EFFECTS OF ASUU STRIKES ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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> Published Online By: EgoBooster Books

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www. Project Topics In Education. com

Published By: EgoBooster Books, 124, Ejirin Road, Ijebu-Ode Ogun State, Nigeria.

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Project Classification: Education.

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PROPOSAL

1.1 Background to the Study

Strike actions by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in Nigeria have had serious effects on the academic performance of the students. Founded in 1978, the Union organized nationwide strikes to challenge the military regimes of General Muhammad Buhari, General Ibrahim Babangida and General Sani Abacha. The Union have also used strike actions to demand fair wages, university autonomy, funding of Nigerian universities, etc.

Strike, according to Chijioke (2013) "is an organised work stoppage by a body of workers to enforce compliance with demands made on an employer or a group of employers." Generally, ASUU uses strike as a means to force the government to respect the demands of the Union. Almost all heads of state and presidents of Nigeria between 1988 and 2013 have been compelled by ASUU through strike to meet their demands.

Disruptions in academic programs serve as non-motivational factor to the students. It discourages them from learning. It is not surprising therefore that during strike actions, most students are seen involved in diverse activities such as

sexual immorality, cyber scam, pool betting, unnecessary gossips, watching of films and reading comic materials for entertainment purposes rather than reading their books. In the long run, they soon forget about academics and are no longer prepared for class activities which negatively affect their learning capability.

Odubela (2012) concluded that an effective learning or an enhanced 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 researcher is of the view that disruption in academic program as caused by strike action breeds disappointment, frustration, emotional and psychological trauma, unpreparedness on the part of the students and lack of motivation, which sum up to non conducive environment for effective learning in Nigerian universities; a situation that dampens human development.

However, little attention is given to the effects of ASUU constant strikes on the academic performance of students in Nigerian universities. This study therefore intends to examine the series of ASUU strikes and the direct effects it has on the students' grade point average (GPA).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

University worldwide is regarded as the citadel of knowledge, the fountain of intellectualism, the most appropriate ground for the incubation of leaders of tomorrow. However, over the last thirty years in Nigeria, the University system has witnessed an

unprecedented industrial unrest and so many official assaults than other social institution.

Statistics from the National Universities Commission (2002) reveal that since 1992, ASUU has embarked on strikes over 23 times to drive home its demands. As with all industrial conflicts, strikes have significant wider social consequences.

Many have argued that those in authorities see universities as a burden and as institutions to be exploited and left desolate. To arrest the situation, ASUU have went on industrial actions several times with the recent one in 2013 lingering for more than 6 months. There is hardly a full academic session that student and staff crises will not result in loss of studies, delayed graduation for students and economic waste for students, parents and the country as a whole.

However, little attention is given to the effects of ASUU constant strikes on the academic performance of students in Nigerian universities. This study therefore intends to examine the series of ASUU strikes and the direct effects it has on the students' grade point average (GPA).

1.3 Research Objectives

The general aim of this study is to find out the effects of ASUU strikes on the academic performance of university students. The specific objectives are:

- 1) To assess the extent to which disruption in academic program in Universities affect students' learning effectiveness
- 2) To determine whether poor ASUU-students' relationship during strike affects students' study habit
- 3) To examine whether ASUU strikes have direct effect on students' academic performance
- 4) To determine whether ASUU strikes motivate students to learn

1.4 Research Questions

- 1) To what extent would disruption in academic program in Nigerisn universities due to ASUU strike affect students' learning effectiveness?
- 2) Would poor ASUU-students' relationship during strike affects students' study habit?
- 3) Does ASUU strikes have direct effect on students' academic performance?
- 4) Does ASUU strikes motivate students to learn?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

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1.6 Scope of the Study

ASUU was established in 1978 and has since then encountered some of the worst problems in the history of trade unionism in the country. While the primary aim of this study is to investigate whether ASUU strikes have direct effects on students overall Grade Point Average, the research also touches on the primary causes and effects of the industrial conflict between the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and the Federal Government of Nigeria. Also, rather than focuses generally on the ASUU disputes since inception in 1978, the study specifically looks as ASUU strikes from 2009 to 2013 and its consequences on students academic performance.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This topic has not been well researched in the existing literature. Thus, the significance of this study lies in its contribution to the body of knowledge as follows:

- (1) This research provides a detailed account of the main disputes and considers specifically some of the factors that are responsible for the ASUU strikes in Nigeria;
- (2) The study is significant to the state and federal governments who will appreciate that the inability to implement the joint decisions reached have serious implications for the learning effectiveness of the students;
- (3) The study is significant to university management who are now in vantage position to apply management techniques by consultation in all issues involving labour problems;

(4) The study would also benefit ASUU members who might not be unaware that the strike actions have direct consequences on their students and should seek alternative means to resolve disputes with FGN.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

Hardly would a research study be concluded without constraints. In a country such as ours where bureaucracy in the flow of information and where there is inaccurate data and statistics, there really has to be a problem. Specific instances of constraints related to the data system would include:

- 1. Some students' might not want to reveal their Grade Point Average;
- 2. It is possible that other factors such as poor study habit, social activities and peer influence might primarily affect students' academic performance in the University;
- 3. Some members of staff might not want to participate in the study by releasing data of the students to actually compare the performance of students in semesters that ASUU went on strike with their GPA in semesters that ASUU did not go on strike.

1.9 Definition of Terms

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