



Perceived Influence of Strike Actions on the Management of Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State

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ABSTRACT

This study examined perceived influence of strike actions on the management of tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study is 25,463 respondents which consisted of 2,993 academic staff and 22,470 administrative staff from the six selected tertiary educational institutions in Rivers State (School Management). Using the Taro Yamene formula, the sample size of this study therefore is 392 respondents consisting of 46 academic staff and 346 administrative staff. This was obtained with the application of stratified sampling technique. The reliability of the research instrument was determined using a test retest method. Since the instrument is in three (3) clusters, their reliability coefficient were determined using Cronbach Alpha which yielded 0.81, 0.79 and 0.80 values for each cluster respectively. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while the z-test analysis was used to test the formulated null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. The study found that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of academic and administrative staff regarding the extent to which strikes influence the planning, organizing and coordinating of tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The study concluded that disruption in the management of tertiary educational institutions as well as 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. The study recommended that there should be implementation of previous agreements concerning salaries, arrears, wages and other working conditions between the labour unions and management as at when due by government/management to enhance effective management of tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Keywords: Strike Actions, Management, Tertiary Institutions, Rivers State.

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, Universities have played dominant roles in the developed world. Universities are usually in the forefront of any social, economic and political challenges, especially with the power of research being focused on areas that will promote human development and solve existential problems (Osuorji & David, 2014). Education is a necessity for survival of man, it suggests development of valuable knowledge and skills in a society, it brings about in the persons submitted to it certain skills and attitudes that are adjudged to be useful and designable in the society. As a result of the necessity of education, there has been the view that one who ceases to learn ceases to exist, although the one may be living, to “exist” is more than to “live” because it means being in the world and at the same time with the world. Thus, one who exists has attributes of transcending, discerning, communicating and participating with others who are existing but one who is living does not possess these critical attributes (Michael, 2013).

The educational sector especially universities in Nigeria have witnessed in recent times incessant closures due to strike actions. The influence of these repeated closures on the management of tertiary institutions

can better be imagined than described. University education in Nigeria has thus suffered tremendous setbacks as a result of lecturers' strike actions (Kuper, 2016). This has always subjected the students to pitiable conditions, disrupting academic programs, giving students' undeserved extension in their study years, poor students' concentration on academic programs and poor teacher-student relationships among others. Consequently, students' academic performance has comparatively become so low while various forms of examination malpractice are on the increase (Marshall, 2016). The situation has assumed such an alarming dimension that it transits to secondary schools (Ogbuka, 2010).

Presently, education in Nigeria has not been able to achieve the noble objective because it is in deep problems (Ojielo, 2012). Paramount among these problems is the incessant Academic Union of Universities (ASUU) strike, which has often disrupted academic activities (Adetiba, 2013). Many reasons can be adduced to be responsible for these incessant strikes by the ASUU. Prominent among those problems according to ASUU are funding, lack of autonomy and dehumanizing working conditions in trying to find a lasting solution to these problems, the Public Complaint Commission set up by the Federal Government in 2005 recommended in their report a 90% funding level for next fifteen years (Ogbuka, 2010).

The recommendations were adopted in the agreement between the federal government of Nigeria and the ASUU, but unfortunately government reneged on the agreement. For instance, funding in 2006 should have been four times more than what was prescribed by the report, but fell short of this expectation because of government attitude towards funding education (Gouldner, 2013). The economic down turn and the foreign exchange rates did not help matters. Judging from the economic down turn, the review of the agreement which government bluntly turned down brought about strike actions by the academic staff union of universities (ASUU) (Olaiya, 2010). Following this, there has been several strike actions by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) since then this situation was further aggravated by the way government reacted to ASUU strike actions (Adibe, 2019). Instead of engaging in meaningful dialogue with the Lecturers, the governments sacked some and even went as far as forcefully ejecting them from their official quarters (Oluwadare, 2018).

In addition to the humiliation, government refused to pay them their salaries and other entitlement. As a result of this, most lecturers left for the private sectors while some others went to private universities in search of greener pastures (Comte, 2019). Some students took to crime, while others also secured temporary employments and yet others get involve in street hawking and became juvenile delinquents, which has consequently led to a condition fall in educational standard in Nigeria (Adeniran, 2010). Strike actions by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in Nigeria have had serious effects on the management of tertiary institutions. Strike, according to Chijioke (2013) is an organized 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. Students sometimes protest by not attending schools in order to draw media attention to the institution, so that the grievances that are causing the students to protest can be aired before the public. Though this usually damages the institutions or government public image. In government- supported institutions, the student strike can cause a budgetary imbalance and have actual economic repercussions for the institution.

Staff industrial actions in Nigeria University, Polytechnic and College of Education systems have become the common phenomenon with the detrimental effects on the management of tertiary educational institutions, and success of Nigeria students. Despite the fact, the clash between the two is inevitable as long as the academic staff union and employer (government) represented by politicians are at variance in belief and philosophy there is bound to be industrial dispute between the two. The action and counteraction of the academic staff union (ASUU), Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP) and College of Education Academic Staff Union (COEASU) in recent years has not been friendly to the recalcitrant attitude of the federal government towards the past agreement; conditions of service, salaries and allowances, adequate funding as prescribed by UNESCO, University autonomy, integration of polytechnic academic staff payroll had led to frequent industrial action by COEASU, ASUP and

specifically ASUU (Amadi, 2015). These unions have resulted in resorting to strike as the last resort to balance the power between their staff and the government when the bargaining and consultation failed to yield desirable result, implying that, the only language government understands is strike action.

The counteraction of the academic staff unions to actions and inaction of the government is not self-centered but incited by the quest to resuscitate the acclaimed fall in Nigeria education standard. The specific evidence to this facts are the agitations by ASUU and ASUP between 2013 and 2014 which includes improvement and provision of educational infrastructure in our dilapidated tertiary institutions; fulfilling 26% budgetary allocation to education as prescribed by UNESCO so that Nigeria education system would be able to turn out graduates that are capable of taking up the task of national development and be globally competitive like in the 70's when Nigeria graduates were accorded high esteem at the global stage. Aside the bad reputation the strikes conferred on Nigeria education system; delayed and extension of duration of students in school in the face of age sensitive or discriminating Nigeria labour market which plummet the economic value of the graduates in Nigeria labour market. And, unjust compression of the syllabus and academic calendar which deprived students of adequate academic preparation and eventually have undesirable effects on the students achievement of educational objectives as laid down in the prescribed curriculum which paved way for the production of half-baked graduates by Nigerian tertiary institutions is of great concern to the study at hand (Edinyang & Ubi, 2013).

Statement of the Problem

Statistics from the National Universities Commission (2012) 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 gone on industrial actions several times with the recent one in 2013 lingering for more than 6 months, and in 2019 for about a month. There is hardly a full academic session that students and staff crises will not result in the disruption of academic activities in tertiary educational institutions, 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 influence of ASUU's constant strikes on the management of tertiary institutions in Rivers State. It behoves the researcher therefore to fill the gap by investigating the perceived influence of strike actions on the management of tertiary institutions in Rivers State in order to ascertain the level of influence strike actions has on the management of tertiary institutions.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of strike action on the management of tertiary educational institutions as perceived in Rivers State. The specific objectives of this study were to:

1. Investigate the extent to which strike actions influence the planning of tertiary educational institutions in Rivers State.
2. Examine the extent to which strike actions influence the organizing of tertiary educational institutions in Rivers State.
3. Determine the extent to which strike actions influence the coordinating of tertiary educational institutions in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How does strike actions influence the planning of tertiary educational institutions in Rivers State?
2. How does strike actions influence the organizing of tertiary educational institutions in Rivers State?
3. How does strike actions influence the coordinating of tertiary educational institutions in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were developed and tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the response of academic and administrative staff on the extent to which strike actions influence the planning of tertiary educational institutions in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference in the response of academic and administrative staff on the extent to which strike actions influence the organizing of tertiary educational institutions in Rivers State.

- 3 There is no significant difference in the response of academic and administrative staff on the extent to which strike actions influence the coordinating of tertiary educational institutions in Rivers State.

METHODS

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study is 25,463 respondents which consisted of 2,993 academic staff and 22,470 administrative staff from the six selected tertiary educational institutions in Rivers State (School Management). Using the Taro Yamene formula, the sample size of this study therefore is 392 respondents consisting of 46 academic staff and 346 administrative staff. This was obtained with the application of stratified sampling technique. The researcher designed a questionnaire instrument titled Perceived Influence of Strike Actions on Management of Tertiary Institutions Questionnaire (PISMTIQ). The reliability of the research instrument was determined using a test retest method. Since the instrument is in three (3) clusters, their reliability coefficient were determined using Cronbach Alpha which yielded 0.81, 0.79 and 0.80 values for each cluster respectively. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while the z-test analysis was used to test the formulated null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: *How does strike actions influence the planning of tertiary educational institutions in Rivers State?*

Table: 1: Presents Mean Analysis of how Strike Actions Influence the Planning of Tertiary Educational Institutions in Rivers State.

S/N	Statement	Academic Staff (n ₁ = 46)			Administrative Staff (n ₂ = 346)		
		\bar{X}	SD	Remarks	\bar{X}	SD	Remarks
1	Your institution experience strike actions regularly which bridges its plans for the year.	2.85	1.08	HE	2.70	1.40	HE
2	Strike action affects the school academic calendar.	2.60	1.54	HE	2.64	1.23	HE
3	Strike influence formal planning in your institution is affected by strike action.	3.02	1.49	HE	2.76	1.15	HE
4	Strike affects creation, level of management and maintenance of a plan in your institution.	2.81	1.32	HE	2.90	1.08	HE
5	Strike determines future course of action in your institution.	2.75	1.51	HE	3.02	1.41	HE
	Grand Scores	2.81	1.39	HE	2.80	1.25	HE

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 1 above established the how strike actions influence the planning of tertiary educational institutions in Rivers State. The grand mean scores of 2.81, 2.80 and grand standard deviation scores of 1.39 and 1.25 implies that strike actions influence the planning of tertiary institutions in Rivers State to a high extent.

Research Question 2: *How does strike actions influence the organizing of tertiary institutions in Rivers State?*

Table 2: **Presents Mean Analysis of the Extent Strike Actions Influence the Organizing of Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State.**

S/N	Statement	Academic Staff (n ₁ = 46)			Administrative Staff (n ₂ = 346)		
		\bar{X}	SD	Remarks	\bar{X}	SD	Remarks
6	Strike affects the establishment of effective authority relationships among selected work.	3.09	1.91	HE	3.03	1.54	HE
7	Strike bridges persons and work places in order for the group to work together efficiently	2.59	1.40	HE	2.61	1.13	HE
8	With strike organisations may not be able to operate effectively.	3.00	1.76	HE	3.14	1.75	HE
9	In some cases strike cause obstacles in the organization.	2.71	1.38	HE	2.50	1.06	HE
10	Poor control of strike may lead to organizational failure.	2.90	1.20	HE	2.69	1.26	HE
Grand Scores		2.86	1.53	HE	2.79	1.35	HE

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

Table 2 above established the extent strikes influence the organizing of tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The grand mean scores of 2.86, 2.79 and grand standard deviation scores of 1.53 and 1.35 implies that strike actions influence the organizing of tertiary educational institutions in Rivers State to a high extent.

Research Question 3: *To what extent does strike actions influence the coordinating of tertiary institutions in Rivers State?*

Table 3: **Presents Mean Analysis of how Strike Actions Influence the Coordinating of Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State**

S/N	Items	Academic Staff (n ₁ = 46)			Administrative Staff (n ₂ = 346)		
		\bar{X}	SD	Remarks	\bar{X}	SD	Remarks
11	Coordination helps to improve the efficiency of operations by avoiding overlapping efforts and duplication of work.	2.57	1.22	HE	2.80	1.37	HE
12	Coordination improves the morale and job satisfaction of employees	2.54	1.60	HE	2.66	1.52	HE
13	Coordination helps to ensure unity of action in the face of disruptive forces	2.80	1.45	HE	2.92	1.08	HE
14	Strengthening of educational coordinating, supervisory/monitoring bodies will reduce strike actions.	2.63	1.31	HE	3.03	1.44	HE
15	Organizational effectiveness will reduce strike actions.	2.86	1.62	HE	2.84	1.21	HE
Grand Scores		2.68	1.44	HE	2.85	1.32	HE

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

Table 3 above established how strike actions influence the coordinating of tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The grand mean scores of 2.68, 2.85 and grand standard deviation scores of 1.44 and 1.32 implies that strike actions influence the coordinating of tertiary institutions in Rivers State to a high extent.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean response of academic and administrative staff regarding the extent to which strike actions influence the planning of tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Table 4: z-test of Significant difference in the Mean Scores of Academic and Administrative Staff Regarding the Extent to which Strike Actions Influence the Planning of Tertiary institutions in Rivers State

Category of Staff	\bar{X}	SD	N	α	DF	z-cal	z-crit	Decision
Academic	3.022	1.281	46	0.05	390	0.84	1.96	Not Rejected
Administrative	3.821	1.370	346					

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

In Table 4 above, since the calculated z-value 0.84 is less than the z-critical value of 1.96, it is imperative therefore to state that the null hypothesis is accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of academic and administrative staff regarding the extent to which strike actions influence the planning of tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean response of academic and administrative staff regarding the extent to which strike actions influence the organizing of tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Table 5: z-test of Significant difference in the Mean Scores of Academic and Administrative Staff Regarding the Extent to which Strike Actions Influence the Organizing of Tertiary Educational Institutions in Rivers State.

Category of Staff	\bar{X}	SD	N	α	DF	z-cal	z-crit	Decision
Academic	3.472	2.033	46	0.05	390	0.79	1.96	Not Rejected
Administrative	3.931	2.451	346					

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

In Table 5 above, since the calculated z-value 0.79 is less than the z-critical value of 1.96, it is imperative therefore to state that the null hypothesis is accepted. In other words, there is no significant difference in the mean scores of academic and administrative staff regarding the extent to which strike actions influence the organizing of tertiary educational institutions in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the mean response of academic and administrative staff regarding the extent to which strike actions influence the coordinating of tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Table 6: z-test of Significant difference in the Mean Scores of Academic and Administrative Staff Regarding the Extent to which Strike Actions Influence the Coordinating of Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State

Category of Staff	\bar{X}	SD	N	α	DF	z-cal	z-crit	Decision
Academic	3.074	1.493	46	0.05	390	0.91	1.96	Not Rejected
Administrative	3.226	1.802	346					

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

In Table 6 above, since the calculated z-value 0.91 is less than the z-critical value of 1.96, it is imperative therefore to state that the null hypothesis is accepted. In other words, there is no significant difference in the mean scores of academic and administrative staff regarding the extent to which strike actions influence the coordinating of tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The study investigated the perceived influence of strike actions on the management of tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The research question one (1), established the extent strike actions influence the planning of tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The grand mean scores of 2.81, 2.80 and grand standard deviation scores of 1.39 and 1.25 implies that strike actions influence the planning of tertiary institutions in Rivers State to a high extent. In the test of hypothesis one (1), the calculated z-value of 0.84 is less than the z-critical value of 1.96, which made it imperative to state that the null hypothesis is accepted. This implied that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of academic and administrative staff regarding the extent to which strike actions influence the planning of tertiary institutions in Rivers State. This finding is supported by the opinion of Francis (2016) that planning requires active participation of the entire organization and should be coordinated on different levels. Planning means looking ahead or to foresee. To foresee means, both to assess the future and make provision for it. To plan means to foresee and provide means for future. To organize means building up the dual structure, material and human of the organization. To organize means to provide the organization with everything useful to its functioning raw material, tools, capital and personnel (Odidison, 2014).

Also, planning has a specific process and is necessary for multiple occupations (particularly in fields such as management, business, etc.). In each field there are different types of plans that help companies achieve efficiency and effectiveness. An important, albeit often ignored aspect of planning, is the relationship it holds to forecasting. Forecasting can be described as predicting what the future will look like, whereas planning predicts what the future should look like for multiple scenarios (Coates, 2010). Planning combines forecasting with preparation of scenarios and how to react to them. Planning is one of the most important project management and time management techniques. Planning is preparing a sequence of action steps to achieve some specific goal. If a person does it effectively, they can reduce much the necessary time and effort of achieving the goal. A plan is like a map. When following a plan, a person can see how much they have progressed towards their project goal and how far they are from their destination. In organizations, planning can become a management process, concerned with defining goals for a future direction and determining on the missions and resources to achieve those targets. To meet the goals, managers may develop plans such as a business plan or a marketing plan. Planning always has a purpose. The purpose may involve the achievement of certain goals or targets.

The research question two (2) revealed the extent strike actions influence the organizing of tertiary educational institutions in Rivers State. The grand mean scores of 2.86, 2.79 and grand standard deviation scores of 1.53 and 1.35 implies that strike actions influence the organizing of tertiary educational

institutions in Rivers State to a high extent. In hypothesis two (2), the calculated z-value 0.79 is less than the z-critical value of 1.96, it is imperative therefore to state that the null hypothesis is accepted. In other words, there is no significant difference in the mean scores of academic and administrative staff regarding the extent to which strike actions influence the organizing of tertiary institutions in Rivers State. In line with this finding, Odidison (2014) asserted that to organize means building up the dual structure, material and human of the organization. To organize means to provide the organization with everything useful to its functioning raw material, tools, capital and personnel. An institution may not require the raw material but it requires other material i.e. tool (computers), capital and personnel. A sound organization should have the following to achieve the good relationship between material and human. In simple terms, management of institutions entails the various means of organizing and delegating the work that needs to be done among staff who can do it, and then ensuring that the said work is done diligently and timely to ensure effective growth and development of the institution (Mbu, 2013). Management (or managing) is the administration of an organization, whether it is a business, a not-for-profit organization, or government body. Management includes the activities of setting the strategy of an organization and coordinating the efforts of its employees (or of volunteers) to accomplish its objectives through the application of available resources, such as financial, natural, technological, and human resources.

The research question three (3) revealed the extent strike actions influence the coordinating of tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The grand mean scores of 2.68, 2.85 and grand standard deviation scores of 1.44 and 1.32 implies that strike actions influence the coordinating of tertiary educational institutions in Rivers State to a high extent. In hypothesis three, it was found there is no significant difference in the mean scores of academic and administrative staff regarding the extent to which strike actions influence the coordinating of tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Coordinating entails the process developed by a manager to secure an orderly pattern of group effort among his personnel through unity of action to pursue the common goals. The coordination should be within the resources available in the organization (Odidison, 2014). In this instance, managers must possess the requisites personal qualities and knowledge to command effectively. The managers must have a thorough knowledge of his personnel, have capacity to spot the right and competent workers so as to eliminate the incompetence, set a good example i.e. leadership, be well versed in agreement binding the business and its employees, have lively and constant touch with subordinates and aim at making unity, energy imitative and loyalty prevail among personnel (Ekeh, 2018).

CONCLUSION

Conclusively, an effective learning or effective management of tertiary educational institutions is achieved by successful covering of the course outline timely and before the examination, thus the researcher is of the view that disruption in the management of tertiary institutions as well as 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

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended therefore that:

7. Autonomy and proper funding of tertiary institutions by the government should be considered to avoid unnecessary interference and to improve the planning of government internal affairs concerning tertiary institutions.
8. There should be statutory provisions on the importance of organizing in the management of educational institutions in Rivers State.
9. The management of tertiary institutions in the state should ensure proper coordinating of their staff and students as to restore their loss of faith and respect to these institutions as citadels of learning.

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