

Impact of Strike Action on Academic Achievement of Undergraduates in Nigeria

Bolu-Steve, Foluke Nike Jolaosho, Temitope Olaolu

University of Ilorin/ Ilorin/ Nigeria

bolusteve2002@yahoo.com

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Abstract

The industrial strike has become a major source of concern within Nigeria. The present study investigates the impact of strike action on students' academic achievement as expressed by undergraduates of the University of Lagos. The study adopts the descriptive survey research design method because it provides an accurate description of a phenomenon. The target population consists of undergraduates of the University of Lagos. The researchers developed a questionnaire titled Influence of Strike Action on Students' Academic Achievement Questionnaire (ISAAQ). This questionnaire was administered to students during one of the strike actions. The snowball sampling technique, which could be referred to as chain referral sampling, was used to identify respondents because universities in Nigeria are on strike. The snowball technique is a sampling procedure that helps the researcher to identify an individual or a small group that meets the criteria for inclusion in the study for further selection. It consists of two sections: section A deals with personal data while section B contains items on the influence of industrial strikes on students' academic achievement. A research question was raised and answered while four null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level. The findings show that there are no significant differences among the effect of gender, age, religion and place of residence on the academic achievement of undergraduates. It is therefore recommended that the professional body (ASUU) should employ other available means to resolve issues amicably instead of embarking on a strike action

Keywords: Strike, Achievement, Academic, Impact

تأثير الإضراب على التحصيل الأكاديمي لطلبة الجامعة في نيجيريا

بولو ستيف فولوك، نايك جولاوشو تيميتوبي أولاولو

جامعة إيلورين / إيلورين / نيجيريا

المستخلص

أصبح الإضراب الصناعي مصدر قلق كبير داخل نيجيريا. تبحث الدراسة الحالية في تأثير الإضراب على التحصيل الأكاديمي للطلاب كما عبر عنه الطلاب الجامعيين في جامعة لاغوس. تتبنى الدراسة أسلوب تصميم البحث الوصفي المسحي لأنه يقدم وصفاً دقيقاً لظاهرة ما. يتكون السكان المستهدفون من الطلاب الجامعيين من جامعة لاغوس. طور الباحثون استبياناً بعنوان تأثير الإضراب على استبيان التحصيل الأكاديمي للطلاب. (ISAAQ) تم إرسال هذا الاستبيان إلى الطلاب خلال إحدى الإضرابات. تم استخدام تقنية أخذ عينات كرة الثلج، والتي يمكن الإشارة إليها باسم أخذ عينات الإحالة المتسلسلة، لتحديد المستجيبين لأن الجامعات في نيجيريا في حالة إضراب. تقنية كرة الثلج هي إجراء لأخذ العينات يساعد الباحث على تحديد فرد أو مجموعة صغيرة تستوفي معايير التضمين في الدراسة لمزيد من الاختيار. وهو يتألف من قسمين: القسم أ يتعامل مع البيانات الشخصية بينما يحتوي القسم ب على عناصر عن تأثير الإضرابات الصناعية على التحصيل الدراسي للطلاب. تم طرح سؤال بحث والإجابة عليه بينما تم اختبار أربع فرضيات صفوية عند مستوى 0.05 ألفا. تشير النتائج إلى عدم وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين تأثير الجنس والعمر والدين ومكان الإقامة على التحصيل الدراسي للطلاب الجامعيين. لذلك يوصى بأن تستخدم الهيئة المهنية (ASUU) وسائل أخرى متاحة لحل المشكلات ودياً بدلاً من الشروع في إضراب.

الكلمات الدالة: إضراب، إنجاز، أكاديمي، تأثير

1. Introduction

An industrial strike is a situation when a large number of organized workers embark on a work stoppage because of grievances against their employer. According to the Business dictionary [1], strike action is a deliberate action or a situation in which a group of workers refuses to work because they are not satisfied with their pay, working conditions, etc. Fatunde [2] explains that industrial strikes started in Nigeria towards the end of the military era due to the dictatorial nature of military administration.

In the same vein, there was the demand for improving staff welfare and a good academic environment by the Academic Staff Unions of Universities (ASUU), which was neglected, and this led to strike [3]. The Union members were determined the more to fight for their rights hence, academic activities on the campus were paralyzed for several weeks and months due to industrial actions [4]. University students were confined at home for months without hope of resumption of academic activities in school. Lecturers in the Universities often desire to match up favorably with other colleagues outside the country. As such, ASUU through industrial actions demanded a pay rise, funding for education, and overhauling of laboratory facilities. Right from inception, lecturers were poorly remunerated [5].

Okebukola[6] emphasizes that one of the major causes of educational backwardness in Nigeria is the regular strike action by university lecturers, which is always precipitated by disagreements between the government and ASUU. The researcher further stated that the various reasons for the ASUU strike include; inadequacy of facilities, poor working conditions of lecturers, unlawful retrenchment of members, and unfulfilled promises by the government. Dafe[7] expresses that the reason for ASUU strike is numerous. Some of these are peculiar to respective institutions.

Adesulu [8] laments that Nigerian institutions have been reduced to mere study centers. It was observed that higher percentages of the graduates are half-baked and cannot match international standards. Olukuyam [9] states that, Nigeria education sector is having problems due to constant strikes and confrontations. Olukuyam observed that the educational system would continue to develop many problems until urgent steps are taken to minimize the gap between employees and employers. Adamu [10] reveals that strike actions affect students' academic achievement in various ways. Students are forced to take lectures for hours in order to make up for the missing lectures hours during an industrial action, while some basic topics in the curriculum are left untouched. This can make students lose interest in participating in academic activities. Adamu states that incessant strike has dwindled the academic performance of students, as learning is suspended for a long period and even the knowledge acquired during the learning period is forgotten. Nationwide industrial actions embarked upon by the Academic Staff Union of Universities and Non-Academic staff union of Nigeria universities have always resulted in the postponement of examinations and alteration of schools calendars which invariably have a negative impact on the academic pursuit of the students [11]. [9] explains that most students find it difficult to cope with academic activities as such they engage in examination malpractice. Fatunde [2] notes that lost school days can eventually lead to low academic achievement. In Nigeria, the continual strike action affects so many students because they cannot graduate at the statutory date. Irrespective of gender, employers often set age limits and once the age of the proposed employee is above the set bar they are not employed in many organizations [6]. This often affects the attitude of students towards their academics.

In view of these, the study intends to examine whether there is a significant difference in the influence of industrial strikes on students' academic pursuits as expressed by undergraduates of the University of Lagos on the basis of gender, age, religion, and residence.

2. Theoretical Background

The theory proposed by Abraham Maslow's states that human beings are motivated when their psychological and physiological needs are met. Maslow's concept of needs emphasizes that basic necessities must be met before progressing to other advanced needs. The theory actually focuses on what makes human beings happy and the efforts they put in to achieve this goal. The major level of hierarchy needs starts from the lowest level of physiological needs (water, food) and security (health, money safety) to higher ones. According to Maslow, these needs are the major necessity of life. Others are social needs (friendship, love), esteem needs (respect), and self-actualization needs. The pyramid starts from the basic needs of life to other complex needs. Once the physiological needs are met then other needs are considered. When these basic needs are not adequate, human beings feel unmotivated and negatively react. When the condition of service is not adequate, workers are always ready to advocate for justifiable wages that could lead to the fulfillment of workers' basic needs, and this displeasure is often displayed through strike action[12].

3. Research Methodology

The study adopts the descriptive survey research design. This research design is adopted because it provides an accurate description or picture of a particular situation or phenomenon at one or more points in time. The design does not establish cause and effect relationships, but it identifies the differences that exist between the variables. The target population consists of undergraduate students of University of Lagos.

The snowball sampling technique, which could be referred to as chain referral sampling was used to identify respondents in the university. The snowball technique is a sampling procedure that helps the researcher to identify an individual or a small group that meets the criteria for inclusion in the study for further selection. This individual or group identified others who equally meet the criteria for inclusion. This sampling procedure was used because the students were on strike when this study was conducted. Some of these students who had accommodation on the campus were living around the school environment waiting for resumption. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 200 respondents. To achieve this objective, the researchers developed a questionnaire titled The Impact of Strike Action on Achievement Questionnaire (ISAAQ), which was used to gather information from the respondents. The questionnaire was developed through the review of various related literature. The instrument consists of two sections. Section 'A' deals with demographic data of the respondents while section 'B' contains items on the impact of strike action on students' academic achievement performance. These items were scored on a four Likert scale of Strongly Agree = 4points, Agree = 3points, Disagree = 2points, Strongly Disagree = 1point.

In order to determine the validity of the instrument, the researcher gave the draft of the questionnaire to some lecturers in university of Ilorin. The modification and comments made by these experts were considered in the final selection of items on the questionnaire. To ensure the reliability of the instrument, the test re-test method was adopted. The researchers administered the same instrument to twenty (20) respondents at an interval of four weeks. The two scores were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and a reliability index of 0.78 was found. Therefore, the questionnaire is statistically said to be reliable for the study.

1.1. Research Problem

The growing trend of the industrial strike in Nigeria's education system has led to the engagement of students in social vices such as joining bad gangs, involvement in internet fraud,

and early cases of pre-marital pregnancy thereby jeopardizing their ambition for academic achievement. Some of these students die as a result of road accidents during this period. By the time, these students get back to school, they find it difficult to cope with academic activities on the campus which invariably kills their zeal for academic pursuit. It has been noted by many researchers and stakeholders that the nonchalant attitude of the government to the plight of lecturers in higher institutions of learning will continually lead to strikes. This will negatively affect the quality of the students that are produced in the universities. If these problems are not well addressed, Nigerian institutions will continually produce graduates that cannot stand the test of time.

Currently, Nigerian Universities are on strike and according to Tolu-Kolawole [13] the government is yet to find a solution. Ogbette [14] work on the causes, effects and management of ASSU strike in Nigeria from 2003-2013, Chand [15] looks at industrial disputes definition, forms and types, while Adavbiele [16] carries out a research on the implications of incessant strike actions on the implementation of technical education. To the best of the researcher's knowledge none has actually focused on the impact of strike action on the academic achievement of undergraduates, hence the need of this research is noted.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of strikes on students' academic achievement as expressed by undergraduates of University of Lagos on the basis of gender, age, religion and residence. The study intends to find out the influence of these variables on the academic achievement of undergraduate students. The study intends to find out the influence of variables such as gender, age, religion and place of residence on academic achievement of undergraduates in Lagos state.

1.2. Importance of the Research

This study is hoped to be of benefit to the school counsellors, University administrators, and educational providers. It can assist in exposing the stakeholders to the consequences of industrial strike action on the educational system and how it negatively impact the academic performance of the upcoming generation of students. Also, the findings in this study might be another contribution to the abundant literatures on industrial strike in Nigeria with specific reference to Academic staff union of universities of Nigeria.

1.3. Research Objectives

Research Question

1. What is the impact of strike action on students' academic achievement?
2. Is there any statistically impact of strike action on the academic achievement as expressed by undergraduates of University of Lagos on the basis of gender, age, religion and residence?

Research Hypotheses

- 1 There is no statistically significant impact of strike action on the ' academic achievement as expressed by undergraduates of University of Lagos on the basis of gender, age, religion and residence.

Results

The results obtained from the data analyzed are presented below

Answering the Research Question

Table 2: Mean, Ranking of Impact of Strike on Students Academic pursuit

Item number	As far as I am concerned strike action may likely lead	Mean	Rank
6	Students spending an extra year in school	3.40	1 st
11	poor quality of education	3.23	2 nd
19	Students reading just to pass an examination	3.23	3 rd
20	Poor study habits.	3.21	4 th
2	school absenteeism	3.08	5 th
4	poor grades	3.07	6 th
12	to the inability of the students to compete academically with mates in private schools	3.05	7 th
13	Lead to lack of interest in academic activities	3.03	8 th
3	lack of interest in attending lectures	3.03	9 th
5	examination malpractice	3.03	10 th
1	Increase in school dropout	2.96	11 th
14	To lack of students' confidence to compete with mates outside the country	2.91	12 th
15	To student's inability to perceive concept as a whole because of discontinuity	2.90	13 th
17	Students lack of concentration	2.89	14 th
8	psychological problems	2.79	15 th
18	Youthful crime and immorality	2.78	16 th
10	Unstable academic calendar	2.75	17 th
7	Poor academic performance	2.75	18 th
16	learning disability	2.51	19 th
9	emotional breakdown	2.47	20 th

Table 2 reveals that item 6 was ranked 1st with a mean score of 3.40 and states that "As far as I am concerned strike action may likely lead to student spending extra year in school" while item 11 was ranked 2nd with the mean score of 3.23. Item 9 was ranked last with a mean score of 2.47.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One:

Table 3: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value Result of the respondents on the basis of Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. t-value	Crit. t-value
Male	128	57.62	9.50	198	2.49	1.96
Female	72	60.94	8.15			

The result on table 3 indicates that the cal.t-value of 2.49 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 at 0.05 significant alpha level. Thus, the hypothesis is rejected because a significant difference is observed.

Hypothesis Two:**Table 4: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value Result of the respondents on the basis of Age**

Age	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. t-value	Crit. t-value
Below 20 years	185	58.64	9.26	198	0.95	1.96
21 years and above	15	60.94	7.75			

Table 4 reveals that the cal.t-value of 0.95 is less than the crit.t-value of 1.96 at 0.05 significant alpha level. Therefore, the hypothesis is upheld because no significant difference is found.

Hypothesis three:**Table 5: ANOVA Result of the respondents on the basis of religion**

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	Cal. F-ratio	Crit. F-ratio
Between Groups	33.445	2	16.72	0.95	1.96
Within Groups	16682.075	197	84.68		
Total	16715.520	199			

Table 5 indicates that the Cal.F-ratio of 0.197 is less than Crit.F-ratio of 3.00 at 0.05 significant alpha level. Therefore, hypothesis is accepted on the basis of religion.

Hypothesis 4:**Table 6: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value Result of the respondents on the basis of Residence**

Residence	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. t-value	Crit. t-value
On campus	31	58.25	11.10	198	0.37	1.96
Off campus	169	58.92	8.79			

Table 6 shows that the Cal.t-value of 0.37 is less than the Crit.t-value of 1.96 at 0.05 significant alpha level. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that "there is no significant difference on the influence of industrial strike on student academic performance as expressed by undergraduate in University of Lagos on the basis of residence is upheld.

Interview Session**Respondents' views on the following questions:****1. As a student how many strike actions have you witnessed in the course of your study at the Nigerian University?**

Respondents 1,4,3, have experienced about three industrial strike actions in the course of their study. Respondent 5 explained that this is the second time she is witnessing this while respondents 2,6, 7, 8 and 10 said they have lost counts.

2. What do you think are the impacts of strikes actions on academic achievement?

Respondents 1 and 5 noted that when academic activities are shut down within the university system, it negatively affects students. Many resumes back to school depressed and frustrated because of idleness. This has a way of affecting students' academic achievement. They said some of their classmates had to carry over some courses while many had scores that were below average.

Respondent 2 explained that most times after strike action the zeal and zest for academic activities are no longer there. Some students will no longer resume back to school thereby trading their academic goals for other things they feel its more profitable.

Respondent 3 is studying pharmacy she said that the most painful aspect is that students can no longer graduate within the stipulated years. The disruption of the academic calendar affects academic achievement.

Respondents 4 & 10 revealed how lecturers had to rush their lectures so that they could seat for exams before strike action commenced. According to the respondents, such acts affect the academic performance of students.

Respondent 6 expressed how the nine months strike in 2020 negatively affected his academic achievement. He said their lecturers continuously organized tests for them on daily basis in order to cover up with the curriculum yet they could not do much before the exams.

Respondents 7, 8 & 9 said that the government should do something about the incessant strike in Nigeria. They noted that the struggle to attain high academic achievement is becoming useless as many countries are not reckoning with our certificates.

3. How do strike actions affect your scores?

Respondent 1 said that after the strike action she sat for her carry-over courses and failed again. She explained that her scores this time around were lower than when she did the exams for the first time.

Respondents 2: she said her scores before the strike were above average but after the strike, she began to struggle academically. She failed some major courses at the final year.

Respondents 3: she mentioned that the strike action almost affected him academically but he was able to pick up as time went on.

Respondents 4, 7 and 9 affirmed that resuming academic activities after prolonged strike action is challenging. Most students' scores are not fantastic. This generally affects our Graded Point Average (GPA). One of the respondents shared her experience on how she failed two courses after the first strike action that happened in the year 2020. She said after retaking the exams, Universities went on another strike and now she is not sure of what the outcome of the result will be. She said her GPA is affected. This was her response "I pray there will not be strike action in Nigerian universities again"

Respondents 5 noted that before the commencement of the strike, he was able to focus on his studies but because of the prolonged strike action, he decided to engage in many extracurricular activities, after resumption, concentration on his studies became an uphill task and this negatively affected his scores.

Respondent 6 said the prolonged strike has reduced his interest in academic activities.

Respondents 8 & 10 explained that the strike action did not affect their scores, they understood the challenge and they prepared for it.

Discussion

Most of the students agreed that strike action may likely lead to students spending extra years in school. This constitutes a waste and inefficient use resources of the guardian and parent, as well as making future planning of the student difficult. Lethal [17] explains that strike actions in the Universities often lead to alteration of school calendars thereby causing students to spend extra years

that were never planned. This can lead to loss of interest in the pursuit of academic activities.

The gender and age of the respondents did not influence their views. This is because they are all faced with the same common problem during industrial action. Dafe [7] notes that the impact of strikes often results in the disruption of academic activities. Okebukola [6] reveals that irrespective of the gender and age of the respondents it is clear that strike actions leave behind painful and irreparable losses that have deep emotional and mental consequences on the students. Knowledge acquired in school before the strike might be forgotten. In the view of [18] there are many factors that can influence the academic pursuit of students which might not be connected to strike actions. Ebenuwa-Okoh [19] notes that people's age has a way of influencing their academic performance.

The respondent's religious affiliation and place of residence did not influence their opinion. Ivan [20] confirms that the effects of ASUU strike are numerous and the impact is much more felt by the students. In the current study, both the student living on campus and those off-campus believes that strike actions do influence the academic performance of students. Okebukola [6] establishes that if there must be an improvement in the standard of education then the government must be ready to provide enough facilities in the tertiary institutions of learning [21]. When all these are lacking ASUU goes on strike to make sure that their demands are met by the government. Yusuf [11] says the strike action dwindles the academic performance of students.

Counselling implication

One of the major guidance programme in counselling is the provision of information. The Counselling Association of Nigeria should sensitize the government and the members of the society on the importance of embracing dialogue as a way of averting strike action. This can be done by organizing various seminars and workshops on the negative effects of industrial action on the educational system.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The result of the findings of the current study shows that most of the respondents agree that strike action could negatively affect the academic achievement of students. As such, it is recommended that the government through its relevant agencies should promote a harmonious working relationship with ASUU. This can be achieved through prompt response to ASUU requests. The government as a matter of urgency should fulfill its promise to ASUU. Also, the professional body (ASUU) should employ available means to resolve issues amicably instead of embarking on strike action. Lecturers should endeavor to cover the course content for the semester after the strike. The students should develop web pages and other e-learning platforms where they can interact and discuss their academics during strike actions. This can go a long way to assist in their academic pursuit.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

There are no conflicts of interest

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