

**IMPACT OF ASUU STRIKE ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
EDUCATION STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA**

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The study sought to determine the impact of Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strike on the academic performance of Political Science Education students in university of Nigeria Nsukka. The study was designed as a descriptive survey. A total of 216 Political Science Education students constituted the sample. Three research questions were formulated to guide the study. A structured questionnaire titled the Impact of Academic Staff Union of Universities Strike on the Academic Performance of Political Science Education Students (IASUUSAPSES) was used to collect data for the study. Data were analysed using mean and standard deviation. The results of the findings indicated among others that ASUU strikes significantly impact the academic performance of Political Science Education students at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

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**Introduction**

Universities are seen as the basis of knowledge, the source of intellectual growth, and a place to produce tomorrow leaders. In Nigeria, government-owned universities are known as public universities, which are founded to provide Nigerian access to post-secondary education (Ogunode, 2020). Public universities are typically created by the Parliamentary Act to serve the public interest. Such universities focus on providing students with access to research, education and community services at subsidised cost. The goals of university education include the development of the right value orientation for individual and societal benefits; and the enhancement of intellectual capacities to understand and appreciate societal values (FGN, 2014).

The contributions of university education to research, technical innovation, and the development of human capital cannot be overemphasised. Hence, investment in university education is a vital source of national development worldwide. As a result, many countries rely more on the knowledge, concepts, and ideas generated through

research. Ideally, university education promotes growth in society through its capacity to produce quality human capital for employment in different sectors of the economy (Ogunode, 2020).

However, much of the lofty importance of university education has been truncated in Nigeria because of frequent ASUU strikes. ASUU is a trade union affiliated with the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC). A trade union is an association that seeks to advocate for improved welfare of members. Most trade unions are independent of the employer but strive to develop good relationships with employers. Pitan and Akindele (2016) noted that trade unions negotiate the terms and conditions of service with the employer, see to the well-being of members and protect their members from victimisations. The general objectives of ASUU include: regulation of human relations between academic staff and employers, encouragement of the members to actively participate in affairs of the university such as elections, membership of cooperative societies, university-wide conferences, lectures and training; protection of university

autonomy and advancement of the social, economic and cultural interests of the nation (Wahab, 2018, Ardo, Ubandawaki & Ardo, 2020).

Meanwhile, the frequent strike action by ASUU in Nigeria has become a recurring phenomenon. A strike is simply a protest organised by trade unions over members' poor welfare conditions. The constant withdrawal of services by ASUU members due to the failure of the government to implement, honour agreements signed with ASUU constitutes a great threat to university education in Nigeria (Adeyanju et al, 2018; Omeje, and Ogbu, 2019). Undoubtedly, what seemed to be the first ASUU strike in Nigeria was observed in 1988 with the major reason for pursuing fair wages and university autonomy. As a result, ASUU embarked on strike actions of different durations for the reasons that were not unconnected to adequate funding, provision of sufficient teaching and learning facilities and equipment, university autonomy and implementation of the provisions of the 2014 Pension Reform Act as well as the introduction of the University Transparency Accountability Solution (UTAS) as against the imposed Integrated Personnel Payroll Information System (IPPIS) by the Federal Government among others (Egbegi & Iheriohanma, 2018).

Educational institutions are established to equip students with the skills necessary to direct the affairs of society in the near future (Ogunode et al, 2021). Enueme, and Onyene (2010) stated that the development of any nation largely depends on youth and are the leaders of tomorrow. Therefore, when attention is not properly paid to political science education students in the course of studentship, society could be at risk of competent future leaders.

Political science education is concerned with teaching the theory, practice, and dynamics of politics and government.

The course content includes political theory, comparative politics, international relations, public administration, and public policy. Political science education curriculum is designed to equip students with critical thinking, analytical skills, and a deep understanding of political systems, processes, and institutions. In addition, this study helps students understand power dynamics, human rights, justice, and equality as indicators of democracy.

Political Science Education connotes the comparative study of the political systems, institutions, and political processes of different nations. This is achieved by examining the peculiarities of different political regimes, electoral systems, and policy outcomes, as well as their impact on historical, cultural, socio-economic, and political development. Hence, Lijphart (2012) argued that the study of political systems and regimes and; interactions between states, international organisations, and global actors are crucial for understanding global politics. It promotes understanding of the causes, consequences, and dynamics of international conflict, cooperation, and diplomacy. Waltz (2000) noted that knowledge of international relations provides individuals with an understanding of the complexities and challenges of global issues such as security, human rights, and climate change.

Through the study of Political Science Education, students learn about the principles of public administration, bureaucratic organisation, policy analysis, and evaluation. Such knowledge exposes students with the skills to evaluate public policies and to recommend changes in some policy objectives (Grossman & Hart, 2018). The objectives of Political Science Education vary depending on the specific programme or institution. However, some common objectives as noted by Grossman and Hart (2018) include helping students develop an

understanding of political systems; providing students with a comprehensive understanding of the political systems, structures, and processes that govern societies; equipping students with the skills and knowledge to analyse and evaluate political behaviour, such as voting patterns, public opinion, and political participation; evaluate political theories, arguments, and policies, and being able to gather and interpret political data and evidence and; aid the understanding of international relations and global politics.

From the above objectives, it is clear that the Political Science Education program was designed to inculcate the critical values of citizenship and leadership, ethical living, diversity, pluralism, inclusiveness, community service, and the idea that students can and must participate actively in societal growth and development. To buttress this, Yusuf (2017) stressed that all higher education program must promote independent, self-directed students' behaviour in cognizance of community values. This suggests that worthy citizenship and service to the community are important values to be promoted through higher education experience.

Conversely, the incessant strike of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has affected higher education programs in Nigerian universities, especially Political Science Education. ASUU strike, which has recently become a norm disrupts academic activities and in turn can affect students' academic performance (Wojuade,2019). Thus, the academic performance of some Political Science Education students may have dropped due to the continuous strike actions in the universities. Academic performance refers to the grades of students in examinations or quizzes. This is simply the level of student performance in the course.

Higher scores indicate better academic performance, whereas lower scores indicated poorer academic performance.

#### **Statement of the problem**

ASUU is a union of intellectuals from government and state-owned universities in Nigeria with the mandate to advocate for the welfare of its members and as such has proven to be one of the strongest and most reliable trade unions in Nigeria. In 2022, ASUU embarked on an eight-month strike that disrupted the academic calendar of universities, leading to delayed or prolonged completion of academic programs. It also resulted in missed lectures, tutorials and seminars, which are essential for effective learning and understanding of political science education content that impacts students' Grade Point Average (GPA). Notably, deplorable working conditions, unpaid salaries/allowances and the inability of the government to reach an agreement with ASUU, and sometimes government delay in the enforcement of the agreements reached with ASUU are some of the contributory factors to the ASUU strike in Nigerian universities. Thus, ASUU has been synonymously linked to strike/struggles due to government insensitivity and irresponsibility.

However, despite the rationale for the ASUU strike, it has far-reaching consequences on academic programs and activities. Disruption in the academic calendar, suspension of teaching and learning, distraction of the normal learning process prolonging the study period and graduation of students have been argued to be some of the major effects of ASUU strikes which in turn can impact students' academic performance. Hence, this study focused on investigating the impact of ASUU strike on the academic performance of Political Science Education students.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study was to determine the impact of the ASUU strike on the academic performance of political science education students at the University of Nigerian Nsukka. The specific purposes were to:

1. find out the impact of ASUU strike on students' academic activities.
2. determine the impact of ASUU strike on Political Science Education students' Grade Point Average (GPA).
3. identify possible strategies for improving the academic performance of students in Political Science Education after a strike.

### **Research questions**

1. What is the impact of ASUU strike on academic activities?
2. What is the impact of ASUU strike on Political Science Education students' GPA?
3. What are the possible strategies to improve the academic performance of Political Science Education students after strike?

### **Theoretical framework**

The study was anchored on frustration-aggression theory of John Dollard, Neal Miller, Leonard Doob, Orval Mowrer, and Robert Sears in 1939. This theory states that aggression is the result of blocking, or frustrating, a person's efforts to attain a goal. While frustration prompts a behaviour that may or may not be aggressive, any aggressive behaviour is a product of frustration, making frustration insufficient, but a necessary condition for aggression. Thus, frustration causes aggression, but when the source of frustration cannot be challenged, aggression is transferred to the innocent target.

In the context of this study, the governments' inability to honour agreements

with ASUU leads to frustration among ASUU members, which causes strike and disruption in educational goals and expectations of academic programs in public universities. Political science education students may feel frustrated by the truncation of academic progress, as classes are cancelled, access to learning resources is denied, year of graduation is prolonged and quality contact with university lecturers is limited due to ASUU strikes.

Such frustration in academic activities can manifest as aggression, not necessarily in a violent manner, but in terms of negative emotions, stress and the erosion of students' motivation to learn. The stress and uncertainty caused by ASUU strikes may make it difficult for students to concentrate on their studies or to maintain a consistent study routine. In addition, the frustration and aggression induced by ASUU strikes can lead to a decline students' overall academic performance.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted a descriptive survey. Two hundred and sixteen (216) political science education students in University of Nigeria, Nsukka selected through total enumeration sampling technique constituted the sample. A questionnaire titled Impact of ASUU Strike on Academic Performance of Political Science Education Students (IASUUSAPPSES) was used to collect data for this study. The questionnaire was subjected to face, content, and construct validity tests were certified to be suitable for the study. Descriptive statistics of the mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the data. Questionnaire items with a mean score of 2.50 and above was accepted and regarded as positive, whereas those below were rejected, and considered as negative.

### **Results**

The results are presented below according to the research questions.

**Table 1: Mean and standard deviation responses of respondents on the impact of the ASUU strike.**

S/N	Item Statement	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1.	Disruption of university calendar.	3.16	1.109	Agree
2	Inadequate syllabus coverage.	3.32	1.085	Agree
3	Inadequate time to study course materials.	3.27	0.956	Agree
4	Engaging in business activities during ASUU strike.	1.86	0.620	Disagree
5	Inadequate access to classroom lecture activities..	2.03	0.657	Disagree
6	Compacted academic calendars.	3.17	1.110	Agree
7	Increase academic stress which affects Students' mental health.	3.34	1.095	Agree
8	Prolonged year of graduation.	3.12	1.106	Agree
9	Inability to write term papers assignments.	3.30	1.065	Agree
10	Struggle to answer questions in examinations.	3.37	0.966	Agree

**Keywords:**  $\bar{X}$  = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, N= Number of the Respondents

The data presented in Table 1 shows the impact of the ASUU strike on students' academic activities. Results indicated that items 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 had mean ratings of 3.16, 3.32, 3.27, 3.17, 3.34, 3.12, 3.30 and 3.37 with standard deviation of 1.109, 1.085, 0.956, 1.110, 1.095, 1.106, 1.065 and 0.966 respectively. Since the mean values of the items were above the 2.50 benchmark mean for decision making, it indicates that the impact of the ASUU strike

on students includes disruption of the university calendar, inadequate syllabus coverage, inadequate time to study course materials, compacted academic calendar, increased academic stress which affects students' mental health, prolonged years of graduation, forgot how to write term paper assignments, and struggle to answer questions in examinations. However, the standard deviation scores indicate less variability in the mean scores of the items.

**Table 2: Mean and standard deviation responses of respondents on the influence of the ASUU strike on political science education students' GPA.**

S/N	Item Statements	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1	Disruption of the University academic calendar affected my GPA	3.14	1.10	Agree
2	Lack of coverage of political science education syllabus affects GPA	3.42	1.09	Agree
3	Inadequate time to study course materials affects my GPA	3.27	0.95	Disagree
4	Compacted academic calendar made my GPA low	3.16	1.10	Agree
5	ASUU strike tends to increase mental health concern	2.63	0.68	Agree
6	Poor reading motivation for exams after strike affects student's GPA	2.16	0.64	Disagree
7	Prolonged graduation year diminishes the ability to make good GPA.	3.32	1.08	Agree
8	Inadequate time to writing term papers assignments after strike affects GRA	3.04	1.92	Disagree

**Keywords:**  $\bar{X}$  = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

The data presented in Table 2 above shows that ASUU strikes negatively impact Political Science Education students' GPA through disruption of the university

academic calendar, lack of coverage of political science education syllabus, inadequate time to study course materials influence the GPA of students in Political

Science Education, compacting university academic calendar to meet up with academic sessions, ASUU strike tends to increase mental health concerns among students which influences their GPA, prolonged years of graduation diminishes students ability to make a good GPA, and

inadequate time to write term paper assignments after strike affects GRA. This is because the mean values of identified items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 were above the 2.50 benchmark for acceptance. However, the standard deviation scores indicated less variation in the mean scores.

**Table 3: Mean and standard deviation response of Respondents on the possible strategies to improve the academic performance of political science education students after strikes**

S/N	Item Statement	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1	Offering counseling support programmes.	3.28	0.957	Agree
2	Reviewing the university academic calendar to accommodate the students' learning interests.	2.86	0.820	Agree
3	Provisions of adequate resources to support the learning of political science education content.	2.63	0.687	Agree
4	Adjusting the course content to reduce the academic pressure on students.	3.33	1.086	Agree
5	Adopting collaborative learning techniques to boost student earnings.	3.76	1.112	Agree
6	Offering of scholarship to students to encourage motivation.	2.52	0.685	Agree
7	Encouraging/improved lecturer - students' mentorship.	3.27	0.956	Agree
8	Conducting online classes like zoom class to cover Political Science Education Syllabus.	3.16	1.109	Agree

$\bar{X}$  = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

The mean values of items 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25 were above 2.50, thus indicating that the possible strategies to improve the academic performance of Political Science Education students after strikes include: offering counselling support programs, reviewing the university academic calendar to accommodate students' learning interests, provision of adequate resources to support learning of Political Science Education content, adjusting the course content to reduce academic pressure on students, adopting collaborative learning techniques to boost students' learning, offering scholarships to students to encourage motivation, encouraging / improved lecturer-student mentorship, conducting online classes, and zoom classes to cover Political Science Education Syllabus. Meanwhile, the standard deviation scores indicated less variation in the mean scores.

### Discussions

The findings of the study indicated that ASUU strike impacts academic activities through disruption of the university calendar, inadequate syllabus coverage, inadequate time to study course materials, compacted academic calendar, increased academic stress which affects students mental health, prolonged years of graduation, inability to write term paper assignments, and struggles to answer questions in examinations. These findings were supported by Wojuade (2019) who found that ASUU strikes negatively impacts students' academic performance.

Based on research question two, the findings showed that ASUU strikes negatively impact the academic performance of Political Science Education students through disruption of the academic calendar, lack of coverage of Political Science Education syllabus, limiting study time for

course materials, compacting university academic calendar, increasing mental health concern among students, prolonging years of graduation, and inadequate writing time for term paper assignments which in turn impact. These findings are in agreement with Ardo et al (2020), who stated that the ASUU Strike had a negative impact on students' performance, leading to an increase in the failure rate.

The findings equally revealed the strategies for improving Political Science Education students' academic performance after the ASUU strike which include offering counselling support programmes, reviewing the university academic calendar to accommodate students' learning interest, provision of adequate resources to support the learning of Political Science Education contents, adjusting the course content to reduce academic pressure on students, adopting collaborative learning techniques to boost learning of the students, offering scholarships to students to encourage motivation, encouraging/improved lecturer-students mentorship, conducting online classes, and zoom classes to cover political science education syllabus and showing the possible strategies to improve the academic performance of political science education students.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings established that ASUU strikes greatly impact the academic activities and academic performance of Political Science Education students.

### Recommendations

- Students should be encouraged to use strike periods to engage in self-study by accessing online resources, textbooks, and educational websites to continue learning independently.
- Students should explore online teaching platforms to supplement their knowledge and skills during strikes.

- Relevant stakeholders should organise virtual study groups to enable students to collaborate and study.
- Students should organize the study schedule and set academic goals to achieve at the end of strike, as having such a plan in place will help one get back on track quickly.

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