



## Moderating “Sign-Out” Celebrations in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions for Student Safety and Campus Order

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**Abstract:** The completion of final examinations in tertiary institutions often marks an important milestone in the academic journey of students. In many higher education institutions in Nigeria, final-year students celebrate the end of their studies through a social activity popularly known as “sign-out.” This celebration typically involves activities such as signing of shirts, dancing, spraying powders or paints, driving around the campus, and organizing small social gatherings among students. While sign-out celebrations are intended to express joy and relief after years of academic work, the uncontrolled nature of some of these activities has raised concerns among university administrators and the wider campus community. In some cases, sign-out celebrations have been associated with reckless driving, destruction of institutional facilities, noise disturbances, and even accidents leading to injuries or death. These incidents threaten campus safety and disrupt the academic environment. This paper discusses strategies for moderating sign-out celebrations in tertiary institutions to ensure that students can celebrate their academic achievements in a safe and responsible manner. The study highlights strategies such as the development of institutional policies, awareness campaigns, supervised celebration programs, strengthened campus security, student union collaboration, and disciplinary measures for misconduct. The paper concludes that effective moderation of sign-out celebrations can help protect lives, preserve institutional infrastructure, and maintain order within tertiary institutions while still allowing students to celebrate their academic accomplishments.

**Keywords:** Sign-out celebrations, tertiary institutions, Universities.



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## 1.0 Introduction

Tertiary institutions serve as centers for intellectual development, character formation, and preparation of young people for meaningful participation in society. These institutions provide students with opportunities to acquire knowledge, develop professional skills, and build values that shape their future careers and contributions to national development. In Nigeria, thousands of students graduate every year from universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education after completing several years of academic training and personal growth [1]. For many students, the completion of final examinations represents the end of a significant stage of their educational journey. As a result, final-year students often celebrate the completion of their academic programs through activities commonly referred to as “sign-out.” This celebration usually occurs immediately after students finish writing their last examination paper [2], [3]. It is often characterized by social gatherings, dancing, music, signing of shirts, spraying of powders or paints, and other forms of celebration among friends and classmates.

While the intention behind sign-out celebrations is to express joy and mark the completion of academic studies, the activities associated with these celebrations have increasingly raised concerns among university administrators and the wider campus community [4]. In some institutions, sign-out events have been linked to reckless driving within campus premises, excessive noise, damage to institutional facilities, and in extreme cases, injuries or loss of lives. The uncontrolled nature of some celebrations can disrupt academic activities and compromise campus safety.

These challenges have created a need for tertiary institutions to develop strategies that moderate and regulate sign-out celebrations without completely eliminating students’ opportunities to celebrate their achievements [5], [6], [7]. Proper management of such celebrations can help maintain discipline, protect institutional infrastructure, and ensure the safety of students and staff within the academic environment. Therefore, this paper examines the negative impact of sign-out celebration and strategies to Moderate “Sign-Out” Celebrations in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions for Student Safety and Campus Order.

## 2.0 Conceptual Terms

### 2.1 Concept of Tertiary Institutions

Tertiary institutions are micro section of the larger society. Tertiary institutions is an organized fraction of the whole society carved out for teaching programme, research and provision of community service. Tertiary institution can also be seen as a subset of the general society that is made of collection of different people, different culture, different life style and different value. Societies globally have been known to have some peculiar social problem and social issues. Social problems of most societies are migrated into the tertiary institutions because the societies and the tertiary institutions are inseparable to some extent (Ogunode, Edinoh, & Ibrahim, 2024). Tertiary institutions are post-secondary educational establishments that provide advanced education and professional training beyond the secondary school level. These institutions include universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, and specialized institutes that offer academic and vocational programs in various fields of study [8]. In Nigeria, tertiary institutions play a vital role in human capital development and national progress. Their primary functions include teaching, research, and community service. Through teaching, they equip students with the knowledge and skills required for professional practice. Through research, they contribute to the advancement of knowledge and the development of solutions to societal problems. Through community service, they engage with society to promote social and economic development. Tertiary institutions also serve as environments where students develop social relationships, leadership skills, and cultural awareness. Campus life exposes students to diverse experiences that contribute to their personal and social development [9]. Because of the large number of students and activities that take place within these institutions, maintaining discipline, safety, and respect for institutional regulations is essential for ensuring a conducive learning environment.

## 2.2 Concept of Sign-Out

Sign out syndrome refers to a social and anti-social activities graduating students involve into on the day they completed their final examination. Final year students engaged in all sort of anti-social activities such as pouring buckets of water on each other, writing on each other shirts and serious sexual orgies as a display of freedom from academic stress and campus life [10]. In Nigeria, Odok, noted that sign-out is becoming a symbolic and celebratory tradition among final-year students, marking the completion of their undergraduate studies and the anticipation of graduation. Ogunode remarked that sign out is a major social problem in the Nigerian tertiary institutions that needs urgent actions because its impact on human society portray the university in a bad light. Many students have lost their lives to the social problem on the day of graduation which ideally is meant to be a day of positive celebration turned into a day of mourning because of carelessness and recklessness thereby resulting to educational wastage on the part of the schools and economic wastage on the part of the parents and guardians [11].

From the above, Sign-out celebration refers to a social activity commonly practiced by final-year students in tertiary institutions to mark the completion of their final examinations or academic program. The celebration usually occurs immediately after students write their last examination paper, symbolizing the end of their academic journey as undergraduate or diploma students.

During sign-out celebrations, students often gather with friends and classmates to celebrate their achievement [12]. Common activities include writing congratulatory messages on shirts, dancing, singing, taking photographs, spraying powders or paints, and organizing small parties within the campus environment. The event is often seen as a moment of excitement, relief, and pride after years of academic effort. However, in recent years, sign-out celebrations in some tertiary institutions have become increasingly excessive and sometimes disorderly. Reports of reckless driving within campuses, destruction of school property, noise disturbances, and risky behaviors have raised concerns among administrators and security personnel [13]. In some unfortunate cases, accidents and injuries have been reported during these celebrations. These concerns highlight the importance of regulating and moderating sign-out celebrations to ensure that they remain safe and respectful. Proper guidelines, awareness campaigns, and structured celebration programs can help students celebrate responsibly while protecting the safety of individuals and institutional facilities [14].

## 3.0 Method

This study adopted a qualitative review model to examine the negative impacts of sign-out celebrations and strategies for moderating such activities in Nigerian tertiary institutions. The review model involves the systematic collection, analysis, and synthesis of existing literature and documented evidence on a subject.

Data for the study were obtained from secondary sources, including published journal articles, textbooks, institutional reports, and relevant newspaper reports documenting incidents related to sign-out celebrations in Nigeria. These sources were selected based on their relevance, credibility, and recency, particularly those that provided empirical or reported evidence of student behavior, campus safety issues, and administrative responses.

The study employed a thematic analysis approach, whereby information gathered from the reviewed materials was carefully examined and organized into key themes such as loss of lives, road accidents, injuries, security threats, and disruption of academic activities. Similarly, identified moderation strategies were grouped into themes including policy development, awareness creation, organized celebrations, and security enforcement.

The review method is appropriate for this study because it enables a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon without direct fieldwork, while drawing on documented experiences and expert opinions. This approach also allows for the integration of diverse perspectives to provide informed recommendations for improving student safety and campus order during sign-out celebrations.

## 4.0 Result and Discussion on Negative Impacts of Sign-Out Celebrations in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions and strategies to moderate Sign-Out Celebrations in Nigerian Tertiary

## **Institutions.**

### **Loss of Lives during Celebrations**

One of the most serious consequences of sign-out celebrations is the loss of lives among students and participants. In some cases, these celebrations involve risky gatherings, conflicts, or uncontrolled environments that can lead to fatal incidents. For instance, a final-year student of Ladoke Akintola University of Technology was reportedly shot and killed during a sign-out celebration held outside the campus [15]. The incident occurred during a gathering organized despite the institution's ban on such activities, highlighting the danger associated with uncontrolled student celebrations. This tragic incident demonstrates that what begins as a joyful celebration can sometimes turn into a life-threatening situation due to poor regulation, security risks, or external interference [16].

### **Road Accidents and Reckless Driving**

Another major negative impact of sign-out celebrations is reckless driving and motor accidents involving students. Many final-year students celebrate by driving in convoys or motorcades around campuses and nearby communities, often ignoring traffic rules. For example, a final-year student of Ambrose Alli University in Edo State died during a motorcade accident while celebrating his sign-out. Reports indicated that students drove recklessly in a convoy after completing their final examinations, which led to a collision that killed one student and injured several others. Such incidents reveal that uncontrolled celebration activities can expose students and other road users to significant dangers [17].

### **Injuries to Students and Bystanders**

Apart from fatalities, sign-out celebrations have also resulted in serious injuries to students and other individuals present during the celebrations. These injuries often occur during reckless driving, overcrowded gatherings, or unsafe celebratory actions. A newspaper report described an incident at the Institute of Management and Technology, Enugu where a recklessly driven vehicle crashed into students during a sign-out celebration, killing one person and injuring two others. The injured students were taken to hospital for treatment after sustaining serious injuries [18]. This example illustrates how unsafe celebration practices can quickly lead to physical harm and emotional trauma within the campus community.

### **Security Threats and Violence on Campus**

Sign-out celebrations sometimes attract unauthorized individuals into campus environments, creating security risks for students and staff [19], [20]. Large uncontrolled gatherings may allow outsiders to infiltrate campuses and engage in criminal activities. For example, the management of Nnamdi Azikiwe University banned sign-out ceremonies because the events had increasingly resulted in unruly gatherings, violence, and security threats. University authorities noted that unauthorized individuals often entered the campus during these celebrations, endangering students and disrupting academic activities. Such security concerns demonstrate why many institutions have begun restricting or banning sign-out celebrations.

### **Disruption of Academic Environment and Institutional Discipline**

Another negative effect of sign-out celebrations is the disruption of campus order and institutional discipline. These celebrations often involve loud music, excessive partying, and disorderly conduct that interfere with normal academic activities [21]. Reports indicate that several Nigerian universities have banned or restricted sign-out ceremonies because students often engage in undignified practices and disorderly behaviour that undermine the discipline and reputation of institutions. When celebrations become excessive, they can damage the image of tertiary institutions and create an environment that contradicts the values of discipline and academic excellence.

## **B- Strategies to Moderate Sign-Out Celebrations in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions**

### **Development of Institutional Policies on Sign-Out Activities**

One of the most important strategies for moderating sign-out celebrations is the development of

clear institutional policies that regulate such activities [22]. Many tertiary institutions do not have specific rules guiding how final-year celebrations should take place. The absence of clear guidelines often leads to excessive and uncontrolled celebrations. Institutional management should therefore develop policies that outline acceptable and unacceptable behaviors during sign-out celebrations. These policies may specify designated celebration areas, time limits for activities, and restrictions on certain behaviors such as reckless driving, vandalism, or the use of harmful substances [23]. When clear rules are established and communicated to students, it becomes easier to maintain order and prevent activities that may endanger lives or damage campus facilities.

### **Orientation and Awareness Programs for Final-Year Students**

Another important strategy is the organization of awareness programs to educate final-year students about responsible celebration practices. Many students may not fully realize the risks associated with some sign-out activities, particularly reckless driving or dangerous stunts during celebrations. University management, in collaboration with student affairs departments, can organize seminars, workshops, or orientation sessions for graduating students. These programs should emphasize safety, respect for institutional property, and responsible behavior during celebrations [24]. By educating students about the consequences of irresponsible actions, institutions can encourage them to celebrate in a more disciplined and respectful manner.

### **Creation of Organized and Supervised Celebration Events**

Rather than allowing spontaneous and uncontrolled celebrations across campus, institutions can organize structured sign-out events that are supervised by university authorities. These events may include official farewell ceremonies, campus concerts, photo sessions, or graduation countdown events organized in designated areas. When celebrations are organized and supervised, students are still able to celebrate their achievements, but the risks associated with disorderly behavior are significantly reduced. Organized events also create a sense of unity among graduating students and allow institutions to celebrate their achievements in a dignified manner [25].

### **Strengthening Campus Security and Monitoring**

Effective security presence during sign-out periods can help maintain order and prevent dangerous activities. Security personnel should monitor major campus areas where celebrations are likely to occur, including parking lots, hostels, and central campus spaces. Increased security monitoring can help prevent reckless driving, vandalism, and other activities that may threaten campus safety. Security officers can also guide students toward safe celebration practices and intervene when activities become unsafe or disruptive.

### **Collaboration with Student Union and Student Leaders**

Student leaders play an important role in influencing the behavior of their peers. University authorities should collaborate with student unions, departmental associations, and other student organizations to promote responsible sign-out celebrations. Student leaders can help communicate institutional guidelines to their colleagues and encourage responsible celebration practices. When students themselves take part in promoting discipline and safety, moderation efforts become more effective and widely accepted.

### **Designation of Specific Celebration Areas**

Another strategy is the designation of specific areas within the campus where sign-out celebrations can take place. Allowing celebrations to occur randomly across the campus often leads to disruption of academic activities and damage to facilities. Designated celebration areas can be selected based on safety considerations and the ability to accommodate large numbers of students. Such areas can be monitored by security personnel and equipped with basic facilities to ensure that celebrations occur in an orderly and safe manner.

### **Enforcement of Disciplinary Measures for Misconduct**

For moderation policies to be effective, institutions must enforce disciplinary measures against students who engage in dangerous or destructive behavior during sign-out celebrations. Clear



consequences should be communicated to students in advance. Disciplinary actions may include fines, suspension of graduation privileges, community service, or other institutional sanctions. When students know that misconduct will have serious consequences, they are more likely to behave responsibly during celebrations.

### **Promotion of Alternative Forms of Celebration**

Institutions can also encourage alternative ways for students to celebrate the completion of their studies. For example, universities may promote activities such as alumni networking events, career development workshops, community service projects, or organized farewell parties. These alternatives provide meaningful ways for students to mark the end of their academic journey without engaging in risky or destructive behaviors. They also help strengthen the connection between graduating students and their institutions.

### **4.1 Conclusion and Recommendations**

Sign-out celebrations have become a common tradition among final-year students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. These celebrations reflect students' excitement and relief after completing several years of academic study. However, the uncontrolled nature of some sign-out activities has created serious concerns regarding student safety, destruction of institutional facilities, and disruption of campus order.

Moderating sign-out celebrations does not mean preventing students from celebrating their achievements. Instead, it involves guiding students toward responsible and safe celebration practices that do not endanger lives or damage the reputation of their institutions. Strategies such as institutional policies, awareness programs, organized celebration events, security monitoring, collaboration with student leaders, and enforcement of disciplinary measures can help achieve this goal. Based on the findings, the study recommends the following

- 1) Tertiary institutions should develop formal policies regulating sign-out celebrations to ensure that such activities are conducted safely and responsibly.
- 2) University management should organize awareness programs for final-year students to educate them about the risks associated with reckless celebration practices.
- 3) Institutions should organize official and supervised sign-out events that allow students to celebrate their achievements in a structured and safe manner.
- 4) Campus security should be strengthened during sign-out periods to monitor activities and prevent dangerous behaviors such as reckless driving and vandalism.
- 5) Student unions and student leaders should be actively involved in promoting responsible celebrations among their peers.
- 6) Specific areas within campuses should be designated for sign-out celebrations to minimize disruption to academic activities.
- 7) Strict disciplinary measures should be enforced against students who violate institutional rules during sign-out celebrations.
- 8) Universities should encourage alternative forms of celebration such as farewell ceremonies, alumni events, and community service activities that promote positive campus culture.

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