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# Natural Violence and the Challenges of Green Campus Initiatives in Nigerian Universities

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## Abstract

This paper examined natural violence and the challenges of green campus initiatives in Nigerian universities. Documentary and qualitative research methods were used. Therefore, secondary sources of data were used and data were collected from government documents, print resources and online publications. The personal observation method of data collection was also employed by the researchers. Content analysis was used to narrow the literature to the theme of the study. The findings of the study revealed that lack of funds, poor knowledge and awareness of green campus initiatives, maintenance issues, lack of indicators to measure sustainability in higher education institutions and weak institutions are identified as challenges militating against the development of green campus initiatives in Nigerian universities. Based on the problems identified, the paper recommends among others that the Federal Government of Nigeria through the National University Commission should direct all intending proprietors of universities to embark on green campus initiatives as a condition for approving the establishment of a university in addition to establishing a unit to manage the initiative.

**Key words:** Green Campus Initiatives, Natural violence, Nigerian Universities

## Introduction

University education is an advanced education in teaching, research and community service (Ogunode & Ayeni, 2023). The Nigerian university system like other universities in developed and developing countries has started to implement various environmentally sustainable programmes such as green campus initiatives, green universities programmes and waste-to-wealth programmes. Naturenews (2023) noted that some Nigerian campuses are taking steps to create green havens for their students, where they can learn, live and thrive in harmony with nature. The essence of this green campuses initiative is to address the negative

consequences of violence arising from unfavourable weather conditions caused by natural gifts like sun and rainfall among others.

The University of Lagos (UNILAG), has established a Botanical Garden, which covers an area of 11.34 hectares and hosts over 300 plant species, some of which are endangered or endemic to Nigeria. Botanical Garden is a green infrastructure provided by government institutions, hence the argument that it is the responsibility of the government to provide those amenities that empower (Ayeni, Sani, Idris & Uzoigwe, 2019, p. 264). This green infrastructure has empowered the members of the university community by giving them comfort from the activities of hot weather in addition to serving as a living laboratory for teaching and research, as well as a recreational and educational facility for students and visitors. Green infrastructure is an Infrastructural development that enhances human security (Ayeni, Andeshi, & Uzoigwe, 2022). **Green infrastructure enhances human security by enhancing health conditions in addition to** providing ecosystem services, such as carbon sequestration, air purification, water conservation and soil erosion control. This green infrastructure helps to prevent people from being vulnerable to harsh weather that can hasten or worsen the health condition of people.

Not only that, the Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) has also developed a Green CampusInitiative (GCI), which aims to promote environmental sustainability and social responsibility among its students and staff. The above observation shows governance in action through an institution of government. This is because "governance is the provision of those amenities and facilities that enhance the well-being of the people" (Ayeni & Sani, 2021, p. 149). Green Campus initiative is an attempt to ensure that members of the university community are not negatively affected by the harshness of unfriendlyatmospheric conditions thereby creating an environment that makes studying easy. The attempt to ensure that students do not suffer to the extent that it will hurt their studies is effective communication from the school management to students for studentsto study (Ayeni, Sani, & Uzoigwe, 2019). The GCI involves various activities, such as tree planting, waste recycling, energy conservation, environmental education and advocacy. The GCI also organizes an annual Green Festival, which showcases the achievements and innovations of the campus community in environmental sustainability.

In addition to the above, the Federal University of Technology, Minna (FUTMINNA) has implemented a Green Campus Project (GCP), which seeks to transform the campus into a model ofenvironmental excellence and best practices. The above development will go a long way in safeguarding the knowledge economy. This is because safeguarding the economy and putting in place infrastructure can boost development (Ayeni, 2014). It has been further noted that this infrastructure can provide long-term satisfaction (Ayeni,Doosuur &

Kefas, 2021). Therefore putting in place those things that will make teaching and learning easy is an attempt to address natural violence. The GCP includes several components, such as green buildings, green transportation, green energy, green landscaping, green waste management and green awareness. The employment of green campus infrastructure to reduce the effect of the harsh atmospheric environment as a result of harsh weather conditions that might hurt members of the university community is anattempt to address what can be referred to as natural violence by the school management or school leaders. This is because leaders can at times choose to use bureaucratic bottle-neck to retard the development or promote it (Asaju, & Ayeni, 2020). Green infrastructure can enhance the development of education.

Also, Abenu, Alfa-Yusufu and Ugochukwu, (2024)carried out a study in the Northwest zone of Nigeria on the current status of sustainability in public higher education institutions in Nigeria and the challenges that inhibit the integration of sustainability into its operations and practices. The result of the study indicated that tertiary institutions in the region have made progress in teaching courses that promote environmental sustainability. However, only limited achievements have been made in integrating sustainability into its operations and practices. The study also concluded that the green campus initiative is faced with a lot of challenges. The need to unravel the challenges faced by green campus initiatives; with the view to addressing these challenges to enhance the development of Nigerian universities informs this study.

It is based on the above that this study seeks to examine natural violence and the challenges of green campus initiatives in Nigeria universities.

**Concept of Green Campus Initiative**

The Green Campus concept offers an institution the opportunity to take the lead in rethinking its environmental culture and developing new paradigms for solving problems that are caused by nature. Green Campus Initiatives encompass a diverse array of policies and practices aimed at minimizing environmental impact and maximizing sustainability within the campus environment. Therefore, these initiatives include energy conservation, waste reduction, water management, transportation, green spaces, and environmental education (Makemyassignment 2024). Green Campus can be seen as an organized plan and actions put down by various institutions to reduce the environmental impact occasioned by natural phenomena and promote campus environmental sustainability. Green campuses are initiatives and programmes designed by the management of institutions to reduce carbon emissions and promote quality health and environmentally friendly programmes (Ogunode & Ukozor, 2024).

Green Campus is an initiative which was launched in the first half of 2011 as part of the

activities organized by student associations to prevent energy and water waste on campus. The Green Campus Initiative then further expanded to include more volunteers, particularly students, and academic and administrative staff with an interest in the issue at hand (Middle East Technical University, Northern Cyprus Campus, 2024). Green campus is sustainability made and kept up the conditions in which people and nature can exist productively, permitting social, economic and environmental to advance (Hosna, Ajilian 2014; Husaini & Jusoh 2017). Green campuses can be referred to as reducing negative impacts on environmental pollution and human health to promote environmental sustainability (Uche, Maizon, Afees; Kherun, 2013).

**Natural violence**

Natural violence is any unfavourable environmental condition that makes people uncomfortable in engaging in their day-to-day activities, e.g. hot weather conditions occasioned by sunrise, and heavy downpours of water leading to erosion among others.

**Theoretical Framework**

This study employed role theory. The role theory was proposed by Robert Merton in 1957. Role theory holds that individuals (including the ruling elites) in society are expected to perform certain roles for the functioning of the society. Individuals aim to meet these roles, which encompass certain expectations, responsibilities, and behaviours. It is supposed to be the role of the government who are represented by the ruling elite to ensure that teaching and learning in the Nigerian universities is carried out under a favourable atmospheric environment to enhance the development of tertiary. For instance, it has been noted that the inability of the governance system to perform its roles is also hurting the educational system (Ogunode, Ayeni, & Olorundare, 2024). Therefore, the inability of the government and its agencies to perform their roles will pose challenges that will make natural violence persist without being addressed in Nigerian universities. This development might mean that the government is not carrying out its role as expected to enhance the development of the knowledge industry. People perform gender roles daily, meaning that their behaviours are shaped by societal expectations for them depending on their gender (S.M, 2022).

The implication of this theory to this paper is that the Federal Government of Nigeria and their respective agencies that have been given charge over university education are not performing their roles. Therefore the favourable environmental condition that is best suitable for learning and teaching is not available to most students of Nigerian universities.

## Materials and Methods

Documentary and qualitative research methods were used. Therefore, secondary sources of

data were used and data were collected from government documents, print resources and online publications. The personal observation method of data collection was also employed by the researchers. Content analysis was usedto narrow the literature to the theme of the study

## Results and Discussion

### Challenges Militating Against Green Campus Initiative in Nigerian Universities

There are many challenges militating against the development of green campus initiatives in Nigerianuniversities. The challenges are discussed below.

### Lack of funds

Fund (Money) is very important in every human setting. It has been noted that fund is the lifeblood of every human society (Ayeni, 2017). Therefore, lack of funds can be a major problem militating against the full implementation of green campus initiatives in Nigerian universities. Green campus initiatives require a lot of financial commitment to operate and be institutionalized in the various universities.Isa, Sedhu, Lop, Rashid, Nor and Iffahd, (2021) did a study and discovered that the majority of the interviewees agreed on the main challenges in applying for a green campus due to lack of finances. According to respondents, the cost of implementing a green campus is very expensive. The study had established earlier that green initiative is an infrastructure. Idris et al. (2015) maintained that the cost required in the implementation of the programme of infrastructure will be much higher than the normal building due to the specification ofgreen elements and the limitation of green product suppliers. Also, Finlay, Massey and Massey (2012) observed that the main issues in implementing a green campus are inadequate financial resources for initial investment. Even though infrastructural development provides a suitable environment (Ayeni, Abdullahi & Andeshi, 2021), it has been noted that the high cost of implementation of a green campus programme is a major challenge (Abubakar, 2020; Abenu, Yusufu & Ugochukwu, 2024).Green campus programmes (green infrastructures) that are supposed to provide comfort and a conducive environment for learning have been sacrificed because of inadequate funds. This development can retard the development of the education sector.

### Poor knowledge and awareness of green campus initiative

Another problem militating against the full implementation of green campus initiatives in Nigerian universities is the lack of knowledge of sustainable education and programmes by managers, staff and studentsof the various universities. Following the above challenge, scholars have argued for training to improve the performance of individuals on their jobs by correcting any deficiency in human effort (Ogunode & Ayeni, 2023). The lack of adequate knowledge on the implementation and the content of the programme affects its development in the various universities across Nigeria. Yuan, Zuo and Huisingh (2013) and Hopkins and Hopkins (2016), noted that a lack of knowledge among staff management will affect the implementation of sustainability in higher education. Tiyarattanachai and Hollmann (2016) also pointed out that a green campus agenda may not be the best approach for every university, particularly if the organisation is not ready for

it. They highlighted that awareness about sustainable universities is influenced by several factors such as age, gender and level of education. There is still inadequate research on sustainability in the university curriculum and sustainable development failing to implement the green campus agenda (Uche et al., 2013). Lack of knowledge on green campuses among staff and students is highlighted by respondents as among the challenges in implementing a green campus (Isa, et al 2021). The study also observed thatit takes time to educateand change human behaviour to be more concerned about a sustainable environment. They found that it is difficult to gain full participation among staff to attend green workshops or green talks organised by the university. Perhaps they are busy with lectures and other university programmes or they are not interested in the area (Isa, et al 2021). According to Hopkins and Hopkins, (2016), lack of knowledge and exposure among the university facilities director about sustainable development is another challenge in supporting the green campus agenda.

**Maintenance issues**

The challenges of maintenance costs hindering the development of green campus initiatives in the universities in Nigeria are very big.Uche et al., (2013) also maintained that green initiatives and development require frequent maintenance works and this involves a high cost to preserve quality and performance by phase to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the green elements. Yet, there is a lack of experienced workers to manage green campus projects and maintain performance quality. Also, the findings' ofIsa, et al 2021) indicated that maintenance issues are a very big problem in the implementation of green campus programmes in UiTM Perak. They observed that each green campus project and initiative is essential to preserve and maintain its performance. So, it can avoid damage and operational failure due to weather conditions and the overall period taken. They also highlighted the disturbance of wild animals such as monkeys, dogs and boars as among the challenges in implementing a green campus in UiTM Perak.

**Lack of indicators to measure sustainability in higher education institutions**

The problem of lack of international and national standards in the measurement of universities in Nigeria in the areas of sustainable programmes and impact also hinders the development of green campus initiatives in Nigerian universities. There is a lack of organization initiatives according to Husaini & Jusoh, (2017) to concentrate on the relationship among the indicators in universities since the universities only focus on research, education, community and operation. Hosna Ajilian (2014) stated that the lack of indicators to measure sustainability in higher education institutions is among the challenges in implementing a green campus. Failure to select suitable indicators may result in a lack of a clear opinion on sustainability. Not only that, it has also been noted that lack of education and activities in sustainable design and development affect green infrastructure (Tarigan, Prayogo & Mardiono, 2012).

**Weak Public Institutions**

The weakness of institutions to support sustainable policies and programmesin all public

and private institutions is contributing to the slow development of green campus initiatives in Nigerian universities. The above challenges facing the education system were affirmed by Ayeni and Abdullahi (2014, p. 91) who noted that "weak institutions that produce strong leaders to war against access to education, technological advancement and opportunity for people to succeed". These strong leaders use laws to preserve their interests to the detriment of the masses, hence one of the reasonsthe education sector is not given its rightful place (Godwin, Ayeni& Peter, 2021). Musa (2018) noted that the absence of strong public institutions to enforce sustainable programmes in the various universities and to ensure programmes and policies on sustainability is a major problem militating against the development of green campus initiatives in Nigerian universities. The lack of construction standards and control from authority to ensure the quality environment is safe. The poor involvement of supervisory institutions in the implementation of green campus initiatives is also contributing to the development of green campus initiatives in Nigerian universities. Abenu, et al (2024) identified the lack of policies and programmes as a problem affecting the development of green campus programmes in Nigerian higher institutions.

The various challenges militating against the development of Green Campuses or Green infrastructure have enabled the problems of Natural violence to continue, rather than being addressed by the Green Campus Initiative which is supposed to create a favourable atmospheric environment for teaching and learning in the Nigerian universities.

**Findings of the Study**

The study found that the challenges militating against green campus initiatives from addressing the problem of natural violence are; a lack of funds, poor knowledge and awareness of green campus initiatives, maintenance issues, lack of indicators to measure sustainability in higher education institutions and weak institutions

## Conclusion

This paper has been able to examine natural violence and the challenges of green campus initiatives in Nigerian universities. The study concludes that the failure of the Federal Government of Nigeria and other supervisory agents to perform their expected roles brought about a lack of funds, poor knowledge and awareness of green campus initiatives, maintenance issues, lack of indicators to measure sustainability in higher education institutions and weak institutions. These challenges subsequently militate against the development of green campus initiatives that are supposed to create favourable learning and teaching environments to address natural violence that creates an unfavourable atmospheric environment for learning and teaching in Nigerian universities.

Based on the problems identified, the paper recommends that the Federal Government of Nigeria through the National University Commission should direct all intending proprietors of universities to embark on the green campus initiative as a condition for approving the establishment of a university in addition to establishing a unit to manage the initiative.

National University Commission should add the implementation of green campus initiatives

to the requirements of accreditation of courses in Nigerian universities by ensuring that every university earmarks certain funds for such initiatives in every academic department. National Universities Commission should organize training and retraining programmes for managers of the universities on the importance andskills of managing the green campus initiative.

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