some LGBTIQ+ students are members of the Student Representative Council, they fail to initiate activism, specifically focusing on the concerns of the LGBTIQ+ community on campus, but usually piggyback on the general university activism because of fear of being

stigmatised and discriminated. Sometimes, the activism will not even be supported by the university management; thus, LGBTIQ+ students target the existing and approved fight for individuals' rights, such as the rights of people with disabilities or living with HIV and then ensure that the LGBTIQ+ rights are also advocated for.

Some LGBTIQ+ students, such as Malefo, took it upon themselves to spearhead the fight for their rights by mobilising other students to sign a petition to ensure that the LGBTIQ+ structure is recognised as one of the official organisations on campus, which qualifies to have a representative on Student Representative Council. That enabled the LGBTIQ+ representative also to raise the LGBTIQ+ related issues at the university level. The involvement of student leaders in the fight for the rights of LGBTIQ+ is also documented by Blomquist (2012), indicating that the student leaders at the University of Rhode in the United States led the protest demanding the improvement of the campus environment for LGBTIQ+ students, students with disabilities, and racial minorities.

Though sometimes LGBTIQ+ students are involved in general student activism, it becomes difficult for them to raise their challenges as the organisers of the activism, usually specify aspects that should be raised. For example, if the focus is on student registration, they will not entertain any other issue even though it is a major concern to LGBTIQ+ students. Same was documented by Beukes and Francis (2020), mentioning that the LGBTIQ+ students could not raise their gender and sexuality-related challenges as the dominant male heterosexual students consider those as secondary, which could not be included as part of the demands.

Although some LGBTIQ+ individuals strive to be involved in student activism, some ensure that they are not involved at all. Their reason for not being involved includes fear of stigma and discrimination. Fear makes LGBTIQ+ students reluctant to raise their issues or even picket in demand of their rights. This fear is based on previous experiences where the LGBTIQ+ individuals fighting for their rights provoked heterosexual

students who demanded that all gender and sexual non-binary students be eradicated from their university. Such experiences make some LGBTIQ+ students even move out of campus whenever there is activism for fear that they may end up being targets of the activism. For other LGBTIQ+ individuals, non-involvement is extended beyond the university environment to the hostile prison environment in case they are arrested. This fear indicates the systemic transphobic and homophobic societal structures.

The other reason for the non-involvement of LGBTIQ+ in student activism is the lack of unity among this community, where other students believe that involvement in the activism is not their responsibility while theirs is only to study and obtain their degrees. The issue may also be related to the fact that some of the LGBTIQ+ are in the closet, and being fully involved in the activism, especially focusing on LGBTIQ+ specific issues, may expose their gender identity and sexual orientation. The lack of unity was also highlighted in the fight for gender-neutral toilets, where some LGBTIQ students in one of the universities were divided on the issue of having gender-neutral toilets, which hindered its implementation as some students felt that having gender-neutral toilets may lead to victimisation.

Despite the challenges that hinder the LGBTIQ+ students from fully engaging in activism and ensuring that their needs are attended to, the LGBTIQ+ students have alternative ways of indirectly engaging in peaceful activism. One of the alternative ways is hosting the LGBTIQ+ prides on campus. The prides are used to increase the LGBTIQ+ visibility as the participants are not only university students but also community members, including celebrities. During prides, most heterosexual students come out to watch, which becomes a way of sensitising the university community about gender and sexual diversity.

Apart from prides, LGBTIQ+ host formal awareness campaigns. However, the awareness campaigns focusing specifically on the LGBTIQ+

community are usually not supported by fellow students or even by the university management of some institutions. This makes the LGBTIQ+ community piggyback on authorised campaigns such as HIV/AIDS awareness. Combining LGBTIQ+ campaigns with other programmes corroborates the finding by Blomquist (2012), who stated that the LGBTIQ+ protest was combined with the demands for the rights of students with disabilities and racial minorities.

However, some institutions fully embrace those campaigns. For example, in one of the open distance learning universities, the students host an annual sports tournament called Reabapala (We play) that focuses solely on fighting stigma and discrimination against LGBTIQ+ students. The tournament is joined by university students regardless of their gender identity and sexual orientation. The event is supported by both the management and student representative council.

In some higher education institutions, LGBTIQ+ students initiate workshops, dialogues, and debates to sensitise the university community about the LGBTIQ+ population. The creative manner of assigning LGBTIQ+ individuals to defend gender and sexual binary identities and assigning cisgender and heterosexual students to defend the LGBTIQ+ increases the understanding and respect of all identities and orientations.

Other means used by LGBTIQ+ individuals to ensure that their voices are heard is through participating and presenting during symposiums so that the general community who attend those events could end up having more understanding of the LGBTIQ+ community. As the university management also attends the symposiums, the situation enables LGBTIQ+ individuals to raise their concerns or plead for their rights in a non-threatening environment.

Besides presenting during the symposium, some LGBTIQ+ individuals voiced their experiences and challenges in higher education by writing

formal articles published in recognised peer-reviewed academic journals such as the South African Journal for Higher Education. Some also use social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and national radio and television to raise the issues affecting LGBTIQ+ students on campus. These platforms also assist LGBTIQ+ students in joining online LGBTIQ+ movements.

Though LGBTIQ+ students mostly voice their needs indirectly, they sometimes actively demand their rights through petitions to ensure their needs are urgently attended to. An example is when the students wrote a petition to management demanding gender-neutral toilets in one of the universities. Though the matter demanded structural change, the university ended up implementing it. This example may signify that if LGBTIQ+ students actively participate in activism that focuses on what they need, it can be done, especially because all the universities do not want to appear transphobic or homophobic. This attests to what happened at John Hopkins University, where the protest resulted in a policy change to affirm various names and pronouns to promote gender inclusivity (Limpe, 2021). The same positive response to LGBTIQ+ demand has been documented in South Africa, where the Trans Collective of the University of Cape Town, succeeded in stopping an exhibition that was non-representative of trans-individuals (Hendricks, 2016).

CONCLUSION

This chapter outlines the involvement/non-involvement of LGBTIQ+ students in protest actions at South African higher education institutions. It further highlights the response of the institutions and their impact on students' lives. The study shows that higher education institutions have an institutional culture, which is either inclusionary or exclusionary, depending on how people are identified or classified, for example, based on gender identity and sexual orientation. Most South African

institutions of higher learning have an exclusionary culture towards LGBTIQ+ individuals. This culture affects how LGBTIQ+ individuals engage in students' activism.

Depending on the situation, some LGBTIQ+ individuals participate fully in activism, especially if the agenda is affecting all the students, such as students' registration. However, raising the specific issues affecting LGBTIQ+ individuals has become difficult. In the process of participation, some LGBTIQ+ individuals end up being discriminated against, making them reluctant to engage in future activism. However, with some participants, issues of non-engagement are related to their fear or mindset of considering student activism as a non-priority.

The positive aspect is that, though LGBTIQ+ individuals are not fully engaged in the activism, they have constructive ways of ensuring that their rights are not continuously violated and that their presence is still felt. However, this study's findings indicate that the South African higher education environment is not yet friendly for LGBTIQ+ individuals regardless of all the policies, which advocate for no discrimination and challenging homophobia, transphobia and heteronormativity. The situation calls for continuous monitoring of higher education institutions to ensure that the policies are put into practice and meet harsh sanctions for violation of such. This may assist in creating an LGBTIQ+ friendly environment where LGBTIQ+ individuals would enjoy the benefits of being students like all other individuals, including freely engaging in student activism.

CHAPTER 3:
THE CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF VISUALLY IMPAIRED UNIVERSITY STUDENT ACTIVISTS IN A CYBERNETIC ZIMBABWE

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Abstract

This theoretical chapter analyses the challenges and prospects of the participation of university students with visual impairment in online activism. The COVID 19-induced lockdowns digitalised student activism. Students joined the world in advancing their goals on social media platforms like WhatsApp, Twitter, TikTok, YouTube and Facebook. However, most of the digital platforms used by activists appear not to be user-friendly to a constituency of students with visual impairments. The digital gadgets are scarce and expensive, whilst the social media platforms offer visual services that make accessibility difficult for those with visual impairments. This chapter uses a collective action theory to uncover the participation of students with visual impairment in digital activism. The chapter argues that students with visual impairments have been forced to hibernate from online activism, because they are not able

to participate due to social, political, economic and operational challenges posed on them by this cybernetic activism. However, through stakeholder collective action, the participation of this constituency of students in online activism can be improved. In fact, online activism devoid of hate speech and cyber bullying can be friendly to those with visual impairment, because it does not demand or result in physical demonstrations which may lead to violence and injuries. With improved and accommodating technology online activism can open locked ingresses for students with visual impairment.

Keywords:

Students, visual impairment, online activism, Covid-19, social media.

INTRODUCTION

Due to Covid-19-induced lockdowns, schooling activities were shifted to the online space (Matimaire, 2020). Consequently, university student activism that used to be characterised by on- and off-campus activities is now visible through #hashtags and online discussions on several social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, TikTok and YouTube to name but a few. It cannot be denied that the online transition has come with advantages and disadvantages to student activism (Hove & Dube 2021). Students with visual impairments appear to have been affected positively and negatively by the abrupt shift to online activism. This chapter analyses the challenges faced by students with visual impairments as they attempt to navigate through the new form of activism. The fact that most online platforms offer visual services, means that students with visual impairment are the immediate casualty.

Access to online platforms demands expertise in the use of modern gadgets like smartphones and laptops. This is a major stumbling block to students with visual impairment in a developing country like Zimbabwe, where digital resources are not only scarce and unaffordable but are

backward and not user-friendly to students with visual impairments (Matimaire, 2020). The chapter also scrutinises the possible opportunities that can be realised in online activism by students with visual impairments. The move from physical demonstrations to online crusades is one thing to be celebrated amongst the community of students with visual impairments. This is because online demonstrations without hate language and cyber bullying are way safer than physical demonstrations, where students risk being injured in running battles with law enforcing agencies. The online platforms accommodate oral messages and recordings that can help students with visual impairments to effectively participate in activism in a better way than before (Olofsson 2017). The chapter also offers suggestions and recommendations on how stakeholders can collectively clear the playing field for online activism to be a safe activity for students with visual impairment.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

This chapter answers the following major question:

1. What are the challenges and prospects that have been brought by online activism amongst students with visual impairment?

This major question can be fully answered if the following sub-question is also answered.

•   How can stakeholders help improve online activism to make it safe for students with visual impairment?

The following objectives help to answer the raised research questions:

The chapter:

1. Identifies and explains the challenges and opportunities of online student activism among students with visual impairment
2. Offer suggestions to stakeholders on how online student activism can be improved to accommodate students with visual impairment.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The transition from traditional on-campus to online student activism as a result of the Covid-19-induced lockdowns, has created new challenges, whilst at the same time seems to offer new opportunities for the constituency of students with visual impairments in Zimbabwe universities. However, the silence in academia on the new challenges and how students with visual impairment can utilise the new opportunities to unlock doors for participation in virtual collective behaviour has driven this research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A lot has been written on university student activism the world over and Zimbabwe in particular (Hove & Dube 2021, Makunike 2015, Mlambo 1995, Altbach 1989). However, there is limited literature on online student activism. Worse still, the few publications on online activism rarely mention the participation of those with visual impairment. This chapter reviews works on the history of student activism, so as to show the trends in the evolution of student activism. It also interrogates texts on online student activism in an attempt to search for the participation of students with visual impairment. Hanna and Hanna (1975), Altbach (1989), Zeilig (2008), Makunike (2015), and Hove & Dube (2021) among

others, have written on student politics from the 20th to the 21st century.

Evolution of student activism

Scholars like Altbatch (1989) and Hove & Dube (2021) agree that student politics evolves with time depending on social, economic and political issues of the day. Philip Altbatch, who is generally credited for being the father of student activism explains that student politics is shaped by a lot of factors like the political status quo, curriculum offered to students and the economic conditions of the day. Hove & Dube (2021) argue that student activists face a lot of challenges in their quest to fight injustice. Students cannot be detached from their communities, therefore, the challenges they face are usually a mirror image of the bigger community problems. This is to some extent true of the community of students with visual impairment which though cannot be treated as a homogenous social category, but is generally affected by the shift to online activism in more or less the same way.

It is difficult to trace the evolution of student activism in Zimbabwe without looking at the works of scholars like Mlambo (1995); Zeilzig (2008), Makunike (2015), Hodgkinson (2019) and Hove & Dube (2021). These scholars have written extensively on student activism in Zimbabwe, such that it makes it easy to understand the common challenges faced by student activists, the nature of student activism and the opportunities realised by student activists over time. There seems to be an agreement among scholars like Mlambo (1995), Zeilzig (2008) and Makunike (2015) that student activism in Zimbabwe is mainly visible at tertiary institutions where organised student councils are found. This goes hand in glove with Altbach's (1989) argument that tertiary institutions provide a safe haven for freedom of expression, aided by a curriculum, particularly in the Humanities and Social Sciences, that insight students to question the status quo. The student councils play a

pivotal role in mobilising students, therefore, showing the importance of
collective action in student activism.

Nature of student activism

The nature of student activism seems to be universal the world over.
Barcan (2002), Makunike (2015) and Lipset (1969) concur that student
activism can be violent or non-violent. Peaceful demonstration, sit-ins,
walkouts, and boycotts are among the common non-violent strategies
used by student activists worldwide. In 'Students Activists: A profile',
Lipset (1969) argues that non-violent strategies are usually common with
right-wing activists or in politically stable countries. Mlambo (1995) and
Hodgkinson (2019) give a picture of the nature of student activism in
Zimbabwe during the colonial era. They explain that in the 1970s student
activism at the University of Rhodesia (now the university of Zimbabwe),
was confrontational and usually resulted in student riots and the
destruction of property. For example, during the Chimukwembe
demonstration in 1973, student demonstrations led to riots which
resulted in the destruction of property worth thousands of dollars
(Mlambo 1995). Hodgkinson (2019) also add that some student leaders
at the University of Rhodesia like Simba Makoni, were harassed and
expelled from the university because of their activism.

The trend continued in the second decade of independent Zimbabwe,
where according to Makunike (2015), Mlambo (1995) and Chikwanha
(2009) student activism turned leftist and turned more violent triggering
a harsh response from the state. This information helps one to
understand the historical nature of student activism thus making a
comparison with online activism easy. It also shows that student activism
demanded some bravery and commitment since it was a dangerous
terrain that could result in injury or death. It is therefore difficult to
imagine how students with visual impairment could participate and
survive in such circumstances. This may explain why such students were
rarely mentioned in the history of student activism, because it was

considered not to be their terrain. Such risks are greatly reduced in online activism.

Common challenges faced by student activists over time

It is also imperative to understand the common challenges faced by student activists over time. This helps in comparing online activism to traditional on-campus activism. Zeilig (2008), Makunike (2015) and Gukururume (2017) agree that University students face a plethora of challenges ranging from social and political to economic issues. However, the harsh state response is to leftist activism remains topical. Hodgkinson (2019) and Mlambo (1995) also highlighted that the harsh state response to student activism was also witnessed in colonial Zimbabwe. In their 2021 article entitled What Now for the Zimbabwean Student Demonstrator? Online Activism and its Challenges for University Students in a COVID-19 Lockdown, Hove & Dube articulated the challenges associated with the evolution to online student activism. They grouped the challenges into operational and economic challenges. Some of the operational challenges include digital illiteracy amongst students and a shy national digital infrastructure, whilst economic challenges included a lack of funds to buy digital gadgets and internet bundles.

It is clear in Hove & Dube's (2021) paper that online activism came with a lot of challenges, but it also opened some avenues for students. Hove & Dube (2021) agree with Gukurume (2017) and Dendere (2019) on the efficacy of social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter. Gukurume (2017) agrees with Mutsvairo and Ronning (2020), that social media has opened an avenue where activists can gather virtually away from state censorship. This is echoed by Hove & Dube's (2021) argument that use of social media in online activism has made it difficult for the state to block the cybernetic crusades. Such publications are treasured in this research, because they help give a picture of the challenges and opportunities brought by online activism. They help show the importance of social

media as the main platform for online crusades where various stakeholders converge in unity of purpose.

However, none of the mentioned scholars looked specifically at the status of students with visual impairment in online activism. The challenges or opportunities that come with the participation of students with visual impairment in online activism were not discussed. Where students with visual impairment are mentioned, it is just in passing as in the case of Hove & Dube (2021) who mentioned that online activism can be safe for students with physical challenges. This chapter used those publications as the springboard in articulating the challenges and opportunities of online activism on students with visual impairment.

The digital world and students with visual impairment

To understand the effects of digitalisation in student politics, this chapter interrogated works on the challenges of online learning to students with visual impairment. In a study on the digital environment on the visually impaired in India, Bhardwaj & Kumar (2017) discovered that students with visual impairment face challenges in accessing online electronic resources. They mentioned the inaccessibility of the college notice board, lack of accessibility to existing facilities and resources, lack of assistive technology facilities and unavailability of readers and writers as some of the main challenges. The respondents in Bhardwaj & Kumar (2017) study indicated that it is cumbersome to access the college website because they are not designed according to the accessibility standards developed for visually impaired students. This shows that students with visual impairments have unique challenges in accessing and using Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Their participation in activities that require the use of ICT is greatly affected. Therefore, such literature helps amplify the challenges faced by this constituency of students in online activism considering that it is dependent on ICT.

In their 2015 study at a state university in Ankara, Turkey, Menzi-Cetin, Alemdag & Tuzun also discovered that the university website was not user-friendly to students with visual impairment. It means such students had limited access and use of the website, therefore, revealing the impediments that are faced by students with visual impairment in accessing and using online resources. This helps in explaining the challenges posed by online activism on this group of students. Gomes, Duarte, Coelho, & Matos (2014) argue that students with visual impairment depend on Braille and assistive technology and this makes it difficult for them to access digital technology.

This is echoed by Hochheiser & Lazar (2010) who argue that the challenge faced by students with visual impairment in accessing digital information is due to the unfriendly design and development of digital gadgets and online platforms. This is true especially if one considers that the effective use of computers, smart phones and social media platforms requires somebody who is able to see. Bocconi, Dini, Ferlino, Martinoli, & Ott (2016) argue that even though a lot of assistive technology has been designed to help students with visual impairment, but they still face accessibility challenges. Bacconi *et al.* (2016) were writing from Italy, a developed nation, therefore, showing that despite one's economic status, students with visual impairment are always at the receiving end in the use of digital technology. Even though the different texts did not specifically discuss cybernetic activism, but the literature on the challenges faced by students with visual impairments in accessing and using ICT is greatly treasured in this chapter, because it helps in showing the impediments that limit the participation of that group of students in online activism considering that ICT provides the gate to online activism.

Hao and Jaafar (2012), advocate for the development of an inclusive digital environment as a solution to counter challenges for students with visual impairment. Lourens & Swartz (2016) also add that the university environment should be friendly to students with impairments. This shows that collective action from designers to users is very important in

easing the participation of students with visual impairment in student politics. Therefore, even though these scholars were writing on challenges faced by students with visual impairment in digital education, but their literature is very important in understanding the participation of those students in student politics. The gadgets and platforms used in online activism and in online education are almost the same, therefore, the challenges are similar. However, this chapter will be different in that it looks mainly at the use of social media platforms by students with visual impairment in Zimbabwe.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter uses a collective behaviour theory to explain the participation of university students with visual impairment in online student activism in Zimbabwe. Le Bon (1895), Blumer (1937) and McPhail (1991) argue that collective behaviour is explained within the contagious effects of the crowd whereby individual behaviour tend to conform to the crowd they are part of. Online student activism is collective action because it attracts and involves various participants who empathise with the plight of students. Hove & Dube (2021) argue that collective behaviour theory has its roots in the Freudian theory of frustration-aggression and in a Durkheimian theory of social control. The development of the collective behaviour theory is credited to the 19th and 20th-century Psychologists, like Gustav Le Bon who was eager to understand mob behaviour and mob psychology.

Later in the 1960s Ralph Turner and Lewis Killian pursued the theory to explain human behaviour in mass public demonstrations (Manning, 1973). The key issue in collective behaviour is that human behaviour is influenced by others who, according to Biddix & Park (2008), collectively seek goals, mobilise resources, and employ strategies to achieve those goals. Therefore, in student activism, students' behaviour can only be explained within the context of their community, which McAdam (1983)

argues that it needs to be mobilised for activists to be successful. The contagiousness of crowd behaviour is the major tenet of the collective behaviour theory visible in virtual crowds, particularly on social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook and WhatsApp, where mob psychology seems to be very effective. Students with visual impairment, when engaged in online activities, become part of the virtual crowd susceptible to the contagious crowd behaviour and therefore become part of the collective action of the broader students' movement, even though their participation is affected differently. These students are part of the collective action needed in activism. Therefore, their behaviour cannot be explained outside what McPhail (1991) refer to as the 'madness of the crowd'.

The mass media is a key pillar in collective behaviour, because it is used to mobilise people to converge for a common cause. The mass media, in this case, makes it easy for crowd behaviour to be contagious. Blumer (1937) argues that by using the mass media, the audience becomes the public. In online student activism, social media platforms are the new type of mass media used to mobilise various stakeholders to join the cause of students. The mobilised constituency, though not geographically close to each other, becomes a mass with known membership, common interests, and common aims (Lofland 1981). Therefore, students with visual impairment are part of the constituency targeted by the mass media. However, access, use and control of the mass media pose unique challenges to the constituency of students with visual impairment, affecting their collective contribution to student politics. The collective behaviour theory emphasises networking as a contagion in student activism. Access to online platforms improves networking and inclusivity in student activism .

Collective behaviour may involve the contribution of some uncontrolled and discrete groups; these according to Turner & Killian (1993) are part of the public. Turner & Killian (1993) argue that there are four types of crowds, namely casual crowds, conventional crowds, expressive crowds,

and acting crowds. The common issue in those four types of crowds is the goal and proximity. The crowds' level of interaction may differ but the goal for converging remains the same. Even though Turner & Killian (1993) were writing in a less digital world as compared to today, their argument is relevant in explaining collective action in online student activism. This is because; students are still crowding virtually for the goal of advancing students' interests.

The same groups that used to meet on- and-off campus have shifted to the virtual space. The students' levels of interaction may differ, but online platforms have bridged the physical distance, creating the propinquity that existed in the old days. One may give an example of students interacting on a WhatsApp group, the geographical distance is reduced. The public factor in the collective behaviour theory is a key tenet that helps us to appreciate the inclusivity of online activism and the involvement of non-student groups in student politics. For example, journalists, politicians and trade unionists may find themselves getting involved in student politics. For example, Millora and Karunungan (2021), argue that university students' online protests on Twitter and Facebook during the COVID 19 lockdown in 2020 and 2021, were joined by politicians, civic society and journalists, who empathised with the issues at hand.

Access to online media platforms by students with visual impairments improves networking and helps integrate the students in the bigger virtual constituency, thus giving them a role in collective student activism. Therefore, the Collective behaviour theory's emphasis on mass media and networking, helps us to understand online student activism because it explains that activism is open to the public, who can conveniently meet to advance issues of common concern. The emphasis on groups in the collective behaviour theory also enlightens us of the existence and importance of different categories of people in activism. Students with visual impairment are one such unique group whose participation in student politics is the focus of this chapter.

CHALLENGES FACED BY STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

An interrogation of primary and secondary sources revealed that the challenges of participating in online student activism by students with visual impairment, can be categorised into economic, operational, and political challenges. Some of the challenges affect all stakeholders and have the potential to cripple collective behaviour so necessary for effective activism. Amongst the economic factors, is the reality that Zimbabwe as a nation is in economic doldrums and its citizens have difficulties in spending on digital gadgets and internet data. Students with visual impairment require assistive technology which directly translates to extra cost. Operating digital gadgets and accessing social media platforms to participate in online activism requires a degree of expertise and the ability to see the keyboard and the screen. This coupled with the danger of clashing with state policies and laws on cyber issues makes activism a daring activity worse off to individuals with visual impairment who may require assistance in navigating their surroundings. This section will be dedicated to explaining the uniqueness of these challenges to students with visual impairment.

ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

Cost of digital equipment and internet data remains one of the key obstacles to online activism. Internet connectivity and digital gadgets like computers and smartphones, are key to accessing social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, TikTok and Twitter, where crusading takes place. Gukurume (2017) and Dendere (2019) concur that social media is increasingly becoming the driver in people's daily activities in Zimbabwe and the world over. According to Gukurume (2017), social media has created a virtual community that has given suppressed voices a chance to be heard. However, accessing social media platforms demands financial muscles to buy digital gadgets and internet data.

Such a cost is beyond the reach of an average Zimbabwean let alone for a student with visual impairment who requires extra funds to procure assistive devices or to hire a helper who is digitally literate. Taru (2020), mentions that affording a laptop is an achievement for an average Zimbabwean University student. He further explains that the COVID 19-induced lockdowns worsened the situation, because students who used to depend on university Wi-Fi now must fork out to buy internet data. The cost of internet data bundles range from US$40 to US$50 a month, which is exorbitant considering that the majority of workers like teachers and other civil servants earn less than US$200 a month (Matimaire 2020). This explains the reasons students, especially those with visual impairments, are locked out of the virtual world where online activism takes place. Therefore, networking and collective action become difficult for those students because they are locked out of the contagious zone of online activism.

Students with visual impairment have an extra cost to get assistive technology. Bhardwaj & Kumar (2017) argue that assistive technology is required for students with visual impairment to be able to access online platforms. The cost of assistive technology like screen readers, braille displays, and speech recognition software locks the student with visual impairment out of the virtual community. According to the American Foundation for the Blind (2021), the price of braille displays ranges from US$3,500 to US$15,000. Davert (2020) mentions that the 20-cell braille display which is relatively cheaper costs US$499. This is still very expensive for an individual from a developing country like Zimbabwe. Noziphor Khanda a computer literacy expert for the blind was quoted by the Herald newspaper lamenting the exorbitant cost of assistive technology for people with visual impairment. She says:

> *"I've recently been to a conference where there was a technology expo for the blind, there are some amazing things that I would love to have. But when I ask the price of a colour sensor, for instance, all I get is: 'it's $700, ma'am!' My heart sinks" (Herald 05/09/2011)*

With such costs, it means without assistance from other stakeholders, access to the digital world remains a dream for students with visual impairment. It will remain difficult for the students to be part of collective action in advancing students' needs. Munyoro & Musemburi (2019) argue that Universities like the University of Zimbabwe have assistive hardware and software in the Disability Resource Centre (DRC). However, the COVID-19 lockdowns mean that students cannot access all this since they will be operating from home thus the burden is put on directly on their shoulders. Because of that economic challenge, students with visual impairment are forced to depend on volunteer helpers whose help in most cases comes with conditions. It means participation in online activism for the student with visual impairment is now dependent on the goodwill of the volunteer helper. This explains why it can be argued that online activism is collective behaviour.

SOCIETAL BARRIERS

Societal and psychological barriers are among some of the challenges that make student activism an unfriendly terrain for students with visual impairment. This applies both to the traditional on-campus and online activism. Salleha & Zainalb (2010) argue that appropriate social behaviour is taken for granted as having been learnt incidentally at a very young age, and this affects social competency when students with visual impairment engage in social interactions. Society generally views activism as secondary to learning. Lourens & Swartz (2016) argue that some students with visual impairments do not feel easily accepted by their peers without visual impairments. This creates a sense of rejection leading to what Bishop & Rhind (2011) call attitudinal barriers that are created because of attitudes of key individuals with whom a visually impaired student will interact.

It can be argued that focus on the challenges of people with impairments may also have the negative effect of creating a feeling of segregation and

marginalisation that may lead to low self-esteem (Barnes, 2012). Lourens & Swartz (2016) add that students with impairments may develop feelings of loneliness and marginalisation because they feel the unfamiliar university campus environment is foreign and not designed with their bodies in mind. This social construct leads to low self-esteem and creates withdrawal tendencies. Such withdrawal tendencies may help explain why students with visual impairment could not participate in on-campus demonstrations. Some of the above-mentioned challenges are also visible in online activism whereby students with visual impairments feel that it is too demanding for them to burden their helpers to help them navigate through social media platforms all for the purpose of participating in student politics. Such a challenge is more unique to students in developing countries like Zimbabwe where the lack of assistive technology makes it difficult for those students with impairments to be independent. Therefore, it remains difficult for those students to be active participants in the virtual collective action network where student grievances are raised.

OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES

Computer and internet digital illiteracy affects all categories of students; however, it is unique for students with visual impairments because of the addition of assistive technology. In addition to the shortage of assistive technology, digital illiteracy amongst students with visual impairments is also one of the major obstacles that inhibit participation in online activism. According to Chataika & Mutekwa (2017) most blind children in Zimbabwe have their first computers at higher education level. This doubles their workload because they must learn computer skills whilst at the same time concentrating on their studies. Therefore, coupled with the lack of assistive technology, students' digital literacy is greatly reduced. Participating on social media platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter becomes very difficult.

The COVID-19-induced lockdowns pushed the student away from the university campus where trained human resources and digitally equipped Disability Resource Centres (DRC) are available, thus further complicating digital access to the student with visual impairments. Without portable digital technology and human helpers in the home, access to digital platforms for students with visual impairment is greatly limited. Therefore, the student's participation in cybernetic activism is greatly affected. Such digital access challenges can be explained within the context of an economically struggling nation where there is a shortage of digital infrastructure and the citizenry struggle to afford digital gadgets. According to Chiparaushe, Mapako & Makarau (2010) lack of a trained human resource base to help students with impairments has been one of the common challenges in Zimbabwe's academic tertiary institutions.

This lack of trained personnel to assist students with visual impairments is one of the causative factors of the high illiteracy rate among those students with visual impairments. Therefore, it can be argued that digital literacy precedes the availing of assistive technology. Students with visual impairments find themselves locked out of the virtual community and they struggle to collectively participate in digital crusades despite their wish to actively partner other students in the collective online action. Helpers may assist in accessing online platforms for educational purposes. However, access to social media platforms appears to be a luxury and very few can sacrifice their time and resources to offer help in that regard. The student with visual impairment remains an outsider in online activism, cannot network with others in the virtual world and is reduced to a second-class student, who passively relies on the rumour mill and hearsay. Such challenges reveal that students with visual impairments have difficulties in influencing issues in the contagious zone of student activism and collective action since the zone has shifted to the far away virtual world.

ONLINE ACTIVISM AS AN OPPORTUNITY

The COVID-19-induced evolution to online student activism brought with it so many challenges that widened the social strata within the student community. However, many opportunities were also unwrapped because of the evolution in student activism. Without hate language and cyberbullying, online activism has made student activism, especially for those with impairments, safer than before considering the lack of physical interaction that usually resulted in rioting (Hove & Dube 2021). In online activism, the distance between the garrulous agitated student and responsible authorities has been reduced to a click of a button on the keyboard. The public nature of online activism has made it easy for non-student stakeholders to converge with student activists in issues of common interest. Though pseudonyms can be used, the traceability of digital footprints can help shape responsible activism. This section details the prospects presented by online activism and explains how these opportunities can be harnessed to ensure that students with visual impairments are active participants in the virtual world, where collective action in student activism has migrated to.

Online activism without hate language and cyber abuse can be safe for students with visual impairments. Hove & Dube (20121) argue that online student activism has rendered obsolete the traditional strategies of on-campus demonstrations that usually resulted in students clashing with the antiriot police. Mlambo (1995) also mentioned that on-campus university demonstrations usually resulted in injuries and destruction of property as witnessed in the 1973 Chimukwembe demonstration among many other protests at the now University of Zimbabwe. In online activism, social media is the vehicle for the dissemination of information (Gukurume 2017). Stakeholders can converge on platforms like Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp to discuss their challenges, write petitions and send messages to responsible authorities without the need to gather physically in the streets or at university campuses. The streets and campuses have been transferred to the online space. Therefore, as

long as students with visual impairments are able to access and navigate social media platforms, they can actively participate in online activism without the fear of being hit by stones or button sticks, as was the case in traditional activism. With such inclusivity, students with visual impairments may be able to influence collective behaviour in the virtual space since they will have access to and use of the 'new form of mass media' (social media), which according to the collective behaviour theory is pivotal in networking and spreading ideas.

In online activism, the distance between the student activist and the responsible stakeholder has been reduced to a click of a button on the keyboard. This reduces red tape in facilitating student issues. Nowadays, messages can be sent directly to recipients via emails or online platforms like Twitter and WhatsApp, without the need to knock on office doors. In student activism, it means student's petitions for example, can be emailed or tweeted to the stakeholders. Besides being quick, use of online media is cost-effective and ensures accountability. Room for claiming ignorance on a trending issue is limited. Gukurume (2017) and Dendere (2019) agree that social media like Facebook and Twitter has revolutionised activism such that it has become difficult for the state to ignore it. This was witnessed by the state's response to Twitter hashtags like #freeAllanmoyo, #thisflag and #thisgown (see Hove & Dube 2021). Such situations also benefit students with visual impairments because they can converge with other students and activists on online platforms to enter offices that could have been difficult to reach physically. Therefore, it can be argued that the evolution to online activism has destroyed barriers of traditional activism.

Stakeholder collective action is now relatively easy and fast because of the transition to online activism. Gukurume (2017) uses the case of the #thisflag and #thisgown to illustrate the mobilising effect of social media. He argues that social media has a powerful mobilising effect that can help people converge within a short period of time. Therefore, with the use of social media, activists can mobilise a bigger constituency in the shortest

possible time, regardless of the stakeholder's geographic settings. A single WhatsApp message, Tweet, or video clip on YouTube or Tiktok, for example, can be viral within a short space of time. This shows some great strides compared to the traditional mobilising strategies, whereby activists had to print posters and placards limited to a certain geographical location. Student activists with visual impairments can also benefit from such developments because if they are able to access online platforms, they can also actively participate in collective behaviour in online activism.

Responsible activism can also be one of the benefits of the evolution to cybernetic activism. The fact that online media platforms leave digital footprints, limits recklessness among users. Hove & Dube (2021) advocate for cyber laws that protect online media users from bullying and hate speech. With a friendly online environment, students with visual impairments can easily move out of the socially created closets that previously inhibited them from being active participants in students' politics. Responsible activism benefits all stakeholders because it filters out unwanted disturbances, making the goals and intentions of the collective behaviour clear and genuine.

An analysis of the opportunities presented by the transition to cybernetic activism, shows that as long there is guaranteed access to online platforms and the necessary digital literacy, online activism can be a safe terrain for students with visual impairments. The digital world shortens the geographical distance among stakeholders which reduces operational costs and makes communication effective. The invention of cyber laws will make online activism safe and friendly for the socially marginalised, whose low self-esteem contributed to withdrawal tendencies. However, the challenge remains on what can be done to ensure that students with visual impairments in Zimbabwe fully benefit from the prospects presented by this COVID-19-induced digital activism.

WAY FORWARD

Having discussed the challenges and prospects of online activism on students with visual impairments, this section offers suggestions and recommendations on what can be done to improve the participation of students with visual impairments in online activism. It is clear from the discussion that economic and operational challenges are the major obstacles that inhibit access to and use of online platforms. However, through collective action, availing of the required resources like assistive technology and trained human resources can be an achievable task. The withdrawal tendencies created by low self-esteem amongst students with visual impairments also require a long-term social strategy.

The spillover and downward effect of a solution to the national economic quagmires can offer a blanket solution to most of the economic challenges that prohibit the active participation of students with visual impairment in online activism. Lack of digital resources and failure to afford internet data is a direct result of poverty and a reflection of the national economic instability (Matimaire 2020). Stakeholders are forced to sideline some key social aspects like activism simply because of a lack of financial resources. This may explain why the issue of shortage of digital resources is more acute in developing countries like Zimbabwe where poverty levels are high. Therefore, deliberate national strategies for poverty elimination can be a necessary input in the collective behaviour required in offering long-term solutions to challenges bedevilling students with visual impairments in online activism.

The donor community also need to empathise with the social needs of students living with visual impairments. There are noticeable efforts by the donor community to provide the basic education needs for students with visual impairments. The availability of Disability Resource Centres (DRC) at tertiary institutions countrywide shows the commitment from stakeholders in improving the education environment for students living with disabilities (Chiparaushe, *et al.*2010). However, because of the

COVID-19-induced lockdowns, such infrastructure is of little help. It appears there is a need for more to be done to improve the participation of those students in social and political activities. More portable digital gadgets with assistive technology are needed so that students can access online platforms without the need to be at the university campus. The government of Zimbabwe has a number of policies that aim to promote the participation of individuals with disability in national politics, but it appears there is none on student politics as if student politics is not allowed.

A rejuvenated collective behaviour amongst stakeholders remains key to the active participation of students with visual impairments in cybernetic crusades. This is so, because online student activism is a combined activity where student and non-student stakeholders converge to advance student goals. Therefore, students with visual impairments need to be proactive and consider themselves as an important constituency in that collaborative action. Such proactive behaviour is important in attracting empathy and admiration from other stakeholders who may realise the genuineness of the cause. Proactive behaviour has the potential to cure withdrawal tendencies amongst individuals with visual impairments and create a sense of inclusiveness necessary for the pursuant of collective objectives.

CONCLUSION

This chapter explained the challenges and prospects of online activism on students with visual impairments. It was discovered that the challenges are mainly economic, social, and operational and have to do with access and navigation of the virtual world. The general agreement among scholars (Munyoro & Musemburi 2019, Chataika & Mutekwa 2017, Chiparaushe, Mapako & Makarau 2010) is that the lack of digital and financial resources are the major economic issues, whilst digital illiteracy is the main operational problem coupled with the traditional

societal and psychological barriers like low self-esteem that affect social competency amongst the constituency of students with visual impairments. Such challenges make it difficult for students with visual impairment to network, actively participate and influence collective action in the virtual world.

Despite all the challenges posed by cybernetic activism on the community of students with visual impairments, there are prospects of a better world. Online activism offers a safe environment without the risk of rioting and physical injuries. Hove & Dube (2021) advocate for a safe online environment devoid of hate speech and bullying such, that if properly utilised, online activism makes effective mobilisation easy and fast. Accountability and genuineness which are the pillars of responsible activism are easy to see in digital crusades. However, there is a need for poverty eradication, donor empathy and a proactive stance amongst students with visual impairments for them to be able to shrug off the social, political, and economic hindrances to online student activism.

CHAPTER 4:
MITIGATING STUDENT'S UNREST THROUGH TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING THEORY: REIMAGINING TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE POST-COVID UNIVERSITY SYSTEM IN SOUTH AFRICA

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Abstract

The covid-19 scenarios that erupted all over the world in late 2019 rocked the world, and politicians were forced to close schools and institutions worldwide. Students' dilemmas are rife in colleges all around the world, particularly in African campuses, thanks to online instruction. Various student unrest has occurred in Africa's university system at various times due to the online digital gap in universities. This can be traced back to a variety of situational circumstances such as power outages, data shortages, a lack of laptops and computers for studying, and recalcitrant learners in groups when given examinations, to name a few, all of which have contributed to social unrest in some institutions. This has hampered smooth teaching and learning in schools, prompting researchers to study the issues faced by students and teachers in Africa's university system

through observation and experience. The researchers discovered that there were remedies proposed to the difficulties mentioned in the literature, but that the problems are still present despite the solutions. In light of this, transformational learning theory was offered as a means of assisting students in overcoming their obstacles and, as a result, reducing student dissatisfaction with the university system. This argument was created in order to find answers to the frequently asked issues about how students deal with online classes when they are at home. The transformative paradigm was used in this research. The analysis was carried out using thematic analysis, with data and arguments drawn from transformational learning praxis and literature on student unrest in order to provide an alternate method for ensuring university operations. The researchers concluded that data should be made available to students, laptops should be made available to all students without loans, the electricity crisis can be avoided by allowing students on campus, and smooth blended teaching and learning will prevent future student unrest, with the recommendation that university teachers be trained on how to manage teaching and learning and the importance of transformative learning to avoid such unfortunate occurrences.

Keywords:

Social unrest, Digital Divide, Transformative learning, transformative paradigm, university system.

INTRODUCTION

Universities all over the world have experienced a wave of violence as a result of social discontent at one point or another, preventing the achievement of the school's goals and objectives (Muhammad *et al.* 2014, p. 81). The situation of universities in Africa is inextricably linked to uncontrolled discontent among students, perhaps among many other alternatives available to settle disputes, there is a high tendency to use aggressive protest. This protest ranges from the consequences of

student-management talks, management's apathy toward student demands, misunderstandings, and power imbalances (Omodan and Ige, 2021, p. 76; Brittain & Maphumulo, 2022, p. 2; Grimm, 2022, p. 26). The Covid-19 pandemic sent advanced developing economies into starkly divergent paths. Universities across the world in 2020, felt the urgent need to move to technology from normal face-to-face teaching and learning (Lorenza & Carter 2021, p. 2; Ates, 2021, p. 293). Students at remote institutions complained that they needed more teaching materials, laptops, and consistent electricity, especially for those in rural locations (Mhandu, Mahiya, & Muzvidziwa, 2021, p. 2; Azionya & Nhedzi, 2021, p. 165; Govender, Reddy & Bhagwan, 2021, p. 46). Students' social discontent in the South Africa university system has been connected to pressing their expectations owing to a shortage of instructional materials, according to scholars like (Asano *et al*. 2021, p. 52; Landa, Zhou, & Marongwe, (2021, p. 168). The issue can be traced back to unreleased funds from the management to students, unanticipated circumstances during a nationwide lockdown, and lack of academic support from staff (van Zyl, 2021, p. 395; Uleanya, 2022, p. 90). Such decisions has led to loss of lives, destruction of school properties and bred the dichotomies between university management and students representatives (Shai, 2021, p. 288). In the light of the preceding, this study focused on the social unrest caused by Covid-19 and the dilemma of digital divide challenges posed in the South African university system.

Various methods have been advocated in the literature to fill in the gap created by Covid-19 and to alleviate discontent in tertiary institutions, particularly universities. It was proposed to adapt to developing technologies, distance learning caused by the Coronavirus disease, one of which is adequate and fast provision of learning materials to avoid becoming uncompetitive with other graduates in the country and beyond Africa (Gurajena, Mbunge, & Fashoto, 2021, p. 10). This solution according to Maree, (2021) that emerging technologies are the future of teaching and learning, and a shortage of teaching and learning materials can cause disruptions in the university system. South Africa through the

national disaster management declared a national lockdown in March 2020, and has since supported the zero-rated apps for teaching and learning in the universities to prevent marginalization of any kind (Mncube, Mutongoza & Olawale, 2021, p. 395). This allowed university administration and the government to come up with alternatives for adjusting the curriculum to avoid social unrest in the school community. Nigeria and Ghana's response to student's unrest proposed availability of funds to combat the menace through emerging technologies (Kwasi-Agyeman, Langa & Swanzy, 2021; Suleiman *et al.* 2020). This solution also shared the recommendations of Kwasi-Agyeman, Langa & Swanzy, (2021); Omodan and Ige, (2021, p. 77) that Universities should be appropriately supported and equipped with basic amenities, as well as inclusive decision-making, to avoid student unrest. Having explored the challenges and solutions recorded by the literature, observations and experiences had shown that student unrest happen on a daily basis. This could be linked to the chasm that the researchers have created by ignoring the transformative learning potentials in their solutions. Recent cases happened on March 14, 2022, when the University of the Free State, South Africa, and many other universities across Africa were shut down after a showdown with the management over pressing their demand through various agitations. This recent agitation caused the school various millions as students lit up the computer room and the school clinic on the QwaQwa campus of the University of the Free State. This goes to show the solutions may have worked but not that effectively. There comes the introduction of transformative learning, the philosophy of instrumental, dialogic, and self-reflective thinking. This could be used as a tool to ensure proper digital learning devoid of student unrest, peaceful relationship and making respectful students. The theory of transformative learning will be unpacked under the purview of the following research question.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to find a permanent solutions to the students' unrest in the university system through transformative learning, the following research question was formulated to guide the study.

- How can transformative learning be presented to unravel the student's unrest in the university system?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is underpinned by transformative learning theory. Mezirow developed the idea based on the learning domains of Kuhn, Freire, and Habermas. Mezirow'stransformative learning is based on these theorists' key principles, which are rooted in instrumental, dialogic, and self-reflective thinking (Mezirow, 1991). Learners learn how to learn knowledge in a practical way. Learners learn how and where they can study in a dialogic environment. Learners that are self-reflective discover why they are learning the material (Dirkx, 1998; Schugurensky, 2002; Dirkx *et al.* 2006; Mezirow, 2007; Alhadeff-Jones, 2012; Mezirow, 2018). Kitchenham, 2008, p. 114 averred that people can modify their thoughts on other people's opinions by sharing people's perspectives as we learn, according to Mezirow's transformative learning hypothesis (perspective transformation). Christie, *et al*. 2015, p. 25 corroborated that Mezirow's theory aids future teachers in comprehending how social structures and belief systems might affect student learning.

The concepts of transformative learning are incorporated in individuals' critical reflection when reading a book, task-oriented problem solving, or group interaction, all of which can lead to substantial personal or group transformations. Mezirow 2008, p. 42 asserted that rigorous examination of the assumptions underpin our perceptions, beliefs, mental habits, and points of view. Mezirow, 1997, p. 6 averred that there are four stages to learning: developing an existing point of view, establishing new points of view, learning to transform our point of view, and finally, changing our

habit of mind by becoming aware and critically reflective in the way we generally view others who do not share our point of view.

According to Mezirow, the theory's relevance means that it can influence a person's worldview, enlarging and transforming it. Motivated students can apply what they've learned in the classroom to new scenarios. Vindaca & Lubkina (2020, p. 183) corroborated the importance of transferring transformative learning theory to digital learning was emphasized. Transformative digital learning will be ideal for this study since it allows for technical process, creative interaction, collaboration with peers, and participation in simulation and assessments, as described in transformative learning theory. With the help of technology, and the bb collaborate that shifts learning from face-to-face to learning online. Pedagogy should be changed to place students at the center of learning and empower them to control their own learning through flexibility and choice. Digital transformational learning is required to develop each society member's ability to live and work productively in a changing economy (García-Morales, Garrido-Moreno & Martín-Rojas, 2021). Because of the Covid-19 problems that hit the world at a vital time, students are agitated about instructional resources, funding, data, and continual teaching and learning (Abel, 2020), this has been the root cause of student activism over time in the university.

METHODOLOGY

The transformative paradigm is used to frame the research, and the paradigm is utilized to lead the research. This is because the transformative paradigm tries to change a phenomenon. The transformative paradigm is relevant for the study since it intends to change student unrest in Africa's university system and around the world. According to Mertens, (2007), the transformative paradigm is a framework that values participant discovery and power dynamics between university administration and students. A transformative paradigm is also an umbrella term that incorporates emancipatory,

participatory, and inclusive approaches (Romm, 2015). According to Hurtado (2015), a transformative paradigm is a research that finds solace in pushing for social justice for the socially oppressed, giving voice to the powerless, and ensuring that oppressed populations experience greater change. As a result, the researchers are able to perceive the participants as a single family that must work together to discover solutions to the students' constant agitation, ensuring stable academic activities in the university system. According to Mertens (2010), the paradigm's distinctiveness is that it aids in the restoration of ties between university administration and students. This allows the researchers to offer their ideas logically in order to find a solution to the student unrest caused by inadequate learning resources in the university system.

However, the choice of transformative digital learning theory as an alternative to face-to-face learning, preventing student's unrests is derived from the arguments of Oyedotun (2020) that the move from traditional face-to-face learning to online brought crises in some universities, thereby using transformation of digital learning. Transformative learning theory is transformative in nature that is meant to create a change in an already existing social system. Therefore, answering the research questions "How can transformative learning be presented to unravel the student's unrest in the university system", data was collected through focus group interviews and stressed the challenges found during Covid-19 lockdown, and the participants were two university teachers, one student rep, and five university students in a rurally located university in South Africa using convenient sampling technique. The researchers used thematic analysis (TA) to analyze the themes created. TA according to Braun & Clarke (2020) allows categorization, organizing, identifying, reporting, and analyzing themes got from large sets of data. The standards of research ethics were observed, participants' rights were respected and trustworthiness was observed (McGinnies & Ward, 1980).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The following were some of the challenges encountered during lockdown that necessitated student unrests in the sampled university. Possible solutions were highlighted throughout the study to improve teaching and learning and to avoid future occurrences of social unrests in the university. Some difficulties encountered included lack of electricity, unavailability of data, unavailability of laptops and computers for studying, recalcitrant learners in groups when given an evaluation; and proposed solutions included data availability, provisions of zero-rated apps, provision of laptops/PCs, provision of alternative power supply, and collaborative engagement of students. For anonymity's sake, the participants were granted anonymity in represented using A1 and A2 (lecturers), A3 (Student representative council), A4, A5, A6, A7, & A8 (Student).

THE CHALLENGES OF TEACHING AND LEARNING DURING LOCKDOWN THAT ERUPTED STUDENT UNREST

Learning loss time and lack of electricity.

The universities across Africa experienced total lockdown, and before the national lockdown in South Africa in March, 2020, the students became agitated and caused a total shutdown when they had confrontations with the university management. Included in the list of their demands were provisions of instructional materials and provision of funds for NSFAS students. Then the national lockdown happened and the university managements put efforts together and started online teaching and learning. One of the challenges the students encountered during the lockdown was the lack of electricity in villages, where the students lived. Learning loss time, and some students had to drop out due to the lack of access to academic content online. This issue is not exclusive to South

African universities, some African universities experienced learning loss time and lack of electricity due to Covid-19 situations. Some of the research participants' remarks are evident in the following conversations:

> *Participant A1, A2, A3, A5, A8 responses were treated respectively: "as a lecturer, the first assignment was to create academic contents for digital teaching and learning, it was a great challenge with electricity with the load shedding around my area". "As a lecturer, the students complained about the load shedding that made them not attend classes, nor submit assessments on time, I had to extend submission dates for more students to submit the said assessments". "As a student rep, we held meetings with the university managements to conclude on the way forward having witnessed the breakdown of law and order, the interest of the students are paramount and we saw the migration of the teaching and learning seamlessly from face-to-face to digital full online, some students complained of electricity challenge and we addressed by pleading with the lecturers to give more time to the students to submit". "As a student, I am faced with electricity challenges in my village, submission was a bit problematic to me". "As a student, I have electricity challenge, they stole our wires and we have a challenge fixing it" respectively.*

According to participants A1, A2, A3, A5, and A8, the common challenges to the seamless migration of teaching and learning to digitalise multifaceted learning devoid of student unrest. Unavailability of electricity and learning loss time are two of the most severe challenges faced by South African institutions (Dube, 2020). In other words, the learning loss time, coupled with the unavailability of electricity has dented the digitalisedteaching and learning. The lack of electricity can be avoided in future digital teaching and learning. The researchers concluded that learning loss time can be avoided through recording lecture sessions for students who are unavailable for the lecture to listen at their convenience (Zeshan, 2021). The study, on the other hand, demonstrated that the implementation of engaged transformative digital learning as the new strategy, eliminates learning loss time.

Unavailability of data, unavailability of laptops and computers for studying

Universities were hit by the stings of the deadly Coronavirus coupled with the various student unrest. Covid 19 situations made universities move away from normal to the 'new normal' of digitalised online learning, for universities to achieve its set aims and objectives and appropriate set of academic structures well rooted in technology. Lack of academic infrastructure due to unavailability of data and the unavailability of PCs for teaching and learning. The unavailability of data has been a major challenge where there was student unrest in the early introduction of online learning. Rurally located students who are disadvantaged, especially the low income families, found it difficult to buy laptops or PCs and hard enough to buy data for lectures. University management must ensure the implementation of digitalised transformed learning for students and lecturers. This is evident in the following conversations:

> *Participant A5: "the school at the beginning of the lockdown in 2020, made arrangements for laptops but the payback loan was on the high side, so I decided to use my phone".*

> *Participant A2: "the students complained that the 10gig promised by the university authorities was not enough, as the students wastes it on YouTube within days".*

> *Participants A7: "as a student, my colleagues complained that the 10 gig promised was not given to all students".*

> *Participants A3: " as a student rep, we had cases of students with the virus, inform the school authority about their situations in which they took actions in place of demise of students, the students complained about the unavailability of laptops and little data not enough for the studies".*

Covid-19 has shown normal teaching and learning that it can actually be done online with digitalised, transformed learning. The students through various mediums met with the university during the closed down of

schools in April 2020, about the availability of laptops and data, they agitated in schools across various campuses. This was also attested by the participants that distance digitalised teaching and learning is the future of teaching (Onaolapo & Onaolapo, 2021). Participants A5, participants agreed that technology was important to the teaching and learning in the university. According to transformative learning theory, one of the most important aspects of the theory is reflective critical thinking which face to face lectures will not achieve. As a results, the findings are at odds as the students complained about the lack of data and academic infrastructure for teaching and learning in the university system.

Collaborative engagements with the students

The university system was hit by the deadly virus the year 2020 and the university lecturers, students, and the university management has worked tirelessly to ensure the containment of the spread of the virus and the urgency in digitalised teaching and learning. The students were unaware of the exigencies of the proposed program and were in a bit of a dilemma to adjust to the new normal (Heng & Song 2020). Some students did not participate in group assessments given to them by the lecturer, delays in the submission of assessments and not attending lectures at all (Lazarevic & Bentz, 2021). This is evident in the following conversations:

> *Participants A1: "As a lecturer, I observed that students who claimed they are from the rural areas don't participate in group assignments, they dragged teaching and learning unnecessarily"*

> *Participants A4: "as a student, I discovered those who we are grouped together on blackboard do not contribute to the tasks given by the lecturer".*

> *Participant A8: "I was frustrated by the behavior of some students in the group, as a group leader in my group, I did and submit alone, the most*

> *painful thing is that I wrote their names on the group assignment given by the lecturer".*

Collaborative engagement is important if the group or the class will improve, the participants claimed that the students did not participate in group collaborative assessments. According to Awidi, Paynter, & Vujosevic, (2019) collaborative engagements bring out the best in students, where they reason together and put effort in to get good grades in a given specialized task. It is evident to get a more united online class, every student must play their part in ensuring the progress of the group they belong to. According to transformative learning theory, one of the most important aspects of the theory allows for critically self-reflective students, creative interaction, collaboration with peers, and participation in simulation and assessments respecting other people's views. As a result, the findings from the study proved wrong that students worked collaboratively in an online assessment.

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS TO AVERT FUTURE DILEMMA CONCERNING STUDENT UNREST

Availability of loan-free laptops and Data

The students should be provided soft-loan laptops that will be theirs after payments, data should be made available to the students on monthly basis for learning purposes and zero-rated apps should be available for all students. Because one of the goals of transformative digitalised learning theory is that it prepares and produces a self-reflective critical student. According to the findings, there is a need for transformative learning to take place in schools. The lecturers and students need to work together to achieve the set goals and objectives of the university. This will make teaching and learning fun when interacting with peers in best behaviors and respect when in groups (Peterson, 2022). The following statements supported the claim:

> *Participants A1: "I think the classroom setting becomes exiting when the students participates in learning, I think they just need support with data and laptops to achieve this".*

> *Participate A3: "I think the school has been listening to us regarding the provision of laptops to the students but the clause of returning the laptops after payments was inconsequential".*

> *Participate A4: "as a student I will love the laptops and data to be free for us every month to assist those of us staying off campus a better learning and teaching environments and to recover learning loss time".*

It can be deduced from participant A1, and A4 that the availability of data and laptops will be the best thing for students to keep learning and teaching even for the future lockdowns, it will keep the students busy and they will not even think about agitations. This is in line with the findings of (Johnson, 2019) that provision of basic academic infrastructures will create a peaceful university community.

Blended learning and avoidance of electricity issues

Blended learning is face-to face learning and online learning, when the situations and arises to manage both situations, it is blended learning. Blended learning with situations of student unrest seems rather impossible (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008). The issue of electricity could be averted with students back on campus where there is data, electricity and generators that runs 24 hours to avoid teaching and learning issues. According to Al-Samarraie & Saeed, (2018) blended learning seems to be the solution to the problems of electricity and data. This will enable students to learn effortlessly which is one of the attributes of transformative learning. The following statement form how the participants supports our claim:

> *Participant A6: "I just want to go back to campus, the issues of electricity affecting me will not be a problem when am on campus".*

> **Participant A3:** *"I will gladly welcome the idea of welcoming back the students soonest because I have missed the #kovsies campus life, then data will not be a problem for the students because we have 24 hours unlimited data in university community".*

It may be explored from the view of participant A3 that unlimited data connection, and blended learning will be the best solution to the incessant student unrests. The university management committees while attending to the provision of basic teaching and learning infrastructures should also be cognizance of student's welfare to avert future occurrence of fresh agitations. This is in consonance with the submissions of (Godlewska *et al.* 2019) that blended learning in a serene campus environment leads to good student's academic achievement. Student activism can be avoided in future through making sure facilities are provided for blended learning, the students protests every time they feel cheated and this has disrupted teaching and learning at various times in South Africa university system (Czerniewicz, Trotter & Haupt, 2019). Provision of collaborative learning and transformative digital learning can avert future rancour between the university management and the student.

CONCLUSION

The researchers concluded that the major challenges to teaching and learning disruptions (student unrest) is the unavailability of data, lack of electricity, and uncooperative group members when given assessments based on their findings. However, blended learning, provision of monthly data for off campus students, and provisions of soft-loan laptops, were the suggested solutions to the problem examined. The study indicated that if the offered solutions were followed, there will be less agitations in the future. Finally, the study specified that embracing transformative digital learning will improve teaching and learning in the university system. According to the findings, university managements, lecturers, students and student representative councils can collaborate together to

achieve the set objectives in the school, there is a need for transformative digital learning.

Recommendations for policy makers, students, management committees, lecturers and the university community are that students will always be students and they want everything on a platter of gold, the school will deal with them wisely, provide all their agitations and let there be blended learning. Policy makers should include transformation learning in the policies of higher education. Students should treat their peers with respect and respect constituted authority for harmony and peace to reign. The researchers linked the student unrest with the possibilities of a lacuna of teaching and learning, future research can view student unrest from another point of view, using a different theory, methodology and see if the outcomes differs.

Profiles of researchers

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CHAPTER 5:
EXPLORING THE CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF STUDENT UNREST IN SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

Despite various regulations and transformation agendas put in place by universities in South Africa to ensure a productive university system, the issue of student unrest continues unabated. This may be connected to inadequate funding, inadequate provision of educational facilities, funding support for students and power differentials in the system. This study responds by exploring the possible conditions that could facilitate effective management of student unrest in the university system. The study was underpinned by decoloniality and situated within the transformative paradigm, while participatory research was used to design the study. Ten participants were purposively selected from three universities in South Africa, and they were interviewed to share their experiences and possible conditions for managing student unrest in their

universities. The data were analysed using thematic analysis. The study finds out that adequate communication, and students' awareness of university happenings are the conditions for effective management of student unrest in South African universities. Therefore, the study concludes that communication and students' awareness are the dimensions of effective management of student unrest towards decolonial space in the universities.

Keywords:

Student unrest, South African universities, effective management, condition of management.

INTRODUCTION

Student unrest is a common occurrence in universities across the globe. In South Africa, the issue has been particularly prevalent in the past few years, with several universities experiencing protests and shutdowns. Since the end of apartheid in South Africa, there have been continued protests and student unrest in universities in response to a number of factors, including inadequate funding, inadequate provision of educational facilities, hike in tuition, and power differentials in the university system (dichotomies among stakeholders), among others (Anjum & Aijaz, 2014; Calitz & Fourie, 2016; Myers, 2008; Vıatonu *et al*., 2018). These have constituted the reasons for student protests, because students are unhappy with the quality of education they are receiving, as well as the high costs of tuition and other associated expenses (Calitz & Fourie, 2016). Several ways of managing student unrest have been suggested by scholars, government and other well-meaning stakeholders; among these solutions are the provision of adequate educational infrastructures, inclusive leadership and management styles, freedom of association for the students, and adequate funding, which includes the provision of bursaries and stipends for the students to be able to cope well with the current cost of education in South Africa (Fuo,

2020; Nkinyangi, 1991; Stefani & Blessinger, 2017; Uyanga, 2016). Despite the various suggestions and solutions, student unrest remains unabated day by day, with numerous consequences to university productivity. In this study, both student unrest and student protest are used interchangeably.

For clarity's sake, there is a need to give instances that show that student unrest remains unmanaged. In October 2015, widespread student protests took place at several universities across the country (Badat, 2016). In February 2016, another round of protests erupted at various universities, including Wits University, the University of Cape Town, and Rhodes University (Laurore, 2016; Mavunga, 2019). In the recent time, students unrest took place at the University of Zululand, University of the Free State, North-West University, Tshwane University of Technology, University of Fort Hare, University of Cape Town, University of Pretoria, and Walter Sisulu University, among others (Dayimani, 2021; SABC News, 2021; Mavunga, 2019; Mutekwe, 2017). Various universities, including the University of the Free State, Walter Sisulu University, and University of KwaZulu-Natal, were shut down as a result of disruptive students. Recounting our engagement with these students, they argued that the universities are not doing enough to address issues such as inequality, funding, timely disbursement of allowances, and registrations of students. The students at these aforementioned universities also complained about high tuition fees and poor living conditions on campus. In consonance with our experiences, Cele (2008) also reported that students feel that university administrators and government officials have not heeded their cries or pay attention to their challenges at the university campuses. In the past, student protesters have made several demands, including lowering tuition fees, introduction of free education, hiring more professors and teaching staff, the need to decolonise education and the provision of more financial assistance to students from low-income households, among others (Dayimani, 2021; Laurore, 2016; SABC News, 2021; Mavunga, 2019; Mavunga, 2019; Mutekwe, 2017).

Universities are not without their challenges when it comes to managing student unrest. One of the major challenges in managing student unrest is universities' inability to identify the underlying causes of unrest prior to the protest (Alimba, 2008). In many cases, the causes are unclear and can be difficult to address. Sometimes, the students may be protesting against an issue that is beyond the control of the school or university administration. For example, a hike in tuition fees and funding might be beyond the control of the college authorities, but the students may protest against this. Another challenge faced by the university management on student unrest is an inadequate and/or disruptive communication system on campus (Muli, 2012) to communicate transparent and accountable policies and university decisions to students. Perhaps this is why Odu (2014) recommended that effectively communicating with students will ensure that they understand and support any action taken. Other important challenges of managing student unrest includes external and political interferences of social groups, such as staff unions and external political parties who may have one or two interests regarding university operations (Srivastava, 2017). Nonetheless, university administrators and the concerned stakeholders must address these issues in order to restore absolute peace on campus and ensure that learning continues uninterrupted and that university aims and objectives are achieved as and when due.

Literature shows a huge lacuna between the perpetual student unrest and its destructive implication on the management of universities vis-à-vis its productivities. Research conducted in Nigeria identified that the unrelenting student unrest in tertiary institutions has severally impacted the speedy actualisation of the goals and objectives, such as a delay in students' graduation within four years (Aluede *et al*., 2005; Omonijo *et al*., 2014). Other studies also argued that many students spent up to six years on a four-year course in Nigeria due to student unrest-related reasons (Omodan, 2019). Research conducted in Kenya also indicated that the dichotomies between students and university management had

affected university productivity, such as that the culture of teaching and learning that was interrupted during these unrests (Okeyo, 2017). In Zimbabwe, the issue of students' unrest is not different, as many universities were shut down during and after student protests to maintain peace and orderliness (Gukurume, 2017). Limitless to this, South Africa, which is the centre of this study, shared its consequential effects such as disruption of academic activities, burning of public properties as in the case of the University of the Free State, QwaQwa campus on 4 April 2022, where students burnt down the school clinic and other valuable properties. Other relevant examples of the ills of student unrest on universities in different countries of the world abound in previous and current research. This indicates that many solutions provided in the past, as indicated above, are not effective; hence, there is a need to explore effective conditions that could enhance the management of student unrest in South African universities. Therefore, the place of decolonial thinking and doing is imminent to ensure that all stakeholders are right-minded towards university productivity.

Theoretical framework: Decolonial Perspective

This study is underpinned by decolonial theory to deconstruct the management styles of the university system to manage student unrest and provide an alternative mindset for the students to press home their demands. Decoloniality is an approach that challenges Western colonial and imperial legacies by promoting self-determination and autonomy for oppressed people (Birmingham, 2008; Coetzee, 2019; Mignolo, 2011; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). That is, it has its roots in the struggle against European colonialism in Africa and has since been taken up as a political project by activists and scholars around the world. We also agree with Mpofu (2018), that decoloniality is the process of liberating oneself from the mental coloniality that continues to dictate our thinking and behaviour long after physical colonialism has ended. It is an effort to undo the damage inflicted by centuries of subjugation and build a new

future based on justice, equality, and respect (Tomar, 2019). In the same vein, it is also conceptualised as a political process that must reflect and shape all aspects of lives for the better, including education. That is to say that decoloniality is not just a theoretical framework; it is also a practical approach to social change towards promoting the rights of the marginalised groups, challenging forms of oppression and building alternative institutions that empower communities to determine their own futures.

In Africa, the concept of decoloniality has been taken up by several movements and organisations working towards self-determination and social justice. These include the Pan-Africanist Congress, the Black Consciousness Movement, and the Decolonial International Network, among others. The concept of decoloniality has also been taken up by scholars working in various fields, including history, religion, sociology, anthropology, political science, natural sciences, and education (Dube *et al.*, 2017; Cooper, 2015; Ndlovu-Gatsheni *et al.*, 2015). These scholars are critical of how knowledge is produced and disseminated in Western academia, and they seek to promote alternative ways of knowing rooted in marginalised people's experiences. This means decoloniality is a powerful tool for social change, and its impact is already being felt worldwide. As more people become aware of the legacies of colonialism and the need for self-determination, the concept of decoloniality will continue to gain strength.

From the preceding arguments, one could argue that decoloniality is relevant to this study because it creates institutions that reflect the diversity of the people and the society, including the university system. Therefore, the assumed powerless need to be empowered by giving voice to those who have been silenced for too long (Dalvit, 2021). In this case, students are regarded as the powerless who always feel marginalised by the university management and the subsequent governments. This further confirms the need for a decolonial management process where justice and equity are prevalent in the

universities to give room for conducive learning environments that are welcoming and inclusive for all students. This is important because the experiences of the marginalised are often left out of dominant narratives and because these narratives can be used to perpetuate discrimination and violence. This is also relevant because student movements around the world are increasingly using the language of decolonisation to challenge the perceived oppressive structures and systems.

However, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to decolonising student unrest, but cognisance must be centred on the voices and experiences of those who have been most impacted by colonialism, most especially in South Africa, by building a management system that values solidarity across differences, acknowledging different roles play in the changing world. Based on this, the study explores managerial conditions for the effective management of student unrest in South Africa.

Research Question

Based on the above analysis, the following general research question was raised to guide the study:

- What are the managerial conditions for effective management of student unrest in South Africa?

Research Objective

In order to answer the above research question, the following objectives were formulated to pilot the research process.

- The study explores the possible managerial conditions that could enhance the effective management of student unrest in South Africa.

METHODOLOGY

This section discusses the methodological process involved in the process of answering the research question. This ranges from the research approach and paradigm, research design, participants and participant selection method, data collection methods, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

Research Approach and Paradigm

The study is located in a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research is an important tool for understanding social phenomena, human behaviour, and psychological processes (Crabtree & Miller, 2022; Dionigi *et al.*, 2022; Singh, 2015; Teherani *et al.*, 2015). This kind of approach is used when the researcher depends on the use of in-depth interviews, participant observation, and focus groups (Eysenbach & Köhler, 2002) which is the case in this study as the in-depth interviews with the selected participants were used to collect information. On the other hand, the study is lensed within the transformative paradigm. The transformative paradigm has been gaining popularity as the best approach for conducting qualitative research targeted toward transforming people and communities.

This is because the paradigm emphasises the need to bring about change in both the researcher and the researched (Mertens, 2007). That is, the essence of conducting research under the transformative paradigm is to ensure that practical solutions that could transform and emancipate the researched are provided. In other words, it is a participatory approach that ensures that all stakeholders facing the problem are involved in finding a solution to the problem (Hurtado, 2015). Transformative paradigm also believes that knowledge is not fixed but is constantly being created and recreated through our interactions with others. This means there is always scope for new understanding and insights to be gained through such a research process. Hence, the paradigm is relevant

because the intention of the researchers is to provide a lasting solution to the problem of student unrest for the purpose of transforming the university system through peace and tranquillity.

Research Design

The study adopted participatory research as a research design. Participatory research is a research design that involves researchers and participants working together to co-create knowledge (Berge *et al*., 2009; Lau & Stille, 2014). It is a participatory, collaborative, and emancipative process that puts the power in the hands of those most affected by the research topic (Afonu, 2015; Hergenrather *et al*., 2009). Participatory research has its roots in participatory action research (PAR), which was developed in the 1970s as a way to challenge traditional, top-down research methods (Brydon-Miller & Maguire, 2009). The researchers in this field believe that those closest to the problem are also best positioned to find solutions, so they advocate for an inclusive, participatory approach to research. Participatory research takes a step further by involving participants in the research process and giving them an equal stake in creating knowledge. In this study, the participants were engaged not as mere participants but as co-researchers, enabling the researchers to develop robust solutions to the problem.

Participants and Selection of Participants

The participants comprise ten university stakeholders from three universities across South Africa. They included three student leaders, two lecturers, two campus staff of Personnel of the University Protection Services, otherwise regarded as campus securities, and three management staff. The students' leaders were important to this study because they are the one that usually leads or stage student protest across campuses of the universities in South Africa. Lectures were also involved because they are usually affected during a protest in the form of classroom boycotts and academic shutdowns. The University

Protection Services/campus securities personnel were also the major staff responsible for maintaining law and order on campuses during the social unrest. The university management staff were selected because they were the centre of the target for students during the protest. That is, the majority of the protests are caused because of the dichotomous relationships between the students and university authorities.

These students, lecturers, and the University Protection Services/campus securities were selected using the convenient sampling method. This method was considered appropriate because they are all qualified as long as they are a member of the selected university. However, the categories of the participants (students, lecturers, and the University Protection Services/campus securities) are also uneasy about being located based on their schedules. Hence, the use of accidental usage of the available ones is imminent. The management staff was selected using purposive sampling because the targeted management members are in charge of student management, such as the head of student affairs, among others. The three selected universities were selected based on the intensity level of unrest. That is, they are identified as universities with robust and incident experiences in student unrest.

Method of Data Collection

An in-depth interview was adopted to elicit information from the participants. This is appropriate because it enables the participants to freely contribute to the research process as one of the people facing the problem at hand. This was considered relevant because it allowed the researchers to get to know the participants more personally and holistically and learn more about their problems, experience, and how to ameliorate the problem. In order to make the most of this opportunity, there are a few things one should keep in mind. We prepared a list of questions based on the general research question, which helped to structure the conversation and ensure that the topic was covered. Since this is not a race to see who can ask the most questions in the shortest

possible time, we took our time to really listen to the answers and get to know the person behind the issues.

Method of Data analysis

Thematic analysis was adopted to analyse the collected data. Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method used to analyse text from transcripts of interviews, focus group discussions, or open-ended survey responses, among others. According to Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006), this involves identifying, coding, and analysing themes in the data. Themes are patterns that emerge from the data that can be used to understand the data in a deeper way. The first step in conducting a thematic analysis is to read through the data and identify potential themes (Clarke *et al*., 2015). Themes can be identified by looking for patterns in the data. Once potential themes have been identified, they can be coded. Coding is the process of assigning codes to segments of text that represent a theme (Braun & Clarke, 2014). This could be words, phrases, or numbers. After the data has been coded, the coded data can be categorised into themes. Themes are usually identified by looking for patterns in the codes and then making sense by interpreting the data. We implement this by presenting the themes according to the data as indicated below.

Ethical Consideration

The study was approved by the ethical committee of the principal author's institution with protocol number FEDREC 03-11-21. The study's ethical concerns were followed by assuring all participants were informed about the research and consented to participate freely and without hesitation. They were assured that their names would remain anonymous throughout the study as well as after it was finished. Finally, once the research is published, no one will be able to connect their statement to them. Their coded identities were allocated as follows: Students were coded with SL1, SL2, and SL3, lecturers were coded with

UL1 and UL2, and the security officers were coded with SP1 and SP2. At the same time, the management staff was coded with UM1, UM2, and UM3. See the below analysis.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The data were presented following the principles of thematic analysis to respond to the research question and the study's objective. The theme: adequate communication and informed awareness, was discovered from the collected data.

Adequate Communication and Informed Awareness

Communication is one of the instruments for effective management of the university system; it is useful for managing student unrest and important in managing all human capital available in the system (Aula & Siira, 2010; Rajhans, 2012). However, the need for an informed society is also one of the beauties of organisational communication, which the participants have described as the cardinal condition of managing student unrest in the university system. The participants indicated these during interviews:

> **SL1:** *"There must be a way to put a system in place by the management that ensures that there is no intermediary between management and we students SRC because sending some other authorities to us sometimes distorts the original message from the school management."*

> **SL2:** *"There must be continual orientations of first-year students whereby the management will tell students about the DOs and DON'Ts in the university."*

> **UL1:** *"When there are germane situations, or students request the university management need to respond urgently, the university management should do that in time without delaying such communications."*

> **UM1:** *"It is always appreciable for university management to take and communicate their decisions and have frequent discussions with students because these decisions will affect students."*

> **UL2:** *"The one that I think is more of power and communication, that is university needs to establish effective means of communicating with students to lessen the power brigandage between them. I think communication is important. Yes, it is."*

> **SP1:** *"So I still believe that the institution must communicate with students and also adopt new technological resources."*

From the statement by SL1, there is a need for a system that will allow communication to flow between the university management and the students without a middleman or an interruption that could hinder the original message. According to the participants, this is important because when there is a middleman, the message could be misinformed, which could lead to issues. In the statement SL2, the participants believe that orientations should be intensified to enable management to adequately inform students, especially new ones in the system. According to him, the dos and don'ts of the university are needed to be communicated to the students in clear and understandable terms. We also argue that if this is done, it will enable the students to be on the same page with university management towards actualising the aims and objectives of the university without any rancour. In the lecturer's statement (UL1), management should always respond to issues swiftly by making informed communication on issues at and. This may be because when students are agitating, and the management is in the known, then the management should make sure they let students know that they are working on it. Silence in such a situation may make students feel neglected, which may cause protests among students leading to unrest. On the part of management, UM1 believes that one of the best conditions to assist in managing student unrest is when the decision is communicated to students in time without delay. This is also in consonance with the opinion of UL2 that the university "needs to

establish effective means of communicating with students" to bridge the possible power differentials between the two stakeholders, that is, students and university authorities. The position of a security officer is also the same by recommending that the university must ensure that there is smooth communication between students and the university itself.

Furthermore, the participants also indicated that communication is good, but the students must be informed by making them familiar to the happenings; orientating and re-orientating them is also fundamental to managing student unrest in the university system. These surfaces in the participants' statements below:

> **UM3:** *"Uhhh [clears throat], I think the most important area to look at is educating the students through frequent communication from the upper management level. The students should be aware of why they are here, within the institution, and whom they are working with."*

> **UM2:** *"Since students seem ill-informed, we must be prepared to educate them, to sit around, for instance, the management can even call what is called an Imbizo in Xhosa, a gathering of many people. Where adequate information could be related to the students."*

> **SL3:** *"…but the university needs to open some forums with the efforts of student affairs, where there will be people invited from outside to inform and make us know some of these things above NSFAS [National Students' Financial Aid Scheme] funds which causes most of the issues. UM1: On the NSFAS funds, you know we need to start informing students that the university, sometimes, does not have power or control over the funds, but students seem not to know and must be made to know."*

> **SP2:** *"…Invite people who need to come and talk to the students, create forums to talk, have some debates, and have some activities that make students understand that the management understands their concerns and is ready to solve them."*

The statement from UM3 supported the fact that students need to be educated and orientated via adequate communications and informative sections from the university authorities to the lower level of stakeholders. That is, the university is expected to take the lead by making sure that they provide enough and the needed education that will increase the knowledge of the students about the limited resources, the aims, objectives, and the reasons why they must be a partner in the process of pursuing the university goal and objectives. According to the statement by UM2, the students are ill-informed, and there is a need for them to be directed and educated about the happenings in schools. This recommendation could be linked to the fact that the students usually misunderstand the issues of government funding that usually cause student unrest.

Hence, the aggrieved students protest against the university instead of the agency that provides the funding. This could be achieved, according to UM2, by round table and one-on-one discussions. The statement of SL3 also confirms that students need adequate orientation on how NSFAS funding works. NSFAS is one of the funding provided to students by the government of South Africa. The argument of the UM1 also indicated that there is a need for the university to intensify the need to make students know the conditions surrounding the government funds. This perhaps explains why SP2 also recommend that there is need for the university to invite the external expert to come and orientate the students about some of the issues. The idea here may be that when external persons are involved, it may create some level of trust in the mind of the students. Therefore, the theme "adequate communication and informed awareness are fundamental in managing student unrest. This is further justified in the discussion of findings.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Based on the above analysis, two findings were discerned namely: adequate communication and informed awareness in the university system.

Adequate communication

Based on the preceding analysis, it was found that effective organisational communication between the university stakeholders, most especially between the students and the university authorities, is a conducive condition that could enhance the management of student unrest. For the university to experience relative peace, the university management should devise a means of adequately communicating with students at all times to avoid undue protest and student unrest. This finding is consistent with the argument that effective communication, both vertical and horizontal communication, encourages successful organisational change and inclusive relationships among the organisational stakeholders (Chen, 2019; Husain, 2013). On the other hand, Muli (2012) and Birya (2020) also found out that poor communication flow in the university system is responsible for students' unrest. Therefore, the university must galvanise its human and material resources to ensure effective communication flow in the system. The argument of Park (2020) also confirms that effective communication will ensure effective management of human capital; therefore, good communication in the university system is one of the conditions that will enhance the management of student unrest in the system.

Informed awareness

Based on the above analysis, it was revealed that informed awareness of students in the university system would promote adequate peace and enhance effective management of student unrest. That is, one of the conditions that could enhance the management of student unrest is to

ensure that students are adequately informed about the dos and done, university policies, aims and objectives, including the goal to enable them to work in the same space with university management towards peace and tranquillity. This finding is consistent with the argument that information is power (Bowie, 1995), and when students are adequately informed about the university focus, they are bound to work towards actualising such focus, which may reduce the rate of students' unrest in the university system. This is also in consonance with Vázquez *et al*. (2014) finding that students' awareness increases students' sustainable social responsibility, satisfaction, and credible attitude. Hence, a socially conscious student will be less inclined to protest or unleash unnecessary unrest.

DECOLONIAL NEXUS OF THE FINDINGS

Since coloniality was a project that disconnected and shifted the people and their ways of doing to the Eurocentric and Americentric system, which has set African people against their epistemic space, it is fundamental to continue to reconstruct knowledge that emanated from the imposition of the assumed superiors. The university system created by "the coloniality" in Africa and the subsequent Apartheid regime in South Africa made students believe that the only way to fight for justice was through protests and agitations for unrest in the university system. On the other hand, university management always appears as the powerful who cannot be challenged. This perceived disparity calls for systemic harmonisation of the two stakeholders, which calls for decoloniality to liberate the university system from self-inflicted coloniality that continues to dictate the thinking and behaviour of university stakeholders. In order to undo the damage of such infliction and subjugation, there is a need to carry along the university stakeholders, including students in the management of the university system, by ensuring effective communication and adequate awareness to make students aware of their university environment. This will build a

new and decolonised future that is based on principles of justice, equality and respect (Tomar, 2019).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study explored possible conditions that could enhance the management of student unrest in the university system using a transformative, participatory and decolonial worldview. The study concludes that communication is fundamental in ensuring relatively good relationships between students and university authorities in South Africa. Thus, when students are informed about the happenings in the university system will lessen the urge for unrest and consequentially enhance effective management of the system. Therefore, the study presents that communication and student awareness are the dimensions of effective student unrest management in a decolonial university operations space. Based on this, the following recommendations were made:

- That the universities in South Africa should ensure that there are effective channels that could facilitate effective vertical, horizontal, downwards and upwards communication flow in the university system. This will enable students to have adequate knowledge of how things are done and when and how to take action against and or in support of situations.
- Secondly, students should be made aware of the university's styles, policies, aims, objectives, and goals, enabling students and other stakeholders to see and act naturally within the organisational directions.

CHAPTER 6:
FAITH IN DEMOCRACY: PROSPECT FOR RENEWAL AMID STUDENT UNREST IN SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

Student and faculty protests against political tyranny, university maladministration, shambolic student treatment, unethical practices, and mismanagement in nation-states continue to tarnish universities' reputations. As a result, the public, which has high expectations of our universities, is disturbed by the contrast between the image of an institution that claims to be completely and honestly committed to rational and progressive ideas and the violence and protest affiliated with our institutions. Therefore, this chapter examines the causes of recurrent student unrest, the role of student protests in democratization debates and processes, and the preservation of excellent education and quality of life in South African institutions. This book chapter employed a systematic review in which a survey of literature from books, journals, and the website was undertaken to examine the obsolete authoritarian and

exclusive decision-making techniques in addressing institutional issues that do not foster democratic values and practices among students. The review also examines the institutional and state responses to student unrest and how university leaders may make the most of students' participation in university governance as a democratic training ground. The study revealed that the causes of student unrest are myriad and are mostly results of power bearers' failure to respond to students' concerns and interests, resulting in confrontation by those affected. The chapter further revealed that most higher education institutions prefer to maintain the closed-off status quo, hence using force to suppress students' disagreements on their campuses which leads to student unrest. The study, therefore, concludes that enforcing measures to resolve student unrest is ineffective. As a result, student unrest should not be viewed merely as a destabilizing force, but as one of the most powerful social forces capable of influencing a nation's and Higher Education Institutions' quality.

Keywords:

Democracy, education, higher education institutions, student unrest, violence

INTRODUCTION

When South Africa declared independence in 1994 and established the Government of National Unity, it began a dramatic transition process characterised by stable institutions, assured constitutionality, and a semblance of democratic and representative governance. Despite the adoption of several "transformative policy positions and strategies encapsulated in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) as part of an integrated reform programme to meet citizens' basic needs, particularly education and sustained economic growth, this policy has had implications for all sectors of the society to re-think and engage in the pursuit of developmental goals" (Wolpe, 1995, p. 5). The post-

apartheid government, which was democratically elected, inherited a higher education system that lacked public trust and confidence (Muswede, 2017). As a result, higher education institutions in South Africa needed to reform in order to meet the needs of a democratic higher education system (Sehoole & Adeyemo, 2016).

This need for transformation was driven by a "belief in higher education's ability to provide opportunities for self-fulfilment, create critical citizens, encourage free intellectual inquiry, respond to contextualized societal and economic needs (high-level skills), and produce knowledge for a modern economy" (Council on Higher Education, 2004, p. 20). As a top priority, higher education institutions were saddled with the responsibilities of reconceptualization of empowerment, human rights, and other related social configurations battered by the apartheid nuances (Muswede, 2017; Öztürk & Jarbandhan, 2020). Thus, in the guise of radical trade unionism, agitated student discontent, service delivery protests, and human rights advocacy, the fight for quality higher education in South Africa has remained at the heart of the current social change program (Muswede, 2017). Therefore, given the long history of student protests in South Africa's higher education system, which dates back to the colonialism and apartheid era, recent political changes have done little to quell student unrest in various institutions (Morwe, Garcia-Espana, & Luescher, 2018). As a result, this chapter investigates the causes of recurrent student unrest as well as the significance of student protests in democratization debates and processes, quality education, and quality living in South African institutions.

CONTEXTUALISING STUDENT UNREST IN SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

While numerous scholars have agreed that student unrest, whether violent or nonviolent, is a kind of social action, no commonly accepted definition of this phrase exists. As a result, the exact meaning of student unrest continues to be extensively discussed and argued among

researchers in several works of literature. According to Onivehu (2021), student unrest, often known as students' protest, refers to disagreements between students and other important parties in the university system. As such, "lecturers, non-academic staff, administrators, policymakers, politicians, and the host community, among others," may be involved in discussions on resource distribution and other matters influencing student welfare (Onivehu, 2021, p. 10). On the other hand, student unrest is described as students' dissatisfaction with the school or institution and its goals expressed in a way that violates explicit or implicit ethical rules and interrupts the educational process (Swart & Hertzog, 2017).

Student unrest has a long history in higher education, particularly in South Africa. At the time of the current study, a simple google scholar search for the exact keyword "student unrest" yielded over 161 000 results, with over 14 100 results listed for 2021 alone, the most of which are from African, American, and Asian countries. While it has been argued that student unrest shares some characteristics or similarities with organised crime, scholars have cautioned that it should not be overblown but reflect the crises that institutions have been experiencing (Holmes, Scanlon, & Niblett, 2012; Swart & Hertzog, 2017). Student unrest often poses safety concerns to faculty, students, and the general public. In South African universities, student unrest continues to be more prevalent nearly two decades after the end of apartheid. However, since the advent of democracy in 1994, the focus has shifted from directing strikes and protests against the government (as it was during the apartheid era) to higher education institutions and administration (Dominguez-Whitehead, 2011).

It is widely known that during the 1990s, attempts were made in South Africa to transform the higher education sector, given that higher education was one of the primary areas targeted for reform by the new post-1994 national government to undo the impacts of apartheid's segregated education systems (Petrus, 2019). More importantly, the

then-newly formed National Council on Higher Education (NCHE) regarded higher education as a critical component in post-apartheid South African society (Reddy, 2006; Heleta, 2016). While it has been argued that higher education institutions' (HEIs') transformation has been slow at best since the 1990s, the nationwide student protests of 2015, such as the #RhodesMustFall and Fees Must Fall campaigns, acted as a catalyst for change that had a significant impact on the higher education sector (Petrus, 2019).

Since 2015, there have been three distinct phases in the quest for rapid transformation in higher education institutions. In March 2015, the first phase, #RhodesMustFall, began and was followed by the second phase, Fees Must Fall. These protests waned during the first half of 2016 but were reignited in August 2016 (Petrus, 2019). Therefore, the third phase saw the Decolonisation of the Higher Education Movement, which is the current phase (Muswede, 2017; Petrus, 2019; Omodan, 2021). While it is impossible to say when one phase ended and the next began, the topic of a fee-free decolonised education system has been a top priority for the South African government and the student population who has had enough of excuses and could not take it any longer (Somo, 2016). Therefore, drawing on the National Development Plan (NDP), which states unequivocally that education, training, and innovation are critical to South Africa's long-term development (Muswede, 2017; Petrus, 2019), it is vital to underline the importance of these features as key components in alleviating poverty and reducing inequality by creating the cornerstone for an equal society.

METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This book chapter examines the causes and forms of student unrest, as well as institutional and corporate responses to crisis management. It also discussed how student unrest has been addressed using obsolete authoritarian and exclusive decision-making processes. As such, this chapter employed a desktop/literature review approach which includes

document analysis, and conceptual analysis of secondary sourced data. The sources of data include reports and policies, newspaper articles, as well as several recently peer-reviewed journals. The search was conducted through electronic databases and search engines such as the GoogleScholar, ERIC, SCOPUS, and Researchgate, as they are some of the most relevant information platforms that access the most significant publications of different areas of knowledge. In particular, with regard to issues of student unrest in the South African higher education system, these databases provide valuable information to the desktop review proposed in this chapter.

Therefore, based on discussions and documentation in the South African context, the number and size of public universities in the country are given in Table 1 below. The universities in the table below were selected to give diversity in site, growth patterns, variety, and intensity of student unrest.

Table 1: Number and Sizes of Nine Selected Public Universities in South Africa in 2019

Provinces	Name of Institutions *	Enrolments # (2019)	Provincial Population +	Index of Representation $
Eastern Cape	Rhodes University	8 247	6 519	1:1
Free State	University of the Free State	41 505	2 917	14:1
Gauteng	University of Johannesburg	50 590	15 055	3:1
KwaZulu-Natal	University of KwaZulu Natal	50 158	11 363	4:1
Limpopo	University of Limpopo	21 490	5 933	4:1
Mpumalanga	University of Mpumalanga	3 471	4 605	1:1

Northern Cape	Sol Plaatje University	1 994	1 246	2:1
North West	North West University	63 671	3 997	16:1
Western Cape	University of Cape Town	28 641	6 794	4:1
	Total	269 767	58 429	49:1

Sources:

* *The Republic of South Africa (2022): South Africa's provinces.*

Department of Higher Education and Training (2021): Statistics on Post-School Education and Training in South Africa: 2019.

+ *Galal (2021): Total Population of South Africa 2019, by provinces.*

$ *The representation index provides information on the ratio of the number of people in the province to one university student. Obviously, North-West University and the University of the Free State have the highest representation index.*

CAUSES OF RECURRENT STUDENT UNREST IN SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

The causes of students' unrest are myriad. However, strikes and protests nowadays do not have the same motivations as during the apartheid era. For instance, student protests primarily targeted the oppressive state during the apartheid era. However, in the post-apartheid years, protests have shifted to institutional grievances such as fee hikes, academic or financial exclusions, poor student residence facilities, unaccountable student leadership, and protests against the inadequate size of state financial aid awards and state-implemented mergers (Cloete, 2006; Dominguez-Whitehead, 2011; Muswede, 2017; Omodan, 2021). Although students do no longer protest against apartheid-related macro issues that affect all students, such as segregation or violation of academic freedom, instead they rally around "narrow interests" that

affect specific groups of students, such as financial-aid issues and merger-related concerns that impact a specific group of student (Koen, Mlungisi, & Libhaber, 2006; Dominguez-Whitehead, 2011; Speckman, 2015; Onivehu, 2021; Omodan, 2021). However, these purportedly narrow concerns, particularly those linked to financial aid, are increasingly becoming broad fundamental elements that affect many students and are not always separated from the nation's macroeconomic policies (Dominguez-Whitehead, 2011; Onivehu, 2021).

While many studies have linked internal and external factors to student unrest or protest, Odebode (2019) believed that university students might participate in protests over various problems. This protest may or may not be directly related to the university system or based on current and severe issues in society and the global community (Odebode, 2019; Omodan, 2020). For Kiboiy (2013), Mungania and Kihoro (2017), as well as Omodan (2020), university students' unrest can be attributed to inadequate facilities, internal provocation, university management styles, poverty, external influences, poor upbringing, and unemployment of university graduates. Similarly, several researchers have attributed other causes of this unrest to student unhappiness with the state of some university residences, student funding issues, and student financial exclusion (Higher Education South Africa, 2011; Ntongana, 2017; Naidu, 2020; Phagane, 2021).

Despite evidence of increased access to higher education in South African institutions since 1994, as indicated in policy papers such as the National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE), some researchers argue that there has been an inadequate political incentive to ensure that the majority of students' goals are met (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2007; Muswede & Sebola, 2018). Similarly, despite the African National Congress's (ANC) Framework for Education and Training (1994), which predicted dramatic transformations from apartheid's education system to one based on inclusivity and the acceptance of democratic ideals, and practices as well as inadequate political commitment to ensure that the majority of

students' hopes are realized remains a challenge (Wolpe, 1995; Akoojee & Nkomo, 2008; Sayed, *et al.* 2020). As a result, in most cases, pre-1994 institutional frameworks remain in place, even though critical issues like access, redress, and equity coexist with some progressive democratic achievements (Wolpe, 1995; Sayed, *et al*. 2020). This has, therefore, "prompted stakeholders in the sector, particularly students and civic groups, to question the capability of government and its willingness to commit to the transformation process as opposed to paying lip service to their grievances" (Muswede & Sebola, 2018, p.2).

According to Akoojee and Nkomo (2007), a lack of sustained investment in financial and material resources thwarted efforts to properly execute the above-stated plans and policies. Furthermore, the state has shown a limited capacity to mobilise the necessary operational resources to establish the enabling environment for implementing its reform agenda, particularly the provision of high-quality education (Muswede & Sebola, 2018). Thus, after realising that the process of a radical change in the education system has failed to deliver on its mandate more than two decades into democracy, violent student protests erupted and have left the South African education system on the "knife's edge" (Cloete, 2016, p. 6). While there are several causes of student unrest in the country, Tjønneland (2017) posits that continuous student unrest in South Africa is a prominent representation of the country's higher education's flaws and failures. Tjønneland (2017) further argued that the upheaval had become a symbol of growing dissatisfaction with South Africa's current state, including its vast inequities, pervasive poverty, and high youth unemployment.

CATEGORIES OF CAUSES OF STUDENT UNREST

The events that occurred after twenty-seven years of democracy were summarised and grouped according to key motives to map out the pattern of student unrest. Table 2 shows the four groups of linked causes that emerged.

1. Academic: academic issues included demonstrations against tough examinations, lecturer ineptitude, book shortages, introduction of additional courses, and favouritism in teaching and assessments.
2. Managerial: management and resource allocation challenges centred on administrative shortcomings, resource distribution conflicts, campus discipline issues, and management style controversies inside the university. Managerial issues, by extension, cover crisis management.
3. Political: issues outside the university's control and physical bounds. This includes protests against imperialism, capitalist exploitation, targeted killings, mismanagement, government failures, meddling in university matters, and prioritizing political matters and investment paths.
4. Student welfare: poor food, crowded dorms, inadequate catering, freedom in residential halls, quality and conducive residence, and access to recreational and guidance services are all examples of welfare issues.

Table 2: Causes of student unrest in selected South African Universities after twenty-seven years of democracy

Types of Causes of Student Unrest				
Universities and the nature of the crisis	Academic	Managerial	Political	Welfare
[1] Rhodes University	----	Financial exclusion; Tuition fee increase.	University change of name because of #feesmustfall protest.	Infrastructure and facilities; intimidation and threats of violence toward staff and students; racial abuse towards staff members; sexual assaults and rape cases.
[2] University of Free State	----	Financial exclusion; tuition fee increase; students accusing management of backtracking on its promises to assist poor students.	Inadequate subsidy funding; nationwide tuition fee hike.	Payment of accommodation allowances for students residing off-campus directly to landlords and not to students themselves; allowances for food and book.
[3] University of Johannesburg	----	Demand for free and decolonised education; student registration; financial exclusion; scrapping of the registration fee.	Student funding; affordable/free education; zero percent fee increase.	Residence maintenance issues, residence and protection services; implementation of the university workers' charter; fair pay and job security for university workers; mandatory vaccination.

[4] University of KwaZulu Natal	----	Extension of the registration period to ensure that no student is left behind; Financial exclusion results from historical debt; historical student debt prevents graduation.	Delay in student funding decisions and payment of allowances; suspension of student leadership without valid cause.	Student accommodation, particularly the alleged collusion between students and private accommodation landlords; mandatory vaccination and the lack of consultation; and safety and security on campus.
[5] University of Limpopo	----	Registration delays; financial clearance; immediate appeal outcome; cancellation of students' historical debt; and students carrying debt be permitted to enrol.	Funding delays; increased student funding; student allowances; free education.	Malfunctioning Wi-Fi and student data; social visits across residencies.
[6] University of Mpumalanga	----	Mal-administration; tuition fee increase; financial exclusion; call for historical debts to be scrapped; free registration for all students.	Student funding; delay in the payment of student allowances.	Accommodation funding; meal allowances.
[7] Sol Plaatje University	----	Financial exclusion of those with outstanding fees.	----	Unavailability of on-campus accommodation for first-year students; catering - the quality of food in the cafeteria.

[8] North West University	Racism and language policy.	Financial exclusion; tuition fee hike, and historical debts.	Student funding; replacement of student representative council without valid reasons.	Vaccination policy.
[9] University of Cape Town	Language and academic policies; access to academic materials	Tuition fee increase; slow transformation process; fee blocks; financial exclusion; historical fee debt; student registration.	Cecil Rhodes statue removal (#feesmustfall protest); Higher Education Minister's resignation; student funding.	Shortage of infrastructures such as beds for students; housing problems; job security.

Sources:

1. *Student protest in democratic South Africa (South Africa History online (SAHO), 2022);*
2. *The time has come for Universities to take harsh action against violent student protests (Peterson, 2022);*
3. *The University of Johannesburg engages residence protesters – maintenance upgrades underway (University of Johannesburg, 2016); Students barricade universities in Johannesburg and Gqeberha (Evans & Chirume, 2021);*
4. *Recent student protests: UKZN, DUT, USAF & SAUS input (Higher Education, Science and Innovation, 2022);*
5. *The University of Limpopo turns into 'war zone' as protests erupt (The Citizens, 2020); Scholars at risk (Scholars at Rist Network, 2020)*
6. *The University of Mpumalanga students make new demand (deVilliers, 2015); Students of the University of Mpumalanga protest in demand of allowances (Lowvelder, 2020);*
7. *Violent protests bring Sol Plaatje University to a standstill (Mkize, 2022); Students at Sol Plaatje University protest over cafeteria (Mekoa, 2019);*
8. *#NWURacism students protest language policy (Moosa, 2018);*
9. *UCT students shut down campus over registration and outstanding fee debt issues (O'Regan, 2022); Protest action continues at UJ and UCT (Nicolaides & Mortlock, 2015); WATCH | UCT students shut down campus in protest over financial exclusion (Charles, 2021).*

As shown in Table 2 above, the causes of student unrest are neither new nor unique in South African universities. While managerial, political, and welfare issues were major causes of student unrest, academic issues were infrequent in South African universities. Based on the above, it is evident that if the nation is to produce responsible and civil leaders for tomorrow, the issue of student life in universities requires more consideration. While the issue of resource constraint is genuine, other concerns are related to management culture. Similarly, in terms of the common causes, it is only natural that governments that promote higher education have a say in how these institutions' capacity, staffing policies, and broad categories of offers are planned. However, governments have been accused of intruding on academic liberty regarding what should be taught, how, and to whom, as well as the university's independence in operational matters, in order to fulfil their lawful function. This has been one of the major sources of instability on university campuses and anti-government protests, especially when many regimes' legitimacy is questioned.

STUDENT UNREST IN DEMOCRATIZATION DEBATES AND MAINTENANCE OF QUALITY EDUCATION

It has been argued that through democratic processes, student activism can help students develop critical thinking, collaboration, organisation, citizenship, identity consciousness, civic involvement, and leadership abilities (Kezar, 2010; Syed, 2013; Barnhardt, Sheets, & Pasquesi, 2015). However, in higher education institutions, students are frequently barred from influencing decision-making (Ropers-Huilman, Carwile, & Barnett, 2005; Garwe, 2017). This is because student activists are sometimes misunderstood as troublemakers influenced by politicians (Garwe, 2017). This unfavourable picture of student activism, particularly in postcolonial African countries, contrasts sharply with the past's positive and progressive perceptions of such protests (Zeilig, 2009; Garwe, 2017).

Nunyonameh (2012) has recently portrayed and erroneously limited the importance of student activism in democratisation by offering support through demonstrations, lobbying, and power appointments. Nunyonameh (2012) also claims that student activism uses similar tactics to topple elected officials, particularly when those officials are in breach of the 'social contract.' Unfortunately for democracy and social justice, if this is how student social action is regarded, activism's function "can only produce low-quality democracy" (Diamond & Morlino, 2005 p 49). Despite the fact, that university campuses have become more democratic as a result of human rights regulations, Keet, Nel and Sattarzadeh (2017:91) argue that 'the major issues that students formulated during these informal discussions suggested that the intuitive justice expectations that students have are not adequately facilitated by rights-based regimes.' To put it another way, the practical quintessence of rights does not always imply its acknowledgement. For Stuurman (2018), this means that student activism has played a crucial role in regaining and repositioning students' voices in higher education decision-making processes and holding the government accountable. This vantage point is buoyed by Van der Merwe and Van Reenen (2016, p. vi), who argue that "the demands for 'Africanisation' and 'decolonisation' of higher education, as articulated by the 'new' student social movements, have now emerged in South Africa and elsewhere as a powerful critique and form of resistance that insists on its own criticality".

While the complexity of modern society limits direct democracy, participation by all is essential because it fosters shared interests, a common will, and collaborative action, all of which unavoidably provide legitimacy to politics. As such, scholars who have maintained that participation is an acceptable part of human nature have recognised the role that student unrest, however violent, plays in bringing about reforms and development (Rhoads, 1998; Mouffe, 2000; Ekiert & Kubik, 2001; Garwe, 2017). Research has also shown that by tackling challenges of academic, social, political, and economic character, leveraging the good parts of student activism has the potential to favourably improve the

quality of higher education (Astin, Astin, Bayer, & Bisconti, 1975; Bragg, 2007; Linder & Rodriguez, 2012). Therefore, encouraging students to participate actively can improve the quality of education that students receive and may help end disruptive and violent student protests (Garwe, 2017).

Similarly, while research has shown that student unrest is a result of power bearers' failure to respond to students' concerns and interests, resulting in confrontation by those affected (Recabar, 2008), the importance of "pedagogy of voice" in student engagement inspires students to see themselves as significant participants in the learning process (Ranson, 2000; Madden & McGregor, 2013; Gill & Herbst, 2016). Therefore, students who learn in ideal conditions that encourage social activity and are given ample opportunities to contribute in ways that enable sound decision-making to improve the learning environment significantly contribute to society both during and after graduation (Garwe, 2017). In addition, such students can solve critical social issues (Akomolafe & Ibijola, 2011). According to Tsui (2000), involvement through critical thinking is fostered via participation in the decision-making process. It also inculcates students' self-direction skills and commitment (Barnhardt, Sheets, & Pasquesi, 2015), thereby motivating them for democratic practices. Therefore, higher education administrators must recognize that students become alumni the day they enrol at a school and that they must be provided with conducive campus surroundings to build positive relationships that will last a lifetime (Gill & Herbst, 2016; Garwe, 2017). Even though evidence backs up the importance of students' voices in supporting a healthier approach to higher institutions' management and practices, most higher education leaders only pay lip service to it.

AUTHORITARIAN METHODS IN RESOLVING STUDENTS' UNREST IN SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

Building democracies to substitute authoritarian regimes has not been easy or rapid in the past, and it will not be easy or quick in the future. Nonetheless, "for several decades currents of change, sometimes subject to undertows, have generally moved toward more open, participatory and accountable governance" (Lowenthal & Bitar, 2015, p. 8). Higher levels of urbanisation, affluence, education, and literacy have typically supported elevated aspirations of personal liberty and political expression (Labaree, 2012; Lowenthal & Bitar, 2015). New information and communication technologies have intensified these tendencies that make it simpler to mobilise opposing movements (Robins & Webster, 2003; Carroll & Hackett, 2006). As such, people worldwide want to be heard and taken seriously. This need for political expression reintroduces the issue of authoritarian government transitioning to democracy to the world agenda (Lowenthal & Bitar, 2015).

In the case of governance in South African universities, several student protests have occurred over the last few years. Students have demonstrated support for various causes, including free higher education, university decolonization, and gender equality on university campuses (Reinders, 2019; Omodan, 2020). However, universities across South Africa have enhanced security measures on their campuses since the last wave of student protests began in 2015, and "it is safe to argue that securitisation has been the major response to student protests on campus" (Gillespie, 2017, p. 1). Thus, violent conflicts between students and private security or the South African Police Service (SAPS) have been a feature of numerous protests. When it comes to these violent clashes, one must be honest about the fact that violence has become a part of student politics' repertoire (Gillespie, 2017, p. 2). During student unrest, most students demand transparency from university administration and emphasize the importance of discussions to address the plethora of issues that plague university campuses. However, on the other hand,

universities became more interested in retaliating against students who participated in protests by utilising force (Reinders, 2019).

The same dynamics could be seen at most South African universities, where the university had also acquired a court order. "Student leaders were suspended after they disobeyed the court's orders(Malabela, 2017; Reinders, 2019). The university also used court orders to justify putting police into campus, which resulted in violence" (Malabela, 2017, p. 145). This demonstrates universities' willingness to employ procedures like interdicts to get police and private security agencies onto their campuses. It also indicates that many universities emphasise militarisation more than in discussion (Reinders, 2019). As a result of this militarisation, students feel dissatisfied with colleges, resulting in a standoff that leads to resentment (Malabela, 2017; Reinders, 2019). Thus, while a university's historic mission has been to provide an open environment for critical debate, the nurturing of democratic culture, education, and the holistic development of students (Gillespie 2017, p. 1), this is no longer the case at the current South African Higher Education Institutions (Reinders, 2019). This is because most higher education institutions prefer to maintain the closed-off status quo and have demonstrated a willingness to use force to suppress students' disagreements on their campuses. As a result, Reinders (2019) contends that universities' use of authority to restrict students and take away their rights should be investigated.

INSTITUTIONAL AND STATE RESPONSES TO STUDENT UNREST

There has been a lot of student unrest worldwide, and there have been many measures put in place to regulate or respond to it. Czerniewicz, Trotter and Haupt (2019) posit that while considering and implementing actions that would allow university activities to continue in the face of student unrest on campuses, university leadership often engages in various measures, including the hiring of private securities and the use of

blended learning. According to Davies *et al.* (2013), having enough infrastructure in universities, employing discussion, and organizing committees made up of professionals in conflict management and resolution to rapidly mediate student discontent are critical measures for an effective reaction to student unrest. Similarly, incorporating peace education into the school curriculum and course of study to teach students about the significance of resolving conflicts without violence is another strategy to respond to student unrest (Davies *et al.*, 2013). Research has also shown that student unrest could be managed through good communication, steady and affordable tuition fees, an effective leadership style, and student participation in decision-making (Etaneki & Okolie, 2020). Student unrest could also be managed through stable tuition fees and better welfare for students (Akeusola, Viatonu, & Asikhia, 2012). Adeyemi (2009) added that ways to respond to student unrest include signing treaties or agreements with students and university authorities on the prohibition of student unionism and the cooperation of students with school authorities in decision-making.

Similarly, Odebode (2019) recommended counselling as a measure to control student unrest, specifically to bring about a mutual and cordial relationship between school management and students. Ramsbothan, Miall, and Woodhouse (2011) supported intervention, mediation, negotiation, reconciliation, bargaining, and arbitration methods in managing and controlling student unrest. Furthermore, Usman (2013) noted that therapeutic counselling strategies such as silence, boxing the problem, confrontation, and arbitration could be used to control student unrest. Nevertheless, silence control measures should be used with care, as they have the potential to convert nonviolent student protests into violent ones (Usman, 2013). K'okul (2010) also proposed that institutions use advice and counselling to reduce student unrest. In addition, Vincent, Okon, and Njoku (2018) advised that future protests at higher education institutions be managed using corporate communication methods and dispute resolution. Kuji (2016) also contends that infusing citizenship and moral education into the curriculum effectively controls student unrest.

While the preceding suggests that various tactics could be used to manage student protests effectively, it should be emphasised that the appropriate authorities have also used non-constructive measures to suppress student protests. For example, in conflict management, the indiscriminate use of security forces and political thugs to quell student protests has been strongly denounced by experts (Mangcu, 2016; Swart, 2016), given that they add more tension to already volatile conditions.

CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

Based on the above, we argue that student unrest is a multidimensional and complicated phenomenon that, in most cases, cannot be managed with a single or specific tactic, but rather requires a large-scale approach. While higher institution managers are encouraged to incorporate various and diverse techniques and strategies to find a better solution to student unrest, we argue for a more democratic approach to conflict management. This is due to the fact that a democratic approach enables students to express their disagreements and prejudices for them to be discussed and solved. Even amid dispute and disagreement, the democratic framework requires that the moral responsibility of care for the other be maintained. As a result, higher education institutions, in this view, do more than simply solve student unrest or train students to be democratic citizens, but rather they will be introducing them to what is referred to as "the political aspects of existing in plural states, which means facing disagreement on political instead of moral terms" (Davis, 2021, p. 11).

It is also worth noting that student unrest, rather than being considered only a negative force, should be recognized as one of the most potent social forces capable of changing the quality of a nation's and higher education institutions. This is because many student unrests have resulted in positive outcomes which demand accountability, efficiency, democracy, press freedom, better education, and academic freedom, simply confirming that the people's economic and intellectual

development has progressed to the point where they feel sufficiently empowered to assert these demands as their right. It is time for the people to reconsider the university's traditional role as a centre of colonization, global research, and development.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The causes of recurrent student unrest, the role of student protests in democratization debates and processes, the maintenance of quality education, and the preservation of quality life in South African universities were examined in this chapter. The study concludes that, while the causes of students' unrest are myriad and are influenced by several factors, student activism is capable of developing students' critical thinking, collaboration, organization, citizenship, identity consciousness, civic involvement, and leadership abilities. As such, rather than being viewed solely as a negative force, student unrest should be recognised as one of the most powerful social forces capable of influencing a nation's and higher education institutions' quality. Therefore, it is believed that student activism in contemporary South African universities will play a critical part in reforms and progressive changes for the good of society.

This chapter also revealed that student unrest, in reality, shows some of the most intimate and personal aspects of how institutions are run, disclosing exploitation, inefficiency, and conflict. It is worth noting that nobody benefits from allowing the university's reputation to be significantly tarnished for an extended period because so much has been invested in these institutions of higher learning. As such, academics, administrators, and politicians should focus on how to direct this unrest and the ideas, forces, and energy that come with it along the most beneficial social and intellectual routes – given that the authoritarian method of resolving student unrest by imposing solutions does not appear to be effective. Similarly, after the closure or restart of university activities, the causes of the student crisis must be studied further so that

all essential follow-up actions can be done – this is because evidence from previous studies suggests that if one crisis is not resolved adequately, it feeds into the next. Thus, effort must be made to resolve issues as amicably as possible.

CHAPTER 7:
POLICY RESPONSE TO STUDENTS' UNREST IN GHANAIAN UNIVERSITIES:REFLECTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

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Abstract

Students' unrest has been part of the academic life of educational institutions for some time now. This study analyses the historical perspectives of students unrest in Ghana and the policy interventions of successive governments to mitigate the effects of students unrest. Implications of those policy interventions on sustained harmony in the various institutions are also analysed. The overall purpose of the study was to determine the causes of students unrest in Ghanaian public universities and the efficacy of interventions to mitigate them. To do this, the study reviewed scholarly works on students unrest in public universities in Ghana. Published journal articles and policy documents from Ghana's ministry of education were examined. In total, 25 documents were analyzed in terms of four criteria, namely: 1) the socio- cultural and economic contexts context 2) historical trends 3) causes of students' unrest 4) policy interventions and implications. The study found that at the time Ghana achieved independence up to the 1960s, students' protests or

hostilities were hardly seen in the country since the atmosphere was favourable and students were promised lucrative jobs after graduation. In order to maximize their disadvantages in their pursuit of a university degree, students chose to do so rather than challenge the government, which also happened to be their main employment. From 1960 to the year 2000, protests were largely against government policies, military regimes and programmes which students viewed to be detrimental to their progress. From 2000 up to date, most of the protests are now largely the result of university policy decisions which directly affect the welfare of students. The majority of these protests are university-based. The results further show that Governments and university authorities have employed diverse strategies to respond to student protest. The responses included the use of brute force to deter students, closure of universities, and formation of committees of inquiry to investigate issues surrounding students' protests, promulgation of legislation and educational policies; and the deliberate infiltration of universities by party organs. The analysis also reveals that the closure of the universities leads to instructional time lost and increased cost of university education to university authorities and students. In a bid to have subtitle control over the universities and reduce students' agitation against government policies, the two main political parties have established branches on all campuses thereby leading to partisan politics in the universities. The chapter concludes that students' engagement through dialogue and diplomacy is indispensable if concerted efforts are to be made to stamp out unnecessary students unrests. It has also been noted with concern, students' indiscipline during demonstrations. University authorities have to ensure a standard way of behaviour of students while they are studying in the universities.

Key Words:

Students' unrest, Ghanaian public universities, policy response, implications.

INTRODUCTION

The university community is a reflection of the larger Ghanaian community. It brings together individuals from diverse sociocultural backgrounds for purposes of teaching, learning, and research. Thus, in a university setting, three distinct groups of people can be found. They are teachers, administrators, and students. These individuals bring a range of values, beliefs, perceptions, and interests to the university. Due to these differences, there have always been disagreements among them. Gmelch and Carrol (as cited in Adu, 2011) contend that disagreements are sewn into the fabric of universities due to their functional, structural and relational characteristics. In the words of Gyampo (2013), universities are perfect breeding grounds for all manner of disagreements. These disagreements sometimes lead to unrest. One of the most common of these unrests is that which involves students.

Students unrest is a form of protest or activism arising out of disagreements between students and other relevant stakeholders such as university authorities, government and other institutions, whose actions directly or indirectly affect the welfare of students. It may take the form of demonstrations, a boycott of university services, strikes, occupation of offices, violent confrontations or rioting. In Ghana, students unrest has been part of academic life since the early days of our independence (Adu, 2011; Gyampo, 2013). This phenomenon has had far-reaching consequences on teaching and learning. This chapter discusses the phenomenon of student unrest in Ghanaian public universities. The areas covered in this chapter include the socio-cultural, socio-economic and political context of students' unrest; cases of students' unrest; policy response, implications; and reflections on students' unrest in Ghana.

SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT OF STUDENTS UNREST IN GHANA

The cultural environment that students are thrust into at various universities appears to serve as a focal point for all manner of organized and coordinated activities, including unrest (Adu, 2011)). One prominent feature of the university culture is the hall residential system. The residential hall system is central to university student culture (Spio-Garbrah, 2010; Tonah, 2009). Residential halls for students are built to serve as "miniature homes" whose comfort and social life are better than ordinary dormitories. They are modelled to look like the British university collegiate system, especially that of Oxford and Cambridge, in which residential colleges structure a university's academic and social life (Spio-Garbrah, 2010; Tonah, 2009). Although university-appointed tutors and wardens are ultimately in charge of the Ghanaian university halls, leaders elected by students among themselves oversee student affairs on a day-to-day basis.

The Junior Common Room (JCR) is formed by the student leaders and the remainder of the student body in each hall. Each hall of residence has developed a distinct personality, complete with its own traditions and rituals (Gyampo, 2013). Casely Hayford Hall of Residence, for example, is well-known at the University of Cape Coast for serving as a rallying point for student protests, with students from this hall leading the majority of demonstrations. Casely Hayford Hall is the University of Cape Coast's only male residence. It was founded in 1967 and is named after one of Ghana's most illustrious sons, Joseph Ephraim Casely Hayford. He was a prominent journalist, editor, author, lawyer, educator, and politician from the Fante Gold Coast who advocated for pan-African nationalism (Spio-Garbrah, 2010; Tonah, 2009). This great nationalist inspires the confidence and assertiveness of people who live and have lived in the Great Hall. It thus seems that students of this hall have adopted the radical and protestant nature of Casely Harford (Gyampo, 2013).

The University of Ghana, Commonwealth Hall, is noted for a similar tradition. Students who live in these halls have to follow the traditions, conventions, and customs that have been in place for a long time. It is the campus's only male residence hall. Additionally, it is the only hall that adheres to customs and traditions at the University of Ghana. Vandals are said to be the unofficial spokespersons for the entire student body (Gyampo, 2013). They take pride in their leadership abilities and cohesiveness, which is why old Vandals are always proud of the hall. Despite differences in traditions, all halls of residence, contribute to a shared university student culture, with the JCRs in each hall and the Student Representative Council (SRC) at the university level serving as the central political institutions and the rallying point for organised activity. Students' JCRs and SRCs in the various institutions serve a participatory function, allowing decision-making to flow from the students' grassroots to their leaders. The participatory nature of this model is used as a way to measure how much students are involved in the larger organised activities, and it is also used to get students to fight against any policy that goes against their interests (Gyampo, 2013).

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT OF STUDENTS' UNREST IN GHANA

The phenomenon of students' unrest just like any issue involving humans can also be understood within the context of the social background in which it occurs (Spio-Garbrah, 2010; Tonah, 2009). Ghana has over 40 different ethnic groups scattered across the length and breadth of the country (Ghana's Statistical Service, 2010). Students from these different socio-economic backgrounds gather in Ghanaian universities for the purposes of teaching and learning. These students are frequently grouped together in the university and required to follow the same instructional and examination programme. The two most significant factors associated with the diverse students that are likely to influence their responses and efforts to enter and succeed in the realm of

universities in Ghana are (1) their ability and (2) their parent's socio-economic status (Jone, 2009). These factors are also the most likely influencers of student unrest in Ghanaian public universities. Based on these two criteria, Shah (1968) classifies students into four broad categories.

The first group is what (Shah, 1968) termed High status—high ability students. Students in this class are likely to be admitted to their desired programmes. According to him, students in this group are more than capable of bearing the expense and meeting the economic as well as other demands that the course may impose. As a result of their superior ability, they may have greater confidence in their success and may be able to exert more effort in adapting to new learning situations. Additionally, as a result of their elevated socioeconomic status, they are more likely to receive encouragement, guidance, and assistance from their parents. Assistance in the form of private tuition, books, and other study materials is also likely to be more readily available to them. Parents are likely to be influential and capable of assisting them in a variety of ways both in their efforts to succeed and in the event of a chance failure (Shah (1968). Thus, because this group of students has no fear of losing in a competition, they are more likely to concentrate on their studies and avoid student disruptions or any form of unrest.

The second group is what Shah (1968) called High status—low ability students. According to him, High-status groups influence the selection process in educational institutions, and a significant number of low-ability students are admitted to educational institutions at all levels. The selection process is influenced by kin, caste, and community loyalties. Certain cushioning mechanisms have been developed to protect and assist these students. The parents of these children may enrol them in universities that don't require them to be good at certain things or have lower academic standards. They may use their personal and socio-economic connections to gain admission or to succeed in the examinations. However, students in this group are perpetually fearful of

failure, of losing in competition due to their lack of ability. Failure in competition means a great deal to them. Their eminence is at stake. If they fail, they will lose their current status and be forced to adopt a more difficult way of life. Out of fear of losing in a competition, they spread non-academic norms and values. This manifests itself in a variety of ways. Several of them include the following: (1) Inattention and misbehaviour in the classroom, absenteeism, and a denial of the value of academic achievement, (2) instilling kin, caste, and other connotations in teachers and authorities, (3) attempting to engage in unethical practices such as question paper pre-knowledge and examination malpractices, (4) attempting to gain an unfair advantage by bribing, threatening, or assaulting examiners, paper setters, or administrators, (5) laziness, fashion snobbery, and extravagant spending on hotels, movies, and the like, (6) reputations, public meetings, processions, demonstrations, walk-outs from examination rooms, and strikes to combat factors threatening their success. These aren't something they start if other types of efforts work out, but if someone else starts them, they might join and help out (Shah, 1968).

The third group according to Shah (1968) is Low status—high ability students. These students according to him are likely to come from lower castes, lower income groups, and families with a lower level of educational attainment. Though parental pressure for educational achievement is unlikely to be great, due to the wards' high ability, their aspirations are likely to be high. As are likely to be the students' aspirations. They may aspire to escape the low social status in which they currently reside and to raise their social status through their educational attainment. They, therefore, stand to lose a great deal if they do not succeed in the competition. They cannot afford to lose or even lag in the battle. Additionally, this group must be completely self-sufficient to succeed academically. It is unlikely that it will receive any external assistance, guidance, or encouragement from parents. Due to their low social status, the parents of such students are unlikely to wield any

influence that could benefit or assist them. Additionally, they are unable to afford additional private services such as private tuition or easily accessible books and other necessary materials. They must rely entirely on their abilities and efforts (Shah 1968). As a result, their fear of not being admitted to the courses of their choice or of falling behind in the competition is significantly greater than that of the others. As a result, this group is likely to exert maximum effort in combating all factors that could jeopardize their chances of admission to the courses of their choice or success in the competition. They will likely support any behaviour that helps them make up for the flaws in the social environment in which they live and that they will back any actions or approaches that make them more likely to succeed. Universities have become increasingly inclusive of all segments of the community (Shah 1968).

CASES OF STUDENTS UNREST IN GHANAIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

The country from the 1960s till date has witnessed a number of students unrests across all the public universities (Spio-Garbrah, 2010). According to Gyampo (2013), there was no history of student protest or disturbance at the University College of the Gold Coast until the 1960s. According to Nunyonameh (2012), the scenario at the Kumasi College of Technology (KCT), which is now Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, was the same. Students maintained a degree of independence from national politics. Several explanations have been advanced for the formative days of apathy, an absence of student activism, and passivity toward issues that affected them directly and indirectly (Gyampo, 2013). To begin, the aristocratic educational system of the time marginalized public protests and domestic radical politics for students. The educational system, according to Emerson (1968), ensured students' occupational ambitions while physically and intellectually isolating them from national politics and student protests. Students made obtaining a university degree a top priority during the post-

independence period due to the high desire for skilled labour and the level of social status associated with university education (Agyemang, 1988, p. 69). According to Peil (1969), students preferred to maximize their drawbacks in their fight for a university degree rather than confront the employer (government).

According to Gyampo (2013), since 1960, students' protests in particular and activism in national politics, in general, had been marked by confrontation, which was a distinguishing feature of the relationship between students and the state. Thus, between 1960 and 2000, students transformed universities into sites of resistance to austerity and political and economic mismanagement, reaching out to and aligning themselves with other civil society formations, including trade unions and women's groups, in their demands for democratization (Spio-Garbrah, 2010). In Ghana, students became one of the forces responsible for the country's second liberation (Gyampo, 2013). Thus, fundamental macro-political and macro-economic issues preoccupied student activists, who were mobilized by their own experience with basic bread-and-butter issues, articulating their grievances more or less consistently in terms of principled concerns such as the right to education, social justice, democracy, and self-determination (Spio-Garbrah, 2010). As a result of an unwavering and competitive desire for academic freedom and nationalism, the government-student conflict began primarily between university students at the University of Ghana and the government (Emerson, 1968). The students and government disagreed on how the former's role in national development should be defined (Jones, 2008). According to Gyampo (2013), the institutions, which were generally run by expatriates, declined to surrender to partisan dominion since their administrators perceive them to be distinct from national partisanship and politics. The State however perceived the university to be an integral component of the vast nationalist machinery accessible to countering colonial vestiges and boosting national development (Spio-Garbrah, 2010). The refusal of the university to surrender to government dominion

was interpreted by the government as evidence that it was not committed to Ghanaian interests, but to colonialist and imperialist interests (Jones, 2008). As a result, the government engaged in a wide range of activities, such as unmeritorious media criticism, to instill dissatisfaction with the university (Gyampo, 2013). According to Gyampo (2013), several steps were taken that undoubtedly incensed university administrators and students such as the attempt to have undue influence over the university and truncate intellectual freedom through the promulgation of the 1961 Universities Act, which made the Head of State Chancellor for universities. Through this legislation, State gained control over universities (Gyampo, 2013). Even though students were infuriated by the Act, they did not protest until the government attempted to bring the judicial branch of government under the control of the Convention Peoples Party-led government through the 1964 Amendment Act (Austin, as cited in Gyampo, 2013). In the University of Ghana, students issued a statement condemning the president's attempt to interfere with the judiciary (Gyampo, 2013). An attempt by the government to purge universities of "subversive elements" sparked massive student demonstrations, ultimately resulting in the exile of six foreign academic staff from the University of Ghana (Austin, 1964, pp. 33).

Whereas students' protests were gaining traction as a well-organised and coordinated force, the CPP government was deposed by the 1966 coup which birthed the National Liberation Council (NLC). Due to the bad treatment, they received from the CPP regime, university students applauded the overthrow and were staunch supporters of the military junta. Although the military junta issued a decree criminalizing rumor-mongering, university students were reluctant to criticize the junta. The National Union of Ghana Students (NUGS) after a while, drew the regime's attention to the decree's threat to the right to free expression (Chazan, as cited in Gyampo 2013). Generally, students in the universities did not see the need to return to democratic rule as urgent. Students thought that the military junta needed time to learn and gain experience

in political administration in order to be more efficient in dealing with the pressing needs of the country. As a result, the military junta did not seem to be an issue for students. Students did not appear overly concerned once it was determined that it was not oppressive (Nunyonameh, 2012). What was most important, was that the 1966 coup marked a total symbolic break from the period of apathy in students' protests.

Students hailed the transitional government from the NLC regime to the Busia-led Progress Party (PP) as a panacea for the country's economic woes. Regrettably, Busia's economic problems persisted. Prices for basic goods rose further as the government imposed medical treatment fees, restored school fees and replaced the government grant for students with a student loan scheme—a move widely condemned by students. Busia was forced to openly admit in his 1969 First National Students' Day address that there was indeed much to revolt about as a result of widespread student protests (Nunyonameh, 2012, p. 16). Notwithstanding the explicit statement, the government opted for desperate draconian measures to put a stop to student protests. Busia took personal responsibility for the Ministry of Information following a cabinet reshuffle in 1971, attempting to stifle free expression from negative media commentary. Indeed, later that year, the government seriously considered passing legislation authorizing the arrest of anyone who insulted Busia (Nunyonameh, p.18).

Sensing parallels between Busia's and Nkrumah's political environments, the students issued a press statement in 1971 asking for press freedom and freedom of expression as well as urgent action to address the country's deteriorating political and economic crisis. The government retaliated verbally, accusing students of treason and referring to them as "the little minds at universities". Such threats fueled students' anger and frustration against the authorities, and as the economy deteriorated and efforts to suppress them became more intense, student protests became more vocal, attracting the assistance of Ghana's Trades Union Congress (TUC) (Spio-Garbrah, 2010).

Through a variety of public relations strategies, the Acheampong-led National Redemption Council (NRC) attempted to establish its legitimacy. According to Chazan and Le Vine (1979), the military junta identified the significant role students' played and decided to seek their assistance by scrapping student loans in favour of government bursaries, raising worker salaries, and undervaluing the nation's currency. The regime launched a series of initiatives that were well-received by students. By forgoing their studies to assist in the collection and transportation of sugarcane from Komenda in the Central Region for further refinement, students contributed to the military's scheme for food production. The students praised the "yentua policy" and helped build several irrigation facilities, including those in Dawhenya, Afife, and Tano (Oquaye, 1980). The young people advocated the creation of a National Service Scheme that would force degree recipients from institutions that offered free tuition to serve the nation for a year.

The National Service Decree (208) was signed into law in 1978 after this concept was approved. However, the regime's "yentua policy" alienated it from the donor community, which, combined with OFYS's inability to sustain itself, resulted in rising economic difficulties with no support from the nation's debtors. As a result, calls for the democratic rule were made, with students leading the charge (Hitchens, 1979,)". In response to the calls, the government proposed a "Union Government" in October 1976, a concept that allows traditional leaders, the military, and the police to co-rule the country for an indefinite period. The government made it abundantly clear that a return to civilian rule did not imply the absence of military participation." The students, on the other hand, interpreted this suggestion as an effort by the military men to maintain their power, and thus organized widespread protests and violent demonstrations (Owusu, 1979). Nonetheless, in March 1978, the regime held a referendum on the "Unigov" concept and declared victory. Violent, unlawful, and confrontational forms of resistance, including those sponsored by students, tarnished the referendum. Conflicts between

students and police resulted in the closure of universities for several days. However, on June 4, 1979, Flt-Lt J.J. Rawlings led a group of junior army officers in overthrowing the Akuffo government and forming the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) as preparations for the elections in June 1979 got underway.

According to Gyampo (2013), during the second encounter between the students and Jerry Rawlings, the AFRC/PNDC got occasional support. He argued that when the PNDC's contractual trust was violated, the students usually proved what was already well-known about them. Regardless of the fact, that the regime was temporary and was supposed to restore multiparty democracy in the country, it appears to lack the courage to do so. As a result, by 1983, students had teamed up with other CSOs to advocate for the transfer of power to a more democratic government (Shillington, 1992). Students were outraged by the National Service Act 426 (1980), which the PNDC regime was about to implement in the late 1980s as well as the World Bank-mandated austerity, measures were included in the 1983 budget, including cost sharing in secondary and tertiary education. Under the direction of the NUGS, students planned a national protest, boycotted lectures, and engaged in additional acts of violence (Shillington, 1992).

When the university administrations, with the support of the NDC government, established academic facilities' user fees that were more than 1000% of the then-current costs in 2000, the conflict between students and the government in Ghana reached its pinnacle (Adu, 2011). The majority of students felt that the ministry of education and the university administration rushed the measures without doing enough public outreach and education (Gyampo, 2013).

Additionally, students said that they had already paid for other necessary expenses associated with their education, such as photocopying, transportation, and food, and could no longer endure any additional financial constraints (Jones, 2009). Most significantly, students believed

that parties who were not explicitly stated in the cost-sharing arrangement were. The university administration, supported by the ministry of education, dismissed the students' compelling arguments, although they were extremely strong ones and ultimately opted to enact the cost-sharing program. To promote awareness, NUGS staged demonstrations around the country, but each time, the NDC was successful in intimidating and obstructing university students by utilizing the police (Adu, 2011). In 1999, students at the University of Ghana elected a highly radical leadership to office. The cost-sharing scheme was implemented in the same year as this. If user fees were not eliminated, the students commencing at the University of Ghana campus said they would make the government unaccountable. Thus, the SRC had called for a nationwide demonstration before the University of Ghana reopened for the 1999–2000 academic year, and afterwards, rallies led by NUGS broke out on all university campuses around the nation and in significant towns including Accra, Kumasi, and Cape Coast.

In September 1999, following an emergency central committee meeting of NUGS, the student leadership made the wise decision to march to the Castle, the seat of government, and present the president with their petition. The protests and demonstrations of that day saw hundreds of thousands of students from across the country gathered at Novotel hotels as early as 6:30 am. As history would repeat itself, that day was a day after waiting for five hours at the same crossroads, the president refused to come out and receive the petition. In fury, the students set the various edifices of the president on fire to smoke him out. The police responded with brutal force, showing how much of the military shadow was hanging on their heads. For many contemporary Ghanaian students, this was the day hell broke loose in our part of the world as some were dragged out of taxis and flogged, while others were chased on foot across the roads. The NDC administration decided to shut down the institutions once more as a result of the students' tenacity in their fight. The government provided a 30% refund on the fees that were being levied

that year after months of pressuring students to stay at home. The leadership of the students agreed to this in the hopes that it will give all parties involved the time and room they need to come up with a long-term plan for financing higher education in the nation. The University of Ghana's leadership of the students' representative council took proactive action the next year, during the 2000/2001 academic year, to bargain for a suspension of the user fees refund (Jones, 2008). In response, the administration declared the freeze, and students returned to school for the first time in five years.

There have also been isolated or university-based student protests in Ghana. In 2001 for instance the University of Cape Coast introduced a new grading system (Adu, 2011). This grading system purged the examination pass mark at 50% from 40%. The pass level for degree classification was also purged at 1.5 -1.9 from 1.0 -1.44. This grading system was greeted with fierce resistance from students of the university who viewed it as too harsh. They also claimed that the university authorities did not adequately involve them in taking this decision. They further bemoaned the lack of adequate academic facilities and resources that would help them march up to the challenge. University authorities on the other hand maintained that the decision was to improve quality teaching and learning as well as maintain standards. The grading system created tension in the university resulting in a subsequent demonstration by students which disrupted the university's congregation on March, 21st 2001 (Adu, 2011). University authorities regarded the demonstration as illegal as it flouted the code of conduct of the university and also brought the name of the institution into disrepute (Gyampo, 2013). The university thus decided to punish some of the students who were involved in the demonstration. Consequently, 7 students were to have their results withheld for 3 years while 2 other continuing students were to be rusticated for 2 academic years. The punishment sparked widespread agitations among the student body. The ministry of education and the university council had to intervene to restore normalcy and resolve the

impasse. The university council directed the Academic Board to review the sanctions imposed upon the students and the grading system after several engagements with the students' representative council (SRC) and the university management. This did not make much change. The main structure of the examination grading system did not change (remained at 50%). The grade, A, was also maintained at 80% - 90%. However, the pass level of degree classification which was 1.5 -1.9 was widened to include a cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 1.0 -1.9. The punishment that was meted out to the students was also reduced.

Additionally, students of the University of Ghana hit the streets to ask the authorities to scrap a new residential policy proposed to come into effect at the beginning of the next academic year 2002/2003 academic year. The new policy was intended to provide accommodation for first-year students only, and replace the existing system which allowed final-year students to be accommodated at the university residence. The protesting students, clad in red bands and clothes said the new policy being introduced by the university authorities was inimical to their academic pursuits and wanted it shed altogether. The students, under a heavy police guard, marched from the university campus to the Education Ministry. They insist that the new policy must not be implemented, and they wanted a word on its cancellation. They said, "On the university campus there are two stakeholders; the authorities and students". They claimed the partnership has not yielded the result they were looking forward to and they believed that equally within that family or fraternity, there were other stakeholders; that is the general public, the corporate world and the government."

Additionally, on Monday, October, 23rd 2018, the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) was shut down indefinitely following student protests that occurred which turned violent. Students gathered in support of 11 other students who had been arrested the previous Friday night for participating in a weekly party, known as "jamborees"- a gathering that the Vice Chancellor had recently banned,

claiming that the events caused "misbehaviour" and "profanity" on campus. One of the students was injured in the process of being arrested. Some students called on the Vice Chancellor to step down. The students found the measures employed by campus security to be extreme and began demonstrations against mistreatment and "brutality" by the school's security and administration. They boycotted classes, marched, mounted roadblocks, and some were reported to have vandalized property. Consequently, the University management directed all students to evacuate the campus. Management of KNUST accused the alumni of the University Hall, popularly known as Katanga of being behind the violent demonstration; an accusation alumni flatly rejected.

A careful look at the trend suggests that the main triggers of theses unrest were economic, academic, leadership and living conditions. The circumstances had the potential to improve or worsen the students' relative odds of being admitted to a course of their choosing, of continuing in it, or of succeeding in the educational competition or achieving more successfully than others. They appeared to have acted in this manner to equalize their odds of victory because they were afraid of losing the combat and subsequently losing the struggle for status. It is important to evaluate whether government and university responses to student unrest have been successful in reducing, if not completely eliminating, it in public after identifying the common driving force that permeates the various factors that are frequently blamed for causing students' unrest. The following section discusses government and university authority's responses to students' unrest.

POLICY RESPONSE TO STUDENTS' UNREST

Measures, reforms and policies have been instituted by university authorities and successive governments in response to students unrest in the country. One dimension of response to students' unrest entails the use of force involving state security. The 1992 constitution of Ghana

guarantees the rights of citizens to demonstrate, protest or hold rallies. However, before any group of people could hold any demonstration, the police has to be notified at least 48 hours before the demonstration. It is against this background that in most of the demonstrations involving students police are always around to maintain law and order and to ensure that public property is not destroyed in the course of the demonstration. However, mass demonstrations are among the most difficult situations that the police have to manage. They must balance constitutional liberties with the safety of officers and the public. Crowds are unpredictable and, in most cases, sometimes hostile. Too much force can escalate the situation. However, there have been instances when police have had to use some force to disperse crowds, especially when the demonstrators turn violent. Sometimes the use of force by the police leads to casualties. For example, when students led by the National Union of Ghana's students (NUGS) organised a series of demonstrations in 1979 against the Supreme Military Council (SMC) government over bad human rights records in Accra, Kumasi and Cape Coast, the government responded by sending the police and the military to maintain law and order. A confrontation between the security forces and the students led to the death of the then NUGS president. Police brutality at the moment resulted in horrible injuries for the NUGS secretary as well. A building belonging to the Head of State was set on fire when people were paying their respects to the late NUGS president in Legon. Within less than five minutes, police and the military rushed on the university's campus and brutally attacked students in some of the most barbaric acts ever. The Head of State denied universities autonomy by placing them under the ministry of education, in an effort to regulate university students. The students organized and decided to skip class. On the grounds, that students were complaining about the high expense of living, the government ordered the closure of the institutions.

Another example was what happened in 1983 when Ghanaian students led by (NUGS) vehemently resisted the policies of the Provisional

National Defense Council (PNDC) government through a series of demonstrations. As the administration and students' movement became increasingly tense. The young cadre of the PNDC military dictatorship was enlisted to attack the NUGS congress in Kumasi in May 1983. In the end, there were injuries on both sides, varying in severity. Additionally, some state trucks that were transporting PNDC personnel were set on fire. The PNDC government filed arrest warrants for the president and secretary of NUGS, in an effort, to discredit the relatively radical student body by linking the student leaders to the rebellion on June 19, 1983. In neighbouring Togo, these leaders had to apply for political asylum. Universities were shut down for about a year after this occurrence, and the campuses were used as training grounds for PNDC vigilante groups.

The second dimension of policy responses has to do with policies and procedures aimed at forestalling future occurrences of such violent protests. The most policy responses to students' agitation before the 4th republic of Ghana were deterrent, punitive or preventive. In the first republic, for instance, a number of policies were formulated by Nkrumah administration aimed at criminalizing free speech and to an extent deterring students from ever-challenging government policies. According to Gyampo (2013), a number of steps were considered, including an effort to manipulate the institutions and restrict intellectual freedom through the passage of the Universities Act (1961), which established the position of head of state chancellor. It thus aided authorities in gaining control of universities. Secondly, the regime's policy to cleanse the institutions of "subversive elements" sparked massive student demonstrations, ultimately resulting in the exile of six expatriate academic staff from the University of Ghana (Austin, 1964). Recognizing the threat to the regime's legitimacy posed by the fledgling student activism, the Nkrumah regime was determined to cripple it. Soon after the CPP won the 1964 one-party state referendum, five University of Ghana student leaders and academic staff were arrested and detained. They were accused of inciting student demonstrations. Another example

of a deterrent policy was that which occurred during Busia regime. Despite widespread student protests forcing Busia to admit openly in his 1969 First National Students' Day address that there was indeed much to revolt about, the government used desperate draconian measures to suppress student protests. After a cabinet reshuffle in 1971, the Prime Minister took personal responsibility for the Information Ministry, seeking to limit free expression from student protests and media commentary. Indeed, later that year, the government seriously considered enacting a law authorizing the government to arrest anyone including students who criticize Busia (Nunyonameh, p.18). Detecting resemblances with both Busia's and Nkrumah's political environments, the students issued a press statement in 1971 demanding freedom of speech and expression and the press, as well as steps to address the country's deteriorating economic crisis. As a verbal response, the administration accused students of treason and referred to them as "the small brains at universities" (Goldsworthy, 1973, p. 20). Students' anger at the government was increased by these assaults, and as the economy declined and efforts to intimidate them increased, student protests grew louder and gained the backing of Ghana's Trades Union Congress (TUC) (Goldsworthy).

The third dimension of policy responses to students' agitations or protests involved the identification and resolution of issues to give rise to the protests. Student demonstrations in the late 1980s and early 1990s compelled the government to set in motion processes leading to the promulgation of the 1992 constitution; the longest constitution in Ghana's history. Before the processes leading up to the promulgation of the 1992 constitution could begin, the students demanded, among other things, the abrogation of all autocratic legislation, as well as the unconditional release of captives.

As a long-term measure to minimise students' unrest, there has been a deliberate effort to involve students' leadership in university governance and in decision-making processes. As suggested in the preceding

discussions, most of the agitations or protests were a result of the fact that students were not involved in some of the major decision-making processes or policy-making in the country's universities. Their inputs and opinions were mostly not sought especially on issues that directly affected their welfare in the universities. To help resolve this issue, the governance structure in the universities has now recognised students as major stakeholders in university administration. Consequently, a deliberate policy has been put in place to recognise the Students' Representative Council (SRC) of every university as a major stakeholder. Thus SRC is now represented at the university council where major policies concerning teaching and learning are formulated. Section 26 (x) of C. K. Tedam University of Technology and Applied Sciences stipulates that the SRC shall be represented at Council by one person elected from among the executives. Indeed, it is the expectation that once students have the opportunity to make inputs concerning some major decisions and policies that affect their daily lives in the university, this will go a long way to mitigate some of the agitations coming from them.

Another long-term policy measure that has been implemented as a genuine response to agitations is the representation on various university campuses of the two political parties (N.D.C. and N.P.P.) that have ruled this country in turn since 1992. It has been realized that most of the demonstrations in the past were a result of some government policies which the students perceived to be bad. To help water down any attempt to protest government policies, the two dominant parties have made it a policy to have party organs on the various campuses. The N.D.C is represented by the Tertiary Institutions Network of the NDC (TEIN), whereas the NPP has the Tertiary Students Confederacy (TESCON). The political parties mobilize students who believe in their philosophy into these organs. Any time there is any government policy that seems unpopular, the organs take it upon themselves to talk to students about the government's real intentions and also try to quash or water down any possible threat of student unrest. The party organs also sponsor and get

their own people elected to the Student Representative Councils (SRC). The executives, having been elected to office under the party's sponsorship, owe a great deal of allegiance to the political party rather than the students. Naturally, they will never allow any demonstration or agitation that will make the party unpopular in the eyes of the Ghanaian people. Partisan politicization of the SRC is what accounts for why, for over a decade, there has never been any organized agitation by NUGS or the SRC against any government policy or programme that negatively affects students' lives.

Another long-term policy measure that has been put in place to reduce students' agitations and protests is the promulgation of the fees and charges (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act of 2018, (Act 983) to provide for the regulation of fees and charges and for related matters in higher education. The Act provides that any proposal to increase academic facilities' user fees must, first of all, go through parliamentary approval. This Act has put an end to the frequent unregulated increases in academic facilities' user fees, a trend which accounted for over 50% of all students' agitations in the universities. Before any fee proposal will receive parliamentary approval, the parliamentary select government will engage all relevant stakeholders for an agreement to be reached before the fee is rolled out.

REFLECTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

A number of lessons can be learnt from the numerous protests and mass mobilisation of students in the country's universities. Lessons can also be drawn from the responses of government and university authorities to students' unrest. As can be seen in the preceding discussions, most of the responses to students' agitations involved policies or reactions that addressed the symptoms of real challenges confronting students. State authorities either pretended that such challenges did not exist or they just decided to turn a blind eye to them. In most situations, state security

was used to harass or intimidate students into silence. For example, the Universities Act of 1961, which made the Head of State the Chancellor of the universities, and the Preventive Detention Act were both laws that sought to gag students and silence any form of dissenting opinion. As previously stated, widespread student protests forced Busia's government to openly acknowledge in his 1969 First National Students' Day address that there was indeed much to revolt about (Nunyonameh, 2012, p. 16). However, he was unwilling to address such concerns. Instead, following a cabinet reshuffle in 1971, Busia took personal responsibility for the ministry of information, attempting to protect free expression from negative media commentary. Indeed, later that year, the government seriously considered enacting a law authorizing the government to arrest anyone who criticised the Head of State (Nunyonameh, p.18). All these measures were put in place to silenced students rather than solve the very issues that students raised in their protest. Another significant confrontation between students and the government in Ghana which government and university authorities turned a blind eye was the one that took place between 1999 and 2000. This was when the government and the university authorities introduced the academic facilities user fees of over 1000% of the then-existing fees. Several protests by the government did not make the government and the university authorities change their minds. Instead, brute force characterized by flogging and dragging students on the floor was what the government used to silence the students. It was not until the students insisted through continues demonstrations that the government was compelled to introduce a rebate of about 30%. Sweeping real concerns of students under the carpet means that one is just postponing the challenges which will re-emerge again in the future. This penchant for not addressing the real concerns is what accounted for the numerous students protests that characterized the period 1960 – 2000. State and university authorities must appreciate the fact that students are major stakeholders in higher education and therefore their concerns matter.

The use of force to disperse rampaging students and the eventual closure of universities have a lot of implications for teaching, learning, security and the wellbeing of students. Individuals have the right to peaceful protest, and police officers have a responsibility to start with the understanding that their principal role is to facilitate individuals' right to protest. Clear guidance regarding the protection of constitutional rights during demonstrations benefits both members of the public and law enforcement. To the extent possible, police officers should engage in cooperative and strategic planning with students to ensure public safety before, during, and after demonstrations. However, there have been numerous occasions when police excesses rather led to the loss of lives and property. For instance, when students led by the National Union of Ghana's students (NUGS) organised a series of demonstrations in 1979 against the Supreme Military Council (SMC) government over bad human rights records in Accra, Kumasi and Cape Coast, the government responded by sending the police and the military to maintain law and order. A confrontation between the security forces and the students led to the death of the then NUGS president. The NUGS secretary at the time Mr Totobi Quakyi also sustained horrifying injuries as a result of police brutalities. Use of force also seems to rather escalate violence instead than ending it and the resultant consequence is loss of lives and property. It must however be noted with concern, the students' behaviour during demonstrations. This borders on indiscipline. While students' right to protest must be respected by the authorities, it must be emphasised that the enjoyment of those rights goes with responsibilities. In Ghana, before one can legally embark on a demonstration, the police must be notified. The code of ethics of students also enjoins them to follow laid down procedures when they want to embark on protests. However, in most cases, they fail worthily to notify the police or follow the university laid down procedures. Again in the course of demonstrations, students try to cause damage to public property. They block roads burn tires and impede the movement of other citizens of the country who equally have the right to freedom of movement. Sometimes, in most of the Halls of residences

such as Carsely Hayford and Commonwealth Hall, students engage in all manner of profanity including going completely naked and attacking innocent people during the protest. This partly explains why in most of the demonstrations, police use minimum force to disperse them. This behaviour cannot be accepted in any civilized society. A university is a place not only for intellectual training but character training as well. It is set up to train people who can fit and function effectively in the society where they find themselves.

Another significant response of the government to students' protest that often follows police intervention which is worth commenting on is the closure of universities. While such a measure is purported to protect lives and property, its implications on teaching and learning must be looked at carefully. There have been occasions when universities have to be closed down for almost a year. When it happens like that, the academic calendar is negatively affected and students end up spending more years in the university than planned. The additional cost of this on parents and the students themselves is telling. The government also incurs costs as it continues to pay university teachers and other staff for no work done.

One other significant issue that has been identified in the analysis of government responses to students' concerns is that, in most of the policy decisions which gave rise to students' agitations, students as major stakeholders were not engaged or consulted. Students are the major customers or clients in university education. As such, it behoves on university authorities to always have consultative engagements with them before major decisions could be taken. Addressing their concerns also matters if a concerted effort is needed in maintaining peace and unity in the various campuses. For instance, in 2001, authorities of the university of Cape Coast apparently did not hold consultations with students before the introduction of the new grading system. When the students agitated, the ministry of education and the university council had to intervene, and form a committee to look into the matter. The committee's response as contained in the Council's communication to

the public suggested that thorough consultations were not held with students before the policy was rolled out and that students lacked understanding of the policy. The university council thus directed the Academic Board to review the grading system after several engagements with the students' representative council (SRC) and the university management. Asantehene Otumfuo Osei Tutu II 3-member committee report on the disturbances that took place in the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in 2018 is another case in point. The report suggested that the policy decision to convert Katanga Hall to mixed Hall was done without thorough engagement with major stakeholders including students. Thus, most of the decisions that were taken by the university management and the government were rescinded which brought normalcy back to the university. The committee made several recommendations going forward including formal and serious engagements with relevant stakeholders such as students before major decisions could be taken. It appears as though students sometimes have legitimate concerns. The university authorities do not adequately engage them to dialogue and reach a consensus before this policy was rolled out. Most of the protests could have been avoided if government and university authorities had use dialogue and diplomacy through formal engagements with students' leadership. In asserting their right to be engaged, the students sometimes also take the wrong path by staging a protest that is against the laid down procedure. Dialogue, diplomacy and consensus building are key in ensuring harmony and peace in the various campuses of the universities.

The promulgation of the Fees and Charges Act of 2018, (Act 983) of Ghana is another significant response to student protest coming from the government. This singular policy response has far-reaching implications for peace and harmony in public universities in Ghana. A major issue that university students have often agitated against is the higher cost of university education which includes school fees. Now the people's representatives in parliament, the ministry of education, university

authorities and students acting in conformity with this Act, are involved in fixing fees and charges in the universities. This has helped to reduce tension and agitation that often arise when new fees are announced by university authorities. The Students Representative Council also forms part of decision-making on matters that affect teaching and learning in the university. Students are represented at the University Governing Council by the SRC president. The University Governing Council is the highest decision-making body of the university. It is at this level that major policy decisions are taken. Students have a voice at Council and so when disagreements are raised at that level dialogue and diplomacy are used to resolve them before they escalate.

The intrusion of the major political parties into public universities as a measure to curtail opposition to major government policies and programmes has a lot of implications for the real autonomy of the universities. The ruling party always try to indirectly control what happens in the universities by using its organs and surrogates to infiltrate into sensitive positions in the university. For instance, both NDC and NPP have often struggled to get their members elected into SRC, NUGS and University Teachers Association Executive positions. When they succeed in the enterprise, they subtly control what happens in the universities. They control decision-making on matters that effect teaching and learning and consequently kill the spirit of academic freedom, freedom of thought and opinion. The major student associations also lose their voice in championing the legitimate concerns of students. It appears such student leaders respect party loyalty more than their loyalty to the very students that elect them into office. It has created a situation in the university that seems to suggest that any legitimate concerns of students attract partisan politics.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The chapter has discussed the phenomenon of student unrest in public universities in Ghana. It has been established that student unrest can best be understood if analysed within the socio-cultural, socio-economic and political context of public universities in Ghana. It has also been realized that before independence and even the period just after independence, students' protests or hostilities were hardly seen in the country since the atmosphere was favourable and students were promised lucrative jobs after graduation. The high demand for skilled labour and the high social status associated with university education made obtaining a university degree a top priority for students during the post-independence period. Students preferred to maximize their disadvantages in their struggle for a university degree rather than confront the government, which happened to be their primary employer. From 1960 to the year 2000, students' protests were largely against government policies and programmes which students viewed to be detrimental to their progress. And most of the governments were military regimes. From 2000 up to date student protests have largely been reduced to university-based ones. Governments and university authorities have used so many ways to respond to students' protests. The responses included the use of brute force, closure of universities, and formation of committees of inquiry to investigate issues surrounding students' protests, deliberate infiltration of universities by party organs, and formulation of policies to contain students' unrest among others. A lot of lessons can be learnt from the responses. The closure of the universities led to the instructional time lost and increased cost of university education. The brute force of the security led to the loss of lives and property. In a bid to have subtitle control over the universities and reduce students' agitation against government policies, the two main political parties have established branches on all campuses. This has comprised academic freedom to a large extent. Students' engagement through dialogue and diplomacy is indispensable if concerted efforts are

to be made to stamp out unnecessary students unrests. It has also been noted with concern students' indiscipline during demonstrations. University authorities have to ensure a standard way of behaviour of students while they are studying in the universities.

CHAPTER 8:
USING STUDENT VOICE AS A STRATEGY TO PALLIATE STUDENT UNREST IN AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

The invertible reality that confronts societies involves economic upheavals and socio-political uncertainties. Social institutions, including universities, are not immune from experiencing these effects. These socio-economic dynamics threaten universities' existence, subsistence and sustainability across the African continent. These institutions have developed systems to insulate themselves from the brunt of these uncertainties. While some universities have developed sophisticated mechanisms, others have refined their models of funding. In most cases, the latter has resulted in expensive tuition fees that are unaffordable to most students. This situation negatively impacts not only students' welfare but also their prospects of completing their studies. The 2015/16 #FeesMustFall movement across South African universities was a response to these challenges. Although somewhat different, one common thread between this movement and other student-led protests in post-apartheid South

Africa has been violence. These recurring high levels of violence seem to have become part of post-colonial Africa and its universities. This situation raises a pertinent question: What can be done to circumvent violent students unrest in African universities? To answer this question, this chapter explores the use of student voice (SV) as a strategy to palliate students unrest in African universities. Owing to its qualitative nature, the chapter adopts critical mancipatory Theory as a theoretical framework. Information sessions (workshops) and free attitude interviews are used for data generation from six participants from one South African university.The sentimental analysis technique is used for data analysis and to establish the sentiments of the main stakeholders (students). The paper established that dialogue is the essential technique for mitigating universities' unrest, redressing the widening gap of inequality, reducing students' dropout rates and encouraging further enrolment for postgraduate studies.

Keywords:

student voice, student unrest, African universities, #Feesmustfall, strategy

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to propose the use of student voices as a strategy to palliate student unrest at universities. This aim is viewed in light of student protests in Africa, wherein the authors argue that the prevalence and persistence of these student unrests are due to the ineffective use of student voice and the attitude adopted by university management concerning the students' demeanour. The chapter depicts the contextual factors adduced as a result of student unrest, the inefficacies encountered due to the under-utilisation of student voice, the challenges which cause student unrest and the successes of using student voice to minimise and manage student unrest. Ultimately, the chapter proposes

using student voice at universities after deliberations on its empirical findings.

STUDENT PROTESTS IN THE AFRICAN CONTEXT

Although protests have always been a global phenomenon and student protests are as old as universities (Fomunyam, 2017), literature still falls short in providing a universally accepted definition of this concept (Onivehu, 2021). However, attempts have been made to conceptualise protests. In broad terms, Adejuwon and Okewale (2009) define protest in terms of its characteristics. These involve the behaviour of people who respond collectively and violently to a social or political issue they deem unjust, unfair or problematic. To Bloisi (2007), protest is characterised by the absence of harmony and agreement between individuals, groups or societies. In a narrow sense, student protests involve a disagreement between students and universities (Onivehu, 2021). In this chapter, we use student protests and student unrest synonymously. In addition, we define student unrest as acts of violence in which students engage as a way of expressing their levels of frustration and dissatisfaction towards a perceived or real threat to their academic prospects and financial and social well-being at an educational institution.

As is the case in other parts of the world, African universities have a long history of student protests. Many of these protests were often linked with the continent's colonial history, characterised by violent means to achieve political freedom and democratisation. The periodisation of student activism and unrest began in the 1940s (Fomunyam, 2017). An era that was characterised by the heightened need for African nationalism. After that, the socio-political and socio-economic challenges as well as the resurgence of the need for nationalism threatened the newly gained independence in the 1960s (Ntshoe, 2002). As a result, another wave of student protests engulfed the continent's universities (Fomunyam & Rahming, 2017). For instance, student organisations in

Mozambique revolted against cultural subjugation from the Portuguese and demanded national independence (Mondlane, 1983). Similarly, students across Senegalese universities participated in issues of national interest (Gellar, 1982). In addition, university students played a role in the independence of Zimbabwe in the 1980s.

Furthermore, the struggle for political liberation in the 1980s induced one more wave of student protests across the universities in West and Central Africa (Teferra & Altbach, 2004). Nkiyangi (1991, p.60) reported that student protests affected over 49 African countries between 1970 and 1989. The anti-austerity protests, including the Arab Spring, continued political liberation that started in the 1980s (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018).

Stuurman (2018) and Odebode (2019) posit that student protests come as a response to shortcomings in the university system as well as challenges facing the larger society. The demands for social justice, affordable tuition fees and decolonisation fuel the current wave of student protests in many African universities. In Nigeria, university students formed part of the larger group that participated in the EndSARS protests (Onivehu, 2021). According to K'okul (2010), socio-economic challenges and political influence, among others, perpetuated student protests in Kenyan universities. In the South African context, social activism amongst university students is common. For instance, students at the Nelson Mandela University (NMU) were in solidarity with students from other universities and refused to participate in the academic programme for over a month (Spies, 2016). In such situations, it became impossible for teaching and learning to continue and as a result, the postponement of academic activities was inevitable (Sempijja & Letlhogile, 2021).

Excessive tuition fees that universities charge prompted most student protests across the continent. In most cases, these tuition fee increases

are interpreted as a form of student exclusion (Czerniewicz, Trotter & Haupt, 2019), especially by the former white universities in South Africa (Muswede & Sebola, 2018). In response to this exclusionary practice, one of the 'fallist' movements, the #FeesMustFall (FMS) was ignited. In part, this movement demanded not only the cessation of tuition fee increases, but students also protested for free higher education (Stuurman, 2018; Daniel, 2021; Maringira & Gukurume, 2021). During this period, violence, student arrests and destruction of property in various universities characterised these protests (Rapatsa, 2017). Residences, university infrastructure and resources were destroyed at the University of Cape Town (Hall, 2016). The University of Johannesburg (UJ) lost a newly built "…multi-million rand economic block" (Bank, 2018, p.221) due to the student protests. In some cases, lectures and academic programmes were halted for several weeks in many educational institutions (Phaladi & Salavu, 2016; Sempijja & Letlhogile, 2021). In addition to being injured due to the confrontation with the police, many students were arrested and subsequently faced criminal charges (Phaladi & Salavu, 2016; Stuurman, 2018). In this regard, the beginning of the 2015 academic year was rocked by a wave of student protests against the proposed tuition fees in South African universities (Mavunga, 2019).

Similar acts have been observed in other parts of Africa. For instance, Fomunyam (2017) and Salmi (2017) reported that universities in Malawi, Ghana and Kenya experienced violent student protests. Likewise, students at the University of Zambia went on a rampage and destroyed properties, and vehicles and disrupted traffic (Onivehu, 2021).

In a broader sense, the 'fallist' movements encompassed the need to achieve economic emancipation, decolonisation of the higher education system, and equality (Mheta, Lungu & Govender, 2018; Muswede & Sebola, 2018; Daniel, 2021; Maringira & Gukurume, 2021). In other words, these movements responded to the call to redress the legacy of colonialism that still exists in educational institutions across Africa

(Ntshoe, 2002; Fomunyam, 2017). In addition, post-colonial Africa still faces challenges of access to resources, redress and equity (Muswede & Sebola, 2018). Preceding the #FeesMustFall movement, the #RhodesMustFall (RMF) started at the University of Cape Town towards the latter end of 2015. Initially, the discourse in the movement was around the removal of artefacts that 'represented' the country's history of colonialism and apartheid. In particular, students demanded the removal of Cecil John Rhodes' statue and other symbols of colonialism from the university (Mavunga, 2019). In short, the notion of decolonisation of curriculum and bringing an end to western-oriented epistemologies were central to the movement (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). In addition, the movement also aimed at addressing challenges such as ''…student exclusion based on financial and cultural grounds'' (Czerniewicz, 2019, p.1). These demands were well captured in the slogans such as "Open Stellenbosch" and "Transform Wits" referring to the Universities of Stellenbosch and Witwatersrand respectively (Daniel, 2021, p.12).

Many African universities have used various strategies to curb violent student protests. These educational institutions have relied heavily on state police and private security firms to respond to student demands (Czerniewicz., Trotter & Haupt, 2019; Sempijja & Letlhogile, 2021). Similar practices have been observed in many universities across the continent (Amutabi, 2002). The consequences of the securitisation of higher education spaces are often violent, brutal and lethal (Muswede & Sebola, 2018; Sempijja & Letlhogile, 2021). While the need to employ these law enforcement agencies may be attributed to the destruction of property due to the violent nature of student protests, university management's view of student protests exacerbates the situation. Rodriguez-Amat and Jeffery (2017) report that terms such as rowdiness, rebellion and anti-authoritarianism are often used to describe student activism. In instances where university management frowns upon student activism, it becomes difficult to address student grievances

(Barnhardt & Reyes, 2016). Similarly, students' perception of university management and their experiences of the campus environment complicate the situation (Muswede & Sebola, 2018).

Van Reenen (2019) reminds us of the need to explore alternative ways of addressing challenges plaguing universities in Africa. According to Rapatsa (2017), students tend to influence the functioning of universities and other higher education institutions. Therefore, strategies that embrace democratic values and augment student participation and involvement in decision-making have also been explored (Muswede & Sebola, 2018; Onivehu, 2021). These include dialogue, and collaborative and collective decision-making strategies (Onivehu, 2021). These strategies, as Wasonga and Makahamadge (2020) and Mavunga (2019) postulate, may assist in the development of a commonly shared vision and mission between students and university management, thereby alleviating the adversarial relationship between these stakeholders. In addition, these strategies amplify student voice in decision-making (Stuurman, 2018).

However, these strategies have not been successful in many cases. The lack of communication between students and university management hinders progress (Odu, 2013). This failure could be attributed to the unavailability of channels for effective communication and consultation (Luescher-Mamashela, 2018). The relationship between university management and the students is unhealthy and almost non-existent (Sempijja & Letlhogile, 2021). As observed during the #FeesMustFall protests in South Africa, Mavunga (2019) reports on the increased levels of tension and mistrust that exist between university management and university students. This author opines that these stakeholders engage in competitive behaviours instead of working collaboratively to address the issues at hand. Similarly, Van Reenen (2019) postulates that these stakeholders often communicate in bad faith, resulting in more protests.

To obviate this situation, Maringira and Gukurume (2021) call for university management to re-examine their views on student activism. Instead of viewing it as a form of insubordination and undermining of institutional authority (Barnhardt & Reyes, 2016), university management may understand it as "…[an] emancipatory terrain of transformation within and beyond the university campus" (Maringira & Gukurume, 2021, p.486). In line with this call, this chapter adds that university management must not regard student activism as a challenge whose aim is to express dissatisfaction and incompetence of one party to another. Rather, it must be understood as a call to open dialogue for the mutual and collective benefit of all stakeholders. In addition, the authors argue that changing the university management's perceptions of student activism is insufficient. In the recent review of student voice, Seale (2009) points to the lack of understanding and development of student voice in institutions of higher learning. Moreover, Canning (2017) expresses concern about limited literature and research on student voice in higher education. In fact, Smyth (2006) expresses an urgent need for strategies that recognise the marginalised voices (students in this case) in society. This chapter, therefore, contributes to the discourse and addresses this gap in research. In this regard, the authors call for an increase in student voice in decision-making in higher education. To achieve this, we propose the use of student voice as a strategy to palliate student unrest in African universities.

STUDENT VOICE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The starting point for understanding student voice is paying attention to the elusive and slippery nature of this concept. In some instances, it takes literal meaning while it assumes figurative connotations in others. In other cases, 'having a voice' is associated with "…identity or agency, or even power…or a democratic politics of participation and inclusion" (McLeod, 2011, p.179). For Bovill *et al*. (2011, p.134), student voice is "…

theory and set of practices that positions students as active agents in analyses and revision of education."

According to Dunne and Zunstra (2011), universities approach student voice differently. Some universities take inputs from students seriously and act according to the demands. Others create a platform for students to participate meaningfully in solution-seeking and problem-solving activities that bring much-needed change. Dunne and Zanstra (2011) developed a model that positions students as agents of change. Firstly, students are seen as evaluators of their education and learning experiences. Such evaluation also considers how universities listen to students' demands for change. Secondly, students are positioned as participants in the decision-making process. In this regard, this positioning signals the extent to which universities are committed to involving students in effecting necessary changes concerning the curricular and learning environment (Strydom & Loots, 2020). Thirdly, students are positioned as partners or co-creators of knowledge and strategies with equal influence on decision-making and institutional change (Seale, 2016). Lastly, students as agents of change tap into students' experiences and activism (Strydom & Loots, 2020). However, all the above 'positionings' do not happen in a vacuum. Lundy (2007) identifies four dimensions necessary for the effective role of student voice. These require the integration of space (the opportunity to have a say), voice (to express the view), audience (having the views listened to, and influence (ideas acted upon).

The practice of 'listening' to and 'hearing' the student voice is important for the functioning of universities (Canning, 2017, p.519). Paying attention to student voice helps the university management to refrain from what Hart (2002) calls tokenism. This refers to where the university management pretends to pay attention to the students' inputs and demands. In other words, students' participation in the decision-making is ceremonial as it does not influence the final decisions in any way.

Furthermore, using student voice guards against the tendency of the university management to communicate in bad faith and maintain power-imbalanced relations (Ferguson, Hanreddy & Draxton, 2011). Likewise, university students benefit from having their voices heard. Students gain control of the learning process. In other words, to a certain extent, they also influence curricula decisions and implementation (Biddulph, 2011). Moreover, student voice enables students to assume leadership roles and spearhead initiatives (Strydom & Loots, 2020). According to O'Sullivan, Parker, Comyns and Ralph (2021), as a strategy, student voice enhances student autonomy and competence. To achieve this, students can use their voice for different purposes. When voice is used as a strategy, it aims to address issues relating to empowerment, transformation and equality. Issues affecting learning and other democratic processes are addressed through voice-as-participation. Students can also use their voices as a right to express their views and positions. For inclusion purposes and issues related to diversity, voice-as-difference is appropriate (McLeod, 2011).

Despite these advantages, universities have not received student voice favourably. In most cases, it has been perceived as a nonentity (Lensmire, 1998). As a result, the understanding and development of this concept remain neglected due to the rigid policies and hierarchical structure of university management. Tuhkala, Ekonoja and Hamalainen (2021) report that university management has a negative attitude towards student voice. In fact, student voice is known to instil fear and anxiety among the university management McLeod (2011) Black and Mayes (2020). Canning (2017) argues that most decisions expressed by students do not often reach the relevant authorities and structures within the universities. Similarly, Freeman (2016) asserts that the formal structural channels of communication hamper students' access to power. In most universities, these channels include student representatives, union associations, and others (Hall, 2017). University students regard these channels of communication as a means by university management to maintain the

status quo of power imbalance (Freeman, 2016). In other words, through these channels, students are merely listened to without any guarantees that their voices are heard or acted upon (Fielding, 2007). In cases where student voice is enabled, the focus is not on addressing power imbalances and inequality (McLeod, 2011), but quality enhancement, assurance, and professional development (Seale, 2010) take preference.

Mitra (2006) advises that the question of power must be addressed before student voice may be accepted as a university strategy. Adding to this, Hall (2020) cautions against assuming that all stakeholders in discussions have equal power. In response, the current discourse in academia centres on the strategies for promoting collaborative and non-hierarchical partnerships between students and university management (Seale, Gibson, Haynes & Potter, 2015; Hall, 2020). When such partnerships are established, students become increasingly motivated to learn and participate in democratic processes (Ferguson, Hanreddy & Draxton, 2011). Furthermore, they can challenge traditional power relations (Taylor & Robinson, 2009) that characterise many universities across the African continent. Through active participation, students initiate and control the discourses around curriculum change, adaptation and delivery (Biddulph, 2011; Strydom & Loots, 2020) as well as their learning environments (Ferguson, Hanreddy & Draxton, 2011). In this regard, Hart's (1992) ladder of participation model becomes beneficial. This model describes the extent to which students 'with voice' in the learning process can lead, initiate action, and participate in decision-making (Shier, 2001; Wyness, 2010). The eight rungs of the ladder represent the voice and participation of students in decision-making processes. The main feature of the first three rungs is non-participation due to the increased levels of manipulation (by university management). In other words, student voice is completely 'muted' with high levels of tokenism. Limited participation begins in rungs four and five. However, students are not in control of the process. On the contrary, adults (university management) dictate the extent, content and nature of

participation and student voice. The remaining three rungs are described as participatory and predominantly increased levels of student voice features. Specifically, rungs seven and eight are characterised by student-initiated and led actions with shared decision-making (Hart, 1992, 2002; Shier, 2001).

As argued elsewhere in this chapter, African universities struggle with embracing strategies that increase student voice in decision-making. The existing channels are manipulated by university management or hampered by rigid organisational structures and policies of universities. Additionally, the non-democratic and violent strategies universities employ to resolve student unrest victimise and alienate students. The need to explore new ways of addressing student protests and problems in the African higher education system remains. To this effect, there has been a call for collaborative decision-making in an attempt to arrest the situation (Mavunga, 2019; Onivehu, 2021). Similarly, there has been a call for emancipatory agenda in educational research to create space for marginalised groups to influence decisions. Such research and approaches are especially important in the wake of the wave of decolonisation of knowledge, curricula and language that sweeps across the universities on the continent and elsewhere.

THEORISING THROUGH CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

The study adopts critical pedagogy as a lens and uses an appreciative student voice model as a research methodology. The notions of dialogue and reflection emphasised in the works of Socrates and Plato shaped the emergence of critical pedagogy (Guilherme, 2017). The conception and advancement of critical pedagogy (henceforth CP) as a theory is largely attributed to Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (1980) book. In his view, education must be liberating and transformative rather than oppressive. In other words, challenging social issues such as dominance, oppression and marginalisation become the primary focus in educational

spaces. The empowerment of students in these contexts becomes critical for instigating social change (Jeyaraj, 2019).

CP is transformative in nature (Kavenuke & Muthanna, 2021). For transformation to occur, CP advocates for the co-construction of knowledge between all the affected stakeholders (Smith & Seal, 2021). Critical thinking and conscientisation remain central to the creation of this knowledge. In addition to being aware of their own, and the oppression of others, people's personal experiences of oppression and injustice feature predominantly in critical pedagogy discourses. Furthermore, CP appreciates the role of critical reflection, action and dialogue when addressing social problems (Freire, 2010; Kavenuke & Muthanna, 2021).

These tenets make CP a suitable approach to use in universities. The universities take students through the different domains of education. Biesta (2004) identifies three domains of education: qualification, socialization and subjectification. Qualification involves equipping students with the necessary knowledge and skills. For socialisation, students are taught norms, values and structures governing society. With subjectification, student voice is encouraged. In this case, students are taught to be critical thinkers who question, investigate, evaluate, and challenge the status quo. The critical approach enables students to confront and challenge the current consumerism view held by universities. Students are also encouraged to confront situations where civil discourse is limited or forbidden. In such situations, Kaufman (2016, p.7) argues that students must "act as agents promoting healthy civil interactions."

Both CP and student voice subscribe to the emancipation and empowerment of the marginalised (McLeod, 2011; Smith & Seal, 2021). According to Taylor and Robinson (2009,), power features prominently in shaping student voice. In addition, the personal experiences of

marginalisation and disempowerment are central to student voice as a strategy (Bourke & McDonald, 2018). By adopting CP, students can overcome the traditional power relations that often result in the marginalisation of students. Kevser and Aydin (2021) recognise the ability of CP to transcend the boundaries and hierarchical structures hindering communication between students and university management. Coupled with student voice, a platform is created for both sides to discuss their different views (McLaren, 2016). This platform also allows for critical reflection by both students and university management. As Smith and Seal (2021, p.3) argue, CP addresses critical questions of "what is education about, who it is for and how it is done." These questions need serious scrutiny considering the discourses around the broader decolonisation in universities across the African continent. The authors believe that a successfully resolved conflict is not one in which one side overpowers another. Instead, our view is that both parties are empowered and emancipated at the end of the conflict.

RESEARCH QUESTION, AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Amid the insufficient empirical data about the use of student voice to mitigate student protests, this chapter aims to propose the use of student voice as a strategy to palliate student unrest. The aim is espoused on two objectives geared to answer the research question; hence the research question is:

How can student voices be used as a strategy to palliate student unrest in African universities? This question is aimed to tackle the underlying issues which exacerbate student unrest and thereby propose the student voices as a strategy. As such, two pertinent research objectives are:

1. Identify the challenges of student unrest that perpetuate the instability of universities.

2.   Determine the successes of using student voice as a mechanism to resolve socio-political issues at universities.

To achieve the gist of this chapter, which is to propose the use of student voice as the strategy to palliate student unrest, it is prudent to identify the challenges of student unrest to have an in-depth understanding of the sources, nature and characteristics of these challenges. Suffice to mention that the enormity of these challenges, wittingly or unwittingly affects the efficient and proper running of the universities. Hence, society's quest to redress and manage the enormity of these challenges relies solely on the set of mechanisms or strategies it has at its disposal. Thus, it is necessary to determine the existing successes of student voice and their application in the context of universities' unrests.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter is structured on the inquiry methods of participatory research whereby the generation of empirical data, knowledge and discovery of facts are espoused on principles of empowerment, emancipation, mutual respect and social justice. It is aimed to produce practical knowledge through transformative agenda; hence participatory research is defined as a process of collaborative learning, investigation and generation of data and knowledge formation by society (Nunteans & Nagy, 2017). In contrast, Hall, Gaved and Sargent (2021) stated that participatory research (henceforth PR) is an intense, rigorous and active engagement of society' stakeholders with a common goal of knowledge discovery irrespective of individual members' social status within the society. This implies that PR seeks to empower, recognise and treat every individual member of society with mutual respect, and humility just to achieve its common goals of solving social phenomena. Precisely because its principles are prone to `a democratic ethos of courtesy, consultation and transparency in a sense that if one seeks to empower and emancipate the people, the principles of equality must govern the

envisaged relationship. It is within this breadth that PR is deployed logically to treat the participants-who are regarded as co-researchers with equality towards empowerment, emancipation and transformation.

Therefore, the data is generated on the principles of PR wherein information sessions (workshops) are conducted over a week in one of the South African universities about student unrest and its repercussions. The information sessions (henceforth IS) are defined by Leonard, Damanik and Amrilchasanah (2019) as the process of sharing expert opinions and information for the common purpose of solving socio-political issues. This implies that IS forums constituted by a cohort of experts converged with the primary goal of sharing empirically tested and proven data to solve social problems. Consequently, the choice of IS is that these sessions are structured to encourage active participation, collaboration and robust discussion. Hence their nature and characteristics endorse the principles of PR and are intertwined with the goal of empowerment and transformation in the culmination of the data generation process.

In all parity, the co-researchers were purposively sampled in these sessions, wherein nine (9) co-researchers comprising two (2) senior managers, three (3) student representatives, two (2) academics, one (1) support staff and one (1) council member were sampled as co-researchers. The demographic and gender constituencies tallied to depict diversity and inclusivity wherein three (3) co-researchers are African males, two (2) mixed colour females, three (3) Western females and one (1) male. The rationality of this choice is not only confined based on inclusivity and diversity but transcends into socio-economic backgrounds whereby the majority emerged from abject poverty and others from the middle to affluent economic classes. As such, these backgrounds augur well with the aim of this chapter in a sense that co-researchers have invaluable insights and experiences about the socio-economic challenges and, for the benefit of hindsight, are aptly and ably

to contribute meaningfully towards the proposition of student voice as a strategy.

In light of collaboration, the roles of principal researchers are merely facilitation wherein their duties and responsibilities were to ascertain those individuals are afforded equal time to express their diverse perspectives and that no one's rights are encroached upon. Secondly, principles researchers must record, write and note comments and discussions in line with the research question and objectives. Lastly, principal researchers were duty-bound to explain the next item during the workshops regarding whom to present and what item or theme to present. However, co-researchers did not share the same responsibilities and duties but were to be actively engaged in all the sessions to contribute to questions posed and formulate group discussions for further debate.

The critical discourse analysis technique is utilised to analyse data because data analysis is the process that involves the evaluation, examination and analysis of data to influence the synthesis of decisions (Carton, 2022). This process entails the analysis of spoken and written words because critical discourse analysis (henceforth CDA) posits that analysis is rooted in logical relationships where discussions are propelled towards the periphery of achieving common meanings (Yesilhurt, 2021). This means that the interpretations and formulations of meanings are conducted in a conduit of dialectical relationships compounded from political, social and economic dimensions (Doyuran, 2018). As a result, the meanings' interpretations are constructed and construed on the description of themes underlying the formations of words and their meaning. Subsequently, a context that underpins the formation of such words and meanings is cogently considered to decipher new meanings associated with the situation and ambience thereof. In surmise, spoken and written words were analysed in conjunction with the context and discourse prevailing at that particular time. Such texts or discourses are

transcribed verbatim and various pseudonyms associated with colours were utilized to respect and conceal the identity of co-researchers.

Despite the criticisms of CDA, IS and PR, the choice of their deployment in this chapter is the fact that both methods elevate the goals of social justice and cohesion, wherein empowerment, emancipation and transformation of people and status quo are prioritised to encourage active engagement of citizens in social inquiry and have relative control of the process. These qualities are proponents of the penances student voice where students are encouraged and empowered to demonstrate enthusiasm, passion and diligence for their studies and aptly influence the outcomes which directly impact the efficacies of their learning at universities. Therefore, the qualities of CDA and PR adduced withstand the anticipation to intellectually, economically and politically emancipate the students to confront the conundrums of higher education.

RESULTS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This part of the chapter intends to present results, findings and discussions. The presentation is structured according to the research objectives geared to respond to the research question; hence the presentation commenced with results and proceeded to findings and discussions thereafter. Suffice to accentuate that the chapter aims to propose the use of student voice as a strategy to palliate student unrest.

CHALLENGES OF STUDENT UNREST THAT PERPETUATE UNIVERSITIES' INSTABILITY

Any strategy cannot be developed or proposed in isolation from challenges because every challenge requires thorough examinations or diagnosis to devise a proper prognosis or strategy. Therefore, the challenges of African universities are broad, complex and protracted

from time immemorial. However, this does not infer those challenges cannot be managed, mitigated, and resolved; it is conversely the question of many factors such as political will, universities' management will and other relative stakeholders like private and public donors, among others. Admittedly, for this chapter, the challenges identified to engulf and continue to infiltrate the condors of our African universities are (1) student residences, (2) tuition fees, (3) inflexible courses and (4) lack of democratic structures of leadership.

STUDENT RESIDENCES

Although this dilemma cannot be attributed to the purview of the universities alone, non-prioritisation to develop proper and sustainable infrastructure for the accommodation of students is a salient omen of the reluctance of both universities and sovereign states. During the IS, co-researchers indicated that students are still subjected to appalling, denigrating and deplorable situations with respect to conducive accommodations. The following transcribed verbatim excerpt, where pseudonyms are used, attests to this assertion:

> *Mr Green: I do not understand why the universities fail to prioritise the procurement of land for new developments of student residences. They (universities) always prioritise academic projects, community engagements and teaching and learning; because these are the main streams, each university is gauged upon for subsidy and funding.*

This excerpt provides the discourse that infers a salient meaning of reluctance and indecisive leadership at the helms of our universities. The sentiments herein underscore the fact that universities have the authority and power to influence the development of these infrastructures; however, the powers are not channelled accurately in line with the priorities of students but directed towards the goals of prestige and accolades collected and accumulated for subsidy.

Universities require this subsidy for several reasons, but the worry factor is that student residences seem not to feature as a priority. So this means that the exponential amount of subsidy is used for academic and community projects to attract esteemed academics, researchers and scholars at the expense of students. In juxtaposition to this challenge, another co-researcher posits that universities are more concerned with international and national rankings regarding research output but ignore the brunt of students. This assertion is captured in this excerpt:

> **Ms Silver:** *Just wonder that your university ranks in the top 50 or 100 globally, but when you visit their student residences, you will be left shocked and angry as to how come such a prestigious university suffers from a sense of dilution from reality.*

Amid this excerpt, the agony among students and stakeholders is understandable and unbearable. Students' mobility, enrolment and choice of universities are informed by their prestigious ranking in terms of research, teaching and learning and community engagement. However, the intuition reasoning dictates that these universities are full houses wherein one gets all types of services equivalent to high value and quality. Therefore, the authors are convinced that universities need to reprioritise their goals, consider the disparity of clientele-students, and embark on a balanced discourse of building a conducive standard of student residences. In brief, the data indicate that much still needs to be done in terms of infrastructure development and land procurement; however, universities must not only focus on academic projects and research outputs but must diversify their income to project income to develop and build sustainable infrastructures.

TUITION FEES AND INFLEXIBLE COURSES

This challenge is multifaceted in the sense that it informs the ability of universities to meet their operational requirements. These requirements

range from attraction and retention of distinguished scholars and academics, administration, teaching and learning, research and community projects. However, the income streams must be diversified instead of relying on students' exorbitant tuition fees. In this excerpt, the sentiments of Mses Green and Blue are captured:

> **Ms Green:** *Universities struggle to meet their end meets given the high rate of inflation, and on the other hand, we had COVID, which ravaged everything we had, and we are back to square one. Students can no longer afford fees, so NSFAS is struggling to fund them, given its model.*

> **Ms Blue:** *I could not agree more, we used to have an annual increment in our salaries, but now there are delays involved because we are told that the university is struggling to balance the increment of salaries and labour retention. It is really tough these days because students are also dropping out since their parents were retrenched, and they can no longer afford fees.*

The excerpts are typical instances of how difficult it is to run a university in this age and era. The meaning deduces that the university needs to strike a balance between operational requirements and meeting its vision and goals. Thus, it implies that tuition fees, as one of the mainstream incomes, must be adjusted in order to correlate with the inflation rate. However, socio-economic factors outweigh this measure since many factors, among others COVID-19 and retrenchment, adversely impact the affordability of fees and proportionally affect the perennial dropout of students. In contrast, there is an element of quality and value that come up with an increment of tuition fee, and this element is the inflexible courses that fail to demonstrate resolute content of solution orientated. This proposition is evidential in this excerpt of Mr Brown:

> *Tuition fees are quite ridiculous and when you check the quality of academic courses, you will be surprised to see that some modules have*

not been revised for the past five or ten years, which compromises the
quality given the evolving world in this age.

This discourse raises a pertinent point of quality and standard; if the modules or courses are not aligned with the modern age, then the unemployment problems shall continue to confront us. The criticality modules' revision is embedded in the alignment with the curriculum because universities' curricula are designed in line with economic demands and skill shortages. Therefore, if students pay for inflexible modules or courses, the consequential effect is dire for students and countries' economies. As a result, universities must prioritise the expediency of module revision and curriculum reforms to sustain quality, standard and value. Equally, the value and quality attached to those courses must reflect equivalence to tuition fees.

The chapter achieved its objective of identifying the challenges that cause student unrest. As outlined above, the succinct challenges of a lack of student residences, an incessant increase in tuition fees and inflexible courses are relative causes of student unrest that have a negative ripple effect on the effective administration of universities. The poignant part is that these challenges emerged anciently ago, but persistence and the manifestation of these challenges lie squarely in the hands of universities and government leaders. Consequently, it is sheer neglect and dereliction of responsibilities by those entrusted with fiduciary duties to harness the status quo of our universities and expediently address students' demands, consider their inputs and develop a model of sustainability. Given these challenges, using student voice as a strategy is proposed to be an object in managing and mitigating student unrest.

SUCCESSES OF STUDENT VOICE

it is a conceded view that a plethora of research is required to justify the use of student voice; hence this chapter aims to contribute to this

research gap. It is indicative that perennial student unrests are the result of challenges discussed previously. Therefore, this section of the chapter delineates various penance of student voice in the context of universities. The successes determined are (1) the holistic students' engagement and (2) structured forums.

HOLISTIC STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT

Student voice have the propensity to inculcate student engagement in their academic courses and general university administration (Brunner, 2019). Although the university's core business is teaching and learning, students can be confined inside the classroom walls to consume information and sharpen their skills and expertise without participating broadly in various university processes. It is postulated by Valerie (2017) that students' engagement across all spheres of leadership, processes and procedures; increases their performance academically in the classroom. As a result, both enemies are meticulously dealt with without hesitation: dropout and student unrest. This proposition is avowed by Mr Pink's excerpt:

> It is satisfying to learn timely from student leaders that the university plans not to extend the registration deadline. This shows consideration because most students will have sufficient time to mobilise funds for registration, and this shows that student representatives are consulted now and then.

From this excerpt, one can denote that consultation of student leaders is an element of students' engagement in every university decision. It is an example of this discourse that students' anxieties are mitigated and averts the imminence of student unrest because consistent and considerate decisions are taken in line with proper engagement. Proper engagement in this context means constant consultation of student leaders and other stakeholders, not only whenever the necessity is

deemed by universities, but in every single moment of decision-making. As a result, consultation is an attribute to students' engagement which makes the dynamics of decision-making complex but efficient. This efficiency augurs well with the spirit of professionalism and thus provides credence to inter-disciplinary mechanisms such as students' engagement to serve as a basis for student voice. It is within this notion that student engagement is considered a preposition of student voice, which qualifies this chapter's aim to use student voice as a strategy to palliate student unrest.

STRUCTURED FORUMS

Universities are complex and intricate by nature and operation, creating necessary structures and systems to cater to every process, individual and stakeholder. One of the important structures is the faculty committees, wherein students' participation has steadily permeated the rigid layers of these committees. For instance, some universities have adopted student leaders into the faculty boards, wherein decisions on academic progression are considered and applied (Brunner, 2017). The inclusion of student leaders in these committees enhanced student perspectives whereby diverse views are elicited with respect to rules such as rule 18 of academic exclusion based on failing a module twice. Students' proximity to the processes of these committees shed light om the need to sustain quality and cater to students' needs with various interventions such as Deans' concessions, exemptions and expanded opportunities. It is espoused by Mr Indigo in this excerpt:

> *Once students have an opportunity to participate in structured committees which take decisions about and with them, then such a university can be able to stabilise its processes, procedures and systems.*

In essence, the practical view of including students in these structured forums is for inclusion, empowerment, liberty and respect for students.

A university that fails to collaborate with its student leaders defies the reality of a golden rule of conflict resolution. Students are the main clients of the university and the merchandise of services provided by universities cannot be delivered to students without collaboration with them. Therefore, it is contended that universities must have structured forums across their echelons or spheres so that diverse perspectives and views informed by decisiveness can be drawn, tested and implemented. This notion qualifies the use of student voices as the strategy to palliate student unrest.

In concisely, universities are conscious of the challenges which confront them globally. However, the reluctance to manoeuvre resources and include students in their structurally recognised forums exacerbate the challenges that cause student unrest. Therefore, the use of student voice in the context of African universities has existed for quite some time, but its fruitions are yet to be noticed because students are merely engaged in decorum and window dressing. The determination of the successes of student voice in various dimensions within universities yields positive results towards the democratisation of decision-making and conflict resolution process. Therefore, on the substantive basis of these successes, the chapter is affirmative to propose the use of student voice in all material facets to palliate student unrest.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Student unrest is an indication of the discontent and dissent of students about a phenomenon. This dissent is sourced from diverse challenges that are complex to resolve but require multi-prong approaches. However, the chapter achieved its goal of proposing the use of student voice as a strategy to palliate student unrest. It is indicated that collaboration and student involvement conceptualise the act of student voice. Furthermore, the treatment of students as active agents of change constituted a blatant feature of synergy between student and university

leaders and the synchronisation of universities' systems. In addition, student voice present diverse perspectives in terms of socio-economic factors and are the best practices to handle such factors with an alignment to student collaboration, inclusivity, respect and transformation. Despite the identified challenges that cause student unrest, this chapter restricted its scope to the challenges and successes. Therefore, further scrutiny of the solutions to student unrest is required to establish interlocutory discourse between students and universities' management to rubber stamp the use of student voice.

Adequately, student voice creates an opportunity to institutionalise students' active participation, which renders efficacy on universities' functionality and administration. Probable to otherwise negate the feasibility of radicalism that could be manifested from students expressing diverse views, students tend to have a sense of involvement and recognition if their voices are heard not only for tokenism but for effective means of resolution development. Likewise, institutionalised students' active participation harnesses transparency, embraces effective communication and reciprocates autonomy and authority. Besides students' engagement, universities remain to operate in silos and permeate a scale of peril and disrepute downwards. Hence the urgency to expedite student voice by involving their leaders across universities' spheres of leadership structures is now harnessed to use student voices as a strategy to palliate student unrest.

In conclusion, the limitations of the chapter were that solutions for student unrest were not inquired about, and further empirical data is required to debunk the lingering challenges of student unrest in student dropout. In addition, there is a future need for studies that will inquire about the type of leadership universities should provide to manage the tenacity of student unrest. Such studies shall model the integration of student voice into a particular leadership style and as a result, harmony and stability are fostered consistently at universities.

CHAPTER 9: STUDENTS' UNREST IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A PERSPECTIVE FROM THE 4IR ERA

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Abstract

This chapter examines the role of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) era on the unrest of students in higher education institutions. Unrest among students in higher education institutions has had devastating consequences for the school administration as well as students themselves. Some of these consequences include the loss of lives and property and disruptions to academic calendars. As institution managements struggle to determine how to effectively deploy the artificial intelligence tool of the 4IR to mitigate unrest, students, who are the current millennials and Gen Z, are already at the forefront of using the 4IR to achieve their objectives. This article examines the perspectives of millennials and Gen Z students through the lens of the current unrest in

sub-Saharan Africa. The students' unrest has been contextualised and conceptualised in light of the 4IR using newspaper articles, scholarly journals, textbooks, and university reports, among others. The research reveals a positive and negative relationship between unrest and the 4IR, including misinformation and fake news, the devaluation of values for higher education, uncontrolled finances of students' activism, easy access to information, and student inclusion through digital connectivity. This study recommends that by building a positive link between the technologies of the 4IR and the reduction of student unrest, the power of social media in engaging students should be studied and applied by the management of higher institutions rather than avoiding it.

Keywords:

Artificial intelligence, internet of things, higher education institution, students' unrest, 4IR

INTRODUCTION

Higher institutions all over the world are known as avenues for the ultimate development of young people in terms of political ideology and activism on many social issues. This is not unsurprising as students of higher institutions are usually from their late teenage years upwards, an age of emerging adulthood fuelled by the need for social relevance and active positions on issues that directly or indirectly affect them. Thus, despite the convergence of cultures, religious beliefs and socio-economic backgrounds, higher institution students are generally excited about seeking opportunities to try out many ideas they come across in their course of study on university campuses. This creates a preponderance of opportunities for students in higher educational institutions to be actively engaged in demanding a better environment that resonates with the elitist ideologies of the academic world. In light of this, higher institution students all over the world have always been involved in some form of activism or another which often results in unrest (Mansour &

Claire, 2018; Omodan, 2020). Student unrest in higher institutions has always come with debilitating consequences for both the school management and the students themselves. Some of these consequences include loss of lives and properties and instability in universities' calendars among others (Auma, 2005; Omodan, 2020; Onivehu, 2021).

In recent times, it has been noted that several factors, including an increase in tuition fees, cultism, a failure of institution authorities to pay attention to students' complaints, and an unsatisfactory campus transformation system, have contributed to student unrest in Nigeria's tertiary educational institutions (Etaneki & Okolie, 2020). Other factors include the lack of student involvement in decision-making, academic stress, shifting student value systems, current national difficulties, the lack of welfare amenities like housing for a sizable number of students, government policies and actions, etc (Alimba & Adindu 2019; Etaneki & Okolie, 2020). All of these have consistently been topics that have predominated student unrest at tertiary institutions in Nigeria. It is evident that students at Nigerian higher institutions today hold values that are generationally different from those of the ruling class (Etaneki & Okolie, 2020).

The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) is the period of high technological development that has revolutionised the world of work, education and indeed, every aspect of human endeavour (LEE, 2021; World Economic Forum, 2017). One of the most significant impacts of the Fourth Industrial Revolution is the high level of information and the accessibility that comes with it through improved connectivity (Mhlanga & Moloi, 2020; Serumaga-Zake & van der Poll, 2021; Yusuf *et al*., 2020). This development comes with new challenges for school administrators, educators, researchers, parents, government policymakers and the government itself. This study thus aims to establish the perspective of the Fourth Industrial Revolution in examining the concept of students' unrest.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Concepts of Students' Unrest

The concept of students' unrest has been variously defined by a lot of scholars who attempted to explain different degrees of students' hyperactivity mostly in the course of demanding a change which may be related to issues bothering welfare or other conditions affecting their academic lives on the campus. According to Etaneki and Okolie (2020), students' unrest is one of the major challenges confronting higher institutions in Africa and impeding their aims. In their definition, students' unrest is viewed as similar to other challenges confronting higher institutions such as violence, revolts, protests and school closures which have greatly contributed to the delimiting factors of institutional deficiency in sub-Saharan African countries (Etaneki & Okolie, 2020). Davies *et al*. (2015) classify students' unrest as activities that occur in the form of violent demonstrations, boycotting of classes, harassment, protests, and strikes among others. These activities are usually a result of a pending perennial problem or a new measure taken by the management of higher institutions to the displeasure of students.

Students' unrest is mostly a form of physical exercise of political activism which is deeply rooted in the colonial history of many developing nations across the world (Luescher *et al*., 2016). While students' unrest represents a display of disaffection over certain issues, it has been widely synonymised as students' protests and riots by some scholars even though protests which may either be violent or peaceful are just a way of categorising unrest among students of higher institutions (Aluede *et al*., 2005; Omodan, 2020; Onivehu, 2021; Rhoads, 1998). Ojo (2019), while explaining the concept of students' protests, defined protests as variations of activities that serve as an expression of students' displeasure with academic or non-academic issues. Thus, terms like "rampage", demonstration" and "confrontation" with authorities and other activities such as disturbances, unruly behaviours that exhibit

displeasure and destruction of school properties were used to characterise students' protest (Bot, 1985; Christensen, 2018; Fomunyam, 2017; Joiner, 2019). These characteristics are also the innate characteristics of students' unrest defined by other scholars (Etaneki & Okolie, 2020; Taiwo, 1999). Ojo (2019) conceptualises students' protests as students' unrest. Students' protests have also been categorised into violent and non-violent protests. Going by other characteristics in the definition of students' unrest, it is thus implied that students' unrest need not necessarily indicate students' exhibition of violence. Rather, it infers a situation where students expressing their grievances impede the progress of academic activities on the university campus. Akinbami's (2015) explanation of the term "students' unrest" finally provides a nexus between the term "unrest" and "protest". According to him, students' unrest is the process whereby students express their grievances by indulging in many activities such as impulsiveness, violent protests, hyperactive behaviours, classroom disturbances and destructive behaviours. This definition thus nails students' protest as an element of students' unrest.

In simplifying the variations of students' unrest, Taiwo (1999) states that students' unrests are usually from either internal or external factors. The internal factors are the issues that stem from the disagreement between university management and the students (Aluede *et al*., 2005; Davies *et al*., 2016; Falki, 2021; Kornbluh *et al*., 2022; Shahmohammadi, 2014). In most cases, issues of disputes between the management of higher institutions and students are welfare-related, such as intra-campus transportation issues, increases in tuition fees, charges for institutional resources or other administrative-related charges, students' accommodation issues and problems associated with basic facilities such as electricity and water supply, and campus security (Davies *et al*., 2016; Dwiastuti *et al*., 2022; Etaneki & Okolie, 2020; B. Omodan, 2020; Onivehu, 2021). Another important factor culminating in students' unrest deals with the strained relationship between the academic or non-academic staff of the university and the students (Auma, 2005; Deng,

2022; Etaneki & Okolie, 2020). Issues of this nature may involve any form of harassment that is becoming generally reported among the students. While these problems may be regarded as perennial problems facing university systems, particularly in sub-Saharan African countries, other problems of similar importance according to Taiwo (1999) relate to the scheduling of examinations, and shortage of learning facilities which may be a result of the admission of more students than the university can adequately cater for. These crises usually result in clashes between students mostly represented by the student union body and university administrations which often lead to university closures and suspension of semesters.

The external factors that generate students' unrest in universities are identified as the problems or challenges faced by students outside the institution's management. Such challenges, according to Taiwo (1999), usually include countrywide problems which may be political or economic in nature.

Higher education institutions in sub-Saharan Africa

Higher institutions are the frontiers of knowledge in every country. Usually consisting of universities and several types of colleges, higher or tertiary institutions are the last lap in the overall education of an average citizen of a country. Thus, Enoidem and Usoro (2016) asserted that higher educational institutions in some African countries like Nigeria were established to achieve the global objectives of providing manpower training, ensuring self-reliance and creating an avenue for national unity. Higher educational institutions, therefore, are saddled with the responsibility of providing sound human capital development which ensures the proper training of the most active part of a country's population (Federal Republic of Nigerian, 2014; South Africa, 2014). While higher institutions generally have a broad outlook as the center of academic and scholarly research and discoveries in every country. Alemu (2018) noted that a university can be referred to as a unit of higher

institutions and at other times, it can be referred to as a higher institution that has other institutions under its establishment. Relating this to the British system, he argued that a university is a higher institution that has the power to conduct preeminent research in several fields and the same vein award degrees. It could thus be deduced from the submission of Alemu (2018) that higher education in the modern contexts implies tertiary institutions of training and learning which include conventional universities with several fields such as humanities, natural sciences, physical sciences, arts and technology.

In Nigeria, Enoidem and Usoro (2016) classification of higher educational institutions includes special and conventional universities, polytechnics, colleges of education and monotechnics. Alemu (2018) whose definition of higher education comes with the tag "modern", includes post-secondary educational set-ups like polytechnics, "grand ecole" institutions awarding professional degrees and colleges of education. In (Ndofirepi & Cross, 2017), universities are conceived as establishments with the responsibility of creating a rich learning environment that prepares students to take up roles in society through access to high-quality scientific knowledge which bridges the knowledge gap in society and the application of such knowledge. Universities in modern times are formed to solve transcultural challenges in a globalised world. By their very nature, Ordorika (2017) explained that universities are global and have always been global. This is demonstrated by customs and traditions, scholarly standards and practices which are in most cases inherited from some European models. This ties the root of the modern university system to the European models of university education which took shape in the medieval age. For most African countries which were colonised by the Europeans, tertiary institutions and universities in particular, were established following the pattern of the colonial masters.

According to Ordorika (2017), colonial governments made the policies and the structures of higher education in their colonies. Therefore, the ideological background of universities in former colonies largely imbibed

the different colonial phenomena according to the colonial situation of the time. Universities established during this period not only set the tone for universities established in the post-colonial period, but they also acculturated certain ideologies of the colonial masters down to the quest by the respective nations to break free from the shackles of colonialism. The struggle for independence of African countries became so embedded into the systems of universities to the extent that the post-colonial African universities are yet to completely eradicate violent activism both from the standpoint of the students and the staff.

Due to their history of colonial activism, African universities have been at the receiving end of several political instabilities which have perpetuated the perennial challenges being faced by some of these universities. Ndubuisi and Jacob, (2021) whose focus is on Nigeria's public higher institutions categorised all these challenges as administrative difficulties. According to him, these challenges include inadequate funding, inadequate lecturers, inadequate infrastructural facilities, brain drain, strike action, political influence, corruption and insecurity. The submission of challenges being faced by Nigeria's higher institutions, according to Ndubuisi and Jacob (2021), shows rudimentary administrative issues with roots in the colonial era. On the other hand, universities on the global front have a variety of other challenges which African universities, unfortunately, have a decent share in. These new challenges identified by Tierney and Lanford (2016) are categorised into four which are (i) the emergence of the knowledge-intensive economy (ii) the need to train a creative and innovative workforce (iii) massification and world-class aspiration (iv) decreased funding and resources for higher education.

While the last of the challenges facing universities globally as identified by Tierney and Lanford (2016) can be assumed to be a perennial problem facing universities in the developed and developing world, the three other challenges identified can be assumed to be consequential to the new industrial development all over the world. According to them, the

emergence of the knowledge-intensive economy became a challenge facing universities globally as a result of rapidly-evolving technological innovation which spreads so fast among countries. These developments are changing industrial orientation across different economies which are thus exerting pressures on universities to adequately prepare citizens who would fully gain mastery of the changes and improve or sustain improvement on the economic landscape of their respective countries. Tierney and Lanford (2016) thus asserted that institutions face the challenge of ensuring that individuals are prepared to identify and effect global innovations based on digitalisation which has gradually crept into the global industrial system.

This challenge culminates in the second problem whereby, institutions face the pressure of ensuring that learning environments prepare individuals for dexterity and mobility in the workplace as a result of the robotisation of hitherto manual activities in industrial production. Hence, Enoidem and Usoro (2016) agree that higher education in countries like Nigeria should have changes in educational curricula to ensure that teaching reflects the rapid industrial revolution of the time. The third problem identified by Tierney and Lanford (2016) involves what they termed "massification vs. world-class" aspirations. The problem of massification in their explanation deals with a high surge in university enrolment which is expected to increase by 47.2% between 2010 and 2025. This, they explained, portends a great challenge for universities in developing countries, particularly African countries, which may battle with the challenges of keeping up with the rapid innovation of the time, increase in enrolment, and difficulty in building capacity to support innovative ideas and funding issues which may limit institutional activities.

Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR)

Industrial revolutions are a nomenclature used to classify different epochs in the history of work or industrial production based on their most

visible characteristics of the time. Markers were set into the classification system of industrial production in the mid-eighteenth century when the steam engine was invented (Prisecaru, 2016). The introduction of the steam engine sparked a gradual departure from the agrarian feudal society into the capitalism-based industries of which development and innovation have ushered the world into the current system (Naidoo *et al*., 2021; World Economic Forum, 2017). The Second Industrial revolution ensured massive industrialisation facilitated by oil and electricity. Digitisation and the worldwide utilisation of information characterised the Third Industrial Revolution. Each of these epochs of production and economic classification is strung together such that innovation and discoveries in one revolution usually result in a newer way of doing things which further revolutionises industrial production (Xu *et al*., 2018). With a boom in the application of information across different fields of knowledge, production came disrupting technologies that are changing the landscape of work previously determined by a combination of the three previous revolutions. The fourth industrial revolution is therefore characterised according to (Bayode *et al*., 2019) by big data, simulation, the internet of things, cloud computing, additive manufacturing, augmented and virtual realities, blockchain technology, robotics and artificial intelligence.

Klaus Schwab, the chairman of the World Economic Forum, in Davos (2016) explained that the Fourth Industrial Revolution is "characterised by a much more ubiquitous and mobile internet, by smaller and more powerful sensors that have become cheaper, and by artificial intelligence and machine learning" (Prisecaru, 2016:58). His definition inherently implied that the possibilities of the Fourth Industrial Revolution will one day intertwine virtual and physical systems of the digital environment which would be converted into industrial manufacturing and several aspects of human services.

The opportunities presented by the advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution spread across the different strata of society. While industrial

production is the most revolutionised in terms of manual labour which is becoming automated, other aspects of different countries are also being integrated into the wide range of possibilities and opportunities presented by the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Penprase (2018) while describing it by the opportunities it provides, explains that the Fourth Industrial Revolution comes about as an effect of the fusion of exponential technologies including artificial intelligence, biotechnology and nanomaterials. This has rapidly increased the processing powers of computers utilised in large corporations evidenced by "the doubling of CPU power every 18-24 months which has enabled new supercomputers to reach computation speeds of 300 quadrillion floating operations per second or FLOPS" (Penprase, 2018). The introduction of the Internet of Things (IoT) remains the main revolutionary contribution of the 4IR with impacts on the daily lives of average citizens of different countries. Xu *et al*. (2018) explained IoT as an internetworking of physical devices which offers advanced connectivity among systems, devices and services enabling automation and applications such as smart grids in areas with embedded connections referred to as smart cities. The introduction of robots which are now overtaking manual activities hitherto handled by humans is spreading beyond the walls of industrial production. It is now possible to carry out domestic activities such as driving, cooking, playing music, and mowing lawns through specially designed robots for each of these activities. Aside from these, artificial intelligence is now deployed in the service industry, particularly in banks, the financial market and the communication sector.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution also known as industry 4.0 or 4IR, has a high level of significance in the education sector. In higher education, 4IR is gradually determining knowledge production, and research activities. Jung (2019) stated that 4IR is revolutionizing knowledge creation, teaching and training of highly skilled postgraduate students and the undergraduate curricula for transiting undergraduate students to the labour market. The process of conducting research in higher education is

now evolving to such a level where research progress can easily be tracked and outcomes predicted using the social network.

For undergraduate education, higher institutions face the challenge of consistently leading and adapting to industry changes to adequately prepare undergraduates for the evolving work environment. Thus, Penprase (2018) suggest that higher institutions should intensify their collaboration with the government and industry. This will enable them to get funding and upskilling from the industry and government which will in turn keep the academic environment at the frontline of industry changes in the evolving society. The other areas of great importance in which the 4IR has revolutionised higher education includes the virtualisation of learning particularly through massive open online courses (MOOCs) which have eliminated distance and time barriers while providing learners from different parts of the world access to self-paced learning opportunities with less restrictions compared to conventional schooling. Assisted technologies have also enhanced how simulation is carried out proving learners with new experiences of interaction with the objects of learning and enabling creativity and versatility in knowledge (Xing & Marwala, 2017).

Despite the lofty ideals and new horizons being set by the trend of the 4IR, there are however some challenges in higher education and indeed, the field of education are yet to overcome. For Bayode *et al*. (2019), they categorised these challenges into three groups viz: technical challenges, personnel challenges and attitudinal challenges. The technical challenges include challenges posed by broadband and ICT infrastructure which massive deployment is highly crucial for proper utilisation of opportunities provided by the 4IR. Even though mobile telecommunication networks are gradually improving their capacity, especially with the advent of fifth-generation (5G) internet connectivity, Bayode *et al*. (2019) lamented that a majority of the population in developing countries such as sub-Saharan Africa does not have access to internet facilities due to lower penetration and affordability issues.

Electricity poses another major challenge to the full utilisation of the 4IR-compliant technologies in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa even though most developed nations have long overcome this. Other challenges under our first categorisation include insufficient investment into the opportunities provided by the 4IR and lastly, cybersecurity problems which may not be considered overbearing in African countries for this period. The challenges of the 4IR under the personnel categorisation involve a lack of technical skill. While many African countries are still grappling with the full deployment of the Third Industrial Revolution – the digital age – the 4IR poses a greater challenge with countries having a lot to keep up to. This prompted the submission of Bayode *et al.* (2019) that African nations are ill-prepared for the imminent disruption in the world of industrial production especially due to a lack of manpower and skills which also resulted from the technical challenges mentioned earlier. The attitudinal challenge to the 4IR deals with the mindset of some industry leaders in various sectors who are hesitant to deploy the 4IR-compliant facilities in their establishment. This tends to slow the adoption of the 4IR. The mindset challenge in higher educational institutions in Africa is particularly grievous, especially for learners who are at the risk of being ill-prepared for the evolving work environment in an already globalised world where technology is becoming more fused.

Generational influences on education and Fourth Industrial Revolution

The emergence of the Fourth Industrial Revolution is largely characterised by a new generation of humans who have shown higher versatility along with a flair for the deployment of opportunities provided by the 4IR. Generations, defined as groups of people who share similar behaviours, beliefs, values and expectations in the social, economic and political spheres, do not only refer to people born around the same period, rather, it also captures individuals who share feelings, experiences and opinions and thus, belonging to the same community (Çora, 2019). Csobanka (2016) also agreed with this description of

generations which was based on the works of previous scholars who set three criteria for generational membership. This criterion listed "perceived membership" as the first criteria, "shared beliefs and behavioural norms" as the second criteria and "shared history" as the third criteria. Thus, while generations may not be strictly defined by a period of birth, birth time however plays a big role in defining generations.

The digital age which heralded the Fourth Industrial Revolution is synonymous with the formation of years of individuals who make up Generation X, born between 1960 and 1985 (Bejtkovský, 2016). Gen X or 'Xer' grew up at a time when computers were becoming more popular. This put them at a vantage point where they had an easy grasp of the opportunities and the applicability of computers to solve many problems of the time. Following Gen X is Generation Y called "the millennials". Gen Y is referred to as the first global generation by Bejtkovsky (2016) because of the similarity in their behaviour and characteristics irrespective of their nationality. Gen Y is referred to as those born between the years 1980 and 1995 (Fry, 2019). Fry (2019) reported that millennials who now make up a portion of the young adult population all over the world have more education than their parents and are adept at the technological changes compared to their parents and grandparents during the technological shifts of the time. Bejtkovsky (2016) summed up the characteristics of millennials as follows: (i) they see work as one of the priorities of life and not the only priority (ii) prefer to be open and transparent compared to the generations before them (iii) prefer inclusivity and team orientation in management (iv) expect daily workplace feedback and thrive in new challenges and opportunities to expand their limits (v) stay connected 24 hours a day (vi) seek career flexibility and portability (v) want personalised, interactive and entertaining education. Gen Y or millennials are taking a higher percentage in work environments all over the world. Rony (2019) affirmed that Gen Y has taken over 65% of the workplace in countries like Indonesia.

Closely associated behaviourally with Gen Y is Generation Z or the post-millennials. Bejtkovsky (2016) defined Gen Z as those born between 1995 and 2010. While the millennials grew along with the industrial shift from digitalization to information, Gen Z grew up in a mobile world of the internet, mobile phones, instant messaging, Youtube, social networking sites and other technological facilities that are gradually finding their way into our everyday life. The industrialisation shift experienced by the world during the formative years of millennials makes them a major key player in the fourth industrial development. On the other hand, the post-millennials or Gen Z are at the forefront in the use of the facilities provided by the technologically advanced world they were born into. This implies a great shift in mindset on issues that relates to this generation by the adult generation. The technological exposure of millennials makes their expectations challenging to higher educational institutions (Swanzen, 2018) which now need constant improvement in curricula and teaching methodologies as well as a new outlook toward research that can adequately prepare learners to cope effectively in a changing world.

Beyond the challenges of providing sound higher institutional training to millennials and post-millennials, the 21st-century world is fast evolving and becoming more demanding. The 21st-century world is characterised by interconnectedness with features such as globalisation, knowledge explosion and ICT which has shrunk the size of the world into a small global village (Malik, 2018). With interconnectedness as a major feature of the present world, the educational and socio-political landscape has taken a newer dimension where adaptation to emerging technologies has become important. The rise of technology in various disciplines has created new employment opportunities. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 further created a new avenue for remote working, online education, and e-governance among others. As the pandemic eased off, the "work from home" signature has become ingrained into the minds of many people for whom technology has reduced the distance barriers. Moreover, international work opportunities via the internet

known as "remote working" have become a new element of the work environment in the 21st century.

A game theory approach to students' unrest from the 4IR perspective

Game theory uses mathematical models to examine conflict and cooperation between rationality and intelligence in decision-making. Osborne (2004) explained that game theory aims to help us understand how interaction flows among decision-makers. With a scope that is larger and could apply to only one situation, game theory is useful in explaining phenomena in areas of economics, politics, biology and education among others. Game theory is an ideal method for understanding the dynamism of interactions in which the "decision of multiple agents affects each agent" (Naveed *et al.*, 2021). Game theory has now become popular due to the works of John Von Neumann, John Nash, and Oskar Morgenstern who published many models by which the theory is now applicable to different situations of human interactions (Nyor *et al.*, 2019). Nyor *et al.* (2019) stated that game theory has a key concept focused on equilibrium. It is expected that when equilibrium occurs, certain human behaviours and reactions will be exhibited. Game theory has different models which can be suited to a specific social phenomenon to provide clarity.

Naveed *et al.* (2021) put up many types of models for game theory. A few of these models which correspond to this study are briefly examined below:

- **Cooperative/non-cooperative:**
  The cooperative/non-cooperative approach sees gaming activities as an event conducted in the interest of individual players even though players often work together while trying to achieve the same goal in the course of the game. The commonalities in the gameplay draw the player into a cooperative gaming style. Therefore, even though they cooperate to achieve a common goal, the cooperation was motivated by selfish interests. In non-

cooperative games, players do not need to form a common front while trying to achieve their goals. This makes the game highly competitive as goals are individualistic even though similar.

The cooperative game theory aptly explains the relationship among students during times of unrest. While pursuing certain demands either at the external level or within the university, students usually form a body or a union through which they can be mobilised to demand their rights. Approaching the management of institutions in unionised bodies often gives them leverage over the decisions of the management which they are fighting against. Non-cooperative game theory applies to students' competition for academic awards over the course of a semester. Students however put off this mentality in periods of unrest as they mobilise to make their voices heard. Another game theory typology that matches this is the zero-sum/non-zero-sum typology.

- **Symmetric/ Asymmetric Games:**
  Symmetric games are those games where the reward of using a strategy largely depends on other strategies instead of the players. Thus, while players may be changed, the rewards for applying a strategy remain the same. Symmetric games usually have laid down rules and strategies that are retained even when the players are changed. On the other hand, in asymmetric games, players only have asymmetric ideas about the preferences of other players. This game theory typology explains the relationship that exists between student groups as a body and the management of universities or other institutions to whom students' unrest is directed to. While the knowledge of students' activism can be viewed through the lens of symmetric typology by the management of higher institutions and external bodies, students' bodies, on the other hand, often display an asymmetric understanding of the preferences of how institutional bodies function.

- **Evolutionary Game Theory:**

   Evolution game theory describes the strategy of adaption by which game players adopt the rules of the game to suit their interests. Rules are not necessarily designed to be rational or futuristic, rather it focuses on how game players can make adjustments and still change the rules as the situation demands. Evolutionary Game Theory perfectly describes the relationship existing among the trio of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, students of higher institutions and the management of higher institutions. While institutions have methodologies, curricula and established codes of operation, the demands of the 4IR are gradually changing this landscape and therefore, university students and managements of higher institutions must adapt themselves to the demands of the time to curb the menace of students' unrest and to take active positions in shaping the influence of the 4IR in society.

Issues of students' unrest in sub-Saharan African higher education

Students' unrest is one of the peculiarities of the academic environment involving learners who gather in solidarity to demand a change in an unfavourable situation. Isalano (2021) defined students' unrest as the involvement of students in various acts of confrontation such as strikes, protests, violent demonstrations, walkouts, mass meetings, processing, burning of school properties, murder and other acts of violence against a university administration or the immediate community. The menace of students' unrest is not new to the African continent. In contrast, it is deeply rooted in the violence and demonstration that characterised the activities of nationalists in the colonial period and has now been passed down from one generation to another as a result of governmental instability which has been a major challenge for many sub-Saharan African countries. Isalano (2021) reported that a preponderance of students' unrest exists because of dissatisfaction with how issues are

handled by schools' management, poor academic performance, low morale and poor parental advice.

However, Omodan (2020) asserted that in sub-Saharan African countries like Nigeria, the only language through which the student community expresses displeasure over certain unfavourable issues is agitation which often leads to unrest. This, he asserted, stems from the inherited characteristics and leftovers from years of colonialism and subsequent military dictatorship both of which had imbibed the culture of agitation into the psyche of individuals in the academic community. Instances of students' unrest in countries like Nigeria involved the students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, who mobilised and protested against unstable electricity in 2010, while in 2013, students of the University of Uyo protested against the state of the university's academic environment which was unbearable to them. In the course of the protests, a second-year student was hit by a police bullet leading to campus unrest (Ojo, 2019).

The causes of students' unrest in post-colonial sub-Saharan Africa have not witnessed many changes over the years. Recent cases, for instance, involved students in South Africa led by the South African Union of Students (SAUS) who called for university closure all over the country in 2021 (Ntshidi, 2021; Thabang, 2021). The immediate cause of the protest was to demand financial inclusion. However, a civilian was killed during the protests thus leading to a state of unrest. Likewise, in August 2021, students of a federal university in Nigeria, the University of Benin, took to the major streets and highways, blocking the road and protesting against an increase of twenty thousand nairas in their school fees, bearing inscriptions such as "Oppression comes in different forms", "we didn't sign up for this injustice" (Adeyinka Adedipe, 2021; Vanguard News, 2021). These instances are pointers to the major trigger of students' protest and students' unrest which is perceived injustice. While cultism is another major cause of unrest in higher institutions, especially in sub-Saharan African countries such as Nigeria, the high level of

students' unrest on university campuses is still attributable to organised students' unionism (Akparep, 2019; Idoniboye-Obu, 2014). Several scholars have cited different causes of students' unrest on university campuses (Akparep, 2019; Alimba, 2008; Deng, 2022; Etaneki & Okolie, 2020). However, Taiwo (1999) summed them all into internal and external factors. Internal factors are the factors that relate to issues of welfare between university management and the students. On the other hand, external factors deal with grand issues of political nature which motivate students' unions at the inter-university level to engage in unrest within or outside the university campuses. The incidence of students from South African universities protesting against financial inclusion in 2021 is one case of an external cause of students' unrest. Instead of directing the protest to its management, students protested and targeted the minister for education, Blaze Nzimnande, and the government, thus leading to public unrest that claimed the life of a civilian. On the other hand, students from a Nigerian university, the University of Benin, protested against the management of the institution for increasing the university's tuition fees by twenty thousand nairas. This represents an internal cause of students' unrest.

Studies by Odebode (2019) examined the causes of students' unrest in Nigerian universities and came up with empirical evidence of the following ranking:

1. Unfavourable government policies
2. Poor staff-student relationship
3. High tuition fees
4. Poor students' welfare
5. Unsupportiveness of school authority
6. National issues e.g fuel scarcity, insecurity, police brutality
7. Uncooperativeness of the community
8. Campus cultism
9. Non-availability of basic amenities on campuses
10. Low commitment of students towards schooling

Students' unrest and implications for the 41R

The police brutality and the ensuing protests hashtag #EndSARS that ravaged Nigerian major cities in 2020 made the year a memorable one for the youths, most of whom were students. In Nigeria, police brutality is a major problem. However, many triggering incidences occurred in 2020 that united young people from different states in the country to engage in massive protests. The Washington Post (2020) reported cases of police brutality in instances that included rape, extrajudicial killings, armed robberies, extortions, assault, and illegal confiscation among others. The specific case triggering the protest was the extrajudicial killing of a young man in Delta State after which the police officers pulled out his body from the car and drove out with his Lexus SUV. What differentiates this protest from other protests or cases of students' unrest in the past, was the involvement of the social media platform, Twitter, which served as a point of mobilisation for youths in different cities, campuses and states who came out en masse to protest.

The active role of Twitter in uniquely mobilising students and youths gives an overview of one of the possibilities in the opportunities provided by the fourth industrial revolution. While administrators of universities are still grappling with how to deploy artificial intelligence in their institutions, students who currently are the millennials and Gen Z, are already at the forefront of using the technology of 4IR to improve their aims. The #EndSARS protest represents a typical example of how students can manipulate social media presence which is a major feature of the 4IR to bypass government regulations and raise funds to pursue their interests. While this idea may sound revolutionary and laudable from a standpoint of oppression and injustice, it, however, poses a threat to the security and safety of lives and properties in the wake of students' unrest. Thus, the fourth industrial revolution and students' unrest have the following interactions

- Misinformation and fake news: The case of misinformation and fake news has risen to a height never seen before. In the past, it used to

be a mouth-to-mouth rumour. However, with the advent of technologically advanced software for video and picture manipulation, fake news has risen to a high level. It is importantly notorious for the Gen-Z and the millennials who are tech-savvy in the use of video and picture manipulative tools. This not only tends to create unrest among students, but it also has the ability to create civil unrest.

- Depreciation of values for higher education: The rise of technological gadgets and the savvy nature of the Gen-Z have made it easy for teenagers in some African countries to gain advanced education outside the four walls of the university. A recent story involves a sixteen-year-old boy named John Oseni, a web developer, who recently got employed by an Italian firm right from Nigeria. His story shows how the drive for technology-based skills is outweighing the desire for higher education among young people. This is gradually reducing the conventional belief that success lies in academic prowess and popularising the phrase "education na scam" among students.

- Uncontrolled finances of student activism: Student activism in recent years are financed by publicly donated platforms such as Gofundme which might be difficult for the government and management of higher institutions to control particularly with the help of blockchain technology and cryptocurrency. Therefore, with the peculiarity of the Gen-Z and the millennials who get easily irritated more than the generations before them, there exists a likelihood of students' unrest across institutions in many sub-Saharan African universities.

- Increased Political Consciousness: The rise of technological tools like social media, blogging platforms, virtual private networks (VPN) among others, has limited the scope and control of the government in West African countries and thereby, increasing the tendency of students to be engaged in activism that often leads to social unrest. A vivid example was Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari's

banning of the social media platform, Twitter, on June 2021, for deleting a post that was reported to be a hate speech. The technological savviness of young Nigerians, the majority of whom are students, prompted them to bypass the ban and access Twitter until the government lifted the ban on 13th January 2022. The lack of the government's ability to limit social media usage represents the power students now have in the wake of the 21st-century industrial revolution and the attendant challenges that come with it.

- Increase in Hate and Insightful Speeches: Many countries all over the world legislated against hate speech and cited consequences for such. However, sanctioning has not been effective and cases of hatred and insightful comments are now more common on social media. This leads to causes of virtual unrest. Hateful and insightful comments on social media are now becoming a menace and sending young people into depression and mental health challenges.

Furthermore, while the above serves as a negative influence of the Fourth Industrial Revolution on students' unrest, the following, however, are the opportunities provided by the Fourth Industrial Revolution in reducing students' unrest:

- Easy access to information: a prominent feature of the Fourth Industrial Revolution is the opportunity it provides for gaining access to information through facilities such as geolocation, and live streaming features, among others. As a result, situations of unrest can be easily predicted through online communication before it gets physical.
- Learner and staff management systems: Before the advent of social media technologies, cases of abuse of privilege were rife among lecturers of universities in sub-Saharan Africa. What emboldens this, however, is the lack of neutral information platforms for students and lecturers to report cases of abuse. With management

systems provided in many forms, opportunities now exist to report incidences of abuse among lecturers and students. By tackling the menace of abuse among staff and students, cases of injustice can be curbed and thereby, students' unrest can be prevented.

- Blended learning opportunities: one major cause of students' unrest in sub-Saharan African universities is unfavourable learning conditions especially insufficient lecture rooms. During the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020, many universities were forced to migrate learning to online mode. While the pandemic has abated, the online platforms maintained during the pandemic can be utilised to reduce infrastructural burdens on the universities' campuses. This will not only improve the learning environment for the students, but it will also increase lecturers' classroom control skills. Thus, another cause of students' unrest has been addressed.

- Student inclusion through digital connectivity: One of the major causes of students' unrest in sub-Saharan African universities is students' welfare and injustice. With the aid of digitisation, however, university administrators can keep a platform to get the students abreast of certain challenges being faced by the management and the approaches being taken by the management to curb those challenges. This will increase students' trust in the management systems of universities and ultimately curb campus unrest.

CONCLUSION

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is taking its toll in every sphere of human existence, changing how we have lived for over one hundred years. This comes with a lot of opportunities and challenges for governments, policymakers, educators, businesses and indeed, every stratum of the globalised world. The wake of the Fourth Industrial Revolution brings with it, a new generation of humans who are so immersed in this new

technology and thus, think and see conventional education as an evolved form which thus poses a great challenge to administrators of higher institutions.

As the world adapts itself to the 4IR, so does higher education have to evolve on how issues bothering students' welfare and the campus environment are handled. This study has considered the impacts of the Fourth Industrial Revolution on students' unrest while citing specific examples of how new technology particularly social media and cryptocurrency are used to mobilise young people for activism and donation for protests and activism that generates unrest. We also looked at some ways to utilise opportunities presented by the Fourth Industrial Revolution in curbing some of the immediate causes of students' unrest and campus activism.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is an unavoidable period of social transformation that if properly utilised can be of immense benefit in curbing different issues disrupting today's world, particularly in campus activism. On the other hand, neglecting to utilise the technologies of the Fourth Industrial Revolution can be disastrous to the education sector and indeed, every part of society, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. Social problems such as students' unrest has a high occurrence rate in some African countries causing intermittent disruption in schools' calendar and reducing the impacts of higher education in transforming the lives of young people. In order to build a positive link between the technologies of the 4IR and the reduction of student unrest, we recommend the following:

- The power of social media in engaging students should be studied and applied by the management of higher institutions rather than avoiding it. Millennials and Gen Z are called "digital natives" or "netizens" because of their daily consumption of social media.

Hence, integrating the university's curriculum and other issues of students' concern into social media would communicate to the students in a language they consider natural. This will reduce their proneness to engage in activities that cause unrest when they disagree with the school management on certain issues.

- Higher institutions of learning should focus their teaching methodology on blended learning in cases of insufficient classroom facilities. This will reduce incidences of an unconducive learning atmosphere on the university's campuses.
- Universities should utilise the internet to connect with their students and keep them informed on important management decisions which may lead to the disruption of academic activities.

LIMITATIONS

This study in the future should address the limitations such as The approach used is limited to theoretical, in which empirical approaches could strengthen the link between students' unrest and 4IR. Furthermore, the scope can be expanded to other Africa nations for generalisation purposes.

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CHAPTER 10:
ANECDOTES OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

In the post-apartheid era, South African higher education institutions are diverse, as they have to a great extent managed to reconcile diverse groups of people from different parts of the country and the world to interact and generate knowledge. While universities across the country have made strides to redress the injustices of apartheid, it is unarguably a process that can be made even better to address issues such as access to quality education, equity, and social justice in the democratic dispensation. The higher education institution I completed my degrees from, including my doctorate, was predominantly designated for White South Africans during apartheid, but now also serves both local and international black students and the academic staff's racial profile can also be argued to be changing, although gradually. Presently, there are representatives from previously oppressed and disadvantaged groups, including staff from other African countries and elsewhere. With these circumstances in mind, the recent emergence of student demands free, decolonised, and "Africanised" higher education institutions, curriculum, and pedagogy necessitates that we rethink what it means to teach and learn in the South African higher education spaces in the post-apartheid

era. This chapter argues that post-apartheid higher education in South Africa celebrates isolated pockets of excellence as we remain on the periphery of educational participation in the country, perpetuating social inequalities and injustice through higher education institutions. This chapter employs an autoethnographic reflexivity approach to demonstrate the convergence between the university society and self as a Black South African middle-class male scholar from a rural background. I focus on the particular and the general, as well as the personal and politics of the South African higher education space.

Keywords:

South African higher education, post-apartheid, decolonisation, colonial education

EDUCATION THROUGH THE LENS OF COLONISATION: SETTING THE SCENE

It is important to note that the colonial education system was designed to meet the needs of European colonisers in their economic exploitation of African countries. Scholars have focused on the education system and development in colonial and post-colonial Africa. Nwanosike and Onyije (2011) highlighted that colonisers used education to ensure that they were guaranteed a source of labour. Nwanosike and Onyije (2011) viewed colonisation as "a system of rules which assumes the right of one group of people to impose their will upon a so-called weaker group" (p. 625). This resulted in the dominance of the so-called "superior" European race over those regarded as "inferior", in this case, Africans. That is, colonial education was vested in the idea that the European religion, knowledge, traditions, and values were all superior to anything from Africa.

Consequently, colonial education intended to wipe off all previous remnants of African heritage and history and replace them with the European way of thinking, being and knowing. It is essential to note that

before the European colonisation of Africa, Africans had an indigenous education system. Its primary purpose was to ensure social solidarity and the continuance of the culture of communities as well as to develop holistically. This form of education provided community members with skills which were contextually based and relied on oral traditions by elders who were considered sages in their communities.

According to Meier zu Selhausen (2019), the initial sources of colonial education were the Christian missionaries, who assumed that it was their responsibility to convert Africans to Christianity (Meier zu Selhausen, 2019; Parsons, 1982). Later, colonial authorities took control of African education, imposing their ways of knowing, thinking, and being on the daily lives of Africans. Thus, one can argue that the call for decolonial and "Africanised" higher education in South Africa in recent years appeals to the need to decentre the European educational structure and content. It is also a call to permeate indigenous knowledge systems as well as change the perception that Africans and their knowledge are inferior to their European counterparts. Despite the decolonisation programme commencing in the 1960s, the effects of colonial education in the 21st century are still apparent and predominant in African education systems, including within the South African education space. The enduring consequences of colonial education include the prevailing adoption of Western curricula, Eurocentric pedagogies, and epistemological framing. It has also resulted in the marginalisation of African traditions and culture at large, as well as treating non-Whites, especially Africans, as substandard when it comes to education (Mazonde, 2001).

The above discussion points to the reality that the long-lasting influence of colonial education systems can still be seen throughout the system, especially within the higher education space. Firstly, in terms of epistemological assumptions, the types of knowledge favoured in schools are those introduced by European colonisers, with little or no inclusion and appreciation of indigenous knowledge (Mazonde, 2001). Even though there was a push for the Africanisation of the curriculum and

pedagogy as accentuated during the #FeesMustFall and #RhodesMustFall movements that began in 2015, and intended to bring in more indigenous, context-specific, or context-dependent knowledge, I argue that this process is slow. Secondly, the pedagogical practices within the higher education space, albeit the calls for decolonisation, continue to emulate ideas from colonial educational practice. It is important to note that, as African people, we are slow to take opportunities to examine the needs of our institutions and develop "African responsive pedagogies", in the same way as those from the West are readily accepted as better and more effective. It might not be apparent to higher education institutions how they should approach the decolonisation of the curriculum and pedagogy, but it is far more likely that the positioning of Western methods and values are seen as being superior to anything that is African.

Concerning the preceding discussion, one conversation that we often shy away from having, which in part the #FeesMustFall movement in South Africa, conscientised us about, is how every day the long-term effects of the oppressive and racist system continue to be experienced by previously disadvantaged groups within institutions of higher learning in South Africa. For this reason, I espouse an autoethnographic reflexivity approach in this chapter to demonstrate the convergence between university society and myself as a Black South African middle-class male scholar from a rural background, the particular and the general, as well as the personal and political of the South African higher education space. I believe this is one way of understanding contemporary thought and practice in higher education and finding solutions to decolonise the minds of African students so that we become active citizens and agents of change within our situated environments. The following section discusses the notion of apartheid education, briefly reflecting on where we come from and understanding the foundations of the dilemma we are in within the higher education space within the South African context.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION: LINGERING SCARS

The apartheid system in South Africa created social, educational, and economic inequalities through the racist policies on which it was based (Soudien *et al.*, 2019). The apartheid system was vested in two interrelated legislations: the cornerstone of apartheid policy, the Group Areas Act of 1950, and the Bantu Education Act of 1952. The former promulgated the specific geographic locations where non-Whites had to live and work and the specific conditions they had to live in. The latter established that non-Whites were offered a substandard quality of education compared to their White counterparts to preserve social and economic inequalities in the country (Masipa, 2018). The Group Areas Act of 1950 defined a White person as those who by the virtue of appearance "is a white person who is generally not accepted as a coloured person" and non-Whites as referring to all others in the South African population, inclusive of Khoisan, Bantu, South and East Asians, and mixed races. This racial categorisation is still used in post-apartheid South Africa as the population is categorised into four racial groups: Whites, Blacks, Coloureds and Indians. The Bantu Education Act was designed to ensure the development of the non-Whites and ensure they remained in the lower strata of society and as labourers. Accordingly, this education policy stratified the content and level of education for the population. Its mandate was to institutionalise racial segregation by hindering formal access to higher education institutions as well as admission into occupations that required more than basic education. The apartheid laws postulated education provisions for each racial grouping (Dreyer *et al.*, 2012). For all Whites, schooling was compulsory between the ages of seven and fifteen, and for Blacks between seven and thirteen, while higher education institutions were solely reserved for Whites.

In view of the above discussion, the fewer years of education provided to non-White students were directly linked with the fewer choices and opportunities for work and economic development. While the

democratic South African government stipulates that all racial groups have equal legal rights to access any level of education, access and opportunities are still limited because of the lingering scars of apartheid legislation that disadvantaged the non-White populations (Masipa, 2018). There are continuing disparities between educational institutions for all levels of schooling located in White (dominated by urban areas) and non-White neighbourhoods (dominated by rural and township areas). The educational institutions located in rural and township areas where non-Whites reside are under-resourced and far below the standards of their urban counterparts. Such disparities should be considered in the structuring and delivery of higher education programmes in South Africa to ensure that our students become conscientious about existing inequalities and develop context and culturally responsive ways of interacting with different people in their different fields, such as in hospitals for doctors, and classrooms for teachers.

AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC METHODOLOGY

In a world where people's stories are often told by others, it is important that we tell our narratives about our experiences, either good or bad, from places where we may experience them and about the actors in our stories and how they made us feel about particular subjects. This resonates with the autoethnographic approach to writing and research, which focuses primarily on presenting descriptions and systematically analysing the experiences of authors to offer accounts of their lived experiences (Ellis *et al.*, 2011). This chapter espouses the autoethnographic approach because it challenges the canonical research approaches and views research as a political and socially conscious act of constructing educational knowledge. In analysing some of my personal experiences as a postgraduate student, it became important that I looked inward and outward, exposing my vulnerability relating to such experiences. Thus, I employ the reflexive autoethnographic approach to

demonstrate the intersections between the higher education context and self, and personal positioning and the politics of knowledge.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES IN SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

In this chapter, my critical personal encounters experienced within the higher education context represent "the processes of understanding, recalling and summarising stories" and the use of memory – a psychological approach (Cortazzi, 1993, p. 10, in Merriam, 1998, p. 158). The autoethnographic experiences narrated in this section might generate conversations about the experiences of African students in higher education institutions and extend the conversations about the need to transform the institutions and create inclusive learning environments for all, regardless of race or place of origin. Thus, I describe my experiences in the higher education institution I attended, not to vilify the actors for what I was personally subjected to or just to document my primary experiences, but to contribute to the development of theoretical understandings of social phenomena – transformation in academic spaces. The following sub-sections present some of my personal experiences in higher education, as a Black South African middle-class male scholar from a rural background, and critically reflect on what the experiences could mean in transformational terms.

Resurrecting Verwoerd: "It cannot be you that wrote this"

> *It was not until my honours year at university that I started to think critically about what it means to be a Black South African at institutions that were previously designated for Whites. I remember the experience as if it happened yesterday when the White male lecturer brought back scripts of an essay on the section of the course that was deemed difficult, the work of Michel Foucault. Instead of handing back mine, I was informed that I needed to come and have a conversation with the*

lecturers about my essay. This made me discombobulated, and I asked the lecturer why my script was not given back to me. The lecturer said, "You need to be interviewed regarding your essay with me and the lecturer who is the lead lecturer of the module." Since this did not make any sense to me why out of the entire tutorial group only my script was retained, I asked the lecturer to hand over my script so I could see the comments on the script, which he eventually did. The comments were all positive throughout the script. However, the lecturer did not award a grade for my work. When I asked subsequent questions about the grade, I was informed that I needed to present myself for an interview with the lecturers. Although their Turnitin report cleared me of academic dishonesty, they believed that I did not write the work myself.

The emotional disconnect I experienced while the lecturer uttered those statements was my allusion to living a life in higher education institutions previously designated for Whites. He was oblivious that his utterances subjected me to what I would like to call the "Verwoerdian object" of seeing Africans as incapable of engaging in higher-order thinking and understanding abstract concepts such as the work of Foucault. At that sad moment, the legitimacy of structural racism in higher education was made apparent. Its symptoms were revealed when the lecturer's eyes shut down and hardened as I articulated the unfairness of the situation as though I was not saying anything to him. In challenging what I experienced as structural racism, I even cited the university standing orders I had learned during my undergraduate years as a student leader at the same university. Nothing helped because all the lecturers wanted to subject me to an interview process so they could catch me out when they asked me questions about what I had written, and I would be unable to answer.

To save class time, I returned the script to the lecturer and indicated that I would avail myself of the interview, which they scheduled for the following week. The day of the interview came and I presented myself before the lecturers, the course leader (an Indian male and feared associate professor), and the White lecturer mentioned above. With my heart pounding as if it would burst out of my chest, the lecturer gazed at me as an academic criminal waiting to verify that I had not written the work myself. (To calm myself down I told myself, I belong in this space

and I am confident in my knowledge of this section. I know Foucault's work, let us start with this interview!) The Indian associate professor handed me my script, with highlighted sections that they needed me to talk through, to entrap me into verifying that indeed it was not my own unaided work. I respectfully refused to read through the script and opted for a different approach, where I unpacked the key concepts in Foucault's The archaeology of knowledge, to which they agreed. I suppressed the anger and exasperation at their refusal to understand and appreciate that a rural young African man could understand the work they presented to students as hard. I unpacked the notion of "discursive formations," detailing the rules of formation of objects, which are explained as the conditions to which the objects, the mode of statement, concepts and thematic choices are subjected; as well as the discursive formations that would help us to form the object; in this context the object was "a university student" (Foucault, 1970). I described the three rules of formation of objects according to Foucault: "surface of emergence, authorities of delimitation and grids of specifications," and once I was done, they requested me to wait outside as they "deliberated about the verdict. This took a few minutes, and I was invited back inside, where they handed me the script awarded 85%.

I asked them whether they thought 85% was unattainable by an African student for them to subject me to an interview, for what I referred to as "a mere 85%." They said that, in the history of the course, no one had ever obtained that mark. Although I was not impressed with the whole experience, a part of me was relieved that I had proved myself against the entrenched structural racist system which sees African students as incapable and inept in producing high-quality work. I knew then that I was forever going to be under surveillance as I continued with my studies, but that did not deter me from advancing my academic horizons right up to post-PhD.

It is worth mentioning that four years after the incident I was invited to co-lecture the course with the very same lecturers; at this time, I was already enrolled for my doctorate. I took up the offer even though a part of me felt they were bringing me closer to continue putting me under surveillance or even breaking the little confidence I was holding on to after the grading incident. Entrenched racism in higher education can

push African students to their graves as my experience and other informal observations reveal that if one is not confident, they may even commit suicide or land in a depression, which can lead to death.

This anecdote demonstrates the need for tactfulness and pedagogic responsiveness in higher education, the need to dismantle structural racism, and fallacies that African students are incapable of producing high-quality works and understanding difficult concepts. My key takeaway from this experience is that, instead of being encouraged and capacitated to become a great scholar or writer, the lecturers took a position to resurrect Verwoerd's position that Africans are non-thinkers - to disparage me and in turn racialise my academic writing ability within higher education. My entire post-graduate journey right up to post-PhD became one of proving the two lecturers wrong and conscientising more African students to value themselves and know that they can become the best students even in an institution where they are treated as second-class citizens.

In view of the above, when #FeesMustFall started later that year, for me it symbolised the need to cleanse the minds and hearts of the "old professors" of salient and structural racism, to see all students as equal and the need to configure student-responsive pedagogies which pays attention to the needs of all students, from different geographic locations, class and racial backgrounds. The journey towards understanding structural racism in higher education institutions in South Africa still requires that Africans see Whites as superior. I believe that if it were a White student who had written such impressive work for the session, they would not have been subjected to what I was subjected to as an African student. Perhaps these are just my emotional assessments and assumptions about the situation. I will leave it to you to judge.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The call for quality, free, and decolonised education in South African higher education institutions created opportunities for students from

marginalised backgrounds. The #FeesMustFall protest and reflections on my lived experiences in higher education have demonstrated that the marginalised and "voiceless" citizens can challenge entrenched racism and exclusion and look into the future with hope. What is often not articulated is the anger, disappointment, fear, pain, and hope that we put up with in higher education institutions. Being subjected to an interview regarding my work made me realise that African students deserve a better future because we work hard despite the structural conditions we may experience in higher education.

This also suggests that before we focus on equality, justice and institutional responsiveness are needed to ensure that students receive a quality education to enable them to be critical thinkers and in turn become agents of change and uphold constitutional values once they graduate. Students, especially African students, should always be ready to challenge White privilege, even though it can have implications on the quality of their academic life such as victimisation by the lecturers. We are often scared by those we assume to hold the power to silence ourselves when we are treated unjustly. One way of dismantling racism and transforming higher education institutions is speaking honestly about our feelings and letting those whom we assume hold power over us know that we belong in higher education spaces and that justice and equality should always be upheld.

CHAPTER 11:
MANAGEMENT OF STUDENT WELFARE SERVICES AS CORRELATE OF STUDENT UNREST IN A NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

One of the responsibilities of universities is to provide adequate welfare services to ensure academic stability as well as the safety of its students. Such welfare services may include but are not limited to health care services, hostel facilities, security of lives and properties, clean and safe water, cafeteria, recreational and sports facilities, counselling services, campus pharmacy, and campus market. All these services are germane to the stability and safety of students during their academic duration. The Management of universities therefore has to pay attention to the management of these services by designated individuals and units and ensure their adequacy and responsiveness to the needs of the students. It is however of serious concern that the manner of management of some student welfare services in Nigerian universities has resulted in avoidable student unrest and crisis in a bid to register their displeasure. As an insider (academic staff and students adviser in the institution under study-Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife) who has carefully studied the situation, the researcher selected two different cases of students unrest and the mode of handling the cases by the Management, while the first

case was on health care provision, the second was on basic needs such as water and power supply. The first was the case of a 400 Level Foreign Language Student who was reported to have been denied prompt medical attention by the officials of the University Health Centre which led to her death on 1st October 2021. A similar occurrence was also reported in the same institution on 17th May 2019 when a 300 Level Microbiology student died as a result of a lack of prompt attention by officials of the Unit. The second selected case of students' unrest as a result of poor water supply, unstable power supply and poor sanitary state of the hostels took place on Monday 30th November 2015. This chapter examines the management of students welfare services in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife gave these incidences and recommends among others, the need for adequate funding of higher education, adequate management of student welfare services by ensuring proper monitoring and supervision of units and individuals responsible for the provision of various students welfare services, the need for proper orientation of students on the need for them to embrace dialogue as much as possible rather than embarking on violent protests and finally the need for university management to be responsive to the demands of students.

Keywords:

Management, Students, Welfare Services. Unrest, Universities.

INTRODUCTION

Conceptual Clarifications

Students Welfare Services

Welfare services are efforts and activities aimed at addressing the basic needs of individuals or a group of people which are crucial to their well-being. The International Association of Student Affairs and Services (IASAS) quoted by Ludeman and Schreiber (2020) noted the importance of addressing the basic personal needs of students through balanced

curricular and extra-curricular student services. These services are designed to assist students to focus adequately on their studies and for the development of the total man. They also should result in enhanced student learning outcomes leading to higher retention and productive output or graduation rates.

Cornish (2019) noted that the core functions of the education sector have extended into areas of social welfare of recipients. Social welfare is one of the aspects of student welfare services. Student welfare services are the total aspects of students' life that determines their academic stability and safety on campus. Student welfare services may include but are not limited to health care services, hostel facilities, security of lives and properties, clean and safe water, cafeteria, recreational and sports facilities, counselling services, campus pharmacy, and campus market. Subair (2021) noted that within the last 10 years in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife (OAU), there had been repeated cases of students' crises, occasioned by agitations for improved welfare that led to school closure and subsequent disruption of academic calendars. Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife was closed down for academic activities and students were sent home on 28th February 2007; 23rd February 2011; 18th June 2014 and 3rd December 2015 due to unrelenting demonstrations by students concerning welfare services (University Circulars Nos. RO.2/Vol. IV/500A, RO.2/Vol.VI/180, RO2/Vol. V/242). The most recent is that of 1st October 2021 in which students were asked to vacant campus on or before 12 noon Saturday, 2nd October 2021 amid the Rain Semester Examination for the 2019/2020 Session. (Press Release by the Management of Obafemi Awolowo University)

Subair (2008) in Ndlovu and Mushonga (2018) defined student welfare service as one of the wide range of services put in place by the school authority, to ensure sound learning of students on campus. He further identified accommodation, counselling, career information, support from tutors, course information, student unionism, bursary award/scholarship, degree marketability and transportation as the basic

welfare services that would serve the entire student populace in any higher institution of learning.

Learning is expected to be provided in a safe and enabling environment for the effectiveness of such a learning process. Hence, the well-being of students is expected to be a priority to ensure their stability and concentration which will determine their academic outcomes. Life in the university is expected to be relatively comfortable and satisfactory for students to develop their potential psychologically, socially, politically, mentally and professionally. Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions (OBESSU) in its policy paper on Student welfare indicated that school student welfare includes all the measures that ensure that a school student's economic, health and social well-being is provided, fulfilled and protected. This further enables the school student to focus on education and individual growth. From the above, three areas of student welfare were identified.

These include economic, health and social aspects. The economic aspects as it relates to students on campus include access to campus market services and tuition fees regime among others. In the health aspect, it includes access to quality health service, promptness and professionalism on the part of officials in the campus health care facilities in attending to student health needs, access to clean, safe and stable water supply, suitable hostel facilities with a healthy environment and recreational/tourist facilities.

The Social aspect includes freedom to participate in social activities, and freedom to form associations which may be departmental-based, faculty-based, Student Union Government (SUG), Local Government and State associations. Each of these associations is expected to register with the Division of Student Affairs (DSA) before they can be allowed to operate within the campus community. The activities of these associations are equally monitored by the DSA for proper coordination. Other services that are necessary for the academic stability of students include stable internet access, library services, banking services

(availability of Automated Teller Machine (ATM) at designated points within the campus and in the hostel environment), sports and recreational facilities, and transport services among others. All these services contribute in one way or another to the stability of students during their academic pursuits on campus. In line with the above categorisation of student welfare needs. Alani, Okunola and Subair (2010) categorised student needs into primary and secondary needs. The primary needs were identified as physiological needs such as water and shelter. Secondary needs were identified to include counselling, career information, support from tutors, bursary, and student unionism among others. While primary needs are the basic needs of the students, secondary needs are meant to enable every student to develop self-esteem, status, affiliation, with others, affection, giving, accomplishment and self-assertion.

Management of Student Welfare Services

In most institutions of higher learning, the management of student welfare services and student affairs generally is overseen by the Student Affairs unit, the name of this unit may vary based on different institutions. In Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife which is the focus of this study, is referred to as the Division of Student Affairs.

The Division is made up of the Student Affairs Office, Guidance and Counseling Unit and the Halls of Residence, it is headed by the Dean and deputised by the Vice Dean, both are usually senior and experienced members of academic staff. They coordinate the day-to-day activities and are directly responsible to the Vice-Chancellor. There are other support staff such as administrative staff, student affairs officers and counsellors who work in the Unit.

Furthermore, the Division is responsible for ensuring and facilitating the quality of the informal learning environment that students need in a University community, to enhance the realisation of their potential as enlightened and responsible citizens of this country. The Division

oversees health services delivery, environmental sanitation, campus road safety, hostel accommodation, counselling unit, registration and coordination of associations and other student-based groups, bursary awards, and mobilisation of graduates for the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC). NYSC is a Federal Government Scheme in which every graduate of higher institutions is made to serve the nation in states other than their origins for one year.

The management of student welfare services in universities is a very important task that demands the attention of managers of higher institutions. The reason is that the university exists only when there are students. Student welfare services as discussed above are the provisions that are made in order to support the curricular and extra-curricular activities of students during their study period in the universities. Such include but not limited to hostel accommodation, health and medical services, and water and electricity supply. Hostel accommodation is one of the basic needs of students on campus, hence, its management is very essential as they determine the general stability of students on campus. Studies have shown that befitting accommodation facilities are central to conducive learning. Such facilities include bed and beddings, electrical fittings and regular electricity supplies, functional plumbing materials, reading tables, chairs, windows with mosquito nets, functional toilet facilities, a good reading room, security coverage, cleaning services and internet facilities. Subair and Adeniyi (2021) noted that hostel accommodation in OAU are fairly available as the population of students staying in the university hostels are far lesser than those staying outside the campus. This development has been consequential as there are a lot of reported cases of robbery in student hostels in town.

There are other cases of casualties as a result of poor quality facilities being used in some of the private hostels outside the University Campus. One such case was that of a 200-level student of the Department of Linguistics and African Languages, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Miss Ajibola Ayomikun, who died after she fell into a soak away in one of

the private hostels in the Ile Ife town that host the University. The unfortunate incidence happened on Wednesday 9th February 2022. The Public Relations Officer of the University, Abiodun Olarewaju, confirmed the incident to one of the national daily newspaper agencies in Nigeria named *The PUNCH.* It was reported that the soak away was a bad state and the innocent girl who was one of the occupants of the hostel fell in and lost her life. Efforts to rescue the female student proved abortive as she could not survive (The Punch, 2022). The Vice-Chancellor had to send an appeal through the University Public Relations Officer to the students to remain calm and law-abiding with the assurance that the police have been briefed about the ugly development and that they will do the needful in investigating the incidence.

The incidence above is one out of the many other risks that students who are denied the opportunity to stay on campus as a result of insufficient hostel accommodation are exposed to in the town. The Management of OAU in a bit to address the issue of shortage of accommodation has recently given room for public-private partnership in the building of students hostels within the University Campus. New hostels are being built by private and corporate organisations to expand the residential status of the University. This is part of the expected responses of the management in managing student welfare services in the aspect of hostel accommodation which is central not only to the academic stability of students but also to the safety of their lives as seen in the case above.

Another critical aspect of concern is water supply which is also one of the basic needs of students on campus. Students of the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, on Tuesday 21st April 2021 embarked on a protest calling on the management of the institution to find solutions to the stoppage of water supply to hostels on the campus. The students claimed that the water supply to their various halls of residence was cut off for about five days. According to the students, the development has exposed them to untold hardship and they have resorted to fetching water from a stream near their hostels. Some of the students were seen

with buckets fetching water from a stream. A resident of one of the male hostels on the campus, named ETF Hall, who gave his name simply as Olayinka, said some buoyant students had been buying sachet water to cook and bathe, while the rest were fetching water from the stream. He stated, "But for some of us that cannot afford sachet water for such purposes, we have been going to the stream near our hostel to get water (The Punch, 2021).

The Public Relations Officer, OAU, Abiodun Olanrewaju, in response to the development attributed it to the fact that the university exhausted the chemical for the treatment of water and could not get a replacement immediately but assured that the situation was being addressed by the management. I assured the students that from Wednesday, 22nd April 2021, regular water supply will resume noting that arrangements had equally been for tankers to supply water to the students while the process of treating the water was on-going.

Student Unrest

Student unrest is usually the outcome of student dissatisfaction or displeasure with certain aspects of their life on campus. It may sometimes be a result of policies made by the Management that are not favourable to the generality of students such as increments in tuition fees. In some other cases, it may be a result of inadequacies in the provision of basic services such as electricity, water, security, the poor state of accommodation facilities, unstable internet, increase in the cost of transport services among others. Students equally embark on protests when they do not get quality service or prompt attention from certain service-providing offices on campus, for example, the health services facilities. Some of the common factors that cause student unrest are managerial and allocative, academic, welfare issues and political processes.

Omodan (2020) noted with concern that the university system in Nigeria has been characterised by re-current social unrest which can be

attributed to strained relationships between students and the university authorities. Contemporary studies have shown that students' unrest in the universities has constituted a drawback to the overall development and achievement of goals and objectives of the universities by the Management.

The general populace in Nigeria including the student community is known for driving home its demands and social issues through demonstrations in form of agitation, protest and unrest. It is generally believed that these are the only language that the government and management of institutions understand. This development in line as corroborated by Omodan (2020) is attributable to the aftermath effects of colonialism and subsequent military dictatorship in the past. In Nigeria, cases of student unrest were reported as far back as 1945. Ezera 1960 in Aluede, Jimoh, Agwinede and Omoregie (2005) reported that between 1940 and 1945, the West Africa Students Union (WASU) had agitated in pamphlets and public lectures for political reforms in all British West African territories. In doing so, they aroused a fairly enthusiastic audience of the British public opinion in favour of African freedom. The student unions were equally at the forefront of the resistance against the oppressive military regimes during Nigeria's second and third republics. Student unrest in recent times has moved away from the expression of displeasure against the government and political activities to issues that directly concern their welfare within the campus community. Such protests are usually directed at the University Management although the ripple effect is felt by every member of the campus community and in some cases by the host community. For example, during the October 2021 student unrest at Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile Ife witnessed the blockage of all access routes on the University campus including the University main gate which caused restriction of movement. This was also extended outside the University as the major access road opposite the University's main gate popularly known as Ife-Ibadan express road was equally blocked by the protesting students.

This latest student unrest recorded in Obafemi Awolowo University which led to the closure of the University in October 2021 was a result of the delay on the part of the officials of the health centre to attend to an emergency health case of a final year student which reports stated to have resulted in her death. Another similar case was recorded in 2019 when a male student died due to a lack of adequate and prompt attention when rushed to the University Health Centre.

There equally was a student unrest in OAU in 2015. As reported by The Vanguard, a Nigeria's daily newspaper, the crisis began after the congress of Great Ife Students on Friday 27th November 2015 unanimously expressed their displeasure towards the state of student welfare, dilapidated hostel and other administrative misdemeanours. The students had repeatedly complained of poor sanitary conditions at the hostels, but the management of the school did not pay expected attention to the complaints. In response to the protest by the students on the issue stated above that led to the unrest, the management of the Obafemi Awolowo University directed students to go on a mid-semester to forestall break down in law and order. The directive may also be a result of provisions of Statutes of Nigerian universities which states that student unrest must not be allowed to last more than 72 hours. The Senate is empowered to shut the University when a Student crisis lingers beyond 72 hours, the provision also empowers the Vice-Chancellor to act on behalf of the Senate and shut down the University in a case where a Senate meeting could not be conveyed and prompt action needs to be taken to guide against possible damages and loss of lives. The Vice-Chancellor is however expected to brief the Senate at the next available opportunity.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Theory of Relative Deprivation

Several theories have been used to explain student unrest in tertiary institutions. These include theories of campus ecology, cognitive dissonance, human needs, deprivation-frustrations, structural theory of conflict, conspiracy theory of conflict, social identity theory, and relative deprivation among others. Out of these theories, the theory of deprivation-frustration theory will be adopted for this study as it explains the subject of student unrest as an expression of deprivation on the part of the students which in most cases results in frustration on the part of students and then leads to unrest and protest against the authorities.

Luizhan (2022) while quoting (Smith at al., 2012) noted that Relative deprivation refers to a cognitive evaluation of an individual on his or her disadvantageous situation and the resultant feelings of anger and resentment after making a social comparison with others. The concept of relative deprivation was first advanced by Stouffer *et al*. (1949) to evaluate the dissatisfaction of United State soldiers during the Second World War. Crosby (1976) in Luizhan (2022) referring to Crosby (1976) further put relative deprivation in perspective with the explanation that displeasure arises when people feel unfairly deprived of some resources that people similar to them have but they do not which ultimately may lead to frustration. Liuzhan (2022) noted that relative deprivation can be divided into relative deprivation of an individual and relative deprivation of a group. In the case of student welfare services which is the focus of this study, it can be said to be a group deprivation because such services are expected to be provided by the Management to the students as a group and not as individuals.

This theory stipulates that conflict occurs as a consequence of some forms of deprivation. Some of these deprivations have been identified to include social injustice, maldistribution of resources and power, inadequate institutional arrangements, and unavailability of basic and

deserving needs for individuals such as students. The deprived group which represents the students in this discourse clamour for the resources, quality services, and attention which are not either being provided at all or not adequately provided by responsible individuals and sections within the University. The Deprivation theory seems to have relevance to the University and other institutions of higher learning. Inadequate resources such as classrooms, low academic support, poor internet services, inadequate water supply, unstable power supply, accommodation, and poor service delivery on the part of staff providing essential services such as health services, are some of the many deprivations that sometimes lead to student unrests. It appears that deprivation of whatever kind bars the people affected from having their needs met which sometimes may include basic needs from being met. In the case of students, when they experience deprivation of their basic needs and services that the Management is supposed to provide, they embark on protests as a way of showing resistance to such deprivation.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Based on the identified problems, the following research question was formulated to guide the study:

How can Management of student welfare services be effectively administered to mitigate student unrest in Nigerian universities?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

To answer the research question, the following objectives were raised to guide the study:

- To examine the mode of management of student welfare services in Nigerian universities.
- To explore workable strategies for managing student unrest in Nigerian universities.

METHODOLOGY

Using the thematic review approach and available secondary data on student welfare services handling and management of attendant unrest, the desktop design was employed for the paper. The desktop design is concerned with cross-referencing and collection of data from existing resources such as academic publications, empirical reports and statistical publications, the Internet, bulletins and periodicals (Management Study Guide, 2013). This method has proved to be very effective and can be conducted in the starting phase of research as most of the basic information can easily be collected and used as a standard in the research process. Resources used for this paper were gathered from scientific databases, university websites and prominent websites of recognized national daily newspapers which include but are not limited to the Punch, the Guardian, Sahara Reporters as well as an internal memorandum from the Obafemi Awolowo University. Keywords and phrases such as student welfare services, student unrest and higher education were included in the web search. Over 100 publications, articles and reports, considered potentially relevant were retrieved but only 15 were selected for the study. The content and contextual relevance of the materials to this paper were considered for the selection.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Based on the research objectives raised by the study, the first of which is to examine the mode of management of student welfare services in Nigerian universities. The study found that the mode of management of student welfare services has not been adequate thus making academic and extra-curricular activities and student learning very challenging. This can be corroborated by Adeniyi and Adeniyi (2017) submission that Obafemi Awolowo University is characterised by a lot of ups and down and this tends to put a lot of stress on the student populace. The two cases that were selected and presented below among many others show some deficit in the management of student welfare services at Obafemi

Awolowo University as applicable in most of the public universities across the country. And one major concern raised by students whom the researcher had the opportunity of interacting with at different times is that each time students embarked on a protest, instead of the Management addressing the students and the issue(s) that led to the protest, they are always silent and the only response will be to shut down the University and ask the students to vacate the school premises and halls of residence. They describe the such treatment as being unfair to the students and their academic pursuits and unfortunately, even when the Universities are later re-opened, the issues are still left unaddressed.

The October 2021 Case of Student Unrest over Issues of Health Care Provision

The October 2021 case of student unrest in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife was associated with student welfare services, specifically health care provision. This account was reported in different national daily newspapers such as Sahara Reporters, The Punch Newspaper, The Guardian Newspaper, The University Circulars and Press Release from the University to the members of the public. Incidentally, the University was conducting its Rain Semester examination during this period. On Thursday 30th September 2021, Adeshina Aishat, a 400-level student of the Department of Foreign Languages of the University who had just one more paper which was supposed to be her final course examination at the University was reported to be having some breathing complications and was rushed to the health centre for medical attention.

As an insider and an academic in the university under consideration and with my interaction with the system and my immediate students, the examination period is usually a time when a lot of students go to the health centre on account of ill-health due to factors such as undue stress in a bit to cover the academic and course contents which they were expected to have been covering gradually during the semester within a limited time close to the examination, some other factors that account

for students falling ill during the examination and consequently resulting in visiting the health centre, including poor feeding, so may students feed on junks because there is no enough time to cook, and also lack enough rest. All of these account for the high rate of illness among students, hence the need to seek medication at health facilities. Further, on the issue of Adeshina Aishat, it was reported that she was not given prompt and necessary attention at the University Health Centre which led to her death. One of the student colleagues Aishat in the Department of Foreign Languages explained that "that Aishat died at the health centre on Thursday due to the negligence of the personnel at the clinic." The student further explained that when students visit the Health Centre to seek medical attention, it takes between two to three hours before they are attended to. (Sahara Reporters, 2020). Further reports from other students reveal that the officials in the health centre do not treat cases brought before them with the expected urgency.

Usually, it is expected that before anyone (either staff or students) can assess medical services at the University Health Centre, they must have been duly registered with the Centre and after such registration, a user card is issued and the card is expected to be presented during each visit to the Centre. One common complaint given by students is the fact that even in cases of emergencies and when the matter needs urgent attention, the Officials were always more interested in the presentation of a health centre card rather than administering the urgently needed treatment. The situation does not only apply to students, one of my colleagues who is a lecturer in another faculty at the university shared her ordeal at the Health Centre with me. She explained that there was a time she rushed one of her students who had a health crisis during an examination she was conducting at the Health Centre. She explained that she struggled to carry the students as the latter could not walk on her own. While the lecturer struggled to carry the student into the student, she said she was surprised that none of the Health Centre workers came to her aid. She equally expressed her displeasure on the fact that even though the case she brought was an emergency case which required

urgent attention, unfortunately, the response she got was not encouraging enough.

Further on the matter of Adeshina Aishat, the Public Relations Officer of the University however reported that Aishat was transferred to a secondary hospital within the town because the Health Centre could not handle her case. In a statement released by the newly elected Public Relations Officer of the Great Ife Student Union, the Student Union body of the Institution and published by Sahara Reporters, he noted that *"Adeshina Aishat, a 400-level student at the Department of Foreign Languages, joined the list of many students who have lost their lives due to 'negligence' at the Health Centre of the University. It saddens our hearts that a member of our union has to be returned home as a corpse when her family expects her to be a graduate with prospects.*

We send our condolences to the family of the deceased. But we mourn Aishat, we cannot lose sight of the circumstances that surround her death, especially the role of the University Health Centre. Aishat's death is not the first to happen due to negligence of duties by workers at the Health Centre. It is only one out of many. Enough is enough!, we call on the University Management to investigate this death and punish all health workers who failed in performing their duties when Aishat needed attention which they failed to give but only transferred her in her last moments to Seventh Day Hospital where she eventually died.

Without a proper and quick investigation (one which must actively involve and be communicated to students) and punishment meted out, the University Management will be putting the lives of students in danger. We cannot let our lives become toys. We will have to protest this, as we cannot afford to keep losing our lives like fowls. As we await the University's reactions and actions to this sad occurrence, we urge all union members to see this incident, not as a loss to the family of Aishat, her class, department or faculty, but as a loss to All students of the University. We solicit your support as we demand justice to be done in memory of Aishat and many others like her. It is Aishat today, it could be

anyone tomorrow. We cannot wait until another sad occurrence like this happens. Our lives matter!" These were direct words from Ogunperi Taofeek Olalekan (Tao), the Public Relations Officer-elect, of the Great Ife Student Union. (Sahara Reporters, 2020).

Furtherance to the report from the Student Union body on the incident, the students staged to protest on Friday 1st and Saturday 2nd October 2021 to register their displeasure about the way and manner in which health issues among students are being handled by the Health Centre Officials citing with concern many cases where students have been treated in such manner in the past. The protest was staged first on the University campus leading to the blocking of major roads within the campus and the protest was later extended to the town. The popular Ife-Ibadan expressway which was opposite the University campus was blocked causing a standstill for commuters and numerous road users on the busy routes. The University Administration on behalf of the Senate however decided to shut down the University to forestall law and order. The University was closed and students were asked to vacate the halls of residence on or before 12 noon on Saturday 2nd October 2021. With the closure of the university, the Rain Semester Examination that was going then had to be suspended even though some students especially in the graduating levels had one paper left to conclude their course examinations in the Institution. The University was later re-opened on Friday 5th November 2021 and the Rain Semester Examination continued on Saturday 6th November 2021.

The November 2015 Case of Student Unrest over Absence of Basic and Essential Services

The students of Obafemi Awolowo University on Monday 30th November 2015 embarked on a protest over epileptic power supply, unavailability of potable water supply in their halls of residence and alleged poor funding of education which they described as the root cause of the inadequacies highlighted. The protest prevented the free flow of

traffic into and out of the campus. The University however announced the closure of the University after 48 hours of student protest. The decision was taken at an emergency meeting of the Senate of the University.

The institution was shut down on Tuesday 2nd December 2015 after an emergency meeting of the Senate. The students started the protest on Monday over epileptic power supply, unavailability of portable water supply in their halls of residence and alleged poor funding of education in Nigeria. The protest prevented the free flow of traffic into and out of the campus. The institution's Public Relations Officer, Mr Biodun Olanrewaju, also confirmed the closure of the university in an interview, and said that the date of resumption would be announced as and when due. (The Vanguard, 2015)

Just like the deprivation-frustration theory which is the theoretical framework in this study, the students had a sense of deprivation of basic and essential services such as good and safe water supply, stable power supply, and safe and healthy environment in the halls of residence all of which determines their academic stability and output in the University. As a reaction to this observed deprivation, the students demonstrated their frustrations by embarking on a protest which eventually led to the closure of the University. The concern, however, is that each time the student embarks on a protest, it usually leads to the closure of universities and consequently the disruption of academic programmes in such institutions. The questions and concerns which address the second research question of the study are how best can universities manage student unrest in cases when it happens or avoid it as much as possible? Secondly, how best can students register their displeasure without breaching law and order both within and outside the campus community?

Recommendations on Workable Strategies of Managing Student Unrest in Nigerian Universities.

In this section, efforts shall be made to recommend workable solutions to the recurrent student unrest at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife and Nigerian public universities in general. Recommendations will also be provided on how best students can embark on their demonstration without leading to a breakdown of law and order.

The first recommendation is that the Nigerian government must show more commitment in the area of funding education. This is in line with Omodan (2020) submission that inadequate funding is needed to be addressed because it has caused a serious setback for the management of students' and authorities' dichotomies. In the 2022 Budget, 5.4 per cent was allocated to Education while in 2021, 5.6 per cent was allocated to education. (Dataphyte, 2022). This is far below the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) international benchmark of 15-20 per cent (Premium Times, 2018). The Education sector in Nigeria is underfunded and something must be done about it. This may be above the Management of universities because they have no financial autonomy. As mentioned above, academic activities in Nigerian public universities have been shut down since February 14th 2022 on issues bothering the funding of universities and poor remuneration of university academics, a situation whereby the Professor at the higher cadre in the university is paid a monthly salary of 416,666 ($1000) while a lot of money is spent on the political class.

On the part of the Management of universities, efforts must be made to judiciously utilise the available resources at her disposal. Mismanagement and misappropriation of funds must be proactively curbed in the university. Accountability and transparency must be demonstrated by the Management Team responsible for the administration of universities. The Management must place priority on the provision of student welfare services such as the provision of safe and clean water, stable power supply, conducive hostel accommodation,

conducive learning environment in the classroom, responsive health care provision, access to market outlets and stores where daily needs are available among others. There is equally the need for the Management of universities to ensure the proper monitoring and supervision of units and individuals responsible for the provision of various student welfare services, especially health care providers.

Furthermore, the Management of universities particularly in the university under study should make effort to provide respite for students when there is a protest rather than resorting always to closing down the University. Although the closure is necessary to forestall the breakdown of law and order and to avoid casualties and destruction of properties, effort must equally be made to acknowledge the deprivation that led to the crisis and pacify the frustrations of the students to the extent that they will feel appeased and perhaps consider stopping the protest.

Lastly, on the part of students, there is the need for civility even amid frustrations. There is a popular axiom which says 'two wrong does not make a right'. There is a need for responsible student unionism. In line with this, Odebode (2019) submitted that students should be provided with proper counselling to steer clear of violence. This can be done for fresh students during orientation programmes and also by incorporating courses on conflict resolution skills into the curriculum may help to educate students to resolve issues without necessarily fighting. Student union leaders must educate their members well on the need to be responsible in their demonstrations. Protests must be peaceful to the extent that there is no violence, no physical assault on anyone, no destruction of property, and not allowing the protest affects the lives and activities of other members of the campus community or the host community.

CONCLUSION

One of the major determinants of academic stability and productivity of students in universities or tertiary education, in general, is the quality of student welfare services, while there are other factors resident with the students, the basic needs to support their learning process within the university are expected to be available. This study has identified those needs which were categorised into primary and secondary needs. While primary needs are physiological needs such as water, shelter and health care provision, secondary needs are meant to enable the students to develop some self-esteem, status, affiliation, with others, affection, giving, accomplishment and self-assertion. Recommendations were made on the need for increased budgetary allocation to education by the government, the need for university management to give priority to student welfare services provision and provide respite to them when expressing frustrations about possible deprivation and students on the roles in mitigating student unrest in universities and the need for students to be civil while engaging in protests and demonstrations bearing in my mind that two wrongs will never make right.

CHAPTER 12:
CONSEQUENCES OF STUDENT UNREST OVER FUNDING AT SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

A few years back, a South African student movement shut down the nation's twenty-six public universities until the government met their demands. This movement requested clearing debt of 13 billion rands, allowing free registration funding from the National Student Financial Aid Scheme for the 2021 academic year to new students, and provision of laptops as teaching and learning universities have moved to blended or online. This chapter reflects on the consequences of student unrest at South African universities. These could impact their completion time and academic achievement. This chapter is relevant to helping the university management and the South African government understand that academic spaces should be opened to a diversity of voices. Thus, failing to listen may cause students unrest, and its effects may demotivate academic staff and compromise academic standards. It may affect students' performance in examinations and increase the rate of dropouts. The implications of student discontent are discussed in this chapter. The study recommends that university administrations be more democratic,

dialogue-oriented, and consultative in decision-making to enhance stakeholder participation in conflict resolution.

Keywords:

South African student movement, Students' unrest, South African Universities, academic spaces

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

It is critical to remember that student discontent is not a new phenomenon in higher education. Throughout the world, there have been several instances of student discontent. According to Sorey and Gregory (2010), student discontent in America may be traced back to the early 19th century. In the early 1800s, Harvard students blew up inhabited public buildings, and Yale students celebrated Christmas by breaking the windows of collegiate buildings. A group of students at the University of Virginia refused to relinquish their guns to the University faculty in 1836. Students took part in random shootings and attacks on teachers' residences resulting in a riot. According to Ngidi, Mtshixa, Diga, Mbarathi and May (2016), between 1800 and 1875, students at Miami University, University of North Carolina, Harvard University, Yale University, New York University, and many other universities in the United States rebelled at least once. Student unrest has led to revolts in different countries for example, the European revolution of 1884, the Russian revolution of 1905, the Indian Independence Movement, the Chinese revolts of the early 20th century, the Cuban rebellion and the Vietnam War, and the Indonesian revolt of 1966 were all sparked by early protests. According to Giroux (2013), there has been student unrest at Canadian universities between 2004 and 2012 demonstrating that violence inevitably occurs no matter what students are protesting for or against. According to Kubal and Fisher (2016), in 2011, university students in Chile organized a seven-month-long protest that included

multiple violent clashes with law enforcement. However, it eventually led to a shift in public education policy.

Student unrest in the African context

Students fought as African nationalists for independence and after independence in the early 1940s (Khapoya, 2015). Nonetheless, attempts have been made to weigh the historical and social virtues and drawbacks of student agitation in local higher education. While engaging in intellectual inquiry and reflection, certain higher education institutions have treated their students with respect, dignity, and reverence. As a result, various factors have fueled student discontent on university campuses across Africa and the world over. Scholars have highlighted that student unrest could contribute to the liberation and democratization of Africa (Balsvik, 2000; Amutabi, 2002; Zeilig & Ansell, 2008). According to Mfula (2016), the Zambian government suspended the University of Zambia and Copperbelt University indefinitely after students protested about the non-payment of allowances.

For Stuurman (2018), students protested against racial segregation and fought for fundamental rights (Fomunyam, 2017). Furthermore, the causes of student unrest in African Universities could be traced back to a lack of management and allocative efficiency, service delivery, programme relevance, and student employability, among other issues (Mihyo & Omari, 1991). According to Odebode (2019), in Nigeria, unfavourable government policies, poor staff-student interactions, inadequate teaching and learning facilities, expensive tuition fees, and a lack of responsiveness on the part of school authorities could be contributing causes of student dissatisfaction. A recent study in Nigeria discovered that factors such as cybercrime, extra-judicial killings, harassment, extortion, and poor governance contribute to student unrest (Onivehu, 2021).

Student unrest in South African universities

Recently unrest among students has been reported in South African universities. According to Plaut (2010), student unrest in South African universities began quite early. Iwara, Iwara, and Kilonzo (2018) aver that the University of Venda also encountered a series and consistent annual student protests after the 2016 national incident. According to Maringira and Gukurume (2021), student protests at the University of Cape Town (UCT) focused on the Cecil John Rhodes statue falling than on the broader subject that transformed into Free Decolonised Education. Indeed, for some students at UCT, the presence of the Rhodes statue was a symbol of the perpetualization of colonialism. From 2015 to 2017, there was a wave of student protests in South African universities known as the #FeesMustFall, which sought to expose the magnitude of exorbitant tuition fees and the decolonization of the curriculum (Nathane & Smith, 2017; Mutekwe, 2017). Students across South Africa responded to the chants echoing from UCT. At the same time, protest action at Rhodes University in the Eastern Cape invigorated conversations about the existing institutional culture in these universities. It drew connections to the symbolic status of colonial masters during the apartheid era (Kamanzi, 2015).

The debate shifted to how these objects and names reflected the continued exclusion of different races, classes and epistemologies of thought, and ongoing gender-based oppressions. According to Ngidi *et al*. (2016), student unrest rocked the University of the Witwatersrand (WITS) in 2015 following a proposal of a 10.5% fee increase in 2016, provoking an uprising to respond to a '#FeesMustFall' protest at WITS. This provoked unprecedented student protests, which expanded within days to other campuses as students demanded no fee increase in 2016. Godsell and Chikane (2016) maintain that the #FeesMustFall protests included students from historically-advantaged and historically-disadvantaged universities. It was reported by Jonathan Jansen, the former Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Free State that the

protests are routine and cyclical on traditionally-black campuses, centring on bread-and-butter issues such as tuition fees, transportation, and accommodation (Ngidi *et al*., 2016). According to Ngidi *et al*., (2016), students from UCT, the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), the University of the Western Cape (UWC), and Stellenbosch University (SUN) joined forces and marched to Parliament to demand no fee increases be implemented in 2016.

Another wave of unrest erupted this year in the document demanded the repayment of a debt of 13 billion rands, which would allow new students to receive free registration funding from the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) for the 2021 academic year, as well as the provision of laptops for teaching and learning at universities that have shifted to blended learning. Student unrest has played a critical role in revolutionary movements in numerous places worldwide. Apt to note is that these unrests have contributed immensely to the independence of many African countries (Woldegiorgis & Doevenspeck, 2013). This transition has the potential to free African nations from the legacy of colonialism and usher in a new era of social equality and citizen participation. Authors such as Fomunyam, (2017) argue that student protests and a culture of violence at African universities are inherited ideological traits. Although the causes of student discontent in different parts of the world are unknown, these unrests always lead to bloodshed. Students' unrest havoc on South African universities due to poor administration and student treatment (Reinders, 2019).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The systems theory informs this chapter. The necessity for a set of systems theoretical constructs to discuss the empirical world prompted the development of systems theory in the 1950s (Boulding, 1956). The theory is based on structural functionalism, which emphasizes the functions of system components as the system responds to external pressures (Parsons, 1951). Adaptation, goal accomplishment, pattern

maintenance, and integration are all important functions of action for a system's survival and efficacy and purpose of pursuing equilibrium. According to Lai and Lin (2017), a system is established based on the structure and patterns of the relationships that emerge from interactions among components. The systems theory focuses on three levels of observation: the environment, the social organization as a system, and human participants within the organization. This multi-level approach may be traced back to the original goal of using systems theory to initiate cross-disciplinary discussion. According to the systems theory, the components of each system are structured in a hierarchical sequence, and components in the system are interconnected to the point that one component cannot function without the support of others (Lai & Lin, 2017). Lai and Lin (2017) reiterate that a system's components could be tightly coupled if they are closely interdependent or if smaller subsets of tightly connected components are loosely connected.

The university can be thought of as a living organism or a system. Since its introduction to the organizational setting in the 1960s, the systems theory and related theories and concepts have been utilized as theoretical frameworks to understand how organizations function in different environments and elements (Lai & Lin, 2017). Organizations are dynamic and what happens in one part of an organization affects the rest. The university as a system is divided into sub-systems. Systems exist at different levels, ranging from micro to macro and multi-level systems, impacting individuals in their environment (Cerna, 2013). Individuals in small or large groups may have personal discontent with the system. Therefore, university students may make decisions collectively with the larger environment, with administration and law enforcement playing a crucial role in impacting student protest and violence (Cerna, 2013).

CONSEQUENCES OF STUDENT UNREST AT THE SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

Student agitation in South African universities could have beneficial and harmful outcomes. As a result, student unrest is commonly portrayed as a harmful and disruptive movement that has resulted in financial losses, disruptions in students' engagement, psychological trauma among students, safety risks to university staff, destruction of university assets, increased students' substance abuse, increased academic costs and adjustment to semester timelines among students. From a review of the literature, despite the negative consequences of student unrest, it has contributed to increased student participation in the decision-making committees, university management's awareness of the funding crisis, students' voices on decolonizing higher education, and a slight improvement in the adoption of better conflict resolution methods in universities. These are discussed bas follows:

Negatives

Financial losses

According to Stephens *et al*. (2000), financial losses are experienced when students riot in universities. South African universities are not an exception and affect both students and the public. Students experienced financial losses due to the length of time it took them to enter the workforce. If an academic year has been suspended, that student would have to enter the workforce one year later. This means that students would lose an entire year's worth of income, which is typically viewed as a cost that the student and their families must bear. Tandwa (2016) articulated that universities incur financial losses due to student unrest since damaged property must be replaced, reducing the university's financial resources significantly.

Furthermore, he claims that the student unrest at South Africa's Central University of Technology in Bloemfontein culminated in multiple petrol

bombs being thrown toward storerooms, which burned down (Tandwa, 2016). In 2016, the costs of damages caused by students' unrest in South African universities were estimated to be almost $10 million in damages in just three months (Swart & Hertzog, 2017). Another aspect of financial loss that universities in South Africa face during student unrest is the additional costs of security to help manage student riots and prevent the destruction of property within the university.

In another study, Times Live (2016: 10) reiterate that during students unrests at universities, the administration strives to provide adequate security to ensure students and employees are safe while also preventing further infrastructure damage, which adds to the university's financial burden. In 2016, the University of the Witwatersrand had to hire private security and police officers on campus, causing its overhead operating costs to exceed expectations. Furthermore, the riots incurred financial costs for students because they necessitated an increase in the number of years to finish their studies, increased registration, fees, housing costs, and upkeep expenditures (ref). According to Brits *et al.* (2019), riots in universities place a greater financial strain on the students as they need to meet transport costs and relocation to off-campus housing. Apt to note is that these extra expenses put further strain on the already financially strained students. Habib (2019) expressed an increase in private security during these student riots to ensure the safety of university premises. Moolman and Jacobs (2018) reported that university student uprisings led to the re-allocation of funds, posing a challenge to most institutions' as they failed to meet the requirements set.

Interferences in students' engagement

Literature by Mavunga, (2019) also indicates that interferences in students' engagement are another consequence of students' unrest in South African universities (Onivehu, 2021). The students' unrests in universities bring about abrupt changes in the academic calendars, leading to interferences in the students' work as they cannot continue with their customary routine lectures and assignments. Due to the lack

of face-face lectures, students usually abandon their assessments because of the disruption of all academic activities, which leads to the suspension of the academic timetable and assessments, further adding to academics' administrative burden. According to Humphries and Mihai (2012), student unrests harm academic performance because many universities use a learning management system to engage and assess students online, diminishing the likelihood of the semester's academic content being completed on time. The disruptions in universities caused by student unrest obstruct learning among students because the abrupt shift to online learning in some cases is disadvantageous to many students because of the inability to access the internet, which leads to poor performance (Nyambuya *et al*., 2021).

Humphries and Mihai (2012) further argue that student unrests reduce contact between lecturer and students, depriving students of face-to-face engagement with lecturers, ultimately lowering students' academic pass rates. The transition to online/blended learning appears to be interfering with students' unrest. According to Brits *et al*. (2019), the students' riots have resulted in a shift in learning modes, with some students struggling to adjust to the new learning modes and internet connectivity concerns. Czerniewicz *et al*. (2019) added that universities adopting blended learning during riots were insufficient for all students because some of them experienced internet connectivity problems.

Psychological trauma among students

It is essential to consider that students' unrest in universities has also led to increased anxiety and stress and student health and psychological trauma. According to Karimi *et al*. (2014), the psychological trauma experienced by students during these unrests may be caused by increased academic pressure to adjust to the ever-changing academic timetable and peer pressure and intimidation to participate in the unrest. Moreover, the psychological trauma is exacerbated by the increasing financial pressure caused by these unrests. According to Greeff *et al*. (2021), the psychological experiences of students during unrest include

apprehension and fear, psychological and emotional pressure, traumatic exposure to violence, experiences of anxiety, feeling of disappointment, or a sense of failure. In other cases, students have reported intense feelings of anxiety, apprehension, and fear during the protests, which they relate to the presence of police and security on campus. Furthermore, when students see police officers with firearms, their anxiety levels grow due to the constant danger of getting shot.

Pilane (2017) acknowledged that during unrests, students feel profoundly uncomfortable or experience psychological or emotional responses that impact one's mental and emotional well-being. Similarly, Dominguez-Whitehead (2011) concurred that the experiences of the students' protest actions were chaotic and unpleasant. Again, Brits *et al*. (2019) reported that students exhibited stress levels during student unrest in South Africa. Later, there are symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder evident among them (Kaminer *et al*., 2018; Ni *et al*., 2020). The psychological trauma inflicted on students due to rioting leads to a rise in healthcare costs (Ni *et al*., 2020). For example, Iwara *et al.* (2020) observed several health consequences of riots on their students, and these included burning solid fuels and littering decayed bins students. Security personnel's continued use of tear gas and firearms posed health consequences. As a result, several students were hospitalised for various ailments at their own cost. Chew *et al*. (2020) discovered that fears, anxieties, and depression were common psychological symptoms and the reasons for increased anxiety included feelings of vulnerability to the infection, disruptions in routines, uncertainty about employment and finances, and fears for safety and wellbeing of loved ones.

Safety risks to university staff

Student unrest in universities has also raised safety concerns among university employees. Tensions between students, stakeholders, and university management may jeopardize their safety as students battle with the police. Apt to note is that these riots are confined to university campuses but usually spread to surrounding areas of the university,

posing safety threats to university employees and the general public. According to Tau and Kgosana (2016), student unrest in South African universities in 2016 led to the looting and burning of a store after police and students clashed violently in the streets of Braamfontein near Wits University. Greeff *et al*. (2021) stated that university employees are concerned about these uprisings since they negatively impact their academic work, housing conditions, and campus transition.

Of importance, is that students occasionally protest and disrupt ongoing classes, resulting in university employees fleeing for their lives. According to Davids and Waghid (2016), disruptive protest actions turned violent at the zenith of this FeesMustFall movement as campus property destruction increased and students clashed with private security and the South African Police Force on and off campuses. The study further reported that academics and staff were threatened, intimidated, and in some cases, assaulted. Safety and security on South African university campuses became a concern for local and international stakeholders, specifically academics, students, parents, and administrators (ref). Furthermore, Jooste (2018) reported a 23% decrease from 2016, which was attributed to the uncertainty caused by the 2016 upheaval. However, Bezuidenhout and De Jager (2014) found that private higher education (HE) students considered security and safety conditions on campus the most critical factors when deciding where to study.

Destruction of campus property

Another repercussion of student agitation in universities is the destruction of university property. Students burn down university buildings and other structures in campus neighborhoods during student unrest. According to Greeff *et al.* (2021), students burn down buildings causing significant damage during university riots. Hlatshwayo and Fomunyam (2019) found that students burned down multiple buildings in universities across South Africa in 2015. In September 2015, protesting students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal set fire to several cars and buildings (Hlatshwayo & Fomunyam, 2019). In October of the same year,

the protesting students at the University of Fort Hare burnt two entrances to the institution (ref). In the same year, rioting students at the University of Limpopo set fire to a security vehicle, and protesting students at the University of Zululand set fire to the student centre building. The University of the Western Cape was not spared either when angry students set fire to two buildings on campus in November 2015. Two arson incidents occurred at the Tshwane University of Technology to end the year, where rioting students burnt three halls, including an exam center, two security cars, and a separate incident at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology financial aid building was torched twice.

The destruction of property within the universities results in increased costs because lots of financial resources are used to fix broken fences and other properties destroyed during the protest (Iwara *et al.*, 2020). In cases when students' riots disrupt the ongoing construction of buildings in universities, there are increased costs associated with such issues because contractors may have been compensated for a breach of contract. The universities spend vast amounts of money, which interferes with the budgetary allocations because other financial vote heads are interfered with. Iwara *et al.* (2020) reiterated direct costs such as lives, properties, and financial resources and indirect costs.

Increasing student substance abuse involvement

Student unrest in universities has also resulted in an increase in drug use among students. The students are reported to engage in more drug use during riots because of a lack of academic engagement and commitment to the university academic schedules. According to Brits *et al.* (2019), protests have resulted in increased incidences of alcohol consumption and changes in sleeping patterns. The changes in sleeping patterns and rising drug use eventually negatively affect academic performance. This further affects students' memory, decreasing motivation and less time to spend on studies. Various studies have reported that students' protests

contribute to behaviour changes leading to increased alcohol consumption.

The increase in drug use among students results in increased financial expenditure. Rees and Wilborn (1983) argue that adolescents who portray a negative attitude towards themselves in the different aspects of life, such as social or academic, often engage in drug and substance abuse. Ongwae (2016) reiterated that substance abuses by university students result in high-risk behavior and have both economic and intellectual loss, and it is caused by idleness, especially when students are doing unrest. Moreover, Skidmore *et al*. (2016) also identified that college students experience unique challenges, making them prone to use alcohol, marijuana, and nonmedical prescription drugs, including periods of unrest. Sarkar *et al*. (2018) illustrated that substance use is more common during college due to academic pressure, peer group effects, popularity, and easy access to common substances.

Increasing academic costs

Literature also indicates that the riots among students have increased academic costs among administrative and academic staff at universities. According to Iwara *et al*. (2020), the students' riots in south African universities have resulted in the total shutdown of the University for several months, leading to a complete cease of administration. The riots made all staff barred from entering the universities, which led to disjuncture and instability in the programs. The university academic staff distorted all their activities, such as workshops, training, and conferences. The riots also interfered with the supervision of postgraduate students as the lecturers retreated to their homes to be safe with their families. In addition, the administrative staff at universities could not facilitate the submission of final dissertations/thesis for the external examination process on time. Thus, this delayed graduation of most postgraduate students. Iwara *et al*. (2020) add that postgraduate students were also evicted from the laboratories leaving their projects unattended. This made some students

abandon their already ongoing projects on the assumption of studies at the university.

Moreover, Czerniewicz *et al*. (2019) reported that university student riots made academic staff shift to blended learning, increasing data costs while working from their homes. Moreover, Potgieter *et al*. (2018) reported that three campuses were shut down at the University of Pretoria for extended periods, and lecturers shifted to online learning, bringing challenges to many students who were not prepared. Similarly, Ejoke *et al*. (2019) reported that some effects of fees must fall protests include reduced conferences attended by academic staff.

Adjusting problems among students

Students' unrest in universities has also resulted in the adjustment of problems among students. According to Greeff *et al.* (2021), the students' unrest at universities has increased adjustment problems among students on their return to campuses to resume academic tasks. Literature indicates that strikes in universities disrupt students' academic lives due to missed classes and keeping up with the work through self-studying in preparation for exams (Costandius *et al*., 2018). This increased pressure causes adjustment challenges because the lecturers must increase their speed of syllabus coverage to complete the semester work to cover for the lost time. Participants experienced high levels of pressure in their studies during the strikes. The students thus struggle to adjust to the increased teaching speed by lecturers, and they have no time to seek clarification from lecturers on challenging aspects of the content being taught.

Similarly, Swart and Hertzog (2017) reiterate that students' unrest negatively impacts their study routine. The students' unrest has resulted in increased adjustment challenges because it disrupts the study routine, creating confusion about the state of academic calendars. The return to campus causes uncertainty because the academic programs are disrupted, and students take time to adjust to the new arrangements

that the universities provide. Moreover, Czerniewicz and Haupt (2018) emphasized that the students' riots disrupted teaching and exams from 2015 to 2017 in most universities in South Africa. Similarly, Czerniewicz *et al*. (2019) reported that some universities decided to use blended and online delivery to enable the academic year to be completed and all curricula to be covered, but this was a controversial decision politically a challenging one practically.

Positives

Increasing student involvement in the decision making

The rise in university student riots has increased students' involvement in university decision-making. The university administration has resorted to having student leaders be more involved in the decisions that affect the running of universities. For example, Luescher-Mamashela (2011) noted that violent student protests often occur where formal channels of communication and consultation are absent. Therefore, the riots have necessitated the creation of formal structures for engagement with student leaders as an appropriate response by university authorities to minimize disruptive political activism on campuses. As a result, student participation in decision-making processes is now recognized for creating an atmosphere of openness and trust, leading to a positive organizational climate (Luescher-Mamashela, 2011).

The universities have adopted inclusive democratic values in student participation and involvement in decision-making. Nkosi (2015) reiterated that students' wilful involvement in decision-making would facilitate buy-in and guarantee peaceful restoration of order on campuses. Another study by Barnhardt *et al*. (2016) recommended that universities should use campus radio platforms to facilitate the dialogue required to address students' demands in ways that resonate with campus culture. This can be mainstreamed through "on-air" talk show debates involving students and university officials, particularly those in the social sciences. Similarly, Mavunga (2019) reported that there are

macro-level structures including Universities in South Africa, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), a joint forum for all vice-chancellors of the public universities in South Africa; faith-based organizations, and the Department of Police have championed for students involved in decision making in universities.

Increased awareness about the university funding crisis

The student protests have also led to an increase in the university funding crisis in South Africa. Dlamini *et al*. (2018) reported that the FeesMustFall movement raised awareness about the funding crisis in higher education in South Africa. This problem has been an underlying problem in South African universities, but it has been brought into the limelight. The movement achieved several positive things at various universities, including renaming university buildings, curriculum transformation, and general workers' insourcing. The state has also been pushed to explore other options and finance models to fund higher education, although the progress has been slow. According to Albertus and Tong (2019), the students resorted to using modern communication technologies, such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, and Twitter, to raise the awareness of the state of funding crises at South African universities.

Increasing student voices on decolonizing higher education

Literature also indicated that university students' unrest had increased voices on decolonizing higher education. For example, Poplak (2016) reported that the students' involvement in protests against fees at universities reiterated their resistance to the colonized nature of university cultures. The students' riots on fees provided critiques on the universities' buildings/symbols, knowledge systems and curricula, and institutional practices, which are expected to increase access to students. Therefore, the student protests have brought awareness of the notion of "decolonizing higher education" into public debate in South Africa. The fees riots have increased awareness about the decolonization of universities into the public limelight. In another study, Mutekwe (2017)

reiterate that the fees-must-fall protests raised an important consciousness of how challenging a colonized education system can lead to academic disruptions. Mutekwe (2017) further report that if tuition fees dry up, as would be the case if a fee-free decolonized education policy were to be adopted prematurely, the country could suffer severe consequences such as inevitable budget cuts compromised research standards, demoralized academics, and curtailed university offerings.

Slight Improvement in Adoption of Better Conflict Resolution Methods

Literature also indicates slight improvements in universities' adoption of better conflict resolution methods. This results in one of the solutions to the consistent recurrent problems that lead to students' unrest at universities. For example, Fatile and Adejuwon (2011) pointed out that tertiary institutions' conflict management in the two universities enhances a constructive communication process that paves the way for negotiators and to be guided from disrupting the university strategies towards attempting its manifestation and latent goals for conflicting parties that are systematic in the way they communicate their grievances. Moreover, Riaz and Junaid (2011) reiterated that ineffective managed organizational conflict leads to reduced confidence levels, stress, and frustration and produces anxiety which could cause humiliation and disengagement. In addition, Olaleye and Arogundade (2013) posited that managing conflict in Nigerian tertiary institutions demands a democratic or participative leadership style of effective administration. Murerwa and Guantai (2019) also advocate three key approaches to managing interpersonal conflicts: domination, compromise, and integration, and stressed that organizations could cope with conflicts through collaborative and dominating strategies. Finally, John-Eke and Akintokunbo (2020) recommend that organizations should reeducate their employees on conflict management construct.

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In most African countries, students' unrest was principally waved to respond to higher education's social, economic, political, and cultural injustice practices. The study concludes that there are numerous negative consequences of students' unrest at the South African Universities, including financial losses, interferences in students' engagement, psychological trauma among students, safety risks to university staff, destruction of campus assets, increased students' substance abuse involvement, increasing academic costs, and adjustment problems among students. The discussed negative consequences, if not addressed, result in derailing the academic porogramms at universities, which would later lead to delayed work among graduating students. The unrests also lead to trauma and poor mental health in the long run, which is likely to have adverse effects on students and university staff.

Despite its adverse effects, it contributed to the increasing students' involvement in the decision-making committee, university management's awareness of the funding crisis, and students' voices on decolonizing higher education. Therefore, the findings imply that students' unrest should not be a student matter, but it should be the government's opportunity to redress the unfulfilled socio-economical and political promises. Hence, university administrations should embrace an all-inclusive decision-making organ that includes students to incorporate their views into the university. Moreover, the administration of universities should play a prominent role by actively enhancing the professional status of the staff and proper protection of their students' interests. The administration of universities should be more democratic, dialogue-oriented, and consultative in decision-making to enhance stakeholder participation in conflict resolution.

This chapter highlighted solutions to improve funding, management, revamping the curriculum and retention of qualified academic and

support staff, and enhancing quality student and faculty climate to deliver adequate services and sustain quality student life on campuses. The universities should be a scientific place of fresh mind and vision where fundamental thoughts should be pronounced, discussed, and clarified in the ethical considerations. The students' unrest should be considered a broader political black framework, a source of education transformation in South Africa. Future research could be carried out on personal factors leading to students' unrest at universities.

CHAPTER 13: CHRONICLES OF LEADERS IN MANAGING STUDENT UNREST IN UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

Student protests have been a recurring phenomenon in most African countries since independence, affecting the character and image of universities as well as society in general. As a result, the goal of this research was to look into the patterns and causes of student unrest and crisis management in African universities. The primary focus was on academics, management, politics, and student welfare as root causes of student unrest. The chapter also examines literature on the challenges of dealing with student unrest in universities and the effective crisis leadership characteristics required to deal with student unrest. A qualitative data analysis methodology was used in the study, and scholarly articles were searched. By searching scholarly articles about the argument raised in this chapter, an electronic database was created. Only articles published in journals and academic book chapters were used as resources in this chapter. The theoretical framework employed for this study is crisis management theory. The study's major findings revealed the causes of student unrests is the authoritarian leadership by university management due to imposed structures from the Government. The study concludes that university management should

foster leadership competencies such as analytic and communication skills and be prepared to deal with crisis by having comprehensive crisis management plans that can be accessed by all stakeholders in their institutions.

Keywords:

Student protests, violence, authoritative leadership, financial crisis

INTRODUCTION

University student unrest is a worldwide phenomenon. Such unrest dates back to the 1960s**.** Omodan (2022) recently reports a sophisticated dimension of student unrest, including virtual protests and virtual social media meetings, which significantly affect teaching and learning. Unrest, including virtual protests and social media gatherings, has a significant impact on teaching and learning. Student unrest manifests itself in the form of demonstrations, strikes, non-attendance (boycott) of classes, riots, and, in most cases, property destruction and loss of life (Davies, Ekwere & Uyanga, 2016; Taio,1999). Such activities usually indicate that students are dissatisfied with some of the university's decisions. In this regard, university authorities or management should be aware of how they manage their institutions, as this can influence students' reactions. Many university unrests, according to Omodan (2020), have been linked to university management styles, with various accusations that university authorities are mostly autocratic in dealing with their subordinates.

In African countries, student protests have been recurring since most countries got independence and that has impacted the character and image of universities and society in general. The dawn of independence brought about education that aimed to transform the nation and amends the damages of colonialism (Fomunyam, 2017). On the other hand, the birth of independence or democracy resulted in countries seeking to

offer quality education for all, and that drive for equality in education brought challenges that resulted in students' violence in universities.

Having realised that student unrest is a global issue, we noted that amongst challenging issues that cloud African universities, as highlighted by scholars, include safety, security, academic, financial exclusion, poor governance, and curriculum. Accordingly, almost all the challenges mentioned above are directly or indirectly linked to finances. In view of that, Wangene-Ouma and Kupe (2020) concur that financial resources are among the most critical assets universities depend on to accomplish their important roles and thrive as effective and vibrant organisations. Aluede and Aluede (1999) in Davies, Ekwere and Uyanga (2016) mention welfare problems that arise in the form of lack of electricity and pipe-borne water, inadequate facilities for learning, and lack of proper motivation on the part of lecturers and facilitators as factors that cause students unrest in Nigeria. In addition, students' protests have been triggered by poor student services, delayed receipt of stipends (where they are offered) and the termination of student benefits (Teferra & Altbachl, 2004 in Fomunyam, 2017). Brewster 2017 highlights issues such as delayed students' allowances, unconducive environments, and shortage of resources as causes of unrest in Botswana institutions of learning. South Africa, like other countries, is not exempted from the global trend in university student unrest. As a result, the protests that engulfed South African universities in 2015 and 2016 revealed students' dissatisfaction with higher education fees (Dlamini, 2019).

Although academics are vital to the universities, they are mostly affected during unrest because the university management normally resorts to closing institutions due to the destruction of properties. In addition, the closing of schools greatly affects the performance and quality of education. Davies *et al*. (2016) note that student unrest on campus affects their academic performance, including disruptions of academic programmes and causes them to spend longer time with less zeal to

pursue their programmes, inability of the lecturers to cover the syllabus, and brain drain, among lecturers.

Despite the challenges in universities that lead to student unrest, the university's core business, which is academic, should prevail and university leaders should find a way of navigating through those challenges to ensure the smooth running of processes. In view of that, Njoka and Gadachi (2019) posit that effective management of student affairs in public universities continues to pose a major challenge to university administrators and student leaders. These challenges involve making difficult decisions and remaining focused on university goals (Andrews, 2020), requiring distinct leadership attributes of both university management and student leadership.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Universities across Africa have witnessed many student protests in the 21st century due to political and economic influence. Prior to independence, education in Africa was informal, and those fighting for independence believed that formal education would help them. Due to political influence, universities are subjected to external pressure on regular accounts, which usually results in student unrest. Most upper management appointments are not made based on merit or management skills, which may contribute to the causes of conflicts between students and management. In most cases, upper management appointments are not based on merits or management skills and that may contribute to the causes of conflicts among students and management.

Akparep (2019) confirms that some vice-chancellors are appointed due to political considerations without much regard for university management competence. In addition, the arrival of formal education by Western missionaries in Africa brought challenges that were either political or economic. African countries did not benefit much from the

education system then, and scholars have attested to that. Buttressing that point, Woldegiorgis and Doevenspeck (2013) argue that colonial education at the early stage was also communicated through Christian missionaries who came up with a new religion, language, and culture, which were completely foreign to African realities. "Missionary education which undermined African culture and the general way of life of the Africans was used as a great weapon to confuse the people's minds" (Nkomazana & Setume, 2016). In actual fact, the missionaries used that as a port of entry to Africa and create a positive environment for colonialism. Higher education was an instrument of facilitating colonial administration instead of enlightening the African societies. At the time, African countries had no universities and access to higher education was extremely limited to few individuals. During the early stages of independence, universities were built in African countries where autonomy was difficult because such universities inherited colonial influence from newly formed governments. As such, students, through their leaders, are always on the lookout for any colonial influence in the university, which always stimulates unrest. A typical example is the #Rhodes must fall in South Africa. Thus, in the transformation from colonialism to independence, higher education institutions in Africa shouldered multiple responsibilities as agents of economic growth (Woldegiorgis *et al.*, 2013)**.**

To date**,** universities do not offer the expected transformation because there is no meaningful relationship between universities and the industries. Universities are not filling that gap of producing skilful graduates. Instead, they only prepare students for white-collar jobs. Transformation was supposed to address socio-economic inequality and poverty ills, which it does not. As a result, the current universities are just reflections of the pre-colonial ones and that causes student unrest in university. As a result, student activists often revolt just to disrupt the "whiteness" in universities that was imposed during the colonial era (Heleta, 2016). Against this background, this chapter aims to interrogate student unrest through the crisis management lensed by analysing the

literature that deals with the challenges that lead to student unrest in African universities and identifies the leadership attributes deemed relevant to address them.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter has adopted the crisis management theory. A series of disruptions in universities recently have caused universities to examine how they respond to critical incidents that have negatively affected students, staff and academic activities. Student unrest is a planned violation of educational events often organised to gain or exert power over management to obtain specific demands (Swart & Hertzog, 2017); thus, it necessitates effective leadership to react to the situation spontaneously. Smith and Riley (2012) maintain that leadership in times of crisis is about dealing with events, emotions and consequences in the immediate present in ways that minimise personal and organisational harm to the school and school community. This chapter is also supported by a crisis management model by Mitof (1994) as a key instrument to address the increasing number of crises in most African universities. The crisis leadership by Mitof (1994) suggests that crisis leadership is staged in that usually, there is a pre-crisis or prodromal stage when events indicate that an issue is emerging, a crisis event where whatever the issue is has fully emerged, and a post-crisis or resolution phase when there is clear evidence that the issue is no longer a concern to members of the organization or institution. Furthermore, Mitroff offers a five-stage model for crisis management:

- signal detection, seek to identify warning signs and take preventative measures;
- probing and prevention, active search and reduction of risk factors;
- damage containment, the crisis occurs and actions are taken to limit its spread;
- recovery, effort to return to normal operations, and

- learning; people review the crisis management effort and learn from it.

Boudeax (2005) explained the five-stage this way: the first two stages – signal detection and probing and prevention – encompass the proactive steps an organization can take before a crisis event. Signal detection identifies the signs of possible crises within an organization. Mitroff's stages discuss the trigger and containment of the crisis event, the arduous task of returning to the pre-crisis norm, and the resolution of the crisis event. First, in the recovery stage, Mitroff (1994) emphasises the facilitation of the organisational recovery, whereas, in the chronic stage, Mitroff (1994) acknowledges that a failure to learn from a crisis can leave an organization susceptible to the crisis again. Mitroff emphasises opportunities to empower crisis managers in a particular crisis event. The model suggests that students normally alert university leadership before engaging in any form of unrest. Kruse *et al*. (2020) suggest that thinking of crisis as "an event" minimises the complexity of the crisis, be it a campus shooting, athletics scandal, natural disaster, or racial tension and protest, how a crisis event is experienced and ultimately, defined, is subject to evolving social and organizational interpretation as a result of the complexity inherent within each event.

FACTORS THAT CAUSE CONFLICTS IN UNIVERSITIES

University students normally participate in protests due to factors that can be internally linked to the university. The model suggests that before engaging in any form of unrest, management is always aware and thus should engage with student leadership. Fomunyam (2017) highlights internal factors such as funding, basic social amenities, school management, and student representative council elections, amongst others, as causes of unrest in universities that should be managed effectively to create the terrain for peaceful co-existence. Although the causes of unrest differ according to the type of universities and country, the primary reason is students' dissatisfaction with some of the

university's operations and the consequences normally lead to violence, destruction of property, and even death. Due the complexity of the phenomenon, university management always has to decide whether to let academic programmes suffer by closing the university, continuing with academic programmes, or putting the school property at risk of being destroyed. In that regard, Omodan (2022) argues that university management faces many challenges when dealing with student unrest situations, including disruption to the academic process, violation of human rights, and low visibility due to internet connection.

By being part of any country's education system, university students are well informed on current affairs and political issues such that they are quick to realise when university or government policies are not implemented. As Dahlum and Wig (2021) suggest, universities create opportunities for potential protestors to coordinate and overcome collective-action problems as facilitators of social networks, organisations, and physical infrastructure, offering "focal points" for coordination. When policies are not implemented or partially implemented, the initial reaction of the students body through their leadership is to make their voices heard. If they are denied that platform, they react through demonstrations, boycotting classes, or even violent strike. Olu (2014) posits that students believe that they should have a significant voice in determining some issues pertaining to their welfare. On the other hand, there will be a crisis if they ask to be heard and feel that legitimate channels are closed. Conversely, Machayi (2015) confirms that whenever there was a lack of adequate consultation and involvement of students in decision-making, there was a high possibility of student unrest and activism in the universities. The implication is that management should be vigilant when handling the students' petitions.

CURRENT SITUATION OF AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

African universities continue to experience student unrest currently. Internal factors influencing student unrest in African universities have

been explored in several studies. Factors such as; financial issues, management, overcrowding, and academics, to mention just a few. Odebode (2019) reports the following causes of unrest in Nigerian universities; unfavourable government policies, poor staff-student relationship, poor teaching learning facilities; High tuition fees; non-responsiveness of school authority among others. Several factors have been identified in South African universities. Higher Education in South Africa has been in crisis over recent years. University systems in many parts of South Africa have witnessed student protests and ongoing violence, resulting in many campuses turning into spaces of violent confrontation between students and police (Stuurman, 2018).

One important factor towards unrest in the universities in Africa is the increase in human existence, multicultural aspects and interaction in the 21st century, which threaten the peace of humanity. According to Olajide (2011), most institutions in Africa have been litigating from academic advancement due to ever-increasing conflict that constitutes a significant factor in the organisation and society. Osakede *et al*. (2018) elude that conflict forms an integral part of human existence. In this instance, it forms an integral part of students' presence in the universities. As students exist in the institutions, sometimes there is inevitable friction in the organisational structure as the stakeholders have different incompatible goals.

Bloisi (2007) states that conflict is inescapable. In various institutions around the globe, there are different levels of conflict. However, the nature of conflict differs in institutional management and leadership management. A well-properly managed conflict can be amicably resolved. But if the conflict is not well managed and there is no intervention, it will escalate to violence. Conflict can cause deep rifts in the framework of an institution and also it can be a veritable tool to promote the institution to a level of effectiveness.

Unresolved conflicts result in unrest that can cause much damage to the property of the institution. Besides damaging the property and the

infrastructure, academic programme is also disturbed by the conflict. In some cases, the entire calendar of the university gets disrupted by unrest. The disturbances include external and internal forces within the institutional framework which constitute constraints to administrative efficiencies. Hence conflict and unrest are inevitable (Gbadamosi, 2006).

Adeyemi, Ekundayo and Alonge (2010) state that it is challenging for the institution to attain academic efficiency in an environment that engulfs crisis as witnessed in the universities in Africa even today. The university stakeholders including students and staff (academic, non-academic and administrators) pose conflict which may result in protests, revolts, unrest and violence leading to the closure of academic programmes.

PATTERNS OF STUDENT UNREST IN UNIVERSITIES

Student unrest as a crisis should be managed promptly because it has financial implications both for the students and the university. In that regard, Odu (2013) argues that students' "crisis is worrisome to parents, government and even the students" themselves. Crisis in schools leads to the closure, suspension and disruption in the academic calendar. Authorities cannot predict how long a semester or academic year could last (five or six years) depending on the frequency of students" crises. Students' unrest has financial implications on students as it affects their career path. At times, academic semesters are suspended, when that happens, it means students will enter the workforce a year later and that impacts negatively on their income. Due to the suspension of classes during the unrest, there are normally reduced contact lessons hence when the university will resort to online learning which impacts negatively on students because few students have access to the internet. In addition, the suspension of classes has a psychological effect on students and their level of stress increases because of anxiety. Despite warnings of the dire consequences of their anti-academic actions, students protested on university campuses around them (Mutekwe, 2017). Furthermore, students' unrest negatively impacts the university.

The loss of infrastructure due to violent student unrest needs to be replaced and that impact negatively on the university's financial resources. In that regard, Swartz *et al*. (2017) report that in South Africa, student protesters caused almost $10 million in damages in just three months of 2016.

In addition, normally during the unrest, private security companies are engaged to protect the school buildings and students. As a result, universities are forced to navigate fragmented funding streams to traditional revenue sources (Wangene-Ouma & Kupe, 2020). Rioting university students in South African universities destroyed buildings and vehicles at several universities that were burnt in the wave of protests that kicked off in the middle of September 2016 (Mutekwe, 2017). As a result, Fomunyan (2017) recommends that different forms of engagement are required on different pathways for protest and that African universities need to create a culture to cater to student needs.

ATTRIBUTES FOR CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Researchers have highlighted several leadership attributes that can be useful for student crises in universities. A crisis requires immediate and sustained managerial attention. As such, leadership in times of crisis differs from the leadership required during normal circumstances (Kwatubana & Molaodi, 2021) therefore distinctive attributes are required to manage the crisis in institutions. Gigliotti (2020) argues that managing a crisis requires leadership competencies such as analytic and communication skills, flexibility, empathy and compassion, presence and availability, transparency and honesty, and established trust and respect. Communication is highlighted as one of the key attributes during a crisis. Smith and Riley (2012) argue that clear and open communication limits confusing rumours and misinformation during a crisis. Communication is vital as it ensures that all stakeholders involved in a crisis are receiving clear, concise, relevant and accurate information. In addition, Kaul and Shah (2020) posit that communication defines reality and reinforces a

clear perspective on what is happening and what it means for the organisation that one is leading. On that note, Odu (2014) argues that the communication gap worsens the crisis in Nigerian universities and that effective communication diffuses tension among students and authorities in the institution. University management should try as much as possible to improve the communication channels and avoid minor conflicts with the student body.

Leaders, during crisis management, should make clear decisive decisions. Smith *et al*. (2012) concur that time is very crucial during crisis management hence decisions must be made quickly before the level of damage escalates. This attribute is vital more so that during university unrest, students' act of anger is displayed through disruptive actions such as damaging valuables on campus which might be difficult to replace. In view of that Kaul & Shah (2020) maintain that successful leaders cut through the clutter of conflicting data and opinions, identify the areas that need attention, and allocate effort and resources accordingly.

In addition, Zamon Grope (2018) maintains that psychological factors constitute an important element for the individual in charge of crisis management and that self-control, self-confidence, and coolness, are some of the mental attributes that are highly needed for any leader as the crisis management process requires patience, wisdom, and sound thinking in the planning for the management of the crisis and providing appropriate solutions.

FINDINGS ARGUMENTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the above exploration, the study revealed that university protest affects academic performance. The closure of universities during unrest impact negatively on the quality of graduate produced because normally when academic activities resume after a protest, students are just rushed through the course content. In that regard, incessant strike actions in universities have inadvertently affected the academic calendar

of university students and this poses a lot of challenges to their study duration performance in examinations and their final grading. From this, one can conclude that the presence of peace and relative tranquillity will lead to a spike in the quality of students' academic performance (Ajayi, 2014; Omodan, 2020).

Access to quality free education was reported to be the main concern generating student protest and student activism in higher education nationally. Recently there has been a series of student unrest in universities due to finance-related issues. In view of that, Odebode (2019) argue that the shortage of funds allotted to Nigerian tertiary institutions has been responsible for high tuition, moribund library, social and laboratory facilities, which result in students' unrest in most tertiary educational institutions in the country.

Researchers suggest good governance, negotiation and open dialogue as solutions to managing a crisis. The best practices that should be observed by school authorities for effective control of student unrest were the use of dialogue, training of school administrators on crisis management, and the presence of adequate infrastructure on campuses (Davies, Ekwekwe & Uyanga, 2016). Good governance is the process of crisis prevention through proactive measures of running the affairs of the institution positively and progressively beneficial to students, listening to students' complaints, being transparent, and democratic as opposed to autocratic (Odu, 2013).

EMPHASIS ON CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN STUDENT AFFAIRS

Farris and Mcfreight (2004) point out that the ability to manage crisis, violence and unrest has become a highly sought skill within the field of student affairs. Each institution should accept the responsibility of responding to and managing emergencies as they arise and also treating them as a matter of urgency as it arises to control an outbreak. The

existing prevalence of unique emergencies on the various campuses of universities, the expectation is not unfounded. The establishment of a new position that focuses completely on coordinating emergency management tasks on a specific campus is a growing trend.

According to Shaw (2018), there is a great need for crisis management skills and competencies within the field of student affairs in the university. Often, in most cases, personnel who are responsible for managing crises in the institution are not trained to aid their ability to respond to the outbreak of crisis within the institution. Hence the problem, in most cases quickly escalates to a violent situation and thus unrest breaks.

LIMITATIONS

The findings of this study have to be seen in light of some limitations. The fact that the article is a conceptual paper and the focus was on published articles regarding students' unrest, there was paucity of information on the recent research on the topic for some African countries.

FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research on bridging the communication gap between the university management and students representative especially in countries that have not recently conducted research on students' unrest should be undertaken.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine the patterns and causes of manifestations of student unrest in African universities and confront the challenges through the crisis management lenses highlighting the distinctive attributes needed to deal with student unrest in universities. the study concludes that delayed student allowances and shortage of

university facilities such as student accommodation access to free quality education, communication gap between authorities and students' representatives, hyper-patriotic youthful exuberance in deviating from behavioural norms of the society and students' home background are major causes of students' crisis in higher institutions of Africa. In light of that, university management should be prepared to deal with the crisis by having comprehensive crisis management plans that can be accessed by all stakeholders in their institutions. The implication is that universities can have crisis management teams that deal with awareness workshops and training. In addition, crisis management should be part of an academic programme. In other words, crisis management should be an elective module so that those who graduate can easily impart proper training or education. The study found that students' level of anxiety rises during unrest and therefore recommends that counselling should be provided to those students.

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CHAPTER 2

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