



## Protection of Students Right to Dignity, Privacy and Non-Discrimination for Global Competitiveness in the Management of Tertiary Institutions in Kebbi State, Nigeria

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**Abstract.** The protection of students' right is one of the strategies of providing an enabling environment for students to unfold their talents for global competitiveness. This study for this reason, investigated in tertiary educational institutions in Kebbi State. The descriptive survey design was used for the study. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used to sample the views of 150 lecturers and 250 students from 5 tertiary institutions in Kebbi State. A researcher designed instrument based on four point Likert Scale was validated, with reliability index of 0.89 was used to collect data. The cut-off mean of 2.5 was used for decision. Mean and Rank Order was used to analyze data to answer the research questions. z-test was applied to test hypotheses at 0.05 alpha levels. It was found that students right to dignity of the human person, private and family life, as well as freedom from discrimination were protected by the management of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State. It was recommended that the protection of students' right should be upheld as a strategy for ensuring global competitiveness.

**Keywords:** Students Right, Dignity, Privacy, Discrimination, Global competitiveness, Management.

### 1. Introduction

The world is today at a stage in history where there is stiff competition in almost every aspect of human endeavor be it in the area of music, sports, science and technology among others. Amid this competitiveness, education occupies a center stage as the source of all knowledge required by man for socio-cultural advancement of society. Ugo (2002) stated that

education unlocks the door to modernization. Tertiary educational institutions are looked upon as citadels of learning and centers of excellence for the production of manpower required for rapid national development (Babalola, 2007). The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004: 36) defined tertiary education as the education given after secondary education in Universities, Colleges of Education, and Polytechnics including those institutions offering correspondence courses. Global competitiveness is one of the fundamental objectives of tertiary education in most countries of the world. This is provided in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004:36) which states that the goals of tertiary education includes the development of intellectual capability of individuals to understand, appreciate their local and external environments and promotion of national and international understanding and interaction among others. Students are first and foremost, the prime beneficiaries of the laudable goals of tertiary education as the extent to which they imbibe the noble goals determining these quality if their knowledge, skills and attitudes which are applied in national transformation and by extension global competitiveness.

### 2. Statement of Problem

Students in tertiary institutions are the hope of the nation and the pride of their parents. What they know, of fail to know could determine the quality of manpower they are able to provide on graduation for better or for worse. To ensure that students in tertiary institutions acquire the right quality of education, they must be provided with conducive physical and psychological environment (Ekpo, Anuna & Okoli,

2002). Although a lot has been done to equip students' to global standards, yet a lot still needs to be done in the case of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State. One of the areas that require serious attention is the protection of students' legal rights, which is extremely essential in enabling them to unfold their potentialities and capabilities to take the challenges of global competitiveness. In recent times however, there a lot complaint by students that their legal rights are not adequately protected by the management. Thus the main thrust of this study is to investigate the extent to which students' legal rights are protected to ensure global competitiveness in tertiary institutions in Kebbi State.

### 3. Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the conduct of this study:

- What is the perception of students and lecturers on the extent to which students' right to dignity of the human person protected for global competitiveness in the management of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State?
- What is the perception of students and lecturers on the extent to which students' right to private and family life protected for global competitiveness in the management of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State?
- What is the perception of students and lecturers on the extent to which students' right to freedom from discrimination protected for global competitiveness in the management of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State?

### 4. Research Hypotheses

Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of students and lecturers on protection of students' right to dignity of the human person for global competitiveness in the management of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State.

Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of students and lecturers on protection of students' right to privacy and family life for global competitiveness in the management of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State.

Ho<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of students and lecturers on protection of students' right to freedom from discrimination for global competitiveness in the management of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State.

### 5. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- To find out the perception of students and lecturers on the extent to which students' right to dignity of the human person are protected for global competitiveness in the management of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State.
- To find out the perception of students and lecturers on the extent to which students' right to privacy is protected for global competitiveness in the management of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State.
- To find out the perception of students and lecturers on the extent to which students' freedom from discrimination are protected for global competitiveness in the management of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State.

### 6. Significance of the Study

This study is significant to students in tertiary educational institutions as it will gauge their awareness and the extent to which they perceive the institutions efforts at protecting their legal rights. This awareness will enable them to stand consciously in the law and to voice out their grievances to the management for prompt redness. The findings of the study will enable the managements of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State to be more proactive and vigilant in protecting the legal rights of students. The protection of students' legal rights to dignity of the human person, right to private and family life as well as freedom from discrimination will create a conducive atmosphere where students study in peace and achieve academic excellence for global competitiveness.

### 7. Review of Relates Literature

Students in tertiary institutions globally constitute the potential manpower that will enable nations to achieve advancement and withstand global competition. The maintenance of an environment where the rule is respected is one of the pre-conditions for nurturing human potentials (Anuna, 2004). To ensure an orderly environment the first and perhaps one of the most important legal rights of students that need to be protected by the management of tertiary institutions is students right to the dignity if the human person as provided in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999), Section 34 (1). Ginsberg (1996), Ekpo

and Okoli (2003), Burton (2007), and Fisher (2007) all pointed out that students should be protected from harassment, intimidation, assault, battery, slander, and psychological stress to enable them compete globally.

Students in tertiary institutions are generally adults who can sue or be sued by the institutions. Thus as adults they need privacy and family life. The constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999) in Section 37 (1) states that the privacy of citizens life, their homes, correspondence, telephone conversations and telegraphic communications is guaranteed and protected by law. According to Holland and Webb (2001), McLeod (2003), Kodelinye and Aluko (2010), Ogunu (2015) and Malemi (2017), the protection of students' right to private and family life will enable them to marry, undertake parenthood, and be able to balance the challenges of their studies and their role as parents. Burton (2007) believes that this will enable students to concentrate on their studies and be fully prepared for global competitiveness.

Section 42 (122) of the constitution (FRN, 1999), states that no citizen of Nigeria shall be subjected to any disability or desperation merely by reason of the circumstances of his birth. To this end Malemi (2017: 307) notes that by implication no student who is a citizen of Nigeria of a particular community, ethnic group, place of origin, sex, religion or political opinion shall be subjected either expressly by, or in the practical application of any law in force in Nigeria or any executive administrative action, to disabilities or restrictions to which citizens of Nigeria are not made subject or be accorded any privilege or advantage that is not accorded to citizens of Nigeria. Ujo (2003), Sanni (2007), Obilade (2009), and Oyedeji (2012) opined that educational managers should strictly ensure that all students are protected from discrimination if they are to be able to face the challenge of global competitiveness

## 8. Research Methodology

The descriptive survey design was used in conducting this study as it sampled the perceptions of students and lecturers on the extent to which students' legal rights to dignity of the human person, right to private and family life as well as freedom from discrimination are protected with a view to enabling students have a conducive environment for global competitiveness. The population of the study was made up of five tertiary institutions in Kebbi State while 150 lecturers and 250 students were sampled using stratified and simple random sampling techniques. A researcher designed and validated questionnaire titled: Protection of Students Legal Rights Questionnaire (PSLRQ) was used to generate data for the study. The instrument had 25 items spread into three sections. A modified Likert Scale type of rating scale was used: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4; Agree (A) = 3; Disagree (D) = 2; and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. The cut of 2.5 and above was used to indicate the mean for agreement, while means that fall below 2.5 indicated disagreement. The instrument on validation using test and re-test method yielded a reliability coefficient index of 0.89. Mean computation and Rank Order were used to analyze the data to answer research questions, while z-test statistics was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level.

## 9. Findings

The research questions were formulated to guide the study. They were answered and presented in table 1-3

### Research Question One

**RQ1:** What is the perception of students and lecturers on the extent to which students' right to dignity of the human person protected for global competitiveness in the management of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State?

**Table 1: The Mean and Rank Order of Students and Lecturers Perception on the Protection of Students Right to Dignity of the Human Person for Global Competitiveness in the Management of Tertiary Institutions in Kebbi State.**

S/N	Protection of students right to dignity of the human person	Students mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	Lecturers mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	Mean set	Rank	Decision
1	Students dignity without discrimination	2.84	2.24	2.54	5 <sup>th</sup>	Agreed
2	Students are protected against assault	2.50	2.74	2.62	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Agreed
3	Students are protected against slander	2.51	2.65	2.58	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Agreed
4	Students are protected against libel	2.47	2.39	2.43	8 <sup>th</sup>	Disagreed
5	Students are protected against battery	2.59	2.55	2.57	4 <sup>th</sup>	Agreed
6	Protected against false accusations	2.74	2.68	2.71	1 <sup>st</sup>	Agreed
7	Protected against sexual harassment	2.49	2.47	2.48	6 <sup>th</sup>	Disagreed
8	Protected against abusive language	2.46	2.45	2.46	7 <sup>th</sup>	Disagreed

Table 1 showed the mean and rank of items as follows: protection against false accusations (2.71, 1<sup>st</sup>), protection against assault (2.62, 2<sup>nd</sup>), protection against slander (2.58, 3<sup>rd</sup>), protection against battery (2.57, 4<sup>th</sup>), and protection against discrimination (2.54, 5<sup>th</sup>). Apart from protection against sexual harassment (2.48, 6<sup>th</sup>) and protection against abusive language (2.46, 7<sup>th</sup>), which means were below the criteria mean of 2.5 and so were rejected, other items had means above the criteria mean. Those items are therefore accepted as the measures taken to protect students' right to dignity of the human person for global competitiveness in the management of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State.

**Research Question Two**

**RQ2:** What is the perception of students and lecturers on the extent to which students' right to private and family life is protected for global competitiveness in the management of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State?

**Table 2: The Mean and Rank Order of Students and Lecturers Perception on the Protection of Students Right to Private and Family Life for Global Competitiveness in the Management of Tertiary Institutions in Kebbi State**

S/N	Protection of students right to private and family life	Students mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	Lecturers mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	Mean set	Rank	Decision
1	Protection of right to private life	2.70	2.64	2.67	5 <sup>th</sup>	Agreed
2	Protection of telephone conversation	2.43	2.37	2.40	11 <sup>th</sup>	Disagreed
3	Protection of private electronic messages	2.61	2.59	2.60	9 <sup>th</sup>	Agreed
4	Protection of students academic records	2.57	2.67	2.62	8 <sup>th</sup>	Agreed
5	Protection of nakedness in conveniences	2.60	2.58	2.59	10 <sup>th</sup>	Agreed
6	Protection of students medical records	2.63	2.65	2.64	7 <sup>th</sup>	Agreed
7	Protection of counseling records	2.66	2.64	2.65	6 <sup>th</sup>	Agreed
8	Protection from indecent touching	2.51	3.01	2.76	4 <sup>th</sup>	Agreed
9	Protection of students right to marry	2.85	3.09	2.97	1 <sup>st</sup>	Agreed
10	Students right to be pregnant	2.79	3.07	2.93	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Agreed
11	Students right to attend to family matters	2.73	3.06	2.90	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Agreed

Table 2 showed the mean and rank of items as follows: protection of right to get married (2.97, 1<sup>st</sup>), protection of right to get pregnant in matrimony (2.93, 2<sup>nd</sup>), protection of right to attend family matters (2.90, 3<sup>rd</sup>), protection of right to privacy from being touched by opposite sex indeblently in public (2.76, 4<sup>th</sup>), protection of right to privacy and family life without discrimination (2.67, 5<sup>th</sup>), protection of counseling records of students (2.65, 6<sup>th</sup>), protection of privacy of students medical records (2.64, 7<sup>th</sup>), protection of students' academic records (2.62, 8<sup>th</sup>), protection of privacy of students electronic messages (2.60, 9<sup>th</sup>), and protection of students nakedness in toilets and bathrooms (2.59, 10<sup>th</sup>). Apart from protection of privacy of students, which mean of (2.40, 8<sup>th</sup>) is below the criteria mean of 2.5, and so was rejected, all other items are therefore accepted as measures taken by management of tertiary institutions to protect students right to private and family in Kebbi state.

**Research Question Three**

**RQ3:** What is the perception of students and lecturers on the extent to which students' right to freedom from discrimination is protected for global competitiveness in the management of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State?

**Table 3: The Mean and Rank Order of Students and Lecturers Perception on the Protection of Students Right to Freedom from Discrimination for Global Competitiveness in the Management of Tertiary Institutions in Kebbi State**

S/N	Protection of freedom from discrimination	Students mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	Lecturers mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	Mean set	Rank	Decision
1	Protection from gender discrimination	2.87	2.27	2.57	8 <sup>th</sup>	Agreed
2	Protection from tribal discrimination	2.53	2.77	2.65	5 <sup>th</sup>	Agreed
3	Protection from local govt. discrimination	2.54	2.68	2.61	6 <sup>th</sup>	Agreed
4	Protection from state discrimination	2.50	2.42	2.48	10 <sup>th</sup>	Disagreed
5	Protection from scholarship discrimination	2.62	2.58	2.60	7 <sup>th</sup>	Agreed
6	Protection from disciplinary discrimination	2.73	2.71	2.74	1 <sup>st</sup>	Agreed
7	Protection from religious discrimination	2.52	2.50	2.51	9 <sup>th</sup>	Agreed
8	Protection from parental discrimination	2.66	2.68	2.67	4 <sup>th</sup>	Agreed
9	Protection from disability discrimination	2.71	2.73	2.72	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Agreed
10	Protection from resource discrimination	2.68	2.70	2.69	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Agreed

Table 3 showed the mean and rank of the items as follows: protection of students from discrimination on handling of disciplinary cases (2.74, 1<sup>st</sup>), protection from discrimination on grounds of physical disability (2.72, 2<sup>nd</sup>), protection from discrimination on allocation of school resources (3.69, 3<sup>rd</sup>), protection from discrimination on grounds of parental background (2.67, 4<sup>th</sup>), protection from discrimination on grounds of tribe (2.65, 5<sup>th</sup>), protection from discrimination on grounds of local government (2.61, 6<sup>th</sup>), protection from discrimination on award of scholarships (2.60, 7<sup>th</sup>), protection from discrimination on grounds of gender (2.57, 8<sup>th</sup>) and protection from discrimination on religious grounds (2.51, 9<sup>th</sup>). Apart from protection from discrimination on grounds of state of origin (2.48, 10<sup>th</sup>), which mean was below the criteria mean of 2.50 and so was rejected, all other items had means above the criteria mean. The items are therefore accepted as extent of measures taken by the management to protect students’ rights from discrimination for global competitiveness in the management of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State.

**Hypotheses**

The hypotheses raised for this study were tested and presented in table 4-6:

**Hypotheses One**

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean scores of students and lecturers on protection of students’ right to dignity of the human person for global competitiveness in the management of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State.

**Table 4: Summary of z-test Analysis on the Significant Difference between the Mean Scores of Students and Lecturers on the Protection of Students’ Right to Dignity of the Human Person for Global Competitiveness in the Management of Tertiary Institutions in Kebbi State**

Participants	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	z-cal	z-crit	Decision
Students	250	20.33	9.94	398	0.096	1.960	Not significant
Lecturers	150	20.22	10.06				

Table 4 shows that at 0.05 level of significance at 398 degree of freedom, the calculated and tabulated z values are 0.096 and 1.960 respectively. Since the calculated value is less than the tabulated value of z, hypotheses one is therefore accepted. Thus there is no significant difference between students and lecturers view on protection of students’ right to dignity of the human person for global competitiveness in the management of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State.

**Hypotheses Two**

**Ho<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean scores of students and lecturers on protection of students’ right to private and family life for global competitiveness in the management of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State.

**Table 5: Summary of z-test Analysis on the Significant Difference between the Mean Scores of Students and Lecturers on the Protection of Students’ Right to Private and Family Life for Global Competitiveness in the Management of Tertiary Institutions in Kebbi State**

Participants	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	z-cal	z-crit	Decision
Students	250	21.38	10.29	398	0.768	1.960	Not significant
Lecturers	150	20.46	10.24				

Table 5 indicates that at 0.05 alpha level and 398 degree of freedom, the calculated Z value of 0.768 was less than the critical z-value of 1.960. Since the calculated value is less than the critical value of z, hypothesis two is accepted. This means that there is no significant difference between students and lecturers view on protection of

students' right to private and family life for global competitiveness in the management of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State.

**Hypotheses Three**

**Ho<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean scores of students and lecturers on protection of students' right to private and family life for global competitiveness in the management of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State.

**Table 6: Summary of z-test Analysis on the Significant Difference between the Mean Score of Students and Lecturers on the Protection of Students' Right to Freedom from Discrimination for Global Competitiveness in the Management of Tertiary Institution in Kebbi State**

Participants	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	z-cal	z-crit	Decision
Students	250	20.31	9.92	398	0.094	1.960	Not significant
Lecturers	150	20.20	10.04				

Table 6 indicates that at 0.05 level of significance and 398 degree of freedom, the calculated z-value of 0.094 is less than the critical z-value of 1.960. This signifies that hypothesis three is accepted, which implies that there is no significant difference between the views of students and lecturers on the protection of students' right to freedom from discrimination for global competitiveness in the management of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State.

**10. Discussion**

Both students and lecturers were of the view that positive measures have been put in place to protect students' right to the dignity of the human person in tertiary educational institutions in Kebbi State. This is in line with the provisions of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 1999) constitution. However, the participants opined that a lot still need to be done to protect students against sexual harassment, use of abusive language by teachers as well as in cases of libel. This inadequacy contradicts the views of Burton (2007), Ekpo and Okoli (2003) who suggested that management should strictly protect students' right to dignity of the human person so as to provide a favourable environment for global competitiveness.

The perception of students was similar to lecturers as both groups agreed that the management of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State to a large extent adequately protect students' right to private and family life. This is in accord with the provision of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999). They however noted that strategies need to be put in place to protect the privacy of students' telephone conversation. This is contrary to the views of Holland and Webb (2001), Kodelinye and Aluko (2010) who advised that all

aspects of students' privacy should be protected at all times by the management of the institutions in order to prepare students for global competitiveness.

The views of students and lectures on the protection of students' right to freedom from discrimination were similar as they believe that tertiary institutions in Kebbi State positively protect students against discrimination. This is in agreement with the provision of the constitution of Nigeria (1999). However the participants noted that one of the major lapses is that discrimination still persists in the basis of state of origin when it comes to issues admission due to concepts of quota system, catchment area and prevalence of institutional staff requests for placement of less qualified students as against those who merit it. This is in disagreement with the views of Sanni (2007), Aluko (2010) and Oyedeji (2012) who maintained that students must be protected against any form of discrimination to give them a sense of belonging which is necessary for global competitiveness.

**11. Conclusion**

Based on the findings and implications of this study, the following conclusions were drawn:

Students' right to dignity of the human person; private and family life as well as right to freedom from discrimination are protected for global competitiveness in the management of tertiary educational institutions in Kebbi State. However, certain aspects such as protection against sexual harassment and use of abusive language by lecturers on students, and discrimination of students based on state of origin still persist to some extent.

Protection of students rights to dignity of the human person, private and family life as well as freedom from discrimination are necessary for the attainment of global competitiveness in the area of higher education.

## 12. Recommendations

The protection of students' rights to dignity of the human person should be maintained for global competitiveness in the management of tertiary institutions in Kebbi State. Factors causing sexual harassment and use of abusive language should be investigated and dealt with promptly.

The students' right to private and family life should continue to be protected at all times. Guidance and counseling service should be intensified for married students and prospective couples so as to enable them to cope effectively with their studies and the challenges of family life.

Discrimination of students on grounds of state of origin should be guided strictly by legal provisions of Federal Character as well as State Education Laws. Tertiary institutions in Kebbi State should ensure that students and lecturers from all parts of Nigeria and beyond are represented in order to encourage national and global competitiveness.

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