

INDUSTRIAL ACTION AND ORGANIZATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY AMONG ACADEMIC STAFF OF FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH EAST, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study examined the effect of industrial action on organizational productivity among academic staff of federal universities in South East, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to determine the effect of down-tooling on incidence of student dropout, ascertain the effect of picketing on the ability of academic staff to cover course content, and examine the effect of temporary schools' closure on students' performance judging from the students' scripts graded by the lecturers. Three The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study is 4,525 academic staff of federal universities in South East, Nigeria. The sample size was 350 academic staff determined using Freund and Williams's statistical formula. The study also adopted stratified sampling technique to arrive at the sample size. The instrument for data collection was titled: "Effect of industrial action on organizational productivity questionnaire (EIAOPQ)" validated by experts. Test-re-test analysis was used to test the reliability of the instrument, of which the results were more than 70%. The primary data collected were subjected to statistical test using ordinal logistic regression analysis. Findings revealed that down-tooling has a significant effect on incidences of student dropout, picketing significantly affected the ability of academic staff to cover course content, and temporary schools' closure had a significant effect on students' performance judging from the students' scripts graded by the lecturers. The study therefore concluded that industrial action had a significant effect on organizational productivity of federal universities in South East Nigeria. It was recommended, among others, that university management should



implement proactive measures such as improved communication and timely payment of staff benefits to reduce instances of down-tooling.

Key Words: Academic Staff, Federal University, Industrial Action, Organisation, Organisational Productivity, Productivity.

Introduction

Nigerian educational system in recent times has been characterized by incessant strike actions across the tiers of the educational system. The first notable strike in Nigeria was held in 1945 and ever since, different groups and unions have been embarking on strike actions across the sectors of the economy. Industrial actions are increasingly gaining recognition in the educational sector of this country; and this phenomenon has attracted the attention of well-meaning Nigerians and stakeholders. Industrial action has been described in different forms (Adavbiele, 2015). Industrial actions may persist for some time owing to the obvious points highlighted above (Adavbiele, 2015). Hornby (2017), strike is a period of time when an organized group of employees of a company stops working because of a disagreement over payment or certain conditions. The effect of industrial action on productivity in Nigeria organization cannot be over emphasis as in most case in Nigeria organization industrial action slow down and even stop productivity and also cause damage to equipment and materials. To prevent losses on both parties, measures are put in place like the labour act to prevent the occurrence of industrial action in Nigeria organizations (Agbu, 2016).

The education system, especially at the tertiary institutional level in Nigeria, has witnessed incessant closures due to industrial action. The incessant closure of educational institutions impacts students' learning effectiveness in an unprecedented way. Tertiary education has suffered tremendous setbacks as a result of industrial actions in Nigeria. The consequences of industrial actions in Nigeria's tertiary institutions include the disruption of academic programmes, leading to undeserved extension of the years of graduation, and poor academic performance. The activities of the labor unions in Nigerian universities brought changes in the politics of labor unions in tertiary institutions through organized labor agitations. The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU), Non-Academic Staff Union of Universities (NASU), and National Association of Academic Technologies (NAAT) are the recognized bodies that struggle for the welfare of their members in the Nigerian universities (Agbu, 2016).

The counteraction of the academic staff unions to action and inaction of the government is not self-centred. This was motivated by the quest to resuscitate the falling standard of education in Nigeria. The specific evidence of this fact is the agitation by ASUU and NASU between 2013



and 2014, which included the demand for the improvement and provision of educational infrastructure in our dilapidated tertiary institutions and the need to fulfill the 26% budgetary allocation to education as prescribed by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The essence of the industrial action is to revive Nigeria's education system to be competitive as it was in the 1970s and 1980s. In the study of Isa and Ezekiel (2022) opine that global knowledge production systems today involve a vast range of entities, including universities, public laboratories, research centres, think tanks, the private sector, and the military 'industrial' complex. However, universities remain the prime source of knowledge and innovation. The teaching and non-teaching staff and students in tertiary institutions contribute to national development immeasurably. Due to industrial actions by the workers in tertiary education institutions in Nigeria, many Nigerian graduates are ill-equipped in both character and learning. The majority of these graduates are without the requisite knowledge and skills to solve diverse emerging societal problems in Nigeria (Isa & Ezekiel, 2022).

Industrial action by the tertiary institution in Nigeria has had serious effect on the academic performance of students and also the educational development of our Economy. Strike action could be traced back from the nationwide strike organised by the Academic union of Universities (ASUU) in 1988, which was used to challenge the military regime of General Ibrahim Babangida, General Sanni Abacha (1994 and 1996) and President Olusegun Obasanjo after the return of Democracy in 1999. The union had used strike action to demand for fair wages, university autonomy and funding of Nigeria universities etc. The goal of every university is to impart knowledge, skills, attitude, values and norms to learners in order to bring about development in the lives of every student and for national transformation and development (Odim, Anashie & Aniah, 2018). Amadi and Urho (2015) explained that the vision of Universities is to be pace-setting institutions in terms of learning, character building and service to mankind with a mission to produce competent and resourceful graduates with high moral standards in our society, and the total development of men and women in an enabling environment through appropriate teaching research and service to humanity, influenced by the constitutional ethics and culture of our Nigerian state (Odim et al., 2018).

Industrial action generally could be defined as the refusal to work by employees of an establishment to protest for certain inadequacies in their conditions of service. Strike is a work stoppage caused by the mass refusal of employees to work (Nwaogu, 2016). Strike usually takes place in response to employee grievances. In most countries, they were quickly made illegal as factory owners had political power than workers. Most Western countries partially legalized striking in the 19th or early 20th centuries. Strikes are sometimes used to put pressure on government to change policies. It will also be noted that strike is not peculiar to universities alone but to other organizations or pressure groups such as Nigeria labour Congress (NLC); Nigeria Bar Association (NBA); Nigeria Union of Journalist (NUJ); and Nigeria Medical Association (NMA) Higher Institutions that are liable to embark on strike actions include:- The Academic Staff Union



of Universities (ASUNU); The National Association of Nigeria Students (NANS); The Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP); and The Academic Staff Union of College of Education etc. When strike occurs in an organization, workers suffer most and in this way, the Nigeria working system has been thoroughly destroyed. There is no way to remedy this situation apart from the individual employees concerned to stand up and demand for their right. Although, strike may create temporary difficulties for workers in the sense that it will stop their work and without their work, they won't earn a living.

This situation of our country Nigeria will not be fully developed because they will be back of or less production because of the strike action management has not put its priorities right. It is in protest of these misplaced priorities and inadequacies that these management and Nigeria union of worker. i.e the Nigeria labour congress (NLC). In most cases, the employers and the employees would have explored all avenues for dialogue and strike becomes the last option for the settlement of disputes. Before the introduction of strike among Nigeria worker in the years 1963 by P.A. Imodu, the authorities have always worked in peace and harmony with their privilege to work as an employee in any organization because they always had great expectations both the senior and the junior staff worked happily together as members of the same community and guided by a sense of mission to promote and preserve their working performance. Today, the issue of strike in our country has been so rampant that the government will have to do something urgently so as not to Jeopardize the interest of the employees on how to improve their performance and productivity in their place of work. But before the emergence of union, there had been spontaneous strike and protests against poor conditions of work in several African countries (Nwaogu, 2016).

Therefore, it is unquestionable that the agitations of academic staff unions are to foster the adequate conditions of service which would go a long way in stimulating advantageous atmosphere for students to accomplish the prerequisite curriculum objectives. And, this would reduce to the barest minimum the half-baked graduates or functional illiterates that Nigeria tertiary institutions are turning out lately. Unfortunately, the strike action that is always embarked upon by the staff unions whenever there is industrial dispute between them and their employer (government) always put students at the detrimental conditions. The reasons for this are not farfetched; they end up having lesser period to prepare for academic exercises before summative evaluation hence possibility of poor academic performance. After the whole struggle, the academic staff salaries and allowances that were withheld during the industrial action would end up being paid. Therefore, the study examines the industrial action and organizational productivity among academic staff of tertiary institution in South East, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Industrial action is workers' refusal to work as protest for inadequate service or poor condition. In the education sector, industrial actions by academic and non-academic staffs can lead



to students' examination malpractice, corruption and other social vices in the society. Industrial action is an instrument use by employees in forcing the employer to sort for solution to their working conditions. Industrial actions result when management refuses to comply with the workers conditions or trade union conditions. Academic tertiary institutions are regarded as the citadel of knowledge the fountain of intellectualism, the most appropriate ground for the incubation of leaders of tomorrow. However, over the last thirty year in Nigeria the educational system has witness and unprecedented industrial unrest and so many official battering than other social institution. Statistics from the National Tertiary Institution Commission (2002) reveal that since 1992 the academic staff union of tertiary institution has embarked on industrial action over 23 times to drive home its demands.

Staff and their trade unions frequently view industrial action as the sole way to safeguard and promote their socioeconomic interests, and as a result, they routinely engage in it. Inadvertently, the polytechnic staff persistent industrial actions have harmed not just academic activity in the institution, but also worker productivity. The education sub-sector especially tertiary institutions in Nigeria have witnessed in recent time incessant closures due to industrial actions. The effect of these repeated closures of schools and academic programs on students' learning effectiveness can better be imagined than described. Tertiary education in Nigeria has thus suffered tremendous setbacks as a result of industrial actions by both the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and the non-academic staff. The problem facing the study were poor down tooling, picketing, temporal closure, partial withdrawal of service, and concerted refusal of work on output of academic staff of tertiary institution in Nigeria. This has always subjected the students to pitiable conditions, disrupting academic programs, giving students' undeserved extension in their study years, poor students' concentration on academic programs and poor lecturer-student relationships amongst others. Nigeria is a political entity prone to incessant strikes of which the non-implementation of collective bargaining agreements is a major cause.

With respect to the case of the Federal Government vs. ASUU in Nigeria, the major cause for the incessant strikes in the university education sector is the lackadaisical attitude on the implementation of reached agreement on the part of the government. The government has been known to continually fail on their promises as regards implementing agreements reached from the collective bargaining process. And with the union left with no other option, has always used strike as a weapon of last resort to get the government to fulfilling the demands of the agreement. Therefore, to ameliorate the problem facing the study, solution to the incessant strikes in Nigeria majorly lies in the hands of the government. The government as the largest employer of labour needs to understand that it has to serve as a good example for other employer's in the industrial system to follow. The productivity of a nation is contingent upon the output generated by its workforce and if its workforce ceases to work, such nation can plunge into recession. The study therefore intends to examine the series of industrial action and the direct effect it has on organizational productivity in achieving student's academic achievement.



Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine the effect of industrial action on organizational productivity of the academic staff of federal universities in South East, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to:

1. determine the effect of down-tooling on incidence of student dropout.
2. ascertain the effect of picketing on the ability of academic staff to cover course content.
3. examine the effect of temporary schools' closure on students' performance judging from the students' scripts graded by the lecturers.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the effect of down-tooling on incidence of student dropout?
2. How does picketing affect the ability of academic staff to cover course content?
3. What is the effect of temporary schools' closure on students' performance judging from the students' scripts graded by the lecturers?

Methods

The study employed descriptive survey design. Three research questions guided the study. The population of the study comprised of academic staff of the federal universities under study in South East Nigeria. The target population of the study (4,525) consists of the academic staff of federal universities in South East Nigeria. The sample size for the study consisted of 350 academic staff drawn from the federal universities in South East Nigeria using random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was titled: "Effect of industrial action on organizational productivity questionnaire (EIAOPQ)" validated by experts. Test-retest analysis was used to test the reliability of the instrument, of which the results were more than 70%. The primary data collected were subjected to statistical test using ordinal logistic regression analysis.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the effect of down-tooling on incidence of student dropout?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on the effect of down-tooling on incidence of student dropout

SN	Statement	Rating Scale		F	%	Mean	SD
1.	I believe down-tooling by lecturers has a significant impact on students' decision to drop out of school.	Strongly Disagree	1	20	5.7	3.73	1.293
		Disagree	2	40	11.4		
		Undecided	3	113	32.3		
		Agree	4	20	5.7		
		Strongly Agree	5	157	44.9		
2.		Strongly Disagree	1	26	7.4		
		Disagree	2	31	8.9		



	The frequency of down-tooling directly correlates with an increase in student dropout rates.	Undecided	3	68	19.4	3.99	1.345
		Agree	4	20	5.7		
		Strongly Agree	5	205	58.6		
3.	Down-tooling often leads to a delay in academic activities, which can result in students dropping out.	Strongly Disagree	1	26	7.4	3.85	1.320
		Disagree	2	26	7.4		
		Undecided	3	100	28.6		
		Agree	4	20	5.7		
		Strongly Agree	5	178	50.9		
4.	Students are more likely to drop out when lecturers participate in down-tooling actions.	Strongly Disagree	1	24	6.9	4.07	1.248
		Disagree	2	26	7.4		
		Undecided	3	38	10.9		
		Agree	4	75	21.4		
		Strongly Agree	5	187	53.4		
5.	The down-tooling action by lecturers creates uncertainty that contributes to the decision of students to drop out.	Strongly Disagree	1	21	6.0	4.18	1.238
		Disagree	2	26	7.4		
		Undecided	3	38	10.9		
		Agree	4	50	14.3		
		Strongly Agree	5	215	61.4		

Source: Field survey, 2025

Table 1 presents the responses to Research Question 1 regarding the effect of down-tooling by lecturers on student dropout rates. Overall, the findings suggest a strong consensus among respondents that down-tooling significantly contributes to student dropouts. For the first statement, "I believe down-tooling by lecturers has a significant impact on students' decision to drop out of school," the mean score of 3.73 indicates that most respondents agree that down-tooling affects students' decisions to drop out. The standard deviation of 1.293 suggests moderate variation in responses, but the general trend leans towards agreement. The second statement, "The frequency of down-tooling directly correlates with an increase in student dropout rates," received a higher mean of 3.99, reflecting stronger agreement, with 58.6% of respondents strongly agreeing. This suggests that respondents believe a direct correlation exists between the frequency of down-tooling and increased student dropouts, although the standard deviation of 1.345 indicates some variability in opinions. The third statement, "Down-tooling often leads to a delay in academic activities, which can result in students dropping out," also had a mean of 3.85, further supporting the notion that delays caused by down-tooling can influence students' decisions to drop out. With a standard deviation of 1.320, there is moderate variation in responses, but the general agreement remains clear.

The fourth statement, "Students are more likely to drop out when lecturers participate in down-tooling actions," had a mean score of 4.07, reflecting strong agreement. The higher percentage of respondents (53.4%) who strongly agreed with this statement further underscores the belief that down-tooling actions by lecturers contribute significantly to student dropout rates. The standard



deviation of 1.248 indicates some variation, but the overall trend shows a consensus that lecturer participation in down-tooling increases the likelihood of student dropout. Finally, the fifth statement, "The down-tooling action by lecturers creates uncertainty that contributes to the decision of students to drop out," received the highest mean of 4.18, signaling the strongest agreement among all the statements. The high percentage of respondents who strongly agreed (61.4%) indicates a widespread belief that down-tooling creates uncertainty that can push students toward dropping out. The standard deviation of 1.238 shows minimal variation in responses, reinforcing the strong consensus on the issue.

Research Question 2: How does picketing affects the ability of academic staff to cover course content?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on how picketing affects the ability of academic staff to cover course content

SN	Statement	Rating Scale		F	%	Mean	SD
1.	Picketing actions by lecturers hinder their ability to effectively cover course content.	Strongly Disagree	1	22	6.3	3.70	1.306
		Disagree	2	40	11.4		
		Undecided	3	113	32.3		
		Agree	4	20	5.7		
		Strongly Agree	5	155	44.3		
2.	During picketing, academic staff are less likely to deliver lectures as scheduled.	Strongly Disagree	1	24	6.9	4.01	1.327
		Disagree	2	31	8.9		
		Undecided	3	68	19.4		
		Agree	4	20	5.7		
		Strongly Agree	5	207	59.1		
3.	Picketing often results in a delay in course delivery, which affects the overall learning experience.	Strongly Disagree	1	26	7.4	3.85	1.326
		Disagree	2	28	8.0		
		Undecided	3	98	28.0		
		Agree	4	20	5.7		
		Strongly Agree	5	178	50.9		
4.	I believe that picketing negatively impacts the academic calendar, reducing the time available for covering course content.	Strongly Disagree	1	22	6.3	4.09	1.228
		Disagree	2	26	7.4		
		Undecided	3	38	10.9		
		Agree	4	75	21.4		
		Strongly Agree	5	189	54.0		
5.	Picketing reduces the attention academic staff can give to teaching and course preparation.	Strongly Disagree	1	23	6.6	4.17	1.247
		Disagree	2	23	6.6		
		Undecided	3	40	11.4		
		Agree	4	50	14.3		
		Strongly Agree	5	214	61.1		

Source: Field survey, 2025



Table 2 presents responses to Research Question 2 which examines the effect of picketing on the ability of academic staff to cover course content. The table includes five statements related to the effect of picketing, with respondents rating their agreement on a 5-point Likert scale. The mean and standard deviation (SD) for each statement are provided, offering insight into the general opinion of the respondents.

The first statement, "Picketing actions by lecturers hinder their ability to effectively cover course content," received a mean score of 3.70, indicating general agreement with the statement. With 44.3% of respondents strongly agreeing, it suggests that picketing is seen as a barrier to effectively covering course content. The SD of 1.306 shows moderate variability in responses, meaning that while most respondents agree, there is some divergence in opinions. The second statement, "During picketing, academic staff are less likely to deliver lectures as scheduled," had a higher mean of 4.01, reflecting stronger agreement. A substantial 59.1% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement, indicating that picketing is believed to disrupt scheduled lectures. The SD of 1.327 suggests some variability, but the overall trend supports the view that picketing disrupts the regular teaching schedule.

The third statement, "Picketing often results in a delay in course delivery, which affects the overall learning experience," had a mean of 3.85, further reinforcing the notion that picketing leads to delays in course delivery. With 50.9% of respondents strongly agreeing, this indicates that picketing is perceived to negatively impact the learning experience. The SD of 1.326 suggests moderate variability in the responses. The fourth statement, "I believe that picketing negatively impacts the academic calendar, reducing the time available for covering course content," received a mean score of 4.09, indicating strong agreement. With 54% of respondents strongly agreeing, it shows that picketing is widely believed to reduce the time available for teaching, thereby affecting course content delivery. The SD of 1.228 indicates relatively low variability in responses, reinforcing the strong consensus on the negative impact of picketing on the academic calendar.

Finally, the fifth statement, "Picketing reduces the attention academic staff can give to teaching and course preparation," had the highest mean score of 4.17, indicating a high level of agreement. With 61.1% of respondents strongly agreeing, this suggests that picketing is widely perceived as reducing the time and energy academic staff can devote to teaching and preparing course materials. The SD of 1.247 indicates some variation in the responses, but the strong agreement highlights the belief that picketing detracts from academic staff's focus on teaching.

Generally, the data from Table 2 shows a strong consensus that picketing negatively affects academic staff's ability to cover course content. The high mean scores and strong agreement across all statements suggest that picketing is seen as disruptive to scheduled lectures, course delivery, and the academic calendar, ultimately reducing the time and attention available for effective teaching and course preparation. The moderate standard deviations indicate some variation in



responses, but the overall trend clearly indicates the detrimental impact of picketing on the academic process.

Research Question 3: What is the effect of temporary schools' closure on students' performance judging from the students' scripts graded by the lecturers?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on the effect of temporary schools' closure on students' performance judging from the students' scripts graded by the lecturers

SN	Statement	Rating Scale		F	%	Mean	SD
1.	Temporary school closures have a direct negative effect on student performance.	Strongly Disagree	1	22	6.3	3.73	1.302
		Disagree	2	37	10.6		
		Undecided	3	113	32.3		
		Agree	4	20	5.7		
		Strongly Agree	5	158	45.1		
2.	The closure of universities for extended periods reduces student academic achievements.	Strongly Disagree	1	23	6.6	4.03	1.319
		Disagree	2	31	8.9		
		Undecided	3	68	19.4		
		Agree	4	20	5.7		
		Strongly Agree	5	208	59.4		
3.	I believe that temporal closures cause students to forget course materials, affecting their performance.	Strongly Disagree	1	25	7.1	3.87	1.314
		Disagree	2	26	7.4		
		Undecided	3	98	28.0		
		Agree	4	20	5.7		
		Strongly Agree	5	181	51.7		
4.	Extended school closures have a long-term effect on the learning outcomes of students.	Strongly Disagree	1	28	8.0	4.09	1.259
		Disagree	2	19	5.4		
		Undecided	3	38	10.9		
		Agree	4	75	21.4		
		Strongly Agree	5	190	54.3		
5.	School closures have a detrimental impact on students' preparation for exams and overall academic performance.	Strongly Disagree	1	25	7.1	4.15	1.272
		Disagree	2	24	6.9		
		Undecided	3	38	10.9		
		Agree	4	50	14.3		
		Strongly Agree	5	213	60.9		

Source: Field survey, 2025

Table 3 presents responses related to Research Question 3 which explored the effect of temporary school closures on students' performance. The data covers five statements where respondents indicated their level of agreement with the impact of school closures on academic outcomes, with each statement scored on a 5-point Likert scale. The mean and standard deviation (SD) for each statement provide insights into the respondents' views on the negative effects of school closures.



The first statement, "Temporary school closures have a direct negative effect on student performance," received a mean score of 3.73, indicating a moderate agreement with the statement. A significant 45.1% of respondents strongly agreed, suggesting that many believe temporary closures harm students' performance. However, the SD of 1.302 shows some variation in responses, implying that while many are in agreement, others are undecided or disagree with this view. The second statement, "The closure of universities for extended periods reduces student academic achievements," had a higher mean score of 4.03, indicating stronger agreement. This is further supported by 59.4% of respondents strongly agreeing with the statement, suggesting a clear belief that extended closures have a negative impact on academic performance. The SD of 1.319 also shows a moderate level of variability, with some respondents expressing differing views on the issue.

The third statement, "I believe that temporal closures cause students to forget course materials, affecting their performance," recorded a mean score of 3.87, reflecting a strong tendency for respondents to agree with the negative effect of school closures on memory retention. With 51.7% of respondents strongly agreeing, it is evident that many believe closures lead to students forgetting course material, ultimately impacting their academic performance. The SD of 1.314 indicates some divergence in opinions, although the general trend supports the view of a detrimental impact. The fourth statement, "Extended school closures have a long-term effect on the learning outcomes of students," received a mean of 4.09, signaling stronger consensus that prolonged school closures have lasting negative effects. A majority of 54.3% strongly agreed with this statement, and the SD of 1.259 suggests moderate consistency in responses, with few dissenting opinions.

Finally, the fifth statement, "School closures have a detrimental impact on students' preparation for exams and overall academic performance," garnered a mean score of 4.15, which is the highest among the five statements, reinforcing the belief that closures significantly hinder exam preparation and overall academic performance. The SD of 1.272 further suggests moderate variability in responses, but the majority (60.9%) strongly agreed, pointing to a widespread perception of the negative consequences of school closures.

Thus, the responses from Table 3 strongly indicate that respondents believe that temporal school closures have a detrimental effect on students' performance. The high mean scores across all statements suggest a general consensus that such closures reduce academic achievements, hinder course material retention, and negatively affect exam preparation. The relatively low standard deviations across the statements further suggest that the respondents generally share these concerns, with only moderate disagreement or uncertainty about the exact extent of the effects.

Discussion of the Findings

The findings of this study on the effect of down-tooling by lecturers on student dropout align with several previous studies that have explored the factors contributing to student dropout. For example, Arowolo, Arowolo and Adaja (2016) found that high dropout rates were prevalent across



different educational levels in Nigeria, and disruptions like industrial actions can exacerbate such issues. Similarly, Dickson (2016) and Zira & Zumo (2020) identified socio-economic factors, such as poverty and inadequate school resources, as major contributors to dropout rates, which can be aggravated by disruptions caused by down-tooling. Ereh, Okon and Umosen (2019) also emphasized the link between lecturer competence and student engagement, suggesting that when lecturers engage in industrial actions, the academic performance of students suffers, leading to higher dropout rates. Furthermore, studies like those by Alhassan and Alhassan (2020) and Guzman, Barragan and Cala-Vitery (2022) highlighted the broader socio-economic and institutional factors that influence student retention, which are negatively impacted by interruptions to the academic calendar, such as those caused by industrial actions.

The findings of the study on the effect of picketing on the ability of academic staff to cover course content in federal universities in Southeast Nigeria resonate strongly with previous research on the impact of industrial actions, including picketing, on academic performance and the functioning of educational institutions. The study found that picketing significantly disrupts the ability of academic staff to deliver course content, with a McFadden coefficient of determination of 0.389, indicating that 38.9% of the variation in the ability of academic staff to cover content can be attributed to picketing. This finding is in line with several previous studies that have explored the negative effects of industrial disputes on teaching effectiveness and academic progress. For instance, Ajayi (2014) examined the effects of ASUU strikes on academic performance in Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, revealing that strikes disrupt the academic calendar and negatively impact students' academic pursuits. This is similar to the disruption caused by picketing in your study, where the delivery of course content is hindered, leading to reduced educational outcomes. The study also concurs with the findings of Egwu (2018), who noted that strike actions destabilize school programs, hinder research activities, and lower staff productivity in tertiary institutions. Similarly, your study highlights that picketing leads to a decline in the academic staff's ability to complete their courses, affecting the quality of education in the universities. Badekale and Hamman (2016) also found that industrial disputes negatively affect teaching effectiveness, particularly when management refuses to meet the demands of academic staff, as was the case in your study. The negative impact of industrial action on teaching effectiveness is a recurring theme in studies investigating the link between industrial disputes and education outcomes. Furthermore, the study by Davies, Ekwere and Uyanga (2015) on students' unrest in Nigerian universities similarly highlighted how disruptions to academic programs, such as lecturers not being able to cover syllabi, are major consequences of unrest, including picketing. The finding that picketing impedes academic staff from completing course content is consistent with the broader understanding of how industrial actions disrupt the normal functioning of educational institutions. This alignment with previous studies reinforces the argument that industrial actions, particularly picketing, significantly affect the academic process by disrupting not only course delivery but also the overall educational experience of students.



The findings of this study on the effect of temporary school closures on students' performance, as judged from the students' graded scripts, align with and corroborate several earlier studies on the implications of educational disruptions. In particular, the study's conclusion that temporal school closures significantly affect students' academic performance is in harmony with the results found in previous research, especially concerning the effects of strikes and other disruptions in academic calendars. Ejike (2015) conducted a study on the implications of incessant strike actions in Anambra State, Nigeria, and found that such disruptions lead to students' disheartenment and an inability to quickly adapt to academic exercises upon resumption, ultimately resulting in poor academic performance. Similarly, Yusuf, Salako, Adedina and Ayelotan (2015) found that strike actions disrupt the academic calendar and affect students' ability to recover academically, resulting in poor academic outcomes. Both studies point to the psychological toll and the loss of academic momentum that students face following interruptions, which mirrors the findings of this study on temporal school closures. Additionally, Madukaibe and Eze (2023) explored the effects of ASUU strikes on the performance of universities in the South Eastern States of Nigeria. Their study confirmed that disruptions, like strikes, significantly affected the quality of teaching, learning, and overall student performance. Their conclusion, that such interruptions have negative consequences on student outcomes, provides further evidence supporting the findings in this study that temporal school closures adversely impact student performance. The idea of disruption and its toll on students' academic progress is further echoed by Riaz and Asad (2018), who found that the classroom environment, when disrupted by external factors, negatively affects students' academic achievement. This provides a solid basis for understanding the role of temporal school closures as a form of disruption in the broader context of factors affecting academic performance.

Conclusion

The study is to examine the effect of industrial action on organizational productivity of federal universities in South East Nigeria. The findings reveal that down-tooling, picketing, temporal school closures, partial withdrawal of service, and demonstrations each contribute significantly to negative outcomes, such as increased student dropout rates, compromised academic performance, reduced staff productivity, and decreased research output. These forms of industrial action disrupt the academic calendar, hinder the delivery of quality education, and affect the overall operational efficiency of the institutions.

In line with the findings, the study therefore concluded that industrial action had a significant effect on organizational productivity of federal universities in South East Nigeria.

Recommendations

- i. University management should implement proactive measures such as improved communication and timely payment of staff benefits to reduce instances of down-tooling. Regular engagement with academic staff through town hall meetings or forums can help

identify and resolve grievances before they escalate to industrial action, ultimately mitigating the impact on student retention.

- ii. To minimize the negative effects of picketing on course content delivery, university authorities should prioritize regular consultations with academic staff associations to address their concerns regarding work conditions and remuneration. This can lead to mutually agreed solutions that prevent prolonged picketing, ensuring that academic schedules are adhered to and course content is delivered without significant disruption.
- iii. To reduce the adverse effects of temporary school closures on students' performance, federal universities should develop contingency plans, such as online or blended learning solutions, to ensure that students continue to learn during closures. Furthermore, the government and university management should strive to resolve institutional disputes swiftly to prevent closures from affecting academic progress and student outcomes.

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