

## **Dynamics of friendship interactions among students of diverse ethnic groups in Nigerian universities**

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### **Abstract**

The university environment the world over is a place where scientific knowledge is sought. Aside from this, it is also a geographical space where a high level of social interaction is contracted between/among students of the same or across ethnic nationalities. In Nigeria, despite ethnic, cultural, linguistic, religious, and economic diversity, students in Nigerian universities still engaged in social interaction. In light of the above, the study explored the dynamics that influenced friendship interaction between/among students of diverse ethnic nationalities. The study used a qualitative approach. Based on the qualitative method employed, the interpretive paradigm was adopted as a lens to understand narratives from participants. Twelve participants from six universities located at six geopolitical zones of Nigeria were purposively selected. A structured interview was designed to elicit information from the participants. Data were analysed using thematic analysis. Findings indicated that students of various ethnic nationalities harmoniously co-exist in all the universities in Nigeria. Furthermore, it was also established that students who did the same course regardless of their ethnic background interacted effectively. Additionally, it was realised that students with behavioural compatibility positively interacted.

**Keywords:** Dynamics, friendship interaction, university, ethnic groups, diverse

### **Introduction**

According to the National Universities Commission of Nigeria (NUC) (2021), there are 170 government-approved universities in Nigeria. For sake of clarity, NUC is an agency established by the federal government of Nigeria to approve the establishment, funding, ensure quality assurance, and seek external collaboration with Nigerian universities. Similarly, there are approximately 1.9 million students in universities from various ethnic groups in Nigeria doing one discipline or the other of choice (NUC, 2021). For instance, universities such as Lagos, Abuja, Yola, Calabar, Port Harcourt, and Kano to mention but a few, have students who come from other ethnic groups such as Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo, Nupe, Ibibio, Ijaw, and Fulani, among others. The choice of universities by students outside their geographical location or catchment areas is influenced by the 1999 Nigerian Constitution (as amended) which guarantee an individual the right to have unrestricted access to the tertiary institution of his/her choice. Furthermore, NUC also mandates

universities in Nigeria to admit students outside its catchment areas. In other words, any student who scores very high in Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) has an opportunity to be admitted into any university of his/her choice. JAMB is a body created by law to offer placement to students into various disciplines in Nigerian universities. From all indications, my critical observation revealed that there exist friendship interactions between/among students of either same or across ethnic groups at different university campuses. It is pertinent to argue that friendship interaction between/among students is an essential part of social life in the university environment. Pangle (2002) argued that an individual is happy when he interaction with his friend(s). In fact, Hotta and Ting-Toomey (2013) said that friendship interactions play a significant role in supporting international students through their cross-cultural transitions and adjustment process. Similarly, Gareis and Jalayer (2018) submitted that friendship interactions among students from different cultural groups substantially breed harmony and peace in university campuses. In a similar vein, research has shown that friendship interactions between/ among students of diverse cultural or tribal backgrounds bring about deeply personal and emotional stability (Robinson et al., 2020). Apparently, friendship interaction falls into Maslow's 3rd level hierarchy of needs, which, according to Zalenski and Raspa (2006), fulfills the need for belonging, peace, and love. To be specific, Maslow (1943) held that the need for belonging, peace, and love is premised on shared humanity that goes beyond geographic, racial, gender, social, ethnic, and religious boundaries (Zalenski & Raspa, 2006). From the foregoing, one should conclude that the benefit of friendship interactions has been widely acknowledged. Though the gains derivable from friendship interaction were extensively reported, not much or very little has been written in the context of dynamics that influence friendship interaction between/ among students of diverse ethnic groups in the university. To be specific, searching the literature, I discovered that few scholarly works have been in the area of friendship interaction by sociologists, anthropologists, and philosophers. To date, no education scholar has dabbled into this emerging field hence my study. Frankly speaking, based on the discourse, the study explores the dynamics of friendship interactions between/among students of diverse ethnic groups in Nigerian universities.

### **Purpose of the study**

Despite ethnic tension which envelop Nigeria in recent times, university campuses continue to enjoy relative peace and harmony as a result of amicable interaction between/ among students of various ethnic groups. The dynamics that surround friendship formation and interaction is still debatable among researchers and scholars. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to explore the dynamics of friendship interactions among students of diverse ethnic groups in Nigerian universities.

### **Rationale for the study**

The rationale for the study is based on my observation over the years as a university teacher in Nigeria and South Africa. In Nigeria where the study focused on, there are about four hundred and fifty ethnic groups and over five hundred indigenous languages (Blench, 2019). Universities campuses across the country consists of students from these ethnic groups and they speak different languages. Furthermore, observation indicated that students in all the university campuses form friendship groups and they also interact amicably between/ among themselves irrespective of where they come from and the language spoken. This happened in spite of the fact that there is agitation by various ethnic groups for excision from the Nigerian state. In light of the above, I deem it appropriate to examine the dynamics which necessitate friendship interactions between/among students of diverse ethnic groups in Nigerian universities.

### **Objectives of the study**

The study has the following objectives as a guide.

- To examine the presence of ethnic groups in the university.
- To determine dynamics that influence friendship interactions between/among diverse ethnic groups in Nigerian universities.

### **Research questions**

In light of the research objectives stated above, the following research questions are developed to guide this research study.

- Which ethnic groups are represented at the university?
- What are the dynamics that influence friendship interactions between/among diverse ethnic groups in Nigerian universities?

### **Theoretical framework for the study**

Based on the phenomenon under investigation, I find it necessary to adopt intergroup contact theory which was first propounded by Gordon Allport in 1954. Allport (1954) submitted that intergroup contact assists in overcoming prejudice and improve social harmony. Relying on Allport's disposition, Pettigrew and Tropp (2008) averred that separateness in a group is viewed as an uncommon phenomenon which is in agreement with intergroup contact theory. Intergroup contact theory says that common places where people make friends and also interact among themselves are in school, church, playground, dance hall, and other social places (Hodson, et al. 2018). In schools in which this is focused, students from diverse ethnic groups interact amicably without recourse to where they come from. From all indications, university campuses have now become a 'melting pot' of social interaction among students devoid of acrimony. There are criticisms of intergroup contact theory. For instance, Kendel et al. (2018) said that Allport did not anticipate the importance of majority-minority group distinctions and that some people would opt for full assimilation while others would prefer to engage in multi-cultural acculturation configurations. Despite various criticisms, I still find the theory appropriate, hence its adoption to explore the dynamics of friendship interactions among students of diverse ethnic groups in Nigerian universities.

### **Literature review**

First and foremost, I want to state beforehand that going through the literature, I discovered that not much have been written about friendship interaction between/among students of diverse ethnic groups. Rather, scholars and researchers focused on friendship formation among students in universities (Witkow & Fuligni, 2010; Albrecht & Ko, 2017; McKenzie & Baldassar, 2017; Chávez, et al. 2021). In spite of the scarcity of literature, I have tried to look into other scholarly works that somehow relate to the phenomenon under investigation.

### **Students' interaction**

Tinto (1993) coined a model known as the Longitudinal Model of Institutional Departure (LMID) in which he explained how students at the institutions with different characteristics interact. Tinto (1993) explained that interactive session among students enhances ones social and intellectual integration. Tinto went further to say that students' contact with

other members of faculty plays an important role in students' academic retention and excellence. Tinto foregrounds his position by emphasizing the need for students' positive interactions within the social system of the university as he claims that subsequent experiences that arise from interactions between an individual and other members of the university are directly related to the students' persistence in the university (Babalola, 2018). Similarly, Krishnasamy, et al. (2014) investigated the nature of intercultural interactions experienced by foreign students and lecturers in Malaysian university. From all indications, twenty-five students were selected from countries such as Yemen, Libya, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Palestine. Furthermore, ten Malaysian lecturers who were very active in their interactions with students were also interviewed. Findings indicated that verbal interaction was a major barrier in intercultural interactions as some of the foreign students had different interpretations of words spoken by the Malaysians. However, it was established that students interacted with their lecturers did excellently well in their examination. Morita (2012) discovered that the inability of young people to interact verbally with elderly people in the community led to ignorance of culture of the community. In fact, a scholar such as Babalola (2018) reported that difference in language has been identified as the hindrance to intercultural interactions and friendship formation. Moreover, Olson, et al. (2016) established that host students experienced anxiety when they interacted with foreign students because of inability to express themselves in foreign languages.

### **Dynamics for students' interaction**

It is pertinent to argue that the dynamics for students' friendship interaction is a function of the same ethnic affiliation. In spite of the advantages of cross-ethnic friendship interaction, most university students prefer to interact with students of the same ethnic colouration. A study conducted by Yip, Seaton and Sellers (2006) have shown that students are more inclined to building friendship interaction with peers of the same ethnic group. In the same vein, Graham, Muniksma and Juvonen (2014) discovered that students from different ethnic inclinations such as Malays, Chinese and Indians among others would not form cross-ethnic friendships interaction during the learning process due to cultural and language barriers. Aside from Graham, Muniksma and Juvonen's position, a study conducted by Salmon-Letelier (2019) showed that students of the same ethnic

group in the department of nursing were found to effectively engage in collaborative learning opportunities hence creating a sense of belonging and oneness. Expanding a bit further and using the 2008 European Values Survey and country-level data on immigrant diversity for the study, Reeskens and Wright (2013) found that having the same national identity generates trust. In another vein, Prati, et al. (2018) declared that across ethnic or racial friendship interaction generates a high level of conflict and aggression in university campuses. Despite the position canvassed by Prati, Albanesi and Cicognani (2018), Allport (1954) has earlier submitted that intergroup interaction can only promote positive relations when certain conditions are met such as equal status within the situation, shared goals, intergroup cooperation, and support from authority. Otherwise, conflict and mistrust are eminent.

### **Research methodology**

The study draws from a qualitative approach. From all indications, qualitative research is seen by many as almost the complete opposite of quantitative research. The qualitative approach allows for alternate ways of knowing emerging out of inductive reasoning. Noblit, et al. (2020, p. 45) state that “qualitative study is as an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting.” Based on the above conversation, it is appropriate to adopt the qualitative method to understand the dynamics which initiate friendship interactions between/among students from different ethnic groups in Nigerian universities. In line with the approach adopted, I used an interpretive paradigm for the purpose of developing or uncovering meaning toward a better understanding of the issues under investigation.

### **Participants**

A research population is generally a large collection of individuals or objects that is the main focus of a scientific query (Creswell, 2015). Borrowed from Creswell’s claim, the population of the study is 1.9 million undergraduate students in all the 170 universities in Nigeria (NUC, 2021). In light of the large population of the study, I, therefore, adopted a purposive sampling technique to select the sample size. The main reasons why I adopted the purposive sampling technique were based on the following characteristics as being some undergraduate students, coming from a particular ethnic group and ability to interact

with other students. Furthermore, I purposively selected one university each from the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria namely; Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria from North Central zone, University of Maiduguri in North East zone, Usmandu Danfodio University, Sokoto in North West zone, University of Ibadan in South West zone, Federal University of Agriculture, Umudike in South East zone and University of Calabar in South South zone. From each of the universities, two participants were selected for the study. In other words, twelve participants in all were purposively selected. Here, the rationale for adopting a small sample size in spite of large population of the study came into my mind. Sandelowski (1995) was of the view small sample size is always used in a qualitative study to have grounded and water-tight information from the participants. Drawing from Sandelowski's position, I used a small sample to have an in-depth understanding and make sense of the phenomenon under investigation.

### **Methods of data generation**

Frankly, it is appropriate to adopt semi-structured interview in the study. This is because Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018) held that a semi-structured interview involves one person asking another person list(s) of pre-determined questions about a carefully selected topic. It was on this strength that a semi-structured interview was used to elicit information from the twelve participants. I was able to develop fifteen interview questions for my participants which bordered on the topic. To address ethical issues, letters of permission to conduct the interview at the universities selected were written to Vice Chancellors. Furthermore, the consent form was designed and given to all participants to indicate their willingness to part-take in the study. Additionally, participants did not object to using their real names. Though, I assured them that the information they volunteered will be treated only for research purposes.

During the interview, I used an audio recorder and field notes to elicit information from the participants. The choice of audio recorder and field note was to ensure that the information volunteered is accurately recorded (Rutakumwa, et al, 2020). After the collection of the data which lasted for two months, I transcribed the data manually without the use of qualitative analysis software. In fact, working with the data manually from this early stage of the research process allowed for more familiarity with the data. It also helped immensely in the ongoing process of analysing and making sense of my

participants' stories. After transcription, data were subjected to an open coding for categorisation and emergence of themes. At the end, themes were analysed using thematic analysis (TA). The choice of using TA is because, it is an accessible and flexible method to analyse qualitative data collected in the natural classroom setting (Xu & Zammit, 2020).

### **Challenges faced during the interview**

Despite reports from various radio stations and newspapers across the country about the activity of kidnapping, and banditry, I did not take it seriously because I live in Abuja which I considered safe. Frankly speaking, I was nearly kidnapped on my way to Usmandu Danfodio University, Sokoto from Kano. The taxi driver I boarded quickly noticed that kidnappers were carrying out their trade about 2500 metres from our position. He was forced to make U-turn and used another route which was longer and time-consuming. I was very lucky to escape being kidnapped.

### **Findings**

**Research question 1:** Which ethnic groups are represented at the university?

#### **Many ethnic nationalities**

Analysis indicated that there are various ethnic groups that exist in Nigerian universities. For instance, Emeka who was doing political science at the Ahmadu Bello University said he was surprised to realise that his university is a microcosm of the country. He went further to say that there was no ethnic group which is not represented in the university. He, therefore, reported that aside from his mates who were from other tribes, his lecturer in political economy is from Nupe which is another ethnic group in northern Nigeria. In a similar vein, another participant (Joy) of the same university stated that she comes from Ibibio which is another ethnic group in the Southern Nigeria, but she was admitted into the university in the North. In the University of Calabar, a participant (Victoria) who comes from a minority tribe called Oron informed me that since her first year in the university, she came to the realisation that her university institution is better than the secondary school attended. I probed further why she held the assertion. In her response, she declared:

*Sir, I graduated with Senior Secondary School Certificate from one community secondary school which still located in my village. In that school, every student*

*was from the community. In fact, we knew ourselves, but in this university, I hardly know half of the students in this department because we are so many and we come from north, south, east and west of Nigeria.*

Based on her view, I interrogated why students in almost all ethnic nationalities are represented in her university? She responded that “any student is free to choose any university of his/her choice irrespective of where he/she come from. We are in democracy hence we the right of choice.” Similarly, Ossom who studied anatomy at the University of Maiduguri used 1999 Nigerian Constitution (as amended) to portray his point of choice of university, when he said:

*The 1999 Nigerian Constitution (as amended) guarantee freedom of choice, therefore, as River state indigene from the South South Zone, I freely decided to choose this university in the north to further my education.*

Amina who come from Kano but schooled at University of Ibadan which is located South West zone of Nigeria narrated how she chose Universities of Kano and Ibadan as first and second choice respectively, but she was offered admission to study zoology at University of Ibadan by JAMB. She went further to say that just like herself; most students from other ethnic groups found in universities outside at the university’s catchment area were also admitted by JAMB. From all indications, she concluded that universities in Nigeria are a ‘melting pot’ of students from various ethnic nationalities.

From the above excerpts, it was discovered that various ethnic formations found in Nigeria were well represented in all universities. There was no university in the country without Igbos, Yorubas, Hausas, Nupes, among others. To be specific, it was stated that students from the northern zone of Nigeria were offered admission to pursue one discipline or the other in any university of their choice either in the South or East zone. While students from the South South zone or South West zone were found at universities which is located in either North, East or North zone. Reason adduced by the majority of students was that it was their fundamental right which is guaranteed 1999 Nigerian Constitution (as amended) to freely choose a university outside the place of birth or origin. Furthermore, others had it that JAMB used its discretion to offer admission to students into universities outside their catchment areas.

**Research question 2:** What are the dynamics initiating friendship interactions between/among diverse ethnic groups in Nigerian universities?

Analysis indicated that students who do same course and compatibility in students' behaviour were some of the dynamics which influence friendship interaction between /among students of various ethnic groups in Nigerian universities and these are explained below.

### **Students who do same course**

Participants interviewed unanimously responded that they interacted mostly with their course mates. In fact, Gabriel who did Agricultural Extension in Federal University of Agriculture at Umudike reported that he freely and amicably interacted with students who are in his department. When I asked him why he interacted only with his course mates? He replied; *“the reason for interacting with my course mates is very simple. We usually share ideas on topical issues that relate to course of study in class.”* Still in the same university, Ngozi of Fisheries department narrated that her interaction with other students from other ethnic groups in the university is on the basis of discipline offered. She was very categorical when she mentioned courses like AFM 426 (Aquaculture Engineering and Pond Management) and AFM 425 (Fish Nutrition and Fish Food Techniques) which has drawn many students to her. In order to establish the reason why students doing the same courses are drawn to Ngozi, I, therefore, asked her to tease why she only interacted with students offering her same discipline. She was quick to declare:

*Frankly speaking, some courses are taught by some difficult lecturers, who did not have patience to explain certain concepts or contents in the class. Therefore, many students felt estranged hence they refused to ask questions in the class for fear of being embarrassed. On the basis of this, we constituted discussion sessions to address on the points earlier discussed by the lecturers in which we did not understand. In fact, this created avenue for interaction very often.*

She concluded by saying that she sparingly interacted with other students from other disciplines because they have nothing to offer to her. In a similar manner, Suleiman who was a law student in Usmandu Danfodio University began by claiming that law programme is very demanding, and that any law student must read effectively to pass his/her examination. He stated that in order to maintain his position as one of the best ten students in his department in which he has been occupying during the past four years, he

usually read and interacted with his course mates. When I probed why he only interacted with his colleagues in law department and whether the interaction centred on same ethnic affiliation. Suleiman responded:

*I want to put it on record that I have never used ethnicity or cultural affiliation as the basis of my interaction with other law students. My interaction cut across linguistic, economic, ethnic and cultural colourations. In fact, any law student who brought meaningful discussion in law is likely going to be my friend. I interacted with any student irrespective of whether he/she is from Igbo, Yoruba, Tiv, Hausa or Ibibio.*

Omolara who was a student in the Department of Theatre Arts at the University of Ibadan was specific with her narrative as she claimed that though she made friends and interact with some students in her department, but her major interaction was based on students' sound academic disposition. She concluded that she cannot interact with some irresponsible students who do not know their reasons for being in the university. Additionally, Rebecca who did civil engineering at University of Maiduguri was very blunt in her response when she narrated:

*Yes, I did interact with some my classmates, but I do not interact with all of them because few of them are not serious with their education. Moreso, some of them are into cultism hence compelled to spend most of their times on hideous activities in the campus. On the basis of what I told you, I can only interact with serious minded students in the department.*

From the above quotations, it was evident that majority of students in Nigerian universities interacted with their colleagues on the ground of same course of study. In fact, it was discovered that most interactions among students was mostly associated with sound academic disposition. From all indications, ethnicity, linguistic, economic or cultural disposition did not play any role in friendship formation and interaction. Rather, students' interaction with each other was based on sound character devoid of negative attributes.

### **Students' behavioural compatibility**

On the issue of interaction based on compatibility in students' behaviour, Alice who was in Medical and Surgery department at University of Calabar explained her position about most of her friends in which she stated that she interacted intimately with them due to

same behavioural characteristics. For clarity sake, I asked Alice to explain the issue of same behavioural characteristics in which she mentioned. On that ground, she replied:

*Sir, this is very simple. You cannot make friends or interact with someone who did not behave alike. To be sincere to you, I choose any my friend and interact with them based on the fact that he/she behave in the same way I do. Anybody who behaves otherwise automatically seizes to be my friend and we won't interact.*

Alice's view notwithstanding, Ossom recollected how he made majority of his friends in the football field. He further explained that he is a great footballer in the university, and all his friends he interacted with were footballers. In fact, Ossom argued that he found it inappropriate to make friends or interact with students who were not footballers. Aside from the fact that he interacted with a lot of footballers in and out of the field, he added that during English Premier League (EPL), he talked about some best players such as Mane, Ndidi, Salah, Sterling, Aguero, among others with his friends at television viewing centre. He concluded by saying that it was extremely impossible to interact with any student who did not have this behavioural attribute. In like manner, Gabriel submitted that though his friendship formation and interaction were based on same behavioural inclination, however, across ethnic affiliation significantly influenced his interaction with other students in the campus. He claimed that never contemplate in having same ethnic group interaction because it limits ones' exposure. Amadi out-rightly illustrated why he used be so selective in picking his friends. He stated that as an introvert, he finds it very difficult to interact or socialise with anyone who do not have his own characteristics. I, therefore, probed how he socialises considering the fact that students who are reserve like him are very few in the university campus. With a little delayed, he responded:

*I know very well that university campuses the world over is a place where various social activities on daily basis is always at its peak, hence it is very difficult to see my kind of person in this campus. However, despite this, I still found one or two students who were not from my tribe but reticent in behaviour. I made these students are my friends and we interacted often.*

The above quotations indicated that students in Nigerian universities interacted with one other based on behavioural compatibility. All participants interviewed revealed they did

not interact with each other on the ground of ethnicity. In fact, according to Alice, Amadi, among others clearly said that their interaction with fellow students is influenced by same pattern of behaviour. A clear example was illustrated using television viewing centres of EPL where interaction with friends were carried out.

### **Discussion of Findings**

From the findings, it was revealed that in each of the universities located in Nigeria, there were thousands of students who came from various ethnic groups. It was also obvious that students from Igbo extraction were found at the universities located in the Hausa, Fulani or Yoruba-dominated areas, while Yoruba, Ibibio, Tiv or Hausa students were given admission outside their states of origin. In fact, students' choice of universities was influenced by their right of freedom to choose any university they want to go to irrespective of ethnic inclination. From my interpretive point of view, the convergent of students from various ethnic groups in a university was designed to integrate students of other ethnic groups into another. Aside from students' freedom of choice of universities outside their geographical zone(s), it was also argued that students' admission into universities was affected by JAMB to ensure an even distribution of students across various ethnic nationalities. JAMB's covert reason for offering students admission was to ensure that there is harmonious co-existence in the campuses and by extension Nigeria. This position is in agreement with Abdullah's (2006) assertion who submitted that the existence of different ethnic groups in university institutions is necessary for the galvanisation and preservation of harmonious relationships in the society.

Findings from the second research question indicated that friendship interaction between /among students from various ethnic groups in Nigerian universities did not reflect same or across ethnicity. Rather, it was based on the same course of study and compatibility of students' behaviour. For instance, it was established that Igbo, Yoruba, Nupe or Ibibio speaking students did not do anything wrong interacting with other students outside their ethnic groups. In fact, most students preferred to interact effectively with their course-mates. From the interpretive perspective, the preference and gains of this interaction centred around shared intellectualism. This goes to support Tinto's (1993) claim in which he held that interactive session among students enhance intellectual integration Again, Pettigrew (1998) affirmed Tinto's position when he stated that most interactions among

students at the university was aimed at the improving students' academic outcomes. My findings validated Babalola (2018) assertion who reported that friendship formation and interactions in itself lead to students' academic success.

It was evident that students' behavioural compatibility was influenced by friendship interaction among students. The game of football was used to illustrate how students who were footballers interacted with one another in the field of play. Additionally, football viewing centres in and around campuses were mentioned as geographical space where best footballers in EPL were discussed. As an interpretive, I, therefore, argued that football and television viewing centres are avenues for the promotion of social cohesion among ethnic nationalities in Nigeria. This assertion is anchored on the fact that football and social space (viewing centre) where the game is watched provided a comfortable ground for friendship interaction irrespective of ethnic nationalities. My position is in agreement with Majaro-Majesty's (2011) claimed that football fanaticism/support has brought together youths and non-youths alike for the development of social cohesion and harmony among various ethnic groups. Apparently, Cahill (2020, p.41) did not completely agree with Majaro-Majesty's position, rather, he argued "though football has a high capacity to integrate students from different ethnic groups, if not checked, it can produce another form of ethnic conflict based on students' club identity." On the issue of students' interaction based on their behavioural compatibility in the campus, my assertion was canvassed by Giel, et al (2020), Leung and Yu (2020) used an adage expressed by McPherson, Smith-Lovin and Cook (2001) to argue that birds of the same feather flock together which invariably means that students who are similar in character to one another interact with each other, while those who are dissimilar do not.

## **Conclusion**

Universities apart from being a place where scientific knowledge is sought, it is also a geographical space where students interacted irrespective of their ethnic affiliation. In fact, the emergence of ethnic militias in Nigeria has threatened the very foundation of the country's coexistence. Despite the grey areas highlighted, the university environment still remained the only social space in the country where ethnic diversity existed but did not affect students' peaceful interaction. In light of the above, the study explored the dynamics that influenced the interactions among students of diverse ethnic groups in Nigerian

universities. It was therefore established that in spite of students' diverse nationalities, their interaction with one another was made possible as a result of offering of the same discipline. Furthermore, students' behavioural compatibility in Nigerian universities reinforced same or across ethnic interaction.

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