

IMPACT APPRAISAL OF ACADEMIC STAFF UNION OF UNIVERSITIES (ASUU) STRIKE ON QUALITY OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract: This paper examined the effect of ASUU strike on quality of education in Nigeria. The study has five objectives and five null hypotheses. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The researchers targeted 450 undergraduate students from three federal universities in the North-West Geo-political zone in the country. Four rating scale structured questionnaire titled, ASUU Strike and Quality of Education in Nigeria (ASQEN) was used for data collection. The researchers assisted by two research assistants distributed the instruments. Three hundred and eighty four copies of questionnaire were properly completed. Data collected were coded in to SPSS; the package was used to run multiple regression models to determine the five null hypotheses. In all the tests of the hypotheses, the .05 confidence level was used for determining statistical significance. The result revealed that, ASUU strike has negative effect on the quality of university graduates that the country produces. In view of this, it was recommended among others that, government should develop actions that will help to check incessant industrial action in Nigerian educational sector.

Keywords: Effects, Academic Staff Union of Universities, Strike, Quality, University, Education, Nigeria

Introduction

Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) was formed in 1978. It is an offspring of Nigerian Association of University Teachers formed in 1965. The union aim at assisting: - the stake holders in achieving its high profile in education and in development and promoting sustainable management of education by providing high-quality services in Education. In addition the union also supports the struggle for the improvement of the social, economic professional situation of the members, safeguard their interests and work for their success. In Nigeria as in other countries, trade unions do use various strategies to achieve their goals. Tahir (2014), reported that, trade union such as ASUU, usually embark on various actions over agitations for improvement of their welfare, teaching and research facilities and university autonomy.

Since the formation of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in 1978, the union is generally considered strike as the last option to influence government decision. The action involves one of the followings: - (i) suspension of work; (ii) refusal to work; (iii) continue to work under certain conditions; or (iv) slow down of work. The first strike action reported by Olusegun (2014), was organised in 1988 during General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida for fair wages and university autonomy. The situation worsened during late General Sani Abacha when the union embarked on strike in 1994 and 1996 protesting against the dismissal of their members. During President Olusegun Obasanjo, the struggle for improvement of salary, teaching and research facilities, university autonomy and reinstatement of forty-nine lecturers from university of Ilorin led to another strike in 2007, 2008 and 2009. The strike was suspended when late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua came to power. With the coming of an academician as the president of the country (Dr. Goodluck Jonathan), it was hoped that the regime will bring lasting solution to ASUU problem. Unfortunately, failure of the Federal Government to implement the 2009 agreement led to another strike action which disrupted the activities of universities for another six months. The persistent strikes have definitely affected the stability of university calendar in Nigeria. Suleiman (2013), reported in his research that the perennial disputes between ASUU and the government over the last fourteen years had made universities to loose three years of academic study.

Despite the importance of stability on school calendar on education, the incessant ASUU strikes action in the country has become worrisome and destabilized the programme of educational sector. It is on record that, from 1988 to 2013, the national body of the union had embarked on 16 strike actions. Abdulsalam (2013) reported that ASUU organised strike in 1988, 1992, 1994 and 1996. Aghatise (2013) reported that in the present dispensation ASUU had organised strikes in 1999, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011-2012 and 2013. Beside these, local chapters also do organise their branch strike actions from time to time.

The persistent ASUU strikes in Nigeria have disrupting school academic, left academic activities of universities disjointed, and distract the normal learning process. According to Kazeem and Ige (2010), disruption in academic program resulting from strike led to closure of universities for a period of time thereby affecting the academic activity of universities. Edinyang & Ubi (2013), and Olusegun (2014), maintained that instability in school calendar through strike elongate study period and hamper their academic activities. Considering the impact of strike actions on school calendar and academic activities, the researchers examined the impact of ASUU strike on:- (i) implementation of school curricula in Nigeria; (ii) quality of teaching in universities in Nigeria; (iii) acquisition of requisite skills in Nigeria; and (iv) students learning habit in Nigeria

Null hypotheses

1. ASUU strike has no significant impact on implementation of curricula in Nigeria.
2. ASUU strike has no significant impact on quality of teaching in universities in Nigeria
3. ASUU strike has no significant impact on students acquisition of requisite skills in Nigeria
4. ASUU strike has no significant impact on students learning habit in Nigeria

METHODOLOGY

Research design

The design used for this study was descriptive design method. The design was considered the most convenient way to obtain facts from respondents in which the results of the analyses were used for decision-taking and generalization. Amechi (2003) stated that, when a study involves a population or a sample of respondents from whom information is obtained either verbally or through questionnaire, the ideal design method to be adopted is the descriptive survey design.

Population of the study

The total population was 450 undergraduate students from three federal universities in Nigeria, namely:- Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Bayero University Kano and Usman Danfodio University, Sokoto located in the in North-west geo-political zone in the country. The researchers randomly selected 150 students from each university.

Research instrument

The instrument used for this study was a self-constructed structured questionnaire titled, ASUU Strike and Quality of Education in Nigeria (ASQEN). The instrument has section A and B. Section A elicits bio-data information of respondents. Section B contains 20 items that generate data used for test of the null hypotheses raised. The researchers used the idea of Likert to construct in a four (4) rating scale structured questionnaire of Strongly Agree 4 points, Agree 3 points, Disagree 2 points and Strongly Disagree 1 point.

The instrument was validated by experts in education and research methodology who were of the ranks of senior lecturers and above in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The suggestions and criticisms were put into consideration in the final copy of the instrument. Twenty copies of questionnaire were distributed to undergraduate students in Kaduna state university, Kaduna for pilot study. Data collected were subjected to statistical analysis using Cronbach's alpha, the analysis gave a correlation-coefficient of 0.75. A reliability coefficient of this value is high enough for studies of this nature as reported by Uzosike (2008), who stated that, the average value of correlation co-efficient should not be less than 0.50 .

Data collection

The data was personally administered by the researchers, assisted by two research assistants. The questionnaire were administered to students during the general courses in their respective institutions. Face to face method of data administration was used. This method enabled a high retrieve rate of the data. The respondents were required to indicate their relative agreement with each item based on the scale.

Result of the Study

All the data collected were analyzed using multiple regression analysis. In the analysis, when calculated value was greater than table value or ($P \geq \alpha$), the null hypothesis was retained and on the other hand when the

calculated value of null hypotheses was less than the table value or the ($P \leq \alpha$), the null hypothesis was not retained. In all the tests of the hypotheses, the .05 confidence level was used for determining statistical significance.

Table 3: Summary of Multiple regression result used to test the null hypotheses

Variables	Coefficient		
	B	B	t-value
Implementation of curricula	0.58	0.387	2.266*
Quality of teaching	0.56	0.381	2.251*
Students Acquisition of Requisite skills	0.64	0.413	4.146*
Learning habit	0.68	0.444	4.217*
Test results			
F- value	3.112*		
R	0.805		
R ²	0.648		
Constant	0.779		2.764*
DF	3/178		

Result of data analysis is as presented in the Table showed that there was high association (0.805) between independent variables and quality of university education in Nigeria. The coefficient of R² value shows that ASUU strike has 65 percent negative effect on quality of university graduates in the country. This further revealed in the result of ANOVA which revealed F value was 3.112, $p < 0.05$ indicates that implementation of curricula, quality of teaching, students acquisition of requisite skills and students learning habit significantly affect the quality of education in Nigerian Universities. The significance effect of the variables indicates that the four sets of independent variables with “t” values of 2.251 & 4.146, $p < 0.05$) have high effect on quality of universities graduates in Nigeria.

Discussion of the findings

The study revealed that ASUU strike had negative impact on implementation of universities curricula. The finding agreed with that of Bello (2008), who reported that, during strike action, universities curriculums were not fully implemented. As a result, students struggled to acquire certificates at all cost without actually fulfilling the required educative process. Kazeem and Ige (2010), earlier noted that, during strike action no academic activity takes place at the institutions and upon resumption students at most times are not given the opportunity to make up for lost times. Similarly, Edinyang and Ubi (2013) stressed that, effective learning was always hampered by inability to successful implementation of curriculum and or of syllabus timely before the examination. In supporting this, Adesulu (2014), maintained that ASUU strike has affect the quality of graduates from Nigerian universities since time lost due to strikes that should be used for delivering the curriculum was not gained after the strike. Similarly, Olusegun (2014) reported that one of the negative impacts of ASUU strike was the lowering of quality of graduates from Nigerian universities since time that should have been used for teaching the curriculum was lost during the strikes. He added that, the typical scenario was to condense content that should have been taught by rushing students to examinations thereafter. This scenario led to half-baked products of university graduates in Nigeria.

The second finding of the study showed that, strike action affected the quality of teaching in Universities. This results agreed with most of the findings regarding the relationship between job satisfaction, need satisfaction, motivation and job performance (Ifinedo, 2003, 2004; Ladebo, 2005; Ubom & Joshua, 2004; Ubom, 2001), who all stated that job performance of teachers depended on job satisfaction. Nwachukwu (2006) reported that physiological needs, security needs, social needs, self-esteem needs and self-actualization needs are significant predictors of the job performance of Nigerian teachers. Asuquo (2010), who reported that good human relations are important to teachers and students’ well being as well as effective teaching and learning in universities. Sommer (2014) stressed that, when a group of employees voluntarily joins a labor union or other formal organizations, and this group goes on strike, the overall employee performance will suffer.

The study also revealed that ASUU strike affected the learning habit of students. The outcome of the study was similar with that of Iheanacho (2002) and Isangedighi (2007), who reported that effective learning was achieved when students were emotionally and psychologically stable. They stressed that during strike action, students become emotionally and psychologically unstable especially on the perception that it would cause them to stay at the institution longer than expected, hence affecting their learning habit. Edinyang and Ubi (2013) also reported that, disruption in academic programme from strike action affect the quality and quantity of students’ learning habit. They added that such disruption affected their concentration, interaction with fellow students and teachers. Isangedighi (2011), believed strike action had negative effect on students’ learning ability. He added

that, students lost preparedness and readiness to learn at time of strike hence their educational attainment becomes adversely affected. Similarly, Edinyang and Ubi (2013) reported that disruptions in academic programmes served as non-motivational factor to the students as it discouraged their learning habit. The view of Gabriel (2014), also showed that, during strike, the enthusiasm of reading habit of students would be lost.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that:-

ASUU strike action destabilized calendar of universities education in Nigeria. The disruption affects the followings, curriculum implementation, quality of lesson delivery, period of graduation, hampered students' performance and quality of education in the country. The National Policy on Education specified standard and goals of higher education in Nigeria as enunciated will not be easily achieved. As a result, graduates will not be adequately prepared to face the challenges of labour market and this would increase the rate of graduate youth unemployment in the country. In addition, the pass glory and enviable standard of Nigeria universities locally and globally would be lost.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it was recommended that:-

1. government should develop actions such as organizing meetings and interaction; this will help to check incessant industrial action in educational sector in Nigeria.
2. there should be reduction of bureaucracies to enhance effective personal communication between ASUU officials and government bodies.
3. ASUU officials also should be calm in any of their decisions that will lead to strike actions which will hamper the academics activities of schools
4. students should cultivate the habit of studying at home during strike, this will help to improve their performance when strike is called off.

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