

EFFECT OF STRIKE ACTION BY ACADEMIC STAFF UNION OF POLYTECHNIC (ASUP) ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLYTECHNIC, EDUCATION IN OSUN STATE, NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the role of trade union in the development of tertiary education in Osun State. Descriptive survey design was adopted. The respondents were selected through simple random sampling technique. This was due to the availability of sampling frame. The total sampling size is 160 respondents. Three research hypotheses were raised with questionnaire used as instrument for collection of data. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was adopted to test the formulated hypotheses. The study revealed negative relationship between ASUP contribution and the development of tertiary education in Osun State. It was also revealed that there is significant positive relationship between strike and development of tertiary education while the study equally showed that there is positive relationship between strategy adopted by ASUP to actualizing demand and the development of tertiary education in Osun State. Based on these findings, it was recommended that apart from members interest, ASUP should be concerned with other people's interest in order to achieve overall development of the polytechnic system: management and government should embrace justice and fair play as official code of conduct while both union and management work together for peaceful co-existence through dialogue and collective bargaining process among others.

Key words: Labour Union, Development and Tertiary Education

INTRODUCTION

The Trade Union Decree, No. 31 of 1973 recognizes the right of workers to come together for the purpose of safeguarding and protecting the interest of its members. Both developed and emerging economies like Britain, United States of America (USA), Germany, Ghana, and Nigeria, depend on labour to move forward. As agents of production, the need to come together to protect their interest and at the same time save members from exploitative tendencies of the employers assume prominence during the period of industrial revolution of 1945 (Osang, 2002).

In Nigeria, organized labour union has been effective in their responsibilities of promoting and protecting the welfare of its members, active in the efforts to review and determine workers salaries and what the minimum wage should be, promotion of industrial peace, playing advisory roles to the government on various socio-economic and political issues, assisting management in tackling the problem of low productivity and conflict resolution, organizing workers into various unions for effective management, participating in planning the nation's economy through suggestions and advising and educating their members to increase and improve productivity (Otobo and Omole, 1989).

However, Stella and Glad (2011) have linked labour unionism with strikes and its attendant ugly consequences on productivity, which has resulted to man-days-lost, a reason adduced to why government in developing nations

are usually intolerant of the labour union because of their contribution to underdevelopment. Also, Marx and Engels (1967) contended that most union leaders were less educated and corrupt and as such limit their agitations to those things that can benefit their members alone at the expenses of other members of the society. Again, Anderson (1967) sees trade union as parochial and selfish group who are only interested in the welfare of its members. In spite of all these, Akinyanju (1997) opined that trade union remains the only pressure group that represents the hope of the common man in Nigeria.

In the area of educational development, Fashoyin (1981), stressed the significant contribution of labour union through encouragement of members to seek for higher qualifications to improve their skills and performance and organization of conferences and seminars in order to boost productivity. The Academic Staff Union of the Polytechnics (ASUP) at the National level has played advisory role to the government on labour matters. ASUP had in the past advised the government against implementation of bad labour and economic policies, the result of which has resulted to industrial peace and healthy industrial relations in the country (Elaturoti, 2006).

The Academic Staff Union of the Polytechnics (ASUP) and the Development of Tertiary Education in Osun State

The Academic Staff Union of the Polytechnics (ASUP) represents the teaching staff in Nigerian Polytechnics. The union is one

of the 42 registered unions affiliated to Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC). As a union body, its primary objective is to promote and protect the welfare of its members. This objective is achieved through regular meetings and discussions with the government and the management bodies of the polytechnics in a bid to determine the salaries and conditions of work of the state labour force. The participation of ASUP in the determination and regulation of the terms and conditions of employment in the state has prevented many strike actions that are capable of bringing the economy of the state to its lowest ebb and disrupt the academic calendars of the institutions with its untoward consequences (Osang, 2002).

There is no doubt that ASUP has been effective in its request for salary increment, and parity between salary paid to lecturers in the State Polytechnics and their counterparts in the Federal Polytechnic system in line with the prevailing economic condition of the country. Even though request for salary increment and parity has always been a thug of war between the union and the government because it usually lead to cessation of work through strike actions, the success recorded in this regard has prevented mass exodus of lecturers from the state polytechnics to other places where the pasture is greener, thereby reducing the problem of brain drain and man power development needed for the accreditation of courses (Abdulsalam and Sunday, 2002).

Another contribution of ASUP to the development of tertiary education in the state of Osun has been exemplified in the participation of lectures in the conduct of examination and tackling of examination malpractice. One of the primary goals of polytechnic education according to Ayeni (2009) is to provide full-time courses in engineering, applied science and business management leading to the production of trained man power. This goal can only be achieved when examinations are well supervised and culprits of examination malpractice are brought to book. This step has helped to forestall production of half-baked graduates as well as protect the integrity of the polytechnic system (Inyang, 2002).

The issue of funding and provision of adequate facilities in the polytechnic system has for a long time been a source of disagreement between ASUP and the government. ASUP has been in the vanguard and the apostle of adequate funding and enough facilities to make the achievement of polytechnic goals realizable. Problem of poor

funding was one of the basis for the ASUP strike of October 4, 2013. The need for adequate funding, well equipped laboratories with sufficient equipments and modern libraries with current books cannot be ignored by any serious government that is desirous of development (Olugboye, 1996).

However, despite these lofty contributions to the development of tertiary education by ASUP, Ayeni (2009) maintained that ASUP is responsible for scores of strikes and work stoppages in our polytechnic system. According to him, the frequent loggerheads with the management and the government usually paralyze academic activities which normally results to reduction in the production of needed trained workforce for the economy. For instance, ASUP embarked on strike actions in 2009, 2011, 2013, and 2014 to press for the payment of full CONPCASS approved for lecturers in the polytechnics and colleges of education by the federal government. These work stoppages ran into several man-days-lost and severe disruption of academic calendar.

Apart from these ugly scenario, Aborisade (2009) explained that when lectures embarked on strike and students are sent back home, many of them are usually lured into socio vices like criminalities and prostitutions, a development that is at variance with national growth and progress.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Trade union in developing countries especially in Nigeria has been seen as agent of retrogression and underdevelopment. Its militant posture most time in an effort to force the employers' that is, both in public and private sectors to implement the agreement signed with labour has made many people look at trade union has enemies of progress and as destabilizing force in the effort for national growth and development (Ayeni, 2009). Apparently, ASUP has labour union tend to show its dissatisfaction which usually leads to disharmony between it and the management/government through strike or other forms of protestation and agitation when an unresolved conflict persists. The attendant problems due strike on productivity and service delivery as necessitated the public to paint ASUP as a trade union in a bad light. It is in this connection that this paper highlight the roles of ASUP as trade union in the polytechnic system in Osun State with a view to proffering solutions to incessant union management face off.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To find out whether labour union has contributed to academic development in general.
- To find out whether strike has affected achievement of academic development.

Research Questions

1. Does the union play any role in the development of tertiary education in Osun State?
2. Is the use of strike to resolve conflict in the polytechnic system contributes to its development?
3. What strategy should the union adopt to effects its demand from management and government?

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was carried out at College of Technology, Esa-Oke and the Polytechnic Iree in Osun State with the view of looking at the contributions of ASUP of the two tertiary institutions to the development of polytechnic education in the state of Osun between 2010 and 2014. The research was conducted during the 2nd semester 2013/2014 academic session. Out of the two hundred (200) questionnaires that were distributed out, one hundred and sixty (160) were returned. The respondents were selected through simple random sampling techniques due to availability of sampling frame. The research instrument that was used to collect data was questionnaire. On data analysis, frequency and percentage method were used to perform descriptive analysis while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was adopted to test the formulated hypotheses.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

MASLOW HIERARCHY OF NEEDS THEORY

Maslow hierarchy of needs theory was adopted for this study. This is basically because the theory emphasized important motivational strategies that are required to spur human element in any organization into action and to achieve goals and development. According to Maslow (1943) the proponent of this theory, hierarchy of needs includes five motivational needs often depicted as hierarchical levels within a pyramid. These are: basic or primary needs which includes physiological, safety, love, esteem, and secondary needs which

include the need for growth or self-actualization. Maslow (1943) emphasized that satisfying the primary level of need is important in order to avoid unpleasant feelings or consequences. While opportunity by the employee to achieve growth and self-actualization in his job will instill performance and efficiency.

The researchers stressed that employee will opt for the secondary needs after the basic levels of needs have been fulfilled. In the account of Maslow, physiological needs includes food, clothing, shelter, air, health care e.t.c. When these needs are met by an employee, there is the tendency for him to remain happy and committed to the goals of the organization. The implication of this is that lecturers will remain focused and prepare to contribute to development of tertiary education in Osun State when they are able to achieve their primary needs through regular payment of salaries, increase in salaries and allowances including promotion as at when due.

The second level of needs as stressed by Maslow is for workers to feel and enjoy sense of job security. When workers feel that they are not going to lose their jobs without following due process, lecturers for instance are bound to work harder and remain committed in an environment of job security, justice, fair play, due process where their personal financial and medical well-being are guaranteed.

Love and belongingness is another human need which Maslow emphasized. According to him, an employee that enjoys interpersonal relationship and feels a sense of belonging among his peers, junior and senior colleagues usually perform better at work than someone who feels rejected and isolated and made to suffer psychological breakdown.

Another factor that contributes to human performance and efficiency in the workplace as postulated by Maslow is esteem need. Maslow found out that every individual desires respect and indeed wanted to be respected, valued and recognized. When this happens, it arouses a sense of value and contribution in the individual worker. According to Maslow, when an employee is respected, acknowledged, and recognized for his contributions towards the achievement of organizational goals through reward, higher appointment or praises, he becomes elated and encouraged to repeat the same feat in the future.

The last in the pyramid of hierarchy of needs by Maslow is the need for self-actualization. This is regarded as the higher level of needs that an individual in the work place aspire to attain after the lower level of needs or the primary needs have been achieved. This level of need was described by Maslow as level of self-fulfillment. It is the level that individual strives to be, what he can be and attain his full potential. This level was described as level of desire to accomplish everything that one can and become the most that one can be. Workers are usually at their best when this kind of environment exist in their organization.

Data Analysis

Questionnaires were administered during the 2nd semester 2013/14 session. The administration of the questionnaires was carried out by the researchers with the assistance of a colleague. Copies of 200 questionnaires were distributed and 160 returned. This represents a return rate of 80%. The completed questionnaires were analyzed using frequency count and percentage.

Table 1: Gender distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	105	66
Female	55	34
Total	160	100

Source: Salami and Oyelekan (2014).

Test Hypothesis.

Research Question 1: Does the union play any significant role in the development of polytechnic education in Osun state?

Table 2: Role of union in developing polytechnic education in Osun state.

	Union plays significant role (x)	Union does not play significant role (y)
Frequency	132	28
Percentage	83	17

Source: Salami and Oyelekan (2014)

Hypothesis 1

H₀– There is insignificant relationship between ASUP contributions and the development of polytechnic education in Osun State.

H₁- There is no significant relationship between ASUP contributions and the development of polytechnic education in Osun State.

The method adopted for analyzing the data was analysis of variance (ANOVA) and the model is stated below. $Y = a + b x_i$

Table 3: ANOVA Table for Role of union in developing education in Osun state.

Source of variation	Degree of Freedom	Sum of Square	F/Ratio	F. Cal	F. Tab
S S Regression	1	61.588	61.585	-113.52	18.5
S S Error	2	-1.085		-0.5425	
SS Total	3	60.5			

Since F. Calculated is less than F. tabulated (i.e F. Calculated – 113.5 is < F. Tabulated 18.5) then we accept H₁ and reject H₀. This implies that there is no significant relationship between ASUP contribution and the development of polytechnic education in osun state. This is in line with the position of Ayeni (2009) when he liked frequent logger heads and strike actions with reduction in the production of needed trained workforce for the economy through several man – days – lost and severe disruption of academic activities. Marx and Engles (1967) also pointed out that rather than contributing to the development of their societies, labour union in general are always interested in furthering the interest of their members at the expenses of the masses. However, Olugboye (1996) observed that despite all odds, ASUP has been in the vanguard of adequate funding and enough facilities to make the achievement of polytechnic objectives realizable. Inyang (2002) also posited that trade union movement has been engaging in socio – economic and political activities to aid the development of their countries since after the World War 11.

Research Question 2: Does the use of strike contribute to the development of polytechnic education?

Table 4: Views of respondents on whether use of strike contributes to development of polytechnic education.

Hypothesis 2:

	Strike contribute to polytechnic education development (x)	Strike does not contribute to polytechnic education development (y)
Frequency	110	69
Percentage	50	31

Source: Salami and Oyelekan (2014)

H₀- There is significant relationship between strike and development of polytechnic education in Osun state.

H₁: There is no significant relationship between strike and development of polytechnic education in Osun state.

Table 5: ANOVA table for views of Respondents on whether the use of strike contributes to development of Polytechnic Education

Source of Variation	Degree of Freedom	Sum of mean	F/Ratio	F.Cal	F.Tab
S S Regression	1	721.62	721.62	3798	18.5
S S Error	2	0.38	0.19		
S S Total	3	722			

F^{0.05}_{1,2} = 18.5

Since F. Calculated is greater than F. Tabulated, H₁ is rejected while H₀ is accepted. That is F. Calculated 3798 > F. Tabulated 18.5. This implies that there is significant relationship between strike and development of polytechnic education in Osun State. This outcome is in tandem with the view of Aborisade (2009) when he maintained that the national lecturers strike actions in 2009, 2011, 2013 and 2014 which led to students of tertiary institutions been sent back home usually lured them into socio-vices like criminalities and prostitution. He asserted that this development is at variance with national growth and development. This is an indication that strike actions have negative effects on the growth of polytechnic education and it seriously impinges on its development.

Research Question 3: What strategy should the union adopt to effect its demands from the management/ government of polytechnic education in Osun state.

Table 6: Views of respondents on what strategy to adopt to effect demands by the union.

	The use of dialogue/ collective bargaining (x)	The use of strike (y)
Frequency	115	72
Percentage	45	28

Source: Salami and Oyelekan (2014)

Hypotheses 3:

H₀- There is significant relationship between strategy adopted to effect union demands and development of polytechnic education in Osun state.

H₁ – There is no significant relationship between strategy adopted to effect union demands and development of polytechnic education in Osun state.

Table 7: ANOVA table for views of respondents on strategy to effect union demands and development of polytechnic education in Osun state.

Source of Variation	Degree of Freedom	Square mean	F/Ratio	F.Cal	F.Tab
S S Regression	1	954.8	954.8	11.7	18.5
S S Error	2	13.2	6.6		
S S Total	3	968			

F^{0.05}_{1,2} = 18.5

Since F. Calculated > F. Tabulated, then H₁ is rejected while H₀ is accepted (i.e. F. Calculated 11.7 > F. Tabulated 18.5). This implies that there is significant relationship between strategy adopted to effect union demands and development of polytechnic education in Osun State. According to Osang (2002) when dialogue and collective bargaining become the approaches for determining the terms and conditions of employments, the industrial environment would develop as there would be peace. He stressed that due to this, strike actions that normally disrupt the economy and academic activities of tertiary institutions will be brought to its lowest ebb. However, when an unresolved disagreements lead to strike actions Stella and Glad (2011) pointed out that productivity would be reduced through lost of man-days-hour and academic activities disrupted.

CONCLUSION

It is pertinent to say that ASUP should look beyond the needs of its members and thrive to avoid embarking on strike actions as the study has been able to prove a negative relationship between development of polytechnic education and strike actions which had been seen as an infringement on its development. It has also been stressed that dialogue and collective bargaining are the best mechanisms for achieving group aspirations. Therefore, to seek and achieve collective goals of polytechnic system, ASUP should endeavour to look beyond parochial interest.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To enhance maximum development of the polytechnic system through active and effective participation of ASUP, the following recommendations are required:

- Apart from members interest, ASUP must also be concerned with other people's interest in order to achieve overall development of the polytechnic system.

- There is need for ASUP to intensify efforts in genuine development of the system by organizing conferences and workshops and even encourage members to go for higher degrees to improve their skills and output for the general development of polytechnic system.
- To encourage ASUP members towards improving polytechnic education, government and the management of polytechnic institutions should embrace justice and fair play as the official code of conduct.
- To achieve effective development in the polytechnic setting, there is need for both union and management to work together for peaceful co-existence though dialogue and collective bargaining process.
- It is equally paramount that the government rise up to the challenge of poor funding and make adequate fund available in order to guarantee effective teaching and learning in our polytechnic institutions.

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