



Research Paper

## Relationship between Political Thuggery and Students' Academic Performance in Tertiary Institutions in Sokoto State Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

The study examined the relationship between political thuggery and students' academic performance in tertiary institution in Sokoto state Nigeria. The aim is to determine the linkage between political thuggery and academic performance of students and also the impact of the factors of political thuggery on students' performance in Umaru Ali Shinkafi Polytechnic Sokoto. Questionnaires were administered to collect data and for analysis while descriptive statistics was used. The study also employed the Elite Theory as the tool of analysis since it claimed that elites are accountable for recruiting and encouraging of thugs to do their bidding in order to continue to maintain and control political power. Conclusively, the study revealed that poverty, lack of proper upbringing, lack of job opportunity, political influence, drug abuse and influence by politicians are part of the factors that motivate political thuggery in Umaru Ali Shinkafi Polytechnic and that this has in turn drastically affected students' performance. Consequently the study recommends that the government should ensure appropriate sanction to thugs and their collaborators regardless of their political affiliations, this will serve as deterrence to others and to those who aspires to become thugs in the future.

**KEY WORDS:** Political, Thuggery, Political thuggery; Financial attractiveness; Elective offices; Unemployment; Poverty; Security agencies; Democratic rights

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Academic success has a great influence on a student's self-esteem, motivation, and perseverance especially for those in higher education. Poor academic performance or high failure rates may result in an unacceptable levels of attrition reduce the number of graduate and lead to increased cost of education (Santhi Balakrishnan, Angela Lim Siok Ching, Noor Aagila Latiff and Nasiru, A.M.A., 2014) on account of this academic performance has continued to be a thing of worry for educationists and researchers alike. The fact is the advent of area-boys couple with their infiltration into academic environment of tertiary institutions has had adverse effect on performance. Thugs or thuggery is not a new phenomenon in a political arena but the concept connotes a social security and protection known as "Area-boys", "Yan-banga" (a social group found in every served setting or 'Yan-Tauri' who provided adequate security and protection not only to the politicians but also to the traditional hierarchy. In Northern Nigeria different names are being attached to them as "Yan-sara-suka", "Yan-kalari" and "Yan-zaman-banza" among many.

Therefore, thugs also referred to as Area-boys and girls can be found in every part of the country have become the political instruments used by politicians for political vanguard (Shehu, 2016). Be that it may, it must be stated that the typology of political thuggery in different parts of the country depends on the conditions, traditions and the levels of political culture that the natives of various ethnic groups possess or have cultivated and cherished. For instance, while the native and popular name of thuggery in Gombe state is called Yan kalari, they are called Yan Daukan Amarya in Adamawa state; Yan Tauri or Yan Daba in Kano; Yan Sara Suka in Bauchi; Ecomog in Borno; Egbesu in Bayelsa and Bakassi boys in Abia state. In states like Lagos and Sokoto they are simply referred to as 'Area Boys'. Interestingly before now those involved in acts of thuggery were either a bunch of school dropouts or non-literate who had been pirolled into the non futuristics venture either as a result of their social or economic antecedent. However in recent times events have taken a new turn. The fact is that more and more young people either still in school or out of school are now involved in acts of thuggery firstly to safeguard their future and secondly to ensure their economic survival in school. This notwithstanding,

their academic performance had remained a challenge since it is still abysmal. It is against this background that this research intends to study the relationship between political thuggery and student's performance in tertiary institution using UASP Sokoto as a case study.

### **1.2 Problem Statement/Justification**

Thuggery is a recurrent phenomenon in Nigerian politics. It is an act usually perpetrated by persons hired and paid to cause political violence and mayhem, disrupt election campaigns, destroy properties belonging to opponents of their paid masters before and after elections as well as to terrorize the electorate in order to desuade them from voting on election day. People involved in this act of criminality were before now a bunch of illiterates or school dropout. In recent times events have taken a new turn as these persons are now found in tertiary institutions as students. However the fact that they are involved in acts of political thuggery side by side with schooling in tertiary institution for reasons bothering on economic and social security has not in any way been observed to enhance their academic performance. Rather the academic performance of persons involved in act of thuggery have continued to remain abysmal. Interestingly, research into the relationship between political thuggery and students academic performance in tertiary institutions is one area that is yet to be tapped. Instead previous works have only centred on the participation of thugs in Nigerian politics. The aim of this study is to look at how thuggery impact on the academic performance of students in tertiary institution in Nigeria.

### **1.3 Objective(s) of the Study**

The following objectives of the study were developed based on problem:

- i. To examine the linkage between political thuggery and academic performance of students.
- ii. To examine the impact of the factors of political thuggery on students' performance in Umaru Ali Shinkafi Polytechnic Sokoto.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

This segment focused on the conceptual, empirical and theoretical issues regarding the study.

### **2.2.1 Concept of Thugs or Thuggery**

Thugs or Thuggery have been examined by (Dan Asabe, 1991) as inadequate parental guidance and proper care which is part of the parents' responsibility. He is also of the view that parents must have self-discipline if they want their wards to be acculturated morally and socially. He also noted that lack of unemployment to address our teaming youth's restiveness is another issue to be addressed by all the stakeholders involved. Not all that, the persistence of out of school children coupled with broken homes are also sources of concern. These factors coupled with others attributed to their involvement in drug abuse, hooliganism, political vanguard, terrorizing community with wanton destruction of public properties, causing harm and economic upset (Shehu, 2008).

Another point of view indicated that thugs are the product of rejection of the society simple for economics reason (such as poverty) or social factor (as a milieu). It has been posited that thugs are nothing but area-boys, petty racketeers, thugs or gangs, unemployed youth without sense of belonging. Thugs are connected to all sorts of drug abuse that include Indian hemp or marijuana inhaling solution-toxic, heroin, resulting to anti-social behaviours, law breakers, violence against law enforcement agencies (Adebambo, 2003). It has been noted that thugs or area-boys got the backing and strong support from powerful political king-maker who employ their services purposely to secure their political ambition (Shehu, 2008).

### **2.2.2 Historical Perspectives of Thuggery in Nigeria**

The institution of thuggery in Nigeria could be trace back to primitive society. It started from age groups, social groups or vanguard groups, who remain the watch-dogs of the society against any misconduct from any member of the society and to ensure there is absolute security and maintenance of law and order in general. It was voluntary associations that were meant to checking make the criminal activities of these bad-eggs among the society. The roles and function of these groups were designed and articulated by the entire society (Shehu 2008).

The situation took another dimension due to the contact with the Europeans whose adulterated socio-cultural setting of the society. Colonialism took away everything belongs to African heritage, thereby, relegating it to emperor status. Colonialism imposed economic hardship not only to Nigerian people but also to the entire African continent. It is because of colonial activities that Africa becomes underdeveloped countries (Shehu, 2016). The development of urbanization coupled with rise of population which creates scarcity of resources also to have contributed toward development and influx of many people trouting to cities searching for greener pasture which led to emergence of thugs or area-boys in the major cities in Nigeria. Lagos state experienced the most in this situation than any cities in the country. Simply due to its strategic position as the business centre

and industrial city which led to the unprecedented congestions of different ethnics divide struggle to earn a moderate living. It is known fact that when cities congested no doubt it bound to face with all sorts of criminalities. Lagos is not exceptional in this aspect because for the past decades the city remained the empire of thuggish or area-boys operating day and night under the bridges and uncompleted buildings as their hide-out (Ugbomeh, 2002).

Thugs are classified into sub-groups namely: permanent thugs (uneducated or drop-out and they are dangerous violence is their domain) temporary thugs (semi-educated half-way or attained some level of education but only operated when they need their social needs). Therefore this kind of category are mostly found in tertiary institutions of learning pursuing their education half-way due their frequent activities and it affect their academic performance. Sometime is very low due to inadequate concentration during the studies (Dan Asabe, 1991).

### **2.2.3 Effects of Political Thuggery on Educational Development**

Thuggery created fear among the students, it violates human rights, destruction of properties and hindered educational development

Firstly, Killings and intimidation attached to political thuggery is affecting political and educational development negatively especially in the 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries where provision of education is facing total neglect.

Secondly, Thuggery in school is creating a big fear among students which hinder educational sustainability, elites and politicians are actively involved in maintaining and sponsoring of thugs for their selfish interest and benefits. They stop them from study and provide them with all sorts of intoxicants substances. Therefore, thuggery affects educational development of political thugs.

Thirdly, Violation of human rights is inevitable in thuggery life and it directly affects educational sustainability, creating fear and tension in school fail to enjoy the right of education. Abubakar, (2015) argued that political thuggery promotes political instability, intolerance and disharmony in the socio-economic activities of the individuals.

Finally, political thuggery is a major threat to educational development and sustainability in higher institution of learning and it degenerate into large form of dropout from schools to get easy money from politicians and elites at the detriment of their education.

### **2.2.4 Academic Performance**

Academic performance has been described in terms of examination performance. In this study academic performance was characterized by the overall performance in each year which culminates in a Grade Point Average (GPA). The GPA score would take into account students' performance in tests, course work and examinations. The method of computing the GPA is as shown below (Reporter, 2003). Past research studies have identified several factors that affect academic performance of students in various centres of learning. Some of these factors include class attendance (Romer, 1993; Crosnoe, 2004), age, learning styles or preferences, gender, class size, entry qualifications and family income (Santhi Balakrishnan. Angela Lim siokching, Noor Aagila Latiff and Nasiru, A.M.A., 2014). It has been examined that there is nothing more practical than a good theory. Given the importance of student success in college, using instructive perspectives to guide research and practice is essential. Fortunately, a handful of sound approaches are available, though as we shall see no single view is comprehensive enough to account for the complicated set of factors that interact to influence student and institutional performance (Dhufera, 2015) what Braxton, Sullivan, and Johnson (1997) call 'the student departure puzzle.' The most often cited theories define student success in college as persistence and educational attainment, or achieving the desired degree or educational credential. These perspectives emphasize to varying degrees the importance of academic preparation and the quality of student experiences during college. This section is organized around theoretical perspectives of demographical, sociological, organizational, psychological, cultural, and economic, all of which contribute to our understanding of student success in college. Taken together, the different theoretical perspectives on student success and departure provide a holistic accounting of many of the key factors that come into play to shape what students are prepared to do when they get to college and influence the meanings they make of their experiences (Braxton, 1997).

Many researchers have been discussed the different factors that affects the student academic performance in their research. There are two types of factors that affect the students' academic performance. These are internal and external classroom factors and these factors strongly affect the students' performance. Internal classroom factors includes students competence in English, class schedules, class size, English text books, class test results, learning facilities, homework, environment of the class, complexity of the course material, teachers role in the class, technology used in the class and exams systems. External classroom factors include extracurricular activities, family problems, work and financial, social and other problems. Research studies shows that students' performance depends on many factors such as learning facilities, gender and age

differences, etc. that can affect student performance (Hansen, 2006). It equally stated that the most important factor with positive effect on students' performance is student's competence in English. If the students have strong communication skills and have strong grip on English, it increases the performance of the students (Harb, 2006). The performance of the student is affected by communication skills; it is possible to see communication as a variable which may be positively related to performance or the student in open leaning. A major distinction of this study from previous studies is that it focuses on open learning (Khan, 2012).

### III. METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of this research study, descriptive survey research design was adopted which is concerns with the collection of data for the purpose of describing and interpreting the existing condition. However, with this method of research design questionnaires was used to collect data and inferential statistics would serve as method of data analysis to determine the relationship between the variables. This research is designed to last for a maximum period of twelve months so as to have adequate data. The population of the study was comprised of the entire seven (7) Colleges in Umaru Ali Shinkafi Polytechnic, Sokoto. The sample technique adopted for the purpose of this research work was stratified random sampling. The research produces results that would use as a measure to address the existing problem of advent of area-boyism in the institution.

**Table 2.1: Distribution of Questionnaire**

Colleges	Distribution of Questionnaire	Returned Questionnaire	Percentage of Questionnaire Returned
CABS	30	30	100
CAH	30	28	93
CES	30	29	97
CE	30	29	97
CST	30	30	100
CGS	30	29	97
CA	30	30	100
Total	210	205	98

Source: Questionnaire Administered 2021

The table 2.1 shows the distribution of questionnaire to various colleges in Umaru Ali Shinkafi Polytechnic Sokoto in all 210 questionnaires were administered among the seven (7) colleges while only 205 were completed.

**Table 2.2: The linkage between political thuggery and academic performance of Student of Umaru Ali Shinkafi Polytechnic Sokoto.**

s/n	Options	Responses	Percentage
1.	The political thuggery affects the academic performance or activities of students.	156	76.10
2.	Some students involve in political thuggery.	202	98.54
3.	Political thuggery affects the attendance of the students in the class.	200	97.56
4	Insecurity within learning environment affects student performance.	190	92.68
5	Political Thuggery influences the rate of examination mal-practice on campus.	199	97.07

Source: Questionnaire Administered 2021

Table 2.2 shows the linkages between political thuggery and student academic performance in Umaru Ali Shinkafi Polytechnic Sokoto. As the responses show, it will be seen that majority of the respondents 156 representing (76.10) percent attributed the political thuggery to the low rate of academic performance of the students. Also confirmed that 202 respondents (98.54%) agree that some students are involved in political thuggery, similarly, 200 of respondents, representing 97.56% declared that political thuggery affect the attendance of the students in the class, and 199 respondents representing (97.07%) support that political thuggery influences the rate of examination malpractices by students. Conclusively, the table revealed that there is serious linkage between political thuggery and academic performance of the student of Umaru Ali Shinkafi Polytechnic, Sokoto.

**Table 2.3: Impact of the factors of political thuggery on students' performance in Umaru Ali Shinkafi Polytechnic Sokoto.**

s/n	Options	Responses	Percentage
1.	Political thuggery is a result of Poverty	190	92.68
2.	Lack of proper upbringing	200	97.56
3.	Lack of job opportunity	200	97.56
4	Political influence	190	92.68

5	Influence of drugs abuse	205	100.00
6	Influence by politicians	198	96.59

Source: Questionnaire Administered 2021

Table 2.3 shows the Impact of the factors of political thuggery on students' performance in Umaru Ali Shinkafi Polytechnic Sokoto. The table shows factors that influence the political thuggery in Umaru Ali Shinkafi Polytechnic Sokoto. The result shows that while 190 respondents representing 92.68% said political thuggery is as a result of poverty, 200 respondents representing 97.56% concurred with the lack of proper upbringing as a factor, in the same vein while 200 respondents, representing 97.56% believe political thuggery is as a result of lack of job opportunity, 190 respondents representing 92.68% attached acts of political thuggery to the influence of politician during political events encourage the increase in the number of thuggery in the society which has great effect on the performance of the student, similarly, 205 respondents representing 100% strictly believed that political thuggery influence by abuse drug and 198 respondents representing 96.59% says most thugs were influence by politicians. They revealed that poverty, lack of proper upbringing, lack of job opportunity, political influence, drug abuse and politician influence are part of factor responsible for political thuggery in Umaru Ali Shinkafi Polytechnic which drastically has effect on student academic performance.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Generally, the effects of the political thuggery is basically felt when it is considered that it has helped in creating tension among the political candidates, caused the killing innocent of persons, infringed on human rights, caused the unwanted destructions of valuable properties and insecurity. The activities of thuggery have not only fuelled insecurity and negatively affected the socio-economic and political stability of the country, but accelerated the upsurge in street attacks, house break, shoplifting, and the abductions and assassination of lives. Therefore when viewed critically thugs will amount to a menace in our society regardless of the fact they are a people who have suffered the rejection of the society due to inadequate parental upbringing this may be considered a narrow perception since most of them are intelligent and brilliant only that they have not been given second chance to prove their ability.

#### V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Be that as it may the paper recommends;

- Government should ensure appropriate sanction to thugs and their collaborators regardless of their political affiliations; this will serve as deterrence to others and to those who aspire to become thugs in the future.
- Government should provide skills acquisition centres to train youngsters and other employment opportunities to carry them away from thuggery life.
- Government should initiate rigorous awareness campaign to transform and persuade those thugs from involving into such violent behaviours.
- Youngsters should pursue their educational development with complete commitment, perseverance and dedication.

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