

Impact of Strike Actions on University Students: A Study of Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU)

Joy U Egwu

Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Ebonyi State, Ebonyi State University Abakaliki.

ABSTRACT

This work examined Academic Staff Union strike effects on the academic performance of students in Nigeria. The objectives that guided this study were; to examine the extent to which instability in school calendar in Nigerian universities due to ASUU strikes affected students' learning effectiveness and academic performance; to establish how students prolonged stay in school due to strikes affect the efficiency of the labour market; to examine how ASUU strike affected students' learning effectiveness and performance. Three hypotheses were formulated in line with the objectives that guided the study. The theoretical framework adopted by the paper was conflict theory. Extensive review of related literature was carried out. As a quantitative research, it utilized primary and secondary sources of data, which were collected using questionnaire administered to four hundred (400) respondents. Data obtained were analyzed using tables, frequency distribution and Chi-square for the empirical testing of the three hypotheses that guided the study. Results showed that ASUU strike actions prolong students' number of years in school; ASUU strike actions affect student's effectiveness and academic performance, ASUU strike actions cause instability in the school calendar, among others. The study recommended that Federal and State Governments should improve the conditions of service of the academic staff with a view to restoring industrial harmony and averting the brain drain of some of the academics migrating to foreign universities in search of greener pasture. Government should always adopt collective bargaining approach to the management of industrial conflict, universities should be autonomous in every respect to avert this frequent experience of strike actions in the university system in Nigeria.

KEYWORDS: Strike, University, Students and ASUU

I. INTRODUCTION

Students across various universities in Nigeria are constantly faced with strike action, by the Academic Staff Union of Universities [1,2,3]. Globally, the University is regarded as the centre of learning, the spring of intellectual development and a ground for the production of leaders of tomorrow [4]. The role of universities in human capital development, research and technological innovation cannot be under estimated. Strike, according to [5] "is an organised work stoppage by a body of workers to enforce compliance with demands made on an employer or a group of employers." 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 2013 have been compelled by ASUU through strike to meet their demands [6,7]. Disruptions in academic programs serve as non-motivational factor to the students [8]. It discourages them from learning [9]. 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 [10]. In the long run, they soon forget about academics and are no longer prepared for class activities which negatively affect their learning capability. The author [11], concluded 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. From the above review therefore, the paper is of the view that disruption in academic programs as caused by strike actions breeds disappointment, frustration, emotional and psychological trauma, unpreparedness on the part of the students and lack of motivation. These sum up to a non-conducive environment for effective learning in Nigerian universities; a situation that dampens human development [12, 13, 14]. The persistent ASUU strikes in Nigeria have disrupted academic work, left academic activities of universities disjointed, and have distorted the normal learning process. According to [15,16, and 17] disruption in academic programs resulting from strike led to the closure of universities for a period of time thereby affecting the academic calendar of activities in universities. The authors [18, 19, 20] maintained that instability in school calendar through strike elongate study

periods and hamper students' academic performance. However, little attention has been given to the effects of ASUU constant strikes on the academic performance of students in Nigerian universities.

Statement of the Problem

Strike action has been a canker worm which has eaten deep into the marrow of Nigeria universities. Disruptions in academic programs serve as a non-motivational factor to the students. 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. In the long run, they soon forget about academics and are no longer prepared for class activities which negatively affect their learning capability. This is in with [8] who stated that industrial conflict elongated the number of years Nigerian university students were expected to stay before graduating from the university.

Prominent among these is the disruption of the academic calendar. As a result, students that are meant to spend four to five years to finish their first degree, spend six to seven years. Invariably, the academic calendar of Universities all over the country cannot be controlled centrally by the federal ministry of education because each University becomes autonomous in the running of its own calendar [9]. For the avoidance of doubt, when ASUU declares a total, comprehensive and indefinite strike it means: no teaching, no examination, no grading of scripts, no project supervision, no inaugural lectures, no appointment and promotion meetings, no statutory meetings or other meetings directed by government or their agents [10]. When these anomalies occur, the future and smooth academic progress of the students who are always at the receiving end is jeopardized.

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. In what ways have ASUU strikes caused instability in Nigerian Universities calendar?
2. How has prolonged students' stay in school due to strikes affected efficiency in the labour market?
3. How does ASUU strike affect students' learning effectiveness and performances?

Objective of the Study and Methodology

The general objective of the study is to examine ASUU strike and its effects on the academic performance of students. Survey research design was adopted for this study. This design is suitable for this study because it a good basis for investigating the impact of strike action on university students. The area of study is Academic Staff Union of University. However, 100- 400 level students from the department of Political Science Ebonyi State University were used in the study to gather data. These levels of students and department were chosen because they have greater knowledge and offer courses related to the issue under study.

Population of Study

The population for the study consists of 768 students of the department of Political Science, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. A breakdown of the figure shows that 162 students are in 100 Level and 235 in 200 level. The 300 and 400 levels have 235 and 136 students respectively.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The Taro Yamani (1964) formula for sample size determination was used for effective and accurate representation of the entire population. The formula is stated thus,

$$\text{Sample size (n)} = \frac{N(e)^2}{1 + N}$$

Where

n = sample size

N = Total population

e = level of significant or degree of freedom 0.05

Solution

$$\text{Thus, } n = \frac{N(e)^2}{1 + N}$$

$$n = \frac{768}{1 + 768(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{768}{1 + 768 \times 0.0025} = 1.4625$$

$$n = 768$$

$$\frac{1.4625}{1.4625} = 400$$

$$n = 400$$

Therefore the sample size is 400.

To determine the sample size for each stratum, the principle of proportional allocation for stratified sampling was employed to guide the distribution of the questionnaire to the respondents accordingly.

The formula is
$$n_h = \frac{N_h \times n}{N}$$

Where N is population size

n is sample size

n_h is population of each stratum

Therefore for 100 level students:
$$400 \times \frac{162}{768} = 84$$

200 level students political science:
$$400 \times \frac{235}{768} = 122$$

300 level student:
$$400 \times \frac{235}{768} = 122$$

400 level students:
$$400 \times \frac{136}{768} = 71$$

From the above calculations, the sample size for 100 level is 84 while 200 level is 122, 300 level is 122 while 400 level is 71.

Data Collection

The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire developed by the researcher to investigate the impact of strike action on university students in Nigeria. The questionnaire was divided into two main parts, A and B. Part A of the questionnaire elicits personal information of the respondents. Part B elicits information based on the research objectives stated in chapter one. A total of 400 structured questionnaires were administered through direct contact with respondents and latter collected.

Reliability and Validity of Instrument

The questionnaire items (test instrument) were subjected to both face and content validity tests by experts in the field of political science and social statistics as copies of the research synopsis and questionnaire were validated for corrections. Their corrections and suggestions were accordingly effected on the instrument before administering them to the respondents. This was to ensure that the instrument used here was valid enough to measure what it intended to measure and that it contained the various indicators related to the research. To obtain the reliability of the instrument, a pilot test re-test technique was used. 20 Copies of the questionnaire were administered to 300 and 400 level Political Science and History and International Relation students. For the purpose of obtaining the internal consistency of the instrument, Cronbach Alpha reliability method shall be used. The data obtained from the administered questionnaire was analyzed using Cronbach Alpha Co-efficient method. The result of the analysis yielded a coefficient of 0.77. The co-efficient was considered high and positive which was an indication that the instrument was reliable enough for measuring what it purports to measure in a consistent manner.

Data Collection and Analysis

The questionnaire were distributed to the respondents through hand. The students were met at their departments and served the copies of the questionnaire. Few days were given them to attend to the questionnaire and later they were handpicked from the respondents. A total of 400 questionnaire were distributed and 340 were retrieved and this was used for the data analysis. The data collected was presented in tables by generating frequency tables and percentages. The four point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SD) (4 points), Agree (A) (3 points), Disagree (D) (2 points) and 1 point for strongly disagree (SD) was used. For the purposes of testing the hypotheses, the chi-square formula was used.

The formula for the chi-square (X^2) distribution is stated below;

$$X^2 = \frac{\sum(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

where X^2 = calculated chi-square value

\sum = is summation

O_i = observed frequency

E_i = expected frequency

The error of acceptance is 0.05 (5%)

This is by (df) and denoted by the formular;

(c-1) (r-1) where c is the number of column and r is the number of rows in the contingency tables

In terms of decision rule, H_0 is accepted if calculated value of χ^2 is greater than the critical value of χ^2 or H_0 is rejected if the critical value of χ^2 is greater than the calculated value of χ^2 .

The Table 1 below shows the number of questionnaire distributed, the number returned and unreturned with their respective percentages.

Table 1: Questions Distributed, Number Returned and unreturned and their percentages.

Frequency	Number returned and %	Number unreturned and %
400	340 (85%)	60 (15%)

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Out of the 400 questionnaires distributed, 340 representing 85 % were returned while 60 (15%) questionnaires were not returned.

Data Presentation Section A

Respondents' data were gathered based on sex, age and academic level.

Table 2: Sex Distribution of the Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	190	56%
Female	150	42%
Total	340	100%

Source: Field Survey 2020

Data in table two show the sex distribution of the respondents. Out of the 340 respondents in the study, 190 (56%) of them were male while 150 (42%) of them were female. This implies that a greater number of the respondents are female.

Table 3: Age distribution of the respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-22 yrs	250	73.5%
23 yrs and above	90	26.5%
Total	340	100%

Source: Field Survey 2020

From the age distribution, 250 (73.5%) of the respondents were 18-22yrs while 90(26.5%) of them were within the ages of 23 years and above.

Table 4:Level of students.

Levels	Frequency	Percentage
100	70	21.5%
200	110	32.4%
300	100	29.4%
400	60	18.7%
Total	340	100%

Sources: Field survey,2020

Data in table 4 above show that 70 respondents representing 21.5% are in 100 level, 110 (32.4%) are in 200 level, 100 (29.4%) are 300 level while 60 (18.7%) are in 400 level.

Section B Thematic Analysis

Data were gathered concerning major issues raised in this study. These are presented below.

Table 5: Objective One: ASUU Strike Action and Instability in School Calendar.

Items	SA	A	D	SD
Disruption of academic calendar leads to results in production of unqualified graduates.	150(44.1%)	120(35.2%)	40(12%)	30(9%)

Change in School calendar results skipping of some part of the school curriculum.	160(47%)	100(29.4%)	35(10.3%)	35(10.3%)	to in
Shortening of school calendar research study by the hampers universities	170(50%)	90(26,5%)	50(15%)	20(6%)	limits academic
Disruption of academic calendar Makes academic uniformity among schools.	180(53%)	80(27%)	45(13.2%)	25(7.8%)	make for difficult

Source: Field survey,2020.

Data from table 5 above show that 150 (44.1%) strongly agreed that disruption of academic calendar leads to production of unqualified graduates. Also 120 (35.2%) agreed while 40 (12%) and 30 (9%) responses were disagreed and strongly disagreed that disruption of academic calendar leads to production of unqualified graduates. Responses to item two show that 160 (47%) of respondents strongly agreed that change in School calendar results to skipping of parts of school curriculum. Also 100 respondents (29.4%) agreed while 35 respondents representing disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Responses to item three show that 170 (50%) and 90 respondents (26.5%) strongly agreed and agree respectively that shortening of school calendar limits academic research by the schools while 50 (15%) and 20 (6%) of the respondents representing disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively, showing that shortening of school calendar limits academic research study by the schools. Responses to item 4 shows that 180 respondents representing 53% of the respondents say that disruption of academic calendar make difficult academic uniformity among schools. About 80 (27%) agree on this fact while 45 (13.2%) and 25 (7.8%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively that disruption of academic calendar makes it difficult for academic uniformity among universities.

Table 6: Objective Two: ASUU strike and Prolonged number of years in school.

Items	5A	A	D	5D
Prolonged stay in school disqualifies for one from certain jobs due to age limit	130(41.1%)	140(44.1%)	40(16%)	30(13%)
Prolonged number of years in school lead brings to untold financial hardship to the students.	150(47%)	120(32.3%)	30(13%)	40(16%)
Prolonged stay in school causes' leads to anxiety on the students	180(53%)	90(24%)	40(16%)	30(13%)
Prolonged stay in schools increases cost of studies in students	190(56%)	70(25%)	50(19%)	20(6%)

Source: Field survey,2020.

Data from table 6 above show that 130 (41.1%) strongly agreed that prolonged stay in school disqualifies graduates from certain jobs due to age limit. Also 140 (44.1%) agreed that prolonged stay in school disqualifies students from certain jobs due to age limit while 40 (16%) and 30 (13%) respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that prolonged stay in school disqualifies students from certain jobs due to age limit. Responses to item two show that 150 (47%) of respondents strongly agreed that prolonged number of years in school brings untold financial hardship to the students. Also 120 respondents (32.3%) agreed that prolonged number of years in school brings untold financial hardship to the students while 30 and 40 respondents, representing disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively say that prolonged number of years in school brings untold financial hardship to the students. Responses to item three show that 180 (53%) and 90 respondents (24%) strongly agreed and agreed respectively that prolonged number of years in school brings untold financial hardship to the students while 40 (12%) and 30 (9%) of the respondents, disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively, stated that prolonged number of years in school brings untold financial hardship to the students. Responses to item 4 show that 190 respondents representing 56% of the respondents say that prolonged stay in schools increases cost of studies for students. 70 (21%) agreed to this fact while 50 (15%) and 20 (6%); disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively, that prolonged stay in schools increases cost of studies to students.

Table 7: Objective Three: ASUU strike and students effectiveness and performance in schools.

Items	SA	A	D	SD
Strike actions discourages students from learning	160(47%)	120(35%)	40(13%)	20(6%)
Strike actions limit completion of course works.	110(32.3%)	150(44.1%)	30(9%)	50(15%)
Strike actions reduce the CGPA of students.	190(56%)	90(27%)	40(12%)	20(6%)
Strike actions lead to graduation of unqualified students.	190(56%)	80(24%)	40(12%)	30(9%)

Source: Field survey,2020.

Data from table 7 above show that 160 (47%) strongly agreed that strike actions discouraged students from learning. Also 120 (35%) agreed that strike actions discouraged students from learning while 40 (12%) and 20 (6%) respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively that strike actions discouraged students from learning. Responses to item two showed that strike actions limited completion of course works as 110 (32.3%) strongly agreed to this submission. Also 150 respondents (44.1%) agreed that strike actions limited completion of course works while 30 (9%) and 50 (15%) respondents show that they disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively, that strike actions limits completion of course works. Responses to item three showed that 190 (56%) and 90 respondents (27%) strongly agreed and agree respectively that strike actions reduced the CGPA of students while 40 (12%) and 20 (6%) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Responses to item 4 showed that 190 respondents representing 56% of the respondents say that strike actions lead to graduation of unqualified students. 70 (21%) agreed on this fact while 50 (15%) and 20 (6%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively.

Testing of Hypotheses Hypothesis One:

The hypothesis was tested using the item in table 5

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	150	44.1%
Agree	120	35.2%
Disagree	40	12%

Chi -square table;

O _i	E _i	O _i -e _i	(O _i -e _i) ²	(O _b -e _i) ² E _i
150	85	65	4225	49.7
120	85	35	1225	14.4
40	85	-45	2025	23.8
30	85	-55	3025	35.5
Total			123.4	
Strongly Disagree	30		9%	
Total	340		100%	

Source: Field Survey 2020

$$\text{Expected Frequency (E)} = \frac{340 \times 85}{4}$$

To compute the degree of freedom (df) or critical value (r-1) (c-1) Cell x row = (C-1) (R-1)
 Where R = 4 C = 2. Therefore df= (4-1) (2-1)
 = 3x1 df Critical value at 3 df is 7.851

If the calculated Chi-Square (X^2) value is greater than the critical value, that is degree of freedom at 4, the alternative hypothesis is accepted while the null hypothesis is rejected. Since the tabulated value of x (123.4) is greater than the critical value 7.851, the H_0 which says ASUU strikes do not cause instability to the student's calendar is rejected while H_1 which states that ASUU strikes cause instability to student's calendar, is accepted.

Testing the hypothesis Two

H_0 : ASUU strike does not prolong number of years in school.

H_1 : ASUU strike prolong number of years in school

The hypothesis was tested using the item in table 6

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	130	41.1%
Agree	140	44.1%
Disagree	30	16%
Strongly Disagree	40	13%
Total	340	100%

Source: Field Survey 2020

$$\text{Expected Frequency (E)} = \frac{340}{4} = 85$$

Chi-square table;

O _i	E _i	O _i -e _i	(O _i -e _i) ²	(O _i -e _i) ² E _i
130	85	45	2025	23.8
140	85	55	3025	35.5
30	85	- 55	3025	35.5
40	85	-45	2025	23.8
Total				118.6

To compute the degree of freedom (df) or critical value $(r-1)(c-1)$ Cell x row = $(C-1)(R-1)$

Where $R = 4$ $C = 2$

Therefore $df = (4-1)(2-1)$

= 3×1 df

Critical value at 3 df is 7.851.

Since the tabulated value of x (118.6) is greater than the critical value 7.851, the H_0 which says ASUU strikes do not prolong the number of years in school is rejected, while H_1 which states that ASUU strikes do prolong number of years in school is accepted.

Hypothesis Three

H_0 : ASUU strike action does not affect student's effectiveness and academic performance.

H_1 : ASUU strike action affects student's effectiveness and academic performance

The hypothesis was tested using the item 9 in table 7.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	160	47%
Agree	120	35%
Disagree	40	13%
Strongly Disagree	20	6%
Total	340	100%

Source: Field Survey 2020

$$\text{Expected Frequency (E)} = \frac{340}{4} = 85$$

Chi -square table;

O _i	E _i	O _i -e _i	(O _i -e _i) ²	(O _t -e _i) ² E _i
160	85	75	5625	59.1
120	85	35	1225-	14.4
40	85	-45	2025	23,8
20	85	-65	4225	35.5
Total				132.4

To compute the degree of freedom (df) or critical value (r-1) (c-1) Cell x row = (C-1) (R-1)

Where R = 4 C = 2

Therefore df= (4-1) (2-1)

= 3x1 df

Critical value at 3 df is 7.851.

If the calculated Chi-Square (X^2) value is greater than the critical value, that is degree of freedom at 4, the alternative hypothesis is accepted while the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore since the tabulated value of x (132.4) is greater than the critical value 7.851, the Ho which says that ASUU strike action does not affect student's effectiveness and academic performance is rejected while H1 which states ASUU strike action affects student's effectiveness and academic performance is accepted.

II. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper studied the impact of ASUU strikes on Nigeria University Students. As it has been observed, the desire of every university student is to complete his or her study without any hitch, but as it turns out in contemporary Nigeria, ASUU strikes have placed limitations on this aspiration. The poor service conditions of academics give rise to industrial disharmony within the university system. Apart from the fact that the strikes elongate the study duration of university students, the performance of students in academic activities is hampered, so much so that good and brilliant students end up graduating with poor grades. Government education policies and the associated inactions and the strikes embarked upon by members of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) have contributed to the poor academic performance of the university students in Nigeria. The avoidable conflict between the government and ASUU must not be allowed to jeopardize the academics and future of Nigerian students. Education in Nigeria must be given its pride of place; the government must strive hard to meet the United Nation's minimum standard. Nigerian Universities cannot be locked up permanently and think that ASUU and government will move about comfortably. Federal and State Governments should improve the conditions of service of the academics with a view to restoring industrial harmony and averting the brain drain of some of the academics migrating overseas in search of greener pasture. Government should always adopt collective bargaining approach to the management of industrial conflict. Universities should be autonomous in every way. This encourages research and consequent progress. Autonomy, however, has its implications: it entails monetary autonomy too. This commits the university system to finding alternative sources of funding to supplement what comes from the government. This is currently operative in many universities already in form of development levies and mild or mitigated forms of school fees.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Akinshipe O (2017) Common Social Vices In Schools: Causes, Effects & Solutions.
- [2]. Amaele, M. A. (1990); *Foundations of Education*. African a FEP Publishers limited Onistha, Nigeria.
- [3]. Amao-kehinde, A. O. (2003). Cult Activities and Campus Violence, Implication for Psychological Counseling" *Education Today*, 10 (2) 36-43.
- [4]. Anzene J. S. (2013). Trends in Examination Malpractice in Nigerian Educational System and its Effects in the Socio-Economic and Political Development of Nigeria. Being a Paper Delivered at a one-day Sensitization Programme on the effects of Examination Malpractice Organized by National Orientation Agency; 23/107 2013.
- [5]. Bell, D.D. (1970). "Bulletin on narcotics 22(2): 21-32
- [6]. Bolarin, T. A. (2005). Values Disorientation in the Nigerian System. In Iwovi, U. M. O (Ed) .*Education for Value. Lagos*. The CIBN Press limited
- [7]. Chukwumezie, F. U. (2001). Evaluation Facilities for Secretarial and Business Studies Programme in Institutions of Higher Learning in Imo State, *Business Education Journal*, 244-245.
- [8]. Chijoke, (2013). Effect of ASUU strike on the Academic Performance of University Students. 27 Dec. 2013. *Egobosterbooks.wordpress.com*
- [9]. Denga, D. I. (1991). Nigerian Education: Proposals for a smooth voyage to the year 2000 and beyond. *London Rapid Education publisher*.

- [10]. Enu, D. B; and Esu, A. E. O. (2011). Re-engineering Values Education in Nigeria Schools as Catalyst for National Development. *International Education Studies* 4(1), 147-153.
- [11]. Esu, A. E. O. (2009). Education for Humanistic values. In Iwovi, U. M. O (Ed). *Education for values Lagos*. The CIBN Press limited
- [12]. Ezeanya, Monsiguer (1979). "Indiscipline in schools" *Nigerian Tide*. News paper
- [13]. Fadipe, J. O; and Oluchukwu E. E. (1999). Education Planning and Administration in Nigeria in the 21st century. A publication of the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NEPA), Nigeria.
- [14]. Felix Igwe (2012) Non-payment of Salaries by the State Governments. www.information.com.
- [15]. Igbokwe, J. M. (1997). "Drug abuse in a depressed economy". A lecture presented during the *Physician week* held at Abakaliki. Nigeria October 24
- [16]. Iheanacho, R. A. E. (2002). *Psychology of Learning*. Owerri: GOC International Publishers.
- [17]. Isangedighi, A. J. (2007). *Child Psychology, Education and Development*. Calabar: Eti- Nwa Associate.
- [18]. Irtwange, S. V. (2004). "Learning, character and University of Agriculture, Makurdi Degree." *An Internal Memo, Students Affairs Department*, University of Agriculture, Makurdi, Nigeria.
- [19]. Jaucourt, L. C de (2002). "Vice." The Encyclopedia of Diderot & d'Alembert Collaborative Translation Project. Translated by Mary McAlpin. Ann Arbor: Michigan Publishing, University of Michigan Library. Web. 1 April 2015.
- [20]. Kalusi (2000). Education as a Fundamental Human Right, the case of Nigeria In Kosemani, J. M (Ed). *Nigeria, Education Matters Arising* Vol I. Port Harcourt. Abe Publishers Corporation.