



IMPACT OF ACADEMIC STAFF UNION OF UNIVERSITIES' STRIKE ACTION ON LECTURERS' PRODUCTIVITY IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the impact of Academic Staff Union of Universities' strikes on lecturers' productivity in federal universities in South-South, Nigeria. Two research questions were answered and two corresponding null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The population of this study was 14,998 academic staff of all the Seven (7) federal universities in south-south Nigeria. The sample size of the study was 752 respondents which consist of 385 male and 367 female academic staff from the seven federal universities using Taro Yamen's formula. The proportionate stratified sampling technique was used to select the sample. The instruments for data collection were self-structure questionnaires tagged "Impact of Academic Staff Union of Universities Strike on Academic Staff Productivity Questionnaire" developed in the pattern of 4-point rating scale. The instrument was validated by three experts, two in Educational Management and one in Measurement and Evaluation. The study adopted the Cronbach Alpha method for the reliability of the instrument. The composite reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.89. Mean and standard deviation statistics were used to answer the research questions while the hypotheses were tested using z-test. The study found that Academic Staff Union of Universities strike action impact on lecturers' interest in research writing and their promotion to a high extent. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others, that ASUU should encourage its members to use the period of strike to engage in researches that would improve them and enhance their promotion since they hardly find time for such activities when school is in full session due to work overload.

Keywords: *Academic Staff Union of Universities, Lecturers, Productivity*

1. INTRODUCTION

Education has been defined as the process through which a society transmits knowledge, skills, values, aptitudes, norms, beliefs etc from one generation to another. This process can take the form of formal schools, non-formal education (out-of-school organized learning programmes), and informal education. All these forms of education are equally important in ensuring a society functions optimally. The Federal Government of Nigeria in Wey-Amaewhule (2018) noted that education is the greatest instrument for quick development of its economic, political, social and human resources. Similarly, Fafunwa in Taylor and Mbadiwe-woko (2018) noted that right from pre-colonial African societies, education played a significant role as a tool for induction of youths into the society and preparation for adulthood.

Formal education particularly is in various levels and these include primary, secondary and tertiary levels of schooling. Of all these levels, tertiary levels where universities fall provides high level manpower needed to drive critical sectors of a nation's economy. It is in line with this that the Nigerian National Policy of Education identified the goals of universities in Nigeria as follows: to contribute to national development through higher level manpower training; provide accessible and affordable quality learning opportunities in informal and formal education in response to the needs and interests of all Nigerians; provide higher quality career counseling and lifelong learning programmes and prepare students with the knowledge and skills for self-reliance and the world of work; reduce skill shortages through the production of skilled manpower relevant to the needs of the labour market; promote and encourage scholarship, entrepreneurship and community services; forge and cement natural unity and promote national and international understanding and interaction (FRN, 2013).

For these goals to be achieved, universities must be well funded and equipped with the necessary human resources and infrastructures. Unfortunately, this has not been the case in most public universities in Nigeria. Public universities in Nigeria have been grossly underfunded and this has led to poor physical facilities which have reduced the quality of education provided. Worst still is the fact that academic staff who are at the heart of achieving the goals of university education are poorly remunerated unlike political office holders who earn exorbitant sums for doing next to nothing.

In a bid to get government to pay attention to the deplorable situation of public universities and improve academic staff welfare, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) have embarked on several strike action which has further crimped academic activities in Nigeria.

The Academics Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) came into existence in 1978, and has brought about some changes and challenges in the academic system of Nigerian universities. Prior to the last industrial action embarked on by Academics Staff Union of Universities, the National Executive Council (NEC), of the Union met from Tuesday 29th November to Thursday 1st December 2011 at the University of Port-Harcourt to review, among other things: the level of implementation of the 2009 ASUU/Government Agreement; the extent of a compliance with the 2011 ASUU/FGN Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the implementation of the Agreement etc. The strike was later called off on the 1st of February, 2012. ASUU again went on a warning strike on 30th August, 2012. All these have left an unfavorable mark on the academic activities of the University students. On 1st of July, 2013, Academics Staff Union of Universities embarked upon another six months industrial action which was called off on the 17th of December, 2013 which really affected the Nigerian undergraduates leading to the involvement of students in many unwholesome activities. Several other Academics Staff Union of Universities strikes have also been connected to inadequate service or poor condition (Odubela, 2012).

These various strike actions have not only affected students and academic activities in universities but it also affects the lecturers themselves. While there are quite a number of literature on the impact of ASUU strike on universities, most of these studies fails to consider the impact of the strike on lecturers' productivity. Lecturers' productivity according to Amadi (2001) is their ability to optimally carry out their core mandates of teaching, research and community service. They are as much victims in the strike actions as the students. These impacts are seen in the area of reduced interest in research and lack of promotion which affects their morale in carrying out their teaching and other jobs.

The academic staff's promotion could be termed as goal-directed behavior. The academic staff's promotion leads to an increase in salary packages. According to Luthans (2015) promotions are employed in motivating academic staff for better job satisfaction when the addition grade level is fully implemented. These are good motivation for work in salary increment, gratuity, and regular promotion, ensuring job security, and establishing cordial relationship among academic staff. Ishaka and Waziri, (2019) noted that the movement of an employee upward in the hierarchy of the organization typically leads to enhancement of responsibility and rank and an improved salary package. Promotion is the reassignment of an employee to a higher-rank of job. Many researchers give their opinion that job satisfaction is strongly correlated with promotion opportunities and there is a direct and positive association between promotion in school and classroom job satisfaction (McCausland & Theodossiou, 2005).

Also, one of the primary duties of academic staff in universities is to carry out research. It is used to assess the lecturer's scholarship and leads to promotion. It is therefore expected that academic staff who must progress as expected should conduct quality research (Duze, 2011). It is through such researches that lecturers update their knowledge and skills. They also add to the body of knowledge and scholarship through research findings. Carrying out research is mentally, physically and financially demanding. Lecturers need to be highly motivated to do this if a nation is serious about harnessing the potential of its citizens for meaningful development. However, most of these activities are usually affected during strike actions. It is against this background that this study examines the impact of Academic Staff Union of Universities' (ASUU) strikes on lecturers' productivity in federal universities in south-south, Nigeria.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Universities all over the world are centres for knowledge generation, preservation and human capital development. They play an integral role in the development of a nation as they have the responsibility of training the human capital needed to drive various sectors of the nation's economy. This explains why government the world over show high level of commitment in the funding of their universities to ensure high quality educational delivery.

Unfortunately, the narrative is quite different in Nigeria as the education sector is grossly underfunded by successive government over the past three decades. Nigeria has never attained UNESCO's recommendation of 26% allocation of annual budget to the education sector. Consequently, the standard of education in Nigeria has been on a steady decline evidenced in the poor infrastructures in schools, especially universities which is the focus of this study. Most public universities in Nigeria do not have enough classrooms, laboratories, well-equipped libraries and e-libraries, steady power supply to mention but a few. This is in spite of the growing number of youths who enroll in public universities on a yearly basis. This situation is further exacerbated by the fact that lecturers in these universities are grossly underpaid. Their salaries are not commensurate with the uphill task of constant research, teaching, attendance of conferences, administrative duties and community service they are saddled with on a daily basis. It is for this reason that most politicians and wealthy Nigerians send their children and wards abroad for university education.

It is for this reason that the Academic Staff Union of Universities have been on the government to show commitment in improving the quality of university education in the country. These they have done through almost incessant strike actions since successive government are adamant in changing the situation of university education in the country.

The recent demands of Academic Staff Union Universities are that government should fulfill an agreement it reached with them in 2009 on how to save the nation's universities from collapse. This has caused serious altercations between government and Academics Staff Union of Universities resulting into persistent industrial actions.

Most studies carried out on ASUU strike actions focuses on the impact on the student and academic activities in universities. Not much has been done in terms of research on the impact of ASUU strike on lecturers who also bear the brunt of the inevitable strike actions. Closing this gap in knowledge on the impact of ASUU strike on lecturers' productivity, therefore, is the problem of this study.

3. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to examine the impact of Academic Staff Union of Universities' (ASUU) strikes on lecturers' productivity as perceived by lecturers in federal universities in south-south, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Find out the impact of Academic Staff Union of Universities strike on lecturers interest in research as perceived by lecturers in federal universities in south-south, Nigeria.
2. Determine the impact of Academic Staff Union of Universities strike on promotion of lecturers as perceived by lecturers in federal universities in south-south, Nigeria

Research Questions:

1. What is the impact of Academic Staff Union of Universities' strike action on lecturers' interest in research as perceived by lecturers in federal universities in south-south, Nigeria?
2. What is the impact of Academic Staff Union of Universities' strike action on promotion of lecturers as perceived by lecturers in federal universities in south-south, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the mean response of male and female lecturers on the impact of Academic Staff Union of Universities' strike action on lecturers' interest in research in federal universities in south-south, Nigeria.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the mean response of male and female lecturers on the impact of Academic Staff Union of Universities' strike action on promotion of lecturers as perceived by lecturers in federal universities in south-south, Nigeria?

4. METHOD

The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The population of the study was 14,998 academic staff of all the Seven (7) federal universities in south-south Nigeria. The sample size of the study was 752 respondents which consist of 385 male and 367 female academic staff from the seven federal universities using Taro Yamane formula. The proportionate stratified sampling technique was used to select the sample. The instrument for data collection were self-structure questionnaire tagged "Impact of Academic Staff Union of Universities Strike on Lecturers' Productivity Questionnaire"(IASUUSLPQ) developed in the pattern of 4-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA=4), Agree (A=3), Disagree (D=2) and Strongly Disagree (SD=1). The instrument was validated by three experts, two in Educational Management and one in Measurement and Evaluation. The study adopted test-retest method for the reliability of the instrument. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.89. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested using z-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance. A criterion mean of 2.50 was used to determine if a statement item connotes "Agree" or "Disagree". The null hypotheses were rejected and the alternate hypotheses accepted when the computed value was greater than the critical value of ± 1.96 at the significance level of 0.05. On the contrary, the null hypotheses were also accepted and the alternate hypotheses rejected when the computed value is less than the critical table value of ± 1.96 .

5. RESULTS

Research Question 1: What is the impact of academic staff union of universities' strike action on lecturers' interest in research as perceived by lecturers in federal universities in south-south, Nigeria?

Table 1: Lecturers' Mean Response on Academic Staff Union of Universities Strike Action on Lecturers Interest in Research

S/N	Item Statement	Male (N ₁ = 380)			Female (N ₂ = 360)		
		X	SD	RMK	X	SD	RMK
1	During strike actions lecturers find it hard to buy internet data needed for accessing research materials online.	3.20	0.60	Agree	4.08	0.60	Agree
2	Since most times lecturers are not paid during strike, they are not able to afford publication fees for their research work.	3.94	0.77	Agree	3.50	0.59	Agree
3	Lecturers feel relaxed in carrying out research during strike.	4.30	0.58	Agree	3.21	0.70	Agree
4	Lecturers don't see the need to embark on research during strike as they feel their efforts are not appreciated	3.80	0.71	Agree	3.66	0.84	Agree
5	Since lecturers promotion activities are halted during strike actions, they lose interest in carrying out research and this leaves	3.70	0.84	Agree	3.73	1.05	Agree

them indolent.

Grand Mean	3.79	Agree	3.64	Agree
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The analyses in Table 1 revealed how academic staff union of university's strike action has impacted on lecturers' interest research in federal universities in south-south, Nigeria. The analysed data in the table revealed that the mean scores of all the items are above the criterion mean of 2.50 indicating that majority of the respondents agree with all the items.

With grand mean scores of 3.79 and 3.64 for male and female lecturers respectively, the answer to research question one is that ASUU strike impact on lecturers' interest in research because during these strike actions, lecturers lack the resources to buy data and pay for publication fees for their research articles and they also lack the motivation to write or carry out research.

Research Question 2: What is the impact of Academic Staff Union of Universities' strike action on promotion of lecturers as perceived by lecturers in federal universities in south-south, Nigeria?

Table 2: Lecturers' Mean Response on Impact of ASUU Strike Action on Promotion of Lecturers

S/N	Item Statement	Male (N ₁ = 380)			Female (N ₂ = 360)		
		X	SD	RMK	X	SD	RMK
1	ASUU strike causes stagnation of ranks among lecturers since there is no appraisal.	3.84	1.01	Agree	4.21	1.01	Agree
2	It leads to brain drain as come lecturers may find other university that is not on strike so that they can be promotion.	3.73	0.94	Agree	4.01	0.64	Agree
3	It limits career development of individual lecturer.	3.69	0.75	Agree	3.60	0.85	Agree
4	Experiences are not shared among the senior and junior rank colleagues.	4.05	1.11	Agree	3.50	0.74	Agree
5	A significant facet of career of an employee is promotion that affects other aspects of experience of work	4.33	0.68	Agree	3.79	0.83	Agree
	Grand Mean	3.93		Agree	3.82		Agree

The analyses in Table 2 revealed how academic staff union of university's strike action has impacted on promotion of academic staff in federal universities in south-south, Nigeria. Result shows that all the respondents (male and female) from federal universities agree that promotion of academic staff of universities are affected by strike actions of academic staff union of universities and hence making an impact. The result revealed that all the item was agree with a mean score that ranges between 3.69 and 4.33 for male lecturers and 3.50 and 4.21 for female lecturers respectively. Result from Table 2 further revealed an average mean of 3.93 and 3.82 for male and female lecturers with a standard deviation value of 0.90 and 0.81 respectively. The mean responses on each item were agreed base on the mean score which is greater 3.00 as cut-off point for decision. Standard deviation value greater than 1.00 indicate that the respondents (male and female lecturers) were heterogeneous or far apart in the responses while standard deviation value less than 1.00 implies that the respondents were homogenous or close in their responses.

Test of Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the mean response of male and female lecturers on the impact of academic staff union of universities' strike action on lecturers' interest in research in federal universities in south-south, Nigeria.

Table 3: Z-Test Analysis on Impact of Academic Staff Union of University's Strike Action on Lecturers Interest in Research

Category	\bar{X}	SD	N	Df	α	zcal	zcrit	Remark
Male Lecturers	3.79	0.70	380	738	0.05	1.80	1.96	Fail to reject
Female Lecturers	3.64	0.76	360					

Accept H₀ if zcal ≤ zcrit, Otherwise Reject H₀.

Since the calculated value of z (zcal = 1.80) is less than the critical value of z (zcrit = 1.960) at 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean response of male and female lecturers on the impact of academic staff union of university's strike action on research by lecturers in federal universities in south-south, Nigeria.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the mean response of male and female lecturers on the impact of academic staff union of universities' strike action on promotion of lecturers in federal universities in south-south, Nigeria.

Table 4 Z-Test Analysis on Impact of Academic Staff Union of University's Strike Action on Promotion of Lecturers in Federal Universities in South-South, Nigeria

Category	\bar{X}	SD	N	Df	α	zcal	zcrit	Remark
Male Lecturers	3.93	0.90	380	738	0.05	1.20	1.96	Fail to Reject
Female Lecturers	3.82	0.81	360					

Accept H_0 if $z_{cal} \leq z_{crit}$, Otherwise Reject H_0 .

Since the calculated value of z ($z_{cal} = 1.20$) is less than the critical value of z ($z_{crit} = 1.960$) at 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean response of male and female lecturers on the impact of academic staff union of university's strike action on promotion of academic staff in federal universities in south-south, Nigeria.

6. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study in research question one revealed that academic staff union of university's strike impact on lecturers' interest in research because during these strike actions, lecturers lack the resources to buy data and pay for publication fees for their research articles and they also lack the motivation to write or carry out research. The findings of the corresponding hypothesis one revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean response of male and female lecturers on the impact of academic staff union of university's strike action on lecturers' interest in research in federal universities in south-south, Nigeria. This finding agrees with the finding of Olugbenga, (2011) which revealed that during strike period, members of academic staff union of universities refuse to carried out fundamental and basic activities as part of the responsibilities. These activities include total and complete abandonment of teaching, no examination, no grading of scripts, no conference participation which affects lecturers' level of research thereby limiting the content of knowledge contribution to the society.

The findings of the study in research two revealed that academic staff union of university's strike action has an impact on promotion of academic staff in federal universities in south-south, Nigeria as it causes stagnation of ranks among lecturers since there is no appraisal, it leads to brain drain as come lecturers may find other university that is not on strike so that they can be promotion and it limits career development of individual lecturer. The study also found that there is no significant difference in the mean response of male and female lecturers on the impact of academic staff union of university's strike action on promotion of academic staff in federal universities in south-south, Nigeria. In line with finding of this study, Olugbenga (2011) found that one of such committees is the academic and promotion committees for both academic and non-academic staff that are saddle with the responsibility of assessing and promotion of staff within the university.

7. CONCLUSION

The conclusion reached from this study actually established the fact that strike of academic staff union of universities impacts on lecturers' productivity in federal universities in South-South, Nigeria. The findings of the study revealed that strike action of academic staff affects lecturers' interest in research and their promotion activities which eventually reduces their capacity and morale to give out their best.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. ASUU should encourage its members to use the period of strike to engage in researches that would improve them and enhance their promotion since they hardly find time for such activities when school is in full session due to work overload.
2. Government should implement all agreement reached with Academic Staff Union of Universities' members and other employees in public universities so as to avoid unnecessary strike actions which in turn affects academic staff promotion activities.

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