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Strike Action and University Education System in Nigeria: The Causes and Remedy

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Abstract
The paper examines the Strike action and University education system in Nigeria. Secondary data will be used. Data will be sourced from print and online publications. The paper conceptualizes strike, Public University, Academic staff and causes of strike actions in the Nigeria public university. The paper identifies the positive and negative impacts of strike action on the staff as well as students' academic calendar in the university education system in Nigeria. The paper reveals that aside from academic staff union if the student demands are not taken into consideration by the university management. The university activities can also be disrupted by the students union. Therefore, the paper suggests that Government should recognize the students union as a part of stakeholder in decision making.

Keywords: Strike action, University education, Students, Government, Nigeria.

Introduction
Public universities in Nigeria are known for embarking on strike actions. For instance from 1999 till 2022 of September, Daily post (2022) reports that there was no administration since 1999 that did not witness ASUU strike, but the latest which started on February 14, 2022 after a 14-month-strike notice from the union had further crippled the educational system.

There are many factors responsible for the strike actions in the public universities. Some of the agitation include; funding of revitalisation of

tertiary institutions; Payment of outstanding Earned Academic Allowances (EAA); review of NUC 2004 Act to tackle the proliferation of Universities and 26 percent budgetary allocation to education sector, implementation of the University Transparency and Accountability Solution (UTAS); Constitution of visitation panels, withheld salaries and non-remittance of check-off dues of unions, as well as addressing the salary shortfall of lecturers. Other factors on the government side as reported by Daily post (2022) when it's quoted the Minister of Education, Adamu Adamu who attributed the lingering strike action to the union's failure to come to a compromise, noting that no demand can be satisfied 100 percent by any government. ASUU National Chairman, Emmanuel Osodeke, as reported by Daily trust 2022) that argued that what the union is demanding is not just for the welfare of lecturers but for the refurbishment of Nigerian universities to attract students from other parts of the world. According to him, ―We're asking for that money for Nigerian students, and Nigerian parents. The money is for building infrastructure, upgrading libraries, hostels, and lecture theatres so that students will not be having lectures through windows; so that students will not be sitting on the floor during lectures, the salaries of lecturers should be competitive.

The recent strike action that commenced on February 14, 2022 included all the labour unions namely; Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Non-Academic Staff Union of Educational and Associated Institutions (NASU), Senior Staff Association of Nigeria Universities, (SSANU) and National Association of Academic Technologists (NAAT). The prolonged strike actions have negative effects on all the stakeholder such as academic staff, non-academic staff, students and parents. It is very important to examine the effects of prolong strike actions by public universities unions on academic staff.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

The term strike has been reviewed differently by scholars. A generally acceptable definition has been difficult to have at a particular period in time, because of difference perception among the scholar or reason that brought about the strike either governmental or non-governmental organization.

Strike refers to as a situation whereby a group of people stopped working in a given organization as a result of one reason or another or agreement that could not be fulfilled in time. On the other hand, strike refer to as not working as form of protest against an employer, often to achieve a specific objectives that could lead benefit to striker and the employer as a result of more productivities. Strike can also be defined as a process by which an organization stopped working as a result those employees refused to work for not paying them their wages or salaries as and when due.

Strike has remained a recurring phenomenon in Nigeria and several scholars have attempted to research into it. Strike is defined as a concerted and temporary withholding of employee services from the employer for the purpose of extracting greater concessions in the employment relationship than the employer is willing to grant on the bargaining table. The Trade Dispute Act (1976) as cited in Clark (2012: 20) defined strike as:

The cessation of work by a body of persons employed acting in combination, or a concerted refusal or a refusal under a common understanding of any number of persons employed to continue to work for an employer in consequences of a dispute, done as a means of compelling their employer or any person or body of person employed, or to aid other workers in compelling their employer or any other person or body of persons employed, to accept terms of employment and physical conditions of work.

This definition is indeed a comprehensive one as sort to analyzing all the salient issues and parties involve in strike. It is pertinent to note that under the Trade Union Act (1973), it is provided that one of the matters to be provided for in the rules is the condition that no member shall take part in a strike unless a majority of the members have in a secret ballot voted in favour of the strike. The strike is therefore a temporary cessation of work as the workers intend that, as its conclusion, they will return to their jobs and employers themselves view the strike in the same light.

Strike, despite being used as a tool by of trade or labour unions in compelling their employers to accept or not to accept terms of employment and physical conditions of work; there are still some employees or sectors that are not allowed to embark on strike because they are considered to be proving essential or sensitive services to the people.

CAUSE OF STRIKE ACTIONS IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES AND OTHER HIGHER INSTITUTIONS

Strike actions in Nigerian Universities and other institutions learning are caused by several factors as reported in scholarly literatures. The notable causes of strike actions in Nigeria are examined in this section as follow.

1. The unfair treatment of workers or employees by their employers has been identified as a major cause of strike actions in Nigeria. Once employees perceived that their personal goals are not given attention, to an extent, there is bound to be job dissatisfaction which will eventually lead to strike actions. There is no doubt that any employee will want to continue in

2. **Sit Down Strike:** It is a form of strike where employees come to an organization and remain at their jobs in the organization but fail to attend to their work. It is often regarded as illegal since it constitutes an invasion of private property.

3. **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 on the employer. This type of strike is common in tertiary institutions in the country where NASSU embarked on sympathy strike because of ASUU and vice versa.

4. **Green Ban Strike:** A green ban is a strike that is done to get the company to adopt more environmentally friendly practices.

5. **Student and government:** This is a type of strike that occur as a result of one reason or the other, for example, in a given society where student has right, he or she can protest or stopped doing anything if the government enforce him to do what is beyond the rule and regulation or in the process of breaking the rule and regulation.

6. **Emergency Strike:** This is also a type of strike that takes place by stopping the discharging of some duties by employer to the employee without given notice or as a result of short notice which will not allowed the employees, to organize themselves.

7. **Lockout and employees Strike:** Refers to as a refusal of entry to workers for example an occasion can occur when workers are prevented from entering into their workplace this is a tactic sometimes used by management in an industrial dispute, this will lead some of the workers to protest against the management.

8. **Jurisdictional Strike:** This occurs when two unions argue about which one has jurisdiction 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.

9. **Constitutional or illegal Strike:** This is another type of strike that can happen, when government use some laws to reduce its workers. For example, former Central Bank of Nigeria

Governor Mr. Soludo asked the Federal Government of Nigeria to reduce workers strength, for the purpose of her economic stability ahead, if government reply by saying that it has no lawful framework, it is said to be illegal because such statement will be documented in a file which will be used when any new government take over office and falls into shortage of economic stability as requested by the former CBN governor.

10. **Go-Slow Strike:** It is a protest that workers make by doing their work more slowly than usual, when they do that, and the management refuse to pay their salaries they will protest and go on strike. This is also a type of strike that can occur as a result of some parts of an organization delaying others unnecessary, like in the organization sale department refused to sell the manufactured goods in time in order to distract more customers by not displaying the products publically, for this purpose, the customers will not see goods and make impulse buying, which will lead the workers of production department to protest against the action of sales department.

11. **Sit-in Strike:** This is a form of strike involving occupation of building in which people occupied a building or public place and refused to leave until their demands have been met or negotiated.
12. **Boycott:** It is a process in which workers refuse to take part in a something as a way of protesting. This is a form of strike in which workers cease or refuse to work or deals with something such as an organization, company or process can protests against its effort it to become more unacceptable among others.

IMPACTS OF STRIKE

The impact of strike could be seen in two directions, either positive or negative. This section shall examine the positive and negative impacts of strike on staff, students, institutions and the general public respectively

Positive Impacts of Strike on Staff

1. Increased allowances for projects supervision, call duty, extra hours worked, hazards and so on.
2. Payment of salaries and entitlements for the several months in which they did not work.
3. Benefits paid to staff even when they did not join the others.
4. The funds released for infrastructure will be used to meet the immediate needs of the tertiary institutions. In building hostels, equip libraries, provide internet connectivity, build laboratories and furnish them, amongst others.
5. Those that will later join the academia and become Professors will also have the benefit of retiring at 70 years of age.
6. Those that will join the academia will also enjoy the special allowances that current struggles will bring about.

Negative Impacts of Strike on Staff

1. Non-payment of allowances for projects supervision call duty, extra hours worked, hazards and so on
2. Withheld of salaries and entitlement for the several months in which they did not work, for getting that if a lecturer did not go to classroom to teach, he/she is carrying out research and other community services applicable in his job
3. Psychological imbalance due to traua of over redundancy and brain idleness.
4. Inability to meet up their health challenge because most lecturer are on drug/blood pressure pill
5. Inability to settle their demotic bills etc.
6. Indebtedness become the surname of most lecturers who do not investment to full back on during the strike action period

7. It lead to heads of department and not Deans not completion of their fill tenures
8. Non publication of complete research work due to non-availability of funds
9. Some lecturers cannot complete their ongoing research work as a result of lack of fund to buy data etc.

Positive impact of strike on students' academic performance

1. Most students use this period of strike action to acquire entrepreneurship and vocational skills, thereby developing their psychomotor domain of learning to a high esteem.
2. Most female students get married during the strike period, by so doing they get support to their educational career
3. Some education students take private teaching job in private school to contribute in building their future career of teaching profession pending when the strike action will be over

Negative impact of strike on students' academic performance

David (2013) shades more light on the negative impacts of strike on students as highlighted below:

1. Among several effects of strike include time wastage and unnecessary delays. The most saddening aspect of the strike action times is that the reason why it is being initiated is not really worth it, thereby leading to a battered academic calendar. A disrupted academic calendar definitely gives birth to the shrinking of activities when the school resumes in order meeting the set target for that session. This affects the students adversely in terms of their performances in tests and exams since they never expected such changes.
2. Unemployment is a „time-bomb" for graduates that were repeatedly affected by strike during their student days. This is caused by their inability to meet up with the set requirements. Most jobs these days are tied to age limit, so graduates that have overstayed mostly owing to no fault of theirs, become too old for jobs of their dream.
3. Students" engagements in non-fruitful and criminal activities have been the case during strikes. Like the popular adage says "an idle mind is the devil"s workshop" some students are drawn into nefarious acts during this period which are capable of destroying them and unleashing terror on the peace of the nation. Aside this, some students become social network veterans, some turn into statutes of idleness, bunch of parrots, backbiters, gossipers and busy bodies while some turn themselves into sleeping bags as if been bitten by tsetse fly. They eat as if life is all about eating. This set of students you see in schools after the strike with voluminous body mass blessed with unnecessary fats (perhaps with no shape), all these against their wishes.

4. Unplanned breaks definitely affect students negatively. This scenario can be compared to when an athlete running a 400 metres race is abruptly stopped when he started the race, he said such situation affects the athlete greatly and will take time for him/her to regain his/her speed and confidence as it was levelled

5. Envisaged poor curriculum implementation which is said to be associated with incessant strike adversely affect student academic performance

Positive Impact of strike on institutions of Learning

1. It help the management not to work on pressure
2. It help the management to have positive thinking on how to address urgent issues in the institution
3. It also help the management to come out strategies to speed their academic programs once the strike is over
4. It could also help the management maintained facilities when students are out of campus etc.
5. It help the public to know institution‟s areas of challenge such as inadequate funding

Negative Impact of strike on institutions of learning

1. **Disrupted Academic Calendar:** The call for a strike action by the academia of the various tertiary institutions do at most times bring about disruption of the academic calendar. When eventually the strike is call off and lectures resume, the students are rushed and examination conducted with no reference to whether the education students and the entire students‟ body have effectively been taught to guarantee good performance. The admission for a new session can also be affected because no new students will resume after being admitted as a result of the elongation of the school calendar.
2. **Delay in the Release of Admission List:** It is important to note that more often than not, a lot of prospective tertiary institutions students find it difficult to gain access to their supervisors who were on strike. Some may be made to start all over again. Imagine such waste.
3. **Poor Study Habit in Schools:** During normal uninterrupted school calendar, students are more relaxed to study unlike periods of strike when students are unstable and find it extremely difficult to study on their own pending when the strike will be called off
4. **Delay or Total Skip of Industrial Training (IT) Program:** Education is a practical oriented program and as such students are expected to learn practical and undertake an IT program to enhance their practical knowledge. This program may be delayed or totally skipped during strike actions which do not support effective learning of practical based course as education.

According to Offem and Ogban (2019) other negative impacts the school seems to face include:

5. The institution will not generate internal revenue because the student will not be there to pay their fees and other changes
6. It delays the institution in terms of course allocations and supervision of students project as compared to private universities
7. General shout down of campus
8. It causes the institution to lose competence hands to foreign university

Positive impacts of strike action on the general public

1. Some student use the strike period to help their parents in gameful activities such as farming, trading industrial, etc. This goes a long way to boost the family per capital income for funding education
2. It creates awareness that actually the government is not meeting the needs of schools in terms of funding and policy implementation
3. It gives room for collaborating funding of institutions of learning with non-governmental organization and other well meaningful Nigerians
4. During strike, students stay at their respective comfort zones. This assures parent of their security and safety
5. It adds to the population of the people. students stay at home may help to generate a good census figure for the government if it occurs simultaneously

Negative impacts of strike action on the general public

Offem and Ogban (2019) highlighted the following negative impact of strike on the society at large

1. Brain Drain: Brain drain during strike is a hindrance to human capital development in Nigeria. This reduces the number of academic staff available in the universities, polytechnics and colleges of education require in training students.
2. Poor quality of product of education institutions is emanated from striking period. This is as a result of the dearth of resources to conduct the teaching and learning process
3. Inadequate of funding programmes due to corruption and mismanagement of resources during strike action

Workers feel the nostalgia with a tinge of guilt, arising from strike responsibilities. Though the same work force called for the strike, but I can tell you that not all its members are always in full support of the action. Also, academic workers who are still in their „evolving process" too get affected during strikes. Example of this is the postgraduate students that lecture in universities. ASUU strike also grounds their study.

4. The poor masses worked in the closed environment. These referr to the motorcyclists, drivers, traders, tailors, carpenters and others that make ends meet by their activities in the academia. Most of these people are below-average Nigerians that have family members who look up to them to survive owing to the penny they get from their toil in the now closed academic community.
5. The loss of credibility is a grave danger applicable to our schools as a result of incessant strikes. It‟s quite unfortunate these days that only few foreigners will prefer to send their wards to study here in Nigeria as a result of the back drops from strikes while we move our children en-mass to schools abroad thereby exporting the fund that is supposed to be expended locally to economically add values to our system.

Possible Solution to Nigerian Universities Strike

The following are possible solutions to Nigerian Universities strike:
a. There should be adequate provision of resources in the nation‟s tertiary institutions. These resources are in the forms of human and non-human resources. From the literatures reviewed so far, most of the strike actions in the country were the outcome of the inadequacy of resources in the institutions. The recent ASUU strike of 2013 was centered on condition of service and especially on provision of resources in the nation‟s universities. Once these resources are provided in the right quality and quantity, there may be no need to result to strike actions.
b. The parties to collective bargaining should honour its provisions; and implement the outcome of collective bargaining. The failure of employers or employees to honour the outcome of collective bargaining has been identified as one of the major causes of strike actions in

Concept of Public Universities

Public universities are universities owned by the government. Public universities are universities established to provide post-secondary schools for Nigerians. Public universities are universities established by act of parliament to serve the interest of the general public. Public universities deal with the provision of teaching, research and communities services (Ogunode, 2020). The objectives of the universities in Nigerian Higher education, including professional education has the following aims: the acquisition, development and inculcation of the proper value orientation for the survival of the individual and societies; the development of the intellectual capacities of individuals to understand and appreciate environment; the acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to develop into useful members of the community; the acquisition of an overview of the local and external environments (FRN, 2013). Public universities in Nigeria are grouped into federal and state owned universities. The federal universities are owned by the federal government

of Nigeria while the state universities are owned by the state government. The total number of federal and state public universities are 49 and 59 across the country (NUC,2022).

The federal government of Nigeria established the National universities commission to oversee the external administration and supervision of all universities in Nigeria. The administration of public universities in Nigeria takes two dimensions: the external administration and internal administration. The external administration is done through the federal ministries and other regulatory agencies in the country. The external administration handle planning, policy formulation, programme accreditation, supervision, funding and quality control of the universities. The internal administration headed by the school administrators and other principal managers within the universities. The function of internal administration is to ensure implementation of policies, coordinate, supervise and organize the human and materials resources of the universities to accomplish the objectives of the universities. The realization of the universities' goals and objective depends on effective administration and planning (Ogunode, 2020).

Concept of Academic Staff

Academic staff also known as faculty members are key component of higher institutions especially the universities. Academic staff as the name implies are professional that handles the teaching, research programme of the higher institutions and also perform other academic services. The role of academic staff in the development of higher institutions cannot be underestimated because the academic staff are the implementer of the instruction in the educational institutions (Ogunode, Jegede, & Musa, 2021). Academic staff as a professional personnel in charge of teaching or lecturing in the higher institutions. The Academic staff members are the teaching staff of the tertiary institutions. They are called lecturers. They are involved in three major functions in the institutions which are teaching and researching and community services. The academic staff are categorized into Graduate Assistant, Assistant Lecturer, Lecturer II, Lecturer I, Senior Lecturer, Associate professor/Reader and Professors. Arogundade (2010), stressed that an academic staff can also be described as a member of an institution of higher learning, (in this case a university) who has an academic view point or a scholarly background.

The professional qualities of the academic staff according to Ogunode (2021) includes; commitment to academic research, commitment to high quality teaching and fostering a positive learning environment for students, commitment to continuous professional development and commitment to public communication. The professional skills of academic staff also include; excellent interpersonal, oral and written communication skills; ability to conduct high quality research which is reflected in the authorship of

high quality; publications, or other research outputs, in the areas of computer science; ability to manage time and work to strict deadlines and ability to teach and to supervise academic work by undergraduates, masters and doctoral students (Ogunode, Jegede, & Musa, 2021). The main duties and responsibilities of academic staff in the higher institutions include: (a) to teach at undergraduate and graduate level in areas allocated by the Head of Department and reviewed from time to time by the Head of Department;
(b) to carry out research and produce publications, or other research outputs, in line with personal objectives agreed in the Staff review process;
(c) to obtain research funding support;
(d) to engage with the broader scholarly and professional community services;
(e) to supervise or assist with supervision of undergraduate, taught graduate (Masters) or research graduate (MPhil/PhD) students;
(f) to contribute to the development, planning and implementation of a high quality curriculum.
(g) to assist in the development of learning materials, preparing schemes of work and maintaining records to monitor student progress, achievement and attendance;

The teaching role involves preparing and delivering of lectures, supervision of students in industrial training, final year project, post graduate students, marking assessments and grading of scripts. Other functions include development and promotion of innovative teaching methods, consultation with students and production of teaching materials for students. Research role involves carrying out investigations on identified problem(s), presentation of findings of such investigations in conferences/seminars and publishing the findings in journals and/or text books. The third role involves rendering services both to the school and the community at large. Such services include heading a department, faculty, committee, external supervisor, advisor of student societies, members of other recognized committees at departmental, faculty and university levels –example; sports, graduation, convocation etc ((Ogunode, Jegede, & Musa, 2021;Uchenna, Maureen & Anthony, 2018).
Academic staff are critical factors in the higher education goals attainment. Without them, the goals of higher education in the country cannot be achieved (Ogunode, Jegede, & Musa, 2021). Teachers are the main determinant of quality education; if they are apathetic, uncommitted, uninspired, lazy, unmotivated, immoral, anti-social, the whole nation is doomed. If they are ignorant in their disciplines and impart wrong information, they are not only useless but dangerous. The kind of teachers trained and posted to the schools may well determine what the next generation will be ((Ogunode, Jegede, & Musa, 2021;NERC, 1980). According to (Abiodun- Oyebanji, 2010), all over the world, academic staff are recognized as personnel whose primary assignments

are instruction delivery, research and public service. They include staff personnel who hold an academic rank with titles such as professor, associate professor, assistant professor, instructor, lecturer or the equivalent of any of these academic ranks. The category includes personnel with other titles such as dean, director, associate dean, assistant dean, chair or head of department. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013), have all attributed the success of any education institution to the professional teachers' availability in the schools. Academic staff are very essential in any educational system. The federal government of Nigeria established the National universities commission to oversee the external administration and supervision of all universities in Nigeria. The administration of public universities in Nigeria takes two dimensions: the external administration and internal administration. The external administration is done through the federal ministries and other regulatory agencies in the country. The external administration handle planning, policy formulation, programme accreditation, supervision, funding and quality control of the universities. The internal administration headed by the school administrators and other principal managers within the universities. The function of internal administration is to ensure implementation of policies, coordinate, supervise and organize the human and materials resources of the universities to accomplish the objectives of the universities. The realization of the universities' goals and objective depends on effective administration and planning (Ogunode, 2020).

CONCLUSION

Strike is a process whereby work is stopping by employees of an organization because of some agreement on wages and salary as well as on its agreement between employer and employees of organized group In the University education system in Nigeria. It is found out that strike action that were taken place in the universities affect educational development and it usually leads to dis harmony and instability of the school programmer. The study suggest that government should also be considering the students' needs in its education policy in order to reduce another form of strike that take place by the student union that hinder the smooth running of academic system in public university in Nigeria.

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