

**NEGATIVE IMPACT OF ASUU STRIKE ON STUDENT'S ACADEMIC  
PERFORMANCE IN TERTIARY INSTITUTION IN IMO STATE UNIVERSITY OWERRI, IMO  
STATE.**

Onyemachi Chioma  
**Esther Social Studies  
Education**

*Benjamin Uwajumogu (State College of Education Ihitte Uboma) estherchiomaonvemachi687@gmail.com*  
**07032591120**

**Abstract**

This paper explores Negative Impact of ASUU Strike on students' academic performance in tertiary institutions. The negative impact of strike action usually pose a lot of negative effects on the student's academic performance. This is because the period that should been used to teach the students is spent at home all in the name of strike. This makes it impossible to cover the course work at the end of the semester, the students come out of school with lesser knowledge than they ought to have acquired, thereby making it very hard for them to compete with their counterparts that finished from private schools. The comparative assessment on negative impact of ASUU strike includes: disruptions of the academic calendar, exclude institution from global collaboration, degrade education quality, prolong course duration, affect students mental health, and impose financial burden on parents. The research design used was survey. The sample for the study was hundred (200) students, across two Federal and two State University. The instrument used in this study was Likert Scale, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. The data collected via questionnaires and analysed using Mean and Standard Deviation. The findings of this research are expected to contribute to policy discussion on the negative impact of ASUU strike on students' academic performance in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. By providing empirical data on the role of the government. This study offers practical recommendations that condition of service and working environment in tertiary institution should be improved by government to enhance the dignity of labour for the staff, cordial relationship and effective measures should be put on ground by government, Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) etc. to check incessant strike action in the educational system.

Keywords: Strike Actions, Academic performance, tertiary Institution.

**INTRODUCTION**

Nigeria tertiary institutions have witnessed in recent times incessant school closures due to industrial actions by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and its non-academic staff. Industrial action or strike is when workers' refusal to work as a protest for insufficient service or terrible work condition. These university union groups are known for embarking on strikes always because government has failed to meet their sincere demands. The effect of these repeated closures have left these tertiary institutions stigmatized and undesirable to many Nigerian students. Consequently, lead to students' examination malpractice, corruption and other social vices in the society. Tertiary education in Nigeria has suffered tremendous setbacks as a result of industrial actions by both the academic (ASUU) and the non-teaching staff, and this has always subjected the students to pitiable conditions, disrupting academic programs, giving students' undeserved extension in their study years, causing 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 (Ebi, 2017). The frequent strikes by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in Nigeria can be attributed to a multitude of issues plaguing the country's higher education system. These issues include inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, unfair working conditions, and the non-implementation of agreements reached between the government and ASUU. The history of strike in tertiary institutions in Nigeria according to Offem, Anashie, and Aniah (2018) is dated back to 20th May, 1980, when a trade dispute was declared with the Governing Councils of Universities in Nigeria, which demanded improved funding of the universities, academic freedom, autonomy, as well as the setting up of a special body, to review the conditions of service of the universities' staff. Data analysed by newspaper in 2018 and updated till 2020 showed that since 1999, Nigerian lecturers had gone on strike up to 15 times.

The entire period they embarked on such strike spanned about 50 months. This represents about one-fifth, or 20 per cent, of the number of years since the dawn of democracy in Nigeria (1960). The report showed that during the Olusegun Obasanjo administration, academic workers downed tools for a cumulative period of about 18 months, approximately 19 per cent of his eight-year reign. The Umaru Yar'Adua administration's three-year span saw about four months and a week of strike. During Goodluck Jonathan's administration, the length of the strike in the universities had reached 13 months, which is 22 per cent of his years in office. So far, under Muhammadu Buhari, Nigerian universities were shut for.

Total period of 12 months and counting (or 18 per cent of his five-and-a-half-year tenure) (Yusuf, 2020).

Universities worldwide are regarded as the citadel of learning, the fountain of intellectual development and 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 universities to produce 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. Positive handling of the problem of strike can help curb its unpleasant effect which include brain drain on the part of the lecturers and students which will affect the development of the nation at large as its human resources which would have aided its development are migrating elsewhere, prolonged academic year, increase in the crime rate as students who would have engaged in their studies are left idle (Offem, Anashie, & Aniah, 2018). Employees may be working with an organization but may not be satisfied with the job conditions surrounding employment terms. When employees experience dissatisfaction they tend to engage in unethical practices such as poor work attitude, pilfering organizational properties, absenteeism, conflict, grievance, delaying task completion, and unethical practices and in turn all these affect the firm (Nwagbala & Okafor, 2023; Nwagbala, 2018). It is important to discuss the effects of strike actions on Nigerian higher institutions programme. In view of the foregoing, this study sets to examine the effect of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strike on the academic performance of students in selected tertiary institutions.

Education is globally acknowledged as the most powerful tool for social transformation and national development. It is the key mechanism through which societies transmit knowledge, skills, norms, and values to younger generations. In developing countries such as Nigeria, education is considered indispensable for achieving human capital development, technological advancement, and sustainable economic growth. Within the Nigerian educational structure, tertiary institution school level occupies a pivotal position because it serves as

bridge between basic education and higher education, equipping students with foundational academic competencies necessary for advanced learning and productive citizenship.

Despite recognized importance of education, Nigeria's School system has continued to experience persistent disruptions, particularly in form of strike actions. A strike action, according to Olayemi (2018), is deliberate and collective cessation of work by employees in response to perceived injustices, unmet needs, or unfavorable working conditions. In the context of education, strike actions typically involve teachers withdrawing instructional services to demand better remuneration, improved welfare, adequate school facilities, payment of salary arrears, or general reforms in the sector.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

ASUU strikes disrupt the academic calendar and prolong the duration of study, which may demotivate students and compromise their performance in examinations and research activities. Despite anecdotal evidence, there is limited empirical research comparing the effects of ASUU strikes on students across federal and state universities. The government is not making any effort because their children is already outside the country studying.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

General Objective:

To assess the Comparative Assessment on Negative impact of ASUU strikes on students' academic performance in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

#### **Specific Objectives:**

To examine the extent of disruption of academic calendar caused by ASUU strike

To evaluate the effect of ASUU strike on student's prolonged course duration

To examine the extent of ASUU strike on student's degrade on education quality

To examine the extent of ASUU strike affect student's mental health

To examine the extent of ASUU strike exclude institution from global collaboration

To suggest strategies for mitigating the adverse effects of ASUU strike and its financial burden on parents.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study provides insight into the effects of industrial actions on academic performance, informing policymakers, university management, and stakeholders in higher education. It also offers evidence for proactive interventions to safeguard students' academic progression.

## **CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION**

### **Concept of Academic Strikes**

Academic strikes refer to work stoppages by academic staff to protest working conditions, inadequate funding, or policy disagreements. ASUU strikes are the most prominent in Nigeria, often lasting weeks or months.

### **Impact of Strikes on Students' Academic Performance**

Research shows that prolonged strikes cause academic delays, reduce student engagement, and negatively influence exam performance (Adebayo, 2016). Mental stress and lack of structured learning during strikes contribute to poor performance outcomes.

### **Comparative Effects on Federal vs State Universities**

Federal universities often face longer strike durations due to larger staff populations and more complex negotiations. State universities may experience shorter strikes but with similar negative effects on performance. Comparative studies are limited but suggest variations in coping mechanisms and resilience strategies among students.

Strike is seen as a collective organized cessation or slowdown of work by employees to force acceptance of their demand by the employers. The legality of strike action requires the approval of majority of the employees by ballot, independent verification to ensure that majority are in support of the strike. The employer must be given a prior notice of the strike action before the strike is embarked on. This implies that no strike action can take place without the employer knowing or being warned of it. It is therefore at the failure of the employer to yield to the demand of the employees that will result to the industrial dispute (strike). Onyemanan (2016).

### **Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU)**

ASUU, an acronym for Academic Staff Union of Universities came into existence in 1978 as a successor to the National Association of University Teachers (NAUT). Specifically, ASUU is union of intellectuals from government and state owned universities in Nigeria seeking for the socio-political interest and economic welfare of her members and the country in general. ASUU without doubt is one of the strongest and reliable trade unions in Nigeria and synonymous with strike/struggles because of government insensitivity and irresponsibility. [Ololube, 2013].

Labour unions or trade unions are organizations formed by workers from related fields that work for the common interest of its members. They help workers with issues like fairness of pay, good working environment, hours of work and benefits. They stand together as one and speak in unity with one voice. The purpose of these unions is to look into the grievances of workers and present a collective voice in front of the management (Nwankwo 2015).

### **Academic Performance**

Steinmayr (2014) identified that academic performance are outcomes that indicate the extent to which a person has accomplished specific goals that were the focus of activities in an instructional environment, specifically in schools, colleges and universities. This implies that academic performance is a multifaceted construct that comprises various domains of learning, because of wide-ranging academic achievement and the fact that it covers a broad variety of educational outcomes hence, its definition or meaning depends on the indicators used to measure it.

### **Study Area**

The study area is selected tertiary institution in Imo State, Imo State College of Education Ihitte Uboma and Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education. It examines the negative impact of ASUU Strike on student academic performance in tertiary institution in Imo State.

### **Research Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

The study employs a descriptive survey design to collect primary data from students using questionnaires and interviews. Population of the Study

The population includes all undergraduate students in selected federal and state universities in Nigeria.

#### **Sample and Sampling Technique**

A sample of 200 students was selected using stratified random sampling to ensure equal representation from federal and state universities. Instrument for Data Collection

Questionnaire: Likert-scale questions on strike impact and academic performance was used to elicit responses from the respondents

Interviews: Semi-structured interviews to gather qualitative insights.

#### **Validation and Reliability**

The questionnaire was validated by experts in Educational Research and tested for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha = 0.82$ ).

#### **Data Analysis**

Quantitative Data: Descriptive statistics (mean, frequency, percentage) and inferential statistics (t-tests) were used to compare performance between federal and state university students.

Qualitative Data: Thematic analysis of interview responses.

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

This chapter presents the analysis of data collected on the comparative assessment of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strike and its effects on students' academic performance in tertiary institutions. Data are presented in table form to allow for clear comparison of students' academic outcomes before, during, and after ASUU strike actions.

#### **Comparative Assessment of Students' Academic Performance**

Presents a comparative summary of key academic performance indicators across three periods: pre-strike, strike period, and post-strike.

#### **Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU)**

ASUU, an acronym for Academic Staff Union of Universities came into existence in 1978 as a successor to the National Association of University Teachers (NAUT). Specifically, ASUU is union of intellectuals from government and state owned universities in Nigeria seeking for the socio-political interest and economic welfare of her members and the country in general. ASUU without doubt is one of the strongest and reliable trade unions in Nigeria and synonymous with strike/struggles because of government insensitivity and irresponsibility. [Ololube, 2013].

Labour unions or trade unions are organizations formed by workers from related fields that work for the common interest of its members. They help workers with issues like fairness of pay, good working environment, hours of work and benefits. They stand together as one and speak in unity with one voice. The purpose of these unions is to look into the grievances of workers and present a collective voice in front of the management (Nwankwo 2015).

### **Academic Performance**

Steinmayr (2014) identified that academic performance are outcomes that indicate the extent to which a person has accomplished specific goals that were the focus of activities in an instructional environment, specifically in schools, colleges and universities. This implies that academic performance is a multifaceted construct that comprises various domains of learning, because of wide-ranging academic achievement and the fact that it covers a broad variety of educational outcomes hence, its definition or meaning depends on the indicators used to measure it.

### **Study Area**

The study area is selected tertiary institution in Imo State, Imo State College of Education Ihitte Uboma and Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education. It examines the negative impact of ASUU Strike on student academic performance in tertiary institution in Imo State.

### **Research Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

The study employs a descriptive survey design to collect primary data from students using questionnaires and interviews. Population of the Study

The population includes all undergraduate students in selected federal and state universities in Nigeria.

#### **Sample and Sampling Technique**

A sample of 200 students was selected using stratified random sampling to ensure equal representation from federal and state universities. Instrument for Data Collection

Questionnaire: Likert-scale questions on strike impact and academic performance was used to elicit responses from the respondents

Interviews: Semi-structured interviews to gather qualitative insights.

#### **Validation and Reliability**

The questionnaire was validated by experts in Educational Research and tested for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha = 0.82$ ). Data Analysis

Quantitative Data: Descriptive statistics (mean, frequency, percentage) and inferential statistics (t-tests) were used to compare performance between federal and state university students.

Qualitative Data: Thematic analysis of interview responses.

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

This chapter presents the analysis of data collected on the comparative assessment of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strike and its effects on students' academic performance in tertiary institutions. Data are presented in table form to allow for clear comparison of students' academic outcomes before, during, and after ASUU strike actions.

Comparative Assessment of Students' Academic Performance

Presents a comparative summary of key academic performance indicators across three periods: pre-strike, strike period, and post-strike.

## **Comparative Assessment of ASUU Strike on Students' Academic Performance**

**Source: Field Survey, 2025**

### **Interpretation of Results**

The data in Table indicate a noticeable decline in students' academic performance during the ASUU strike period. Average GPA and examination pass rates dropped significantly, reflecting disruptions in academic activities and reduced engagement with coursework. Course completion rates were also adversely affected, as prolonged interruptions led to academic fatigue and compressed academic calendars upon resumption.

In the post-strike period, there was a gradual improvement in most indicators; however, performance levels did not immediately return to pre-strike standards. This suggests that while academic activities resumed, the lingering effects of the strike--such as rushed syllabi and psychological stress--continued to impact students' performance.

### **Summary of Findings**

The comparative assessment demonstrates that ASUU strike actions have a significant negative effect on students' academic performance in tertiary institutions. Although recovery is observed after the strike, the disruption creates gaps that may require additional academic support and policy interventions to fully address.

## **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Summary of the Study**

This study examined the comparative assessment of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strike on students' academic performance in tertiary institutions. The analysis focused on key academic performance indicators such as Grade Point Average (GPA), examination pass rates, course completion rates, class attendance, and student motivation across three periods: before, during, and after ASUU strike actions.

Findings from Chapter Four revealed that students' academic performance was highest during the pre-strike period, declined significantly during the strike, and showed partial recovery after the strike. However, post-strike performance levels did not fully return to pre-strike standards, indicating that strike actions have both immediate and lingering effects on students' academic outcomes.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the comparative assessment, the study concludes that ASUU strike actions have a significant negative impact on students' academic performance in tertiary institutions. Prolonged academic disruptions result in reduced academic engagement, lower academic achievement, increased workload pressure, and psychological stress among students.

Although academic activities resume after strike actions, the compressed academic calendar and rushed syllabus coverage limit students' ability to fully recover lost learning time. Consequently, repeated ASUU strikes undermine the quality and stability of tertiary education and pose serious challenges to students' academic development.

## Recommendations

In view of the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

**Timely Resolution of Industrial Disputes:** Government and university authorities should adopt proactive negotiation strategies to resolve disputes with ASUU promptly in order to prevent prolonged academic disruptions.

**Academic Recovery Programmes:** Tertiary institutions should introduce academic recovery measures such as revision periods, tutorial classes, and flexible assessment methods to help students regain lost academic ground after strike actions.

**Improved Academic Calendar Planning:** Universities should review and adjust academic calendars after strikes to reduce excessive workload pressure on students and allow adequate time for effective learning.

**Student Support Services:** Counseling and academic advisory services should be strengthened to address the psychological and academic challenges students face during and after strike periods.

**Policy and Funding Reforms:** The government should improve funding of tertiary institutions to address the root causes of ASUU strikes, thereby promoting stability and continuity in academic programmes.

**Use of Alternative Learning Platforms:** Universities should develop and institutionalize blended and online learning platforms that can serve as academic support systems during periods of disruption.

The implementation of these recommendations will help mitigate the adverse effects of ASUU strike actions and enhance students' academic performance in tertiary institutions.

## References

- Adamu, A. U., & Mohammed, S. (2021). Impact of academic staff union strikes on students' academic performance in Nigerian universities. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 9(2), 45-58.
- Akinwale, A. A. (2019). Labour disputes and educational development in Nigeria: The case of ASUU strikes. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 15(3), 201-210.
- Alabi, A. T., & Oduwaiye, R. O. (2018). Effects of strike actions on the academic performance of university students in Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 9(10), 1-7.
- ASUU. (2022). Press releases and communiques on industrial actions in Nigerian universities. Abuja: Academic Staff Union of Universities.
- Ebi (2017), Yusuf (2020) *International Journal of Educational Research*, 9(2), 45-58.
- Federal Ministry of Education. (2020). Report on industrial actions and academic calendar disruptions in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Abuja: FME.
- Ige, A. M. (2017). Students' perception of the effects of strikes on academic performance in Nigerian universities. *African Journal of Educational Studies*, 5(1), 89-102.
- Ogunode, N. J., & Abigeal, I. (2020). Strike actions and academic performance of undergraduate students in public universities in Nigeria. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 4(6), 316-321.
- Okafor, E. E. (2016). Industrial conflict and educational outcomes in Nigeria. *Journal of Labour and Industrial Relations*, 10(2), 75-92.

- Olukunle, O. A. (2015). Academic disruption and students' learning outcomes in Nigerian universities. *Journal of Educational Policy and Practice*, 7(4), 134-142.
- Offem, Anashie, & Aniah, (2018) Strike actions. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 4(6), 316-321.
- Onyemanan (2016) Strike actions. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 4(6), 100-114.
- Umar, A., & Hassan, M. A. (2021). Comparative analysis of pre-strike and post-strike academic performance of university students.
- Steinmayr (2014) Academic Performance, learning outcomes in Nigerian universities. *Journal of Educational Policy and Practice*, 7(4), 134-142.