

Re-Examining Students Unrest in Kenyan Universities:A Historical Perspective

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to re-examine students' unrest in Kenyan universities. Students' unrest in Kenyan universities has been on the rise in recent days and years. This has often resulted in destruction of property, waste of time resources and sometimes loss of lives. The government and respective management of Kenyan universities have done several interventions to bring the madness of unrests in universities to an end. However, violence as a way of conflict resolution in Kenyan universities has continued to be widely used to convey the message to management whenever the students are dissatisfied despite the laid down mechanisms to channel grievances any time they arise. This study was guided by the following objectives: to trace the origin and development of unrests in Kenyan universities, to evaluate causes of student's unrest in Kenyan universities, to establish measures put in place to deal with students' unrest in Kenyan universities. The researcher employed desktop survey design. The researcher based the study on relative deprivation and campus ecology theories. From the the study, it was found out that many of unrests in Kenyan universities are spontaneous with very few planned and excuted. Another finding was that ethnicity topped the causes of unrest, followed by bad governance and mismanagement. Further, interference into students' elections and inadequate teaching and learning resources prompted the unrests. The study recommended that the government and other actors in university education legislates laws to outlaw tribal politics in universities, regular trainings for the management in Public Relation skills to handle students, universities should be transparent and accountable for all resources entrusted to them and students leadership should be left in the hands of students through open democratic space. From the study it was deduced that Kenyan universities have worked hard to make students unrest a thing of the past.

Key Words: Students Unrest, Kenyan Universities, Violence, Ethnicity, Management