

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The education sub-sector especially tertiary institutions in Nigeria have witnessed in recent time incessant closures due to industrial actions. The effect of these repeated closures of schools and academic programs on students' learning effectiveness can better be imagined than described. Tertiary education in Nigeria has thus suffered tremendous setbacks as a result of industrial actions by both the academic (ASUU) and the non academic staffs. This has always subjected the students to pitiable conditions, disrupting academic programs, giving students' undeserved extension in their study years, poor students' concentration on academic programs and poor lecturer-student relationships amongst others. Consequently, students' academic performance has comparatively become so low while various forms of examination malpractice are on the increase.

University worldwide is regarded as the citadel of learning, the fountain of intellectual development and a ground for the production of leaders of tomorrow. According to Ike (1999) a university fulfills, one major function, it is a knowledge and value provider, in other words, a university progresses when it is able to provide knowledge and value and when it is not properly managed by the administrators and staff, it then fails in its function of providing knowledge and value. This according to Nwankwo (2000) explains why merit has been the watchword in the university system – an institution in which a student must first be certified worthy in character and learning before being admitted into the Honors Degree.

The role of universities in human capital development, research and technological innovation cannot be under evaluated. All over the world investment in University education is a critical component of national development effort. Nations today depend increasingly on knowledge, ideas and skills which are produced through researches in the universities. Nations invest in university education because society expects it to contribute to national development in three principal ways. First, society expects its university to produce the highly skilled personnel in technology, engineering, management and other professions; secondly, universities have the responsibility of producing their own corps of academic personnel that is, the intellectual resource pool that will, through scientific research generate new knowledge and innovation to solve developmental problems. Thirdly, universities produce teachers, administrators and managers for other levels of human resources development institutions.

The main union whose incessant industrial action takes a heavy toll on the academic performance of the students is the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). The union was formed in 1978, a successor to the Nigerian Association of University Teachers formed in 1965 and covering academic staff in the University of Ibadan, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, University of Ife and University of Lagos. In the 80's, the union was active in its struggles against the military regime. In 1988 the union organized a National industrial action to obtain fair wages and university autonomy. As a result, the ASUU was proscribed on August 7, 1988 and all its property seized. It was allowed to resume in 1990, but after another industrial action, it was again banned on August 23, 1992. However, an agreement was reached on September 3, 1992 that met several of the union's demands including the right of workers to collective bargaining. The ASUU organized further industrial actions in 1994 and 1996, protesting against the dismissal of staff by the Sani Abacha military regime. After the return to democracy in 1999 with the

Nigerian Fourth Republic, the union continued to be militant in demanding the rights of university workers against opposition by the government of President Olusegun Obasanjo. In July 2002, the national president of ASUU, petitioned Justice Mustapha Akanbi of the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission to investigate the authorities of the University of Ilorin for financial mismanagement and corruption.

In 2007, ASUU embarked on an industrial action for three months. In May 2008, it held two week 'warning strikes' to press a range of demands, including an improved salary scheme and reinstatement of forty-nine lecturers who were dismissed from University of Ilorin in 1998. In June 2009 ASUU ordered its members in federal and state universities nationwide to proceed on an indefinite strike over disagreements with the Federal Government's on an agreement it reached with the union about two and a half years ago. After three months of industrial action, in October 2009, ASUU and other staff unions signed a memorandum of understanding with the government and called off the industrial action.

Prior to the last industrial action embarked on by ASUU, the National Executive Council (NEC), of the Union met from Tuesday 29th November to Thursday 1st December 2011 at the University of Port- Harcourt to review, among other things: the level of implementation of the 2009 ASUU/Government Agreement; the extent of compliance with the 2011 ASUU/FGN Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the implementation of the Agreement; Government's unilateral dissolution of Universities' Governing Councils; the on-going institutional accreditation and the state of the Nation, including the issue of alleged removal of fuel subsidy, but the lack of understanding between the two parties led to an indefinite strike embarked upon by the Union for fifty-nine days. It was later called off on the 1st of February, 2012. ASUU again went on a warning strike on 30th August, 2012. All these have left an unfavorable mark on the academic activities of the University students and it has also affected the academic calendar and the performance of the students. On 1st of July, 2013, ASUU embarked upon another Six months industrial action which was called off on the 17th of December, 2013 which really affected the Nigerian undergraduates leading to the involvement of students in many unwholesome activities. Often times, these incessant agitations by ASUU usually triggers industrial action by sister associations such as NASU, SSANU etc.

Industrial action or strike is workers' refusal to work as protest for inadequate service or poor condition. In the education sector, industrial actions by academic and non academic staffs can lead to students' examination malpractice, corruption and other social vices in the society. Strike is a social ill not different from corruption because it eats into students' time which makes it difficult for students to be fully and properly 'baked' within the designated educational time frame. As a result, 'products' that are ill-equipped in both character and learning are turned out to the society. This research is targeted at examining the effect of these industrial actions on the academic performance of the students of the Ekiti State University.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The demand of ASUU and other industrial unions in the Nigerian Universities is that government should fulfill an agreement it reached with them in 2009 on how to save the nation's universities from collapse. On the other hand, government is proposing a piecemeal selective approach. There is no doubt that education is too vital to the survival of any nation that it should be treated as a subject beyond politics or evasive polemics. It is not deniable that Nigeria is presently not doing enough, by world standards, in the funding of her children's education. As far as the government is concerned, there are other competing items for the limited funds available and government is not doing enough in the infrastructural development of the Nigerian Universities.

This has caused serious altercations between government and these industrial unions including ASSU resulting into persistent industrial actions. The incessant industrial action by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and all these industrial unions has inadvertently affected the academics of university students; it usually poses a lot of challenges to their study duration, performance in examinations and their final grading. The students are kept away from school for a long time; most of them are completely cut off from academics as conditions at home may not favor productive and rigorous academic exercise. The students and their parents become frustrated because of long expectation of school resumption that is far from sight. Some of the students while at home doing nothing get engaged in other things other than academics. In some cases they are easy recruits for criminal activities, such as armed robbery, kidnapping, and rape and on the other hand encourage cultism. This has made them a problem to the society peace and order in Nigeria. However the extent to which staffs of the universities including ASUU strikes affects student's academic performance require a close examination and this research is geared towards examining the extent to which it has affected the performance of students particularly in Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of the study is to examine influence of industrial actions on the academic performance of students in Ekiti State University EKSU. Specific objectives are:

To examine the perception of an average university student on industrial action by Labour unions in the university including Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU).

To determine whether industrial action by the staffs of the universities has influence on the reading habits of students during the disruption in academic activities period.

To assess the extent to which disruption in academic program in Universities influence students' learning effectiveness.

To determine whether Industrial Actions by Lecturers significantly contribute to low CGPA of students.

To examine whether industrial actions have direct influence on students' overall academic performance.

To determine whether industrial actions motivate students to learn.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to guide the study and achieve the research objectives of the study, the following research questions were formulated in line with the objectives:

What is the perception of an average university student on industrial action by Labour unions in the university including Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU)?

To what extent does industrial action by the staffs of the universities influence students' reading habits?

To what extent would disruption in academic program in Nigerian universities due to ASUU strike influence students' learning effectiveness?

Do Industrial actions significantly contribute to Low CGPA of students?

Do Industrial actions have direct influence on students' overall academic performance?

Do industrial actions motivate students to learn?

1.5 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

1. **Ho:** Students have a negative perception about industrial actions carried out by academic staff of Universities.

Hi: Students have a positive perception about industrial actions carried out by academic staff of Universities.

2. **Ho:** Industrial actions do not influence reading habits of students when academic activities are disrupted.

Hi: Industrial actions have influence reading habits of students when academic activities are disrupted.

3. **Ho:** There is no significant relationship between industrial actions and learning effectiveness of students.

Hi: There is a significant relationship between industrial actions and learning effectiveness of students.

4. **Ho:** There is no significant relationship between industrial actions and low CGPA of students.

Hi: There is a significant relationship between industrial actions and low CGPA of students.

5. **Ho:** There is no significant relationship between industrial actions and overall academic performance of students.

Hi: There is a significant relationship between industrial actions and overall academic performance of students.

6. **Ho:** Industrial actions do not motivate students to learn.

Hi: Industrial actions motivate students to learn.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research will add to the body of knowledge by enlightening the students on how they can cope with the unfavorable industrial actions embarked upon by University's staffs, so as to enable them perform as expected in their studies. Furthermore, this study would also help to further research and add to knowledge build-up in the university. Again from this study, students would be able to device exemplary means of ensuring excellent performance even with the occurrence of a strike action by the various labour unions in the university including the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). Policy makers may also find the outcome of the study useful for future planning in tackling the menace by reducing the incessant industrial actions to the barest minimum.

1.7 SCOPE OF STUDY/LIMITATION OF STUDY

This study on the influence of industrial action on the academic performance of the student of the Ekiti State University will cover all the issues of industrial action in Nigerian universities focusing on the Ekiti State University and the perception of students about it.

Limitation of the Study

The researcher in the course of this work encountered certain constraints which are:

Time constraint as the research work is combining with other academic activities.

Second is the dearth of information such as low respond from respondent due to one reason or the other.

Lastly in financial constraint occasioned by the need for continuous sorting for information material.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Industrial action: a protest in which workers show that they disagree with a policy of their employer

Performance: the accomplishment of a given task measured against preset known standards of accuracy and completeness

Infrastructure: the basic physical and organizational structure and facilities e.g. building, roads, power

supply etc.

Funding: a sum of money or other resources set apart for a specific objective.

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