

## **Student Perception of Strategies for Reduction of Academic Staff Union of Universities Strikes in Anambra State**

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### **Introduction**

In Nigeria, the Education sector especially tertiary institution have witnessed in recent time incessant closure due to industrial action. The influence of this repeated closure of school and academic programs on students learning effectiveness can better be imagined than described.

Academic staff union of Universities strike (ASUU Strike) is defined as an organization of teaching staff that uses collective action or stoppage of work to advance its members interest in regards to wages and working condition. The principal aim of this trade union is to promote their members interests. Therefore ASUU as a trade union, in order to fight for their right, good working condition in the Universities and better living standards of the staff of universities have been engaging in incessant strike action so as to press home her demands. ASUU remains the most powerful trade union in Nigeria. It does not dine with the Government which explains why it is difficult to infiltrate its ranks. It goes beyond its primary mandate of protecting the interest of its members to fight for the down-trodden in the Nigeria society (Uzoh, 2017).

Perception is the way in which something is regarded, understood or interpreted. Perception defers from one individual to another. The perception of Nigerian students is different from the perception of other staff of the university. Perception governs the way we react to a given situation (Williams, 2014).

Porter (2016) defined strategies as a method of plan or chosen to bring about a desired future, such as achievement of a goal or solution to a problem. Tertiary education in Nigeria has thus suffered tremendous setback as a result of industrial action (ASUU Strike). This has always subjected the student to pitiable condition, disrupting academic programs. Consequently, student's academic achievement has comparatively become so low while various form of examination malpractices are on the increase.

As a student, one deserves to know what to do in the bid to enhance or explore effective performance in his/her education aspect. It is probably important to consider who a student is and what he or she is doing. Such individual under the discussion find himself or herself in a college, polytechnics or University setting knowledge, skills and trying to modify his academic performance. University worldwide is regarded as the citadel

of learning, the fountain of intellectual development and a ground for the production of leaders of tomorrow. A university fulfills one major function; it is a knowledge and value provider. In order word 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.(Ajayi, 2013). Merit has been the watchword in the university system. An institution awards certificates to the student when he or she satisfies the university both in character and learning before the institution will issue the student with a certificate.

According to Business dictionary (2015) strike is seen as collective and organized, cessation or slowdown of work by employees, to force acceptance of their demands by the employer. The legality of the strike action requires: approval by the majority of employee by ballot; independent verification to ascertain that the majority support the vote. International Labour Organization (2011) posits that strike is the most visible and controversial form of collective action in the event of a labour dispute and is often seen as the last resort of workers organization in pursuit of their demands. Therefore, strike is one word that is a thorn in the flesh of the management. Each time the organized labour embarked on any strike, substantial output is lost. According to Chijioke (2013) strike is an organized work stoppage by a body of workers to enforce compliance with demands made to employer or a group. Generally ASUU uses strike as a means of forcing the government to accept the demand of the union. Almost all the previous heads of state and president of Nigeria have experienced industrial action.

The main union whose incessant industrial action takes a heavy toll on the academic achievement of the university student is the Academic staff union of universities (ASUU). The union was formed in 1978. A successor to the Nigeria Association of University Teacher which was formed in 1965 at University of Ibadan. Academic staff union of Universities (ASUU) can therefore be seen to be trade union whose activities being lawful and not inconsistent with the spirit and practice of trade unionism are covered by the law of the land. ASUU's disenchantment with government over issue of University autonomy, poor condition of service, poor funding and non-conducive environment for academic pursuit had been simmering for years and had been a theme for fruitless negotiations and dialogue with successive Federal Ministries of Education.

There is no doubt whatsoever that, for the University system to function as efficiently and effectively as expected, the stakeholders need to work in harmony, collaborating with ASUU, to a great extent with a clear

sense of focus having vision and mission. This guides the University in its developmental processes as well as its service to the society. In the same vein, the society needs to be in good condition and state of living. But this is not the concern of the stake holders in Nigeria. Therefore ASUU as a trade union, in order to fight for their right, good working condition in the Universities and better living standards for the masses in society have been engaging in incessant strike actions so as to press home her demands.

Disruption in academic programs serve as non-motivational factors to the student, it discourages them from learning. It is not surprising therefore that during strike actions, most students engage in social vices as gambling, stealing etc. instead of reading their books.

Odubela (2012) concluded that an effective learning or an enhance 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. From the above review therefore; the researchers are of the view that disruption in academic programmes caused by strike action breeds disappointment, frustration, emotional and unpreparedness on the part of student.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The demand of ASUU and other industrial union in the Nigeria Universities is that Government should abide by the agreement it reached with them in 2009 on how to save the nations Universities from collapse. On the other hand, Government is proposing a piece meal selective approach. There is no doubt education is too vital to the survival of any nation. It is not deniable that Nigeria is presently not doing enough, by world standards, in the funding of her children's education. This has caused serious altercations between Government and ASUU resulting into persistent industrial strike action.

The incessant strike action by the Academic staff union of universities (ASUU) has inadvertently affected the academic activities of university, it usually poses a lot of challenges to their study duration, performance in examination and their final grading. The student are kept away from school for a long time, most of them are completely cut off from academics as conditions at home may not favour productive and rigorous academic exercise. Some of the student while at home doing nothing gets engaged in other things other than academics. In some cases, they engaged in some criminal activities such as armed robbery, kidnapping, cultism and rape. This has posed a lot of problem to the society. Therefore, this study will

examine whether motivational, economic and policy strategies will help to reduce ASSU strike action in universities in Anambra state.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The general purpose of the study was to examine the influence of ASUU strick on the academic achievements of students in Anambra State.

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. To examine the policy strategies students perceived by the students to reduce ASUU strike.
2. To investigate the motivational strategies perceived by the students to reduce ASUU strike.
3. To find out the economic strategies perceived by the student to reduce ASUU strike.

### **Significance of the Study**

This research will be beneficial to the student on how they can cope with the unfavorable industrial actions embarked upon by University staff, so as to enable them perform as expected in their studies.

Furthermore, the study would also help to further research and to knowledge build-up in the university. Again from this study, student would be able to device exemplary means of ensuring excellent achievement even with occurrence of a strike action by the Academic staff union (ASUU). Policy makers may also find the outcome of the study useful for future planning.

### **Research Question**

The following research questions were formulated in order to guild the study.

1. What policy strategies do students perceive to be used to reduce ASUU strikes?
2. What motivational strategies do students perceived to be used to reduce ASUU strikes?
3. What economic strategies do students perceived to be used to reduce ASUU strike?

### **Research Hypothesis**

The study addressed the following null hypotheses.

1. There is no significant difference between the opinion of male and female students on the influence of ASUU strike on academic achievement.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

The research design employed by the researchers in the study was a survey research design. This design aimed at studying large population through a representative sample with the view of generalizing the result to the large population. The purpose of using this design is to collect and analyze data from Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka and Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Igbariam using some students to represent the large population.

### **Area of the Study**

The study was conducted at Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka and Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Igbariam in Anambra State.

### **Population of the Study**

The population comprises of all the students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka and Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Igbariam. There are 36000 students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University and 21,000 in Anambra State University. Total is 57,000 students.

### **Sample and Sampling Techniques**

The sampling technique used was proportionate stratified random sampling techniques which 250 student were sampled from Nnamdi Azikiwe University and 142 students from Anambra State University. Totaling 392 sample.

### **Instrument for Data Collection**

The instrument was questionnaire. A comprehensive questionnaire was designed and administered to the respondents, each of the respondents were asked to check for an option that best suits the question (s) and fills in their responses as appropriate on the questionnaire space provided.

### **Validation of Instrument**

In order to ensure the validity of the questionnaire, copies of the drafted questionnaires were given to two lecturers' in statistics department of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and a lecturer in measurement and evaluation from F.C.E (T) Umunze.

The researcher asked the validators to validate the drafted questionnaires to a suitable standard; their advice and corrections were used in correcting and validating the questionnaires.

### Method of Data Collection

The questionnaire was personally administered by the researchers. The questionnaires were administered to students in their respective institutions. Face to face method of data administration was used. The respondents were required to indicate their relative agreement with each item based on the scale.

### Method of Data Analysis

The data collected was analyzed using Mean while the hypothesis was tested using Z-test at 0.05 level of significance. The formula for mean is as follows;

### Results

The data collected from the study were presented and analyzed according to the responses received on the questionnaire from the respondents. Research Question One: What is the perception of an average university student about ASUU strike action?

**Table 1:** Mean rating of the policy strategies on student's perception on how to reduce ASUU strikes.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	N	X	REMARK
1.	Government should provide good training and development to members of ASUU	208	184			392	3.5	Accepted
2.	Government should reduce the number of years for sabbatical leave for ASUU members	88	176	104	24	392	2.8	Accepted
3.	Government should give promotion to the members of ASUU as and when due.	192	176	8	16	392	3.3	Accepted
4.	Government should reduce the number of years for promotion of ASUU members to two years.	40	96	224	32	392	2.3	Rejected
5.	Government should provide where ASUU members will go for their sabbatical leave.	168	184	32	8	392	3.3	Accepted
6.	Government should provide fund for article publications.	128	200	48	16	392	3.1	Accepted

7	No work-no-pay policy should be adopted by the government during ASUU strike	88	176	88	40	392	2.7	Accepted
8	Government should make sure that the vice chancellor of each university should be a staff of that university especially in state universities	128	200	48	16	392	3.1	Accepted
9	ASUU should place a reasonable and realistic demand to the government	120	144	112	16	392	2.9	Accepted
10	More budgetary allocation should be provided for university education	320	32	8	32	392	3.6	Accepted

Table One in item 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 with the mean responses of 3.50, 2.80, 3.30, 3.30, 2.90, 2.70, 3.10, 2.90 and 3.60 respectively are above cut off point of 2.50 hence, are accepted. However, item 4 with the mean response of 2.3 was rejected by the respondents because, the students believes that Government should not reduce the number of years for promotion of academic staff.

Research Question Two: what motivational strategies do students perceive to be used to reduce ASUU strikes?

Table 2: mean rating of students on motivational strategies on how to reduce ASUU strike

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	N	X	REMARK
11.	Government should increase the salaries of ASUU members once in every 5years	248	104	24	16	392	3.4	Accepted
12	Government should build staff quarters inside all the universities for ASUU members	48	56	112	176	392	1.9	Rejected
13.	Government should provide health insurance for ASUU members and their children.	304	56	34	8	392	3.6	Accepted
14.	Government should provide life insurance for ASUU members	200	144	48		392	3.3	Accepted

15.	Government should provide award to the best article publisher of the year in all the universities	136	200	56		392	3.2	Accepted
16.	Government should balance the salaries of state universities with that of federal universities	176	160	40	16	392	3.2	Accepted
17.	University lecturers should encourage the government by producing quality graduates not half baked graduate.	120	144	104	24	392	2.9	Accepted
18.	Government should provide staff bus through the universities authorities for the ASUU members.	40	40	184	128	392	1.9	Rejected
19.	Government should make transfer of service automatic for all the SUU members.		80	184	128	392	1.8	Rejected
20.	Overseas medical treatment should be provided for ASUU members.	32	40	120	200	392	1.4	Rejected

Table Two, in item 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17, with the mean responses of 3.4, 3.6, 3.3, 3.2, 3.2, and 2.9 respectively are above cut off point of 2.50 hence are accepted. They admitted that ASUU strike is caused by lack of motivational policies by the government. However, item 12, 18, 19 and 20 with the mean responses of 1.9, 1.9, 1.8 and 1.4 was rejected by the respondents because the government may not have enough funds to meet with all their demands.

Research Question Three: What economic strategies do students perceived to be used to reduce ASUU strike?



**Table 3;** mean rating of students on economic strategies on how to reduce ASUU strike

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	N	X	REMARK
21.	Government should make yearly increment of ASUU members tangible.	232	120	32	8	392	3.4	Accepted
22.	Government should reduce the pensionable year of service to 5years	240	144	8		392	3.5	Accepted
23.	Tangible duty traveling allowance should be approved for ASUU members when the need	288	80	24		392	3.6	Accepted
24.	Housing allowance should be provided for the ASUU members for the people that do not want to live inside the staff quarters	192	184	16		392	3.4	Accepted
25.	Scholarship should be given to ASUU members for career advancement	192	184	16		392	3.4	Accepted
26.	Scholarship should be given to children of ASUU members	272	88	16	16	392	3.5	Accepted
27.	Digital library should be provided to all the universities to enable the lecturers have access to the internet for their research	248	136	8	24	392	3.6	Accepted
28.	Years of promotion should be reduced to two years	96	240	48	8	392	3.0	Accepted
29.	Lecturers should be sponsored for international conferences without restrictions.	88	240	56	8	392	3.0	Accepted
30.	Government should also pay a reasonable amount of money to the family of any ASUU member that died on active service.	160	152	40	32	392	3.1	Accepted

Table Three; the above items of 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 and 30 with the mean responses of 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.4, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.0, 3.0 and 3.1 Were accepted by the respondent due to the fact that ASUU strike can be minimized through economic policies that will improve the living standard of the ASUU members.

**Null Hypotheses**

There is no statistically significant difference between the opinion of male and female on the influence of ASUU strike on academic achievement of student.

Summary of table for Z test of different between the two means

Gender	Mean	S.D	N	Standard Error	Z-Cal	Z-Crit	Decision
Male	2.64	0.92	152	0.9741	1.0265	1.96	Null hypotheses Accepted
Female	2.74	0.97	240				

Result of data analysis is showed on table 6 that there is no statistically significant difference between the opinion of male and female on the influence of ASUU strike on student academic achievement. It is obvious that the Null Hypothesis was accepted meaning that there is no statistically significant difference between the two mean.

### Discussion of Findings

The discussion of the findings was carried out in line with the research questions. The researcher investigated on the influence of ASUU strike on academic achievement of undergraduate in Anambra state. After analyzing the data, the following were made on the influence of ASUU strike on academic achievement of undergraduate student in Anambra state.

The study revealed that the respondent have experienced ASUU strike and that it has a negative influence on their academic performance from the finding the perception of respondents are that Government is to be blamed for the incessant strike action. Also government should institute a policy plan for academic staff training and development. Delayed negotiation/bargaining between ASUU and Government trigger the strike action; lack of policy implementations by the Education stakeholder promotes ASUU strike. The Federal Government doesn't keep to the bargains and meet up with their obligation. The findings agree with that of Ajayi (2013) that irrational action of the Government toward the demands of ASUU contribute to the incessant strike action.

The second finding of the study show that ASUU strike is caused by lack of motivational strategies by the government. It contributes to the student's poor academic performance when the curricular is not fully implemented, this result to poor academic performance. Bello (2008) in his finding reported that during strike action, universities curriculum were not fully implemented. As a result, student struggled to acquire certificate at all cost without actual fulfilling the required educative progress.

Isangedighi (2011) believed strike action had negative effect on student learning ability. He added that, students lost preparedness and readiness to learn at time of strike hence their education achievement becomes adversely affected.

The study also revealed the effect of ASUU strike will be minimized through economic strategies to improve the standard of living of the ASUU members. This can enhance their work output in the university. The finding also agree with that of Ajayi (2013) who reported that increasing salaries of university lecturers helps to minimize the ASUU strike and improve the academic performance of the students.

### **Recommendation**

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made.

- Government should organizing meeting and interaction. The joint consultation committee that would comprise government representatives, academic staff union representatives, representative of other relevant stakeholders in the education sectors should be set up and meet on periodic interval to discuss impending matters that could generate dispute. This committee should be backed up with the necessary legislation and the decision made, should be final and binding on the government and the unions.
- Nigeria government should abstain from negative action that would hamper the achievement of national objective in education sector such as undermining the acquisition of appropriate skills and competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society.
- The study recommends that no matter the grievances, academic union and other union bodies that operate in educational sector should not resort to the strike as weapon of bargaining for their conditions of service.
- ASUU should present reasonable and realistic demands to the government.
- Government should make policy, use economic and motivational strategies that will improve the living standard of the ASUU members which will help to reduce the incessant strike action in the universities.

### **Conclusion**

This research work was centered on the student's perception of strategies for reduction of academic staff union of university strikes in Anambra state. It focuses on the cause, effect and possible solution to strike actions. As it has been observed, the desire of every university student is to complete his or her study without any hindrance, but as it turns out in

contemporary Nigeria, ASUU strike have placed limitation on this aspiration.

Government education policies and the associated inaction and the strike embarked upon by members of the Academic staff union of universities (ASUU) have contributed to the poor academic achievement of the university student in Nigeria. The avoidable conflict between the government and ASUU must not be allowed to jeopardize the academic and future of Nigeria students. Education in Nigeria must be given its pride of place; the government must strive hard to meet the united Nation's minimum standard in Nigerian.

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