

Student's perception of Strike Actions on Academic Performance in Nigeria University: Implications for Best Practices and Counselling

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated students' perception of Strike actions on Academic Performance in Nigeria University and its implications for best practices and counseling. The researcher stratified the participants into different strata of gender, academic level, institution attended. Simple random sampling technique was employed to select 1000 participants from four randomly selected Universities. The impact of Strike actions on Academic Performance Questionnaire (ISAAPQ) was administered to the respondents to collect relevant data. The t-test, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Chi-Square statistics were used to analyse the data collected. The major findings show that there is no significant difference in undergraduates' expressions on the impact of strike actions on academic performance based on gender and academic level while, there is the significant difference in undergraduates' expressions on the impact of strike actions on academic performance based on institution attended. The result of the findings also revealed the significant relationship between strike actions and students' academic performance in higher institutions of learning. Based on the conclusions of the study, recommendations has made that the Government should develop actions such as organizing meetings and interactive sessions; that will help to check incessant industrial action in the education sector in Nigeria; there should be a reduction of bureaucracies to enhance effective communication between ASUU officials and government bodies.

KEYWORDS

Perception; Strike actions; Academic Performance; Nigeria Universities; Best Practices; Counselling, Nigeria, Africa

INTRODUCTION

The formation of the Academics Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in 1978 has brought about some changes and challenges in the academic system of Nigerian universities. The academic member's staff see the union as a general body through which they can dialogue and channel their request and grievances to the school management and government. ASUU emerged as an intellectual force to challenge the powers that be and offer a credible alternative for our country (Umagbalsi, 2013). But in most cases when the expectations of the members of the AASU have not met by either the school authority or government, they often resort to industrial action without considering the negative multiple ripple effects on students, parents and the society at large. These are why some people in the society may see the activities of the union especially the industrial actions as an attempt to frustrate academic pursuit of Nigerian undergraduates.

In Nigeria, numerous industrial actions had been embarked on by the union to compel the government to meet the needs of public universities lecturers and schools especially in the areas of wages, allowances and infrastructural facilities in tertiary institutions. During such industrial actions, schools were to shut down for months; academic activities have paralyzed, and students and parents were frustrated. It should, however, be stressed that some of the numerous actions of the ASUU were intended to improve the welfare of the public university, lecturers, students and society at large. For instance, the union has actively involved in the struggles against the military regime during the 1980s. In 1988, the union organized the national strike to seek the increase in wages and University autonomy. As a result of that industrial action, the union has banned on 7th August 1988, and all its properties have seized. It is on record that several industrial actions had been embarked on after the ban lifted in 1990. The last one took place in 2013, and it lasted for almost six months.

These strike actions always lead to disruption of academic programs which may expose students to disjointed learning and it may encourage poor study habit among students. According to Odubela, (2012), an effective learning or an enhanced academic performance is achieved by the successful covering of the course outline before the examination. Maliki and Ekpekin-Ekanem (2011) opined that quality and quantity of students' learning determined by individual study habit. During strike actions, some students may engage themselves in unproductive activities such as sexual immorality, cyber scam, pool betting, playing video games, gossips, watching films and reading comic materials for entertainment purposes rather than reading the school notes. These may affect their academic performance. According to Arukaino (2013), the idling youths at home could cause security problems. Isangedighi (2011) opined that the way a stimulus excites or impacts on an individual would trigger his/her responses. These are an indication that students may lose the skill for preparedness and readiness to learn at the time of the strike. Hence their educational attainment becomes adversely affected.

Odubela (2012) also observed that disruption in academic program occasioned by strike action breeds disappointment, frustration, emotional and psychological trauma, unpreparedness on the part of the students and lack of motivation, which sum up to a non-conducive environment for active learning in Nigerian Universities, a situation that dampens human development.

However, little attention is given to the impact of strike actions on the academic performance of students in Nigerian universities. This study, therefore, intends to examine the impact of strike actions on the academic performance of undergraduate students.

The university worldwide is regarded as the citadel of knowledge, the fountain of intellectualism, the most appropriate ground for the incubation of leaders of tomorrow. However, over the last thirty years in Nigeria, the University system has witnessed unprecedented industrial actions than other social institution.

Statistics from the National Universities Commission (2002) revealed that from 1992 up to the present, ASUU had embarked on strikes over 23 times to drive home its demands. The last one in 2013 lasted for more than six months. The table below shows the records of AASU strike.

Table 1. AASU Strike by Year

Year of Strike	Duration
1999	5 months
2001	3 months
2002	2 months
2003	6 months (ended in 2004)
2005	3 days
2006	1 week
2007	3 months
2008	1 week
2009	4 months
2010	5 months & 1 week
2013	2 months, 2 weeks
2014	6 months
2015	-
2016	3 days

These numerous strike actions that always led to the disruption of academic school calendar may be one of the factors responsible for falling standard of education in Nigeria, and it could be responsible for reasons while many Nigerians students prefer to attend the tertiary institution in neighboring countries, especially in Ghana. This research, therefore, examines the impact of strike actions on academic performance as expressed by undergraduates in the south-west, Nigeria.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To determine the impacts of strike action on academic performance as expressed by undergraduates;
2. To find the difference in undergraduates' expression on the impact of strike actions on academic performance based on gender;
3. To determine difference in undergraduates' expression on the impact of strike actions on academic performance based on academic level;
4. To examine the difference in undergraduates' expression on the impact of strike actions on academic performance based on the institutions attended;
5. To trace the significant influence of strike actions on students' academic performance in higher institutions of learning.

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey method was adopted for the study. The target population for this study consists of undergraduates from public universities in South-west Nigeria. The undergraduates were chosen because they are always at the receiving end during a strike.

The researcher was employed simple random sampling technique in selecting four public universities in South-West, Nigeria, while (50) students were selected from each of the schools. Two hundred (200) participants formed the sample for the study. The instrument used for data collection is a researcher self-developed questionnaire titled “Impact of Strike Action on Academic Performance.” (ISAAP). The questionnaire is a four point scale of Strongly agree” (SA), “Agree” (A), “Strongly disagree” (SD) to “Disagree” (D) with the value of 4, 3, 2, 1” respectively. It has two sections. Section A was used to collect demographic data of the respondents while section B consists of 20 items on an impact of strike actions on academic performance.

Frequency counts, simple percentage, and charts were used to analyze the demographical data of the participant, while t-test, ANOVA, and Chi-square were used to analyze the research questions raised to guide the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The number of male students sampled was 500 while that of the female was also 500 amounting to 50% each. It can be seen that 280 (28%) out of the total number of the participant were 100 level students while 180 participants representing 18% were in 200 level. The table and the figure also reveal that 245 undergraduates representing 24.5% were in 400 level. It can be seen that 755 out of the total number of the undergraduates were running a 4-year program which represents 77.5% while 210 undergraduates, representing 21% of the respondents, were doing a 5-year course. It reveals that 680 undergraduate students, representing 68% had experienced ASUU strike while 320 (32%) students had not witnessed it. Same 120 out of the total number of the undergraduates had witnessed a strike action that lasted for about 3 months which represents 17.7% while 75.7% (515) of the students had experienced a strike action of about 6 months. The table and the figure also reveal that 20 undergraduates had witnessed a strike action that lasted for about a year.

Table 2. Impacts of strike action as expressed by undergraduates

S/N	Items –	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D
1	The constant ASUU strike experienced in the educational system is caused by irresponsiveness of government to the needs of academic staff.	810 81%	165 16.5%	20 2%	5 0.5%	3.78	.49
2	ASUU strike paralyses all activities in schools.	710 71%	260 26%	25 2.5%	5 0.5%	3.67	.54
3	Strike always leads to disruption in the school calendar.	790 79%	190 19%	20 2%	- -	3.77	.46
4	ASUU strike has been a major factor why some students go to private university.	650 65%	270 27%	60 6%	20 2%	3.55	.69
5	The frequent strike actions contributed to the decline in the quality of education in Nigeria higher education.	660 66%	270 27%	45 4.5%	25 2.5%	3.56	.69
6	Lecturers rush the course outline, tests, and assignment when the schools resume from ASUU strike.	690 69%	250 25%	35 3.5%	25 2.5%	3.60	.67
7	Strike actions always affect students CGPA.	425 42.5%	295 29.5%	235 23.5%	45 4.5%	3.10	.91
8	Poor quality of graduates produced is due to frequent strike actions by ASUU.	450 45%	340 34%	165 16.5%	45 4.5%	3.19	.87
9	The disruption of the school calendar always has influence on academic performance of students.	520 52%	360 36%	75 7.5%	45 4.5%	3.35	.80
10	ASUU strike is always based on Academic staff selfish Interest.	255 25.5%	260 26%	205 20.5%	280 28%	2.49	1.15
11	Strikes can be avoided if lecturers and government can come into mutual agreement.	495 49.5%	450 45%	30 3%	25 2.5%	3.41	.67
12	ASUU members are to be blamed for incessant strike actions	100 10%	350 35%	315 31.5%	235 23.5%	2.31	.94
13	ASUU Strike actions always increase failure rate of students.	165 16.5%	495 49.5%	263 26.5%	75 7.5%	2.75	.81

14	Strike actions always affect students study habit.	190 19%	590 59%	175 17.5%	45 4.5%	2.92	.73
15	Students engage in deviant behavior like prostitution, stealing, and raping during strike action.	305 30.5%	520 52%	120 12%	55 5.5%	3.07	.80
16	Students find it difficult to concentrate on their studies after the strike action.	190 19%	510 51%	250 25%	50 5%	2.84	.78
17	Students are not given enough time to prepare for examination after the strike action.	380 38%	475 47.5%	105 10.5%	40 4%	3.19	.78
18	Fresher's are affected more by the strike action than satellites	305 30.5%	395 39.5%	230 23%	70 7%	2.93	.90
19	Students are not motivated to attend classes after the strike action.	190 19%	540 54%	210 21%	60 6%	2.86	.78
20	Federal government should abolish ASUU.	195 19.5%	265 26.5%	340 34%	200 20%	2.45	1.02

Table 2 revealed that 975 representing 97.3% of the undergraduates agreed that the constant ASUU strike experienced in the educational system as caused by the responsiveness of government to the needs of the academic staff while 970 representing 97% of the undergraduates indicated that ASUU strike paralyzes all activities in schools. The table also reveals that 98% (980) of the undergraduates agreed that strike always leads to disruption in the school calendar while 92% (920) of the respondents agreed that ASUU strike had been a major factor why some students go to private university. It can also be seen in the table that 930 (93%) of the undergraduates agreed that the numerous strike actions contributed to the decline in the quality of education in Nigeria higher education. Also, 880 (88%) of the respondents agreed that disruptions of the school calendar always have the influence on the academic performance of students.

Table 3. Summary of t-test Analysis of significance difference in undergraduates' expression on the impact of strike actions on academic performance based on gender

Gender	N	X	SD	DF	T	Sig.	Remark
Male	100	63.700	6.701	998	1.896	.059	Not significant
Female	100	62.000	5.959				

*Denote significance at $P < 0.05$

The results of the findings in Table 3 revealed that there is no significant difference in undergraduates' expression on the impact of strike actions on academic performance based on gender ($t = 1.896$, $df = 998$, $p > 0.05$). These implied that the expression of male undergraduates on the impact of strike actions on academic performance is not significantly different from that of their female counterparts.

Table 4. Summary of Analysis of Variance on the significant difference in undergraduates' expressions on the impact of strike actions on academic performance based on academic level.

Source: Academic Levels	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	389.054	5	77.811	1.956	.087	Not significant
Within Groups	7716.446	994	39.775			
Total	8105.500	999				

*Denote significance at $P < 0.05$

The results in Table 4 show that there is no significant difference on undergraduates expressions on the impact of strike actions on academic performance based on academic level ($F(5,994) = 1.96$, $p > 0.05$). These implied that the expressions of undergraduates on the impact of strike actions on academic performance are not significantly different based on academic level.

Table 5. Summary of Analysis of Variance on the significant difference in undergraduates' expression on the impact of strike actions on academic performance based on the institutions attended

Source: Institutions attended	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	394.080	4	98.520	2.491*	.045	Significant
Within Groups	7711.420	995	39.546			
Total	8105.500	999				

*Denote significance at $P < 0.05$

Table 5 shows that there is a significant difference in undergraduates expression on the impact of strike actions on academic performance based on institutions attended ($F(4,995) = 2.491, p < 0.05$). These implied that the expression of undergraduate students on the impact of strike actions on academic performance is significantly different based on institutions attended.

Table 6. Summary of Chi-square analysis on the relationship between strike actions and students' academic performance in higher institutions of learning

N	X	S.D.	D.F.	χ^2 Cal.	Sig.	Remark
1000	3.143	.779	285	59.920*	.009	Significant

*Denote significance at $P < 0.05$

Table 6 reveals the result of the significant relationship between strike actions and students' academic performance in higher institutions of learning. The result shows that there is a significant influence of strike actions on students' academic performance in higher institutions of learning ($\chi^2 = 59.92, df = 285, p < 0.05$). These implied that the academic performance of students in higher institutions of learning has significantly influenced by the industrial actions embarked upon by ASUU.

The findings of the study revealed that 97.5% (975) of the undergraduates agreed that the constant ASUU strike experienced in the educational system is caused by the responsiveness of government to the needs of academic staff while 970 (97%) of the undergraduates indicated that ASUU strike paralyzes all activities in schools. The table also reveals that 98% (980) of the undergraduates agreed that strike always leads to disruption in the school calendar while 92% (920) of the respondents agreed that ASUU strike had been a major factor why some students go to private university. It can also be seen in the table that 930 (93%) of the undergraduates agreed that the numerous strike actions contribute to the decline in the quality of education in Nigeria higher education. While 880 (88%) of the respondents agreed that disruptions of the school calendar always have influence on academic performance of students.

The finding of the study is in line with the finding of Kazeem and Ige (2010) that disruption in an academic program resulting from strike led to a closure of universities for a period thereby affecting the academic activities of universities. The study also corroborates the observation of Edinyang & Ubi (2013), and Olusegun (2014), that instability in school calendar through strike elongates study period and hampers the academic activities.

Another finding of this study shows that there is no significant difference between male and female undergraduates on the impact of strike actions on their academic performance. These implied that the perception of male undergraduates on the impact of strike actions on their academic performance is not significantly different from that of their female counterparts. The findings of this study are in consonance with Kazeem and Ige (2010), that, during strike action, no academic activity takes place at the institutions and upon resumption students at most times are not given the opportunity to make up for the lost times.

It was also revealed in this study that there is no significant difference among various levels of academic sessions of undergraduate students on the impact of strike actions on their academic performance. These implied that the perception of undergraduate students on the impact of strike actions on their academic performance is not significantly different based on their various levels of academic sessions. This result is supported by Edinyang and Ubi (2013) that, effective learning is always hampered by an inability to complete the curriculum and or syllabus before the examination. Adesulu (2014), submitted that ASUU strike has affected the quality of graduates from Nigerian universities as the time lost for lecture delivery due to strikes was not gained after the strike. Similarly, Olusegun (2014) reported that one of the negative impacts of ASUU strike was the lowering of quality of graduates from Nigerian universities as the time that should have been used for teaching the curriculum was lost during the strikes.

Findings in Table 3 revealed that there is a significant difference among undergraduate students on the impact of strike actions on their academic performance based on the institutions attended. These implied that the perception of undergraduate students on the impact of strike actions on their academic performance is significantly different based on the institutions attended. The reasons for the difference in the expressions of undergraduates on impacts of strike maybe because some universities experience strike actions than others especially when it has to do with the internal problem then is not general to all universities.

Furthermore, the result of this study also revealed that there is a significant influence of strike actions on students' academic performance in higher institutions of learning. These implied that the academic performance of students in higher institutions of learning is significantly influenced by the strike actions embarked upon by the university workers (academic and non-academic staff). The outcome of the study was similar to that of Iheanacho (2002) and Isangedighi (2007), who reported that effective learning has achieved when students are emotionally and psychologically stable. They stressed that during strike action, students become emotionally and psychologically unstable especially on the perception that it would cause them to stay at the institution longer than expected. Hence, it affects their learning habit.

The findings of the study also supported the reports of Edinyang and Ubi (2013) that disruption in academic program through strike action affects the quality and quantity of students' learning habit. The disruption affects their concentration, interaction with fellow students and teachers. The finding of the study is also in agreement with the belief of Isangedighi (2011) that strike action has the negative effect on students' learning ability. He added that students lost preparedness and readiness to learn at the time of the strike.

Hence, their educational attainment becomes adversely affected. Similarly, the finding of the study is in line with the report of Edinyang and Ubi (2013) that disruptions in academic programs serves as the non-motivational factor to the students as it hinders their learning habit. The study also supported the findings of Gabriel (2014), that during a strike, the enthusiasm of reading habit of students would be lost.

Implications for Best practices in Education and Counselling

1. The government should develop actions such as organizing meetings and interactive sessions; that will help to check incessant industrial action in the education sector in Nigeria.
2. There should be the reduction of bureaucracies to enhance effective communication between ASUU officials and government bodies.
3. ASUU officials should always try to avoid any of their decisions that will lead to strike actions.
4. The school management should be sensitive to the needs of ASUU.
5. Counselors in Nigerian Universities should be organizing the capacity workshop on how to improve negotiating and dialogue skills for academic staff.
6. The school counselors should help the students to develop good study habit skills to enable them to study inside and outside the school.

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