

## Detection of Main Physical Indicators of Mental Status of University Students' at Onset of Unrest.

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### Abstract

This paper presents the detection tools of mental status of University students at the onset of unrest. Many factors which includes biological or environmental, influence variation in the mental status of an individual if they are exposed to them. Negative factors are the root cause of mental status at the onset of unrest and this can have specific manifestations. During social unrest, people's entire way of life is torn apart. In such scenario, there will be clear and predictable observable manifestations which may exhibit themselves physically since the body language is the most reliable sign of internal state of affairs. Several research findings show that University students' unrest is a common phenomenon all over the world and that most Universities are focused on the aftermath of students' unrest. However, studies have not been done on detecting the onset of students' unrest and then implementing appropriate preventive measures to forestall University students' unrest. The objective of the study was to identify the main physical indicators of mental status of University students' at onset of unrest. It was a survey research design which used mixed research method approaches. Data was collected using structured questionnaires. The research population included Security officers, secretaries, of selected public Universities in Kenya. Simple random sampling was used which gave a total sample size of 145 which was obtained from a target population of 177. The quantitative data collected was analyzed using SPSS programme into frequency counts, percentages, means and independent t-test analysis. From the findings, the main physical indicators of mental status of University students' at onset of unrest were identified as: Yelling emotional expressions, violent tendencies, hostile attitude manifestations and anger gestures, in that order.

**Keywords:** Indicator, Mental state, Stressor, Unrest.

### Introduction

Several research findings show that University students' unrest is a common phenomenon all over the world and that most Universities are focused on the aftermath of students' unrest. However, studies have not been done on detecting the onset of students' unrest and then implementing appropriate preventive measures to forestall University students' unrest. Goolam (2010) describes the major factors which contribute to increase in unrest at Universities as: The student numbers are far greater in the 21<sup>st</sup> century than in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Previously an African University would have a couple of thousands of students; now most Universities have tens of thousands of students, so the disturbances have more serious consequences; the existing campus infrastructures (including student residences, lecture halls and libraries), have not generally expanded to cope with the increasing student population, leading to greater frustrations and complaints from students; the student profiles have changed. Previously Universities would admit a few students from the more socially advantaged urban population. Now, with efforts to increase access to higher education, Universities admit a greater mix of students from different social and ethnic strata, as well as from the rural areas, thus increasing the possibilities of tensions among students; a significant number of students now have to pay tuition fees, so they are more demanding and want their money's worth; technology, in particular mobile telephony, has increased the ease of communication among students, making it possible to better organize their protest for maximum impact; many of the former student leaders, and even faculty, now occupy influential political positions which they tend to use to their political advantage. With these conditions in place, tensions that will often lead to University students' unrests are inevitable. There is therefore need to identify the main physical indicators of mental status of University students' at the onset of unrest so as to forestall the unrest.

### Research Methodology

Survey research design was used to collect quantitative data using structured questionnaires and this was done using mixed research approaches. This was adopted from Creswell (2014) who noted that survey research provides numeric description of trends, attitudes or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population. The questionnaires were used to collect data from security officers and secretaries working in selected Public Universities in Kenya. Table 3.1 gives research population size and sample size that was involved in data collection to answer the research question.

**Table 3.1**  
**Research Population involved in answering research question**

Serial No.	Stratum / Section	Population Size	Sample Size
1	Security officers	55	48
2	Secretaries	122	97
	Total	177	145

Security officers and Secretaries were the main participants involved in data collection because they were assumed to possess the information required for this study. This is because they are first persons that interact with University students when they are about to go on strike.

Wadsworth Cengage Learning (2013) noted that the data processing phase of survey typically involves the classification (coding) of written-in answers and the transfers of all information to a computer. In view of this, quantitative data was scored in comparative analysis format. This involved collecting data from different respondents who also belonged to different strata of security officers and secretaries, in time and/or the same settings and to identify similarities and differences. The variable scored in this section was physical indicators of mental status of University students' at onset of unrest. The respondent questionnaires were subjected to data inspection, after which questionnaires with missing selected options were separated from those that were with complete selected options for each question. Further inspection was done by choosing five questionnaires at random and then confirming from the prepared data if they were correctly keyed in the SPSS programme. This was then used to produce the primary data matrix analysis, categorization and hence helped in arranging collected data in tables. Using independent sample t-test analysis, comparative means of the respondents' perceptions on each variable item were established and ranked appropriately.

#### Data Presentation and Interpretation

The research question which was derived from the objective of this study stated that: What are the main physical indicators of mental status of University students at onset of unrest? The responses were keyed into a Computer data file and mean scores calculated using SPSS programme. The mean scores are presented in Table 4.2

**Table 4.2**  
**Physical Indicators of Mental status at Onset of Unrest**

Item Number	Physical Indicator	Mean	Std. Deviation
29	Yelling Emotional Expressions	4.27	.834
34	Violent Tendencies	4.25	.939
26	Hostile attitude manifestations	4.16	.775
28	Anger Gestures	4.10	.817
19	Forward and upward pointing Fist	4.08	.878
27	Secretive behaviors	4.07	.964
32	Casual Attire dressing style	4.07	.977
30	Tensed Face	4.04	.786
22	Wide mouth opening in anticipation	3.96	.866
35	Agitated body movement	3.90	.904
20	Arm's length distance	3.75	.930
21	Rapid hand movement	3.72	.998
23	Stone Faced	3.71	1.168
17	Hand waves and talking	3.68	1.039
31	Wandering Eyes	3.66	.896
33	Careless Grooming	3.66	1.025
16	Bending while Talking	3.62	.827
18	Aggressive hand grip greetings	3.57	1.004
24	Side-ways head movement	3.52	.795
15	Erect Standing posture	3.50	.947
25	Mouth Tapping	3.35	1.090
14	Open legged sitting posture	3.14	.921

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	Grand mean	3.81	

Haiyan (2009) equates physical indicators to body language or non-verbal channel of communication. Physical indicators are signs on the human body that gives a true reflection of an internal state of affairs or thinking inclination. An individual may give a false impression in speech but the body display if properly observed and analyzed, will give a reliable interpretation of the internal state of affairs. It is the primary site for communication of emotional states; it reflects interpersonal attitudes, it provides non-verbal feedback on the comments of others and in fact is the primary source of information next to human speech.

The first most frequent physical indicator of mental status of university students' at onset of unrest is yelling emotional expressions ( $M = 4.27$ ,  $SD = .834$ ). Furnham (2011) recommended further investigations on the exact meaning of yelling emotional gestures especially in the context of unrest. There will be frequent yelling emotional expressions displayed by the students at onset of unrest particularly with the extroverted personalities. This should therefore be used as the first main physical indicator of mental status of University students' at onset of unrest especially with extraverted students.

The second most frequently observed physical indicator of mental status of university students' at onset of unrest is violent tendencies ( $M = 4.25$ ,  $SD = .939$ ). Jung (1995) theorized that extraversion personalities have the habit of being predominantly concerned with obtaining gratification from what is outside the self, hence the violence tendency at onset of unrest. Notably, Rothman (2015) found that as long as justice is postponed, there will be reoccurrences of violence and riots over and over again. Rothman noted further that despair is linked to anger and thus riots. The university students therefore can very easily go violent even for very flimsy reasons as long as it can bring some despair in them. Any situation that tends to bring despair on the university students is likely to trigger violence and hence riots. Violent tendency should therefore be used by Psychologists or administrators as the second main physical indicator of mental status of university students' at onset of unrest particularly if observations are made on extrovert students.

The third most frequently observed physical indicator of mental status of university students' at onset of unrest is hostile attitude manifestation ( $M = 4.16$ ,  $SD = .939$ ). Hickson (2010) recommended further investigation on the meaning behind prolonged and intense eye contact as relates to hostility in different cultures, which in this case portraying hostile attitude manifestation at onset of unrest by university students' at onset of unrest. It may require prior knowledge of the individual students in order to notice their hostile attitude manifestations, although the introverted personalities may at times make attempts to hide this. This hostility will

most frequently be displayed towards the people they have grievances to (see Appendix XII). This can therefore be used as a third main physical indicator of mental status of university students' at onset of unrest.

The fourth most frequently observed physical indicator of mental status of university students' at onset of unrest is anger gestures ( $M = 4.10$ ,  $SD = .817$ ). The finding affirms Bowden (2011) that people tend to gesture more when they are enthusiastic, excited, and energized, which in this case anger gestures signifying mental status at onset of unrest. According to Knapp and Hall (2006), the face is rich in communicative potential and therefore anger gestures are likely to be displayed on the faces of the students especially when they are not aware that they are being observed. The students will most frequently appear charged with any form of anger gestures at onset of unrest. This should therefore be used as one of the main physical indicators of mental status of University students at onset of unrest.

The least common physical indicator of mental status of university students at onset of unrest is open legged sitting posture ( $M = 3.14$ ,  $SD = .921$ ). Whereas Vrij (2011) observed leg and feet sitting position have significant meaning in North America and some European countries cultures, the results it does not seem to have significant meaning in the Kenyan university students' culture especially as it relates to onset of unrest.

### Conclusion

Research question was: What are the main physical indicators of mental status of University students' at onset of unrest? These are: Yelling emotional expressions, violent tendencies, hostile attitude manifestations and anger gestures, in that order.

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