NIGHTINGALE PUBLICATIONS
AND RESEARCH INTERNATIONAL]

CAUSES AND IMPACTS OF VANDALISM IN THE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING IN YOBE STATE

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Abstract

Any unacceptable act of destruction, demolition, damage or annihilation of existing structure and/or facility developed to serve specific functions within a given community could be referred to as Vandalism. The rate of increase of vandalism in the Nigerian institutions of higher learning in the recent years is alarming. Records and statistics have shown that the increase in learner's vandalism in Nigeria was absolute since late eightieth. Students do use it as a medium to express their anger or dissatisfaction with the learning condition they found themselves or management policy of their institutions. Researchers have found that learners who take part in few or no school activities often commit acts of vandalism, because they

Introduction

Vandalism over the years has been an issue for discussion by many researchers and within the societies, cities and countries. Many acts of vandalism especially in the learner's environments tend to repeat itself in the same manner it occurred earlier; yet proper ways for containing it are not often device. Vandalism could be seen as any unacceptable act of destruction, demolition, damage or annihilation of existing structure and/or facility developed to serve specific functions within a given community. According to Theron (1991), and Welch (1991), in Corene de Wet (2004), "vandalism" was described as the behaviour aimed at causing damage or destruction without obtaining significant profit from the behaviour. Stahl (2000) defines vandalism as: The willful or malicious destruction, injury, disfigurement or

*I*ack school pride, (Corene, de Wet, 2004). Data required were obtained *through physical inspection and observation, interview, questionnaire administration and literature sources; it was analyzed through the use of tables, charts, percentile, figures, narrative and descriptive methods. Part of the result showed that about 96% of the causes of the learners vandalism was due to poor condition related to portable drinking water, unhygienic hostel living, poor maintenance of facilities, higher school fees, students – management relationship, student's rivalry and cultism among others. It was also established by the study that; More than 72% of the students did not know that all acts considered as minor vandalism are categorized as such and it is punishable in law. Most of the institutions have no up-to-date records of vandalism and majority of the students are not aware of the punishments for vandalism. It was concluded that with adequate briefing of students on the impact of vandalism, ensuring conducive and hygienic atmosphere for learning within the campuses, adequate monitoring and controlling of students' activities, the rate of vandalism within the our institutions of higher learning will be totally circumvented or reduce to minimum.*

d efacement of any public or private property, real or personal, without the consent of the owner or persons having custody or control. Aysel Yavuz and Nilgün Kuloglu (2010), viewed vandalism as an action with social, psychological, spatial and economical aspects that have negative impacts on the environment and it is impossible to eliminate completely, but can be alleviated by some spatial measures.

The rate of increase of vandalism in the Nigerian institutions of higher learning in the recent years is alarming. Records and statistics have shown that the increase in learner's vandalism in Nigeria was absolute since late eightieth. Students do use it as a medium to express their anger or dissatisfaction with the condition they found themselves or management policy of their institutions. Where student's riot occurred properties and facilities worth billions of naira are destroyed which eventually, lead to the closure of the school for months or years until damage facilities are restored and environment becomes habitable again for learning.

Records of the case study institutions have shown the involvement of male students in subversive activities more than female students. Gender contributed to the student's participation in vandalism as well as their educational performance (lower or higher GPA), Mozari, (1996), in Monica Torkaman and Iraj Saei (2016).

School vandalism has negative economic, psychological, and educational implications for education. Major acts of vandalism may indicate serious anger, issues with a school or emotional disturbance. A lot of the minor vandalism, such as writing or carving on desks or writing on school walls, posters and cartoons may contain massages, and identities to both learners and the management of their institutions. Minor vandalism usually takes place in an old buildings or buildings lacking maintenance (figure 1&2). The study therefore, intended to identify the genesis of learners' vandalism, the targeted buildings, and facilities and establish ways to overcome them. This research work aimed at attaining the answers to the following questions: Why vandalism? What is its genesis, why did it continue and can it be overcome.

SOME RELATED LITRATURE ON VANDALISM
The concept of vandalism

The word "vandals" have an ancient origin that can best be described by senseless destruction. According to James Wise in Monica et al, (2016), historically; the phenomenon of vandalism started since as he believed since man started working in the Garden of Eden. 'The destruction of tombs of Egyptian pharaohs and slogans written of in the ruins of Pompeii in Naples. The act of Germanic people who destroyed aesthetic structures, work of arts and valuables books 'as a result of their sack of Rome under King Genseric in 455' (Merrils and Miles 2010). This was the idea used by Abbe Gregoire to create the term "vandalism" that means causing destruction to anything of value without driving benefit directly or indirectly from the behaviour (Corene, 2004).

According to Sanders (1981), 'Vandalism can be described as the purposeful damaging, violation, defacement, or destruction of public or private property by persons who are not the direct owners of the property'. The criminal term for vandalism is "injury to property" (Geason & Wilson, 2000). It is the willful damage or destruction of any property with no other purpose than damage or destruction of said property (Oxford English Dictionary, 2008).

Definition of vandalism and its contents varies from one community or location to another; as well the 'scale' of damage done could be used to classify the act of vandalism. It therefore, important to identify the two categories of vandalism base on 'scale' in our learning environment:

Vandalism at inattention scale where it occurred physically on the structure or facility but do not directly causes damage or any form of destruction to the building; these may include writings or scratching on the walls, posters breaking of notice board and so on. Those acts of structural disfiguration are only noticeable were it scale increases with time. Many students are not aware that structural disfiguration is vandalism. This could be termed '**Minor Vandalism'**

Figure 1&2: Examples of Minor Vandalism (source: field survey, 2019)

Where vandalism physically affected the nature, condition, and/or usage of the building(s) or facility from its normal functions or performance designed for. It may also be referred to as damage to some portion of a building or facility resulting to reduction in convenience or malfunction. These include breaking of fixtures, removal of any part of the building's fabric and burning of the school structures and so on, is referred to '**Major Vandalism'.**

Figure 3&4: Examples of Major Vandalism (source: field survey, 2019)

Causes of Vandalism at Schools

In Corene (2004), the causes of learner's schools vandalism was classified as:

Learner-related causes of school vandalism: There are quite number of vandalism that could have direct link with the student's behaviour, age, gender, upbringing, and performance. According to Mozaffari (2005), boys rather than girls and those that have low GPA show vandalistic behaviour. 'Adolescence is characterised by the love of adventure, a search for excitement, and the need to discover new things and one's own identity'. Black (2002), and Cummins (2003).

There is also a connection between vandalism and the youth's involvement within the peer group and/or gang. Youths often find acceptance within a peer group and/or gang, and acts of vandalism bind the members of the group and/or gang. The extent to which youths participate in acts of vandalism also contributes to their reaching a certain status within the peer group and/or gang and being recognised by the members (Teevan & Dryburgh, 2000). Some researchers also viewed youth's involvement in vandalism in connection with drug and alcohol abuse. They come to an agreement that there is a link between acts of violence, including vandalism, and drug and alcohol abuse among youths. However, attention should be given to some factors surrounding school-related issues such as school management style, educator-learner relationships, discipline, as well as learners' academic successes or failures can give rise to learner vandalism.

School-related Causes of Vandalism: The general theory of equity-base model of vandalism in accordance with Fisher and Baron (1982) which proposed that perved control is a primary predictor of mode and intensity of vandalism, Vilalta C.J. and Frondevila, (2007). It emanate as a result of management policy or accumulation of many unsolved problems relating to learner's welfare, freedom, and financial benefit. 'Autocratic management styles; poor, disorganized leadership; over-regulated, suppressive or inconsistent school control measures; educators who are disrespectful, uninterested and prejudiced; the repeated use of punishment measures; vague and/or unclear school rules and disciplinary procedures; the inconsistent application of discipline; educators who do not work as a team in applying discipline', (Black, 2002; Mayer, 1999; and Theron, 1991).

The youth at schools that have poor or few recreation facilities or those who do not take part in extra-mural activities often find that vandalism gives colour to their otherwise dull life, (Corene 2004). Black (2002) found that learners who take part in few or no school activities often commit acts of vandalism, because they lack school pride.

Neighbourhood Context of the Causes of Vandalism: In many instances the student's vandal behaviour emanated as a result of the community setting they lives; many studies analyzed the locality or place of residence of students on school vandalism, Vilalta et al (2017). In this way so many findings have confirmed reasonable results to relate some student's behaviour with the environment or society they live. Antisocial learner behavior can be directly linked to problems affecting the community as a whole. There appears to be a link between vandalism and poverty, unemployment, substandard living conditions, single-parent families, dysfunctional family relationships, a high average number of persons per household, high mobility of the neighbourhood's residents, drug and alcohol abuse, as well as various other social problems that combine to create an environment of disillusion and personal unsettlement. (Catalano, Loeber & McKinney, 1999; Douglas & McCart, 1999; Bloemhof, 1990) in Corene. (2004).

Family Causes of Vandalism: Some students may turn to vandalism because they are living in stressful family contexts, leading to conclusion for students. This is so because negative family contexts lead adolescent to lower levels of attachment to parents and lower levels of self-control. (Vazsonyi, Pickery, Belliston, Hessing and Junger, 2003). The level of parent's schooling or level of education can sometime be correlated with the negative behaviour of students at school. (Horowitz and Tobaly, 2003).

The aftermath of vandalism: Vandalism is a crime that has a major effect on our quality of life and costs a lot to repair. It looks simple and usually considered as minor offense, but it has bigger impact on our communities and way of life. It may be seen in the people's quality of life, as it targeted the basic amenities needed by the society for convenient living or what they like most. Vandalism turned safe and reliable environment in to dangerous and unhygienic one and when got out of control its consequences may be ugly.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
Research Instruments
Due to the nature of the research work the data required were obtained through:

Inspection and Observation: The institutions of higher learning within Yobe State were physical inspected with the aim of gathering the relevant data for the research work. In each institution visited, information on both minor and major vandalisms was collected as well as the present conditions of all the structures within the institution were carefully observed and assessed.

Questionnaire: Simple and relevant questions was carefully designed and administered to only the students. They are directly targeted here as they are the subject matter of this research and perpetrators of most vandalism within the institutions studied. Effort was made to meet only the returning students who might have spent one year in the institution and above, those that experienced the condition of learning within a given period of time and not fresh students. The questions asked were in close ended form. 1500 questionnaires were distributed and about 1200 were returned, however, only 1029 are needed (see table 2).

Formal Interview: Interview was conducted in all the institutions that served as case studies. Three categories of respondents (students, staff, and security personnel) were considered for the interview and the population of each category of the respondents needed is specified in table 2 below. The questions asked was the same though some questions targeted a particular class of respondent(s); the inputs of other respondents are considered relevant. Only answers to the questions not taken care up by the questionnaire were pursued through the interview.

Target Population and sample frame: These contained the returning students, academic staff, non-academic staff and the security personnel of the institutions that served as case studies.

Sampling Technique: As the total population of the study runs to thousands far beyond the reach of the researchers; a stratified random sampling method was employed to collect information from only 3% of the target populations. In order to achieve this, each institution is considered as a stratum thereby selecting the required number of the respondents through simple random sampling method as showed in table 2 below.

Sample Size: This comprises 3% of each targeted population of every stratum which give the total number (sample size) needed for all samples that includes; 1029 students, 53 academic and 75 non-academic staff, and 14 securities. The respondents were selected for questionnaire and interview which took place simultaneously. Consideration was given to the non-

academic staff because they are among the stake holders especially those in maintenance section of the institutions.

Table 2: Sample Size

S/N	INSTITUTION	STUDENTS NUMBER & 3%		NUMBER OF ACADEMIC STAFF & 3%		NUMBER OF NON ACADEMIC & 3%		NUMBER OF SECURITY & 3%	
1	Federal University	4500	135	370	11	620	19	43	2
2	Yobe State University	5000	150	300	9	600	18	145	4
3	Federal Polytechnic	5767	173	154	5	247	7	75	2
4	Mai Idriss Aloma Polytechnic	2572	77	162	5	88	3	21	1
5	Federal College of Education	5500	165	300	9	500	15	75	2
6	College of Agric	772	23	111	3	187	6	18	1
7	College of Education	10,200	306	350	11	220	7	58	2
	TOTAL	34,311	**1,029**	1,747	**53**	2,462	**75**	435	**14**

Source: Questionnaire, 2019.

Methods of Data Analysis

The data collected was analyzed through the use of tables, charts, percentile, figures, narrative and descriptive methods.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Learner's vandalism in our institutions usually occurred as a result of:

The Condition of Learning: This is directly related to the student's excitement or depressed. Responses from our investigation have shown that about 96% of the causes of the learners vandalism was due to poor condition related to portable drinking water, unhygienic hostel living, poor maintenance of facilities, higher school fees, students – management relationship, student's rivalry and cultism among others. While only 4% of learners vandalism was due to enthusiasm either celebration which eventually turned to violence and destruction.

Accumulation of Unsolved Issues: The origin of most of the major vandalisms was due to accumulation of many unsolved issues within our campuses which the management body did not address. Various educator and management related practices can contribute to vandalism, Black (2002). However, in many instances it originated from outside the institution especially where vast numbers of students are living off campus. An example

is where there is misunderstanding between the students and their host community or escalation of civil crisis to the learners' environment. (De Wet, 2004) expressed that, many negative behaviour of the learner may have direct linked with the problems affecting the community as a whole.

Origin of Vandalism
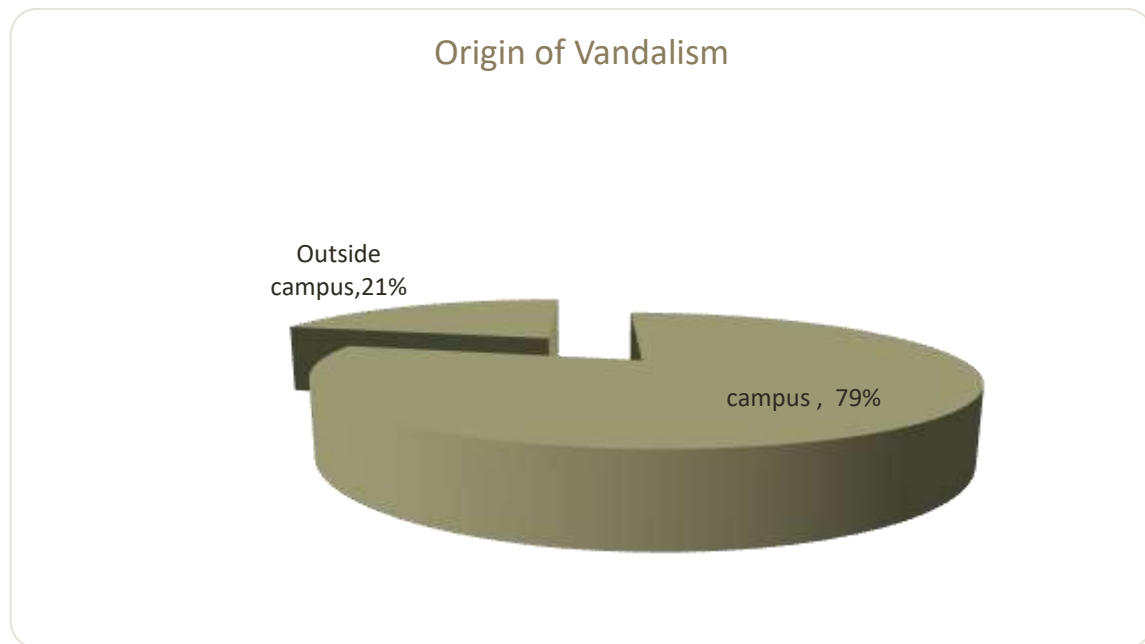
Source: field survey, 2018.

Figure 3: indicated that 79% of the recorded vandalism originated within the institutions only 21% started from outside the campuses and escalate to the institutions.

Nature and Condition of the Surrounding Structures: Most of the minor vandalisms (75%) are done on obsolete buildings or those lacking maintenance. The learners consider them as a platform for sending massages among themselves, to the management of their institutions or government. The reverse was the case in major vandalism. The students targeted mostly (63%) important and newly developed structures in retaliation for management or government policy.

Inadequate Knowledge of what Constitute Vandalism: More than 72% of the students did not know that all acts considered as minor vandalism are categorized as such and it is punishable in law. Most of the institutions have

no up-to-date records of vandalism and majority of the students are not aware of the punishments for vandalism as it was not clearly specified in student's handbooks and other related documents.

Frequency of Vandalism
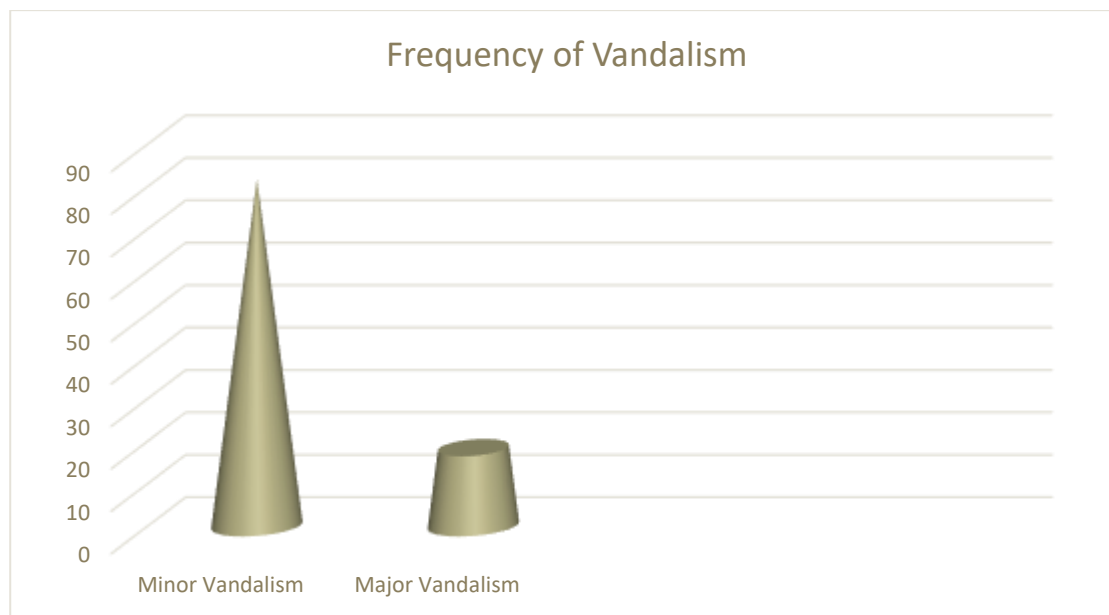
Source: field survey 2018.
Figure 4 shows that 81.70% of the act of vandalism committed by the students is of minor category while 18.30% are major vandalism.

Size of the Institution: It has been realized that, there is a link between the size of the school and vandalism. If the school is small in terms of students number, it is easier to exercise control and discipline; the bigger the students number, the greater the opportunity for vandalism to occur, Black (2002), and Theron (1991). The major vandalism mostly affects new building's elements like glasses, fixtures, ceiling and walls. Minor vandalisms are commonly seen on walls (posters and painting) desks, laboratory equipment's and electrical fittings of old and new buildings. The study reveals that, the levels of both major and minor vandalisms are averagely low though increases with time; and older schools experienced it more than the newly established institutions.

Size of Security Personnel: The study shows that, there is a relationship between the number of students supervised by each security personnel and the frequency of vandalism. The minimum and maximum number of students' par security in the institutions studied is 43 and 145 respectively.

The perception of 78% of the security personnel interviewed is that; the level of vandalism was kept at low level where their number is large enough to supervise the activities of the average number of 35 students, compared with the institutions where each security supervises as large as 123 students, (see table 1).

Table 1: Students capacity and Security Personnel of the Institutions

S/N	Institution	Location	Year of Establishment	Number of Students	Number of Security	Students per Security
1	Federal University	Gashua	2013	4,500	43	105
2	Yobe State University	Damaturu	2006	5,000	145	35
3	Federal Polytechnic	Damaturu	1994	5,767	75	77
4	State Polytechnic	Geidam	2002	2,572	21	123
5	Federal College of Education	Potiskum	1989	5,500	75	73
6	College of Agric	Gujba	1996	772	18	43
7	College of Education	Gashua	1987	10,200	58	176

Source: Questionnaire, 2019.

Longer period of study and Student's less busyness: Many of our institutions planned their academic activities of each semester to be run for more than the time necessary required. Thereby, living their students less busy or redundant for many months after all the obligatory activities achieved its 100% completion. The students at these moments were opportune to create other leisure activities that eventually turn to vandalism.

CONCLUSIONS

It was concluded that with adequate briefing of students the impact of vandalism during schools orientation exercises and its consequential punishments, periodic renovation and maintenance of the buildings in our institutions to meet the minimum standard, ensuring conducive and hygienic atmosphere for learning within the campuses, adequate monitoring and controlling of students' activities, the rate of vandalism within the our institutions of higher learning will be totally circumvented or reduce to minimum.

Huge capital sum budgeted annually by the management of our institutions for repairs and renovation of vandalized buildings will be used for other beneficial activities. No any institution will be close due to students' riot or vandalism which eventually affected the academic activities of the institution, the students, campus community as well as the host community.

It is only when punishments for all kinds of vandalisms are established and properly maintained in our campuses that can properly protect public buildings to be free from vandals. When learners are kept academically busy their focus on their study, the vandals out of them will not have time for troubles.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ❖ Students should be adequately sensitize to understand what vandalism means and that public buildings are directly their own properties, therefore they should allow no amount of aggression on institutional buildings no matter the condition they found themselves in. as all misunderstanding can be solve amicably through dialogue.

- ❖ The buildings and other infrastructure within the institutions of higher learning should be adequately and regularly maintained. The maintenance department of each institution is required to plan ahead for minor and major repairs and renovation at specific intervals to enable the buildings retain its aesthetic and sound condition. Maintenance activities should be given a due consideration in the annual budget of the institutions by allocating enough money to finance the maintenance departments. This will reduce the vandalism as learners enjoy living in beautiful buildings.

- ❖ The institutions should put the students' politics within the campuses under control. Only notice board should be accepted for posters and other students' massages not on walls and some important areas.

- ❖ The basic necessities needed by the students for conducive learning within the campuses such as water supply, electricity, lecture halls and classes and so on should be provided by the institution concern. Students' complains should always be address quickly.

- ❖ All punishments for vandalism should be clearly explained to students during orientation exercises and the guilty vandals should be punished according for their act in order to prevent others from repeating it.

❖ The used of other surveillance equipment's in detecting vandals within our campuses should be adopted; this may involve the use of electronic monitoring device like cameras such as Closed Circuit Television (CCTV), in strategic areas, that will record all activates especially at low traffic time for easy tracking of vandals. This will also enhance the performance of the security personnel.

❖ Students learning period (semesters) should be adequately planned by the authorities concern with the aim of keeping the learners busy always and focus on their academic activities, where error occur in timing the learning period some other activities such as games should be introduce to remedy it.

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