

Effects of Incessant Strikes on Business Education Programme in Southwest Nigeria Universities

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Abstract

This study examined the effect of incessant strikes on business education programme in Southwest Nigeria Universities. Three research questions guided the study and three hypotheses were formulated and tested. The design of the study was a descriptive survey. The population was 1,280 (made up of 30 business educators and 1250 final year business education students) from four Universities offering business education programme in the Southwest zone. A sample of 280 (20% of the population) was used for the study. A 23 item structured 5-point rating scale questionnaire which was validated by experts was used for data collection. Test re-test method was used to determine the probability of the instrument and application of Cronbach Alpha for internal consistency of the instrument yielded overall reliability coefficient of 0.73. Mean was used to answer the research questions, while t-test was used to test all the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that the extent to which incessant strike actions affect business education programme was high extent in terms of loss of credibility, elongation of academic calendar, wastage of material resources, low quality of teaching, research and community service, production of half-baked graduates and host of others. Based on these findings, it was recommended among others that education should be adequately funded by governments and all other well-to do people in the country, because this is a period of critical consciousness and revisionist thinking. With the inadequate financial provision, the academic institutions entered into crisis that is yet to be abated. The unwholesome trend of breaching the agreement between government and the unions should be stopped. The parties should ensure that their own part of the agreement reached during negotiation is not repudiated and reneged.

Keywords:

Incessant Strikes,
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Background to the Study

The incessant disruption of academic activities in Nigerian institutions on account of strike actions is worrisome to government, parents, students and other stakeholders. One would begin to wonder what must have led to this unending situation faced by the educational sector. Is it the system that is so bad or those that are piloting the affairs of the sector? Sometimes stakeholders begin to ask if the issue of strike would not destroy totally our educational sector.

Strikes or threat of strikes in one form or another has become a regular routine in the nation's educational sector. Strike according to Hornby (2006), is the refusal to work as a protest. It is work stoppage caused by the mass refusal of employees to work which usually takes place in response to employees' grievances. It has been observed that strike has become annual festival during which students are not allowed to go to school. To a very large extent, the definition is right as it has become a 'norm' for the occurrence of work halt in at least once in a session in the education sector in the country within the twelve month in a calendar year (Abdulram, 2007).

Over time the issue of strike has generated a lot of controversies and setbacks in the development of the education sector and up till now, the solution seems not to be in sight as strike actions continue in tertiary institutions across the nation. It is surprising that despite all effort put in place by the Federal Ministry of Education and other regulatory agencies of tertiary institutions to mitigate strike actions in the nation's higher institutions, the trend still persist as if nothing has been done to curb it. Then what could have been the causes of this strike action? The main concern of teachers' unions is it (ASUU, COESU, ASUP, NUT, etc) has been how to overcome the state of backwardness in the educational system in the country. Birma, (1998) lamented the rot in the education sector that if Nigerians who matter know exactly the trouble which education is passing through, they will be shocked to their marrows because Nigeria's education has reached a level which deserves the declaration of a state of emergency.

As such, the union at all levels cannot afford to pretend that the chaotic state of educational system is none of their concern. Consequently, to express their deep concern and opinion over the deterioration of conditions in our institutions and failure of government to accede to their demands and recommendations, the unions resulted into strike action.

The issue of inadequate funding worsened by harsh economic conditions and probably lack of political will on the part of government added to the causes of strike actions in the educational sector. Acknowledging the inadequacy of fund in Nigerian educational system, Haggis, (1995) posited that the current financial provision on education is seriously deficient. The paucity of fund has created a disturbing situation in the area of general shortage of basic infrastructural facilities such as classrooms, hostels, equipment and consumables. These tend to have led to overcrowded hostels and lecture rooms where students scramble for seats and spaces and learn without the necessary resources

like microscopes, computers and other infrastructure (Adedeji, 2010). The situation appears to be worsened by the exodus of competent lecturers in the higher institution to organized private sectors, politics and overseas for better opportunities in what has come to be known as the brain drain syndrome. Consequently, to avoid the persistent of this unwholesomeness in the education sector especially in our universities and turning the University to a mere factory for producing half-baked graduates, the union results into strike action. ASUU (1995) confirmed the insincerity of government in funding of university education that between 1992–1995 there was short fall in Recurrent Grants as follow: Stabilization fund ₦1.40 billion, Education tax ₦1.60 billion while the total short fall in capital grants amounted to ₦2.73 billion. Members of ASUU went on strike on these issues in 1993 and 1994, however, they were severely attacked. If that was the situation almost three decades ago, the present situation in our institutions will not be a surprise.

As part of the agreement resolved between Federal Government and ASUU as well as Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) to call-off almost seven month's strike action embarked upon by ASUU in December, 2013, it was agreed that the Federal Government shall provide funds for the revitalization of the university system in the following manner in six years:

Table 1

S/N	Year	Amount (Billion Naira)
1	2013	200
2	2014	220
3	2015	220
4	2016	220
5	2017	220
6	2018	220
Total	6 years	1.3 trillion

Source: ASUU, FGN & NLC Resolution agreement to call off strike, 4th November, 2013

The worry now is whether the FGN will be sincere and not renege on its part of the agreement to re-position and revitalize university education.

The foregoing scenario will, no doubt, have negative effect on learning sequence in our institutions especially on business education programmes as most of the skills; values and ability acquired would have been faded away before the end of the strike action thus, leaving the students with disjointed knowledge and the worth of the certificates issued in this kind of academic environment may be questionable.

Statement of the Problem

It should be noted that the overriding goal of Business Education according to Dimowo in Ojetunde (2006) is to create a pool of men and women of character and competence, people that are balanced in their physical, emotional and spiritual well-being and who

will be effective in the design and implementation of national development. Dimowo also opined that the new thrust of Business Education should be to develop people whose understanding or business interest is not to see business as a means of earning a living but as a means of making a living. It is disturbing to note that the laudable roles of business education programmes seem not to have been effectively achieved due to myriad of problems affecting Nigerians educational system, ranging from inadequate funding, poor facilities, gross understaffing and incessant strikes in the educational sector. Could it be that the incessant strike action has responsible for the loss of credibility and quality of instruction received on the programme or resulted into elongation of students' stay on the programme, wastage of material resources and low quality of teaching, research and community service? This therefore necessitates an empirical study such as this to determine the effects of incessant strike actions on business education programme in tertiary institutions in southwest Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What are the causes of incessant strike actions in Southwest Nigeria Universities??
2. To what extent does incessant strike action affect business education programme in Southwest Nigeria Universities?
3. To what extent does incessant strike action affect the quality of prospective business education graduates produced in Southwest Nigeria Universities?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female respondents on the causes of incessant strike actions in Southwest Nigerian Universities.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of business educators and business education students on the extent to which incessant strike action affect business education programme in Southwest Nigeria Universities.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female respondents on the extent to which incessant strike action affect the quality of prospective business education graduates produced in Southwest Nigeria Universities.

Method

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. According to Arua in Olaniyi (2016) a descriptive survey research design is used to collect data from every member of a population or from a carefully selected sample. In agreement with this, Nworgu (2008) posited that when a study center on individuals and their opinions, the best research design should be a descriptive survey design. The study was conducted in Southwest Nigeria which is made up of six states (Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, and Oyo States). The population of the study comprised of 1,280(made up of 30 business educators and

1250 final year business education students) from four universities offering business education programme in the zone. A sample of 280 was drawn and 20% of the population size used for the study. This was in line with Borg and Gall in Uzoagulu (1998) who suggested a sample size of 20% for a population size which is up to 1000-2000. The instrument used for data collection was a validated five point rating scale questionnaire which has two parts. Part 1 dealt with demographic information from the respondent while part 2 contained 23 items organized in three sections A, B and C in line with the research questions. Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument which yielded co-efficient values of 0.72, 0.71 and 0.75 for the three clusters and over all co-efficient value of 0.73. This indicated that the instrument was highly reliable for the study. The instrument was administered with the aid of four research assistants and all the 280 copies administered on the respondents were retrieved and used for the analysis. Data collected relative to the research questions were analyzed with arithmetic mean while t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1

What are the causes of incessant strike actions in Southwest Nigeria Universities?

Table 2: Mean ratings on the causes of incessant strike actions in Southwest Nigeria Universities

S/N	Causes of Strike Action	X	Remarks
1	Inadequate funding/financial meanness of government toward education	4.82	Strongly Agree
2	Government attitude to teachers' plight	4.35	Agree
3	Deplorable condition of institution	4.61	Strongly Agree
4	Disparity in the condition of service of the institutions	3.96	Agree
5	Wages differential	3.80	Agree
6	Stringent educational policies on staff	4.00	Agree
7	Management behavior and reaction to staff needs	3.75	Agree
8	Non-implementation and violation of agreement by government	3.99	Agree
9	Frustration on the job due to job insecurity	3.87	Agree
10	Insincerity on the part of government on employees' demand	3.77	Agree
	Mean of means	4.09	Agree

Data presented in table 2 show that the respondents rated items 1 and 3 strongly agree with the mean rating of 4.82 and 4.61. While other eight items were rated agree with mean rating, ranging from 3.77 – 4.35. The mean of mean of 4.09 indicates that the respondents agree on all the factors as the causes of incessant strike action in Southwest Nigeria Universities.

Research Question 2

To what extent does incessant strike action affect business education programme in Southwest Nigeria Universities?

Table 3: Mean ratings on the extent to which incessant strike actions affect business education programme in Southwest Nigeria Universities

S/N	Effect of incessant Strike Action	X	Remarks
11	Wastage of material resources	3.85	High Extent
12	Elongated academic calendar	4.33	High Extent
13	Low quality of teaching, research and community services	4.22	High Extent
14	Loss of credibility	4.50	Very High Extent
15	Poor academic performance	3.87	High Extent
16	Truncating achievement of business education objectives	3.56	High Extent
17	Encourage students to be lazy on their studies	3.70	High Extent
18	Growing apprehension of academic redundancy	3.91	High Extent
19	Enable students to rest for better performance	3.00	Moderate Extent
20	Frustration and abandonment of the programme	3.30	Moderate Extent
Mean of Means		3.82	High Extent

Data in table 3 reveal that the respondents rated items 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, high extent and item 14 very high extent with mean ratings ranging from 3.56 – 4.50. While items 19 and 20 were rated moderate extent with mean ratings of 3.00 and 3.30 respectively. The mean of means of 3.82 indicates that incessant strike action affect business education programme in Southwest Nigeria Universities to a high extent.

Research Question 3

To what extent does incessant strike action affect the quality of prospective business education graduates produced in Southwest Nigeria Universities?

Table 4: Mean ratings on the extent to which incessant strike action affect the quality of prospective business education graduates produced in Southwest Nigeria Universities

S/No	Effect of Strike on Quality of Prospective Graduates	X	Remarks
21	Production of half-baked graduates	4.35	High Extent
22	Production of graduates with low level of employability skills	4.45	High Extent
23	Production of graduates that do not measure up with international standard	3.45	Moderate Extent
Mean of Means		4.08	High Extent

Data in Table 3 reveal that the respondents rated items 21 and 22 high extents with mean ratings of 4.35 and 4.45, while items 23 was rated moderate extent. The mean of means of 4.08 indicates that incessant strike action affect the quality of prospective business education graduates produced in Southwest Nigeria Universities to a high extent.

Null Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female respondents on the causes of incessant strike actions in Southwest Nigerian Universities.

Table 4: t-test Analysis of male and Female respondents on the causes of incessant strike actions in Southwest Nigerian Universities

Variables	N	Mean	SD	A	df	t-cal	t-table	Remark
Male	125	2.87	1.188					
				0.05	278	1.765	1.960	Not Rejected
Female	155	2.54	1.0.82					

($P < 0.05$)

Data in Table 4 show that the calculated t-value of 1.765 at degree of freedom 278 and 0.05 level of significance is less than the t-table of 1.960. This implies that there is no significant difference in the respondents' mean ratings based on gender; therefore, the hypothesis was not rejected.

Null Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the mean rating of business educators and business education students on the extent to which incessant strike action affect business education programme in Southwest Nigeria Universities.

Table 5: t-test analysis of respondents on the extent to which incessant strike action affect business education programme in Southwest Nigeria Universities

Variables	N	Mean	SD	A	df	t-cal	t-table	Remark
Business Educators	30	1.10	1.075					
				0.05	278	1.634	1.960	Not Rejected
Bus.Edu. Students	250	1.43	1.180					

($P < 0.05$)

Data in Table 5 show that the calculated t-value of 1.634 at degree of freedom 278 and 0.05 level of significance is less than the t-table of 1.960. This implies that there is no significant difference in the respondents' mean ratings on the extent to which incessant strike action affect business education programme in Southwest Nigeria Universities; therefore, the hypothesis was not rejected.

Null Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female respondents on the extent to which incessant strike action affect the quality of prospective business education graduates produced in Southwest Nigeria Universities.

Table 6: t-test analysis of male and female respondents on the extent to which incessant strike action affect the quality of prospective business education graduates produced in Southwest Nigeria Universities

Variables	N	Mean	SD	A	df	t-cal	t-table	Remark
Male	125	2.38	1.023					
				0.05	278	1.500	1.960	Not Rejected
Female	155	2.20	1.112					

(P<0.05)

Data in Table 6 show that the calculated t-value of 1.500 at degree of freedom 278 and 0.05 level of significance is less than the t-table of 1.960. This implies that there is no significant difference in the respondents' mean ratings based on gender; therefore, the hypothesis was not rejected.

Discussion

The findings of research question one indicated that the respondents agree on all the factors raised (ranging from Inadequate funding/financial meanness of government toward education, deplorable condition of institutions...and insincerity on the part of government on employees' demand) as the main causes of incessant strike actions in Southwest Nigeria universities. This is in line with the findings of Eric and Urho (2015) that workers embarked on strike actions due to poor condition of services. They stated that workers or lecturers have always risen in protest against their condition of employment and stressed further that condition of employment and services agitated for by employees include promotions, provision of facilities and equipment, increased pay package and other benefits.

The findings with respect to research question two showed that the extent to which incessant strike actions affect business education programme was high extent in terms of loss of credibility, elongation of academic calendar, wastage of material resources, low quality of teaching, research and community service, production of half-baked graduates and host of others. This is in agreement with the statement of Ajayi (2000) that the high quality of university education for which this country was noted and which made Ashby in 1960 to assert that "the quality of Nigerian University education was among the best in the world; has now become a mirage, a shadow of past glory". The certificates being issued by the same public university that had produced world renowned experts including a Nobel Laureate seem to be regarded as worthless. In support of this, Soludo, (2007) described the appalling state of the nation's education sector which he alleged has continued to produce dynastic of poverty stricken families. He argued that education that could have been a leveler had become so challenged that it is likened a time-bomb waiting to explode. Such description no doubt signifies depleted state and quality of our institutions. ASUU lamented that academic staff of Nigerian Universities, today, find themselves being forced, against their conscience, to go on producing graduates that do not measure up to international standards. This image in agreement with Osuorji and

David (2014) robs graduates of Nigerian Universities of international esteem even when their worth has not been proven through employment.

The findings of research question three indicated that incessant strike action affect to a high extent the quality of prospective business education graduates produced in Southwest Nigeria Universities. This is in line with submission of Ajayi (2000) that the time wasted during the period of strike action could not be recouped and to meet and patch up with other institutions, the academics staff are called upon and compelled to go on awarding degrees that are not backed by a true knowledge of the various subjects of specialization. In support of this, Osuorji and David (2014) stressed that incessant strikes have a depressing effect on the quality of graduates from Nigerian universities since time that should have been used for teaching the curriculum is lost to the strike. This therefore leads to condensed contents and turning out of half-baked graduates into the labour market. Business education is expected to make the students self-reliance and take responsibility for its overall development through rugged, robust and inexpensive machinery in the exploitation of its resources However, graduates generally appear to be without the necessary skills to contribute positively to individual and national development probably due to prolong strike actions.

The test of the three hypotheses revealed that respondents did not differ in their mean ratings on the causes of incessant strike actions, the extent to which incessant strike action affect business education programme and on the extent to which incessant strike action affect the quality of prospective business education graduates produced in Southwest Nigerian Universities. This is in congruent with findings of Ajayi (2014) that incessant strikes affect academic performance of students negatively.

Conclusion

In view of the findings of this study, it was concluded that incessant strike actions have a grave consequence on business education programmes in our tertiary institutions. This is evidence in the elongation of students stay on campuses with irregular school calendar, low quality of teaching, loss of credibility, production of half-baked graduates and a host of others. In fact, the grave developments of strike action have thrown all conscientious academics in Nigerian institutions into deep agony.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- (1) Education should be adequately funded by government and all other well-to do people in the country, because this is a period of critical consciousness and revisionist thinking. With the inadequate financial provision, the academic institutions entered into crisis that is yet to be abated.
- (2) There should be a rejuvenated and revitalized educational system. This will definitely have a very big role to play under this dispensation. In the words of Martin Lurther king, "The prosperity of nation does not reside in great treasures and white elephant projects, but in clever, capable, wise honourable and articulate citizenry who can acquire, utilize and preserve every treasure and possession".

- (3) Governments at all levels should ensure that laudable education programmes and policies are well implemented through constitution of implementation monitoring committee.
- (4) The unwholesome trend of breaching the agreement between government and the unions should be stopped. The parties should ensure that their own part of the agreement reached during negotiation is not repudiated and reneged.

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