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EFFECT OF ACADEMIC STAFF UNION OF UNIVERSITIES STRIKE ON STUDENTS ACADEMIC TRAINING IN NNAMDI AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY, AWKA, 2019 – 2023

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ABSTRACT
The study examined the effect of Academic Staff Union of Universities strike on students' academic training in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The study was guided by two specific objectives. In line with these objectives, two corresponding research questions and hypotheses were formulated. The study was anchored on the ***Conflict Theory*** *originally propounded by Karl Marx (1818–1883). A descriptive survey research design was utilized in the study. The population consisted of all students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University in Awka main campus, including regular, part-time, and postgraduate students, totaling 41188. The Taro Yamani (1964) sample size determination formula was applied to determine a sample size of 397. Data were collected from both primary and secondary. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics. All analyses were conducted using SPSS version 24. The findings revealed that; non-teaching has significant negative effect on students' academic performance and that ASUU strikes has significant negative effect on students' access to learning resources, in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The study concluded that frequent industrial actions by academic unions pose a serious threat to the stability, effectiveness, and quality of higher education in Nigeria and recommends among other things that government and university authorities should engage in proactive and continuous dialogue with academic unions to resolve issues promptly and avoid strike actions that delay students' graduation and disrupt academic calendars.*

Keywords*: **ASUU strike, student academic training, non-teaching and student academic performance during strike, access to learning resources..***

Introduction

Student performance in higher institutions is influenced by various factors, among which academic strikes are significant. Strikes, usually organized by university staff unions to demand better funding, salaries, and working conditions, have become frequent disruptions in many developing countries, affecting academic calendars and student outcomes (Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley, 2017). In sub-Saharan Africa, challenges such as economic instability and poor educational funding further exacerbate the problem, leading to truncated sessions, disengagement, and reduced academic performance (Oketch, 2016; Chinyere, 2018). In Nigeria, ASUU strikes are a recurring issue in public universities, including Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Since ASUU's formation in 1978, strikes have occurred frequently, notably in 1988, 1992, 2003, 2009, and 2020, some lasting up to nine months, disrupting academic progress and weakening educational standards (Ekundayo & Ajayi, 2019; Ogunode, 2021). The consequences include delayed graduation, increased dropout rates, and reduced quality of graduates. These strikes have had deep impacts at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, where students face academic uncertainty, psychological stress, and limited access to resources during strike periods (Adebayo, 2019; Olawale & Akinwumi, 2020). Financial burdens on students, especially from low-income backgrounds, are worsened by prolonged university closures (Chukwuma, 2017), and employers often perceive graduates as underprepared. Despite ASUU's role in advocating for systemic reforms, the persistence of strikes reveals a failure in government-union dialogue and highlights the need for sustainable solutions (Ofoegbu & Alonge, 2022). This study therefore examines the impact of ASUU strikes on student academic performance at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, aiming to understand the extent of their influence and propose strategies for mitigating their effects.

Statement Problem

Ideally, university education is pivotal to national development, equipping students with essential knowledge and skills to contribute to society. Academic activities should follow structured calendars, ensuring uninterrupted access to learning and timely graduations. A stable educational system promotes discipline, enhances performance, and aligns graduates with labor market needs. Universities are expected to foster collaborative environments conducive to learning. In this ideal, strikes would be rare. However, Nigerian public universities, including Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, face a contrasting reality. Frequent ASUU strikes disrupt academic calendars, delay graduations, and hinder student learning. These strikes stem from unresolved disputes over funding, remuneration, and agreement implementation, leaving students in academic uncertainty. Such disruptions negatively impact students' academic performance, motivation, and mental well-being, as they miss lectures, practical's, and facility access. The consequences are significant. Research highlights that strikes contribute to lower academic outcomes, higher dropout rates, and reduced workforce readiness (Ogunode, 2021; Chinyere, 2018). While existing studies examine general effects, there is a gap regarding their impact on specific institutions like Nnamdi

Azikiwe University. This study aims to address that gap by assessing the unique effects of ASUU strikes on student performance at the university, offering targeted insights to inform effective interventions.

Objectives of the Study

i. To analyze the effect of non-teaching on the student academic performance during the strike in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.
ii. To examine the effect of ASUU strike on students' access to learning resources in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Research Questions

Then study was guided by the following research questions;

i. How does non-teaching affect the students' academic performance during the strikes in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?
ii. In what ways does ASUU strikes affect students' access to learning resources in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?

Conceptual Review

Asuu Strike

A strike is a collective and strategic withdrawal of labor by employees, aimed at addressing grievances or influencing organizational policies (Armstrong, 2019; Fajana, 2016). It often follows failed negotiations or dispute resolution attempts, serving as a tool for collective bargaining and protest (Otobo, 2015; Anugwom, 2017). The International Labour Organization (ILO) frames strikes as a fundamental worker right linked to freedom of association and collective bargaining, especially when alternative mechanisms fail. Strikes can also reflect broader socio-political discontent (Ejiofor & Obi, 2016). In the Nigerian context, **ASUU strikes** are specific industrial actions by the Academic Staff Union of Universities, advocating improved funding, better working conditions, and the implementation of agreements with the government. These actions reflect recurring tensions between ASUU and the state (Aluede et al., 2016; Ofoegbu & Alonge, 2016). Some scholars view ASUU strikes not just as labor protests but as efforts to reform the nation's tertiary education system (Chinelo, 2020; Ige, 2018). They are often a response to systemic issues such as poor infrastructure, irregular salaries, and underfunding (Olorunsola, 2016; Nwagwu, 2019). ASUU strikes are marked by collective solidarity and strategic coordination (Okebukola, 2015; Onuoha, 2016), and their frequent recurrence underlines structural weaknesses in Nigeria's educational governance. Ultimately, they represent both a demand for academic reform and a symptom of deeper governance failures in the Nigerian education sector.

Academic Training

Academic training refers to structured educational experiences within academic institutions aimed at equipping students with knowledge, skills, and attitudes for personal and professional development (Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2018). Okebukola, 2015). It involves both theoretical instruction and practical learning through internships, research, and academic mentoring (Ogunyemi, 2022; Ezeani,

2016). describe academic training as a comprehensive, systematic process designed to cultivate critical thinking, problem-solving, and ethical competence (Aina, 2017; Nwagwu, 2017). It is also seen as a vehicle for transmitting societal values and preparing students for global competitiveness (Fafunwa, 2018; Akintoye, 2018). This process includes formal instruction, academic advising, and professional socialization (Adeyemi & Adu, 2020; Yusuf, 2019) In Nigerian universities, academic training includes lectures, seminars, research projects, and hands-on experiences. However, **recurrent ASUU strikes** have disrupted academic calendars, hampered curriculum delivery, and weakened mentorship structures, significantly affecting the quality of training (Okebukola, 2015). At Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, such disruptions have led to delayed sessions, postponed examinations, and reduced academic engagement. These interruptions impair students' academic performance, erode academic culture, and discourage long-term academic planning (Anyanwu & Iheriohanma, 2016). The result is a fragmented academic experience, with students often lacking essential skills like critical thinking and research competence.

Non-Teaching and Student Academic Performance During Strikes

ASUU strikes, marked by the suspension of lecturers' instructional duties, have severely disrupted academic performance in Nigerian universities. Teaching, essential for developing critical thinking and knowledge application (Obasi, 2018; Okebukola, 2015), is halted, leaving students without structured learning and creating fragmented understanding. Disruptions to academic calendars result in incomplete syllabi and impaired learning outcomes (Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2018; Ezeani, 2016).

These interruptions hinder content retention, as prolonged breaks cause students to forget previously learned material, with compressed catch-up schedules compromising depth (Aina, 2017). Students also face reduced motivation, as the absence of academic structure fosters disillusionment and academic disengagement (Yusuf, 2019; Ogunyemi, 2022). Many redirect focus to non-academic activities, exacerbating academic decline. Exam preparation and academic mentorship also suffer, with minimal time for revision post-strike and limited access to supervisory support (Adeyemi & Adu, 2020; Nwagwu, 2017). Psychological distress from prolonged uncertainty further impacts performance (Anyanwu & Iheriohanma, 2016; Fafunwa, 2018).

At Nnamdi Azikiwe University, strikes have delayed graduations and lowered academic quality (Okebukola, 2015). Non-teaching also risks program accreditation due to undelivered curricula (Obasi, 2018). Recurrent strikes contribute to academic mediocrity, eroding student ambition and institutional excellence (Akintoye, 2018).

To mitigate these effects, policy reforms should include academic continuity frameworks, digital learning infrastructure, and alternative conflict resolution strategies.

ASUU Strikes and Students' Access to Learning Resources

ASUU strikes have significantly reduced students' access to educational resources, undermining academic continuity. Library

closures restrict access to essential academic materials, particularly affecting students reliant on physical resources in a country with poor internet infrastructure (Adewumi, 2021). Laboratory-based disciplines also suffer due to halted practical sessions (Oladele & Adebayo, 2020).

A widening digital divide disadvantages student from lower-income backgrounds who lack access to devices and stable internet, impeding their ability to continue learning (Nweze, 2023). Most universities are ill-equipped for full digital migration, making resource access a systemic issue.

Academic mentorship also halts during strikes, delaying research and graduation, especially for final-year students (Okafor, 2022). This leads to disengagement and diminished motivation (Onuoha, 2021), with many students turning to jobs or vocational training during the hiatus.

Financial challenges further restrict access to learning tools, as families redirect funds to immediate needs during extended closures (Adesina, 2020). Institutions delay infrastructure investments due to operational uncertainty, while students avoid purchasing materials due to possible future disruptions (Adebayo & Folarin, 2022).

Addressing these challenges requires investments in digital infrastructure, e-learning platforms, and public-private partnerships to bridge the digital divide (Nwankwo & Adekunle, 2021). Long-term, systemic reforms in funding and labor relations are necessary to prevent future disruptions and safeguard student learning (Okonkwo, 2023).

Theoretical Framework

In order to provide a sound theoretical base for this study, **Conflict Theory**, originally propounded by Karl Marx (1818–1883) was adopted. Conflict Theory is a sociological perspective that emphasizes the inherent power struggles between different social classes and groups competing for limited resources, influence, and authority. Marx argued that society is structured in a way that privileges the dominant group (bourgeoisie) while subordinating the working class (proletariat), leading to continuous tension and confrontation. Although Marx's ideas were rooted in economic relations, later scholars such as Max Weber extended the theory to include conflicts in political, cultural, and institutional realms, highlighting that social structures are maintained through domination rather than consensus.

Empirical Review

Adesina and Babalola (2024) found that frequent ASUU strikes significantly lowered student performance and prolonged graduation timelines, concluding that strikes diminish higher education quality. Okonkwo and Igwe (2023) reported that students faced academic regression, reduced motivation, and heightened anxiety during strike periods in South-East Nigeria, ultimately impairing academic achievement. Suleiman and Ibrahim (2023) used disruption theory to show that strikes in Northern Nigeria led to reduced study time, poor exam preparation, and decreased academic motivation among 800 students. Yusuf and Bello (2023) confirmed that prolonged strikes disrupted academic activities, delayed course completions, and reduced student grades and motivation across selected Northern universities.

Agwu and Ekong (2023) found that repeated strikes at ABU Zaria and University of Maiduguri caused syllabus disorganization and limited access to academic resources, lowering academic outcomes. Okafor and Nnamani (2023) observed that 70% of students in South-East universities reported reduced study time and academic motivation during strikes, which negatively affected engagement and success. Okon (2023) highlighted that ASUU strikes at the University of Uyo caused delays in graduation for 78% of students and diminished academic interest for 65%, reducing class attendance and performance. Adeola, Bamidele, and Okoro (2023) revealed that 64% of students at Adekunle Ajasin University experienced lower academic performance due to strikes, while over 70% reported delayed graduation and disrupted career plans.

Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey design, suitable for collecting detailed information on the characteristics, opinions, and behaviors of the target population. This non-experimental design enabled the researcher to observe and describe the current impact of ASUU strikes without manipulating variables.

Area of Study

The study was conducted at Nnamdi Azikiwe University (UNIZIK), Awka, a federal university in Anambra State, Nigeria, with campuses in Nnewi, mbaukwu and Agulu. UNIZIK offers diverse programs across multiple faculties and supports a large student and staff population. It was selected due to its robust academic structure and relevance for examining the effects of ASUU strikes on student performance.

Population of the Study

The study population comprised all 41,188 students of UNIZIK, including:

- 24,706 regular students
- 12,476 part-time students
- 4,000. Postgraduate student. (Source: NAU Students Affairs Unit & Office of Academic Planning, 2024)

This inclusive population ensured that the research captured a wide range of perspectives across different academic categories and experiences**.**

Population of NAU Students by Programme

Programme	*Population*	*Percentage*
Regular Students	24,706	60
Part-time Students	12,476	30
Postgraduate Students	4006	10
Total	**41,188**	**100**

(NAU Students Affairs Unit, 2024, Office of Director, Academic Planning NAU).

Sampling Technique

The study adopted a stratified random sampling technique to ensure adequate representation of the diverse categories of students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The student population was first stratified into three groups: regular, part-time, and postgraduate students. Thereafter, a proportionate random sampling method was employed to select respondents from each stratum based on their percentage as shown in table 3.4.1 above. This approach ensured that each category of students was adequately represented in the study, thereby enhancing the reliability and generalizability of the findings.

Sources of Data

The study explored two main sources of data:

primary and secondary sources. The primary sources of data collection for this study were obtained through the use of self-constructed questionnaire. While the secondary data were obtained by means of reading other author's submissions on ASUU strike and students' academic training. Also, other secondary sources of data such as; bulletin, journals, magazine and internet services were explored.

Data Collection Instrument

The primary instrument for data collection in this study was the questionnaire. This choice was informed by an extensive review of relevant literature and the specific objectives of the study. Taylor et al. (2017) affirmed that the use of a questionnaire is an effective method for collecting factual information from a large number of respondents. The questionnaire consists of closed-ended questions and was structured into five sections: Sections A, B, C, D, and E. Section A focused on obtaining demographic information about the respondents, while Sections B, C, D, and E contained items designed to address the study's objectives and research questions. The items were based on a five-point Likert summative scale with response options as follows: Strongly Agree (SA) - 5 points, agree (A) - 4 points, Undecided (U) - 1 point, disagree (D) - 2 points, and Strongly Disagree (SD) - 3 points.

Reliability of the Research Instrument

To ensure the reliability of the research instrument, a reliability test was conducted to examine the consistency of the variables in the measuring instrument over time. This was achieved using the test-retest method and Pearson Correlation Coefficient. Forty copies of the questionnaire were administered to a group of students at Nnamdi Azikiwe University who are not part of the study's sample. The responses were collected, and after a two-week interval, the same instrument was administered to the same group of respondents. The results from both administrations were subjected to Pearson Correlation Analysis to assess the consistency of the instrument. The result yielded 0.86, indicating a high level of reliability. This value is well above the generally accepted threshold of 0.70, confirming that the instrument is reliable for data collection in the context of this study.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected for this study was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, was used to summarize and describe the demographic profiles of the respondents. Following this, the objectives of the study were analyzed using descriptive statistics (percentages, means, and standard deviations) and the regression model of the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) approach.

To test the study's hypotheses, t-test and F-test statistics were employed. The t-test was used to examine the significance of individual predictors, while the F-test was used to evaluate the overall fitness of the regression model. All analyses were conducted using SPSS software version 24.

The linear regression model of the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) approach was specifically used to determine the influence and relationship between the independent and dependent variables as conceptualized in the study. The choice of the OLS regression model was based on its efficiency

under normality assumptions, as it is recognized as the best, unbiased linear estimator (Gujarati and Porter, 2008). This ensures that the results are both robust and reliable.

Test of Hypotheses

The t-test was used to know the statistical significance of the individual parameters at 5% significance level. The result is showed on table below.

Summary of T-Statistics

Variables	t-Cal (t_{cal})	Sig.	Conclusion
Constant(C)	0.075	0.000	Statistically Significant
Non-teaching	11.098	0.007	Statistically Significant
Access to Learning Resources	15.749	0.000	Statistically Significant
F-statistic	331.601	0.000	Statistically Significant

Source: Researcher's computation, (2025).

We begin by bringing our working hypothesis to focus, considering the individual hypothesis. The t-test result is interpreted below:

Hypothesis One

H_0: Non-teaching has no significant effect on students' academic performance during the strikes in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

H_1: Non-teaching has significant effect on students' academic performance during the strikes in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

The t-test value of Non-teaching, is significant. We, therefore, reject the null hypothesis and conclude that non-teaching has significant effect on students' academic performance during the strikes in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Hypothesis Two

H_0: ASUU strikes has no significant effect on students' access to learning resources in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

H_1: ASUU strikes has significant effect on students' access to learning resources in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

The t-test value of access to learning resources is significant at 0.000 level of significant. We therefore, reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate by concluding that ASUU strikes has significant effect on students' access to learning resources in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Discussion of Results

This study found that ASUU strikes significantly impair students' academic performance and access to learning resources, at Nnamdi Azikiwe University. Disruption of academic activities led to poor academic outcomes, aligning with findings by Ogbogu (2016), Olanrewaju (2018), and Adejumo & Alimi (2020). Limited access to learning resources during strikes hindered research and learning, consistent with Adebayo & Akinola (2017), Olatunji (2019), and Eze (2020).

Conclusion

This study concludes that ASUU strikes significantly disrupt students' academic training at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The strikes negatively affect academic performance and hinder access to learning resources (Ogbogu, 2016; Olatunji, 2019; Aluko, 2017; Oboh & Ohiokha, 2016). These disruptions highlight the broader destabilizing effects of frequent industrial actions on students' academic and professional development in Nigerian public universities.

Recommendations

In line with the key findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. University management should develop effective internal mechanisms to ensure that essential non-teaching activities such as administrative support, laboratory

maintenance, and library services continue to function during strike periods to minimize disruptions in students' academic performance.

2. Efforts should be made by both university authorities and government agencies to guarantee students' continuous access to learning resources such as libraries, e-resources and academic support centers, even during periods of industrial action.

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