



Causes of EndSars Protest as Perceived by Polytechnic Students in Ondo State, Nigeria

Opeyemi O. Olaseni* 

*Department of Social Sciences, Faculty of Social Sciences and Communication Studies,
Rufus Giwa Polytechnic, Owo, Ondo State, Nigeria*

Johnson K. Oladele 

*Department of Social Sciences, Faculty of Social Sciences and Communication Studies,
Rufus Giwa Polytechnic, Owo, Ondo State, Nigeria*

Article Information

Suggested Citation:

Olaseni, O.O. & Oladele, J.K.
(2023). Causes of EndSars Protest
as Perceived by Polytechnic
Students in Ondo State, Nigeria.
*European Journal of Theoretical and
Applied Sciences*, 1(3), 196-202.
DOI: [10.59324/ejtas.2023.1\(3\).22](https://doi.org/10.59324/ejtas.2023.1(3).22)

* Corresponding author:

Opeyemi O. Olaseni, e-mail:
opeyemiolaniyi26@gmail.com

Abstract:

The study examined the Causes of Endsars Protest as Perceived by Polytechnic Students in Ondo state. The sample population was selected from Rufus Giwa Polytechnic, Owo, Ondo State. Result from this study revealed that, there was significant difference between the perception of students who were part of the protest and those who were not part of the protest ($t=-2.12$, $df=1006$, $p<.05$), there was also a significant difference in the perception of students based on political affiliation ($t=5.15$, $df=969.71$, $p<.05$). However, the result furthered reveals that 430(42.7%) of students were not part of the protest due to various reasons, while 109(25.2%) were afraid of being killed by the police/military, 170(39.4%) sees the protest as a waste of their time as they did not see the protest as the solution

to the Nigeria problems. T-test and ANOVA were the statistical analysis used to test hypothesis in this study. The researcher(s) developed instrument titled "Causes of Endsars Protest Scale" (CEPS) which was used to collect the data for the study. The scale has a reliability of 0.60, using eighty-eight students to test for reliability. Three hypotheses were stated for the study and were all tested at 0.05 levels of significant. The study therefore recommended that government should identify with the suffering and pains of its people, which should be reflected in how governance is being done and proper mental and emotional screening should be carried out on recruited police officers.

Keywords: *EndSars, protest, polytechnic, police brutality, bad governance.*

Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO) viewed youth as anybody between the ages of 15 and 24 while the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2004) officially placed the age bracket of youths between 16–30 years. Majority of the Nigerian Polytechnic Students fall under this age category of 15-30years though the definition of who is a

youth is relative and has to do with an individual perception. Elegbeleye (2005) identified peer motivated excitement of being a student, the jingoistic pursuit of patriotic ideas and perceived victimization arising from economic exploitation as the cause of youth restiveness. However, Ofem and Ajayi (2008), identified lack of humanitarian and social welfare, lack of good governance, corrupt practices of government



officials, inadequate training programs, inadequate recreational facilities, lack of quality education as the reasons for incessant youth restiveness.

Protest involves the combination of actions, conducts and behavior which constitutes unwholesome, socially unacceptable behavior exhibited by students in the society. The development of youths is expected to be one of the very priorities of any country as they are being groomed to become leaders of tomorrow. The youths comprise a force in any political system and so the youth's views and interests must be heard and protected in order to have their energies properly channeled, which will eventually lead to rapid progress and improvement. Youth restiveness is the inability of a youth to be still or quiet, difficult to control especially when one is not satisfied with something. Various forms of youth restiveness that are economically, politically, or religiously motivated have existed for a long time in Africa (Anasi, 2010).

An Average Nigerian Student lives in the fear of the Nigerian police who are supposed to protect because they do not need to do anything wrong before been shoot by the police. Students who possess a big technology phone is always the first suspect by the police as they are tagged 'yahoo boys', hence the Endsars protest was a reprisal attack by the youth against police brutality which then escalated to include protest against bad governance by the leader and insensitivity of the political leaders to protect the youth from police brutality. "Police is your friend", a slogan used by the Nigerian police force has become a contradiction because police just shoot at will leading to cases of victim who have experienced sexual assault, injuries and death often the result of stray bullets and possible mistaken identities thereby leading to relationship characterized with suspicion, prejudice, brutality and violence between Nigerian police and citizens.

Police brutality has been a serious challenge in Nigeria and police who are expected to protect lives and properties has abused their power. The Endsars protest was therefore spearheaded by no one but comprises of youth and students who

reported on daily basis in different parts of the country. The protest led to a near breakdown of law and order, vandalization of both government and private properties, low productivity due to disruption of production activities, increasing crime rate, intra ethnic hostilities, harassment of prospective developers and other criminal tendencies.

During the Endsars Protest, Nigeria president behaved like a feudal potentate, aloof, demonstrably unconcerned and doing errously clueless, which further raised the agitation of the students during the Endsars protest across the country, thereby intensifying the protest and leading to other issues being raised by the protesters; issues like bad governance and corruption practices among Nigerian leaders.

Bad Governance which according to The World Bank (1992) characterize failure to properly distinguish between what is public and what is private, leading to private appropriation of otherwise public resources and exceedingly narrow base for, or non-transparent, decision making. Reflection of a good governance is often seen in leadership which is important to realizing any giant stride taken in pursuit of development anywhere in the world and holds the key to unlocking the transformation (UNDP, 2011) but Nigerian political leadership has become 'neck-deep' in corruption with several cases of monumental diversion of public funds meant for the economic development of the country into individual pockets which are evidence in the high rate of unemployment in Nigeria. Governor of Delta State, Dr. Ifeanyi Okowa, has said youths restiveness and agitations from different parts of the country is a consequence of the lack luster performance of the ruling class (sept 17, 2017, Vanguard, bad governance cause of agitations, youth restiveness-Gov. Okowa).

Chukwuemeka (2008) observed that composite unemployment in Nigeria has increased from 3.8% in 2006 to 4.2% in the first half of 2011, no doubt why unemployment has constitute a major problem among Nigerian youth and so with the rate of unemployment in Nigeria, one cannot but say an idle hand is truly the devil's

workshop in combination with the long period of ASUU strike that has kept majority of the students at home at the time of the protest cannot be underestimated as the reason for the outburst of EndSars protest. Alabi & Alana (2010) contended that poverty, unemployment, frustration, hopelessness, and the total lack of commitment of the leaders to the plight of the struggling Nigerian youths are some of the consequences of youth idleness.

Nigeria leaders has always been found directing the nation's wealth into their personal purse and abuse the state power given to them, hence many of the youth have become pessimistic, feeling powerless to change their situation (International Labour Organization, 2012),

Whether as students or not, youths are always at the forefront in the struggle against injustice, oppression, and exploitation. When the expectations of the youths are thwarted, delayed or denied, they tend to become unstill, or unwilling to be controlled especially when they are bored or not satisfied with certain decisions particularly when changed or existing laws considered to be unfavorable, protest become the instrument used by Nigerian young adults to get what they want from the relevant authority.

Bad governance has led to tension in the land causing anger, hunger, anxiety, and there is age-long resentment. There is lack of basic amenities, lack of electricity, bad roads, and distorted academic calendar which has made average students becomes an idle hand and a devil's instruments willing to join a protest.

Endsars Protest in Nigeria

The EndSars protest began with agitation and demands by the Nigerian youth to end police brutality on the youth and was sparked by a video that surfaced online on October 3, allegedly showing a SARS officer shooting a young man in Delta state. The protest commenced from October 8-16, 2020, with twenty-six (26) States out of 36 States and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) experiencing series of demonstrations in Nigeria. The States include; Abuja-FCT, Lagos, Enugu, Ogun, Oyo,

Delta, Imo, Edo, Ondo, Ekiti, Anambra, Kogi, Osun, Kano, River, Plateau, Jigawa, Benue, Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Bauchi, Adamawa, Abia, Kwara, Borno and Ebonyi States. In ondo state, the protest took various dimensions from causing a road block to cooking on the major roads and setting up DJs on the roads. It is of importance to note that the protest took place in all of the major cities in Ondo state, where there is tertiary institution, starting from Akure; the state capital, Owo, Ondo town, Okiti-pupa, etc. The protest did not only take place in Nigeria, it also gained extensive international support with solidarity protests carried out in Dublin, London, Ireland in the United Kingdom and New York in the United States of America on October 11, 2020; Toronto in Canada and Berlin in Germany on October 12, 2020; Nigeria High Commission in Accra, Ghana on October 13, 2020; and the Nigerian Embassy in Johannesburg in South Africa on October 15, 2020.

Theory

The Relative Deprivation Frustration Aggression Theory will stand as the theoretical framework of this study. Relative Deprivation Theory refers to the dissatisfaction people feel when they compare their positions to others and realize that others in the group possess something that they do not. When this feeling persists, it may lead to frustration, stress and aggression, which may result to protest. The relative deprivation theory is profoundly rooted in the Psychological variables of anger, frustration and deprivation which is the basic product for conflict and protest of any kind. Relative deprivation which is the lack of resources to tolerate the nutrition, lifestyle, activities and facilities that an individual or group are familiar to or that are generally encouraged or accepted in the social order to which they belong. The more widespread and intense deprivation is among members of a population, the greater is the magnitude of violence in one form or the other (Famham and Pilmot, 1998). Historically, Nigerian Students seem to engage in some destructive social vices as a way of

registering their grievances, seeing how well their counterparts in the western world are maximizing their potentials in the various economy sectors. Dollard (1939) submits that the primary source of the human capacity for violence appears to be frustration aggression mechanism. According to him, anger induced by frustration as a motivating forces that disposes mainly to aggression, frustration serving as an interference with goal directed behaviors.

Hypothesis

1. There will be a significant difference in the causes of the Endsars Protest as perceived by students that were part of the protest and students that were not part of the protest
2. There will a significant difference in students' perception of causes of Endsars protest based on political affiliation
3. There will be a significant difference in students' perception of causes of Endsars protest based on religion

Methodology

The research design used for this study is descriptive survey method. The target population for this study consists of polytechnic students in Ondo state. Rufus Giwa Polytechnic was therefore purposively selected for this study with one thousand and eight (1,008) students randomly selected from the various educational level National Diploma and Higher National Diploma (ND/HND) in various departments of the institution.

The data for this study was collected between November 1, 2020 to January 20, 2021. The data were collected by the researcher(s) using a self-developed scale called 'Causes of Endsars Protest Scale' (CEPS). The scale consists of 11 items after some items were deleted. The items were derived from relevant information obtained from review of literature on youth restiveness and Endsars Protest. The scale validity was tested using face validity. The scales were given to 4 experts in the field of

psychology, who read through and corrected some of the designed items. The reliability of the scale was carried out using eighty-eight students who were accidentally selected from Rufus Giwa Polytechnic, Owo, Ondo State. Causes of Endsars Protest Scale (CEPS) have Cronbach Alfa of 0.60 after one item was deleted.

The questionnaire used for the study has two sections. The first section comprises of demographic data, such as 'were you part of the Endsars protest', while second section consists of the CEPS. The Causes of Endsars protest Scale (CEPS) has four likert responses ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Design and Participants

In this study, perception of causes of the Endsars Protest is the dependent variable, while the students' Educational level, religion, political affiliation and being part of the protest are the independent variables. The respondents gender included 363(36%) male, 645(64%) female; majority of the respondents fall into 15-25years age bracket, with 881(87.4%) within 15-25 years and 127(12.6%) fall into 26-36 years. 886 (87.9%) of the respondent are Christians, 113(11.2%) Muslims and 9(0.9%) are of the other religion. The educational level of the respondents comprises of 724(71.8%) ND Students and 284(28.2%) HND Student, 576(57.1%) of the respondents are politically affiliated to APC while 432(42.9%) are politically affiliated to PDP.

The frequency result of this study further reveals that 578(57.3%) of the respondents were part of the protest, out of which 382(66.2%) participated in the protest virtually(online) while 195(33.8%) participated physically. 430(42.7%) of the respondents did not join the protest due to various reasons.109(25.2%) stated that they did not join the protest because they were afraid of being killed, 73(16.9%) stated that they were restricted by parents to join the protest,40(9.3%) were not part of the protest stating that they actually lack the enthusiasm to join the protest,170(39.4%) stated that the protest is not the solution to Nigeria problem and so they saw

it as a waste of their time and energy joining the protest and 40(9.3%) stated that they did not join the protest due to other reasons such as Health challenges at the time of the protest, some stated that the protest was not staged in their area of residence, some were busy at work(the students were on Industrial training at the period of the protest), while some heard the news of death of related/known others.

Results

Hypothesis 1: There will be a significant difference in the perception of students who

were part of the Endsars protest than those that were not part of the protest.

There was a significant difference between the perception of students who were part of the Endsars protest and those who were not part of the protest ($t=-2.12$, $df=1006$, $p<.05$). The Hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a significant difference in students' perception of the causes of Endsars protest based on political affiliation.

Table 1. A t-Test Table Showing the Difference Between the Students' Perception of Causes of Endsars Protest Based on Participation

Variable N	MEAN	SD	SE	DF	t	p
Part of Endsars	578	31.81	3.85		.16	
				1006	-2.12	<.05
Not part of the Endsars	430	32.33	3.92		.19	

Note: * $p<.05$

Table 2. A t-Test Table Showing the Difference in Students' Perception of Causes of Endsars Protest Based on Political Affiliation

Variable N	N	MEAN	SD	SE	DF	t	p
APC	576	32.56	3.99	.17			
					969.17	5.16	<.05
PDP	432	31.32	3.63	.18			

Note: * $p<.05$

There was a significant difference between the student's perception of causes of Endsars protest based on their political affiliation ($t=5.16$, $df=969.71$, $p<.05$). The Hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Hypothesis 3: There will be significant difference in students' perception of causes of Endsars protest based on religion.

Table 3. A One-Way ANOVA Showing the Relationship of Religion on Students Perception of Causes of Endsars Protest

SS	df	MS	F	p
57.39	2	28.70		
			1.90	>.05
15165.72	1005	15.09		

Note: * $p<.05$

There is no statistically significant difference in the students' religion on their perception of the causes of EndSars protest [$F(2,1005) = 1.90, p > 0.05$], the hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Discussion

The finding of hypothesis one shows that there is significant difference in the perception of students who joined the EndSars protest (either physically or virtually) and those who did not join. The mean value of those who were part of the protest was more significant to their perception of causes of the protest ($M=578$). This supports the findings of Frank Reichert who found that young adults may not be very active in politics when they do not perceive the need to bring about change.

This study also reveals that there is significant difference on students' perception of the causes of the EndSars protest based on their political affiliation as shown in hypothesis two. The study reveals students who are presently affiliated to the present political party in government (All Progressive Congress) perceived bad governance and police brutality as cause of the protest than students who are affiliated to Peoples' Democratic Party in Nigeria. This is supported by Elegbeleye, who found out that, there is no difference on the understanding of restiveness among youth in terms of their sex and origin of their political zone and against the findings of Aglad, who found that there was no statistically significant main effect of protest group political affiliation.

This present study further reveals that, there is no significant difference in the perception of students' causes of EndSars protest based on religion as shown in hypothesis three. Irrespective of the religion of the students, they were united for the course against bad governance and police brutality. This is supported by the findings of Akbaba and Taydas, who found a negative relationship between religious discrimination and ethnic protest.

Conclusion

The study has revealed that the cause of the EndSars protest is not only about police brutality but an agitation which arises from different part of the country as consequences of the wearisome performance of the ruling class.

People in governance should therefore identify with the pain and suffering of its people so that the youth do not get pushed to the wall by protesting; as peaceful protesters can easily be hijacked by hoodlums leading to lose of lives and properties.

Nigerian leaders should demark from using religion or politics to divide its people as the students is found standing in unity for what they believe irrespective of age, level of education, religion, tribe or political affiliation.

Government should also screen appropriately those recruited into the police force to check the level of their mental and emotional stability as an emotional/mentally stable police officer will not shoot/kill illegally.

Students and other members of the community should also be enlightened by presenting them with factual information that will guide their actions, help them develop information literacy, deliberation skills, and respect ground rules for communication which will inform them of good conclusion that will promote peace, thereby reducing the amount of student's violence and confrontation.

References

- Akhakpe, I.P (2014). *Bureaucracy and Good Governance*. Lagos: Pumarck Nigeria Ltd.
- Alabi, T. & Alana, O.O. (2010). Unemployment and Poverty: The twin fertilizer for youth criminality. *Global Journal of Social sciences*, 2(2).
- Anasi, S.N. (2010). Curbing youth restiveness in Nigeria: The role of Information and Libraries. *Library philosophy & practice*, 388, 1-7.
- Dollard, J.M., Doob, L.W., Mowrer, O.H., & Sears, R.R. (1939). *Frustration and Aggression*. Yale

- University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/10022-000>
- Okowa, I. (2017). *Good Governance for wealth creation and sustainable development: Experiences and Lessons*. Alumni Lecture of the University of Ibadan.
- Elegbeleye, O.S (2005). Recreational Facilities in Schools: A Panacea for youth's restiveness. *Journal of human ecology*, 18(2), 93-98.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09709274.2005.11905814>
- Famham, D. & Pilmot, J. (1998). *Understanding Industrial Relations*. London: Cassel Publishers.
- Reichert, R. (2020). Collective Protest and Expressive Action among University Students in Hong Kong: Associations between Offline and Online Forms of Political Participation. *Frontiers in Political Science*, 2–2020.
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpos.2020.608203>
- FRN (2004). *National Policy on Education*. 4th Edition. NERDC: Yaba Lagos.
- International Labour organization (2012). Leading the Way to Sustainable and Inclusive Globalization - Message by Juan Somavia at the Spring Meetings of the IMF and World Bank. Retrieved from:
https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/statements-and-speeches/WCMS_178913/lang-en/index.htm
- Ofen, N.I. & Ajayi, A.R. (2008). Effects of Youth Empowerment Strategies on Conflict Resolution in Niger. *Journal of Education & Practice*, 4(6).
<https://doi.org/10.3329/jard.v6i1.1671>
- UNDP (2011). *Human Development Report 2011: Sustainability and Equity: A Better Future for All*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Tahra C. Anglade (2022) *Perceptions of Conservative and Liberal Protest Groups' Use of Violent and Nonviolent Behavior Violent and Nonviolent Behavior*. Seton Hall University. Dissertation and Thesis.
- World Bank (1992). *The World Bank annual report*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group. Retrieved from
<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/403031468780283602/The-World-Bank-annual-report-1992>
- Falola, T. (2009). *Colonialism and Violence in Nigeria*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Yasemin, A. & Zeynep, T. (2011). Does Religious Discrimination Promote Dissent? A Quantitative Analysis. *Ethnopolitics*, 10(3-4), 271-295.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17449057.2011.561988>