

INFLUENCE OF ACADEMIC STAFF UNION OF UNIVERSITIES' STRIKE ON STUDENTS' EXTRA – CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES IN AMBROSE ALLI UNIVERSITY, EKPOMA

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Abstract

The paper examined the influence of academic staff union of universities' strike on students' extra-curricular activities in Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma. The study specifically determined the influence of Academic Staff Union of Universities' (ASUU) strike on students' extra – curricular activities in Ambrose Alli University. Out of 350 students who were given the questionnaire copies to fill only 260 copies were returned which represented 74.29%. Data collated were analyzed with tables and simple percentages. The t-test statistic was employed to test the hypothesis stated. The result of data analysis of the study revealed that ASUU strike has a significant influence on students' extra-curricular activities in Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that ASUU strike has a significant influence on students' extra-curricular activities in Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma. Findings of the study revealed that most protracted strikes could have been averted if necessary steps were taken to build a good relationship between both parties. Therefore, the Government should ensure that all agreements signed and reached with the ASUU in public universities are implemented as agreed. Government should be proactive to negotiate with the ASUU in public universities before they embark on any strike. The study therefore recommended that ASUU members in public universities should devise other means such as articulated dialogue rather than the use of strikes to resolve aggrieved issues.

Keywords: *Academic Staff Union of Universities, Ambrose Alli University, Extra-Curricular Activities, Influence, Strike*

Introduction

Public University undergraduates in Nigeria are constantly faced with strike actions by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). The disharmony between the Government and Staff Unions has jeopardizing effects on the extra-curricular activities of undergraduates in Nigerian Public Universities. Staff industrial actions in Nigeria University, Polytechnic and College of Education systems have become the common phenomenon with the detrimental effects on the academic commitment and success of Nigeria students (Erasmus, 2022). Education is a vital instrument for socio-economic mobility for every citizens and an instrument for transformation of the society (Bolarin, 2015). Education is undoubtedly the greatest instrument which man has devised for his own progress. Edinyang and Ubi (2018), and Olusegun (2019), maintained that instability in school calendar through strike elongate study period and hamper their academic activities.

Disruptions in academic programmes serve as non-motivational factor to the students. It discourages them from learning. It is not surprising therefore that during strike actions, most students are seen involved in diverse activities such as sexual immorality, cyber scam, pool

betting, unnecessary gossips, watching of films and reading comic materials for entertainment purposes rather than reading their books (Chijoke, 2013). In the long run, they soon forget about academics and are no longer prepared for class activities which negatively affect their learning capability. Adesulu, (2019) also stated that an effective learning or an enhanced academic performance is achieved by successful covering of the course outline timely and before the examination. This is rarely achieved with strike actions in place.

Odubela (2017) asserted that 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 (2016) opined that the quality and quantity of students' learning were determined by individual student's 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. Erasmus (2022) further stated that these strike actions always lead to disruption of academic programme which may expose students to disjointed learning and it may encourage poor study habit among students. These are indications 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 (2017) earlier observed that disruption in academic programme 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, much attention has not been given to the strike actions on the academic activities of students in Nigerian universities. This study, therefore, intends to examine the influence of strike actions on the academic performance of undergraduate students.

Rationale for the Study

Education helps in cultivating appropriate skills, knowledge and attitudes in the individual, that will help to effectively harness her resources, industrialize, and participate actively in the current Global knowledge-driven Economy (Chijoke, 2013). However, the disputes between ASUU and the Government have in one way or the other affected the goal of Education in Nigeria.

Despite the efforts made by government to stabilize education in public universities, the incessant ASUU strikes have destabilized the programmes in educational sector. Public universities have become ineffective as a result of strike over the years. It has been observed that persistent ASUU strikes in Nigeria have disrupting school academic, left academic activities of universities disjointed, and distract the normal learning process. It has also been observed that strikes could affect students' learning and information seeking behaviors and their comportments in academic activities. This problem this study seeks to address is how strike action influence students learning in Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, if strike influence school curricula in Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma and if the strike influence the comportment of students in Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma.

However, most studies carried out on ASUU strike actions have been focused on the influence on students' performance but not much has been done in terms of research on the influence of ASUU strike on students' extra-curricular activities in Ambrose Alli University,

Ekpoma. Closing this gap in knowledge on the influence of ASUU strike on students' academic activities, therefore, is the problem of this study.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine the influence of ASUU strike on students' extra-curricular activities in Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma. The study specifically sought to determine the influence of ASUU strike on students' extra – curricular activities in Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma

Review of related Literature

The study employed the Ralf Dahrendorf's Authority and Conflict theory which arose out of a critical evaluation of the work of Karl Marx (Dahrendorf, 1959). Ralf accepted that Marx's description of capitalism was generally accurate in the 19th century when Marx was writing, but argued that in the 20th century, it has become outdated as the basis for explaining conflict. Ralf further argued that important changes have taken place in countries such as Britain and the U.S.A. they are now 'post-capitalist' societies. Ralf claimed that, far from the two main classes becoming polarized, as Marx had predicted, the opposite has happened. In view of these changes, Ralf argued that conflict was no longer based upon the existence of the two classes identified by Marx, nor were they based upon economic division. Instead, Ralf saw conflict as being concerned with authority (Dahrendorf, 1959).

To Dahrendorf, authority is the legitimate power attached to the occupation of a particular social role within an organization. Thus, for example, the Government has the right to take certain decisions, regardless of the wishes of the workforce (which includes the Academic Staff Union of Universities-ASUU). All organizations -or associations, as Dahrendorf calls them have positions of domination and subjection. Some are able to take decisions legitimately and issue commands, and others are not. It is this situation which Dahrendorf saw as the basis for conflict in the societies of nowadays. The author believed that the existence of dominant and subordinate positions produces a situation in which individual have different interests. Those occupying dominant positions (Federal Government of Nigeria) have an interest in maintaining the social structure that gives them more authority than others, while those in subordinate positions (ASUU) on the other hand have an interest in changing it. This conflict of interests is present in a much wider range of social relationships than the economic conflict of interests between the ruling class and the subject class that Marx identified as the basis to conflict in the society (Dahrendorf, 1959).

Therefore, from the theory of conflict by Ralf Dahrendorf, it can be reasonably assumed that the authority wielded by the Federal Government gives them the right to take decisions and whenever these decisions contradict the interest of the ASUU, there was bound to be conflict which may manifest through the grievances of the ASUU and resulting into strike action. This invariably affects students' academic activities.

Generally, ASUU uses strike as a means to force the government to respect the demands of the Union. Almost all heads of state and presidents of Nigeria between 1988 and 2022 have been compelled by ASUU through strike to meet their demands. Ogunode (2020) observed strike action is an endemic problem facing the administration of public universities in Nigeria.

Nigerian public universities are known for continuous strike actions by different union groups within the system. The actions are frustrating the administration of public universities in Nigeria. The reasons for the strike actions by union groups include; underfunding of the public

universities, inadequate infrastructural facilities, and poor implementation of agreements reached with union groups, and poor working conditions. Continuous strike actions on the public universities include; disruption in the academic program, poor quality of education, bad image for the universities, poor ranking internationally, and poor patronage of public universities in Nigeria (Ogunode et al., 2022).

Causes of Strike Actions in Public Universities

There are many causes of strike actions in Nigerian public universities propelled by some factors. In this paper, poor funding of public universities, inadequate infrastructural facilities, integrated payroll and personnel information system (IPPIS), poor and inconsistent payment of salaries, poor conditions of Service, political interference in University management, and poor implementation of agreements reached with the Union are considered.

1. **Poor Funding of Public Universities:** Poor funding of public universities by the government is a major reason for the strike actions in public universities (Ogunode et al., 2021). The budgetary allocation for education in the country is inadequate and below 26% of UNESCO recommendations (Ogunode et al., 2022(a); Ogunode and Ndayebom, 2022; Ogunode et al., 2022(b)). Odum et al. (2018) asserted that the United Nations in an attempt to improve education in Nigeria recommended that 26% of the Nation's budget should be channeled into the education sector. It has been noticed that the Government has never met such conditions, this further results in many universities being underfunded and having poor infrastructural supplies, poor payment of salaries, and poor maintenance of existing plants.
Ogunode et al. (2021) and Ogunode et al. (2022) also confirmed that poor funding of public universities is among the factors responsible for strike actions. Research approaches resulted in a wealth of evidence in supports the notion of well-being as changing and changeable at the instance of individual and group. Happiness intervention studies, including meta-analyses, have firmly documented that happiness may change in individuals and populations through some identified effective factors such as the causes of strike action (World Happiness Report, 2022).
2. **Inadequate Infrastructural Facilities:** Lawan and Ogunode (2021) submitted that another reason why different union groups in the higher institutions embarked on strike actions was the poor infrastructural facilities in higher institutions. In addition, addressing the above requires sensitization of the government on the welfare policies that target structural inequities and provide access to healthy living standards, meaningful and inclusive work, safety, and sufficient economic resources for public universities, corruption, and increase socially sustainable staff communities' quest which plays an important role (World Happiness Report, 2022).
3. **Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS):** Public universities integration into the IPPIS is one of the reasons for embarking on strikes. Lawan and Ogunode (2021) opined that IPPIS was introduced by the federal government and made it compulsory for all agencies, ministries, and higher institutions to enroll for their salaries and other payment. There had been resistance by ASUU to embrace the IPPIS into the university system. But the Federal Government continually insisted that the payment system was for transparency and not intended to trample upon the university's autonomy nor designed to subsume the university into the civil service. IPPIS will shut the door

against foreign scholars, contract officers, and researchers that we need most dearly. ASUU developed and offered an alternative payment system, the University Transparency Account System (UTAS), which it said would equally meet the transparency and accountability requirements better than that of the IPPIS.

4. **Poor and Inconsistent Payment of Salaries**, and unstable payment of earned allowances account for major reasons Public University workers frequently go on strikes. Odime et al. (2018) opined that university workers are often underpaid and most times the Government pays part salaries to lecturers.
5. **Poor Implementation of Agreement Reached with Union**: Lawan and Ogunode (2021) stated that different union groups in the Nigerian public higher institutions often go on strike as a result of non-implementation of the agreement reached with the government. The Nigerian government in 2009 signed an agreement with the ASUU to eject N1.3 trillion into the universities over five years beginning from 2009. But only a fraction of that sum was released till date. The deliberate neglect by Government to release the monies has made Public University workers to embark on strike actions frequently.

Influence of Academic Staff Union of Universities' Strike on Students' Curricular-Activities

The financial and other costs of university education in Nigeria treats to the future of literacy campaign in the country. Further, the recurrent strike actions by academic unions have discourages both current students and admission seekers. ASUU strikes have usually affected the students in a number of ways. This includes but not limited to lack of opportunities to make up for lost times and inadequate implementation of curriculum (Adesulu, 2018).

Strike action renders both students and lecturers emotionally and psychologically unstable (Isangedighi, 2017; Ibrahim, 2015). Allowing the university teachers to embark on an indefinite strike gives room for avoidable strike to take place. During the period of strikes, students out of idleness and frustration, engage in deviant behaviours like robbery, arson, rape, touting and constituting nuisance to the society. Strike actions affect the activities of the entire university management including planning and effective decision making. Ootobo (2005) asserted that the general influences of strikes on workers and management, are enormous and beyond comprehension. Strikes affect social – psychological, political and economic aspects of life.

Methods

The study examined the influence of academic staff union of universities' strike on students' extra-curricular activities in Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma. This survey design was considered appropriate, because opinion of a large sample was sought for and presented in their natural setting to draw inference.

The population of this study comprised of all undergraduates in the Faculty of Education in Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State. The population had a total number of 4,987 AAU students' (Statistics Bulletin, 2023/2024 academic session).

A purposive simple random sampling of students out of the population was drawn for the study. This was adopted to ensure equal chance of both male and female students in Faculty of Education, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State. This helped to minimize sampling error and also helped for meaningful generalization.

A questionnaire was used to test for the reliability of the instrument. Using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient, the reliability was used. The co-efficient obtained (r)

was .78 and was termed high enough for the study. The Questionnaire was distributed to 350 respondents by the researchers in various schools that were selected in this study. But only 260 copies of the questionnaire were dully filled, recovered and collated in tabular form for data analysis. Some of the respondents did not fill their copies and some did not return the copies of the questionnaire given to them. Hence, only the number of copies of the questionnaire that were returned was used for analysis.

Data collected were analyzed with tables and simple percentages and t-test statistical method was employed to test the hypothesis stated.

Research question 1 addressed the questions on items 1 – 6.

Research Question 1: Does ASUU strike have any influence on students' extra-curricular activities in Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma?

Table 1

Responses on the influence on students' extra-curricular activities in Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma

S/N	ASUU Strike and Students' Extra-Curricular Activities	SA	A	D	SD
1	During strike, research students find it difficult to gain access to their supervisors	186 (53.1%)	64 (18.3%)	2(0.6%)	8(2.3%)
2	During strike action, most of the equipment facilities begin to depreciate	134 (38.3%)	116(33.1%)	6(1.7%)	4(1.1%)
3	ASUU strike may result to unprecedented excess work had.	207 (59.1%)	43 (12.3%)	10(2.9%)	-
4	ASUU strike can affect the stability of university calendar in Nigeria	202 (57.7%)	48 (13.7%)	10(2.9%)	-
5	ASUU strike may result to all-time record of lost working hours	241 (68.9%)	4(1.1%)	10(2.9%)	-
6	ASUU strike may result to lack of opportunities to complete the set goals for each semester	191 (54.6%)	59 (16.9%)	4(1.1%)	6(1.7%)

Table 1 showed frequencies and percentages of responses on the influence of ASUU strike on students' extra-curricular activities in Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma. Result revealed that respondents were of the opinion that during strike, 96.5% of research students found it difficult to gain access to their supervisors; during strike action, 92.6% of the equipment facilities begin to depreciate; ASUU strike may result to 89.3% unprecedented excess work; ASUU strike can affect 95.6% of the stability of university calendar in Nigeria; ASUU strike may result to 94.1% of all-time record of working hours lost and ASUU strike may result to 97.2% lack of opportunities to complete the set goals for each semester.

Testing of the Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: ASUU has no significant influence on students' Extra - curricular activities in Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma.

Table 2

One Sample t-test regarding ASUU Strike and Students Extra-curricular Activities in Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma

Variable	N	M	SD	d	df	P

ASUU strike and students extra-curricular activities	260	27.81	3.339	47.99	259	.079
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One sample t-test applied to find out if Academic Staff Union of Universities' strike has significant influence on students' extra-curricular activities in Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma. As $P < \alpha$ value of $P (.079)$ is higher than the level of significance $\alpha (.05)$, so our null hypothesis that ASUU strike has no significant influence on students extra-curricular in Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma was rejected. Therefore, it is concluded that ASUU strike has a significant influence on students' extra-curricular activities in Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma.

Discussion of Findings

The result from research question two showed that ASUU strike has a significant influence on students' extra-curricular activities in Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma. This finding agreed with the findings of Isangedighi (2017) and Ibrahim (2015) who stated that strike action usually hinders students' extra-curricular activities and as well as prolongs students' academic years and most of the students end up missing the Federal Government compulsory National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme as a result of over age. Also, while other students begin their second degree or master's degree at age 22, some Nigerian students are not sure of obtaining a first degree even at age 30. This is often due to incessant strike actions and lack of proper funding of the universities.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that academic staff union of universities' strike has a significant influence on students' extra-curricular activities in Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma. Strike makes planning for universities' academic and nonacademic activities to be very difficult. Everyone must play his or her role by abiding to agreements signed. Educational managers face the challenge of re-planning educational activities, re-preparing the school calendar, reassigning old task to new staff and not achieving certain long-term goals due to the prolonged unaccomplished as a result of the strike.

Findings of the study revealed that most protracted strikes can be averted, if necessary, steps are taken to build a good relationship between both parties. Therefore, the Government should ensure that all agreements signed and reached with the Academic Staff Union of Universities in public universities are implemented as agreed. Government should be proactive to negotiate with the Academic Staff in public universities before they embark on any strike. The ASUU members in public universities should devise other means such as articulated dialogue other than strikes to resolve aggrieved issues.

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