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KWARA STATE LECTURERS' PERCEPTION OF MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR CURBING INDUSTRIAL STRIKE ACTIONS IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

By

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Abstract

This paper examines the perception of Kwara State academic staff on managing universities industrial strike actions for national security. The study adopted a survey design, 357 lecturers were randomly selected from the four Universities in Kwara State (University of Ilorin, Kwara State University, Al-Hikimah University and Landmark University) out of a total population of 614 lecturers. The researchers designed questionnaire titled: "Lecturers' Perception on Managing Industrial Strike Actions in Nigerian Universities Questionnaire" (LPMISANUQ), was used to elicit the needed data for the study. Arithmetic mean was used to answer the research questions while t-test and the One-way ANOVA statistical tool were used to test the hypotheses at $p < 0.05$ level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that all the lecturers perceived the causes of Industrial strike action having negative implication on national security with mean score ranging from 4.55 to 3.62. Negotiation bargaining, the use of problem-solving, mediation, violence and coercion were identified as appropriate management strategies for curbing strike actions in Nigerian universities. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that adopting different management strategies by the government and other stakeholders in the education sector would discourage incessant strike actions in the Nigerian universities thereby, promoting national security.

Keywords: Industrial strike actions, assessment, employee-employer relationship, educational development and negotiation.

Introduction

Industrial strike Actions are regarded as one of the means of addressing organizational labour disputes between employees and employers. For employers to perform their crucial roles effectively and efficiently there must be effective management strategies which will bring about cordial relationship between the employees and employers in the organization. According to Wikipedia, strike action is when a large number of workers stop working in protest. Employees occupy a very strategic position in an organization because of their centrality to the production process. Employees contribute greatly to both the achievement of various organizational goals and objectives as well as to government economic programmes. For employees to perform effectively and efficiently in their organizations, there must be a strong cordial relationship between employers and the employees. In most of Nigerian industries, strike actions have become perennial and worrisome as they hamper organizational and development in especially the education sector. As Ojielo (2002) pointed out; in many organizations in Nigeria today, internal (intrapersonal) and interpersonal conflicts are consuming so much of organizational time and attention.

Fajana (1995) defined industrial conflict as the inability of employers and employees to reach agreement on issues connected with employers-employees' relations. Fajana (1995), pointed out that many discussions on industrial relation and conflict management simply refer to strike because it has become the most overt and significant aspect of industrial conflict. Affirming this position, Ogunbaeru and Oribabor (2000) asserted that industrial conflicts occur whenever clash of interests exists in worker-management relations. Industrial conflict is expressed as strike, strike actions, industrial unrest, industrial disharmony, trade dispute, industrial dispute, and so on (Adeoti, 1980). All these are concepts which describe unhealthy relationship between key actors (employers and employees) in an industrial setting (Ogunbameru & Oribabor, 2000).

The causes of industrial conflicts can be broadly classified into two categories namely economic and non-economic causes. The economic causes involve among others the work compensation issues like wages, bonus, allowances, conditions of work, working hours, leave and holidays without pay, unjust layoffs and retrenchments etc. The non-economic factors include; victimization of workers, ill treatment by staff members, sympathetic strikes, political factors, indiscipline and so on (Benjamin and Hideaki, 2004).

Industrial strike actions in the education sector have become an issue of concern for many stakeholders. Usually, conflicts arise with Nigerian three tiers of education system

viz Basic, Upper Basic / Senior and Tertiary. There are also industrial workers' unions in the education sector at various level serving as interest groups defending interest of the teaching and non-teaching staffs. These include the Nigerian Union of Teachers, Academic Staff Union of Universities/Polytechnics/Colleges of Education, the Non-Academic Staff Union of these institutions, and the Senior Staff Unions. Each interest group is working towards improving members' welfare and their structural development. However, what determines who gets what and how best has always been the area of contention between employers and the employees in the educational sector.

Academic Staff Union of the University (ASUU Strike)

The ASUU was formed in 1978, a successor to the Nigerian Association of University Teachers formed in 1965 covering academic staff in all of the Federal and State Universities in the Nigeria. Over the years, universities in Nigerian have experienced series of industrial strike actions. A reference point is the 1992 Academic Staff Union of University (ASUU) strike action in pursuit of better working conditions during the regime of late General Sani Abacha. The strike action lasted for over an academic session. In 2002, under President Olusegun Obasonjo's administration the situation repeated itself in which ASUU embarked on a six-month strike action. In 2009 under late president Umaru Musa Yaradua ASUU embarked on another six months old industrial action which led to the ASUU-FG 2009 agreement. All these industrial actions adversely affected the academic programme of Nigeria Universities and had implications for National development.

National Security

Security is an important aspect of the corporate existence, health and happiness of an individual or nation. Every individual or nation aspires to have security (Nwogu, & Nnorom, 2013) The importance attached to security is also revealed in Maslow's hierarchy of human needs. The theory identified security as one of the basic needs of man. Security can be described as any positive measure taken to keep an individual, state, organization, country, or resources safe from danger. It is a protection against physical, psychological, emotional, socio-economic or even cultural harm. Atoyebi (2003) states that national security is the absence of threats to the core values and the prevention of public disorder. This disorder affects the individual and hence the society. When the individual is threatened, the society

witnesses' insecurity which embraces the act of and fear of all tendencies towards the corporate existence of the nation.

Abraham (2008) observed that insecurity exists in two dimensions – the individual and the state. It exists in the individual when the core values of life such as job security, social security, political, religious and cultural lives among others are negatively affected. On the other hand, security exists in the state when there is protection of the territorial integrity against external and internal aggression. This implies that national security includes the preservation, protection and guarantee of lives, property, health and national sovereignty of a given society.

In Nigerian, frequency of industrial strike actions in the education sector have contributed towards increased level of insecurity. This situation has given a lot of concern to all stakeholders of the education industry. Patrick (2007) as cited by Otobo, (2005) observed that at the roots of these strike was mainly resources mismanagement and corruption.

Education, serves as an instrument for solving societal problems and development. Unfortunately, as Ogonor (2013:1) observed that:

the features of the educational system today and the state of the national security suggest that there are dysfunctions either/or in the policy, implementation and outcomes of the educational system and consequently it is unable to deliver its mandate.

This state of affairs negates the objectives of the national policy on education which stipulated that:

Education shall continue to be highly rated in the national development plans because education is the most important instrument of change; any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society has to be preceded by an educational revolution.

(FRN, 2004:8)

Okowa (2011:75) aptly supports the above when he stated that “education is central to human existence and development. It is through education that values are transmitted across generations. Education enables society to create and domesticate knowledge”. This implies that any society that fails to harness the benefits of education endangers its future and therefore faces security challenges. The neglect of the education system as an avenue for creating the new man in a heterogeneous society like Nigeria justifies the increase of insecurity in Nigeria.

Management Strategy

Management strategies appropriate for curbing industrial strike action to promote national unity and development is required by all the stakeholders in the education sector. Management has been defined as according to Stoner and Freeman (1989); Ogundele and Okonji (2004); Cole (2002); Abdulkareem (2000) and Draft (2003) as the art of getting things done through people and a functional process of accomplishing the goals of the organization through the help of others. Management is a collection of activities including planning, organizing, motivating and controlling. To Abdulkareem (2000) management means (i) a process (ii) a people (iii) a profession. According to him, management is a process by which limited resources are assembled and used to achieve predetermined goals. On the other hand, management as a people refers to the people that carry out the activities of management. As a special field of study, management is regarded as a profession.

Thus, conflict management to scholars such as Thomas (1976); Tosi, Rizzo, and Carroll (1986); De Bono (2005) and Best (2006) involves four models viz the use of violence and coercion, bargaining and negotiation, problem solving and mediation.

- a. *Violence/coercion* (in physical or psychological form) is a win or lose style of managing crisis. It is asserting one's view point (through the use of coercive state apparatus) at the expense of another.
- b. *Negotiation and Bargaining* is a way of dealing with crisis, particularly when the parties in crises have relatively equal power and mutually independent goals. It is based on the belief that a middle route should be found to resolve the crisis situation, with concern for personal/group/organizational goals as well as relationship. In the process of negotiation, there are gains and losses for each party.
- c. *Problem solving*- This involves identifying causes of crises and removing such so as to make the situation normal again.
- d. *Mediation*—This is the involvement of third party –binding (legal system i.e the use of court and litigation processes), non-binding (the use of traditional rulers'/opinion leaders) and non-governmental organization (NGOs)/associations to settle differences/dispute between parties in crises.

Statement of the Problem

Strike actions have become rife in the Nigerian labour force. Various unions and groups have continued to embark on strike actions across the country. In academic institutions, it usually happens when staffs of the institution refuse to work, usually involving non-payment of salaries or administrative reasons. Industrial actions as usually termed continue to claim significant space in the academic calendars of Nigerian Tertiary Institutions.

In 2016 alone, staffs of institutions such as the University of Ibadan, Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife have at one time embarked on industrial actions. Ladoko Akintola University of Technology – an institution with a known history of strike actions, still has its staff members on strike for close to two academic sessions as at August 2017. The frequent protests across institutions in the country makes it necessary to examine what management strategies can be adopted to end or avoid strike action. Thus, this study examines perception of university lecturers on the causes of strike actions, their impact and management strategies that can be adopted by the government and the university management.

Several research findings on the effect of industrial strike actions on institutions of higher learning revealed that it has negative effects on the education system on one side and on the society on the other hand. The findings from the study of Rossouw (2010), revealed that industrial strike actions obstruct academic calendar of universities and cause serious delay in the completion of university programmes. Again, Imberman (2008) stated that the effect of industrial strike actions on the education system of a nation is negative as it lowers the quality of education. In the work of Egwu (2004), it was observed that industrial strike actions do not add any value to academic standard but rather extend the number of years for students to graduate.

Cohen's (2010) findings showed that during the period of industrial strike actions, most students engaged themselves in some anti-social acts such as political thuggery, armed robbery, drug trafficking, prostitution, kidnapping etc. These have negative effects on the socio-economy and security of the society. From available studies carried out by different researchers, there was none that has combined these three variables that is, ASUU strike action, National security and Management strategies among Nigerian Universities thus, creating a research gap part of which this study would fill.

However, this study examines Kwara State lecturers' perception of managing industrial strike actions in Nigerian universities to promote national security. Specifically, the study investigated:

- i. the perceived causes of industrial strike actions in the University by Kwara State lecturers.
- ii. the perceived impacts of industrial strike actions on Nigeria Universities on national security of the Country by Kwara State lecturers.
- iii. the perceived management strategies that can be adopted to curtail incessant industrial strike Actions in Nigeria universities by Kwara State lecturers.
- iv. whether there are differences in the perception of Kwara State lecturers on the management strategies adopted to manage industrial strike action in Nigeria Universities for national security based on gender.
- v. whether there are differences in the perception of Kwara State lecturers on the management strategies adopted to manage industrial strike action in Nigerian Universities for national security based on different faculty.

Theoretical Framework

The research adopts Karl Max (1818-1883) conflict theory as its major theoretical framework. Conflict theory holds that conflict rather than consensus is ubiquitous, inevitable and often present in every social system. To Max, the unequal distribution of material resources means that some interest groups would be exploited and marginalized while some would be most favoured. This eventually leads to unhealthy competition and subsequent antagonism and conflicts in organizations.

Industrial strike actions in Nigeria can be explained using Karl Max perspective. This is a situation where the owners of production or the employers of labour (Federal Government) often times apply several strategies to maximize profit without considering the interest or welfare of workers. The workers, in order to protect their interest and to fight for better working conditions have to embark on industrial strike actions. This could be the reason why industrial strike action has been a dominant factor in Nigerian Labour history. Workers assume that they are not paid enough wages or salaries that can sustain their needs. In the educational sector strike actions have been frequent. For example, the failure of the Federal Government of Nigeria to implement the 2009 ASUU-FG agreement propelled ASUU to embark on five months' strike action in 2010 that seriously affected the academic

activities of Nigerian universities. Also in the late part of 2013 and early 2014 embarked on 6 months' industrial strike.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following questions:

- i. What is the perception of Kwara State lecturers on the causes of industrial strike actions in Nigerian University?
- ii. What is the perception of Kwara State lecturers on the impacts of industrial strike actions on Nigeria Universities on national security of the Country?
- iii. What is the perception of Kwara State lecturers on the management strategies adopted manage incessant industrial strike Actions in Nigeria universities?
- iv. Is there any difference in the perception of Kwara State lecturers on the impact of industrial strike action in Nigeria Universities for national security on the basis of gender?
- v. Is there any difference in the perception of Kwara State lecturers on the management strategies adopted to manage industrial strike action in Nigeria Universities for national security on the basis of different faculties?

Hypotheses

- H₀₁:** There is no significant difference in the perception of Kwara State lecturers on the management strategies adopted to manage industrial strike action in Nigerian Universities for national security on the basis of gender.
- H₀₂:** there is no significant difference in the perception of Kwara State lecturers on the management strategies adopted to manage industrial strike action in Nigerian Universities for national security on the basis of different faculty.

Methodology

The survey research design was adopted for the study. All university lecturers in the four Universities in Kwara State constituted the total population (University of Ilorin, Ilorin; Kwara State University, Malete; Al-Hikmah University, Adewole; and Landmark University, Omu-Aran), while university lecturers from 3 faculties in the four universities in Kwara State constitute the target population for the study. There are 614 lecturers in these 3 faculties out of which a total of 357 were randomly selected. This was inline with The Research Advisor (2006) table for sample selection which stated that for a population of 600-700, a sample of

357 is appropriate at 3.5% margin of error. A 14 items four-point Likert scale researcher-designed questionnaire titled: "Lecturers' Perception of Managing Industrial Strike Actions in Nigerian Universities Questionnaire" (LPMISAQ) was used for the study. The questionnaire was validated for content validity by lecturers from the faculty of Agriculture and Forestry University of Ibadan. The test-retest procedure was adopted to ascertain the reliability of the instrument with 20 lecturers of the faculty of Agriculture and Forestry University of Ibadan. The scores were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and this yielded a coefficient of internal consistency of $r=0.67$. The obtained data were analysed using arithmetic mean and Standard Deviation to answer the research questions. The remark on the research questions was determined at 2.50. While the hypotheses formulated to guide the study were tested using the t-test statistical tool and the One-way ANOVA at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the perception of Kwara State lecturers on the causes of industrial strike actions in Nigerian University?

Table 1: Causes of Industrial Strike actions

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	SD
1	Non-payment of workers' entitlement	4.55	1.22
2	Poor working environment	4.21	1.13
3	Neglect of workers' welfare	3.91	0.97
4	Non-payment of promotion arrears	3.62	0.83
5	Mismanagement of Resources meant for the smooth running of the institution by the university administrators	3.01	0.60

Results in Table 1 indicate the perception of Kwara State lecturers on the causes of Industrial strike action in Nigeria Universities to be non-payment of workers' entitlement, poor working environment, neglect of workers' welfare, non-payment of promotion arrears and Mismanagement of Resources meant for the smooth running of the institution by the university administrators with mean scores ranges from 4.55 to 3.01. These mean score is above the accepted means score of 2.50.

Research Question 2: What is the perception of Kwara State lecturers on the impacts of industrial strike actions on Nigeria Universities on national security of the Country?

Table 2: Impacts of Industrial Strike Actions

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	SD
1	Idleness of students as a result of ASUU strike breed anti-social among youth which manifest itself into robbery, youth restiveness, violence, war, terrorism promote insecurity of the society.	4.48	1.21
2	Overstay on the educational programmes by the students as result of ASUU strike action breed students who engaged in examination malpractices which serve as a threat to national security.	4.61	1.31
3	ASUU strike action leads to distortion of educational planning and programmes, which threatens steady growth and development in the society but promote national insecurity.	4.00	1.23
4	Poor graduate output that lack effective knowledge for nation building rather than serve as instrument of societal problems leads to insecurity in the society.	4.00	1.23
5	A great number of industrial strike actions from the Nigerian have increased the level of insecurity in the land.	3.62	0.83
6	Incessant strike action in Nigerian Universities breed students who develop negative attitudes towards government policies thus, constituting threat to national security	3.60	0.67

Results in Table 2 indicate that, the Kwara State lecturers perceived all the stated impacts of industrial strike actions in Nigeria Universities on national security, this is shown from the mean scores ranges from 4.61 to 3.60 which is higher than the accepted means score of 2.50. By implications Idleness of students breed anti-social such youth restiveness, violence, war, terrorism that threatens security in the society. Overstay on the educational programmes by the students breed examination malpractices among students which questions the quality of Nigerian graduate therefore, threaten national security. Also incessant strike action in Nigerian Universities breeds students who develop negative attitudes towards government policies thus, constituting threat to national security. All these and others are lecturers' perception of the impact of industrial action.

Research Question 3: what is the perception of Kwara State lecturers on the management strategies for adopted curbing incessant industrial strike actions in Nigerian Universities?

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Research Question 3: what is the perception of Kwara State lecturers on the management strategies for adopted curbing incessant industrial strike actions in Nigerian Universities?

Table 3: lecturers' perception on management strategies for curbing industrial strike actions

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	SD
1	Adoption of violence and coercion would help in the management of ASUU strike in Nigerian University to promote national security	4.21	1.13
2	Negotiation and Bargaining is considered as appropriate management strategy for cubing ASUU strike action in Nigerian University to promote national security.	4.31	1.20
3	Problem-solving is perceived as appropriate for cubing ASUU strike action to bring about national security in the society	3.91	0.97
4	Mediation and coercion is also another management strategy for curbing ASUU strike actions in Nigerian University to promote national security.	4.75	1.31

Table 3 shows that all the lecturers perceived negotiation and bargaining, the use of problem-solving, mediation, violence and coercion as an appropriate management strategy for curbing strike actions in Nigerian university. With the mean scores ranges from 4.75 to 3.91 > 2.50 accepted means score.

Hypotheses 1: There is no significant difference in the perception of Kwara State lecturers on the impact of industrial strike action in Nigeria Universities for national security on the basis of gender.

Table 4: The difference in the perception of male and female lecturers on the impact of industrial strike actions in Nigerian Universities on national security

Gender	Frequency	df	t-test	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Male	360	355	-1.063	0.288	Not rejected
Female	180				
Total	357				

P<0.05

Table 4 shows that t-test obtained was -1.063 with P-value = 0.028 < 0.05 thus, hypothesis one is not rejected. This implies that male and female lecturers perceived the impact of industrial strike actions in Nigerian Universities on national security the same way.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the perception of Kwara State lecturers on the management strategies adopted to manage industrial strike action in Nigeria Universities for national security on the basis of different faculties.

Table 5: ANOVA summary table on the difference in the perception of lecturers from in different faculties on the impact of industrial strike Actions in Nigerian Universities on national security

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	27.066	4	6.766	1.155	0.330	Not rejected
Within Groups	2061.422	352	5.856			
Total	2088.487	356				

$P < 0.05$

Table 5 is the ANOVA summary Table for difference in the assessment of Kwara State lecturers in different faculties on the impact of industrial strike actions in Nigeria Universities on national security. The table revealed that F-ratio was 1.155 and the significant level obtained was 0.330 which is greater than 0.05 alpha level of significance. Hypothesis two is hereby not rejected. This implies that there is no significant difference in the assessment of lecturers in different faculties on the impact of industrial strike actions in Nigerian Universities on national security.

Discussion

The above findings suggest that a greater number of the sampled respondents perceived that several factors such as non-payment of workers' entitlement, poor working environment, neglects of workers' welfare, and the non-payment of promotion arrears are the likely causes of industrial strike actions in Nigeria universities. These findings are in agreement with the view of Ootobo (2005) whose study submitted that poor management style, unfavorable nature of physical environment of work place, orientation or social and economic policies are possible causes of industrial strike actions in organizations.

It is obvious from the study that idleness of students, overstay on the educational programmes by the students, obstruction of academic calendar, distortion of educational planning and programmes, Poor graduate output that lack effective knowledge for nation building rather than serve as instrument of societal problems, all these breed robbery, youth restiveness, violence, war, terrorism which threatens steady growth and development in the society but promote national insecurity of the Nigerian society. This finding is in agreement with the finding of Rossouw (2010), Imberman (2008), Egwu (2004) and Cohen (2010) who

argued that industrial strike actions in Nigerian universities obstruct academic calendar of the universities and causes serious delay in the completion of university programmes. They maintained that industrial strike actions impact negatively on the socio-economy as they lower the quality of education of a nation. And lastly, industrial strike actions do not add any value to academic standard and development of education, rather extend the number of years the students were expected to stay on a programme before graduating from the university. And to worsen the situation, the waiting period offered students the opportunities to engage themselves in some anti-social acts such as political thuggery, armed robbery, drug trafficking, prostitution, kidnapping, among others, which have negative effects on the socio-economy and security of the society.

One of the most effective strategies for the management of industrial strike actions as perceived by Kwara State lecturers regardless of sex and variation in their department is negotiation and bargaining. . This finding contradict that of Olutade (2005) whose findings revealed that proper and prompt implementation of agreement made to workers are considered the best solution for all the parties engaged in the conflict. It is also obvious that problem-solving, mediation and violence and coercion are strategies that represent a high desire to satisfy the conflict situation. The problem-solver is a people-oriented management strategy where the parties constantly work out plans to help others make considerable progress with little concern for self. These reflect strategies found important and effective in resolving, minimizing or avoiding role conflicts. They are in consonance with the ideas and findings of Ootobo (2007), Fashoyin (2002), Burach (2001), Dalrendorf (2000) and Glueck (2000). All the strategies found in this study are effective in managing role conflict in every social institution.

Conclusion

Industrial strike has been a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the bone marrow of Nigeria education system. It has been a dominant factor in the history of Nigeria labour relations. Most of Nigeria institutions have suffered setbacks in terms of development, most especially the education sector. However, this study has been able to examine the perception of Kwara State lecturers on the management strategies adopted for managing industrial strike actions in Nigeria universities and its impact on the nation's security.

Recommendations

On these bases, the study recommended that the Federal Government of Nigeria should always implement promises and agreement reached on the negotiation table to its fullest. Negotiation and dialogue should be employed and maintained by the federal government and Academic Staff Union of the Universities so as to reduce recurrence of strike actions that have crippled the Nigeria education sector of the country. If this is done, it would go a long way in the training of qualified graduates needed in the development of society and the promotion of national security.

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