Effect of Incessant Strike on Nigerian Education: Implications for University Education in Nigeria.

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Abstract
The study was carried out on the Effect of Incessant Industrial Strike on Nigerian Education: Implications for University Education in Nigeria. The aim of the paper was to determine the effect of incessant through on the adequacy of years students are supposed to spend receiving lectures in the university before graduation. The design of the study was triangulation design and the scope of the covers incessant strike embarked by the Academic Staff union of Universities (ASUU) in Nigeria from 1999 to 2020. As source of data, the researcher used the data on the number of strikes Universities embarked on and how long each lasted. Simple percentage was used to analyse the data and the result reveals that about 17% of the entire calendar has constantly been used to train the students but is lost to strike. Conclusion was therefore, made that Nigeria University students are hare half-baked with strike action responsible for 17% of the problem. One that background, recommendation was made that government should avoid any action that would lead Asuu to go strike and Asuu should find an alternative means of settling their disputes with government other than industrial strike.

Keywords: Strike, Industrial Strike, University, University Education
Introduction

Naziev (2017) posits that “Man, as an individual, stands in relation to himself and he has two aspects: his individuality and his universal essence because his duty to himself consists partly in his duty to care for his physical preservation, partly in his duty to educate himself and to elevate his being as an individual into conformity with his universal nature”. This goal is to elevate human being as an individual into conformity with his universal nature, with another goal, that is all-round development of personality which is the focus of education. Therefore, university is also a level of education where personalities are shaped.

Consequently, Goetze (2019) states that the university is conceived primarily in terms of its economic value, that is to prepare students for the workforce, to produce innovative technologies, to incubate entrepreneurial projects, and to produce scientific discoveries that are useful to government or industry. Viewing university as higher level of education, Alemu, (2018) states that modern higher education is defined as an organized tertiary learning and training activities and institutions that include conventional universities such as arts, humanities, and science faculties and more specialized university institutions in agriculture, engineering, science, and technology. The concept of higher education includes post-secondary institutions like polytechnics, colleges of education, and university.

Otonko (2012) holds that the history of university education in Nigeria is traced to the Elliot Commission of 1943, which culminated in the establishment of University College Ibadan (UCI) in 1948. UCI was an affiliate of the University of London. Ibukun in Otonko (2012) also contends that the UCI was saddled with a number of problems at inception ranging from rigid constitutional provisions, poor staffing, and low enrolment to high dropout rate and that in April 1959, the Federal Government commissioned an inquiry (the Ashby Commission) to advise it on the higher education needs of the country for its first two decades. Before the submission of the report, the Eastern Region government established its own university at Nsukka (University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 1960). The implementation of the Ashby Report led to the establishment of University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife) in 1962 by the Western region,
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria in 1962 by the Northern Region and University of Lagos (1962) University College, Ibadan became a full -fledged university in 1962. This meant that UCI, Ibadan and University of Lagos became the first two federal universities in Nigeria while the other three remained regional. In 1970, the newly created Midwestern region opted for a university known as University of Benin. The six universities established during this period 1960-1970 are still referred to as first generation universities. According to Otonko (2012), universities in Nigeria were under the close surveillance of the government and appointments of lay members of the council, and that of the Vice-Chancellor, were politically motivated while in the third National Development Plan (1975 - 1980), the government established seven universities instead of the four proposed in the plan, and also took over the four regional universities in 1975. They were Universities of Calabar, Ilorin, Jos, Sokoto, Maiduguri, Port Harcourt and Ado Bayero University, Kano which became the second generation universities. The third generation universities were established between 1980 and early 1990. They are: the Federal Universities of Technology in Owerri, Makurdi, Yola, Akure and Bauchi. While state universities were found in Imo, Ondo, Lagos, AkwaIbom, Oyo and Cross-River states. The fourth generation universities are those established between 1991 and the present date. They include more state universities, Nigerian open universities and many private universities.

The benefits derivable from a good and functional university education system can never be overemphasized. The entire developmental apparatus of the socio-economic structure revolves around a good university education. The contribution of university education to development comes in varied forms. In a nutshell, even though the university system in Nigeria has not had a very smooth sail from inception, it has witnessed many successes.

1. It provides not only the high-level skills necessary for every labor market but also the training essential for teachers, doctors, nurses, civil servants, engineers, humanists, entrepreneurs, scientists, social scientists, and a myriad of other personnel. It is these trained individuals who develop the capacity and analytical skills that drive local economies, support civil society, teach children, lead effective governments, and make important decisions which affect entire societies. This function of education can be seen vividly in action in Nigeria.
2. Furthermore, the university education in Nigeria has led to the development of many Nigerians into sound and effective citizens. Here, university education more than any other, has led to higher self-awareness and self-realization of individuals at various tasks, enhanced better human relationships, national consciousness and effective citizenship. One cannot doubt the fact that the university education system has enhanced social, cultural, economic, political, scientific and technological progress in Nigeria.

3. The country is more blessed now with specialists at various fields of endeavour: medicine, law, engineering, philosophy, education, etc. And due to this development, the nation is becoming more and more dynamic and self-reliant as the days go by. This has been made possible through university education.

4. It helps in the rapid industrialization of the economy. This it does by providing manpower with adequate professional, technical and managerial skills. In another vein, a good university system helps to boost the transformation of societies into knowledge societies. This it does by providing not just educated workers, but knowledge workers who will contribute immensely to the growth of the economy.

5. Furthermore, a worthwhile university education helps to instill good attitudes and engenders attitudinal changes that are necessary for the socialization of the individuals, thereby, leading to the modernization and overall transformation of the society.

6. It is also clear that a functional university system helps, through teaching and concise research, in the creation, absorption, dissemination and application of knowledge.

7. Finally, healthy university education helps in the formation of a strong nation state and at the same time aids globalization. It allows people to enjoy an enhanced life of mind*, offering the wider society both cultural and political benefits.

In addition, university education has been on the vanguard of creating opportunities for the teeming Nigerian population. To build a united and egalitarian country entails that every Nigerian should contribute to the development or up-liftment of the country. The opportunity to do this in Nigeria has been largely provided by the university education. Apart from serving their
fatherland, the university education has continually churned out scholars who have contributed meaningfully to the world’s reservoir of knowledge. There is thus growing evidence that university education, through its role in empowering domestic constituencies, building institutions, and nurturing favorable regulatory frameworks and governance structures, is vital to a country’s efforts to increase social capital and to promote social cohesion, which is proving to be an important determinant of economic growth and development.

The question is who is to be blamed for the systematic destruction of the Nigerian University system in Nigeria? Otonko (2012) states that history has it that in the 1960’s, 70’s and up to the mid 80’s the five premier universities, Ahmadu Bello university, Zaria; University of Ibadan, University of Ife, University of Lagos, and University of Nsukka were centers of academic excellence and that there were few universities and many students to be admitted and competition was very fierce with no strike by lecturers of the universities as it is being experienced today. Industrial strike action appears to be a major set to educational practice in Nigeria.

A strike is a stoppage of work as a result of mass refusal of employees to work in reaction to employees grievances (Research clue.com, 2021). Adavbiele (2015) states that strike actions are increasingly gaining recognition in the educational sector of this country; and this phenomenon has attracted the attention of well-meaning Nigerians and stakeholders. The term ‘strike’ has been described in different forms. According to Hornby (2001), strike is a period of time when an organized group of employees of a company stops working because of a disagreement over payment or certain conditions. Those that are often involved in these strike actions are described as strikers. Disagreement or conflict is a common phenomenon in any organizations owing to the Strike actions may persist for some time owing to the obvious points highlighted above. Once a strike action continues to persist without stopping, it is described as incessant strike actions. Nigerian educational system in recent times has been characterized by incessant strike actions across the tiers of the educational system. The first notable strike in Nigeria was held in 1945 and ever since, different groups and unions have been embarking on strike actions across the sectors of the economy. From observations, the educational sector has received the greatest hit among all sectors.

There have been series of strike actions in the nation’s educational sector and especially tertiary institutions. The Academic Staff Union of Universities
(ASUU) and the Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP) embarked on strike in 2013 and the Colleges of Education Academic Staff Union (COEASU) strike in 2014 are recent incessant strike actions which have led to school disruption and stress among all concerned stakeholders. This often cause a big setback in educational industry in Nigeria and calls worries that necessitate drastic action by the nation. In some cases, union leaders have been attacked and some of them have sustained serious injuries; and some have paid with their lives due to its prolonged nature. These developments have in no small measure have negative impact and also affected Technical education programme in Nigeria university of workforce in an organization; and the difference between individual and organizational goals

**Strike and its impact on Education in Nigeria**

There are several forms of strike as documented in different literatures. In this context, the following types of strike are examined:

1. Jurisdictional Strike: this occurs when two unions argue about which one has jurisdiction to over a type of work and attempt to exert pressure upon the employer to allocate it to one or the other (Clark, 2012). This strike is a ‘fall out’ from the multiplicity of unions in a given profession or discipline. This strike is described as illegal as their employer is caught in the middle between the two warring unions.

2. Sympathy Strike: it is a form of strike that is embarked upon as solidarity for other union. It is described as sympathy strike because other unions who are not party to the original strike consent to strike in sympathy with the original union (Clark, 2012). It is an attempt to exert an indirect pressure upon the employer. This type of strike is common in tertiary institutions in the country where Non-Academic Staff Union of Universities (NASUU) embarked on sympathy strike because of ASUU and vice versa.

3. Recognition Strike: this is a form of strike that is primarily geared at forcing the employer to recognize and deal with the union (Clark, 2012). In a country, there are several unions. Some of the unions are more recognized than the others. The perceived less recognized union will result to embarking on strike as a way of drawing the attention of their employers and the general public to recognize and deal with them. The strike actions sometimes embarked upon by the Non Academic Staff
Union of Universities (NASUU) may be described as recognition strike as this has a way of drawing the attention of the government to recognize and deal with them, and not ASUU alone.

4. Economic Strike: this is one of the most popular forms of strike in Nigeria. It is the typical strike based on a demand for better wages, hour and working conditions than the employer is willing to grant (Clark, 2012). It is sometimes called ‘bread and better strike’. The first strike embarked upon by ASUU in 1994 was on this ground and the recent strike actions embarked upon by ASUU, ASUP and COEASU was also based on economic considerations (that is, better wages/salaries and working conditions). Wildcat Strike: it is described as a quick, sudden and unauthorized type of work stoppage. It is not approved by union leadership. It is often masterminded by a subgroup of employees who have not achieved

Asuu has been going on strike several times and the type strike associated with the union is Economic Strike. Below it a table displaying all the strikes action embarked upon from 1999 to 2020.

Table 1: All the times ASUU has gone on strike since 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Then President</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>5 months</td>
<td>Olusegun Obasanjo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>3 weeks</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>1 week</td>
<td>Musa Yar Adua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>4 weeks</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>5 month +</td>
<td>Goodluck Jonathan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>59 days</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>5 months 15 days</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>Mohammadu Buhari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>9 months</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sum of time spent on strike = 42 months 3 year 6 months
Between 1999 and 2020 is 21 years out of which 3 years 6 months lost to strike. 

=21x12 (252 months)/42 months= 6 days lost out every academic month. Therefore, in a programme of 4 years a student looses 6x12x4=288 days which is 9 months 6 days.

Cause of strike actions in Nigeria
Strike action has created tension in the country thereby causing people (especially students) to wonder what could be the causes of prolonged strike actions by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in Nigeria. The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). According to Njure (2021), the following are root cause of strike between Asuu and Nigerian Government.

1. The need for the renewal of the university system
2. Inability of the Federal Government to fulfill the conditions included in the 2004 agreement reached between the two sides (ASUU and FG)
3. Payment of Earned Academic Allowances and salaries
4. Federal Government’s failure to adhere to agreed terms
5. Inadequate pay packages and poor welfare packages
6. Displeasure in the harsh and unfriendly policies by government and employers
7. Government’s inability to set up a visitation panel to tertiary institutions.

In regards to 2020 strike action by Asuu, Njure (2021) states:

Several meetings have been held to end prolonged strike actions but no positive results have been achieved. The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has opposed and rejected the new payment platform introduced by the Federal Government in recent meetings-Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System (IPPIS). This new scheme was started by the Federal Government (FG) in the Nigerian public service sector by means of the utilization of Information and Communications Technology (ICT). The IPPIS was acquainted with satisfactorily demonstrate the viability and productivity of finance organization in the public authority’s Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). The National President of ASUU, Prof. Biodon Ogunyemi, said that workers and lecturers cannot return to classrooms without being paid their long
overdue and withheld salaries. This has brought more fear in the hearts of students who were already getting ready for resumption following the earlier announced date of resumption.

**Effects of strike on students:**

The incessant strike actions in Nigeria tertiary institutions has negative impacts on the students, as stated in Njure (2021) and these include:

1. Students tend not to perform well in their examinations leading to examination malpractice.
2. It destabilizes the school programme and its operations leading to the production of unqualified university graduates who cannot defend their certificates when called upon to do so.
3. The academic programmes tend to be extended to the detriments of students. That is a five years course becoming a six years course.
4. The longer students stay at home, their mental ability reduces. Students tend to forget all they have been thought during the learning period. This often causes some students to chase after certificates only not the knowledge needed in their field of study.
5. Increases the rates of drop-outs, yet a lot of people are admitted into the tertiary institution yearly.
6. Leads to loss of efficient and experienced teachers or lecturers to other lucrative jobs as a means of livelihood.

Solutions to strike action between Asuu and Federal government as given in Njure (2021) as follows:

1. The Federal Government should review existing educational law to make it more adaptable.
2. The Federal government should fund education adequately to encourage research.
3. Employee’s welfare and condition should be improved.
4. Adequate infrastructural facilities for tertiary institutions to improve their working environment. Most of the infrastructures in our tertiary institution are out-dated.
5. Quick intervention from the Federal Government when matters of strike arise will help reduce the prolonged strike actions.
6. Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) should not always use striking as a backup plan, they should try negotiations to resolve issues.

7. The Federal Government should always keep to promises. By providing Academic Staff Union of Universities whatever they have agreed on thereby building a good relationship between themselves.

References


