

ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN THE CLASSROOM, RADICAL PEDAGOGY AND CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTHWESTERN NIGERIA

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Introduction

Academic freedom seems so difficult to define that Diekema (2000:7) says it has “no official or uncontested definition.” Some definitions also exclude students on the grounds that they, supposedly, “are neither qualified nor equipped to handle the rights and responsibilities of academic freedom” according to such definitions (Diekema, 2008:8, footnote 1). However, one of the much discussed issues in Africa, especially after independence from colonial rule in many countries, has been academic freedom. One of the most significant of such discussions appears in a compendium edited by Mahmood Mamdani (1993) entitled *Academic Freedom in Africa*, in which academic freedom refers to freedom of intellectuals and academic institutions to pursue and publish research findings; and issues of the influence of capital, historical processes, autonomy and democracy, as well as funding, on academic freedom in Africa are dealt with. Moreover, an Africa Watch (March 1991) report cites cases in 14 African countries of “summary executions of academics and students; torture; arbitrary arrest and prolonged detention without charge or trial; imprisonment under conditions that are cruel and degrading,” and other forms of persecution, especially in reaction to criticisms of governing authorities (pp.2-3).

Restriction on academic freedom is not uniform across Africa. For example, Ramtohul (2012:14) points out that “the threat level experienced by academics and students in Mauritius is much lower than on the African continent.” A similar point is noted by Bentley, Habib and Morrow (2006), that contemporary South Africa is not confronted with the violation of academic freedom by such repressive apparatus of the state as in other African countries where “academics

are regularly harassed, maimed, jailed or even killed” (p.2). But they observe that academic freedom in Africa has suffered from the authoritarianism of the colonial governments, dependence on governmental and foreign funding, as well as oppression of critical academicians by oppressive African dictatorships (pp4-6). Bultana (2006:6), also notes that academic freedom is “largely dependent or linked to the general freedoms prevailing in national political systems,” being more guaranteed by democratic systems and more restricted by non-democratic ones.

While various scholars in different African contexts have addressed the issue of academic freedom, there seems not to be any significant discussion of academic freedom in Christian higher education (institutions or departments that provide education from Christian perspective), or relating to students’ classroom experiences, though many pedagogical theories exist in the world that try to place students at the center of the teaching-learning process. In other words, most discussion on academic freedom seems to pay more attention to what institutional leaders and faculties feel free or otherwise to do, than what students feel free or otherwise to do in the classroom. However, some pedagogical views would challenge the view that students are ill prepared to handle the rights and responsibilities of academic freedom. This paper looks at academic freedom for students in the classroom among Christian seminaries or departments of religious studies in universities in South Western Nigeria, while citing some contributions of radical pedagogy, so as to offer a more student-centered perspective to the discussion of the subject.

Academic Freedom in Christian Higher Education

While not directly addressing academic freedom, the works of some Christian scholars around the world point to its need in Christian higher education. Holmes’ (2001, p.117),

declaration that “we need Christian thinking not only about foundational questions, but also about points of tension between faith and knowledge, about theoretical concepts within a discipline, about the ethical issues new knowledge poses...in the twenty-first century” will certainly need academic freedom to adequately address. The suspension and eventual departure of Laricia Hawkins in February 2016 from Wheaton College, Illinois, for expressing that Christians and Muslims share the same God, though she also expressed recognition of the differences between the two religions in questions of salvation and the person of Christ (www.npr.org/sections/the-two-way/2016/02/07/465916095/professor-who-said-christians-muslims-share-a-god-is-leaving-chr), also indicates that academic freedom in Christian higher education needs more serious thinking about.

Looking at academic freedom in Christian scholarship, Diekema (2000:86) limits its application to institutions and teachers, where the institution has the right “to determine for itself on academic grounds who may teach, what may be taught, how it shall be taught, and who may be admitted to study.” It seems for him to be the extent to which an institution can determine without interference what takes place within its borders. Christians also tend to express caution about the extent of academic freedom. For instance, Blomberg (2007:195) looks at the personal implications of being human as “the freedom to choose rather than merely to be impelled,” which freedom however must be “located within a lawful order that needs to be respected if truth is to be done.”

Also, Diekema (2000:105) sees both the essence and danger of academic freedom for the church because freedom in scholarship is needed to “bring fuller understanding to our world and to our Christian worldview and biblical mandate, but it is exactly that kind of scholarship that

will most likely and most frequently challenge old and established ways.” Guthrie (2002:23) puts it in other words:

Christians are under obligation to allow their perspectives to be molded by genuine insight offered by good research. This does not mean, of course, that those outside the Christian worldview cannot do research with integrity, nor that all Christians do their research with integrity, but rather that integrity is a specific mandate within the Christian worldview rightly understood.

Academic freedom, then, requires Christians to recognize good scholarship by non Christians, as well as poor scholarship by Christians, and to be free to say so. Yet, Thornbury (2002:48) warns that academic freedom is not a warrant for compromise with every wind of philosophy to the detriment of one’s Christian identity: “Outside observers...remain singularly unimpressed and wonder what, in fact, makes one an evangelical if one’s presuppositional boundaries appear so fluid and accommodating to the winds of secular philosophical thinking.” In spite of the cautious approach to academic freedom by Christian scholars, however, some radical educational ideas that have gained currency over the years compel the attention of Christians. Of significance to this paper is that they lay great emphasis on students’ freedom in the classroom.

Radical Pedagogy

One of the various forms of humanistic education is Radical-Critical humanistic education. It is often identified with the radical education or critical pedagogy of Freire, Apple, Giroux and others. They insist that pedagogy should confront poverty, crime, homelessness, drug addiction, wars, ecological crises, suicide, illiteracy, discrimination against women and ethnic minorities,

etc (Aloni http://eepat.net/doku.php?id=humanistic_education). Paulo Freire's work is considered in this paper as a good example of radical pedagogy. Freire was born in 1921 in Recife, Brazil, a place described by Shaul (2010:30) as "the center of one of the most extreme situations of poverty and underdevelopment in the Third World." This greatly influenced his life and his resolve to fight against poverty. As Shaul further points out, Freire observed that the oppressed were victims of economic, social and political domination which submerged them in ignorance and a culture of silence in which "critical awareness and response were practically impossible." Freire's philosophy of education is most clearly stated in his book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970; 2010).

According to Freire, the process of liberation requires the active reflection, through critical and liberating dialogue (2010:65), which can only be achieved through co-intentional education between teachers and students; leadership and people (2010:69). This education must be freed from its "narration sickness" in which "the teacher talks about reality as if it were motionless, static, compartmentalized, and predictable" (p.71). The contents of the teacher's narration are detached from the experience of the students. Freire elucidates: "Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are depositories and the teacher is a depositor. Instead of communicating the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat." This Freire calls the banking concept of education in which the students only participate as receivers, filers, and store-keepers of the deposits (p.72). The students thus lose their humanity, creativity and power to transform. In contrast, liberation education must remove the contradiction between teacher and students through reconciliation,

whereby both become simultaneously teachers and students (p.72). This would seem to question seriously any limitations of academic freedom to teachers rather than students.

According to Freire, “Those truly committed to liberation must... abandon the educational goal of deposit-making and replace it with the posing of problems of human beings in their relations with the world.” (p.79). This problem-posing education leads to consciousness and intentionality, rejecting communiqués and embodying communication. This creates a situation of dialogue between teachers and students. Freire says further, “The problem-posing educator reforms his reflections in the reflections of the students. The students – no longer docile listeners – are now critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher.” (pp.80-81). People begin to see the world in transformation, and establish an authentic form of thought and action.

Criticizing Freire’s thoughts, Jay and Graff (1995) argue that in Freirean dialogue, “the oppressed are free to decide only within limits” (p.203). Moreover, they continue, “Students who are not persuaded by radical politics cannot, by definition, be expressing an authentic desire. It cannot be their true selves speaking, but only the internalized voice of the oppressor” (p.203). In other words, they do not believe Freirean pedagogy is universally liberating. However, in Freire’s defense, Shor (1993:26) argues that “through problem-posing, students learn to question answers rather than merely to answer questions.” Moreover, she says, “The empowering education Freire suggests is...a democratic and transformative relationship between students and teachers, students and learning, and students and society” (p.27). Thus Freire’s ideas of a pedagogy of liberation do not suggest a singular way of authentic thought, but strongly suggest the need for academic freedom for students in the classroom, and the need to allow students to

question ideas, dialogue about them and propose their own ideas in the teaching-learning situation, which is the focus of this paper.

Focus on Students' Classroom Experience

A lot of literature is devoted to how students should be treated in the classroom. For example, Pazmino (1992:140) says categorically: "Every teacher should seek to influence students, but not to manipulate them." Jay and Graff's (1995) criticism of Freire is on the grounds that "efforts by teachers to empower students often end up reinforcing inequalities of the classroom," with teachers who promote progressive political doctrines being the worst culprits by "inverting the traditional practice of handing knowledge down to passive students who dutifully copy it into their notebooks" (p.202). However, Freire (2004:47) does say that, "the educator must not be ignorant of, underestimate or reject any of the 'knowledge of living experience' with which educands come to school." For him, it is not permissible "to conceal truths, deny information, impose principles, eviscerate the educands of their freedom, or punish them, no matter by what method, if for various reasons they fail to accept my discourse – reject my utopia" (p.70). It is obvious that Jay and Graff do not fully grasp the scope of Freirean radical pedagogy. However, all points of view seem to point strongly to the need for academic freedom for students in the classroom. To what extent can this be said to exist among Christian higher educational institutions in South Western Nigeria?

Academic Freedom for Students in the Classroom in South Western Nigeria

The following questions guided an opinion survey among teachers and students of three departments of religious studies of public universities, and three seminaries in South Western Nigeria:

1. What is the extent of academic freedom allowed to students?
2. What are the teachers' attitudes towards critical responses to the information or instruction they give students?
3. How do students perceive their liberty to interact with information or instruction by teachers?
4. What are the chances of radical pedagogy gaining general use as an approach in the classroom in Christian higher education?
5. What are the likely effects of the current state of academic freedom and radical pedagogy on classroom experiences in Christian higher education?

Research Design

An opinion survey was used to find out the extent of academic freedom for students in three departments of religious studies of universities and three seminaries in South Western Nigeria. Two questionnaires containing six propositions each were used to respectively obtain the opinion of teachers on the extent of freedom students should be given in the class room, and students' perceptions of the actual freedom they receive. For each proposition, four options were provided on a Likert scale as A. Strongly Agree, B. Agree, C. Disagree and D. Strongly Disagree.

The population of the research was made up of all teachers in religious studies departments of University of Ibadan (UNIBADAN), University of Ado-Ekiti (UNIADO), and University of Ilorin (UNILORIN); and all teachers in the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso (NBTSO); ECWA Theological Seminary, Igbaja (ETSI); and UMCA Theological College, Ilorin (UMCATC); as well as all 400 level students of the departments of religious studies of the three universities, and all 400 level students in the seminaries. While a purposive sampling technique was used for the teachers, whereby all teachers that were available received, filled and returned the questionnaire for teachers at their convenience; a block sampling technique was used for the students, whereby all 400 level students present in a classroom or chapel assembly were given the questionnaire for students to fill and return on the spot. Twelve teachers at UMCATC, 12 at ETSI, 27 at NBTSO, 10 at UNILORIN, 6 at UNIADO and 3 at UNIBADAN filled the questionnaire for teachers. Thirty students at UMCATC, 49 at ETSI, 30 at NBTSO, 49 at UNILORIN, 30 at UNIADO and 36 at UNIBADAN filled the questionnaire for students. Simple percentages were used to analyze the responses. The propositions and responses are presented in the tables below.

Table 1: Proposition 1: Students should be free to reject any information presented to them by teachers

OPTIONS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	StronglyDisagree	TOTAL
UMCATC	2 (16.7%)	3 (25%)	6 (50%)	1 (8.3%)	12
ETSI	0 (0%)	3 (25%)	7 (58.3%)	2 (16.7%)	12
NBTSO	4 (14.8%)	11 (40.74%)	7 (25.93%)	5 (18.52%)	27
UNILORIN	4 (40%)	4 (40%)	2 (20%)	0 (0%)	10
UNIADO	2 (33.33%)	1 (16.7%)	1 (16.7%)	2 (33.33%)	6

UNIBADAN	2 (66.7%)	0 (0%)	1 (33.33%)	0 (0%)	3
TOTAL	14 (20%)	22 (31.43%)	24 (34.3%)	10 (14.3%)	70

While the overall statistics for South Western Nigeria indicate that teachers in Christian higher education favored freedom of students to reject any information given to them, it was majority of teachers in the universities and NBTSO who actually favored such freedom, while the majority of teachers in UMCATC and ETSI did not.

Table 2: Proposition 2: Students should be free to present alternative information to that presented to them by teachers

OPTIONS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	TOTAL
UMCATC	2 (16.7%)	8 (66.7%)	1 (8.3%)	1 (8.3%)	12
ETSI	3 (25%)	7 (58.3%)	1 (8.3%)	1 (8.3%)	12
NBTSO	17 (63%)	10 (37.04%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	27
UNILORIN	2 (20%)	7 (70%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	10
UNIADO	2 (33.33%)	3 (50%)	0 (0%)	1 (16.7%)	6
UNIBADAN	1 (33.33%)	2 (66.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3
TOTAL	27 (38.6%)	37 (52.9%)	3 (4.3%)	3 (4.3%)	70

Majority of teachers in all the universities and the seminaries favored freedom of students to present alternative information to that given to them by teachers.

Table 3: Proposition 3: Students should be free to disagree with the teacher's declared or implied religious doctrine

OPTIONS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	StronglyDisagree	TOTAL
UMCATC	4 (33.33%)	5 (41.7%)	3 (33.33%)	0 (0%)	12
ETSI	3 (33.33%)	6 (50%)	3 (33.33%)	0 (0%)	12
NBTSO	5 (18.52%)	18 (66.7%)	4 (14.81%)	0 (0%)	27
UNILORIN	1 (10%)	9 (90%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	10
UNIADO	2 (33.33%)	2 (33.33%)	2 (33.33%)	0 (0%)	6
UNIBADAN	1 (33.33%)	2 (66.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3
TOTAL	16 (22.9%)	42 (60.%)	12 (17.14%)	0 (0%)	70

Majority of teachers in the universities and the seminaries agreed that students should be free to disagree with the teacher's declared or implied religious beliefs.

Table 4: Proposition 4: Students should be free to demand a different approach to teaching and learning

OPTIONS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	StronglyDisagree	TOTAL
UMCATC	1 (8.33%)	4 (33.33%)	5 (41.7%)	2 (16.7%)	12
ETSI	1 (8.33%)	5 (41.7%)	5 (41.7%)	1 (8.33%)	12
NBTSO	3 (11.11%)	15 (55.6%)	7 (25.93%)	2 (7.41%)	27
UNILORIN	0 (0%)	9 (90%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	10
UNIADO	2 (33.33%)	3 (50%)	1 (16.7%)	0 (0%)	6
UNIBADAN	0 (0%)	1 (33.33%)	2 (66.7%)	0 (0%)	3
TOTAL	7 (10%)	37 (52.9%)	20 (28.6%)	6 (8.6%)	70

An overall majority of teachers agreed that students are free to demand a different approach to teaching and learning, but in UMCATC and UNIBADAN the majority of teachers did not agree.

Table 5: Proposition 5: General academic freedom will lead to decline in learning

OPTIONS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	StronglyDisagree	TOTAL
UMCATC	0 (0%)	3 (33.33%)	6 (50%)	3 (33.33%)	12
ETSI	0 (0%)	5 (41.7%)	7 (58.3%)	0 (0%)	12
NBTSO	3 (11.11%)	4 (14.81%)	14 (51.9%)	6 (22.22%)	27
UNILORIN	2 (20%)	7 (70%)	1(10%)	0	10
UNIADO	0 (0%)	3 (50%)	2 (33.33%)	1 (16.7%)	6
UNIBADAN	1 (33.33%)	1 (33.33%)	0 (0%)	1 (33.33%)	3
TOTAL	6 (8.6%)	23 (32.9%)	29 (41.43%)	11 (15.71%)	67

While majority of teachers in the three seminaries disagreed that general academic freedom will lead to decline in learning, majority of teachers in the three universities agreed.

Table 6: Proposition 6: General academic freedom will erode the teacher's authority

OPTIONS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	StronglyDisagree	TOTAL
UMCATC	2 (16.7%)	6 (50%)	3 (33.33%)	1 (8.33%)	12
ETSI	2 (16.7%)	2 (16.7%)	8 (66.7%)	0 (0%)	12
NBTSO	4 (14.81%)	6 (22.22%)	13 (48.15%)	4 (14.81%)	27
UNILORIN	1 (10%)	7 (70%)	2 (20%)	0	10
UNIADO	1 (16.7%)	2 (33.33%)	3 (50%)	0 (0%)	6
UNIBADAN	1 (33.33%)	1 (33.33%)	0 (0%)	1 (33.33%)	3
TOTAL	11 (15.71%)	24 (34.3%)	29 (41.43%)	6 (8.6%)	67

While majority of teachers in the three seminaries disagreed that general academic freedom would erode the teacher's authority, in UNIADO opinions were evenly split, and the majority in UNILORIN and UNIBADAN agreed.

Apparently, while teachers in the seminaries were more skeptical about allowing academic freedom to students, they thought doing so would neither lead to decline in learning nor erode teachers' authority. On the other hand teachers in the universities were more positive about allowing academic freedom to students, but thought doing so would both lead to decline in learning and erode teachers' authority. This may be because universities have had a longer history with the struggle for and complexity of academic freedom, hence their acceptance of its importance but skepticism about its results; while the seminaries have not confronted the issue much, hence their skepticism about its importance, yet hopefulness about its results.

The responses of students to six propositions are displayed in the tables below.

Table 7: Proposition 1: You feel free to reject any information presented to you by teachers

OPTIONS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	StronglyDisagree	TOTAL
UMCATC	7 (23.33%)	8 (26.7%)	11 (36.7%)	4 (13.33%)	30
ETSI	14 (28.57%)	15 (30.61%)	12 (24.5%)	8 (16.33%)	49
NBTSO	4 (13.33%)	9 (30%)	13 (43.33%)	4 (13.33%)	30
UNILORIN	2 (4.1%)	21 (42.9%)	18 (36.73%)	8 (16.33%)	49
UNIADO	2 (6.7%)	6 (20%)	18 (60%)	4 (13.33%)	30
UNIBADAN	5 (13.9%)	14 (38.9%)	15 (41.7%)	2 (5.6%)	36
TOTAL	34 (15.2%)	73 (32.6%)	87 (38.4%)	30 (13.4%)	224

Overall, a slight majority of students in South Western Nigeria disagreed that they felt free to reject any information presented to them by teachers, though perceptions were evenly split in

UMCATC, and only a slight majority in UNIBADAN agreed, indicating that the overall picture of students' perceptions tended to contradict teachers' opinions.

Table 8: Proposition 2: You are encouraged by teachers to present alternative information to that presented to you by them

OPTIONS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	StronglyDisagree	TOTAL
UMCATC	6 (20%)	16 (53.33%)	6 (20%)	2 (6.7%)	30
ETSI	10 (20.41%)	18 (36.73%)	16 (32.7%)	5 (10.20%)	49
NBTSO	2 (6.7%)	11 (36.7%)	11 (36.7%)	6 (20%)	30
UNILORIN	7 (14.3%)	18 (36.73%)	18 (36.73%)	6 (12.24%)	49
UNIADO	5 (16.7%)	16 (53.33%)	8 (26.7%)	1 (3.33%)	30
UNIBADAN	5 (13.9%)	18 (50%)	9 (25%)	4 (13.33%)	36
TOTAL	35 (15.63%)	97 (43.3%)	68 (30.4%)	24 (10.71%)	224

Majority of students in UMCATC, ETSI and the three universities agreed that teachers encouraged them to present alternative information to that presented to them by teachers. In this there was overall agreement between teachers' opinions and students' perceptions, though majority of students in NBTSO disagreed.

Table 9: Proposition 3: You feel free to disagree with the teacher's declared or implied religious doctrine

OPTIONS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	StronglyDisagree	TOTAL
UMCATC	6 (20%)	15 (50%)	7 (23.33%)	2 (6.7%)	30
ETSI	12 (24.5%)	13 (26.53%)	15 (30.61%)	9 (18.4%)	49
NBTSO	2 (6.7%)	9 (30%)	8 (26.7%)	11 (36.7%)	30
UNILORIN	8 (16.33%)	16 (32.7%)	19 (38.8%)	6 (12.24%)	49
UNIADO	4 (13.33%)	12 (40%)	9 (30%)	5 (16.7%)	30
UNIBADAN	4 (13.9%)	12 (33.33%)	18 (50%)	2 (5.6%)	36

TOTAL	36 (16.1%)	77 (34.4%)	76 (33.93%)	35 (15.63%)	224
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While majority of students in UMCATC, ETSI and UNIADO agreed that they felt free to disagree with the teacher's implied or declared religious doctrine, majority of students in NBTSO, UNILORIN and UNIBADAN disagreed. This indicates complexity in the perception of students about freedom of religious expression against their teachers' views, though majority of teachers had expressed the opinion that students were free to reject their implied or religious doctrines.

Table 10: Proposition 4: You feel free to demand of the teachers a different approach to teaching and learning

OPTIONS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	TOTAL
UMCATC	7 (23.33%)	10 (33.33%)	10 (33.33%)	3 (10%)	30
ETSI	10 (20.41%)	17 (34.7%)	13 (26.53%)	9 (18.4%)	49
NBTSO	1 (3.33%)	13 (43.33%)	7 (23.33%)	9 (30%)	30
UNILORIN	2 (4.1%)	13 (26.53%)	19 (38.8%)	15 (30.61%)	49
UNIADO	1 (3.33%)	14 (46.7%)	10 (33.33%)	5 (16.7%)	30
UNIBADAN	5 (13.9%)	5 (13.9%)	20 (55.6%)	6 (16.7%)	36
TOTAL	26 (11.61%)	72 (32.14%)	79 (35.3%)	47 (21%)	224

Majority of students in UMCATC and ETSI felt free to demand a different approach to teaching by their teachers, but majority in NBTSO, UNILORIN and UNIBADAN disagreed,

while perceptions were evenly split in UNIADO. Again here there seemed to be an overall tendency of contradiction between the perceptions of students and the opinions of teachers.

Table 11: Proposition 5: General academic freedom will lead to decline in learning

OPTIONS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	StronglyDisagree	TOTAL
UMCATC	2 (6.7%)	4 (13.33%)	14 (46.7%)	10 (33.33%)	30
ETSI	7 (14.3%)	11 (22.45%)	18 (36.73%)	13 (26.53%)	49
NBTSO	4 (13.33%)	8 (26.7%)	12 (40%)	6 (20%)	30
UNILORIN	5 (10.2%)	6 (12.24%)	22 (44.9%)	16 (32.7%)	49
UNIADO	0 (0%)	3 (10%)	16 (53.33%)	11 (36.7%)	30
UNIBADAN	2 (5.6%)	4 (13.9%)	18 (50%)	12 (33.33%)	36
TOTAL	20 (8.93%)	36 (16.1%)	100 (44.64%)	68 (30.36%)	224

Majority of students in all the seminaries and all the universities disagreed that general academic freedom would lead to decline in learning. Students' majority perceptions agreed with seminary teachers' majority opinions but disagreed with university teachers' majority opinions.

Table 12: Proposition 6: General academic freedom will erode the teacher's authority

OPTIONS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	StronglyDisagree	TOTAL
UMCATC	2 (6.7%)	12 (40%)	13 (43.33%)	3 (10%)	30
ETSI	7 (14.3%)	16 (32.7%)	18 (36.73%)	8 (16.33%)	49
NBTSO	2 (6.7%)	11 (36.7%)	11 (36.7%)	6 (20%)	30
UNILORIN	3 (6.12%)	15 (30.61%)	24 (49%)	7 (14.3%)	49
UNIADO	0 (0%)	7 (23.33%)	20 (66.7%)	3 (10%)	30
UNIBADAN	1 (2.8%)	8 (22.22%)	22 (61.11%)	5 (13.9%)	36
TOTAL	15 (6.7%)	69 (30.8%)	108 (48.21%)	32 (14.29%)	224

Again, majority of students in all seminaries and universities disagreed that general academic freedom would erode the teacher's authority, which agreed with the opinions of majority teachers in all seminaries and UNILORIN, but not in UNIADO and UNIBADAN.

While the data represents a general complexity of perception about academic freedom among students of Christian religious studies and seminaries in South Western Nigeria, there seemed to be a general tendency towards contradiction between students' perceptions of the academic freedom they received and teachers' opinions of the academic freedom students should get. There seemed to be an overall feeling among teachers and students that academic freedom is important, though skepticism existed among some teachers about its usefulness, and among most students about its availability. This is probably because in Christian higher education the subject of academic freedom had not been much discussed, and may explain the existence of heterogeneity of perceptions and opinions.

Implications for Christian Higher Education

Christian higher education in South Western Nigeria reflects desire for, as well as caution about, academic freedom for students in the classroom among Christian intellectuals. However, there is an overall feeling among students that academic freedom in the classroom is not much available. While some caution in granting academic freedom to students in the classroom is advisable, the ideals of radical pedagogy of empowering students to contribute to knowledge are not likely to be much realized with the current level of freedom, and this will not be favorable to rigorous scholarship among Christians. Dockery (2007:73) calls for the reclamation, revitalization, renewal and revival of "the breadth and depth of the Christian intellectual tradition," which is not represented by the "anti-intellectual, personal, inward and subjective

faith we see around us in...popular forms of Christianity” (p.73). We must pursue excellence in all disciplines, so that Christian higher education may “take the lead in establishing a credible Christian presence in places often hostile to the gospel” (p.196). Objective scholarship in defense of Christian orthodoxy can be greatly enhanced by academic freedom in the classroom, within carefully considered parameters.

It must of course be recognized that academic freedom cannot be totally unfettered. As Diekema (2000:144) aptly points out,

It is clearly a mistake to believe that academic freedom is fully protected anywhere...there are orthodoxies everywhere: a professor who feels silenced in the classroom in order to prevent the charge of advocacy of a personal ideology; a student who feels intimidated in the classroom for a personal (albeit minority) point of view; a graduate student who feels constrained to pursue a dissertation project more in line with departmental orthodoxies than her own interests; a faculty candidate who is not hired because colleagues believe his research does not fit the department’s ideology.

Yet, since the great Christian intellectual tradition made progress due to some measure of academic freedom, and the radical pedagogy of Paulo Freire points out many dangers of putting shackles on freedom in learning, institutions that desire academic freedom from the government must be willing to accord it to teachers. Teachers in their turn must be willing to allow a good measure of academic freedom to students.

Conclusion

While some resistance to academic freedom in the classroom may be justified in terms of protecting useful orthodox systems against destructive doctrines, such protection may best be served when resistance is done with objectivity and rigorous scholarship. Careful listening to every novel approach will not only enable institutions and organizations to access useful new

ideas and approaches, but will help them to take thorough note of those things that ought to be rejected in order to more successfully preserve the integrity of their ideas or beliefs.

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