

## **Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) Industrial Action Impact on Student's Academic Performance in Usmanu Danfodiyo University, 2013/2014 Academic Session**

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**Abstract:** *The research is set to examine influence of Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strikes on academic performance of students in Usmanu Danfodiyo University (UDUS) during 2013/2014 Academic Session. The study employed cluster sampling technique to select faculties and the departments. A total of 350 questionnaires were administered and 280 were retrieved and analysed through descriptive statistics. The disruptions of academic session by staff union industrial actions have significant undesirable negative impact on academic success of the students. The students' academic success suffered greatly from the incidence of strike action in 2013/14 session in UDUS. It results in poor academic performance in the post-strike semester. The study concludes that ASUU strike action during 2013/14 session in UDUS has negative effect on the students' academic performance by increasing the failure rate of students and were unable to speedily regenerate themselves towards academic exercises at the resumption. This study is significant as it would enable stakeholders in the education sector understand the deeper implication of ASUU strike on University students and also spur the students to engage themselves in tutorial classes or self-study during strike action to keep them abreast with academics at resumption.*

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**Keywords:** Strike, Industrial Action, ASUU, Labour Union, Academic Performance

### **Introduction**

Education is the panacea that liberates individual from slavery while the university is the brain box of a nation and the key to success. As such, Adamu and Nwogo (2014) assert that education plays a leading role in ensuring the transformation of countries from developing to a developed nation. Fafunwa (1994), emphasised the above facts when he stated that an ideal educational medium should be able to help the beneficiaries, develop the abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour which add positive value to the society in which they live. It is therefore important that every individual acquires basic education.

The education system in Nigeria comprises the primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. Tertiary education is an advanced education system in which students are developed to be qualified as professionals in various career level. In Nigeria, tertiary education includes; the colleges, polytechnics, and universities which are assumed to be the highest level of tertiary institution.

The formation of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in 1978 has brought about some changes and challenges in the academic system of Nigerian universities. The academic members staff see the union as a general body through which they can dialogue and channel their request and grievances to the school management and government. ASUU emerged as an intellectual force to challenge the “powers that be” and offer a credible alternative for our country (Umagbalasi, 2013). But in most cases when the expectations of the members of the ASSU have not been met by either the school authority or government, they often resort to industrial action without considering the negative multiple ripple effects on students, parents and the society at large. These are why some people in the society may see the activities of the union especially the industrial actions as an attempt to frustrate academic pursuit of Nigerian undergraduates. In Nigeria, numerous industrial actions had been embarked on by the union to compel the government to meet the needs of public universities lecturers and schools especially in the areas of wages, allowances and infrastructural facilities in tertiary institutions. During such industrial actions, schools shut down for months; academic activities were paralyzed, and students and parents were frustrated. It should, however, be stressed that some of the numerous actions of the ASUU were intended to improve the welfare of the public university, lecturers, students and society at large. This research attempts to examine the effect of ASUU strike on the academic performance of students in Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto (UDUS), Nigeria in the 2013/2014 Academic Session.

Many reasons can be identified as responsible for the incessant strikes by the ASUU. Prominent among the problems according to ASUU are those of funding and dehumanizing working conditions etc. ASUU and the Federal Government are always in conflict over these problems regarding better working conditions among other ASUU demands. It becomes pertinent that a lasting solutions be formed through a comprehensive research on the effect of strike on the academic standard of students. The specific objective of this investigative study is to examine the effect of ASUU strike action during 2013/14 session on the academic performance of the student’s in Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, Nigeria and to proffer the policy prescriptions that would mitigate this undesirable incident in Nigeria education system.

The research approach employed was a mixed method which is the use of both quantitative and qualitative research approaches to gather data to inform this study. Quantitative research was used to collect numerical data in order to explain predict and control phenomena of interest and data analysis was mainly statistical. Qualitative research was also used to collect variety of literatures. The target populations for this study were the students of Usmanu Danfodio University. The sample size of the population study was 350. The cluster sampling method was adopted in this study. Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto (UDUS) has eight (8) faculties in which each faculty serves as a cluster, and within each cluster a simple random sampling was applied for a fair representation.

Methods of data collection include primary and secondary. Primary method of data collection includes questionnaire method, interview method, and observation. .During the process of collecting primary data the researchers used only two instruments which are the questionnaire and interview. Secondary data were collected through a descriptive analysis of published and unpublished literature; such include textbooks, professional journals, magazines, newspapers,

internet materials, and papers presented at seminars and conferences. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics, specifically using percentages, distribution tables, means and Likert-type scale other measures of central tendencies by the help of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 22). Such were used to achieve the objectives. While T-test Table was used to test the hypothesis.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To identify factors responsible for ASUU strike action during 2013/14 session and its impact on student's academic performance in Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto.
2. To examine the relationship between 2013/14 ASUU industrial action and academic success of the students of Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto.
3. To discuss the implications of 2013/14 ASUU strike actions on the academic success of students of Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto and Nigeria educational system.
4. To proffer solutions for future occurrence of industrial actions by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU).

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the factors responsible for ASUU strike action during 2013/14 session and its impact on student's academic performance in Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto?
2. Is there any relationship between 2013/14 ASUU strike actions and academic success of the students of Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto?
3. Does the academic staff union industrial action have adverse effect on the academic success of the students of Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto?
4. What are the possible solutions to future occurrence of industrial action by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU)?

### **Research Hypotheses**

- 1 H1: Student's Pre-strike semester GPA is significantly greater than student's Post-strike semester GPA in 2013/14 academic session Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto.  
  
H0: Student's Pre-strike semester GPA is not significantly greater than student's Post-strike semester in 2013/14 academic session Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto.
- 2 H1: Disruption of academic session caused by 2013/14 ASUU strike actions has significant negative impact on academic success of the students of Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto.  
  
H0: Disruption of academic session caused by Staff union industrial action does not have significant negative impact on academic success of the students of Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto

## **Conceptual Issues**

### **Strikes**

Ivancevich (2007) documented that strike is an effort by employee to withhold work so that the employer will make greater concessions at the bargaining table. It is opined that it is a major bargaining weapon used by labour union. Michael Armstrong (2004) asserted that strikes are most politically charged of all the features of industrial relations. "Strikes are too often a weapon of first rather than last resort. However, labour unions have recognised that a strike is a legitimate last resort if all else fails," Armstrong M. (2004).

### **Industrial Action by ASUU**

From the inception of democracy in Nigeria, It's no longer a news that in every government regime, there must be an industrial action or strike demonstrated either by, the Nigeria Labour congress (NLC), Trade Union Congress (TUC) or Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) which in one way or the other had crippled affected sector of the economy.

### **Labour (Academic Staff) Union**

Ivancevich (2007) defined labour union as an organisation of employees that uses collective action to advance its members' interest in regards to wages and working conditions. They form or join because of the belief that there is strength in unity. Trade Union Decree 1973 as cited by Shokan (1997) viewed labour union as any combination of temporary and permanent workers or employees, the purpose of which is to regulate the terms and conditions of employment of workers. Academic staff unions are in the context of labour relation, it is the continuous relationship between lecturers and the government.

### **Academic Performance**

Academic Performance is the outcome of students' evaluation in the educational process indicating to what level the students have achieved the educational goals as specified in the curriculum which is greatly influenced by internal and external classroom factors. Although the importance of academic achievement is rarely questioned, reaching unanimity regarding its measurement has been elusive. Performance is defined as the observable or measurable behaviour of a person an animal in a particular situation usually experimental situation (Simpson and Weiner. 1989). This means that performance measures the aspect of behaviour that can be observed at a specific period. To determine performance, a performance test is conducted. Singer (1981) defined performance test as the type of mental test in which the subject is asked to do something rather than to say something. Performance test is the type of test which throws light on the ability to deal with things rather than symbols (Drever, 1981).

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Tyler's Rational Planning Approach or Objective Approach**

Academic Performance is conceptualised as the outcome of students' evaluation in the educational process indicating to what level the students have achieved the educational goals as specified in the curriculum which is greatly influenced by internal and external classroom factors. In view of this, this research work adopted Tyler's Rational Planning Approach or Objective Approach. The Approach emphasise product (achievement of the educational objective-academic performance) or intent as prerequisite issues as far as curriculum development is concerned. Igwe R. O. (2000) documented the general assumption of Tyler's Rational Planning Approach:

- School is a purposive institution and that education is an intentional activity which ought not to be disrupted either by internal or external classroom factors.
- All rational activities are characterised by having both purpose, procedure, aims and goals. Curriculum as rational activity is no exception to this rule.
- Education is a process which involves changing the behaviour of learners. To be successful in this activity depends on the learners' attention, intention, commitment to the activities.
- That the ends enumerate and justify the means. The accomplishment of the academic goals by the students is priority.

Based on the foregoing, staff union industrial action cannot come and go without leaving any aftermath effect on the educational achievement of the students.

### The Impact of Strike Action on Academic Performance

**Table 1: Impact of Strike Action on Academic Performance.” (ISAAP).**

Effect of ASUU Strike Actions	Agree		Undecided		Disagree		No Response	
	Fre q.	%	Fre q.	%	Fre q.	%	Freq.	%
The constant ASUU strike experienced in the educational system is caused by irresponsiveness of government to the needs of academic staff.	225	80.2	15	5.3	40	14.5	0	0
ASUU strike paralyses all activities in schools	210	75	5	1.8	65	23.2	0	0
ASUU strike has been a major factor why some students go to private university	264	94.3	1	0.4	14	5	1	0.3
The frequent strike actions contributed to the decline in the quality of education in Nigeria higher education	134	47.8	1	0.2	146	52	-	-
Lecturers rush the course outline, tests, and assignment when the schools resume from ASUU strike	73	26.1	10	3.6	190	67.9	7	2.4
Strike actions always affect students CGPA	209	74.7	2	1	68	24.3	-	-
Poor quality of graduates produced is due to frequent strike actions by ASUU	115	41.1	14	5	151	53.9	-	-
ASUU strike is always based on Academic staff selfish Interest	100	35.7	50	17.8	113	40.3	14	6.2
The disruption of the school calendar always has influence on academic performance of students.	95	33.9	-	-	185	66.1	-	-
Strikes can be avoided if lecturers and government can come into mutual agreement	242	86.4	-	-	38	13.5	-	-

ASUU members are to be blamed for incessant strike actions	110	39.3	24	8.6	130	46.4	16	5.7
ASUU Strike actions always increase failure rate of students	177	63.2	9	3.3	94	33.5	-	-
Strike actions always affect students study habit	90	32.1	35	12.5	140	50	15	5.4
Students find it difficult to concentrate on their studies after the strike action	117	41.8	40	14.3	123	43.9	-	-
Students are not given enough time to prepare for examination after the strike action.	259	92.5	3	1.1	18	6.4	-	-
Freshers are affected more by the strike action than satellites	220	78.6	-	-	60	21.4	-	-

Table 1 shows the data on the impact of ASUU Strike Action on Students Academic performance. 80.2% of the respondents indicates that constant ASUU strike experienced in the educational system is caused by irresponsiveness of government to the needs of academic staff, 5.3% remains undecided while 14.5% strongly disagree with that. The result further shows that ASUU strike paralyses all activities in schools going by the 75% of the respondents that strongly agrees to that, while 1.8% remains undecided and 23.2% disagree that ASUU Strike paralyses the activities in schools.

94.3% of the respondents agrees that ASUU strike has been a major factor why some students go to private university instead of the several federal and states universities across the country. The data collected also reveals that 63.2% of the respondents agrees that ASUU Strikes actions always increase failure rate of students in the university and 78.6% further agree that new intakes are affected more by the strike action than satellites. 92.5 also strongly agrees that students are not given enough time to prepare for examination after the strike action which affect students' academic performance.

Contrary to the negative effects of ASUU strike action during 2013/14 academic performance, the results reveals that 52% of the respondent disagree that the frequent strike actions contributed to the decline in the quality of education in Nigeria higher education though the percentage of the respondents slightly differs to the 47.8% that agrees the strike actions plays a role in the decline of the quality of education in Nigeria. 67.9% of the respondents also disagree to the fact that Lecturers rush the course outline, tests, and assignment when the schools resume from ASUU strike. 66.1% as well disagree that the disruption of the school calendar always has influence on academic performance of students. 50% of the respondents further disagree that Strike actions always affect students study habit.

### Hypotheses Testing

- H1:** Student's Pre-strike semester GPA is significantly greater than student's Post-strike semester GPA in 2013/14 ASUU strike actions in Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto.  
**H0:** Student's Pre-strike semester GPA is not significantly greater than student's Post-strike semester GPA in 2013/14 ASUU strike actions in Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto.
- H1:** Disruption of academic session caused by 2013/14 ASUU industrial action had significant negative impact on academic success of the students of Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto.  
**H0:** Disruption of academic session caused by Staff union industrial action does not have significant negative impact on academic success of the students of Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto.

### T-Test table comparing the means of students GPAs before and after ASUU strike

#### Group Statistics

	Sex(students)	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	sig
prestrike	Male	168	3.2440	.91884	.07089	2.323	278	.021
	female	112	2.9643	1.08161	.10220			
Post-strike	Male	168	2.3393	.98995	.07638	-.149	278	.881
	female	112	2.3571	.96662	.09134			

The table above shows that there is no much differences between students GPAs before and after strike. Irrespective of their gender, the point of difference is just (1.05), though positive in nature. This is shown in the mean column above. Thus: pre-strike = M & F (3.2440, 2.9643) post-strike = M & F (2.3393, 2.3571). The t values for prestrike shows positive difference in direction, and strong in strength. More so, significant while post-strike t value is negative in direction and weak in strength, also not significant. Thus: pre-strike ( $t = 2.323$ ,  $df (278)$ ;  $p \leq 0.05$ . Post-strike ( $t = -.149$ ,  $df (278)$ ;  $p \geq 0.05$ .). Therefore H1 is accepted which states that Student's Pre-strike semester GPA is significantly greater than student's Post-strike semester GPA 2013/14 in Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto.

#### Univariate Analysis of Variance

##### Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: performance

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	80.010 <sup>a</sup>	4	20.003	2.077	.084
Intercept	54370.167	1	54370.167	5646.592	.000
<b>ASSU</b>	<b>80.010</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>20.003</b>	<b>2.077</b>	<b>.084</b>
Error	2647.933	275	9.629		
Total	74536.000	280			
Corrected Total	2727.943	279			

The table above indicates that, ASUU strike has a positively strong effect on students' performance. Though slightly above the significant value of 0.05. Thus:  $f = 2.077$ ,  $df (4, 275)$ ;  $p \geq 0.05$ . These findings confirm the positive struggle of the union in question. If the struggle yields positive result, learning will be better and easier for both lecturers and students. It is also saying that academic success is attributed to other strong factors ranging from personal, social, psychological, political and sociological interaction rather than just ASUU struggles.

### **Discussion of Findings**

In order to have a full grasp of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) – Federal Government of Nigeria Industrial Relations and its impact on the Academic Performance of Students at Usman Danfodio University, Sokoto, the study first examines the factors which precipitated 2013/14 ASUU strike actions in the academic performance of the students of Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto through a review of the related literature and result gathered from fieldwork. The study found out that some of the major causes of ASUU strike action during 2013/14 session are poor and inconsistent payment of salaries, poor funding of the education sector, political interference in Education, poor conditions of service, non-compliance with agreement, and unnecessary delay in payments of salaries and other emoluments. The study further reveals that ASUU strike actions always increase failure rate of students going by the 63.2% of the respondents that strongly agree on that.

Going by the data collected and analysed the study also found out that ASUU strike paralyses all activities in schools and has been a major factor why some students go to private university instead of the several federal and states universities across the country. Furthermore, students are not given enough time to prepare for examination after the strike action which in turn increases the failure rate of students' academic performance. On the other hand the result of the findings show that ASUU strike actions do not contribute to the decline in the quality of education in Nigeria higher education. There may be other factors that are largely responsible for such.

Finally, the research found that there is relationship between Student's Pre-strike semesters GPA which is significantly greater than student's Post-strike semester GPA in 2013/14 session in Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto. Through the Univariate Analysis of Variance the study also reveals that ASUU strike has a positively strong effect on students' performance.

### **Conclusion**

This study examines the impact of strike action during 2013/14 session on students' academic performance in Usman Danfodiyo University Sokoto. The study concludes that ASUU strike action during 2013/14 session in UDUS has negative effect on the students' academic performance by increasing the failure rate of students and were unable to speedily regenerate themselves towards academic exercises at the resumption. ASUU strike actions has always paralysed school activities which in turn makes the performance of students in academic activities hampered, so much so that good and brilliant students end up graduating with poor grades. Also it makes parent to send their children to private universities no matter the cost because they will be able to complete their studies within the stated time. Furthermore when strikes are being called off, students are not given enough time to prepare for examination after the strike action which is another factor that cripples students' academic performance. Finally the research found that there is relationship between Student's Pre-strike semesters GPA which is significantly greater than student's Post-strike semester GPA in 2013/14 session in Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto. Findings of the research work conform to the work of Osuorji



and David, 2014; Michael Baker, 2013; Gabbrielle Wills, 2014 Olaniyi and Aina, 2014, Ayeni and Kolawole, 2014; Olupaimo, 2014; Olusegun Ajayi, 2013.

### **Recommendations**

1. University students should engage themselves in tutorial classes or self-study during the strike action to keep them abreast with academics at resumption. Their parents or guardians should ensure that they encourage the student's engagement in academic activities rather than domestic chores while the strike lasts.
2. The members and the executives of ASUU should employ other industrial dispute strategies to express their grievances rather than embark on indefinite strike action which obviously paralyzes student's academics.
3. The Nigerian Government should also employ the method of prompt dialogue and grant the requests of ASUU in time to prevent erosion and total breakdown of the educational sector.
4. Meanwhile, government should always try to honor whatever agreement reached with the academic communities. Most protracted strikes can be averted if necessary steps are taken to build a good relationship between both parties. It is worth emphasizing that any government with a poor education system is heading towards a bleak future.
5. At the same time, the various unions in our institutions of higher learning should devise other means other than strike to resolve aggrieved issues.
6. Government should pay all outstanding debts to ASUU members and other employees in public universities so as to avoid unnecessary strike actions which in turn affects student's academic performance.

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