

Perceived Youths' Contributions to National Stability and Integration by Students of Political Science and Public Administration, Adamawa State University, Mubi, Nigeria: Implications for Human Development Counselling

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Abstract:

This study investigated the extent to which students of political science and public administration, Adamawa State University, Mubi perceived the contributions of Nigerian youths to national stability and integration. Four research questions were raised to determine the major contributions of youths to national development and their perceived challenges. Four hypotheses determined whether gender and religious profession had any influence on students' perception on youths' contributions in forging national unity. The population of the study consisted of all students of political science and public administration, Adamawa State University, Mubi. A total of 200 students were selected out of the population of 2000 using stratified sampling technique. An Instrument titled: Students' Leadership Behaviour and perception Battery (SLBPB) was developed by the researcher. The instrument was subjected to face and content validation and the reliability index of 0.69 was obtained using Guttman's split-half method. Descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages were used to answer research questions while the chi square independent two sample tests was used to test the hypotheses formulated. The result revealed military defense, inter-ethnic and inter-religious marriages as major strategies for achieving national unity while sectionalism, tribal loyalties and religious differences were identified as major challenges. The study also revealed a non-significant difference between Muslim and Christian students and political and public administration students in their perceived youths' contributions to national development. It was therefore recommended that Government at the three levels should fund all inter-ethnic and inter-religious marriages that are contracted by Nigerian youths. There should be leadership training programmes for all youths across the country. Multi-cultural activities should be organized for youths in secondary and post-secondary institutions. Human development counsellors should organize symposia and workshops for youths on transparent leadership.

Keywords: : National stability, national integration, youth's contribution, inter-ethnic marriage, inter-religious marriage

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I. INTRODUCTION

The survival of Nigeria as a nation is daily being threatened by centrifugal forces pitched against her corporate existence. Evidence of this abound in calamitous happenings across the length and breaths of the country where there are daily accounts of gory incidents of mindless killings of innocent souls by religious sects, Fulani herdsmen, political thugs, militant youths and hunters. The activities of these groups of Nigerians have consequently led to the destruction of public and private buildings, settlements and mass exodus of people as displaced persons to safer environments.

The bulk of the population of most developing countries is the youth. These youths represent the most vibrant and adventurous group in society. Responsible governments consider youth population very critical in the implementation of programmes aimed as achieving national stability, national building and national integration particularly in the multi-ethnic, multi-religions and multi-linguistic countries.

In Nigeria, the youths have played prominent role in the unity and stability of the country during the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods. In the traditional Nigerian societies, the youths were saddled with the moral responsibility of maintaining the security and territorial integrity of their

cultural communities and were also required to use their energy and vitality in performing the most demanding task of building town halls, road construction and maintenance of drainages and market stalls (MAMSER, 1989) During the colonial period, they were conscripted into the colonial army and used to acquire more territorial boundaries and maintenance of peace and hegemonic control of the hinterland. Many Nigerian youths died as foot soldiers in the colonial army, the West African Frontiers Force. In the defense of British interest, they were ordered to kill those kinsmen and women and their children that offered resistance to colonialism.

According to Onwubiko (1985), Nigerian youths played active role in the anti-colonial struggle throughout the country. The formation of the famous Nigeria Youth Movement (NYM), the Zikist Youth Movement, the West African Students Union and other national political parties provided fertile grounds for Nigerian youths to experiment their leadership potentials in the throes of promoting political consciousness, national unity and stability. These youth movements became training grounds for leaders who were to take up the mantle of leadership from the ageing elites who

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were fast drifting into conservatism. The British colonial masters sacked many of the youth ranks who had been employed as journalists and political educators in the struggle. Many more were imprisoned for their role in exposing the evils of the colonial regime.

During the post-independence period, many Nigerian youths found themselves at the centre of governance in the country. For instance, Ambassador M.T. Mbu, Obafemi Awolowo, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Yakubu Gowon, Akintola, Murtala Mohammed and Olusegun Obasanjo, to mention a few, became leaders in their early 20s and 30s. The historical events leading to the emergence of youths in top positions of responsibility may not be relevant in the contemporary Nigeria that is characterized by ethno-political-religious violence, Nepotism, godfatherism and penchant for personal, regional power and aggrandizement. It is believed by most political scientists and public administrators that nations are built by exemplary men and women sustained by institutions that promote good governance. Nations therefore do not happen by historical accidents; rather they are built by men and women with vision and resolve. Nation building is always a work in progress, a dynamic process in constant need of nurturing and re-invention. It never stops and true builders never rest because all nations are constantly facing new challenges. To achieve meaningful results therefore, a country in dire need of progress requires a responsible leadership which is a critical factor in achieving unity and integration. It is sad to note that most Nigerian leaders see themselves as champions of only some sections of the population. They are most interested in silencing their opponents than in pursuing justice. They preach one thing and do the opposite. They place themselves above the constitution and the laws of the country. According to Shettima (2012), Nigerian leaders have no sense of tomorrow other than private bank accounts. The result is that many of those who have been entrusted with the affairs of the nation lack any sense of commitment to the nation. They have no plans for a Nigeria of tomorrow beyond the empty rituals of long and empty speeches (Shettima, 2012).

These leadership crises have led to the production of youths suffering from a poverty of patriotism which has eaten at the very heart of Nigeria thereby making it a giant standing on feeble feet. According to Fasina (2012), stability, peace and rapid development witnessed in the west was not built by magicians but by patriotic ordinary human beings through hard work and cooperation between and amongst the various ethnic, linguistic and geographical regions. It is sad that Nigerian youths value their ethnic and religious groups more than this country. This is because they provide them with self-identification; sense of belonging and mutual recognition. The Nigerian youths therefore see themselves first as Yoruba men, second as Muslims or Christians and third as Nigerians. Where their interest as Yoruba people clash with the interest of Nigeria, they choose to defend Yoruba interest (Gambari, 2012).

Youth age boundaries differs from one culture to another but global consensus exists amongst psychologists that age 15-25 years could be classified as youth (Akinze & Elaiwu, 2007). This period coincides with the period of adolescents whose behaviours are characterized by deviance, disobedience,

unruly behaviours which are difficult to manage. These observations are not out of place because the period is marked with a lot of challenges for the growing adolescents. They show ambivalent feelings of independence and question unnecessary conformity to values and views. Much as these characteristics are viewed as negative, they also possess potential positive qualities which when adequately harnessed, could lead to rapid national growth and development.

Nigerian universities, colleges of education and polytechnics and other tertiary institutions constitute the nursery beds for nurturing charismatic and transparent leaders that are capable of taking this country to its promised land, a land flowing with milk and honey. In most Nigerian tertiary institutions, students' unionism is very vibrant. Some students' union leaders have, after graduating from the university, become politicians and members of parliaments.

Literature is replete with enormous contributions of youth to national development. Empirical studies are few if any on whether Nigerian youths are adequately prepared to face the challenges of leadership in our multi religious, multi ethnic and multi-linguistic country. Review of literature has not revealed any political or leadership programme or government policies aimed at inducting Nigerian youths in the rudiments of leadership. Information is inadequate as to whether Nigerian University students particularly those in the department of Political science and Public Administration are sensitized on the enormous leadership responsibilities awaiting them on graduation and whether they are properly inducted to face such leadership challenges. This paper therefore focuses primarily on youth's contributions in fostering national stability and integration as perceived by students of political science and public administration, Adamawa State University, Mubi, Nigeria.

The following research questions and hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

1. What are the major challenges militating against national stability and integration?
2. What transparent leadership qualities do Political science and Public Administration students of Adamawa varsity possess to take up the mantle of leadership on graduation?
3. What are the various ways of achieving/fostering national unity in Nigeria?
4. What contributions have Nigerian youths made towards national stability and integration as perceived by the students of Adamawa varsity?

H01: There is no significant difference between students of political science and public administration in their perceived contribution of youths to national development.

H02: There is no significant difference between male and female students of political science and public administration in their perceived contributions of youths to national stability and integration.

H03: There is no significant difference between Christian and Muslim students of political science and public administration in their perception of youth's contributions to national development.

H04: There is no significant difference between Christian and Muslim students of political science and public administration in their perceived challenges militating against national stability and integration.

II. METHODOLOGY

An ex post facto survey was used for the study in order to empirically assess students' transparent leadership behaviours, their awareness of the enormous challenges to national stability and integration and their mitigation strategies. The population was made up of all students of political science and public administration, Adamawa State University with an estimated population of 2000. A sample of 150 students was drawn from the two departments using stratified random sampling techniques. Gender equality and religious profession was maintained in the selection. 50 boys (25 Muslims and 25 Christians) and 50 girls (25 Muslims and 25 Christians) were selected in each department.

Research instrument

The instrument titled "Students' Leadership Behaviour and Perception Battery (SLBDB) was developed by the researcher. It has two sections: Section A is the Bio data which sought out information on students' level, department and religious profession. Section B contains items on the various challenges confronting Nigeria's unity while Section C contains items on students' transparent leadership behaviors. Section D contains items on the suggested ways of fostering national stability and integration. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined which yielded the reliability value of 0.69 using Guttman's split half method.

Method of Data Collection

The instrument was randomly administered to the students of Political Science and Public Administration during lectures. The researcher ensured that equal number of male, female and religious affiliation was identified through the raise of the hand.

Method of Data Analysis

Frequency counts and percentages were used to answer research questions 1, 2, 3 while the X2 independent two sample test was used to test the hypotheses formulated at 0.5 level of significance. The use of x2 independent two sample test statistics is most appropriate because the data collected are based on frequency distributions

III. RESULTS

Research Question 1: What are the major challenges militating against national stability and integration?

Table 1: Frequency, Percentages and Ranking of Perceived challenges militating against National Stability and Integration

S/N	Challenges	Frequency	Percentages	Ranking
1.	Religious differences. Some religions do not trust other religions	141	94.0	3
2.	Differences in language	128	85.3	12
3.	People from other parts of Nigeria are not trusted	141	94.0	3
4.	Discrimination in employment on the basis of religion and ethnic origin	106	70.7	15
5.	Corruption	141	94.0	3
6.	Activities of Boko Haram	124	82.7	13
7.	Lack of respect for human rights	135	90.0	10
8.	Tribal loyalties	143	95.3	2
9.	Political instability	140	93.3	7
10.	Political Thuggery	139	92.7	8
11.	Sectionalism	148	98.7	1
12.	Nepotism	141	94.0	3
13.	Loss of dignity of Labour	130	86.7	11
14.	Examination malpractice	113	75.3	14
15.	Attitudes of selfish and greedy politicians	136	90.7	9

Table 1 shows the frequency, percentage and ranking of the students' perception of challenges of national stability and integration. Analysis of data identified sectionalism, tribal loyalties, religious differences, mistrust, corruption and nepotism as the major challenges facing government efforts in achieving national stability and integration. Contrary to the general expectation, discrimination in employment on the basis of religion and ethnic origin ranked 15th with 70.7%

Research Question 2: What transparent leadership qualities do political science and public administration students of Adamawa State University possess to take up the mantle of leadership on graduation?

Table 2: Frequency, Percentages and Ranking of Students' Perceived Leadership Qualities

S/N	Transparent Leadership Qualities	Frequency	Percentages	Ranking
1.	As a leader, I would allow my subordinate to take part in decision making	139	92.7	1
2.	As a leader, I will account for any Kobo I spend for my organization	121	80.7	5
3.	I would resign as a leader if I find out that my winning election was fraudulent	109	72.7	7
4.	As a leader, I would use my position to amass wealth as an opportunity which has come	62	41.3	17
5.	As a leader, I would want the press to publish my private life as an example to others	73	48.7	16
6.	There is nothing wrong, if as a leader, I use my position to help my family members and those from my area	98	65.3	12
7.	As a leader, I will be responsible for the actions of my subordinate	134	89.3	2
8.	I am ready to sacrifice my life for the safety of my subordinates as a leader	118	78.7	6
9.	As a leader, I will be accountable for any action I take, whether right or wrong.	129	86.0	3
10	I will freely divulge to my group any financial deals I undertake with outsiders	128	85.3	4
11	As a leader, I will be 100% honest	109	72.7	7
12	If you are too honest as a leader you will look like a fool.	89	59.3	13
13	Being honest and God fearing in leadership is only a theory because it does not work in real life.	87	58.0	14
14	As a leader, I will discuss serious matters with my secrete group before I take them to the whole group.	105	70.0	10
15	As a leader, I will discuss government wit my wife first and take her advice of considering those from my office.	75	50.0	15
16.	As a leader, I will take the decision of my subordinates even if it is against my judgment	100	66.7	11
17	I will keep secrets as a leader.	108	72.0	9

Table 2 shows the analysis of responses on the nature of leadership qualities possessed by students' of Political Science and Public administration that are expected to take up leadership positions on graduation. From the table, 92.7% and 80.5% of the respondents believe that good leadership should use democratic principles where subordinates are involved in decision making and that leaders should take responsibility for whichever happens in the organization. Honesty and accountability ranked 3rd and 4th with 86% and 85.3% of the Political Science and Public Administration students who believe that good leadership at whatever level should exhibit high sense of honesty and accountability in carrying out public duties and responsibilities. They also opined that they would not mind if the press publishes the activities of their private lives as an example to others. 58% of the students however disagreed with their colleagues pointing out that exhibition of honesty and God fearing behaviour does not work in contemporary Nigeria.

Research Question 3: What Contributions have the Nigerian youths made towards national stability and integration as perceived by Adamawa State University students?

Table 3: Frequency, Percentage and Ranking of students' perceived youth's contributions to National Stability and Interpretation.

S/N	Contributions	Frequency	Percentages	Ranking
1.	Building of roads and maintenance of drainages and market stalls	111	74.0	18
2.	Recruitment as soldiers to defend the country.	146	97.3	2
3.	Joining police force and civil defense to protect lives and property	147	98.0	1
4.	Engraining youths in agricultural food production -fishing, dry season farming, poultry farming	126	84.0	
5.	Waging war against security challenges such as Boko Haram	118	78.7	15
6.	Transparent leadership	107	71.3	19
7.	Availability of man power for recruitment into military and Para-military organization	130	86.7	10
8.	Recruitment into state and federal civil service	139	92.7	5
9.	ICT and technological development	134	89.3	6
10.	Participating in National Youth Service Corps (NYSC).	141	94.0	2
11.	Marrying wives and husbands from other ethnic groups and religious affiliations (Inter religious and ethnic marriages)	115	76.7	17
12.	Taking interest in learning other languages	128	85.3	12
13.	Eating food produced from other regions of the country	126	84.0	13
14.	Wearing and dressing styles from other ethnic and religious groups	133	88.7	9
15.	Participating in cultural shows and dancing competitions	135	90	5
16.	Making friends with people from other ethnic and religious background	140	93.3	4
17.	Participating in youths exchange programmes	134	89.3	6
18.	Studying different religions	118	78.7	15
19.	Participating in leadership training programmes	134	89.3	6
20.	Study of citizenship education as a compulsory course	129	86.0	11

Table 3 shows the analysis of frequency, percentages and ranking of perceived youths' contributions to national stability and integration by students' of political science and public administration. Analysis of data shows that joining police force and civil defense, recruitment as soldiers and inter-ethnic and religious marriages ranked first and second with 98% and 94% respectively was the major contributions of youths to National Stability and Integration. 93.3% and 89.3% of the respondents are also of the opinion that friendship with other youths across ethnic and religious divide and participating in leadership training and youths exchange programmes could lead to national unity. Waging war against Insurgency, building of rural roads and maintenance of drainages and market stalls as well as demonstration of transparent leadership were considered least in their perceived contributions to national development.

Research Question 3: What are the various ways of achieving National Unity in Nigeria?

Table 3: Analysis of Frequency, Percentage and Ranking of Students' Perceived ways of achieving National Stability and Integration

S/N	Strategies	Frequency	Percentages	Ranking
1.	Provision of interstate youth exchange programme	129	86.0	6
2.	Organizing symposia/seminars on issues relating to national integration	134	89.3	3
3.	Organizing multi-cultural activities on the theme of national integration	132	88.0	4
4.	Organizing national youth festivals involving youths from different regions, backgrounds and faith.	128	85.3	8
5.	Organizing leadership training camps for youths drawn from different regions	139	92.7	2
6.	Citizenship education	140	93.3	1
7.	War against all forms of corruption by youths across the country	129	86.0	6
8.	Engaging youths in agricultural food production such as poultry farming, fish farming, dry season farming and cultivation of cash crops	126	84.0	9
9.	Government encouragement and sponsorship of inter-ethnic and inter-faith marriages	112	74.7	12
10.	Compulsory National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) for all completers of secondary and tertiary education in the country	103	68.7	13
11.	One compulsory military service for all secondary and tertiary graduates	114	76.0	11
12.	Youth inter-state education exchange programmes for all secondary school students	119	79.3	10
13.	Teaching the major Nigerian languages in all primary and secondary schools in the country	131	87.3	5

Table shows students' perceived ways of fostering unity in Nigeria. From the table, students of Political Science and Public Administration have identified citizenship education, youth's leadership training programmes, multi-cultural activities and seminars/symposia on relevant national themes as the major strategies for fostering national unity. Contrary to general expectation, compulsory National Youths Service Corps and inter-ethnic and inter-faith marriages ranked least with 74.7% and 68.7% respectively in their perceived strategies in fostering National Stability and Integration

Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant difference between students of political science and public administration in their perceived contribution of youths to national development.

Table 5: X^2 Independent Two Sample Test Difference in Perception between Political Science and Public Administration on Youths' Contribution to National Development

Variable	N	df	$X^2_{cal.}$	$X^2_{crit.}$	Decision
Political Science	75	19	10.4	30.4	Not rejected
Public Admin	75				

The result of the analysis shown in table 5 revealed the obtained X^2 value of 10.4. This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical X^2 value at 0.05 level of significance and 19 degrees of freedom. The obtained X^2 value (10.4) was found to be less than the X^2 critical value (30.4). The null hypothesis was therefore not rejected. This means that Political Science and Public Administration students do not differ in their opinions on youths' contribution to national stability and integration.

H02: There is no significant difference between male and female students of political science and public administration in their perceived contributions of youths to national stability and integration

Table 6: χ^2 Analysis of the Difference between Male and Female students in their Perceived Contributions of Youths to National Development

Variable	N	df	$\chi^2_{cal.}$	$\chi^2_{crit.}$	Decision
Male	75	19	19.61	30.14	Accepted
Female	75				

Table 6 shows that there is no significant difference ($\chi^2=19.61 < 30.14$) between male and female students in their perceived contributions of youths to National Development. The null hypothesis was therefore upheld meaning that male and female students of Political Science and Public Administration have similar views on the role of Nigerian Youths in National Stability and Integration.

H03: There is no significant difference between Christian and Muslim students of political science and public administration in their perception of youths' contributions to national development.

Table 7: Chi-square Analysis of Religious Influence on Students' Perceived Youths' Contributions to National Development

Variable	N	df	$\chi^2_{cal.}$	$\chi^2_{crit.}$	Decision
Muslim students	75	19	4.93	30.14	Accepted
Christian students	75				

Table 7 shows that 0.05 level of significance and df (19), the calculated χ^2 (4.93) is less than the critical value of 30.14. Therefore the null hypotheses is accepted, meaning that there is no significant difference between Muslim and Christian students' in their perception of religious influence on youths contributions to national development.

H04: There is no significant difference between Christian and Muslim students of political science and public administration in their perceived challenges militating against national stability and integration.

Table 8: Chi-square Analysis of Religious Influence on Students' Perceived Barriers to National Stability and Integration

Variables	N	df	$\chi^2_{cal.}$	$\chi^2_{crit.}$	Decision
Muslim Students	75	14	2.05	23.68	Accepted
Christian Students	75				

The results in table 8 show a calculated χ^2 value of 2.05 at 0.05 level of significance with 14 df. Since this value is less than the critical value of 23.68, the null hypothesis which

states there is no significant difference between Christian and Muslim students of political science and public administration in their perceived challenges militating against national stability and integration was sustained. This means that Christian and Muslim students in the two departments do not differ in their perceived barriers to national stability and integration.

IV. DISCUSSION

The major thrust of this study was to determine the contributions of youths to national stability and integration as perceived by students of Political Science and Public Administration, Adamawa State University, Mubi and their implications for Human Development Counselling.

Research questions one and hypothesis four sought to find out the major barriers to national stability and integration. The hypothesis was tested to find out if religious profession had any influence on students' perceived barriers to national stability and integration. The result which showed a non-significant difference between Christian and Muslim students identifies sectionalism, God fatherism, tribal loyalties, religious intolerance, corruption and nepotism as the major challenges facing government efforts towards national stability and integration. This finding agreed with those of Okonkwo (2007), Eghanevba (2007), Florence (2007) and Ndukwu (2007) who identified religious intolerance, linguistic diversities, tribal royalties, corruption, economic sabotage, bad leadership, materialistic tendencies, ritual killings and oppression of the weak by the wealthy in society as the major barriers to national unity and accelerated development

Research question two sought to determine the extent to which political science and public administration students of Adamawa State University, Mubi possess the basic leadership qualities needed to take up leadership responsibilities on graduation. The study revealed that the use of democratic principles and exhibition of high sense of honesty and accountability by all public servants could lead to rapid national development. This corroborate the studies of Ndukwu (2007), and Ogunsanya (2007) who identified discipline, honesty and accountability as the major attributes of leadership which should be exhibited by all leaders.

Research question three and hypothesis two and three sought to find out the extent to which Nigerian youths have contributed to fostering national unity and accelerated development and whether male and female students and Christians and Muslims students differ in their opinions. The study identified recruitment into the Police Force and army and inter-religious and inter-ethnic marriages as the major ways Nigerian youths can contribute in fostering national unity and accelerated development. Male and female Christian and Muslim students in the two departments do not differ in their views on the enormous contributions Nigerian youths have in fostering national stability and integration since colonial times. MAMSER (1989) and Ejikeme (2012), Elaigwu (2007) and Lamidi (2007) have identified youths as an indispensable groups in all facets of national building particularly in the area of protecting the territorial integrity, inter-ethnic and inter-religious marriages and youths exchange programmes.

Research question four investigated the various ways of fostering national integration and stability. Citizenship education, youth leadership training and multi-cultural activities among others were identified by the students as the major strategies for achieving national integration. Contrary to the general expectation, compulsory National Youth Service Corps and inter-ethnic and inter-faith marriages were considered least significant in promoting national stability and integration. This finding is consistent with the findings of Okonkwo (2007) and Ogunsanya (2007) who believed that leadership by example, inter-ethnic and inter faith marriages, teaching of national languages and demonstration of honesty and accountability by all public servants could lead to national stability and accelerated development.

V. IMPLICATIONS FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT COUNSELLING

The task of fostering national stability and integration is enormous. Nigerians in top positions of responsibilities, parents and teachers as well as religious and ethnic leaders must exhibit transparent leadership behaviours and observe and practice all the cherished norms and values of the society so that our youths would learn from them. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Government at the three levels should fund all inter-ethnic and inter-religious marriages that are contracted by Nigerian youths.
- ii. There should be leadership training programmes for all youths across the country.
- iii. Multi- cultural activities should be organized for youths in secondary and post-secondary institutions.
- iv. Human development counsellors should organize symposia and workshops for youths on transparent leadership.
- v. All youths should be taught to understand and practice all norms and values in all primary and secondary schools.
- vi. Human development counsellors should teach students to denounce social vices such as politics without principle, wealth without work, education without character, pleasure without conscience, commerce without morality etc.
- vii. The problems rocking the Nigerian state can be addressed through the enforcement of federal character, promotion of equality among the various ethnic groups, promotion of inter-tribal marriages, and increase in the duration of NYSC, sports activities, zoning of leadership positions etc. These, no doubt, can lead to national healing where all Nigerians will experience self-forgiveness, acknowledgement of personal dignity, promotion of peace and peaceful coexistence among different religions and tribal groups in the country.

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