



Asuu Strike and the Nigerian Governments: Implications on Students and Society in a Changing World

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

The impasse between the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and the governments in Nigeria (state and federal) manifested in a repeated ASUU strikes, having implications on students and society in the contemporary changing world. Hence the study examines the adverse impacts of the strikes on university students and the society that embodies the stakeholders. The study discovered that the strikes are orchestrated largely by the union quest to protect its members' welfare and swift greeting of any perceived unfriendly steps by the government with strike actions while the government fell short in funding and entrenching a right legal milieu for negotiation and regulation of ASUU. With the secondary sourced data from journals, newspapers, journals, books and the internet while underpinning the research with the social contract theory, the study concludes that the public university students are exposed and tempted to indulge in social vices, have a sense of being disadvantaged unlike their private colleagues, and the society developmental agenda is threatened because of the poor quality of graduates produced from the Ivory Tower. It recommends that government and ASUU should renegotiate their agreements while the former should also ramp up the budgetary funding allocation to the University amongst others.

Keywords: ASUU; changing-world; implications; society; strike; students.

1. INTRODUCTION

The complexity of development in virtually all facets of life, especially in sciences, technology, and resources management is increasingly placing demands on human resources development to minimize the effects of over-dependent on foreigners in a fast-paced changing world. For instance, Nigeria's educational aspiration at independence in 1960 seems to be geared towards raising a high-level of manpower to take over, most importantly, the administrative services from the colonialists, informing the establishment of some government-owned University. However, with many changes in the structural composition of the country – starting from four regions to 36 states with Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), and a continuous increase in population (approximately 180,000,000, almost three times figure at independent) the societal changes have intensified needs to service the population by both the central and the federating states. Hence, providing a qualitative higher education alongside the basic and secondary levels becomes essential. But the Nigerian public University education has recorded incessant industrial action of Academic Staff Union of University (ASUU) orchestrated largely due to a collapse of agreements between her and its employer, the federal or state governments in Nigeria, threatening the breeding of the needed manpower.

Also, the modernization of teaching aids and methods across the globe are additional responsibilities the government is required to shoulder. A global reference is increased use of sophisticated digital technology in Australian Universities assisted by far-flung access to high-speed broadband services to present modern and innovative content to learners [1]. Similarly, an increased global call for students to build an extensive set of skills within the years of formal education more than it used to be in the past is trending currently because, according to Care *et al.*[2], education has been viewed as an arrangement meant for preparation for adulthood and its work-related responsibilities.

Therefore, to achieve the set goals in university education, quality leadership is required in which the governments and ASUU can serve this purpose. ASUU was founded in 1978 as an umbrella that covers University academic staff in

both the federal and state-owned University in Nigeria, succeeding the former National Association of University Teachers established in 1965 [3]. ASUU is one of the major four trade unions in Nigerian public universities. Others are the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU), National Association of Academic Technologists (NAAT), and Non-Academic Staff Union of Universities (NASU) [4:16]. While NAAT is a technical education service provider to students SSANU and NASU handle the administration of schools as non-academic staff. Since the inception of ASSU (having a national executive that negotiate on behalf of the state and federal-owned University under an agreed arrangement by the Union and governments), there are records of strike actions - long and short time. But, before embarking on strike, demands or concerns to be addressed by governments are always articulated which, many times, are unattended to often making the union down-tool. Or where agreements are reached, governments sometimes disrespect them. In response to either of both instances, Ugar [5] submits that ASUU has no option than to apply industrial actions to attract the government's listening ear to the 'cankerworms eating the fabrics' of the educational system in Nigeria.

However, there seems to be no tractable success accompanying many of the ASUU industrial actions except few negligible achievements mostly about increased members' welfare. As such, can one argue that ASUU incessant strike has benefited the student, educational sector or the larger society as a whole? The question is important because it seems the government (state and federal) appears to be undermining the importance of high-level human development through the university training that is strategic to national development, and averred by Krishna (2016) as one of the most viable means of gathering, distributing, upgrading and expanding the frontier of knowledge. Additively, Aidelunuoghene, [6:7] submits that:

Education is not a thing that is positioned to be sold. It is a social good. It is a social responsibility that the government owes its people. It is the power behind the growth, development and changes of any society. Higher education returns humanity to mankind. The university is the brain box of the nation. To close it down means to a nation what suffering from

stroke means to a person. There is a nervous collapse...

Given this prevailing situation in Nigeria, can one say that the ASUU strike has improved the welfare of students and society as stakeholders in the educational sector? Therefore, this article aim is to investigate the implications of the ASUU strike on students and society. The secondary data sources such as journals, newspapers, the internet and others are explored and descriptively analysed – using descriptive analytical method for the study. The paper is divided into seven sections. Section one introduces the work, section two reviews the literature, section three presents the theoretical framework while the fourth section interrogates the basis for the ASUU strike. The fifth section examines the government responses to strikes, section six discusses the implications of ASUU strikes on the students and the Nigerian society and the last section concludes and offers recommendations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Education is the strongest weapon that can be applied for the transformation in almost every area of human life. And, the university is noted for playing a leading role in this regard. This informs Efeke [7] submission that Universities globally are charged with the responsibility of equipping and enlightening individuals with professional abilities and skills such that is capable of enabling invention in the political, socio-economic and other areas of national and international life.

It is noteworthy that societies, which according to Kumar [8:7] are not just “group of people that share a common culture, occupy a defined territory and with a sense of unity contribute towards a unified entity” but also embedded associations and values by which members care for themselves. Interestingly, institutions are created to maximize the advantages of collective livelihood for both the individuals and as a people. The University system is a notable institution designed to advance and sustain the community to improve living. However, the disruption in the academic calendar often caused by ASSU strike making students be stranded at the junction of a progressive training programme and constituting a clog in the wheel of a very important sector kernel to development appears to contrast or be reversing the national societal aspiration.

While strike, defined by Chijioke [9] as an organized stoppage of work by a group of workers to enforce adherence to demands made on a particular employer or employers, is employed by the labour unions to press home their demands, Ogbette [3] argue that both the government and ASUU are now turning it to an opportune time for fault findings and blame trading. As such, a critical time for active negotiation and finding a lasting solution to the causes of the impasse is now wasted for trading on frivolities. Though the right to strike is global and a universal democratic right of all employees irrespective of where they are employed; and it is also under the control of the International legal instruments of the United Nations (UN) through the International Labour Organisations (ILO) [10], its underlying principle of last resort after the failure of other mediums of bargaining seems to be undermined by ASUU and the government appears to be less perturbed by it seeing it as part of the societal norm, judging by its repeated action by the former and late responsiveness of the latter.

In the global community, many factors have been identified as causes of strikes. This includes breakdown of bargaining system; imperfect or limited information; low wages, poor working condition, poor condition of service, the crisis of rising expectations; arbitrary treatment of workers by management; and, agitation and agitators [6, 10, 11]. However, specifically, reasons for ASUU's strike are traceable to increasing workload due to a rising students' population, weak institutional autonomy, poor government funding, and poor policies [12, 13]. Implicitly, the government appears to share the larger causes of strike arising largely from poor political leadership, and neglect of the principles of good governance.

Meanwhile, every action has consequential effects and strikes are not exempted. Ezeagba [12] noted that strike brings the benefit of achieving demands to employers but sometimes lead to loss of jobs. But since there are two sides to a coin, what are the likely losses strike has on the government? It is would be seen in the associated breaking of the social contract with the populace; breaches of public trust; and, its attendant negative results on the society.

While it is believed that bad governance and mismanagement of the economy, especially, during the oil boom (1960-1970) by the Nigerian Federal Government largely spur ASUU's

agitations for better funding that eventually resulted in the 1979 strike, the economic recession that accompanied the boom period alongside the neglect of the agricultural sector seems to have deepened the government liquidity crisis which consequently affected government capacity to maintain workers' welfare. This resulted in the Federal Government alignment with the World Bank / International Monetary Fund (IMF) Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) introduced in 1986 as a panacea to the biting economic problem, making many workers jobless through downsizing, commercialization and privatisation and devaluation of Naira (Nigerian money) [14]. Since the ASUU are not left out of the harrowing effects of the national challenges, she has been intensifying her demand, more importantly, a better welfare package for her members.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This work adopts the Social Contract Theory (SCT) for its framework. Thought SCT underscores, generally, a contractual agreement as the basis for the societal existence (artificial or constructive model) and has been referenced or mentioned by some of the classical philosophers such as Machiavelli and Grotius, Hobbes is widely acknowledged as the inventor of the modern SCT while Locke, Lewis and other scholars have developed its varied perspectives [15]. This, as well, suggests the variants of SCT thoughts and applicability even in the social sciences circle. However, the SCT version of Lewis Coser proposed in 1956 applicable to employer and employee relationship in both the private and public sectors, which is an offshoot of Thomas Hobbes SCT that is centred on the government and the governed or submission of private rights for public goods in a polity, is employed. The main assumption of SCT is that an industrial dispute can either be functional or dysfunctional amounting to a productive and an unproductive outcome respectively (cited in Alabi, [16]). When it is functional, conflict brings about new norms, reformed institutions, economic and technological stimulation and wage increase. Others are a rise in investment, fighting back to suppress resistance to innovation and reformation, providing solutions to many reasons of conflict in and groups and individuals performance may be improved. However, when it is Dysfunctional, whereby solutions to conflicts are not found, it increases frustration, on-the-job stress, discontent, aggression, hostility, hoarding of information, distrust, divisiveness, hostility,

discrimination, resentment, suspicion, rebellion, arson, assassination and any other response indicating resistance to change.

In reality, when a group have a sense of being short-changed in an organization or by an employer in regard to power relation, status, resource allocation or wealth, discontent and disenchantment become inevitable. In other words, employees' feeling of deprivation would ignite a conflict [17]. However, Mitchell [18] argues that Lewis Coser's assumption undoubtedly is rooted in Karl Marx's submission that conflict does not only lead to ever-changing relations within the existing social structure but the social system also transforms through it. But how is this applicable to ASUU and government relation and how does the conflict take its toll on students and Nigerians?

Meanwhile, Alabi [16] in his study titled 'Students perception on the impact of Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) Industrial Action on University Development in Nigeria' employed the SCT to underpin his findings and concluded that the ASUU strike hampered effective learning. While this study expands the scope of the study beyond student perception to include the wider society impact – closing the gap - the theory offers insight that ASUU's industrial actions embody both the functional and dysfunctional consequences on stakeholders. Although the dysfunctional outcome encompasses low-quality education, students frustration, societal decadence and the likes, the conflict between the two parties (government and ASUU), has likewise brought about unity among members of the union across the nation as they express dissatisfaction with the government on issues concerning salary, conditions of service, or the university funding. The unity of ASUU members often appears strong during an industrial action in a country characterized by a fragile peace which, according to Folarin et al. [19], is delicate and often degenerate into horrifying violence, implying that the strike could disrupt public peace if it is not well managed by both parties.

Nevertheless, as relevant as SCT is to this article, it is criticized for focusing too much on changes (positive or negative) arising from conflict but failed to acknowledge relative social stability existing in societies. Also, critics maintain that the changes are not major and should be termed incremental instead of being revolutionary [20].

4. AN OVERVIEW OF ASUU AND STRIKE ACTIONS

The disagreement between the ASUU and government is always justified by the former as a necessary step in advancing the education sector development. While it is incontrovertible that education is the bridge connecting generations for sustainability and improvement of recorded development, but connecting this reality with the ASUU strike for educational growth seems irreconcilable. Moreover, since education prepares the young generation for tractable incremental successes, it is expedient to review ASUU activities and her guiding principles.

The ASUU constitution detailed its objectives and responsibility expected of members. However, rule two is relevant for interrogation in this study. Rule two of stipulation includes the following stated objectives: to unite all academic staff that are qualified and register as a member; to guard and increase the socio-economic and cultural interest of the nation; and, to regulate the relations between the academic staff and employers, and between members; to promote and maintain a high quality of academic and professional practice; and, to establish and maintain a just and proper condition of service for its members [11]. These objectives not only articulate ASUU as a labour union that is expected to champion members interest but also reiterate her resolve to uphold professionalism and national interest, especially in ensuring socio-economic and cultural development. But would academic profession preservation and the Nigerian development agenda advancement pursuit realizable by ASUU amidst recurrent strikes? Similarly, is the union receiving the necessary support from the government or the opposite is the case? Answers to these salient questions largely suggest whether the ASUU is adding positively to the national development which, expectedly, would be transmitted through products of the academic system (students) to the environment representing the society that embodies all stakeholders.

Furthermore, because the government-ASUU impasse is almost becoming part of the academic activity in Nigeria, one is sceptical to believe that ASUU's national development ambition is more than a cosmetic objective. The repeated suspension of academic activities by ASUU in the Ivory Towers remains a national concern, making a review of agreements and demands a continuous exercise. Though,

recently, Odunsi [21] maintains that the continuous demands over the years center on six major issues which are: increased funding for public universities; revisit of the 2009 FGN/ASUU agreement; outstanding academic allowances; continuous increase in the number of universities; composition of Visitation Team to Federal Universities; and, forceful implementation of the Integrated Payroll on Personnel Information System (IPPIS) and refusal to pay February 2020 salaries, the suspension of the ten months strike started in March 2020 in January 2021 does not suggest that these issues have been finally addressed by the government or an end-in-sight to incessant strike. As well, the issues appear to tilt more in furtherance of ASUU's members' welfare than promoting students or masses interest.

Corroborating the above ASUU members' benefits advancement submission, a senior academician (Professor) from one of the public University, Niger Delta University (NDU) quipped thus:

How is it possible to work in a situation as this? The fan and the air-conditioner are not working, I cannot switch on my computer if I cannot well utilize my computer in my office, how can a student make use of computer in the library? The reason for the strike actions are no longer that of salaries and wages. It is now about raising the condition of service in both the academic and non-academic staff of Nigerian public universities" [4:20].

If a number of the strike has been undertaken by ASUU totalling 15 from 1999 according to Yusuf [20] and detailed thus: 1999- five months; 2001- three months; 2002- two weeks; 2003/2004- six months; 2005- three days; 2006- three days; 2007- three months; 2008 - one week; 2009- four months; 2010- over five months; 2011/2012- three months; 2013- over five months; 2017- three weeks; 2018/2019 - two months; 2020 - nine months, it seems safe to infer that both the ASUU and the government interests are far from being nationalistic or stakeholders' centred.

The adverse effects of the incessant strike actions by the ASUU are aptly captured by Aidelunuoghene, [6:10] as resulting into:

...low standard of graduates from Nigerian universities; delay in graduation leads to wastage of time, examples are, medical students that will not meet up with

housemanship, law students not going to Law school at the right time; the level of 'standstill' for Nigerian students creating a bad image for public schools; students that stay at home without being engaged are psychologically affected; after being away from work for months, the lecturer receive their pay which amounts to financial loss; when students do not pay school fees, revenue automatically reduced...

Obviously, strikes incur losses of resources and time to the students and government apart from the psychological effect on the former. Also, it is worthy of note that the ASUU members suffer almost no loss as their emoluments are still paid for doing nothing during the strike period. Is this not an irony? Be that as it may, we examine how the government reacts to this seemingly conflicting situation.

5. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO ASSU STRIKES

Government is a serious business requiring prudent management of limited resources for maximum impacts on the citizenry. Therefore, amidst competing needs, policy and decisions are not just churn out but also prioritized. In Nigeria, the tertiary education funding challenge has been a recurrent issue for discussion in the public domain. While many analysts blamed the government for allocating a paltry sum of money, often below the recommended United Nation Education and Science Organisation (UNESCO) 20 percent of the national budget, the government justified her inability due to increasingly limited financial resources which is claimed to be the major reason for the default in agreement implementation as well.

It is unfortunate that most of the Nigerian public universities are bedevilled with notable challenges ranging from the lack of qualified personnel, inadequate facilities, depreciating amenities and infrastructures affecting the quality research outputs and graduates alongside the diminishing employability pedigree [22]. The decadence, as revealed, in the public Universities is traceable to funding, suggesting that the government is not living up to its billing or is underperforming its overseer role.

In addition, the Federal Government introduction of an alternative payment platform, the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIIS), believe is a means of ensuring prudent

financial management, cut wastages, corruption and cost was perceived by ASUU as a clog in the progressive wheel of academic progress. The ASUU President Biodun Ogunyemi reacted that the IPPPS system contrast the autonomy of the union; is a distraction to the union; that many enrollees on the IPPS have attested to the fact that it is a disgusting store of corruption; and, that no organized country in the world has lump Intellectuals with the civil service on same payment platform [23, 24]. This is a clear indication that ASUU vehemently opposed the government acclaimed remedial measure to lessen the funding problem in the university, suggesting the adoption of the union-sponsored alternative payment system. As it is, the ASUU reaction to IPPIS suggests a parochial view of it and the union members' interest furthering as the basis for its rejection, with little regard to the overall national interest of effective resource management.

Comparing the Nigerian experience with what is obtainable in other climes appears essential. In Macedonia for example, the peaceful settlement of industrial strike is outlined and regulated by the government's law on Peaceful Resolution of Labour Dispute (Official Gazette of RM 87/07) wherein there is provision for the right of workers to strike in areas of common needs as stated in Article 18, Law on Peaceful Settlement of Labour Disputes [10]. Hence, the government failed to create the right legal environment for labour unions negotiation regulation aided the ASUU stance and capacity to almost circumvent the workability of IPSS in the University system.

Similarly, the Nigerian government continuous short-falling in the internationally set standard of 20 percent by UNESCO is evidenced in the 'Annual Budgetary Allocations to Education of 20 World Bank Sampled Countries' where Ghana took the lead (1st position) with 31% of its budgetary allocation education, followed by Cote D'Ivoire (2nd position) with 30% while India and Nigeria came behind as the 19th and 20th with a budgetary allocation of 12.7% and 8.4% respectively [25]. The Nigerian funding position clearly demonstrates the importance government attach to education generally which often empowers ASUU demand for improved financial allocation to University; encourage the government to encourage the establishment of private University, compromise of stand on the public Universities academic quality, their low research output or regulatory rule application;

and, public less appreciation of government efforts and sympathy for ASUU most times.

One of the effects of poor funding of government-owned University is the rapid springing up of private Universities (79 at present) with some recording a rising profile in terms of teaching and research when compared with many of their public counterparts – totalling 91 at present. For instance, Covenant University, American University of Nigeria, Skyline University, Landmark University, Babcock University, were ranked high amongst both the public and their peers private University using the performance indicators of Teaching (the learning environment), Research (volume, income and reputation, citations (research influence), international outlook (staff student's research) and Industry Income (knowledge transfer) [26]. Although the population growth in Nigeria is one of the factors necessitating private schools complement the public as the latter is almost overwhelmed, the government management of the public University would likely determine their relevance in the nearest future.

6. IMPLICATIONS OF ASSU STRIKES ON STUDENTS AND SOCIETY

Having examined the reasons for ASUU strikes and government responses, we turn to implications of both actors actions on the stakeholders especially students and the societal socio-economic development. As rightly pointed out by Glasby [1] that as the technology landscape of universities continues to develop students increasingly depend on them for assistance in the development of skills required in a digital age instead a mere content. It is common knowledge that the contemporary world is too dynamic for any nation to be left behind the curve of acquiring and appropriating the scientific and technical knowledge through the higher institutions of learning for all-round development. But, with the strikes characterizing the Nigeria public University system, it is doubtful to the belief that they can measure up to the task of keeping pace with the global trajectory. Though the private schools are gearing up in this regard the state counterparts are naturally expected to give the lead or set the pace for innovative scientific and technologically driven development.

Besides, students of public universities are always crestfallen and frustrated because of the elongation of their duration of study period

arising from too many strike actions of ASUU. The unfavourable environment for qualitative learning often dampens human resourcefulness making student graduation with an excellent Grade Point Average (GPA) difficult or almost impossible [27]. Additionally, students are increasingly becoming disinterested in academics; prefer to continue doing menial jobs to returning for learning; and, forget most of the acquired knowledge due to a prolonged stay out of school occasioned by strikes [28, 16, 29]. Public students' remarks noted next attest to the aforementioned scenarios.

"I have deeply lost interest in resuming school activities because I have lost memory of what has been previously taught before the commencement of the strike. I can't remember my course titles and codes. All my female friends do not talk about school any longer since there is more focus on getting married and beginning a family" An averment of a final year student of Nutritional Dietetics Department, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. [30].

"I am not happy at all staying at home for this long. It is more than frustrating. The time of completion will now be extended. The Federal Government should honour the reached agreements with ASUU to enable students to go back to school. This is the better way forward to avoid going on strike at the end of this one" Said a 400 level student of the University of Jos [20].

Likewise, a student from the Linguistics Department, University of Nigeria Nsukka was worried that her business located within the university environment has not progressed in any way since the strike commenced while an undergraduate from the Department of Psychology of Nnamdi Azikiwe University lamented that the money he paid for his accommodation located off-campus has expired with no proper use of the rented room [31].

Furthermore, in a study of Six Hundred and Four students selected from Ekiti State University in a multi-stage sampling study, Ajayi [32] discovered that the ASUU strike has brought in disorderliness in the academic calendar of universities that affected students' academic pursuit and performance. The percentage breakdown of the study shows that 71.2% have in one way or other experienced ASUU strike, 51.6% admitted that the ASUU strike has

influenced negatively on academics, 59.5% have the notion that the Federal Government can find a way of resolving the crisis through timely and rewarding dialogue. These are an integral part of concrete shreds of evidences of blows dealt by ASUU strikes on the national life.

Moreover, two cases should be avoided from occurring in Nigeria. First, the experienced in Sierra Leone where youth joined the terrorist group because of the absent of quality education (Dad *et al*, 2020). Second, Darden (2019, cited in Mohd-Sani, [33]) report that ISIS recruitment records show 300 young ISIS members between 2013 and 2014 were students at the period of recruitment which are a major source of help for assigned domestic chores like cooking or as armed-fighters with some trafficked, kidnapped, and recruited forcibly while few others joined voluntarily on the bases of perception of divisiveness, exclusion, frustration, grievances, cultural threats, family or friends' network.

It is apparent that the devastating effects of youth idleness that might be caused by academic paralysis similar to the referenced cases need to be prevented in Nigeria. This is because the overall impact of the manifestation of similar situations would be an increase in social vices. More so that some students' observe to indulge in unproductive activities such as sexual immorality, cultism, cyber scam, gambling, gossips, watching films and reading fun materials in place of important academic materials in Nigeria during strikes [16, 4] which is a precursor to raising an army of indecent and unproductive citizens.

Also, the public students' perception of being disadvantaged compared to their private colleagues is a psychological effect of the frequent school closure by ASUU strike. For instance, after the national lockdown was eased in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, private University explored the online learning platform while the public students could not as a result of the strike. Interestingly, the leading Universities acknowledged to lead in online learning are privately owned Covenant University and American University [34]. It is interesting to note that this is increasing students' penchant for foreign schooling and certification even in the neighbouring countries, such as the Republic of Benin, Ghana amongst others [16], with an academic standard that appears not equal to that of Nigeria aside from its capital flight negativity.

It is high risks for the world if people refused to provide for their children the type of education that complies with their intellect, society and emotional growth [35]. The Nigerian populace appears to be losing faith in the quality of graduates the public University are producing because parents and higher school leavers prefer private universities to public ones judging by a research conducted by Okwum and Campbell (n.d cited in [16]) on the influence of ASUU strike on the University choice making using 2000 homes sample from the selected nine Local Government Areas of Oyo State, Nigeria. The result reveals that 80% of these homes prefer sending their children or wards to private University and 20 to the Public, indicating dissatisfactions with the negatives associated with the latter largely due to ASUU incessant strikes [36].

Perhaps, the prevailing situation accounts for Yusuf [20] submission that Africa is a continent with many numbers of unemployable youths because the state failed to transform their potentials into political, social and economic value-yielding ventures. Hence the Nigerian government and ASUU to do a critical examination of the current trend the state-owned university is heading toward alongside its attendant adverse impacts on stakeholders and the entire society to stem the tide of further degeneration.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examines the implications of ASUU strikes and government reactions on students and society. Based on the explored information, the study reveals that the strikes are orchestrated largely by the union quest to protect its members' welfare with little tolerance for hurting government policies and swift greeting of such perceived unfriendly steps with the interruption of academic activities through strike actions while the government fell short in funding and entrenching an appropriate legal milieu for negotiation and regulation of ASUU as a labour union.

In consequence, the public university students are exposed and tempted to indulge in social vices, have a sense of being disadvantaged unlike their private colleagues, and the society developmental agenda is threatened because of the poor quality of graduates produced from the Ivory Tower. These findings concur with the

submissions of Aideluoghene (2014), Majihosen (2013) and Obasi [11] on the causes of ASUU strikes and Ezeagba [12] and Azamoza [13] that strikes come with consequences, especially the dysfunctional side argument of SCT. In light of these findings, the paper presents the following recommendations to rescue the situation.

First, the ASUU and government, as a matter of urgency and in the spirit of national interest should renegotiate their agreements with sincerity of purpose and realistically, adding a caveat that strike is not fashionable again and should be jettisoned by the former in pressing for their demands. This is very important for the restoration of the public confidence and improvement of quality of University education. Also, the country budgetary allocation percentage to the University should be ramped up to meet the UNESCO 20 percent benchmark. It is believed that this would improve the quality of teaching, research and learning environment – increasing the possibility of engaging the state of the art technology and teaching aids - thereby reducing ASUU complains or demands, especially the recurring poor funding and remuneration.

Besides, students, parents, civil societies, and all unions in the education industry should be involved by both the Federal and State Governments in the making, implementation and budgetary process to promote transparency. It would not only make the stakeholders have senses of belonging but also minimizes friction between them and the government. As well, the social ills in the society such as kidnapping, banditry, terrorism, armed robbery and likes should be fought to a minimum by the government to reduce their influence on youth that constitute a greater percentage of the student population in the University. With the application of these recommendations, the era of strikes and its associated hurting consequences on students and the wider society would be permanently reversed.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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