AJEMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.13 (1), September-December, 2024 https://ajemates.org

ANALYSES ON THE CAUSES OF ASUU STRIKE AND ITS PERCEIVED IMPACT ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF THE STUDENT OF NNAMDI AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY, AWKA

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ABSTRACT

This research work investigated the causes of ASUU strike and its impact on the academic performance of the students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Three Specific purposes and three research questions guided the study. A descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The population of the study comprised of one thousand and fifty (1050) final year students from the departments in the faculty of education, however random sampling was used to select (200) two hundred students for the data analysis. A structured questionnaire was used to solicit for responses from the respondents and the data gathered was analyzed using mean. The findings of the study recognized the causes of strike actions and its impact on the academic performance of students. It was among others recommended that the government and university administration should establish and strengthen student support services, such as counselling, mentoring, and academic guidance. These services can help students cope with the challenges posed by strike periods and provide them with the necessary support to stay motivated and focused on their studies.

Keywords: Education, ASSU, Strike and Academic performance on students.

Introduction

Education is the panacea that liberates individuals from slavery while the university is the brain box of a nation and the key to success. As such, Adamu and Nwogo (2014) assert that education plays a lead role in ensuring the transformation of countries from developing to developed nations. Students across various institutions of higher learning in Nigeria are constantly faced with strike actions most especially by the known Academic Staff Union of various higher

institutions. Most of these strike actions are caused by a disagreement between the government and the unions of various institutions, arising from the non-implementation or partial implementation of former agreements reached. The disagreement or lack of understanding between the government and the academic community often results in a deadlock that usually disrupts the academic calendar. As learning is suspended for a long period, the student's reading abilities fall. Even the knowledge acquired during the learning period is even forgotten by some students. This mostly turns some students into certificate seekers rather than knowledge seekers. The after effect is a prolonged school year that exceeds stipulated periods. This is one major cause of producing unqualified graduates who are deficient in their fields of study. In the same vein, students who are supposed to do a four-year course end up spending six years in the school for a simple programme. Such strike periods also have the tendency of leading undergraduates into some social vices like prostitution, oil bunkering etc. There is, therefore, the need for a re-evaluation of the education sector. A strike simply means a stoppage of work for a while in order to allow the employers to yield to workers' agitation or demand. It is a means of protest against some unpalatable occurrence. Tahir (2013) as well as Adamu and Nwogo (2014) reported that trade unions such as ASUU, usually embark on various actions over agitations for the improvement of their welfare, teaching and research facilities and university autonomy. Since the inception of the union, Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in 1978, the union has undergone a series of industrial action that amounts to 25 strike actions apart from the internal strike by the various chapters of the union, statistics from the National Universities Commission (2014). The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) was a subset of the Nigerian Association of university teachers formed in 1965. The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) gained autonomy in 1978 and began to operate as a union that fights for the rights of its members. The union is saddled with the responsibility of assisting the stakeholder in attaining the aimed classic standard of education through the provision of quality education in the Nigerian university system. Furthermore, the union also supports the struggle just like another union to ensure adequate welfare of her members, job security for her members and facilitate the enabling working environment for her members. In Nigeria, just like in other nations, studies have shown that whenever workers are demanding or agitating for certain entitlement or changes, they embark on strike. The first industrial strike of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) as reported by Olusegun (2014) commenced in 1988 during the military regime of General Gadamosi Ibrahim, Babangida which lasted for one year and nine months. The strike was anchored on fair wages for the union member, setting up a joint negotiation committee between the federal government and the university staff union and university autonomy. The strike led to the prescription

of ASUU on the 7th of August 1988 and this also resulted in the seizure of ASUU properties and the union was banned by the federal government. Despite the importance of stability in the school calendar on education, the incessant ASUU strike action in the country has become worrisome and destabilized the programme of the educational sector. It is on record that, from 1988 to 2013, the national body of the union embarked on 16 strike actions. Abdulsalam (2013) reported that ASUU organised strikes in 1988, 1992, 1994 and 1996. Aghatise (2013) further reported that in the present dispensation, ASUU had organized strikes in the years 1999, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011-2012 2013, 2017, 2018, 2020 and 2022. Besides these, local chapters also do organise their branch strike actions from time to time. The persistent ASUU strikes in Nigeria have disrupted school academics, left academic activities of universities disjointed, and distracted the normal learning process. According to Kazeem and Ige (2010), disruption in academic programs resulting from strikes led to the closure of universities for a period of time thereby affecting the academic activity of universities. Edinyang and Ubi (2013), and Olusegun (2014), maintained that instability in the school calendar through strikes elongates study periods and hampers their academic activities. Meanwhile, the impact of the ASUU strike on the academic performance of students is very disturbing and in every way evident as this industrial action has disrupted the academic activities of the university for years while the quality of education given to students is getting poorer every session due to the incessant industrial action by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). Kazeem and Ige (2010) reported that the disruption of academic activities resulting from the industrial action of the ASUU has crippled the Nigerian educational system as the product of the Nigerian tertiary institution is nothing to write home about due to the disrupted academic calendar. Asides the disruption of academic activities, there is also the issue of interrupted academic calendar of the tertiary institution and elongated study period for the students. (Edinyang and Ubi, 2013; Olusegun, 2014; Adamu and Nwogo, 2014) thus discouraging the interest of students upon resumption. Nnamdi Azikiwe University, like many other universities in Nigeria is not left out as it has similarly experienced several strikes in recent years. It is on the basis that this study is carried out to examine the effect of strike actions on the quality of education at Nnamdi Azikiwe It has been observed that strikes in higher institutions have become a recurring phenomenon in Nigeria which has resulted in extended disruptions to the academic calendar and hence a reduced quality of education. The constant strike action by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has inadvertently affected the academic programmes in Nigerian Universities and as a result, has brought about a very poor standard in the education sector. It is of utmost importance to note that the longer students are kept away from school, the dimmer the hope or belief they have time towards the national

education system. Hence, it is only expected that they disconnect from their academics and become involved in other activities. Idleness and boredom can take a toll on a student's mental health and can sometimes lead to depression and anxiety. Some of these students especially female students even go ahead to get married and give birth, the males on the other side might decide learn a trade or start a business and in some cases, certain students get involved in criminal activities such as Fraud, popularly referred to as "yahoo,yahoo", armed robbery, and kidnapping among others. Nnamdi Azikiwe University, among other universities in Nigeria, has experienced its fair share of strikes and in essence also experienced the impact of these disruptions on the quality of education of her students. This study therefore seeks to investigate the causes of ASUU strikes and its impact on the academic performance of the students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University,

Strike: A strike is an organised collective cessation or slowdown of work by employees, to force acceptance of their demands by the employer (Omeje and Ogbu, 2019). For a strike to be legal, it must be approved by the majority of the employees in a secret ballot. The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) is one of the staff unions in the universities. It fights for the rights and welfare of its members; improves and revamps the universities in Nigeria. It also ensures adequate job security and an enabling working environment for its members and students (Shaibu, Mohammed and Aliyu, 2018). It uses strikes to draw the attention of the government to the deplorable state of teaching and learning in universities (Igbokwe, and Ogbonna, 2018). When strikes are extended, it makes lecturers rush academic work and essential aspects of the curriculum. The timetables of semesters are slashed short and the students are given lots of assignments within a short period to complete and submit their works which affect graduate employability.

Across the country over the past two decades, strikes have become a regular occurrence in Nigerian universities. Albert (2015) observes that universities in Nigeria embarked on a nationwide strike to pressure the government for a pay increase for the second time in one year. Hominh (2014) complained that such industrial action is likely to become common on campuses. Academic activities in almost all of Nigeria's universities have been disrupted; teachings and semester examinations in some 38 universities have been brought to a standstill (Albert, 2015).

Unfortunately, neither the university staff nor the government seems to realise what damage has been done to the quality of education as well as students' information-seeking behaviours. With several strikes, students' education will be interrupted. The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) prefers to go on strike during active academic sessions, with hopes of giving them an undue advantage. Going on strike during an academic session is no act of fate, but a calculated process that jeopardies students' education, as one that will yield an

advantage during negotiation. A sequel to the 2007 University and College Staff Union (UCSU) strike in Great Britain, where union leaders celebrated a successful strike action (Taiz, 2008), it seems unlikely that striking staff could achieve their demands without using students as human shields. Even to this extent, students from the University of Ibadan, returned to school to find lecturers insisting they would not resume lectures (Fatunde, 1996).

Influence on Education: Particularly in Nigeria, strike has been used as a weapon ready to be unleashed at the slightest dispute between university staff and government, as described by Ajadi (2010) "Nigeria has a peculiar attitude of providing individual solutions to social problems" (p.20). What more can be said to refute this when experiences over the years show how it has been used? It is no longer nationwide strike, and universities in Nigeria have been thrown into chaos after workers voted to walk out over unpaid allowances and job se security (Owoseje, 2013).Addressing a crowd of French journalists in 1999, Soyinka reported that most Nigeria universities are on strike and that means, if you add the total number of months when higher education institutions have been on strike in the past four years, you will hardly find one complete academic year when the universities have been functioning. Students are constantly the scapegoat of a system that targets them, and their woes are worrisome. Albert (2015) remarked that "what makes strike a nightmare is its frequency" and on that note affects the academic year, which was already disrupted early in the year (p.5). Neglect and constant strike interfering with students' education creates a systemic self-destruction mechanism. Crawford (2014) "The college cannot condone industrial action that will impact on the quality of our student's education" (para.12). Families are suffering and sharing in this distress.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of the study is to investigate the causes of ASUU strike and its impact on the academic performance of the students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Precisely, the study focuses on:

1. Investigating the causal factors that gives rise to the needs for strike actions by ASUU in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.
2. Determining how the incessant action of strike by ASUU affects the academic performance of the students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
3. Determining the strategies that can be used to minimize the negative impacts of the ASUU strike actions on the academic performance of the students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University

Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide the study:

1What are the causal factors that give rise to the needs for strike actions by ASUU in Nnamdi Azikiwe Universities?

2. How does the incessant action of strike by ASUU affect the academic performance of the students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?

3. What are the strategies that can be used to minimize the negative impacts of strike actions on the academic performance of the students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University?

Research Method

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design being that information is obtained through verbal discussion and distribution of a questionnaire to the respondent at Nnamdi Azikiwe University. Research design, also called a research strategy, is a plan to answer a set of questions (McCombes, 2019). It is a framework that includes the methods and procedures to collect, analyse, and interpret data on preparing students to become competent and effective educators. The faculty offers a range of undergraduate and postgraduate programs that are designed to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for teaching and learning in various educational settings. The faculty of education is one of the 14 Faculties of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and has ten departments. These departments include; Educational Management and Policy, Adult and Continuing Education, Early Childhood and Primary Education, Education Foundations, Guidance and Counseling, Human Kinetics and Sports Science, Health Promotion and Public Health, Library and Information Science, Science Education and Technology and finally Department of Technology and Vocational Education.

The population of the study consisted of all final year (400L) students of the regular programme from the ten Departments of the Faculty of Education with a population of 1050 at the time the study was carried out. (Sources: Departmental Offices in Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka).

The sample for the study was 200 regular students of the faculty of education. The random sampling technique was adopted to ensure that each department from the area of study had an equal opportunity of being represented based on the proportion to the population of the study. Twenty per cent (20%) of the population were randomly selected from each department. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled; **"**The Causes of ASUU Strike and its Impact on the Academic Performance of Students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka (TCASIAPSNAU)**".** This was used for collecting data from the respondents. It was administered to ascertain how strike actions affect the quality of education. It was structured in four clusters representing the four research questions with twenty (20) statements for information on the topic under investigation. The questionnaire was designed for the final year (400L) students of the faculty of education and the facts used to construct the questionnaire came from the framework of the study. The questionnaires were administered to students in the

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institution. A face-to-face method of data administration was used and data was generated from the questionnaires distributed, hence giving a primary data. Responses from the questionnaire were analyzed using the Simple percentage with tables in analyzing the data. The responses of each item of the research questions were tallied and weighted using four (4) likert type scale of Strongly Agree (4points) Agree (3points), Disagree (2points) and Strongly Disagree (1point). The arithmetic mean was used to analyse the data collected. The mean (X) for each item was obtained using the formula

$$X = \frac{\sum F}{N}$$

Where:
X= mean,
$\sum$ = add together.
F = frequency of occurrence,
N = number of events or observations.
Also, the cut of the mean of 2.50 was computed as follows: $\frac{4+3+2+1}{4} = \frac{10}{4} = 2.50$

The total weighted frequencies were used to determine the mean scores of each item. Mean scores from 2.50 was considered accepted while mean score below 2.50 was considered rejected. The mean was used to analyze the research questions posed for the study.

This chapter deals with the presentation of the result of this study. Data collected with respect to the research questions were analysed descriptively using mean scores.

Research Question One: What are the causal factors that give rise to the needs for strike actions by ASUU in Nnamdi Azikiwe Universities?

Analysis of Data

Table 1: Mean rating on the causal factors that gives rise to the needs for strike actions by ASUU in Nnamdi Azikiwe Universities

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Remark
1.	Non-implementation of agreements with government	88	65	27	20	200	3.1	Agreed
2.	Poor physical condition of workers in universities	100	58	26	16	200	3.2	Agreed
3.	Delay in payment of outstanding salary arrears	107	55	25	18	200	3.3	Agreed
4.	Inadequate funding of the universities in Nigeria	95	47	30	28	200	3.0	Agreed
5.	Corruption on the part of university administration	96	55	29	20	200	3.1	Agreed

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Grand mean	**3.1**	Agreed

Table 1 shows that the respondents agreed with items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 with mean scores of 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.0 and 3.1 respectively. The grand mean score of 3.1 implies that the respondents agreed that, Non-implementation of the revised salary structure, Poor physical condition of work in universities, Delay in payment of elongated salary structure, Inadequate funding of school systems, and High handedness and corruption on the part of university administration are some of the causal factors that gives rise to the needs for strike actions by ASUU in Nnamdi Azikiwe Universities.

Research Question Two: How does the incessant action of strike by ASUU affect the academic performance of the students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?

Table 2: Mean ratings on the incessant action of strike by ASUU affect the academic performance of the students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Remark
1.	Disruption in academic programme causes students to have extended years of stay	100	60	25	15	200	3.2	Agreed
2.	Long extensions of strike actions may cause students to forget what was already taught	75	47	35	43	200	2.7	Agreed
3.	Due to long breaks in academic session students may develop waning interest in academics	90	52	35	23	200	3.0	Agreed
4.	Rushed academic calendar may cause burnout for the students	95	60	28	17	200	3.1	Agreed
5.	Due to idleness, students may indulge in deviant behaviours	63	49	45	43	200	2.5	Agreed
	Grand Mean					**200**	**2.9**	

Table 2 shows that the respondents agreed with items 1,2,3,4 and 5 which have the mean scores of 3.2, 2.7, 3.0, 3.1 and 2.5 affects the academic performance of the students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The Grand Mean showed an agreement on items 1-5 as effects of ASUU strike on the academic performance of the students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Research Question 3: What strategies can be used to minimize the negative impacts of strike actions on the academic performance of the students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University?

Table 3: Mean ratings on strategies that can be used to minimize the negative impacts of strike actions on the academic performance of the students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Total

1.	Government should establish transparent lines of communication between themselves and university administration to address concerns promptly.	95	55	35	15	200	3.2	Agreed
2.	They should provide negotiation and conflict resolution training for both university administrators and faculty to enhance their skills in resolving disputes amicably.	90	52	34	24	200	3.0	Agreed
3.	Government should ensure fair and competitive compensation policies for addressing salary issues and other financial concerns that may contribute to dissatisfaction.	93	58	28	21	200	3.1	Agreed
4.	Government should involve university representatives in decision-making processes that directly affect their working conditions to ensure their voices are heard.	91	70	22	17	200	3.2	Agreed
5.	Government should conduct regular surveys to assess the satisfaction levels of staff and students, and use the feedback to make informed decisions and improvements.	90	52	35	23	200	3.0	Agreed
	Grand mean						**3.1**	

Table 3 shows that the respondents concur with items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 as listed above with mean scores of 3.2, 3.0, 3.1, 3.2, and 3.0 respectively. The overall mean goes to equally show that the items listed in items 1 through 5 are strategies that can be used to minimize the negative impacts of strike actions on the academic performance of the students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University

Summary of Major Findings

Based on the data analysed, it was discovered that:

1. Non-implementation of the revised salary structure, Poor physical condition of work in universities, Delay in payment of elongated salary structure, Inadequate funding of school systems, and High handedness and corruption on the part of university administration contributes as some of the causal factors of ASUU strike among students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.
2. For the research question two, the mean of the response shows that from all the listed impact of strike on the students, there is concurrence on the part of the respondents as regards to the fact that the items listed in table two are ways in which the ASUU strike affects the academic performance of the students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.
3. Finally, to minimize the negative impact of ASUU strike actions on the students, the researcher listed possible ways this could take effect and got affirmations from the respondents on the ideas stating that all the listed ways could help play a role in minimizing the negative impacts of ASUU strike actions on the students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

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Discussion of Findings

The findings in Table 1 revealed that some the causes of ASUU strike such as Non-implementation of the revised salary structure, Poor physical condition of work in universities, Delay in payment of elongated salary structure, Inadequate funding of school systems, and High handedness and corruption on the part of university administration are some situations that cannot be easily overlooked as pertains to reasons why out ASUU union seem to always want to involve in strike actions in order to get the attention of the government. The findings of this study concurs with the work of Akah (2018) which focused on ASUU strike, Federal Government and Nigerian educational system in Calabar with the purpose of examining the factors bedevilling the smooth operation of Nigerian public Universities and also further maintained that like in the current study that issues like non- payment or underpayment of salaries, non-payment of earned allowances, and poor funding of Universities are aberration and pose as causes of the strike actions in Nigeria.

From table 2, it was revealed that Disruption in academic programme. Long extensions of strike actions, due to long break in academic session students may develop Waning interest, rushed academic calendar and students indulgence in deviant behaviors all have negative impacts on the academic performance of the students as they tend to have extended years of graduation, they tend to forget what was taught during the period before the strike. Some of the students even lose interest in academics and may involve in business or become a menace to the society by involving in bad morals.

This findings of the study are in agreement with the saying of Omotere (2014), that during the strike, most students are involved in diverse activities and as such forget about academics and class activities which negatively affect their learning capabilities and Yusuf (2017) who stated that during the ASUU strike, most students hardly read their books. In the long run, they tend to abandon their studies because Peer pressure negatively affects their learning capabilities.

Table three of this study gave some possible ways to minimize the negative impact of ASUU strike actions on the students of Nnamdi Azikiwe university, awka in order to bring the negativity of these actions to the barest minimum as a result of its increasing negative impacts on individuals and even the society at large. The researcher out of many gave one of the possible solutions to this action to be that Government Should Involve university representatives in decision-making processes that directly affect their academic and working conditions to ensure their voices are heard and hence their needs tended to.

This is in line with Angelina (2015) who concurs in her study on the causes and effects of ASUU strike on academic activities of public university students in Nigeria that the Government should be proactive and sensitive to the demands of

the Unions as well as have a sustained platform for interactions with all the stakeholders by settling the important outstanding debts owed to ASUU members and other University employees such as payment of academic earned allowance, adequate provision of infrastructures, teaching and learning facilities and equipment.

Conclusion

The study examined The Causes of ASUU Strike and its Impact on the Academic Performance of Students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Arguably, ASUU strike has significantly undermined academic activities which have invariably affected adversely the students' academic performance. It was uncovered that among the key major causes of ASUU strike are inadequate funding of universities, and non - payment of financial entitlements of academic staff. Notably, Waning interest, Rushed academic calendar, students' indulgence in deviant behaviours, discouragement and de-motivation among students to concentrate on their studies out of the many were the impacts of the ASUU strike on the academic performance of students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. However, involving both government and the university administrators in these cases undoubtedly creates platforms to curb and manage the causes of these ASUU strike actions and thereby reducing the negative impacts it has on students.

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