



Sociological Perspectives to Impact of Strike Actions in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions on the Social Adjustment of University of Lagos Undergraduates.

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Abstract. Strike action is a legitimate means through which workers make their employers accede to their demands. Nigerian tertiary institution workers have employed the means over the years in their labour-relations with their government employers. Although the use of strike actions has not always yielded the desired results, it would sadly remain a legitimate option when every other means of engagement fails. The impact this may have on the products of the system and the society is a concern to all education stakeholders. This research hence, investigated the impact of strike actions on social adjustments among undergraduate students of the University of Lagos. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design, with a sample size of 280 undergraduate students drawn from study population using proportionate random sampling technique. Five hypotheses guided the study. A researcher-developed questionnaire titled Impact of Strike Actions on Social Adjustment Questionnaire (ISASAQ) with $r = 0.71$ was used for data collection, Chi-square and ANOVA statistical tools were employed for data analysis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that incessant strike has a significant impact on the schools' academic programme, students' interest in education and students' interpersonal relationships. Also, there is a significant age impact of incessant strike on social adjustment among undergraduate students at the University of Lagos. Based on the research findings, the study recommends; fostering positive labour relations and open communication to minimize the frequency and duration of strikes and adopting in addition, flexible academic programmes that allow for alternative modes of learning during strike periods to alleviate disruptions to students' education. Also, strengthening student support services, promoting transparency and timely communication, and prioritizing initiatives that foster social integration is essential to support students' social adjustment during periods of strikes.

Keywords: Incessant strikes, Education, Interpersonal relationship, Social Adjustment.

1. Introduction

Tertiary institutions are considered as the fountain of knowledge throughout the world; the fountain of intellectualism and the most suitable place for the intellectual incubation of leaders of tomorrow. Shimawua (2020) observed that tertiary institutions fulfill one major function: a knowledge and value provider. 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 (Amadi and Urho, 2016). Research finding is part of a society's knowledge base, which is transmitted to students and industries. A university must be an institution for the people, a Centre for knowledge and problem solving for the society.

According to Chijioke (2013), a strike refers to a collective action by a body of workers to stop carrying out their regular duties to enforce compliance with demands made on an employer or a group of employers. It is a collective, organized cessation or slowdown of work by employees to force acceptance of their demands by the employers (Amadi and Urho, 2015). Parker (2012), views a strike in labour employment relations as a combined action of a group of employees, thereby withdrawing their labour totally or partially to persuade an employer to accept their combined demands. The purpose of strike action is to force employers to accede to the workers' demands. Strike action by trade union is lawful within the Nigerian laws, because Nigeria is signatory to the charter of the International Labour Organization (Jega, 2013). Staff industrial actions in Nigeria University, Polytechnic, College of Education, Secondary and

Primary Educational System have become the common phenomenon with the detrimental effects on the academic success of Nigerian students, academic calendar, delay in the duration of studies and the management.

The history of strikes in tertiary institutions in Nigeria dates back to 20th May, 1980, when a trade dispute was declared with the Governing Councils of Universities in Nigeria, which demanded improved funding of the universities, academic freedom, autonomy, as well as setting up of a special body to review the conditions of service of the universities' staff (Odim, Anashie and Solomon, 2018). Early in 1992, members of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) declared an industrial dispute, over gross underfunding of universities in Nigeria, poor conditions of service of the academic staff, university autonomy, as well as the need for academic freedom. Numerous strikes have since followed by both academic and non-academic unions of the tertiary institutions to compel the government to meet the needs of public universities lecturers, non-teaching staff and schools, especially in the areas of wages, allowances, and infrastructural facilities (Yusuf, 2017). ASUU has been noted specifically for actions that were intended to improve the welfare of the public university, lecturers, students, and society at large. Sule, (2020) noted that disagreement or lack of understanding between the government and the academic community often results in a deadlock that usually disrupts the academic calendar.

Social adjustment is a skill that requires people to adapt well socially. Social adjustment points out one's skill to meet some criteria demanded by the environment to fit well in his or her environment socially. Pascarella and Terenzini (2014) stated that the process of adjusting socially at a higher institution was a complex process that involved socialization and desocialization. The students must prepare themselves to deal with the new beliefs and values as collegians while discharging the previous ones. As students navigate their daily schedules within the ivory towers to meet up with the social and academic demands of their education programme, adjustments are inevitable, either short-term or long-term.

Odubela (2012) observed that disruption in academic programmes occasioned 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 a non-conducive environment for active learning in Nigerian Universities, a situation that dampens human development. During strike actions, some students

may engage themselves in unproductive activities such as sexual immorality, cyber scams, pool betting, playing video games, gossiping, watching films, and reading comic materials for entertainment purposes rather than reading the school notes. These may affect their academic performance. According to Arukaino (2013), idling youths at home could cause security problems. Isangedighi (2011) opined that the way a stimulus excites or impacts on an individual would trigger his/her responses. These are indication that students may lose the skill for preparedness and readiness to learn at the time of the strike. Hence, their educational attainment becomes adversely affected. This study, therefore, attempts to examine the influence of incessant strikes on the social adjustment of undergraduate students of the University of Lagos.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The action and counteraction of the academic staff union: the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP), College of Education Academic Staff Union (COEASU) and Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) in recent years to the recalcitrant attitude of the federal government towards the past agreement; conditions of services, salaries, and allowances, adequate funding as prescribed by the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), University autonomy, integration of polytechnic academic staff payroll had led to frequent industrial actions by COEASU, ASUP and especially ASUU. In an attempt to achieve these objectives, the students struggle psychologically to adapt to changes occasioned by these strike actions in an attempt to cope with new standards and values in their physical and social environments. The social, emotional, and intelligent quotients of students are disrupted by strike actions hence, most students find it difficult to retrace their academic flow following a long period of strike actions.

The physical state of the university is impacted by strikes as well; University structures and equipment are most often left without use. The local economy where the university is founded and operates suffers. Enterprises that are established to supply the demands of the individuals that come to the area because of the university are crippled due to the strike actions and if the duration of the strike extends for a long time, some businesses will fold up. The economic lives of those whose business activities depend on tertiary institutions for survival are affected.

An academic institution disrupted by so many strikes cannot produce quality education. The time that is to

be spent learning and carrying out research is spent in crisis and conflict, yet strikes take place more than once every four years. This, however, will continue to be the trend in Nigeria's higher education system if strikes continue to disrupt academic calendars and activities. It is against this background that this study investigated the impact of the incessant strike in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions on the Social Adjustments of undergraduate students at the University of Lagos.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine the Impact of Incessant strikes in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions on the Social Adjustment of Undergraduate Students of the University of Lagos. The specific objectives are to:

- Ascertain the impact of incessant strike action on the schools' academic programme among University of Lagos Undergraduate Students.
- Determine the impact of incessant strike actions on students' interest in education among University of Lagos Undergraduate Students.
- Ascertain the impact of incessant strike on students' interpersonal relationships among University of Lagos Undergraduate Students.
- Ascertain the age impact of incessant strike on Social Adjustment among Undergraduate Students in University of Lagos

1.3 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided the study:

- Incessant strike action does not have any significant impact on schools' academic programme among University of Lagos Undergraduate Students.
- Incessant strike action does not have any significant impact on students' interest in education among University of Lagos Undergraduate Students.
- Incessant strike action does not have any significant impact on students' interpersonal relationships among University of Lagos Undergraduate Students.
- There is no significant age impact of incessant strike on social adjustment among Undergraduate Students in University of Lagos.

2. Theoretical Framework.

This study was anchored on conflict theory. The Conflict perspective is a social, political, and economic philosophy embedded in the writing and ideas of Karl Marx (1818-1883). This theory examines the effect of capitalism on labor, productivity, and economic development and argues for a worker's revolution to overturn capitalism in favor of communism. Marx posits that the struggle between social classes, specifically, the bourgeoisie or capitalist and the proletariat, or workers, defines economic relations in a capitalist economy will invariably lead to conflict (Haralambos and Holborn, 2008). Okunade (2016) explains that the conflict perspective includes conflicts among segments of a society and is not limited to economic determinism. Conflict is pervasive and exists among family, union and management, social institutions, and industrial systems.

This theory is relevant to the study as industrial relations in Nigeria are largely imbalanced and antagonistic between the parties involved and often in favour of the employer. Hence, strike actions are organized by the Academic Staff Union of Universities in response to unfavourable working conditions, funding, and management of Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design.

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. It is an approach of descriptive research that blends qualitative and quantitative data to provide relevant and accurate information. Nworgu, (2015) describes survey research design as a type of research in which a group of individuals or things are studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few samples considered to be representative of the entire group. The survey research design is suitable for this study because data was collected from a representative sample of the total number of undergraduate students from the Akoka campus of the University of Lagos.

3.2 Population of the Study

The target population of this study are the undergraduate students of the University of Lagos. There are currently eight faculties in the Akoka Campus of the University. The researchers considered the students to be in the best position to be respondents for this research because they are directly affected by the variable under study.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Techniques

The study used a proportionate random sampling technique to select the participants from the faculties. As such, thirty-five (35) students were selected from each faculty. Hence, the sample size for the study was two hundred and eighty (280) undergraduate students drawn from the eight faculties that make up the University of Lagos Akoka Campus. A total of one hundred and thirty-two male and one hundred and forty-eight female students were involved in the study.

3.4 Research Instrument.

A structured questionnaire titled “Impact of Incessant Strike Actions on the Social Adjustment Questionnaire (IISASAQ)” was used in data collection. It comprised of sections A, and B. Section A provided information on the Biodata of the respondents while Section B contained four clusters, derived from each of the formulated hypotheses. The Likert scale measurement format of ‘Strongly Agree’ (SA), ‘Agree’ (A), ‘Strongly Disagree’ (SD), and Disagree (D), was adapted to the study.

3.5 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The research instrument was subjected to face and content validity. The validity is intended to ensure the

instrument’s relevance, comprehensiveness of content, appropriateness of items and clarity of statements. The validators’ opinions and comments guided the production of the final draft of the instrument which the researchers used for data collection. The researchers conducted a pilot study on the reliability of the research instrument. Cronbach’s Alpha reliability analysis was used to analyze the data that was obtained. The overall reliability index of 0.71 was obtained and was used to determine the adequacy of the research instrument for the study.

3.6 Administration of the Instrument.

The research instrument was administered to the respondents electronically through a Google form. The respondents were enjoined to complete the instrument electronically and submit it. In all, a total of thirty (35) questionnaires were distributed to the students in each of the faculties involved in this study. Afterward, the questionnaire was retrieved for data analysis.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

The formulated hypotheses were analyzed using inferential statistics, Chi-square (X²), and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical tools at 0.05 level of significance.

4. Results and Discussion

Hypothesis One: Incessant strike action does not have any significant impact on the school’s academic programme.

Table 1: Chi-Square (X²) Analysis of the Impact of Incessant Strike Action on the School’s Academic Programme.

Scale	Observed	Expected	O-E	(O-E) ²	Chi-Square test	DF	Decision
Strongly Agree	120	70	50	2500	91.457	3	RejectHo
Agree	96	70	26	676			
Disagree	45	70	-25	625			
Strongly Disagree	19	70	-51	2601			
Total	280	280					

*Degree of Freedom = 279, Level of Significance = 0.05

The result from Table 1 shows that the Chi-square (X²) calc value of 91.457 is greater than the Chi-square tabulated value of 7.815 with 3 degrees of freedom at 0.05 Level of Significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. Thus, incessant strike action has a significant impact on the school’s academic programme.

Hypothesis Two: Incessant strike action does not have any significant impact on students’ interest in education.

Table 2: Chi-Square (X2) Analysis of The Impact of Incessant Strike Action on Students’ Interest in Education.

Scale	Observed	Expected	O-E	(O-E)2	Chi- Square test	DF	Decision
Strongly Agree	130	70	60	3600	92.314	3	RejectHo
Agree	76	70	6	36			
Disagree	55	70	-15	225			
Strongly Disagree	19	70	-51	2601			
Total	280	280					

*Degree of Freedom = 279, Level of Significance= 0.05

The result from Table 4.5 shows that the Chi-square (X2) calculated value of 92.314 greater than Chi-Square (X2) tabulated value of 7.815 with 3 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. Thus, incessant strike action has a significant impact on students’ interest in education.

Hypothesis Three: Incessant strike action does not have any significant impact on students’ interpersonal relationships.

Table 3: Chi-Square (X2) Analysis of the impact of incessant strike action on students’ interpersonal relationships.

Scale	Observed	Expected	O-E	(O-E)2	Chi-Square test	DF	Decision
Strongly Agree	115	70	45	2025	58.828	3	Reject Ho
Agree	80	70	10	100			
Disagree	58	70	-12	144			
Strongly Disagree	27	70	-43	1849			
Total	280	280					

*Degree of Freedom= 3, Level of Significance= 0.05

The result from Table 3 shows that the Chi-square (X2) calculated value of 58.828 is greater than Chi-square (X2) tabulated value of 7.815 with 3 degrees of freedom at 0.05 Level of Significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Thus, incessant strike action has a significant impact on the students’ interpersonal relationships.

Hypothesis Four: There is no significant age impact of incessant strike on social adjustment among undergraduate students.

Table 4: One Way Analysis of Variance of Age impact of Incessant strike on social adjustment among undergraduate students.

	Sum of squares	DF	Mean square	F	Mean	St. Deviation	Sig.
Between Groups	1.978	1	1.978	12.571	2.50	.460	.000
Within Groups	43.750	278	.157		1.28	.287	
Total	45.729	279					

Table 4 result shows that the significant figure (.000) with a total degree freedom of 279 and F-value of 12.571 is less than the level of significance (α) at 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant age impact of incessant strike on social adjustment among undergraduate students’ is rejected and the alternate accepted. Thus, there is a significant age impact of incessant strike on social adjustment among undergraduate students.

5. Discussion of Findings

Hypothesis one states that incessant strike action does not have a significant impact on the school’s academic programme. From the results of the study, it is concluded that the incessant strike actions have a

significant impact on the school’s academic programme. The compressed academic calendar skipped curriculum content, poor examination preparation, and disruption of academic activities collectively contribute to the decline in the overall quality of education and hinder students' appropriate knowledge development. This finding corroborates Adekunle (2017), who conducted a comprehensive study highlighting the adverse consequences of strikes on academic programs. The research revealed that strike actions invariably disrupt the smooth flow of academic activities, leading to a compressed calendar and inadequate coverage of essential curriculum content. Also, Okonkwo (2018) conducted an in-depth analysis of the impact of strikes on the knowledge development of students. Findings indicated that the

disruptions caused by strikes create gaps in students' learning experiences, leaving them with insufficient knowledge in various subject areas.

Hypothesis two was rejected as the findings indicated that incessant strike actions has a significant impact on students' interest in education. The reason may be that the lack of a stable and conducive learning environment negatively affects students' motivation, causing them to perceive education as less relevant and valuable. This is in line with Isangedighi (2017) and Iheanacho (2022), that the occurrence of incessant strike actions acts as a non-motivational factor for students. These frequent disruptions to the academic calendar create a drawback in the effectiveness of learning. Okechukwu (2018) conducted a study on the psychological impact of strikes on students' interest in education and found that the constant disruptions to the academic calendar due to strikes diminish students' motivation to engage with their studies. Similarly, Afolabi (2019) explored the relationship between incessant strikes and students' educational engagement. The study affirmed that strikes disrupt the continuity of learning and create a sense of disillusionment among students, leading to a decline in their interest in education.

Hypothesis three states that there will be no significant impact of incessant strike actions on students' interpersonal relationships. The findings from the study reveals that incessant strike has a significant impact on students' interpersonal relationships. The disruptions to the academic calendar and the inconsistent learning environment poses a challenge to students' ability to adapt. The lack of regular interaction with peers and teachers and the uncertainty caused by frequent interruptions, can have adverse effects on students' interpersonal relationships. This corroborates Uzochukwu (2018) that the lack of consistent interaction with peers and teachers during strike actions can lead to social isolation, hinder the development of crucial social skills, and affect students' emotional well-being. Adewale (2019) conducted a study examining the psychosocial effects of academic disruptions on students. Her research emphasizes that the uncertainty brought about by strikes can lead to stress and anxiety among students, further straining their interpersonal relationships. The disruptions in academic activities make it difficult for students to maintain a sense of belonging within their educational communities.

Hypothesis four stated that there will be no significant age impact of incessant strikes on undergraduate students' social adjustment. The research findings indicate that incessant strikes have a significant impact

on age and social adjustment among undergraduate students. The findings suggest that age does indeed have a significant influence on how students adapt socially during periods of incessant strikes. Mature-age students may experience challenges in social adjustment due to the lack of tailored activities, leading to feelings of exclusion. According to Dawborn-Gundlach and Margetts' (2018) research, mature-age students expressed reservations about the lack of specific activities catering to their needs during periods of incessant strikes. They opined that events open to all undergraduate students lacked relevance for older students, which could lead to feelings of exclusion and difficulty in social adjustment. Additionally, Dawborn-Gundlach (2018) highlighted that the relationship between student adjustment and age has been mainly studied by comparing the academic performance of younger and older students. However, research findings from studies comparing the performance of older students with school-leaver students have been inconclusive, indicating that the age impact on social adjustment during incessant strikes is an essential and complex factor to consider.

6. Conclusion

The study investigated the impact of incessant strikes on the social adjustment of undergraduate students at the school. The analysis yielded significant findings that shed light on the effects of strikes on various aspects of students' lives.

The research revealed that incessant strikes have a considerable impact on the school's academic program, disrupting the continuity and effectiveness of the educational process. This disruption, in turn, affects students' interest in education, leading to reduced motivation and engagement in their academic pursuits.

Moreover, the study identified a significant impact of incessant strikes on students' interpersonal relationships. The uncertainty and instability caused by strike actions can strain social connections and create challenges in maintaining positive relationships among students. Furthermore, the research highlighted the influence of age on social adjustments among undergraduate students during strike periods. Different age groups may experience and cope with strike-related challenges differently.

In conclusion, the study underscores the detrimental effects of incessant strikes on the social dynamics within the school community. It emphasizes the importance of addressing strike-related issues to promote a conducive and supportive environment for students' social adjustment and overall well-being. The

findings can serve as valuable insights for educational institutions and policymakers to develop strategies aimed at minimizing the adverse effects of strikes and fostering a positive learning experience for students. By addressing these issues, educational institutions can better support their students and create an environment conducive to academic success and personal growth.

7. Sociological Implications of the Study

By examining the sociological implications of the study, we gain a deeper understanding of the broader social processes at play within educational institutions during periods of strikes. These implications can inform discussions on social cohesion, power dynamics, resilience, and access to resources in educational contexts. Furthermore, they can contribute to the development of policies and practices that foster a supportive and inclusive learning environment for all students, even in times of social disruptions. The key implications are:

Social Disruptions and Instability: The study highlights how incessant strikes disrupt the social fabric within educational institutions. These disruptions can create a sense of instability and uncertainty among students, affecting their interpersonal relationships and overall social adjustment. Sociologically, this reveals how labor disputes in educational settings can have far-reaching consequences beyond the immediate academic disruptions.

Socialization and Social Bonds: The educational system is at the center of socialization, and provides opportunities for students to form social bonds and connections that shape their identity and sense of belonging. There, this study reveals that incessant strike actions can strain these social bonds, impacting the quality and strength of relationships among students. This emphasizes the significance of the educational environment in fostering social integration and cohesion.

Age and Life Stage Perspectives: The finding that different age groups of students may respond differently to strikes highlights the significance of life stage perspectives in understanding social adjustment. Thus, this underscores the importance of considering students' life stages and developmental trajectories when studying the effects of social disruptions like strikes.

Institutional Power and Student Agency: Strikes in educational institutions can illuminate power

dynamics between students and institutions. The study's findings bring attention to how students navigate their agency in the face of labor disputes and how institutional decisions impact their lives. Sociologically, this raises questions about student participation and decision-making processes within the educational setting.

Social Resilience and Adaptation: The study provides insights into students' resilience and adaptive strategies during periods of strike disruptions. Hence, this contributes to the understanding of how individuals and groups respond to social challenges and adapt to changing circumstances within educational environments.

Social Inequality and Access to Resources: The impact of strikes on students' interest in education and social adjustment may have implications for social inequality within educational institutions. Students from marginalized backgrounds may face greater challenges during strike periods due to limited access to resources. Sociologically, this emphasizes the need to address disparities in access to educational opportunities and support services.

8. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are presented:

Flexible Academic Programs: Institutions should introduce flexible academic programs that support adjustments and alternative modes of learning for students during strike periods.

Enhanced Student Support Services: Educational institutions should strengthen their student support services, providing counseling, mental health resources, and support networks during and after strike periods. These services can help students cope with the stress and uncertainty caused by strikes and support their social adjustment.

Transparency and Communication: To reduce uncertainty, educational institutions should adopt communication channels that facilitate open and timely communication with students during strike periods. These channels should provide updates on strike developments, potential resolutions, and contingency plans to eliminate anxiety and foster trust between students and the institution.

Promotion of Social Integration: Institutions should explore initiatives that promote social integration and belongingness among students. Thereby creating

opportunities for social interactions, extracurricular activities, and student engagement to strengthen social bonds within the university community.

Age-Appropriate coping mechanisms of students at various life stages: The interventions adopted should also consider the developmental levels of the students and age groups can better address the social adjustment challenges experienced during strike actions.

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