

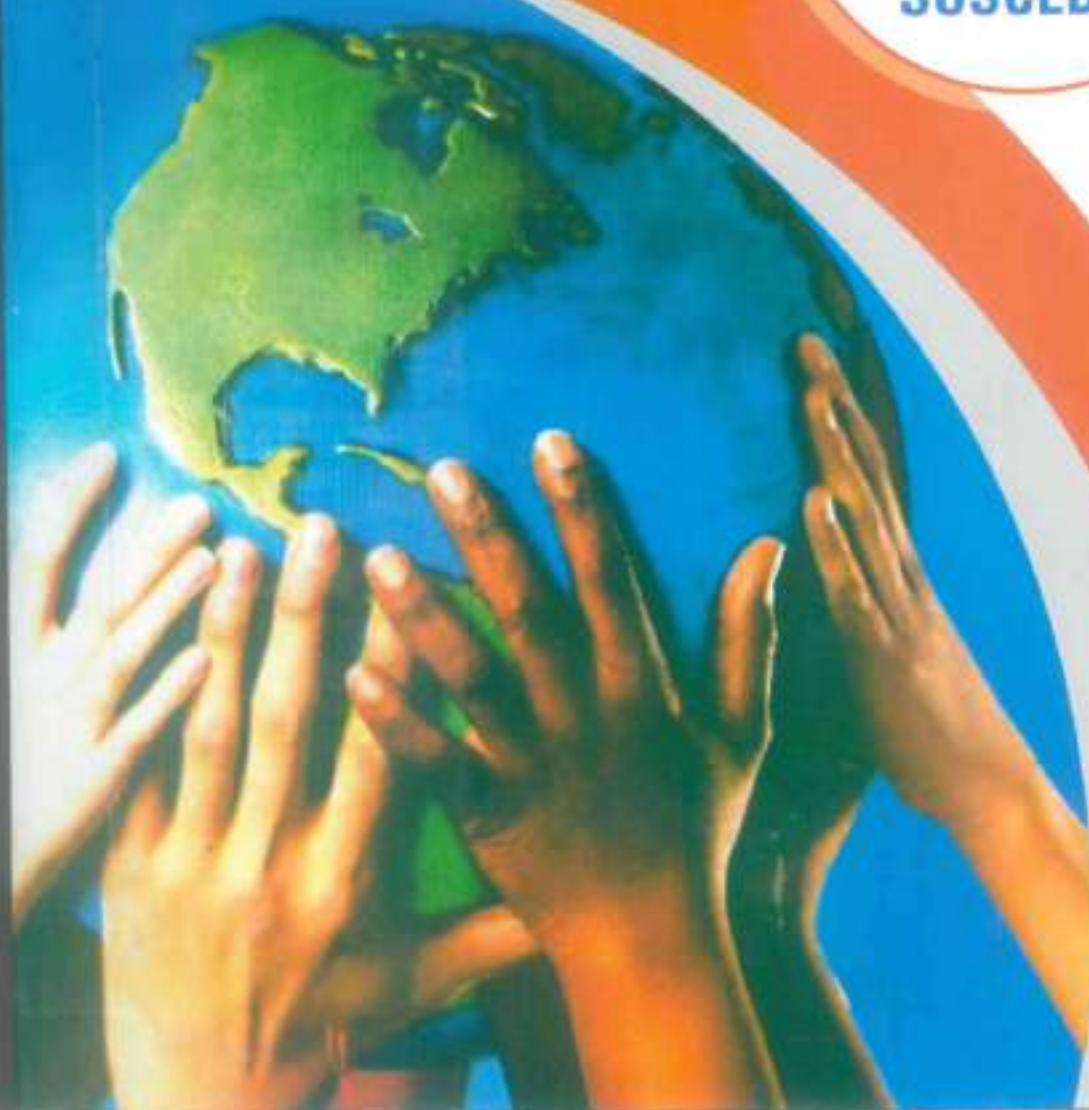
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Youth Incivility as a Correlate of Political Apathy among Undergraduates in University of Ilorin, Kwara State

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Abstract

Violence has become synonymous with Nigeria's political culture such that virtually all elections held so far in the country are violent-ridden; thus the study investigated Youth Incivility as a Correlate of Political Apathy among Undergraduates in Kwara State. A case study research design was adopted for the study. The target population of this study consisted of all the undergraduates in University of Ilorin, Kwara State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select fifty (50) undergraduates from each of the six faculties selected making a total of 300 undergraduates as the sample of the study. The instrument was a questionnaire titled "Youth Incivility as a Correlate of Political Apathy among Undergraduates' (YICPAU)" with a reliability coefficient of 0.81. The data collected were analysed using percentage, mean and standard deviation and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation. The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that the common forms of incivility among undergraduates includes missing lectures; picking calls during lectures; dressing indecently; leaving classes with no reason, mishandling school properties; sneaking out of classes; engaging in self-medication and communicating covertly during exams. The study also showed that the level at which undergraduate students participate in Politics was low and there was a significant relationship between youth incivility and political apathy among undergraduates. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that more political education should be organized on regular basis in order to reduce incivility and political apathy among undergraduates.

Keyword: Incivility, Youth, Political apathy, Undergraduates

Introduction

Youth incivility has been a growing concern across all spectrum in recent time. reiterated that incivilities among youth is prevalent in all works of life ranging from small and corporate businesses, government agencies to educational institutions. In the field of education, which houses quite a large number of youths in a concentrated location, especially at the higher education level, incivility has been one of the major challenges education stakeholders have been handling. According to incivilities are those behaviours that are generally described as disrespectful and disruptive.

Stated that uncivil behaviours are stated that schools are experiencing negative behavioural dispositions from students, hence these behaviours are negatively impacting teaching and learning processes. opined that incivility disrupt learning environment and contribute to the shortage of adequate and qualified personnel. Williams further stated that academic leaders are concerned by the increased number of students who engage in uncivil behaviours, hence are seeking solutions. Contributing factors of incivility are multifaceted. stated that the act of incivility may be an intentional aggressive act or an unintentional passive act.



Common act may include students arriving late to classes, conducting side conversations during class time, and threatening to give poor faculty evaluations even on social media). Also, behaviours such as missing class, sleeping in class, cheating in examinations and operating cell phones are all categorized as uncivil behaviours). According to incivility impedes the learning environment and uncivil behaviours inhibit the ability to develop high quality personnel needed in the political domain.

Politics is used as a peacemaking strategy to provide solutions to conflict arising among groups and to facilitate the decision making process by involving all concerned parties. However, the most probable outcome might be a win-lose situation where one party will have to give in order to reach a consensus (Daud, 2012). Political participation according to Buhari (2010) is the involvement of every member, organization and groups in a nation in the entire political process. It is the process through which the individual plays a role in the political life of his society and has the opportunity to take part in deciding what common goals of the society are and the best way of achieving these goals (Adelekan, 2010). Political participation as defined by Akamare (2003) is an aspect of political behavior which focuses on the way in which individuals take part in politics. It is a voluntary activity and one may participate directly or indirectly without being compelled to do so. Forcing someone to participate in an electoral process for instance is tantamount to breach of the electoral act. The individual as a free moral agent is at liberty to participate based on his or her choice. More so, he or she can determine the degree of participation, directly or indirectly; it is thus common to see people turn out for voter registration and refuse to turn up for voting.

In higher institutions in Nigeria, there are political institutions where undergraduates socialise and exercise their political influence. These institutions could be found in universities, polytechnics, colleges, institutes among others. The political institutions in educational institutions include but not limited to Students' Union, Faculty Associations, Departmental Associations, Community Associations, Clubs, Societies, among others that promote their political education and enable them to occupy social status with appropriate social

responsibilities (Olokooba & Abdulsalam, 2020).

In today's world, a lot of people do not have the tendency to develop comprehensive political ideas. They consider political discussions and political ideas seemingly boring and avoid them no matter how great their practical implications are (Abdullahi, 2012). Because of lack of political opinion and lack of public participation in the political process, those in power engage in pursuing their own goals. As a result, the masses become more alienated or apathetic towards politicians and the political process in general.

Solmitz (2000) described apathy as basically a state of indifference where an individual has an absence of interest or concern to certain aspects of emotional, social or physical life. Apathy can be object-specific towards a person, activity or environment. It is a common reaction to stress where it manifests as 'learned helplessness' and is commonly associated with depression. It can also reflect a non-pathological lack of interest in things one does not consider important. According to Enouch (2012), political apathy is an inevitable end result from the transition of politics from an art form that is dominated by those who engage in politics for the love of politics and a genuine desire to improve conditions to cooler, colder, more calculating "career" politicians, who see it as a job like in any other company where the goal is to keep the current party or company in power without the regard to what happens in the country as a whole. So, the public especially younger people in general seem to lose interest in politics. Political apathy among young people is not a new concept; various political surveys carried out all over the world portray similar tendencies among young people.

Ishola (2015) stated that political apathy could be seen in mass and collective behaviour of people towards political participation, and this could be traced to their psychological beliefs. It usually starts with an individual showing disappointment, distrust and faithlessness in the electoral system and this gradually circulates to other members of the society. People begin to care less about political life, withdraw from obligations to civil society, and perform entirely nominal in political institutions or organizations. However, several factors have been identified as the reason for the growing political apathy among undergraduates



in Kwara State. These include psychological involvement and collective memory of historical and contemporary events and issues, patterns of trust, feelings of efficacy, political engagement and disengagement of individual, geographic regions and youth incivility (Mason & Rhoda, 2011)

Statement of the Problem

Violence has become synonymous with Nigeria's political culture such that virtually all elections held so far in the country are violent-ridden. Rather than rejoicing and showing optimism at the approach of election period, people become more skeptical and apprehensive of the system (Ojo, 2014). It was based on this that the researcher sought to investigate youth incivility as a correlate of political apathy among undergraduates in Kwara State.

Purpose of the Study

This study investigated youth incivility as a correlate of political apathy among undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria. Specifically, it investigated:

- a. common forms of incivility among undergraduates;
- b. level of political apathy among undergraduates; and
- c. the relationship between youth incivility and political apathy among undergraduates in Kwara State.

Research Questions

The following questions were answered in the study:

1. What are the common forms of incivility among undergraduates?
2. What is the level of political apathy among undergraduates?
3. What is the relationship between youth incivility and political apathy among undergraduates in Kwara State?

Research Hypothesis

One null hypothesis was formulated to guide the study:

H_0 : There is no significant relationship between youth incivility and political apathy among undergraduates in Kwara State.

Methodology

This study adopted a case study design to investigate youth incivility as a correlate of

political apathy among undergraduates in Kwara State. The descriptive design was preferred because it is objective in data collection at a point in time, it quantifies variables, and it describes the phenomena using numbers to characterize them. The design also permits the researcher to examine how variables, either single or combined, might affect a particular behaviour.

The population of this study consisted of all the undergraduates in Kwara State. The target population were undergraduates in University of Ilorin. Stratified sampling technique was used to select six out of 50 faculties in the university on the basis of political participation and relevance of programmes of the study to political participation. Thus, simple random sampling technique was used to select 50 undergraduates from each of the six faculties making a total of 300 undergraduates as the respondents of the study.

The instrument for this study was a researcher designed questionnaire titled 'Youth Incivility as a Correlate of Political Apathy among Undergraduates' (YICPAU). The questionnaire was divided into two sections: section A, was used to elicit information on biographical data of the respondents, while section B was made up of 20 items which focused on youth incivility as a correlate of political apathy among undergraduates in Kwara state. The instrument was validated by some experts in the Department of Social Sciences Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin. For effective data collection, the researcher personally administered the questionnaire in all the sampled faculties. The administration of the questionnaire took a week to enable the researcher administer and collect back the questionnaire.

Results

The data collected for the study were analysed. Percentage was used to describe the demographic information of the respondents. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions 1 and 2. Inferential statistics inform of Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the only hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.



Table 1: Demographic Information of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	150	50.0
Female	150	50.0
Total	300	100.0
Residence		
On campus	150	50.0
Off Campus	150	50.0
Total	300	100.0
Faculty		
Arts	50	16.66
Education	50	16.66
Life Sciences	50	16.66
Management Science	50	16.66
Physical Sciences	50	16.66
Social Sciences	50	16.66
Total	300	100.0

The demographic profile in Table 1 shows that 150 (50.0%) of the respondents sampled in this

study were male and 150 (50.0%) were female. Also 150 (50.0%) of the respondents lived on campus while 150 (50.0%) of the respondents lived off campus. Similarly, 50 (16.66%) of the respondents are in faculty of Arts, Education, Life Sciences, Social Sciences, Management Sciences and Physical Sciences respectively.

Research Question 1: What are the common forms of incivility among undergraduates?

The table below shows the mean and rank order of the common forms of incivility among undergraduates in Kwara State. The items in the instrument were measured on 4 Likert scale of Always = 4 points, Sometimes = 3 points, Rarely = 2 points and Never = 1 point. The average score of the four points of the scale ($\frac{4+3+2+1}{4} = 2.5$) was used as a benchmark for determining items that were accepted and rejected. Thus, any item with mean score 2.5 and above was remarked as common form of incivility and any item with mean score below 2.5 was remarked otherwise.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Common Forms of Incivility among Undergraduates

SN	Items	Mean	S.D	Remarks
1	I miss lectures as I like	3.75	0.54	Common
10	I pick calls during lecture	3.30	0.91	Common
3	I dress as I like to class	3.28	0.84	Common
4	I escape from class with no reasons	3.10	0.58	Common
2	I mishandle school properties	3.00	0.84	Common
7	I sneak out of class	2.75	0.54	Common
5	I engage in self-medication	2.67	0.91	Common
6	I communicate during examination	2.65	0.25	Common
8	I act as I like on campus	2.53	0.85	Common
12	I drink excessively on campus	2.30	0.85	Not Common
9	I sleep/doze off in class	2.10	0.35	Not Common
11	I force myself on people on campus	2.05	0.29	Not Common

The results in Table 2 revealed that missing lectures, picking calls during lectures, dressing indecently, leaving classes with no reason, mishandling school properties, sneaking out of classes, engaging in self-medication, communicating during examination and acting anyhow on campus were the common forms of incivility among undergraduates.

Research Question 2: What is the level of political apathy among undergraduates?

The scores of each respondent on the level of political apathy were estimated and subjected to

percentage analysis. Given that there were 10 items on political apathy structured in a four-response-type, the minimum, maximum and range score were 10, 40 and 30 respectively. The level of political apathy could be high, moderate or low. Thus, students whose scores fell within the score range 10 – 20, 21 – 30 and 31 – 40 indicated high, moderate and low level of political apathy respectively. The statistics of respondents' scores are summarized and presented in Table 3.



Table 3: Level of Political Apathy of Undergraduates

Level of Political Apathy	Frequency	Percentage
High	79	26.33%
Moderate	94	31.33%
Low	127	42.34%
Total	300	100.0%

Table 3 showed that 79 (36.33%) of the undergraduates were of high level of political apathy; and 94 (31.33%) of the respondents were of moderate level of political apathy while 127 (42.34%) of the respondents were of low level of political apathy. This is also presented in figure 1.

Figure 1: Level of Political Apathy among Undergraduates of University of Ilorin

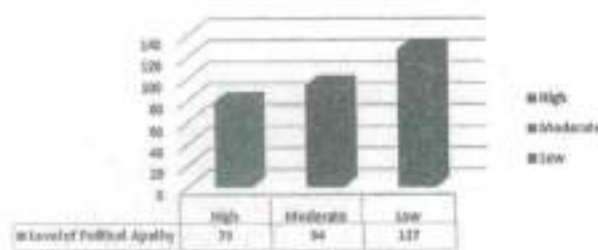


Table 4: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient between Youth Incivility and Political Apathy among Undergraduates in Kwara State

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	r-cal	Sig.
Youth Incivility	300	30.49	5.90			
Political Apathy	300	31.76	3.78	298	- 19.94	0.000

*Significant at $P < 0.05$

The result above shows that the calculated significance value of 0.000 is less than the chosen 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is a significant negative ($r = - 19.94$) relationship between youth incivility and political apathy among undergraduates in Kwara State. This implies that youths' incivility is negatively related to political apathy ($r_{\text{cal}} = - 19.94$; $p < 0.05$).

Discussion

The study revealed that the common forms of incivility among undergraduates includes missing lectures, picking calls during lectures,

As shown in Figure 1, majority of undergraduates of University of Ilorin were of low level of political apathy. This signifies that majority of undergraduates of University of Ilorin do not partake in school political activities as 127 representing 43.33% of the respondents were of low level of political apathy. This indicates that minority of the respondent (43.33%) lack political emotion and interest.

Research Hypothesis

Ho: *There is no significant relationship between youth incivility and political apathy among undergraduates in Kwara State.*

The hypothesis formulated for this study was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) at 0.05 level of significance.

dressing indecently, leaving classes with no reason, mishandling school properties, sneaking out of classes, engaging in self-medication and communicating covertly during exams. This finding is in line with the study of Jamieson & Capella (2008), and Sobieraj and Berry (2011) who reported that name calling, aspersion or derision of ideas, disingenuousness or lying, vulgarity and pejorative speech are forms of incivility. Jamieson & Capella, (2008) also asserted that the use of highly emotional speech, including appeals to negative emotions such as hatred, fear, or anger may sometimes be very uncivil.

The second finding showed that majority of undergraduates partake in school political



activities. This result negates the finding of Adelekan (2010) which affirmed that political participation involves setting common goals of the society and the best way of achieving these goals. This may be true because few undergraduates or youths do not have political will and show no interest in politics. This is likely the reason for low level of political apathy among undergraduates.

Hypothesis one revealed that there was a significant relationship between youth incivility and political apathy among undergraduates in Kwara State. This implies that youths' incivility is related to political apathy. This finding agrees with Ishola (2015) who stated that political apathy could be seen in mass as a result of incivility among the youths. The reason for incivility among undergraduates could be associated to apparent political apathy among individuals in the society.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it could be concluded that there were common forms of incivility among undergraduates, majority of undergraduates did not partake in school political activities and there was a significant relationship between youth incivility and political apathy among undergraduates.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that undergraduates should be given more responsibilities right from schools in order to reduce incivility among them. When undergraduates are made to be responsible, their nonchalant attitude towards handling public properties will reduce. They will be sensitive to government properties and become more patriotic.

More political education should be encouraged on campus to enhance undergraduates' political participation in order to reduce political apathy. This will help to increase the political will of undergraduates so as to get them involved in politics as they are the leaders of tomorrow.

Similarly, counselling centres should be put in place in schools. Counseling programmes will enable them to develop right attitudes towards strong political participation and reduce incivility and political apathy among undergraduates.

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