

**THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE SIDES OF INCESSANT ASUU STRIKES IN
NIGERIA: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY BASED ON ACADEMIC STAFF
PERCEPTIONS**

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Abstract

This study examined the conceptions of incessant Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strike actions in Nigeria public universities and identified the positive and negative sides of this action to university teachers. A qualitative research design of narrative type was used for this study. Twelve academic staff were sampled based on their availability to participate voluntarily in the study. Twelve individual interviews with academic staff were conducted. A list of fifteen (15) categories was generated to conceptualized incessant ASUU strikes in Nigeria public universities. Results showed that the context of incessant ASUU strikes were perceived as involvement in politics, desire for continuation, civil responsibility, engagement, research output, and programs disruption. The most positive outcomes of incessant ASUU strikes to academic staff was engagement in terms of stress aversion, alleviating burnouts, and natural work leave. The most negative outcomes of incessant ASUU strikes to academic staff was programmed disruption in terms of disruptive academic calendar, loss of productive

time, and over-extension of study programs. The findings revealed that incessant ASUU strikes in Nigeria public universities have been designed to maintain the integrity of university education and the need to provide global standard quality education. The study recommended that the University management should initiate 'Semester Break' to relief lecturers from academic burnout. Academic staff in public universities should work closely with their Union chapters to promote quality university education.

Introduction

In Nigeria, strike is the most important form of industrial disputes between employees and employers. Strike is a spontaneous and concerted withdrawal of labour from production (Chand, 2016). Chijioke (2013), defines strike as an organized work stoppage by a body of workers to enforce compliance with demands made on an employer or a group of employers. It is the result of unresolved conflicts between employers and employees. In the education system, the tertiary education sub-sector has been conferred with bad reputation of strikes action. The annals of perpetual strikes of Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) have dented the image of university education in Nigeria. The frequent nature of the dispute has caused parents, guardians and other stakeholders to consider foreign education regardless of its social and economic implications.

ASUU strikes in Nigerian universities have become so common that parents and students are divided in their opinion on who is responsible for these lingering crises. When some view government nonchalant attitude and lack of commitment to the welfare of the education sector as the cause, others blame ASUU on their radicalism, confrontational approach and insatiable demand. Two kinds of strikes can be noticed in Nigerian universities – the internal and national strikes. Internal strike takes place within the university. Such strike is triggered by factors inherent in each university. National strike involves many universities owned by the state and federal governments. Strike can also be total if academic staff withdraw their services completely from their places of work. It is partial when lecturers report at their places of work but refuse to work. It can also be definite or indefinite. Definite strike lasts for a specific period of time (that is, days, weeks, months or years), while indefinite strike does not have specific time

limit. Warning strike lasts for few days and it is meant to intimate government or the university management of an intending total strike (Ige, 2014; Anonaba, 2015).

Ogbette, Eke and Ori (2017) emphasized that, the industrial conflict between ASUU and the government can be understood as having the features of a class dispute and that it entails both economic and political factors. The researchers further stated that the factors affecting the industrial disputes (strike) between the ASUU and the government have been largely propelled by historical, economic and political factors which have become institutionalized and embedded in the Nigerian polity so that the disputes will continue to be difficult to resolve. Also, Osabuohien and Ogunrinola cited in Ogbette *et al* (2017), observe that unions within the system have often based their demands on adequate funding of the system, university autonomy and academic freedom, as well as salary and conditions of service. It also notes that high handedness, arbitrariness and corruption, on the part of university administration, are some of the causes of agitation in the system.

Previous ASUU strikes in the early 1980s were caused according to National Association of Universities Teachers (NAUT) 1978 by: erosion of university autonomy and academic freedom, poor remunerative structure and conditions of service, under-funding of universities, poor physical conditions of work in the universities, the delay in the payment of the elongated salary structure. But today, the key outstanding issues leading to ASUU strike include:

1. Payment of fraction/non-payment of salaries
2. Non-payment of earned academic allowances
3. Non-release of operational license of NUPEMCO
4. Non-implementation of the provision of the 2014 Pension Reform Act with respect to retired Professors and their salaries
5. Removal of universities staff schools from funding by government
6. Funds for the revitalization of public universities (Implementation of Needs Assessment Report)
7. Poor funding of existing state universities and proliferation of universities by their visitors (Agbakwuru, 2017).

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has been going on strike for a number of years over the same issue with government not

honouring agreements reached with the union; yet, nothing seems to have changed. Till date, the above reasons have almost remained central in ASUU demand and the cause of ASUU crises. The question is: why has this demand remained consistent and unresolved over the years? Some habitual strikes by ASUU from 1999 till date is presented on table 1.

Table 1: Some popular strikes by ASUU (1999-2018)

Year	Strike Duration
1999	Five months strike
2001	Three months strike
2002	Two weeks strike
2003/2004	Six months strike
2005	Three days strike
2006	Three days strike
2007	Three months strike
2008	One week strike
2009	Four months strike
2010	Over five months strike
2011/2012	Three months strike
2013	Over five months strike
2017	Three weeks strike
2018	Over a month strike and on-going

Source: Ugar (2018) and Authors compilation

Strike actions have positive and negative effects on all parties concerned. According to Doublegist (2013), strikes have four dimensions which include: frequency (the number of work stoppages in a given unit of analysis over specific period of time), breadth (the number of workers who participate in work stoppages), durations (the length of stoppage usually in main days of work lost), and impact (the number of working days lost through stoppages). Also, Ogbetteet *al* (2017) categorized the effects of ASUU strikes into two fundamental parts – the positive and the negative effects. Under the positive effects, the eventual funds released will be used by university administrators to meet their immediate needs. Stagnated projects will be completed to serve lecturers and students on campus. To individual who wish to join the academia and become professors will benefit of retiring at 70 years

and enjoy special allowances that the current struggle will benefit. For the negative effects, disruptions in academic programmes serve as disincentive to industrious teachers and students. There is also loss of study and research time to students and lecturers respectively.

At the institution level, Amadi and Precious (2015) discovered that strike actions have effects on educational management planning and generally result to irregularity of academic programmes, examination malpractices and cultism amongst students, certificate racketeering, erosion of dignity and respect of higher education. The impact of strikes on higher education in Nigeria is diverse. Many researchers have identified some of these impacts. Anonaba (2015) noted that incessant strikes in tertiary institutions in Nigeria have had negative effects with government, parents, and educational institutions' administrators having their share of the effects. Generally, incessant strikes have adverse effect on the economy According to Anonaba (2015) these adverse effects include: the suspension of academic activities and disruptions of academic calendar, conflicts between the government and trade unions, government and academics, corruption, laziness of students, increase in crimes in the society, degrading the academic profile of Nigeria, loss of jobs, inactive economic activities and delay in registration of graduate students with National Youth Service Corps (NYSC). In the university, the physical state of the university is impacted by strikes. University structures and equipment are left without use. Vandals use this time to vandalize university properties worth millions and the university is not maintained as workers take part in strike actions. Structures, facilities and environment dilapidate when strike suspends daily maintenance. The image of the university continues to wane before members of the society. Parents become fed up with their ward's inability to complete their education (Anonaba, 2015).

Humanly, the impact of strike on the University is great. Strike prevents human resources that work at the university from working. It prevents them from developing in any of the areas of their duty. The human brains that are trained at the university are set loose of every level of culturing. These are students who are forced to go on a break, the end of which no one can tell the time the conflict resolution will end. The impact of such phenomenon is that the society fails to benefit from the trainers, the human resources and brains which are the

students (Enomahet *al.* 2010). Also, the economy suffers because of the strike. The economy in this study is divided into three: the University economy, the local economy and the state economy. The University economy dwindles as economic activities become inactive, yet there are even more expenses but no income. University workers would be paid, electricity, water and security would be paid for, more travels for university officials as they engage in travels for endless negotiations to achieve the aim of going on strike. Strike imposes cost on the employees, the employers and the entire economy. The employees may suffer loss when they are not paid during the strike period. On the part of the employers, cost may be indicated by lost output, lost customers and lost management confidence (Fashoyin, 1992 cited in Anonaba, 2015). This has several adverse effects on the Universities growth and achievements.

The local economy where the university is found and operates, benefits economically from the University. The housing business flourishes as university staff and students hire houses to live in. Markets in this local area benefit as they become the closest point of call for the exchange of goods and services. Small and medium scale enterprises that are established to supply the demands of the individuals that comes to the area because of the university. Strike actions however, bring immediate crippling of the patronage of business and if the duration of the strike extends for a long time, some businesses will fold up. The economic lives of those whose business activities depend on the tertiary institutions for survival are as well affected (Anonaba, 2015).

In case of the state economy, the loss of productivity affects the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This constitutes the most significant quantitative cost to society (Fashoyin, 1992 cited in Anonaba, 2015). Instability of the academic calendar has led so many youths to leave the country to study at other countries. Presently so many Nigerian students study abroad and spend so much in order to get a university degree. The researches of the academicians which have the capability to cause an increase in the state advancement and development are lost within the period of strike. So many scholars lose their jobs; strikes have led to the dismissal and retirement of members of trade unions. In 1985, the management of the University of Benin dismissed a former President of ASUU, over his role in the strike in the university and the

country as a whole. Forty nine (49) academic staff of University of Ilorin, Nigeria were dismissed in 2001 for taking part in a nationwide strike, embarked upon by members of ASUU (Timilehin, Esohe, Osalusi and Babatope, 2010).

The societal impacts of strike are many as it affects the family, the nation's image, the government and the quality of education. The national image is also smeared by these strikes as they display poverty of leadership responsibility. As the nation gets lock up in unending negotiations of strike with the body that trains and qualifies its literate work force, it casts a shadow of underdevelopment on this country. Over the years, there have been growing concerns about the fall in the quality of education in Nigeria (Okebukola, 2002). One factor that can be attributed to this is the incessant strikes and the associated closure of institutions (Saint, Hartnett and Strassner, 2003). All these phenomena affect our country in the scheme of things in the international arena. This strike becomes a reoccurring event with every administration of government; it shows inability of our leaders and our teachers. The government is also exposed. The major reason for strikes in higher education institutions have always been unfulfilled agreements, lack of adequate academic sponsorship, mismanagement of academic funds, non-payment of staff salaries and obnoxious government policies. These are all leadership challenge that affects us in Nigeria. The citizens both literate and illiterate would not appreciate much any government that allowed its relationship with stake holders in higher education to get into strike. Soon the strike becomes a factor that brings about other problems that become even greater challenge to the government. An academic institution disrupted with so many strikes cannot produce quality education. The time that is to be spent on learning and carrying out research is spent on crisis and conflict, yet strikes take place more than once in every four years (Ige cited Anonaba, 2015).

The primary goal of this study was to examine the perceptions of academic staff in Ogun State on incessant Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strikes in Nigeria universities. The aims of this study were to (i) generate a list of categories of positive sides of incessant ASUU strikes perceived by academic staff in universities in Ogun State (ii) generate a list of categories of negative sides of incessant ASUU strikes perceived by academic staff in universities in Ogun State. Noting

that the most frequently perceived gains and loss to academic staff as a result of strike action experienced can be somehow objectively observed, a particular perception is regarded as positive/negative sides depending on the academic staff's subjective judgement and values, years of teaching experience in university, and the type of university. Therefore, this study recruited lecturers with different years of teaching experiences in state and federal universities in order to get a comprehensive view of the issue. It is a descriptive and exploratory qualitative research study. Academically, the present findings would add to the local literature, as recent research studies on this topic are scanty in Ogun State. Practically, it was expected that the findings would have profound importance to guiding academic staff during industrial actions.

1.2 Research Questions

The study sought answers to the following questions:

1. How have academic staff perceived incessant Academic Staff Union of Universities strike in Nigeria?
2. What are the personal gains and loss to academic staff as a result of incessant Academic Staff Union of Universities strike in Nigeria?

Methodology

Design: The researchers employed a qualitative research design. The design which was narrative in nature allowed the researchers to focus on academic staff shared experience of incessant ASUU strike actions.

Population, Sample and Sampling Technique: The population of this study comprised 10,995 academic staff in 18 public (7 federal and 11 state) universities in Southwest, Nigeria. Twelve (12) academic staff were sampled using availability sampling technique. The twelve academic staff were the only respondents that volunteered to work collaboratively with the researchers.

Participants: Three universities (2 state and 1 federal universities) whose academic staff were members of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) were invited to join this study. In each university, four tenure academic staff who had experiences of teaching and

research (at undergraduate and postgraduate levels) were invited to join an individual interview. In total, twelve academic staff (seven males and five females) participated in this study. Four of the participants were academic staff in the status position of lectureship, and eight of the participants were academic staff in the status position of professorship. The average years of the participants in academia was 15.54 years (range = 11-31 years). Their participation was voluntary and written consent from the university management and the interviewees were obtained prior to data collection. Issues of anonymity and confidentiality in handling the data were also clearly explained at the beginning of the interview.

Instrument: A self-constructed semi-structured interview guide was used for each individual interview. In the interview guide, questions and prompts were used to explore the interviewees' perceptions of frequentative nature of ASUU strikes and its positive and negative effects on academic staff. The interviewees were asked to explain "incessant strikes" in the context of university education based on their own understanding and interpretation. They were invited to use real-life examples to further illustrate their views. The average time for an interview was 25 minutes (range= 18-33 minutes). Each interview was conducted by the researchers. The interviews were audio-taped with informants' prior consent and transcribed in verbatim after the interview. As many questions were covered in the interview guide, only data related to the following questions were analysed in this paper.

1. What are your perceptions of perpetual Academic Staff Union of Universities strike in Nigeria public universities?
2. What are the personal gains and loss to academic staff as a result of the frequent strike action experienced
3. How well have you been able to maximise your strike holidays?
4. What are your personal achievements during the last ASUU strike action?

Data Analysis: Findings pertinent to academic staff perceptions of incessant ASUU strikes, and the perceived bright and down sides of ASUU strikes are reported in this paper. Data was analysed by using general qualitative analyses techniques. First level of coding was conducted by an expert who has a doctoral degree in psychology.

Semantically similar words, phrases, and/or sentences that formed meaningful units in each conclusion at the raw response level were grouped whereas semantically different data were divided. Further checking and second levels of coding and categorisation were conducted by the first author, in which similar codes were grouped to reflect higher-order categories of theme or patterns. The coding and categorisation were finalised with consensus among the coders and further checked by a colleague who are experts in their fields.

As the code and categorisation were inductively derived from the data, both intra and inter-rater reliabilities on the coding were calculated to ensure the credibility of the findings. In the reliability test, 20 raw responses were randomly selected for each rater to code without referring to the original codes. The intra-rater reliability tests were conducted by the two coders independently; whereas the inter-rater reliability tests were conducted by two experts independently. The reliability of the categorisation was on the high side, because the intra-rater agreement percentages were both 100%; while the inter-rater agreement percentages were 80% and 95%.

Results

Categories on Meaning of Incessant ASUU Strike: Table 2 summarises 82 responses regarding the perception of academic staff to incessant ASUU strikes reported by 12 informants. The responses were classified into 15 categories, and 6 of them were further divided into sub-categories. As shown in Table 2, the context of incessant ASUU strikes were perceivably conceptualised by academic staff mostly as “involvement in politics”, “desire for continuation”, “civil responsibility”, “engagement”, “research output”, and “programme disruption”.

Table 2: A summary of the academic staff perceptions of ASUU strikes action in public universities

Category	Sub-category	Number of responses	Number of responses regarded as positive sides	Number of responses regarded as negative sides
Involvement in politics	Politicisation of higher education system	2	0	0
	Political appointment	3	3	0
	Academic corruption	2	0	0
	Sub-total	7	3	0
Desire for continuation	Refreshing job engagement	2	2	0
	Partial commitment	8	0	3
	Sub-total	10	2	3
Civil responsibility		6	4	0
Engagement	Stress aversion	6	5	0
	Alleviating burnout	3	2	0
	Natural work leave	3	2	0
	Sub-total	12	9	0
System revitalization		3	1	0
Personal endeavor		4	4	0
Graduate production	Improving graduate quality	3	0	0
	Reducing graduate output	2	0	0
	Sub-total	5	0	0
Educational services		2	1	0
Competitiveness		3	0	2
Professional dissociation		1	0	0
Psycho-social trauma		4	0	4
Incapacitated leadership status		2	0	0
Institutional image	Bad reputation	1	0	0
	Poor image	4	0	4

	Sub-total	5	0	4
Research output		6	3	3
Programme disruption	Disruptive academic calendar	3	0	2
	Loss of productive time	5	0	4
	Over-extension of study programme	4	0	1
	Sub-total	12	0	7
Total responses		82	27	23

Academic staff reported that incessant ASUU strike is an avenue to get involved in politics in highly politicised higher education system such as headship appointment in a university. Some academic staff pointed out that it was a rising phenomenon that union members also use strike action as an avenue to gain political appointment. In response to this phenomenon, informants also attested that incessant ASUU strikes have been a major spearhead of academic corruption among political movement groups.

“Desire for continuation” was another synoptic view of incessant ASUU strike actions as perceived by academic staff in public universities. This was mainly referred to as an attempt to revive job engagement or fulfil staff commitment. It is distinguished from “engagement” which was referred to as stress aversion, academic burnout and work leave.

“Civil responsibility” appeared as another perceived meaning of incessant ASUU strikes, but academic staff conjecturally described this category as right disputes. For instance, an academic staff mentioned that agreements on salaries and allowances are rights which cannot be violated. Academic staff FM1 commented that:

“...we get to work on time, have enough to do, overwork ourselves on a daily basis, and we are not getting the right allowances...I think we are right by exercising our civil rights to industrial action.”

“Research output” was the next common term in which incessant ASUU strikes was carefully explained. An academic staff explained that active state/institutional sponsored researches are often affected. Another

academic staff illustrated that incessant ASUU strikes meant “programme disruption” which was referred to as disruptions such as disruptive academic calendar, loss of productive time, and over-extension of study programme. An academic staff mentioned that:

“It is observed that in the event of industrial action such as strikes and protest of all sorts, academic activities and other official jobs are paralyzed; since all activities are a standstill as lecturers wait for settlements. When this happens, one can imagine what happens to school calendar. Semester works drag-on while sessions last longer than necessary” (Academic Staff SF2).

Positive Sides of Incessant ASUU Strikes: Among the various positive sides of incessant ASUU strikes reported, comparatively more academic staff pointed out that “stress aversion” was a form of “work engagement”, which was mostly seen as gains to academic staff (Table 2). An academic staff explained that:

“...sincerely, the daily work engagement is not configured on the right teacher-student ratio. In most cases handling triple figures (hundreds) of students has been a formidable task, and this has been the case for years. So, when the union says let us go, it is a relief call being off-duties” (Academic Staff FF1).

“Personal endeavour” and “civil responsibility” were the next commonly perceived positives sides of incessant ASUU strike actions. An academic staff commented that:

“I think the commencement of ASUU strike does not stop personal endeavour in academic research. It is always an avenue to make the best use of such period” (Academic Staff SM4).

Some of the academic staff also regarded “political appointment”, “research output”, “refreshing job engagement”, “alleviating burnout”, “natural work leave”, “system revitalisation”, and “improved educational services” as the positive outcomes of incessant ASUU strikes (Table 2). An academic staff SM3 reflected in a narrative statement that:

"...the dispute is part of the Nigerian polity. There is potential for academic staff at the negotiation table to get involved in politics...The beauty of ASUU strike is embedded in its continuation. There is nothing important than to renew our agreement with the government...the industrial conflict between us (ASUU) and the central government is as a result of conflict of interests as regards wages and working conditions. Simple!"

An academic staff SF5 remarked that:

"Strikes change policies of universities infrastructural development and welfare of both academic and non-academic staff union of universities...We are passionate of producing quality graduates. The sizeable numbers of graduates in Nigeria are half-baked and unemployable in a formal employment setting. This is a case of bad system we are working in. This however would continue to be the trend in Nigeria's higher education system as long as strikes continue to disrupt academic calendars and activities; unless tangible outcome to change this anomaly is achieved...It is incontrovertible that 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 if not to zero level the half-baked graduates or functional illiterates that Nigeria tertiary institutions are turning out lately".

Negative Sides of Incessant ASUU Strikes: As indicated in table 2, "poor institutional image", "psycho-social trauma", and "loss of productive time" were each rated by four academic staff as the negative outcomes of incessant ASUU strikes. As revealed in the interviews, such negative outcomes proved as downsides on academic staff. An academic staff SM5 remarked that:

"strike damages the institutions or government public image. In government-supported institutions, strike action can cause a budgetary imbalance and have actual economic repercussions for the institution...It becomes despondent that when there is

pre-planned meeting on strike action, everything breeds disappointment, frustration, emotional and psychological trauma, unpreparedness on the part of the students and lack of motivation to all lecturers”.

Another academic staff added that:

“...the family is a basic unit of every society and it represents and reflects the image of everything that is going on in the society. Every family unit desires to see their offspring succeed, get educated and influence the family for good. But strikes of higher education institutions prolong these dreams. The periods of strikes send the students on a break and some them misuse these breaks and get into many ills that distorts their future. Strikes also cause strains on the family relations as students that are expected to be in school come home and become extra responsibilities...Reduced productivity and loss of focus on objectives are often the case” (Academic Staff SF4).

“Partial commitment”, “research output”, “competitiveness”, “disruptive academic calendar” and “over-extension of study programmes” were also mentioned by academic staff as categories of negative outcomes of incessant ASUU strikes. For instance, in an academic staff's perceptions of "partial commitment" and “research output”, he expressed that:

“...I think that sometimes government signs agreements to get ASUU back to work; they are used to signing with the intention to break them as they are reached under duress...Active state/institutional sponsored researches are often affected” (Academic Staff SM2).

Another academic staff explained why “competitiveness”, “disruptive academic calendar” and “over-extension of study programmes” were regarded as negative outcomes:

“Originally, the desire not to improve the system will give other organisations (private universities) an edge. Private proprietors do partner with striking lecturers often times to see how the system could be improved. Our major fear is losing renowned indigenous scholars to these competing partners... Immediately

after resumption to work, there is always pressure to get started with course works. And at times kick start examination if possible. There is always fear of gross examination malpractices in such scenario...When an academic process gets interrupted with strike, all on-going research get abandoned or delayed; students keep their books in shelves and when the strike is called off, both students and lecturers are mentally weak. "At the end of the day, they graduate with mere certificates instead of knowledge that could impact on the economy. There is a common saying that 'When two elephants fight, the grasses will suffer'. Students have been at the receiving end of strikes in Nigeria" (Academic Staff SF1).

Discussion

Based on the perspective of academic staff, this study attempted to generate a list of categories to meaning of incessant ASUU strikes in Nigeria public universities, and to identify its positive and negative outcomes to academic staff. As shown in table 1, a list of 15 categories were conceptualised for incessant ASUU strikes, including involvement in politics, desire for continuation, civil responsibility, engagement, system revitalisation, personal endeavour, graduate production, educational services, competitiveness, professional dissociation, psycho-social trauma, incapacitated leadership status, institutional image, research output, and programme disruption. Among them, the most highly perceived categories were involvement in politics, desire for continuation, civil responsibility, engagement, research output, and programme disruption. These findings indicate that academic staff in public universities in Nigeria are concerned about the current state of the nation's economy and how the university as a resource centre has not been fully charged to take control of its national growth and development.

The most conceived positive effects of incessant ASUU strike to academic staff was engagement in terms of stress aversion, alleviating burnouts, and natural work leave, followed by personal endeavour and civil responsibility. The next one was political appointment, research output, system revitalisation, and improved educational services. It is not surprising that stress aversion was highlighted in this study as a kind of positive outcome of incessant ASUU strikes, because teacher-

student ratio in Nigeria public universities are generally high (National Universities Commission, 2017). According to a 2013 report from the Nigerian Universities Needs Assessment Committee established by the federal government to look into the problems of universities, just 43 per cent of Nigeria's 37,504 university lecturers have PhDs. The report also notes that Nigeria has one of the worst lecturer-to student ratios in the world, with the National Open University, University of Abuja and Lagos State University having ratios of 1:363; 1:122; 1:114 respectively (FGN, 2012). Lecturers are often task with both teaching and administrative workloads in most cases, thereby culminating to stress. Stress arising from workload does affect the job effectiveness of university lecturers (Usoro and Etuk, 2016). Therefore, incessant ASUU strikes function as tie breaker in this scenario. This study also confirms that lecturers during ASUU strike undertake a lot of personal activities related/unrelated to academics. Olufemi (2018) noted that lecturers during industrial action have available time to schedule their off-campus academic activities such as conferences, field trips, workshops etc to add to their personal attributes. Similar to those of the existing studies (Ogbetteet *al.* 2017; Adamu and Ngwo, 2014), attempts to exercise civil rights, headship appointment and improve educational services were add-ons reasons to embarking on strikes.

The most highly perceived negative effects of incessant ASUU strike to academic staff was programme disruption in terms of disruptive academic calendar, loss of productive time, and over-extension of study programmes, followed by poor institutional image, and psycho-social trauma. The next one was partial commitment, research output, and competitiveness. All these might escalate tension within the university system and often result to production low quality graduates. Amadi and Precious (2015), discovered that strike actions bring instability to the tertiary education sector. Their studies found that irregularity of academic programmes, examination malpractices and cultism amongst students, certificate racketeering, erosion of dignity and respect of higher education are the negative outcomes of strike actions. Ogbetteet *al's* study also confirms that the industrial disputes (strike) between the ASUU and the government have become institutionalized and embedded in the Nigerian polity so that the disputes will continue to be difficult to resolve, and bringing more disruptions in academic programmes in public varsities.

Conclusion, Recommendations and Limitations

The present study revealed that incessant ASUU strikes in Nigeria public universities have been designed to maintain the integrity of university education and the need to provide global standard quality education. To individual academic staff within the system, there appears some benefits derivable from the existing status quo. The perpetual industrial actions have made possible for academic staff to avert stress, burnouts and undertake a personal scholarly work. While these come with other benefits, however, the adverse effects to the university education sub-sector are damaging and consequential to the growth and development of the economy. Although some unique findings were observed in this study, there were some limitations involved. First, as only twelve academic staff from three universities were involved, representativeness of the findings should be viewed with caution. Second, as only academic staff were interviewed, the findings may reveal the assumptions and biases of the lecturers due to their societal roles as a “university scholar”. Therefore, it would be more comprehensive if the views of the students and other non-academic staff can be also included. Apart from looking at the categorization and descriptions of incessant ASUU strikes, it would be more insightful if the antecedents of these positive and negative side effects could be explored in future. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that:

1. Academic staff in public universities should work closely with their Union chapters to promote quality university education.
2. The University management should initiate ‘Semester Break’ for all academic staff to relief academic burnout.
3. Federal and State governments should honour and implement the demands made by Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) for the benefits of Nigeria education system in general.

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