



Does Strike Action Affect Seminar and Publications of Public University Academic?

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Abstract: *The staff-student ratio in Nigerian universities is very high and in some situations, individual lecturers handle classes of over 2000 students, mark their scripts, assign grades and tabulate their results alone. This is mostly found in the Faculties of Social Sciences, Management, Arts and Education of the selected federal universities where student population is relatively higher as compared to other faculties. Similarly the tools with which academics utilize were improvised, laboratories were ill equipped, research grants are vanishing, class rooms and other facilities are becoming increasingly inadequate. In some faculties three or more lecturers shares the same office accommodation, an action that is inimical to the academic profession. This scenario captures the frustrations with which the staff and students of Nigerian universities experiences in a bid to maintain the high academic standards for which universities worldwide are known and respected for. It also explains the teaching condition of the universities as the most predominant factor that affect the publication and seminar of academic staff. The paper adopts the use of logistic regression to estimate the response of 156 academic staff of selected federal universities in north-western states of Nigeria. The response after simulation shows that strike action by academic staff affect the seminar and publication capabilities of academic staff. It further found that university autonomy; funding and working conditions are principal actors that precipitate strike action by the Nigerian academics. It finally recommends for government to take decisive action aimed at addressing the problem of funding and working conditions affecting Nigerian public universities.*

Keywords: *staff-student ratio, Nigerian universities, office accommodation, academic profession, & seminar and publication capabilities.*

1. INTRODUCTION

University education is arguably the most important and crucial component in human capital development. It is considered indispensable to the building of a strong and viable economy. It is an important ingredient for national development.

Furthermore, knowledge accumulation and its applications are seen as a major factor in the economic development of any nation. This leads to competitive advantage in the global economy. Educating the citizenry of any nation is essential to its social, political, economic and cultural vitality. Hence, higher education provides the much needed human resources for actively improving the economy of nations and guaranteeing rapid changes.

For several decades now, Lecturers of Public universities in Nigeria have been engaged at different times in strike actions over several issues of importance to the lecturers. These issues includes poor wages and poor conditions of service of academic staff in government owned Universities across the country, the problem of under-funding and infrastructural neglect in Nigerian universities as well as the lack of autonomy and academic freedom which the lecturers claim to be limiting the quality of teaching, research, scholarship and innovation. These issues represent the primary causes of the dispute which now escalates into a wider struggle with political connotations. The government's reaction has been that the lecturer's demands are unrealistic and unjustifiable when considered alongside the needs of other sectors of the economy. Thus the government labels the lecturers as greedy, inconsiderate and a union that parade itself as a political watch dog of government's actions and inactions, neglecting their primary mandate of teaching and research (Sylvester 2012). A closer look at the 2012, 2013, 2015 and 2017 industrial dispute between the Academic Staff and the Federal government of Nigeria indicates how the dispute affect the morale and academic performance of the university lecturers. This calls for a critical exploration with a view to identify the effect of such strike actions on the performance or productivity of the Nigerian public sector university academics. The paper seeks to estimate and establish the effect of such strike actions on the Seminar and Publication capabilities of the academics.

Questions;

- a. Does Strike Action significantly affect Seminar presentations of Nigerian University Academics?
- b. Does Strike action significantly affect Publications of Nigerian University Academics?

Hypotheses;

- a. Strike Action has no significant effect on the seminar of Nigerian University Academic
- b. Strike Action has no significant effect on the Publication of Nigerian University Academic

2. REVIEW ON ACADEMIC STAFF PRODUCTIVITY PATTERN IN NIGERIA

Research productivity include research publication in professional journals and in conference proceedings, writing a book or chapter, gathering and analyzing original evidence, working with post-graduate students on dissertations and class projects, obtaining research grants, carrying out editorial duties, obtaining patents and licenses, writing monographs, developing experimental designs, producing works of an artistic or creative nature and engaging in public debates and commentaries (Creswell 1985).

Arunach (2009) cited by Wagwu (2017), notes that South Africa and Nigeria are the only two African countries whose scholarly works dominate developing countries' 13 per cent contributions in the 140,000 periodicals' titles listed in Ulrich's Directory of Science Serials. Nwagwu adds that in Nigeria, there is no reliable local statistics about science production. On the other hand, Karani (2007) notes that in terms of quality and quantity of research output, Nigerian academics are rated the best in sub-Saharan Africa up to the late 1980s before it thereafter declined. This view is further supported by Okebukola (2012), while summarizing the factors which contributed to the decline between the late 1980s and 1996 before its subsequent collapse from 1997 till date. These factors include Lack of research skills in modern methods; Lack of equipment for carrying out state-of-the art research; Overloaded teaching and administration schedules which leave little time for research; Difficulty in accessing research funds; and diminishing ability of seasoned and senior researchers to mentor junior researchers due to brain drain. Those factors occasionally aggravate industrial disharmony in the Nigerian public sector environment and therefore precipitate strike actions.

Uzun (2002) also observes a sharp decline in the research productivity of academics in terms of the number of articles published in Nigeria from 1980-1989 and 1990-1999 based on an analysis of 21 core Nigerian Library and Information Science (LIS) journals indexed in Social Science Citation Index database. A similar scenario was also reported by Aina and Mabawonku (2008) when they observe that

Nigeria has the highest proportion of rejected papers in Africa out of the papers submitted to the African Journal of Library, Archives and Information Science (AJLAIS) for publication. In an attempt to reinforce the notion of a low publication output in Africa. Ali (2000), cites the UNESCO Statistical Yearbook which reports that 55 titles are being published per one million readers in the developing world as against the 487 titles per one million readers in the developed world. In the same vein, while reporting on low research output in Nigerian universities, The World Education News and Review (2006), states that Nigerian academics' research output is relatively low. The report shows that out of over 70 universities in the country as at the time of the study, only 20 were found to have performed creditably well in terms of academic research production. This view has been corroborated by Agarin and Nwagwu (2006), to the effect that in 2005, Nigeria was ranked next to the least of the countries in the world with the evidence of scientific research. The critical question lies in the fact that these low output could have been aggravated by the by the conditions prevalent in the Nigerian university environment, thus aggravating strike actions.

In addition, Aiyepoku (2006) conducts a study on bibliographic research on local scholarly works in local literature in Nigeria. He carries out a bibliometric and documentation study on geographic literature by Nigerian academics, and test the validity of Brooke's probability theory.

In the same vein, Chiemeké, Longe, Longe and Shaib (2009) conduct an empirical appraisal research on research output from Nigerian tertiary institutions and found out that publication remains a yardstick for promotion in academia in Nigeria. Braimoh (1999), also reviews the role of African universities on national and continental developments while placing his emphasis on the significance of research and publication efforts among university lecturers as the process of improving their teaching as well as demonstrating their abilities to create and disseminate knowledge for the solution of societal problems.

Agboola and Oduwolé (2005), investigate publication output of Nigerian academics. The study seeks information on the status of Nigerian university academic publication requirements for promotion, frequency of staff seminars, role of seminar secretaries, role of staff seminars in enhancing staff publication output. They report further that staff seminars have impacted positively on the publication outputs of university academics in Nigeria.

3. STRIKES BY ACADEMIC STAFF UNION OF UNIVERSITIES

In 1980 ASUU embarked on an industrial action because of the threat of termination of the appointment of six lecturers from the University of Lagos. In 1981 ASUU embarked on further strikes to demand funding for the universities, the reversal of the problem of brain drain, poor salaries, and conditions of service, including the improvement of the entire university system. In 1983 there was negotiation on the Elongated University Salary Structure (EUSS) and this became an issue of dispute in 1988 because of the lack of implementation of this prior agreement. In 1984 ASUU went on strike to oppose the deregulation of the economy and to resist military dictatorship. In 1985 The Union embarked on strike to resist the military regime and its authoritarian decree 16 of 1985.

Furthermore, in 1986 ASUU went on strike to protest the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) by the Ibrahim Babangida's administration and in 1987 ASUU still went on strike to demand for the implementation of the Elongated University Salary Scale and to establish a joint negotiation committee between ASUU and the Federal Government. Similarly in 1988 there was Strike against the effects of imposed Structural Adjustment Programme. In 1992 the union went on strike due to the failure of negotiations over the working conditions in Nigerian universities.

However, in 1993 ASUU was banned again because it refused the order of the Industrial Arbitration Panel (IAP) to suspend industrial action and return to the negotiation table. So in 1994 the union embarked again on another strike to demand renegotiation of agreements reached in 1992, the reinstatement of over eighty lecturers whose appointments were terminated. In 1996 ASUU embarked on a strike due to the dismissal of the its President, Dr. Assisi Asobie.

In 2001 ASUU declared an industrial action on issues related to funding of universities, and also sought the reinstatement of 49 sacked lecturers at the University of Ilorin for taking part in a previous industrial action in 2001. In 2002 again ASUU embarked on a strike to protest the failure of the government of Obasanjo to implement the 2001 agreement.

In 2003 ASUU embarked on a further industrial action due to the non-implementation of previous agreements, poor university funding and disparity in salary, retirement age and in 2007 It was the same agitation for salary increment and other reforms in the education sector the ASUU cried out for in 2005 that led to the strike.

In 2007, ASUU went on another strike for three months and yet in 2008 it held two one-week “warning strikes” to press on a range of demands, including an improved salary scheme and reinstatement of 49 lecturers who were dismissed many years ago.

There was an indefinite strike action in 2009 over a disagreement with the Federal Government on an earlier agreement reached. After three months of strike, in October 2009, an MoU was signed and the strike was called off. In 2013 July 1st, 2013 another industrial action started and in 2015 another strike took place as a result of the refusal of federal government to implement the signed 2009 agreement.

In 2026 and 2017 ASUU embarked on yet another strike as a result of the refusal of the Federal Government to honour a memorandum of action signed by the joint committee between the two parties (asuustruggles.org) this scenario explains the preponderance of strike as a weapon used by the union to engage governments of various regimes in Nigeria. The paper focuses on whether the strike action has any implication on the performance of university academics.

4. METHODS

To determine the aggregate effect of strike action on Seminar and Publication of academic staff, 156 Questionnaires were distributed to the selected academic staff in three selected federal universities in north-western Nigeria. The criterion is based on their ranks and years of experience. A logistic regression was employed to assess the relationship between strike and publication as well as seminar of university academic staff.

The general formula for logistic regression looked thus:

$$P = \frac{e^{\alpha + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \dots + \beta_k x_k}}{1 + e^{\alpha + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \dots + \beta_k x_k}}$$

Where P = Publication and Seminar

$\beta^1 X^1$ = Strike variable (Autonomy)

$\beta^2 X^2$ = Strike variable (Funding)

$\beta^2 X^2$ = Strike variable (Work Condition)

The paper adopted the three factors as the major determinants of strike. Hence their aggregate impact was determined on the productivity elements of selected academic staff in three federal universities in north western Nigeria. Two dependant variables (Seminar and Publication) were assessed aggregately in order to determine their level of combined response from the combined impact of the predictors. Apart from using research publications as a criterion for staff promotion, research publications in current and relevant areas are also considered vital for enhancing the reputation and economic status of a university as they yield funds that can be used for the wellbeing of the university. They are also a useful tool for institutional ranking hence, an increase in research publication positively affects the reputation of an institution and leads to an increase in productivity and larger student enrolment. Thus, it is considered vital in determining the quality of any university as it does not only constitute a fundamental requisite for promotion of an academic staff but it also requires a high level of participation and good quality work.

5. TEST AND RESULT

Hypothesis 1: Strike action has no significant effect on Seminar presentations of University academic staff.

Table 1: Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients in respect of academic staff Seminar

		Chi-square	Df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	211.277	3	.000
	Block	211.277	3	.000
	Model	211.277	3	.000

Source: Simulation of SPSS

Table 1 is the test of efficiency of the logistic model in assessing the variables of the research. The Omnibus test of model coefficients determines the suitability of the logistic model in assessing the extent to which the independent variable predict the behavior of the dependent variable or influence it. The table indicates that the model is fit because at the level of significance of .000 which is below the 5% level of significance set in the research, the outcome justifies the positive nature of the model in gauging the behavior of the variables of the study both in step (sequential and logical), Block (combined effect assessment) and in aggregate model efficiency. However, where the model was found to be ineffective in capturing the behavior of the research variable, the model will be dropped. This gives the research paper the opportunity to proceed with the parameter estimates of the effect of the compressed predictor variables on individual components of the response variables.

Table 2: Parameter estimates of the impact of Strike action on seminar

		Variables in the Equation (Seminar)					
		B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 2	Autonomy	2.034	.269	57.360	1	.000	7.643
	Funding	2.972	.316	88.677	1	.000	19.538
	Working conditions	2.168	.271	64.141	1	.000	8.739
	Constant	-3.884	.442	77.187	1	.000	.021

Source: Researcher's simulation of SPSS

Table 2 reflects the influence of strike action on the Seminar of the Nigerian university academic staff. The results shows the combined effect of strike action represented by lack of university autonomy and academic freedom, underfunding and poor working conditions on the seminar component of academic staff of selected Nigerian universities. The Beta results (2.034, 2.972, and 2.168) in the regression model reflect the magnitude of the contribution of the components of independent variable on the dependent variable. The positive nature of the outcome shows that each component is capable of influencing the dependent variable (seminar). The standard error or white noise error term (S.E .269, .316 and .271) reflects the level at which the model was capable of holding other strike factors that have the capacity of influencing the seminar of university academic staff constant. The Constant figures in the logistic regression (-3.884, .442 and 77.187 for beta, SE and Wald) are the values of the dependent variable (Y) when other components of the independent variable are set at zero. The wald figures in the logistic regression model (57.360, 88.677 and 64.141) shows the test of significance of the beta estimates while the significance level (.000, .000 and .000) shows that the level of influence of the three predictors of strike action on the seminar component of university academic staff is positive. Meaning that strike action has a significant impact on the seminar component of Nigerian University academic staff.

Since the level of significance is less than 5% adopted in the research, we reject the null hypothesis which states that: Strike action has no effect on seminar presentation of Nigerian University academic staff. This finding is consistent with the work of Obasi (1991) Julious (2008) and Sylvester (2012) where they concluded that the absence of lack of autonomy and proper funding of the universities will undoubtedly affect the quality and the quantity of the productivity output of the

Nigerian academics. Yet the finding is inconsistent with the works of Otoba (2001) and Jonathan (1991) who found that seminar presentations of academic staff is function of their zeal towards attaining high level of academic status i.e. promotional prospects within the academic circle. In summary, the regressed results show that all the three predictors of strike have influenced the seminar component of the academic staff significantly.

Table 3: Model Summary of academic staff seminar

Model Summary			
Step3	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	477.090 ^a	.510	.541

Source: Researcher's Simulation of SPSS

Table 3 is a summary of the efficiency of R square. Using the COX and SNELL as well as the Nagelkerke to test the extent at which the R square is effective in explaining the level of variations among the variables. That is, the model summary shows the degree at which the independent variable is capable of explaining variations in the dependent variable. At .510 (51%) and .541 (54%) using both the two approaches have shown that the model is slightly above 50% which is a good parameter for gauging the efficacy of the model.

Table 4: Academic Staff Productivity Classification on Seminar of Academic Staff

	Observed	Predicted			Percentage
		Seminar			
		.00	1.00		
Step 4	Seminar	.00	58	94	38.2
		1.00	27	137	94.2
	Overall Percentage				80.4

Source: Researchers' simulation of SPSS

Table .4 shows the classification of respondents in relation to their response on the seminar presentation as a component of academic staff productivity. The model captures the percentage of academic staff within the selected universities who are deemed as productive based on their response on seminar.

At the overall efficiency level of about 80.4% of the classification table. 94 respondents (representing 38.2%) were found to be unproductive based on their assessment by the model. The assessment was made vis a vis their level of response in respect of the seminar component of academic staff productivity. However, 137 respondents (representing 94.2%) were found to be productive based on their responses. The overall productivity measurement was set in order to identify the aggregate level of productivity of the respondents. A respondent by this criterion is deemed productive when all the productivity elements in respect of him were found to be positive.

Hypothesis 2: Strike action has no significant effect on Publications of Nigerian University Academic Staff

Table 5: Omnibus Test of Model Coefficients on Academic Staff Publication

		Chi-square	Df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	336.849	3	.000
	Block	336.849	3	.000
	Model	336.849	3	.000

Source: Researchers' Simulation of SPSS

The Omnibus test of model coefficients in table 5 shows that the logistic model is highly significant (.000 for step, block and overall model effectiveness) in gauging the behavior of the

variables. Since the omnibus test of the research coefficient was found to be fit in testing the influence of strike on the publication component of university academic staff. The study proceeds to estimate the level of the influence of the strike action on publications of academic staff.

Table 6: Parameter Estimates of the Impact Strike on Publications

		B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 2	Autonomy	2.299	.324	50.464	1	.000	9.967
	Funding	2.584	.346	55.812	1	.000	13.250
	Working-conditions	3.222	.320	101.610	1	.000	25.072
	Constant	-4.561	.436	109.299	1	.000	.010

Source: Researchers' Simulation of SPSS

From Table 6, one observes that all the three predictors of strike have a significant influence on the publication of academic staff. The beta results (2.229, 2.584, 3.222) for lack of university autonomy and academic freedom, Underfunding and poor working condition revealed the contribution of the independent variables towards influencing the a single component of the dependent variable (i.e. publication). The level of significance (.000, .000, .000) for all the components of strike which is below 5% of the level set by the research enables the study to reject the null hypothesis which states that strike has no effect on publication of academic staff. However from the beta results which shows the magnitude of the contribution of each predictor variable on the component of the publication, one can observe that the contribution of poor working condition to the level of the influence is higher (3.222) followed by University autonomy and academic freedom.

This can be inferred to mean that working condition as a predictor of strike has a greater influence on the publication capabilities of academic staff. By implication, it suggests that the extent to which the academics publish is significantly dependent on the level of the infrastructural/ working conditions of the university.

This situation concurs with the works of Obasi (1991), Aminu (2004), Ganiyu (2009), Matha (2010) and Julious (2010) whose findings shows that poor working condition is a critical factor in the determination of worker's productivity.

According to ASUU (2010) the staff- student ratio in Nigerian universities is very high and in some situations, individual lecturers handle classes of over 600 students, mark their scripts, assign grades and tabulate their results alone. This is mostly found in the Faculties of Social Sciences, Management, Arts and Education of the selected universities where student population is relatively higher as compared to other faculties. This explains the teaching condition of the universities as the most predominant factor that affect the publication of academic staff.

Similarly, Obasi (1991) observes that the tools with which academics utilize were improvised, laboratories were ill equipped, research grants are vanishing, class rooms and other facilities are becoming increasingly inadequate. This scenario captures the frustrations with which the staff and students of ABU/BUK and UDU experience in a bid to maintain the high academic standards for which universities worldwide are known and respected for. In some of the faculties of the selected universities (ABU and UDUS in particular), the research observes that three or more lecturers shares the same office accommodation, an action that is inimical to the academic profession because according to Kola (2008);

The crucial fact is that for a job that requires high rate of concentration and intellectual rigors which should be free from distractions, it is very unfortunate to put three or more lecturers in one office Pp 113

This scenario explains how working conditions affect the publication of academic staff.

Table 7: Model Summary on the Impact of Strike on Publication

Model Summary			
Step 3	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
	430.677 ^a	.521	.591

Source: Researchers' simulation of SPSS

The values of the R square from Table 7 have shown that at .521 (52%) and .591 (59%) the R square is positive enough to explain how the behavior of the independent variable could influence variations in the dependent variable (Publication). The paper proceeds to estimate the level of productivity among the selected academic staff.

Table 8: Academic Staff Productivity Classification on Publication

Classification Table ^a				
	Observed	Predicted		
		Publication	Percentage	Correct
Step 4	Publication	.00	101	32.1
	Overall	1.00	25	94.1
	Percentage			80.8

Source: Researchers' Simulation of SPSS

Table 8 shows the classification of respondent in relation to publication. The result shows that 127 academic staff (94 %) are productive while 33 (32%) are found to be unproductive. The classification table as earlier said was based on the respondents' responses on the five elements of productivity; hence this shows that a significant number of academic staff of the selected universities are productive particularly in relation to their publication behavior.

5. CONCLUSIONS

It is worthy of note that research productivity of academic staff is mainly disseminated through publication and seminar. This earns the staff local and global recognition. Research publication is considered a major determinant of academic staff productivity as it helps to provide current information needed for the growth and development of a society. The standard results in this paper reveals thus;

- a. University Autonomy, Funding and Working Conditions predict strike action by academic staff of the selected universities and this have a high significant impact on their publications. The impact is mostly influenced (from the computed logistic result) by working condition (Lead Predictor). This calls for governments at various levels to attach more emphasis on enhancing the teaching environment within the Nigerian Universities.
- b. University Autonomy, Funding and Working Conditions predict strike action by academic staff of the selected universities and this have a high significant impact on their Seminar. The impact is mostly influenced (from the computed logistic result) by funding (Lead Predictor). This also calls for government to reemphasize on its commitment to adequately fund the Nigerian public Universities.

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