

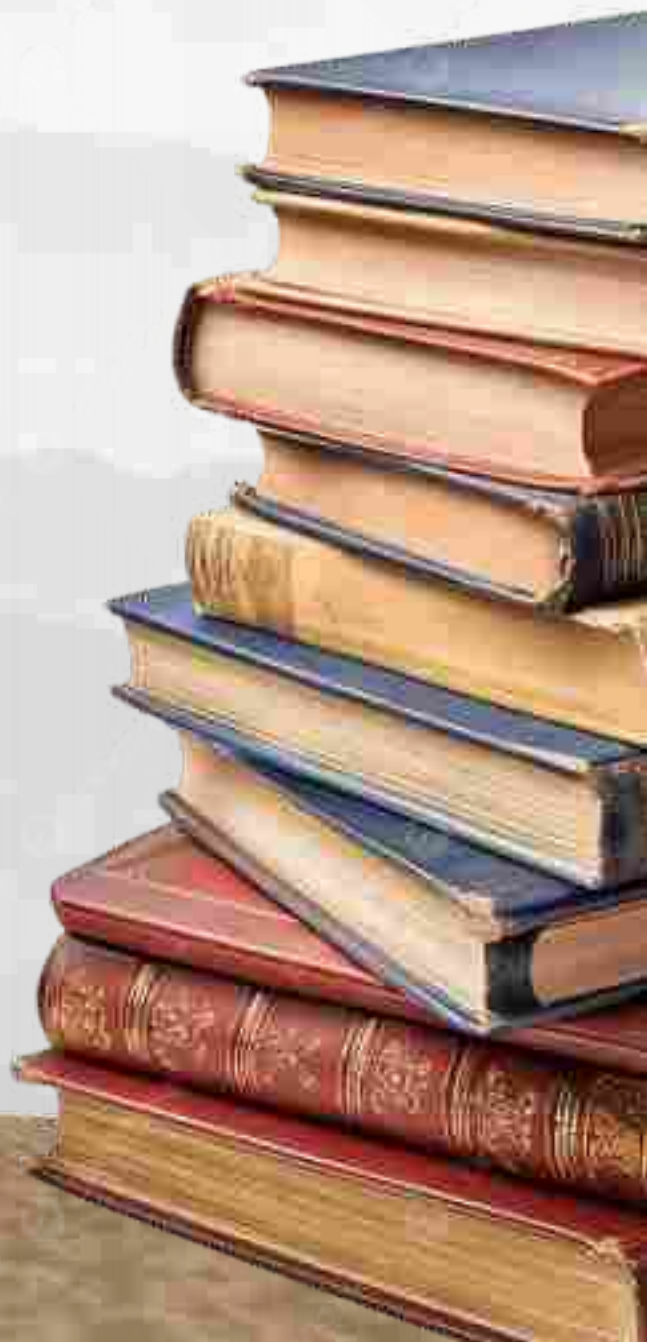


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PERSPECTIVE ON EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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CHAPTER FIVE

**TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA AND CRIME
MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES**

By

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ABSTRACT

Crime within Nigerian tertiary institutions has become a critical concern, threatening not only campus safety but also the integrity and credibility of higher education. This chapter examines the prevalence, causes, and management strategies for crime in Nigerian universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education. Crimes such as cultism, sexual harassment, cybercrime, examination malpractice, theft, drug abuse, and financial fraud are discussed, highlighting their social, economic, and institutional implications. Factors contributing to these crimes include inadequate security infrastructure, moral decline, peer influence, poor institutional governance, and socioeconomic hardship. The chapter adopts a multi-dimensional perspective, emphasizing that effective crime management extends beyond punitive measures to include preventive, rehabilitative, and participatory approaches. Strategies such as strengthening campus security systems, promoting student engagement in safety initiatives, establishing confidential reporting channels, enforcing transparent disciplinary processes, and integrating mental health and counseling support are explored. The chapter also underscores the role of ethics training for staff, economic empowerment of students, community collaboration, and awareness campaigns as sustainable mechanisms for crime reduction. Drawing from Nigerian case studies and international frameworks it concludes that a holistic, human-centered crime management model—anchored on accountability, inclusion, and proactive prevention—is essential for safer, more productive tertiary education environments. By fostering shared responsibility among students, staff, management, and the community, institutions can transform from crime-prone spaces into centers of character formation and societal development.

Keywords: crime management, tertiary institutions, student safety, cultism, sexual harassment, cybercrime, Nigeria, disciplinary policy

5.1. Introduction

Tertiary institutions in Nigeria, often regarded as centers of learning, innovation, and personal development, have increasingly become settings where various forms of crime occur. These crimes—ranging from theft, cultism, drug abuse, examination malpractice, cybercrime, to sexual harassment—pose serious threats to the safety, academic integrity, and overall well-being of students, staff, and the academic environment at large. The rising trend of criminal activities within university and polytechnic campuses has not only disrupted academic activities but has also contributed to a climate of fear, distrust, and insecurity.

The complexity of crime in Nigerian tertiary institutions is driven by many interrelated factors: weak campus security infrastructure, inadequate funding, overcrowding, cult-related rivalries, peer pressure, erosion of moral values, and sometimes the complicity or negligence of institutional authorities (Adeleke, Ogunleye). As these institutions continue to expand in size and population without a corresponding increase in resources and governance structures, managing crime becomes an increasingly urgent challenge. (Sanni, 2022).

Effective crime management, therefore, goes beyond enforcement and punishment; it requires prevention, education, robust security policies, active community engagement, and institutional accountability (UNODC, 2021). This chapter explores the concept of crime management, crime, types of crimes and Strategies for Managing Crime in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria. (NUC, 2023).

5.2. Clarification of concepts

i. Crime Management

Crime management refers to the organized processes, strategies, and actions designed to prevent, control, investigate, and respond to criminal activities within a society. It involves the combined efforts of law enforcement agencies, the judicial system, correctional institutions, community groups, and sometimes technological tools, all working together to reduce crime and maintain public safety.

In practice, crime management covers:

A) Prevention: Measures such as awareness campaigns, community policing, surveillance systems, and policies aimed at reducing opportunities for crime.

B) Detection and Investigation: Gathering evidence, analyzing data, and using forensic or technological tools to identify and apprehend offenders.

C) Law Enforcement and Prosecution: Ensuring offenders are arrested, tried, and sanctioned according to the law.

D) Rehabilitation and Correction: Reforming offenders through correctional programs to reduce re-offending.

E) Community Involvement: Engaging citizens in crime reporting, vigilance, and supporting reintegration of ex-offenders.

In short, crime management is a holistic approach that not only addresses crimes after they occur but also focuses on preventing them, ensuring justice, and promoting long-term social order.

ii. Concept of Crime

Crime is more than just breaking the law — it's an action or behavior that causes harm to others, disrupts peace in society, or violates the trust that holds a community together (Akande & Adeyemi, 2020).. It's what happens when someone crosses a line that society has agreed should not be crossed — like stealing what doesn't belong to them, hurting another person, cheating the system, or abusing power. In the context of a campus, crime isn't always something dramatic or violent. Sometimes it's a student sneaking into a dorm to steal a laptop, a group intimidating others to join a cult, or a lecturer demanding sexual favors in exchange for grades. Other times, it's online scams run from hostels, or exam questions being leaked for money. Each of these acts leaves someone feeling unsafe, exploited, or betrayed. For the victim, crime can feel like a loss of dignity. For the perpetrator, it might be a desperate choice or a learned behavior. For the institution, it's a failure to protect its people. At its core, crime on campus is not just about laws and punishments — it's about people. It's about students trying to survive, sometimes making poor choices. It's about staff dealing with pressures, and administrators trying to maintain order in overstretched systems. To understand crime is to understand the social and emotional realities that push people toward it — and what can be done to stop it before it happens (Akande & Adeyemi, 2020)..

5.3. Types of Crime in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions (Humanized Discussion)

Below are some of the most common types of crimes found on campuses, told through a more human lens.

a) Cultism and Gang Violence

Cultism and gang violence are among the most dangerous forms of crime in Nigerian tertiary institutions. What may begin as a promise of protection or status often escalates into extortion, violent clashes, and intimidation (Olufemi, 2018; Akinwumi, 2021). But what follows can be

intimidation, bloodshed, or even death. These groups often engage in violent clashes, extortion, and sometimes forceful recruitment. Innocent students and staff can get caught in the crossfire, living in fear in what should be a safe learning environment.

b) Sexual Harassment and Exploitation

Sexual harassment frequently occurs in the campus context, often stemming from power imbalances between lecturers and students; it can include verbal, non-verbal or physical harassment and exploitation (Udo & Etim, 2019).. It's not always physical—sometimes it's a lingering threat, a suggestive comment, or a price placed on grades. This form of crime leaves lasting emotional scars and often goes unreported due to shame, fear of victim-blaming, or fear of academic repercussions.

c) Cybercrime ("Yahoo Yahoo")

In hostels and off-campus lodges, some students engage in online scams, hacking, or identity theft. Motivated by poverty, peer pressure, or the glorification of fast money, they drift into “Yahoo Yahoo” culture, where the victims are faceless and the rewards feel easy. But behind every scam is a real victim—often someone overseas who lost money, trust, or peace of mind.

d) Examination Malpractice

Cheating has become normalized in many schools. From smuggled “chips” to leaked exam questions sold online, academic fraud is widespread. But it starts with fear — fear of failure, of not measuring up, or of wasting one's school fees. Over time, this erodes the value of education and produces graduates who lack the competence to thrive in real-world jobs.

e) Theft and Burglary

Laptop stolen. Phone snatched. Hostel broken into. These are everyday realities in many Nigerian tertiary institutions. Often, it's fellow students or local outsiders who commit these crimes out of desperation or greed. The pain of losing personal belongings in school—where many are already struggling to get by—is a major source of trauma and distrust.

f) Drug Abuse and Dealing

The use and sale of drugs like tramadol, codeine, marijuana, and hard substances are rising on campuses. Some students turn to drugs to escape stress, peer pressure, or mental health struggles. Others see it as a business. Drug abuse doesn't just destroy the user—it also creates a culture of addiction, crime, and instability within the campus community.

g) Fraud and Extortion by Staff or Student Leaders

Sometimes, even those in authority abuse their power. There are cases of student leaders embezzling union funds, or staff demanding bribes to process results or give admission. This kind of institutional corruption eats away at trust and fairness in the education system.

5.4. Strategies for Managing Crime in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

Here are key strategies that go beyond punishment and aim to build trust, responsibility, and community.

i. Strengthening Campus Security — But With a Human Face

Yes, physical security is important — more patrols, better lighting, CCTV, and secure hostels. But students shouldn't feel like they're in a prison. Security personnel must be trained not just in enforcement, but in respect, empathy, and conflict de-escalation. They should be approachable, especially for vulnerable students.

ii. Creating Safe Channels for Reporting Crime

Many students know who is doing what — but they stay silent because they don't feel safe speaking up. There should be anonymous, confidential reporting systems for issues like theft, cultism, sexual harassment, and drug abuse. Establishing student-friendly hotlines, online portals, or suggestion boxes with real follow-up can make a huge difference.

iii. Engaging Students as Partners, Not Suspects

Engaging students as partners, not suspects, can foster shared responsibility for campus safety. Peer mentoring, student safety clubs, and co-designing prevention programmes enable student ownership (Chukwu, 2022).

iv. Reforming Disciplinary Systems to Be Just and Transparent

When students are accused of crimes or misconduct, the process must be fair, fast, and transparent. Too often, cases drag for months, are handled secretly, or involve favoritism. Every institution should have an independent disciplinary panel, include student representation, and ensure that both the accused and the victim are heard and protected.

v. Mental Health Support and Counseling Services

Many crimes on campus — from drug abuse to cultism or even theft — stem from emotional pain, peer pressure, or desperation. Students need people to talk to before things get out of hand. Professional counselors, therapists, and wellness programs should be accessible and free from stigma. Institutions must treat students as whole people, not just academic machines. Institutions should provide accessible mental health and counseling services. These services help address

underlying issues such as stress, depression and peer conflict, which can lead to crime (WHO, 2022).

vi. Staff Accountability and Ethics Training

Some crimes originate from within — a lecturer soliciting sex for grades, an administrator demanding bribes, or a supervisor intimidating students. Institutions must enforce zero tolerance for abuse of power. Regular ethics training, staff monitoring, and whistleblower protection can create a healthier staff-student relationship. Regular ethics training for staff, mechanisms for accountability (e.g., whistleblower policies), and strict sanctioning of corrupt or abusive behaviours are essential (NUC Code of Conduct, 2021; Federal Ministry of Education, 2022).

vii. Empowering Students Economically

Poverty and lack of support often push students into crime — whether it’s “Yahoo Yahoo,” theft, or joining cults for protection and money. Offering scholarships, part-time job opportunities, vocational training, and entrepreneurship support can reduce desperation and offer dignity.

viii. Community Collaboration (Town and Gown Approach)

Sometimes, crime on campus is influenced by outsiders — local gangs, drug dealers, or area boys. Building bridges between the school and its surrounding community can improve information-sharing and reduce tension. Regular dialogue with local chiefs, youth leaders, and law enforcement can help both sides feel invested in campus safety.

ix. Awareness and Education Campaigns

Knowledge is power. Many students don’t fully understand the legal, academic, or personal consequences of certain crimes — or how to avoid being victims themselves. Through seminars, dramas, posters, and social media, schools can educate students on crime prevention in a way that resonates with them.

x. Early Identification and Intervention

Instead of waiting for crime to happen, schools should identify at-risk students early — those struggling academically, socially isolated, showing aggressive behavior, or acting out. Mentorship programs, regular check-ins, and support networks can help students before they go down a destructive path.

Conclusion

Tertiary institutions in Nigeria play a vital role in shaping the character and future of young people, making effective crime management strategies within these institutions essential. The presence of crimes such as cultism and gang violence, sexual harassment and exploitation cybercrime (“Yahoo

Yahoo"), examination malpractice, theft and burglary, drug abuse and dealing, fraud and extortion by staff or student leaders not only threatens the safety of students and staff but also undermines the credibility of higher education in the country. Implementing crime management strategies—such as awareness campaigns, strict enforcement of institutional regulations, counseling services, security surveillance, and collaboration with law enforcement agencies—helps to reduce these threats and foster a safer learning environment.

Despite the persistent challenges of inadequate security infrastructure, poor funding, and insufficient stakeholder collaboration, Nigerian tertiary institutions are gradually adopting innovative approaches to crime management. By combining preventive measures with enforcement such as strengthening campus security — but with a human face creating safe channels for reporting crime, engaging students as partners, not suspects, reforming disciplinary systems to be just and transparent, mental health support and counseling services, staff accountability and ethics training, empowering students economically, community collaboration (town and gown approach), awareness and education campaigns **and** early identification and intervention institutions can ensure that crime is tackled holistically rather than reactively.

In conclusion, strengthening crime management strategies in tertiary institutions is not only about maintaining order but also about protecting the integrity of education and nurturing responsible graduates who will contribute positively to national development. With consistent commitment, adequate resources, and active participation from students, staff, and external stakeholders, tertiary institutions in Nigeria can create environments that are safe, just, and conducive for academic excellence.

Revise Questions References

- 1) Define artificial intelligence
- 2) What is fraud?
- 3) List five types of fraud common in tertiary institutions
- 4) Discuss five Artificial intelligences tools for fraud detection and prevention
- 5) Discuss five challenges of deploying AI for fraud detection and prevention
- 6) Highlight five strategies to deploy AI for effective fraud detection and prevention in tertiary institution in Nigeria

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CHAPTER FIVE:

TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA AND CRIME MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

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CHAPTER SEVEN:

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