

Students Perception of Academic Staff Union of Nigeria Universities Strike Actions on their Academic Performance at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the perception of University of Ibadan Students on the effect of Academic Staff Union of Nigerian University (ASUU) Strikes on their academic performance. The survey research design was adopted using the multi-stage sampling procedure to select five faculties: Law, Pharmacy, Clinical Science, Agriculture and Technology and 376 final year students as sample. One research question and hypothesis guided the study. ASUU strikes and Students Perception on their Academic Performance Questionnaire (ASUUSSPAPQ) with 'r=0.80' using the cronbach alpha elicited data for the study. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics and t-test at $p < 0.005$. ASUU strikes distort academic calendar at the university of Ibadan with SD = 0.092 (high), leads to students involvement in crimes SD = 0.97 (high), unbeneficial to students academics SD =

0.670 (medium). A non-significant relationship existed among gender opinions at ($F_{=0.070}$) $t_{-0.265}$; $p < 0.05$ on ASUU strikes. The study recommended that government should employ prompt dialogue to prevent disruption and total breakdown of the educational system, members and the executives of ASUU should employ other industrial dispute resolution strategies than indefinite strike actions which obviously paralyses student's academics.

Key Words: Perceptions of ASUU Strike Actions, Students Academic Performance, ASUU Strike Actions in Universities

Introduction

The role of universities in human capital development, research and technological innovation cannot be under evaluated. University education plays a vital role in the development of human capital and is linked with an individual's well-being and opportunities for better living (Battle and Lewis, 2002). Universities also ensure the acquisition of knowledge and skills that enable individuals increase their productivity and further improve on their quality of life. Such increase in quality of life could boost and lead towards new sources of earnings that could enhance the economic growth of a country (Saxton, 2000).

Universities have grown to be known as educational institutions where teaching, learning, research and manpower development take place and a good breeding ground for the production of leaders for tomorrow. According to Ike (1999), a university fulfills the major function as knowledge and value provider. In other words, a University could be said to progress when it is able to provide knowledge and value which if not properly managed by its administrators and staff will lead to failure in its function of providing knowledge and value.

Nwankwo (2000) explained that merit has been the watchword in good university system thus, the diversity is an institution in which a student must first be certified worthy in character and learning before being admitted into the Honors Degree.

Nigerian Universities have experienced tremendous setbacks as a result of Academic Staff Union of Universities strike actions. Academic Staff Union of Nigerian Universities (ASUU) has always subjected students to unfavorable conditions of studies, through the disruption of academic

programme, giving students' undeserved extension of their study years, poor students' concentration on academic programs and poor teacher-student relationships among others.

University students face a lot of challenges in developing positive study attitudes and habits during strike. ASUU has also used strike actions to demand fair wages, university autonomy, funding of Nigerian universities, etc. Stakeholders assert that strike periods which result to students stay at home degenerate students' academic performance especially in universities. Asaolu (2010) opined that effective learning in school occur when the stakeholders adequately perform their roles. This means that effective learning can be hindered when there is conflict among the stakeholders especially when one fails to perform its required responsibility and disrespect others' rights. Good human relations are important to teachers and students' well being as well as effective learning (Asuquo, 2010). However, conflict in the school setting disrupts academic progress and adversely affects effective learning among the students.

Odubela (2012) 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 action in place. The researcher is of the view that disruption in academic program as caused 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 effective learning in Nigerian universities; a situation that dampens human development. Ajayi (2013) carried out a research on ASUU Strikes and Academic Performance of Students in Ekiti State University Ado-Ekiti. The findings showed that the incessant strikes action by ASUU in Nigeria could have disrupted the academic calendar of Universities thus affecting students' academic pursuit and performance.

The relationship between gender and the academic achievement of students has been discussed for decades (Eitle, 2005). A gap between the achievement of boys and girls has been found, with girls showing better performance than boys in certain instances (Chambers & Schreiber, 2004).

However, this study is poised to examine Students Perception On Academic Staff Union of Nigerian University (ASUU) Strikes Action On their Academic Performance at the University of Ibadan ,Nigeria.

Incessant strikes in Universities in Nigeria are quite common of which the University of Ibadan is one. In Table I, the total number of strike by ASUU between 2008 and 2013 were 5 with a mean strike indices of 5.5months in each year.

Table I: Summary of ASUU strikes between 1999 and 2013

Year	Period of Strike
1999	5 months strike
2001	3 months strike
2002	2 months strike
2003/2004	2 weeks strike
2004	6 months strike
2005	3 days strike
2006	3 days strike
2007	3 months strike
2008	1 week strike
2009	4 months strike
2010	Over 5 months strike
2011/2012	3 months strike
2012/2013	6 months strike

Source: www.statisense.info/ASUUStrike

From the above analysis between 1999 and 2013 ASUU strike cumulatively is responsible for 2 missing years in Universities academic programmes. As mentioned earlier, there are multiple causes of ASUU industrial actions in Nigeria ranging from breakdown in collective bargaining, failure to implement agreements or refusal to recognize the unions among other factors.

ASUU in December 1980 protested over the non-reinstatement of its six senior academic staff of the University of Lagos sacked by President Shehu Shagari's Justice Belonmu's Visitation Panel Report. ASUU also

opposed the SAP and its harsh conditionalities of the IMF loan introduced by Babangida's regime. ASUU also went on strike in 2013 due to failed implementation of agreements between the Federal Government and ASUU. The situation however seems to have degenerated from bad to worse since the inception of civilian administration starting with Chief Olusegun Obasanjo till date.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of strikes by ASUU though not new in Nigeria has assumed a new dimension with the capacity of keeping students away from classes and lecturers in some cases for upwards of 6 out of the 9 academic months in a year (see Table 1). Stakeholders have commented variously on the effects of these strike on students for example, the Federal Ministry of Education in 2005, observed that the level of numeracy and literacy of Nigeria Universities students was declining due to several unresolved issues that kept tertiary education students away from schools. Again, it is generally observed that the internal efficiency of most tertiary educational institutions have been decline as courses which ordinarily should be completed in 4 years end up taking as much as 6 years and above. While employers of labour are not left out of this cry that students produced by Nigerian Universities lacks required skills for employment, students have argued otherwise. This study however is investigating the perception of University students on the assertions of Federal Ministry of Education and employers of labour. The University of Ibadan is selected for the study due to its pioneer status as University making findings from its generalisable.

Research Question

What is the perception of University of Ibadan student on Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strikes effect on the academic performance of students?

Hypothesis

H_{o1} : There is no significant difference between the male and female students' perception of Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU)

strike action and students' academic performance at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Methodology

This study adopted the survey research design of the '*ex-post facto*' type that is descriptive in nature. The survey was adopted because the variables being investigated could not be controlled by the investigator as the events had occurred. The population of the study is the entire final year undergraduates in the university that consist of thirteen faculties. The sampling techniques adopted for the study is the multistage sampling procedure. Five faculties were selected purposively. The sample size for the study comprised all 500level undergraduates' students. The Faculties of Agriculture; Law; Technology; Pharmacy and Clinical Science were selected. Investigating perception of University of Ibadan Students on the effect of Academic Staff Union of Nigerian University (ASUU) Strikes on academic performance of University students could be determined by students who had spent at least five years in the University. The total population of 500 students in these faculties were 800 as illustrated in Table 2:

Table 2: Students Population by Faculties

Description	Agriculture and Forestry	Law	Pharmacy	Technology	Clinical Science	Total
No of Students	285	146	59	282	28	800

Source: Researchers field trip and details from University of Ibadan Academic Planning Unit 2013/2014.

The second stage involved the adoption of the proportionate to size random sampling technique to select 376 students from the 5 sampled faculties. A proportion of 47% of the population of each faculty was used (Table 2).

Table 3: Sample Size of Students

Description	Agriculture and Law Forestry		Pharmacy	Technology	Clinical Science	Total
Population	285	146	59	282	28	800
% of total pop	47	47	47	47	47	47
Total Sample	134	69	28	133	13	376

Two instruments for data collection, designed by the researcher and titled 'ASUU Strikes and Students Academic Performance Questionnaire (ASSAPAQ) I & II' were designed to elicit primary responses from respondents while ASSAPAQ 2 was constructed to elicit response on students academic performance from the Academic Planning Unit of the University of Ibadan. To ensure validity of the instruments, experts in Educational Planning in the department of Educational Management and test construction experts in the Institute of Education were consulted. The experts modified and approved the instruments before administration. The reliability of the instruments was estimated through the use of test, re-test method that yielded a reliability co-efficient of 'r-0.80' indicating a high reliability and therefore valid.

The data collected were analyzed using the following statistical tools: The research question was answered using descriptive statistics while the hypothesis was analysed using inferential statistics of t-test. The decision point was $p < 0.05$ level of significance.

Findings

Research Question I

What is the perception of the University of Ibadan student on Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strike action on the academic performance of students?

This research question sought to seek the opinion of students on how ASUU strikes affect their studies.

Table 3: Student Perception on ASUU Strike Action

Descriptive Statistics						
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Remarks
ASUU strike leads to distortion of academic calendar	370	1	4	3.65	0.920	High
ASUU strike leads to students involvement in social vices like prostitution, oil bunkering	370	1	4	3.12	0.979	High
ASUU strike leads to students loss of interest in academic activities	370	1	4	3.00	0.920	High
ASUU strike is beneficial to the students	370	1	4	1.82	0.916	Medium
ASUU strike is beneficial to the community.	370	1	4	1.69	0.923	Medium
ASUU strike is a result of selfish interest of academics staff.	370	1	4	2.24	0.869	Medium
Government insensitive to the need of academics staff (ASUU) leads to strike.	370	1	4	3.13	0.816	High
Nigerian Governmental Organization (NGOs) should organize academic activities for students during the strike.	370	1	4	3.09	0.894	High
Students should engage in productivity activities during the strike	370	1	4	3.53	0.691	High
the culture of self study should be encourage among the students	370	1	4	3.55	0.670	High
tutorial classes should continue during the strike.	370	1	4	2.89	1.019	Medium

Key: 0-1 (low) 1.1 – 2.9 (Medium) 3.0 - 4.0 (High)

With a minimum scale of 1 (very low), 2 (low), 3 (high), and maximum scale of 4 (very high), Table 4.2.2 revealed that students are of very high perception that ASUU strike actions lead to distortion of academic calendar ($Mean = 3.65$ or H^4), the culture of self study should be encouraged among students to reduce poor academic performance

(Mean = 3.55 or H⁴), and students should engage in productive activities during strike to reduce the social vices (Mean = 3.53 or H⁴). Other perceptions include government insensitivity to the needs of academic staff leads to strike (Mean=3.13), ASUU strike leads to student involvement in social vices like prostitution (Mean = 3.12), NGOs should organize academic activities for students during strikes (Mean = 3.09) and ASUU strike leads to students loss of interest in academic activities (Mean = 3.00).

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference between the male and female student perception of Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strike action and students' academic performance.

Table 4. Gender Perception on ASUU Strike Actions

Items	N	df	Mean	S.D	STD Error Mean	F	T	Sig.	Remark
Gender			3.18	0.815	0.005				
						0.070	-0.265	0.791	Not Significant
Student Academic Performance	358	356	3.21	0.811	0.070				

p > 0.05

An independent sample t-test was calculated comparing the mean perception of male and female on ASUU strike action and student academic performance. No significant difference was found [$t(356) = -0.265, p > .05$]. The mean of the male group ($m = 3.18, sd = 0.055$) was not significantly different from the mean of the female group ($m = 3.21, sd = 0.070$).

There is no significant difference between the male and female student perception of Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strike action and students' academic performance at the University of Ibadan. Therefore, no significant difference was found. The mean of the male

group was not significantly different from the mean of the female group. We therefore, do not reject the hypothesis.

Discussion of Findings

In the findings of the study, the revelations were quite clear that strikes distort academic calendar and the mean among respondents was always high. It is quite clear that though strikes bring in unwanted results, it is expected that in Nigeria's quest for national development, these strikes should have left our psyche by now. The cost of strikes on the University system is quite enormous. In the first instance, our Universities cannot be ranked among the Universities of the world because of low internal efficiency traceable to constant strike actions. Again, the declining morale of students who are affected adversely by these strikes is another case in point as the number of drop outs could increase at the end of every strike due to financial constraints, unwanted pregnancies and involvement in social vices indicating that in all ways, the Nigerian Nation loses when there are strike actions in Universities.

What is the perception of the university of Ibadan student on Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strike action on the academic performance of students?

There is no significant difference between the male and female students' perception of Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strike action and students' academic performance. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0), which stated that there is no significant difference between male and female students' perception of Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strike action and students' academic performance is thereby accepted and the alternative hypothesis is thereby rejected. This result disagrees with the conclusion of Chambers & Schreiber (2004), that a gap exists between the performance of boys and girls, with girls showing better performance than boys in certain instances. Eitle, (2005) stated that relationship between gender and academic achievement of students has been discussed for decades with no proper demarcation.

The study revealed that students are of very high perception that ASUU strike actions lead to distortion of academic calendar ($Mean = 3.65$ or H^4), the culture of self study should be encouraged among

students to reduce poor academic performance (*Mean* = 3.55 or *H*"4), and students should engage in productive activities during strike to reduce the social vices (*Mean* = 3.53 or *H*"4). Other perceptions include the government insensitivity to the needs of academic staff leads to strike (*Mean* = 3.13), ASUU strike leads to student involvement in social vices like prostitution (*Mean* = 3.12), NGOs should organize academic activities for students during strikes (*Mean* = 3.09) and ASUU strike leads to students loss of interest in academic activities (*Mean* = 3.00). In conclusion, no significant difference was found [$t(356) = -0.265, p > 0.05$] in an independent sample t-test that compared the mean perception of male and female students on ASUU strike action and student academic performance. The mean of the male group ($m = 3.18, sd = 0.055$) was not significantly different from the mean of the female group ($m = 3.21, sd = 0.070$). As observed, the desire of every university student is to complete his or her study within stipulated time without any hitch, but in contemporary Nigeria, ASUU strikes have placed limitations on this aspiration. Good and brilliant students end up graduating with poor grades or relatively low cumulative grade point averages.

Summary

The study examined Academic Staff Union of Universities strike as it correlates with students academic performance at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria; the purpose of the study was to examine ASUU strike effects on the academic performance of students in the University of Ibadan. Descriptive survey research of the 'ex post facto' method was adopted for the study, guided by one research questions and one hypothesis. The result revealed that there is a weak positive correlation between Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strikes and students' academic performance and that there is also no significant difference between male and female student's perception on Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strike action on students' academic performance.

Conclusion

This research work studied students perception on Academic Staff Union of Nigerian University (ASUU) Strikes effect On their Academic Performance at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. The study established no significant difference in gender opinions concerning the strike actions. Again, Nigerian students have lost two full years in education to strikes which show a weak internal efficiency in Universities, a huge cost of education on the part of government and a heavy opportunity cost to the students. The sufferings arising from ASUU strikes are unquantifiable as some students in Nigeria drop out of school due to financial crises which emerge when savings for the particular programme has elapsed and the programme is yet to conclude. Others include unwanted pregnancies on the part of the ladies bring about abrupt end to their educational pursuit and widening the educational gap on gender basis.

Recommendations

The study suggests and recommends the following solutions to bring a palliative end to ASUU strikes in Nigerian Universities;

1. Members and executives of ASUU should adopt other industrial dispute resolution strategies to express their grievances than indefinite strike actions which obviously paralyses student's academics.
2. The Government should also employ the method of prompt negotiation and grant the requests of ASUU in time to prevent disruption and total breakdown of the educational system. The reasons for this is that in all disputes so far, there is never a time government has never conceded to ASUU what they required so why wait for the strikes?

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