

## Effects of Strike Action on Qualitative Education in Tertiary Institutions

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**Abstract:** This study employed the survey design to investigate the effects of strike action on qualitative education in tertiary institutions. Two research questions guided the study, Two hundred (200) participants from four tertiary institutions in South-East-Zone completed the instrument (questionnaire) constructed by the researcher. Test retest method was used to test the reliability of the instrument using Pearson product moment. Mean score were used to answer the research questions. Findings induce that: strike actions affects students performance is examination and make them engage in examination malpractice, strike action destabilize the school programme and its operations which lead to production of half baked university graduates, strike actions decrease research and innovation in tertiary institution and also lead to low staff outputs. Recommendation include: Government should review existing educational law to make it more flexible, Government should fund education adequately to encourage research and intonations, Employee's welfare and condition of service should be improved.

**Keys words:** Strike Action • Qualitative Education • Tertiary Institution

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### INTRODUCTION

The mandate of tertiary education is to develop the total man mentally morally and physically and to confer degrees on their products that are found worthy in character and learning to enable them assume leadership roles in their immediate and extended society [1]. Aluede *et al.* [2] deducing from the above stated that the goal of higher education is the development of the man physically, mentally, morally and technologically to enable them function effectively in any environment in which they find themselves so that they become more productive, self-fulfilling and attain self-actualization. One of the objectives of tertiary education is to produce highly talented and skilled human resources as well as meet the demand of the labour market nationally and globally [3]. Education therefore is the most dynamic instrument of change both for individual and the society at large.

The quality of education improves the quantity of the workforce, by raising the levels of its skills and efficiency. Quality education gives a nation access to the world's body of knowledge and as a result, the adoption and adaptation of the existing technology to specific environment is facilitated. The quality of education is a progressive increase in its productivity and efficiency.

It is the inevitable tool for determining the level of development of a society [4]. Federal Government of Nigeria [5] added that the quality of education is the instrument for human socio-economic development. Education industry being a dynamic one, experiences from time to time, some amendments in the quality of its operational structure, aimed at achieving better the national goals. They also pointed out that a nation's overall development is inextricably tied to its education system. Therefore, the quality of the education system and its operation should be for better improvement and development of individuals and the society.

The federal government of Nigeria believes in the indispensable power of education towards the overall development of the country, as embedded in the National Policy on Education (FGN, 2004). It stated that education is an instrument for national development. To this end, there is need to formulate ideas for all aspect of education and to create opportunity for qualitative education for all Nigerians. Gbosi and Omoke [6] asserted that the nature and standard of knowledge to be given from one generation to another increases as societies become more complex. In this context, Gbosi [7] opined that this situation creates way for formal education in the school and the specialists called teachers.

Presently, formal education ranges from higher education, primary, secondary to tertiary levels. The demand at national development and the widespread of modern technology in the society especially in the 21<sup>st</sup> century requires large number of specialists in varying fields of Science, Art and social science. The institutions responsible for grooming these specialized educationist and professionals are the tertiary institutions.

The most serious challenge tending to undermine the provision of quality education at the tertiary institutions in Nigeria is strike action. Griffin [8] described it as stoppage of work by employees for the purpose of forcing the hands of their employer to accept terms and conditions of employment. Idogho [9] define strike action as a period when no work is done because of disagreement over wage, promotion discipline, hours of work or other conditions of employment. Nwadi and Oguugua [10] explained it to mean absence of definite and effective industrial relations policy that take cognizance of the prevailing economic situation is the country. Obi [11] stated that it can occur as a result of divergent interest, objectives or priorities between individual groups, employee and employers; non conformity to requirements of task, activity or process. Okeke [12] defined it as a disagreement between employees and their employers following failure of one side to meet the demand of the other for the removal of the grievances. These actions are bound to have severe consequences in the productivity of an educational institution.

The literatures reviewed on the topic attest to the adverse effects of strike action on educational system. Okpala [13] opined that incessant strike action in tertiary institutions dwindle the academic performance of students. As learning is suspend for a long period, students abilities fall. Even the knowledge acquired during the learning period is forgotten by some students [14] explained that students perform poorly in examination and often engage in exam malpractice as a result of strike action during the period of teaching and learning. Osuafor and Okoli [15] stated that strike action reduces the student mental ability, as they spend more time at home than at school.

Tor-Anyim [16] explained that the rising waves of strike have destabilized the Nigerian education system, they pointed out that the constant strike action has brought about instability in the development of the educational system. Ukeji [17] added that the increasing rate of strike action in Nigeria tertiary institutions is so alarming and have contributed immensely to the falling

standard of education. Obi [11] stated that strike action has deadly impact on the tertiary institutions existence as it leads to loss of experienced lecturers to lucrative jobs in foreign land. This brain drain and the inability to further attract stable attention of the brilliant and intelligent lecturers, has led to loss of respect for university degree and persistent decline is the educational platform. Griffin [8] declared that university system in Nigeria had suffered tremendously because of series of strike action that characterized its operation. Adebayo [1] added that immorality gets to its peak during strike. He stated that the quality of education and the certificates have lost their original value as a result of erratic academic calendar in tertiary institutions. Infact, strike action destroys educational system and prevent it from attaining its stated goals and objectives. This study therefore, investigated the effects of strike action on qualitative education in tertiary institutions.

**Statement of the Problem:** Tertiary institution in Nigeria has been saddled with serious industrial strikes. The situation has become a phenomenon such that a year will not pass without a strike action involving either the Academic Staff Union or Non-academic Staff Union, often with government or school authorities. Most of the misunderstanding arise due to issues such as non-payment of salaries and allowances. No matter the cause and the nature of strike, it is an ill-wind that blows no one any good. There is no doubt that strike action has implication on the tertiary education. It is against this back ground therefore, that the study sought to ask; what are the effects of strike action on qualitative education in tertiary institutions? To answer this question, there is need for an empirical inquiry into the effects of strike action on qualitative education in tertiary institutions.

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of strike action on qualitative education in tertiary institutions. Specifically, the study sought to determine:

- The effects of strike action on performance of students in tertiary institution;
- The effect of strike action on the educational development in tertiary institution.

To guide this study two research questions were formulated as follows:

- What are the effects of strike action on the performance of students in tertiary institutions?
- What are the effects of strike action on educational development in tertiary institutions?

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study employed the survey design to collect data of existing phenomenon using opinion gathered from the respondents. The population of the study comprised 472 fourth year medical students. Participants were 200 students sampled randomly from four tertiary institutions in South East Zone.

The instrument for data collection was a 10-item researcher structured questionnaire on effects of strike action on qualitative education in tertiary institutions. The instrument was face and content validated by experts in Measurement and Evaluation and Educational Administration and Planning in Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. Their suggestions resulted in the final copy of the questionnaire used for the study. Using test-retest method, the reliability index obtained using Spearman Brown method for computing correlation coefficient was 0.76 indicating its suitability for the study. The questionnaire used the 4-point scale of strongly agree, Agree, disagree and strongly disagree rated 4, 3, 2 and 1, respectively. The acceptable mean was 2.50. The questionnaire was administered on respondents using knowledge research assistants after obtaining their consent. One hundred and eight two (182) copies were properly completed and returned. The research questions were answered using mean scores.

## RESULTS

Results in Table 1 shows that strike action affects the performance of students in tertiary institutions. This is because all the items yielded mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that strike actions make student loose focus in their studies, perform poorly in examination and often engage in exam malpractice which destroy their educational ambitions and destines.

In Table 2 results show that strike action has serious effects on educational development in tertiary institutions. This is because all the items yielded a mean score above the criterion mean or 2.5. This implies that incessant strike action in tertiary institution leads to instability in the education system, which results to decrease in research and innovation and low staff outputs.

## DISCUSSION

The results of this study showed in Table 1 that strike actions have adverse effects on tertiary education in Nigeria. Strike action affects students' performance because strike forces them to stay at home during the period of teaching and learning and thereby not covering what the programme stipulates that should be covered. This leads to examination malpractice and engaging in

Table 1: Mean Scores of Students on Effects of Strike Action on Performance of Students in Tertiary Institutions

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	N	$\bar{x}$	Decision
1.	Strike action leads to decrease in academic performance of students	81 (324)	74 (222)	19 (38)	8 (8)	592	182	3.1	Accepted
2.	Strike action hinder academic excellence among students as programmes are rushed over	107 (428)	69 (207)	6 (12)		647	182	3.3	Accepted
3.	Strike action leads students of tertiary institution to play truancy	69 (276)	72 (216)	29 (58)	12 (12)	519	102	2.9	Accepted
4.	Strike makes some students to be lazy and not to focus in their academic endeavours	62 (248)	57 (153)	43 (96)	26 (26)	513	102	2.7	Accepted
5.	Strike makes some students to abandon their educational programmes	71 (284)	66 (198)	30 (60)	15 (15)	557	182	2.8	Accepted

Grand Mean = 2.9

Table 2: Mean scores of Students on Effects of Strike Action on Educational Development in Tertiary Institutions

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	N	$\bar{x}$	Decision
6.	Strike action lead, to decrease in research and innovation in tertiary institutions	1.08 (432)	56 (168)	11 (22)	7 (7)	629	182	3.3	Accepted
7.	Government uses up available resources needed in higher institution to resolve strike action	40 (160)	82 (246)	50 (100)	10 (10)	516	182	3.3	Accepted
8.	Institutional ranking decrease during strike action	24 (96)	101 (302)	52 (104)	5 (5)	508	182	2.6	Accepted
9.	Strike action lowers staff output in tertiary institutions	118 (472)	50 (150)	14 (24)	--	646	102	3.4	Accepted
10.	There is decreased academic activities development.	49 (196)	98 (294)	24 (28)	11 (11)	549	182	2.8	Accepted

Grand Mean = 2.9

crimes such as cultism, prostitution and stealing. These findings agree with Idogho [9] findings that incessant strike action dwindle the academic activities of students. As learning is suspended for a long period, students' abilities full. The results agree also with Babawale [4] who stated that student perform poorly in examination and engage in exam malpractice because of ineffective teaching and learning.

The results of this study in Table 2 also showed that strike actions affect the educational development in tertiary institutions. Strike actions lead to disharmony and instability in the school programme. There is decrease in research and innovation which pave way for the falling standard of education. This finding is in consonance with the findings of Okpala [13] who observed that strike actions have deadly impact on the tertiary institution existence, as it leads to loss of experienced lecturers to lucrative jobs in foreign lands. The results of the present study are in line with those [12] who reported that strike action has great effect on education system because lecturers and students leave school for a long time thereby negating the objectives of education in the training and development of human capital. The implication may point to the need for minimizing strike actions in tertiary institutions.

### CONCLUSION

The incessant strike action in Nigerian tertiary institutions is an ill-wind the blows no one any good. The students, lecturers, non-academic staff and indeed the society as a whole have in one way or the other had their share of the negative effects of strike action in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. In all strike action students are the most affected because academic programmes tend to be extended to the detriment of students. This has resulted to crimes within the institution and in the society at large. The constant strike actions in the educational system have lead to low quality of education as teachers outputs are low. There is instability in the development of educational programmes which give rise to the falling standard of education in Nigeria.

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

- Government should improve the welfare and condition of service of Academic staff and Non academic staff and provide adequate infrastructural facilities for tertiary institutions in order to improve their working environment.

- Fund should be provided adequately as to encourage effective research.
- The existing educational laws should be reviewed to make it more flexible in order to match with the present day realities.
- Government should intervene immediately when issues of strike arises as to reduce frequency of strike actions.
- Employer/employees interpersonal relations should be enhanced and constructive communication process developed. This will help to prevent incessant strike action.
- Stakeholders should act as intermediary when issues of strike arise as to bring lasting solutions that will improve the education sector and not taking side.
- Unions should not encourage strike action rather they should encourages negotiation to resolve issues of disagreement.

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