


# Perceived Impact of Industrial Actions on the Academic Performance of Students in Tertiary Institutions in Delta State Nigeria

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## Abstract

The study investigated the perceived impact of industrial actions on the academic performance of students in tertiary institutions in Delta State, Nigeria. Three research questions were raised and answered in the study. Two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at a .05 level of significance. A descriptive survey research design was used in the study. Two hundred seventeen students of tertiary institutions in Delta State comprised the sample of the study. A structured questionnaire titled 'Impact of Industrial Action on Students' Academic Performance Questionnaire' (IIASAPQ) was used for data collection. Mean and standard deviation, as well as t-test statistics, were used to answer the research questions. The formulated null hypotheses were tested at a .05 level of significance using t-test statistics. The findings revealed that instability in the policies of the government both at the central and state levels, poor welfare and remuneration package of the staff of the various unions, among others, are causes of industrial actions of unions of Nigeria tertiary institutions, and the difference in the mean ratings on the causes of industrial actions of unions of Nigeria tertiary institutions is not significant based on gender. Additionally, lack of interest in school among students, which leads to poor academic performance, reduced and low grades, and poor study habits among students to a great extent are the impact of industrial actions of various unions on the academic performance of students in Nigeria tertiary institutions, and the difference in the mean ratings on the extent industrial actions impacts academic performance of students in Nigeria tertiary institutions is not significant based on gender. Based on the findings, the study recommended, among others, that the federal government should ensure that there is a smooth and regular dialogue with various unions of tertiary institutions so as to avoid incessant industrial actions. The unions of various tertiary institutions should understand the impact of their industrial action on the academic performance of the students, therefore, seek alternative means of dispute and conflict resolution with the federal government instead of resorting to industrial actions.

**Keywords:** industrial action, academic performance, students, tertiary institutions

## Introduction

Industrial action is anytime a group of employees stops working as a result of disagreements with the employers on their earnings or collective welfare. Such group of employees usually express their displeasure and dissatisfaction in order to gain a positive response from the employers. Industrial action is also seen as a stoppage of work by workers in order to enforce an agreement made by employers (Hornby, 2010). Industrial actions have been explained as a refusal by a group of workers to work, usually as a form of protest,

in an attempt to drive home a series of demands. This is because of disagreements between or among groups of workers and their employees. Observations have shown that over the years, industrial action is a tool various groups of workers use to register their displeasure with earnings and work conditions which aims at compelling employers to meet the demands of the employees.

Notable among workers' unions are the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Colleges of Education Academic Staff Union (COEASU), and Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP). Academic staff of

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various tertiary institutions in Nigeria, especially ASUU, have recently embarked on strike since February 14, 2022 till date because of the Federal Government's failure to honor 2009 and 2020 agreements (Wahab, 2022). Similarly, COEASU began a one-month warning strike on June 10, 2022 which lasted on July 10, 2022. However, the union extended their striking actions by another three weeks because the Federal Government was adamant about their demands (Edema, 2022). ASUP is also not left out as they suspended their industrial actions declared on April 6,

2021 and June 10, 2021, respectively, hoping that the Federal Government will accede to their demands. The recent industrial actions by ASUU have lasted over six months and are still counting. This for ASUU is to drive home their demands because the Federal Government of Nigeria has refused to honor 2009 and 2020, which include revitalization funding of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The table reveals the duration of industrial actions by ASUU over the years from 1981 till date.

**Table 1**

*Year and Duration of Industrial Actions by ASUU from 1981-2022*

Year	Duration	Year	Duration
1981	6 months	2006	3 days
1988	2 months	2007	3 months
1992	6 months	2008	1 weeks
1993	3 months	2009	4 months
1994	6 months	2010	5 months
1995	5 months	2011	59 days
1996	7 months	2013	5 months
1998	5 months	2017	1 months
1999	5 months	2018	3 months
2001	3 months	2020	9 months
2002	2 weeks	2022	4 weeks
2003	6 months	2022	2 months
2005	2 weeks	2022	February 14, 2022 – present

Source: BBC NEWS PEDGIN (2022); Yusuf (2017).

In solidarity with ASUU over the lingering industrial actions, NLC has embarked on an a-two-day (July 26th and 27th, 2022) national protest in support of the striking members of ASUU (Premium times, 2022). This is to further mount pressure on the government to do the needful for students to return to various tertiary institutions in the country. One of ASUU's contentious issues with the government is largely due to inadequate funding by

the government, which is far less than the 26 percent minimum national budget as recommended by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). This resulted in many institutions being underfunded and having poor infrastructural supplies, poor payment of salaries, and poor maintenance of existing plans. The table indicates the percentage of budgetary allocation to the education sector from 2007 till date.

**Table 2**

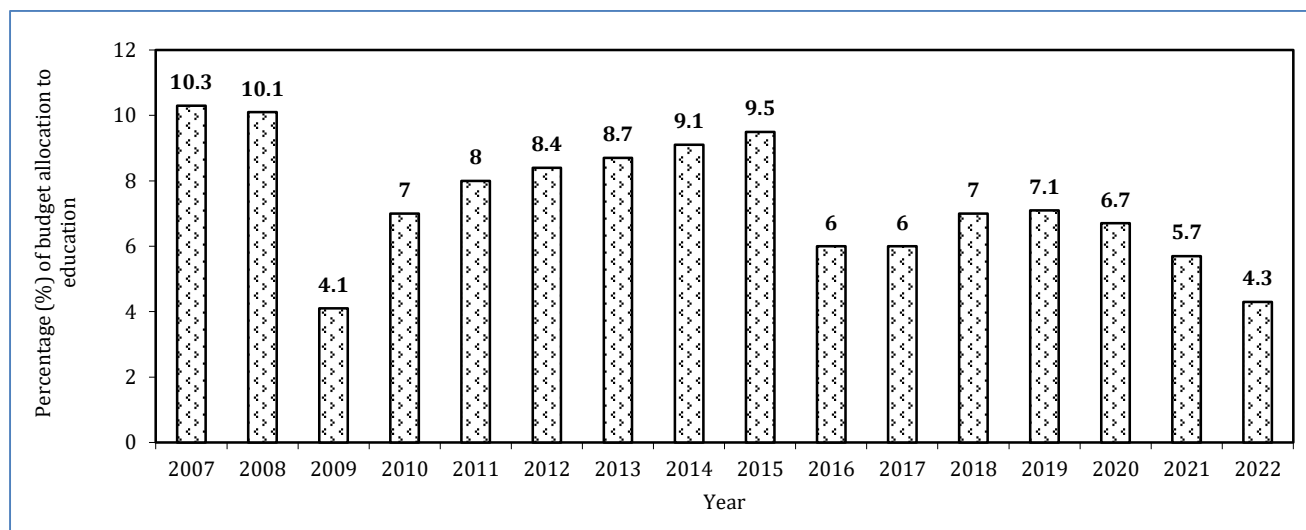
*Percentage of Federal Government of Nigeria Budgetary Allocation to Education Sector from 2007 to 2022*

Year	Percentage (%) of budget allocation to education	Year	Percentage (%) of budget allocation to education
2007	10.3	2015	9.5
2008	10.1	2016	6.0
2009	4.1	2017	6.0
2010	7.0	2018	7.0
2011	8.0	2019	7.1
2012	8.4	2020	6.7
2013	8.7	2021	5.7
2014	9.1	2022	4.3

Source: Fatunmole (2021); Odigwe and Owan (2019)

**Figure 1**

*Representation of Federal Government Budgetary Allocation to Education from 2007 till date*



Nevertheless, the perceived impact of industrial actions of various unions in tertiary institutions on her members is far less than the impact such has on the academic performance of the students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The after-effect of industrial actions in tertiary institutions cannot be over-exaggerated. The impact is such that normal teaching and learning become stall, and therefore, the resultant effect is that the students usually stay at home for a long period of time when in fact are supposed to be in school. Some students, as a result of boredom, while staying at home, are prone to many ills such as idleness which is the center point for security and social problems, cybercrime, watching immoral movies, stealing, sexual misconduct with the opposite sex, wrong social media addiction among others (Edinyang & Ubi, 2013). This makes the majority of the students lack concentration and interest in studies which may have a negative effect on students' academic performance in school activities. Industrial action does not give room for effective learning or enhanced performance because of little or no course outline coverage before the examination (Odubela, 2012). Furthermore, observations have indicated that when students stay long at home as a result of incessant industrial actions may become frustrated and, this affects them emotionally, socially, psychologically, leading to poor preparation before the examinations as lecturers rush to cover the course contents within a very limited period after the industrial action must have been suspended by the unions. The impact of industrial actions on students' academic performance in tertiary institutions in Nigeria has not been given adequate attention by various stakeholders, hence the necessity of the present study.

### Objectives

The main objective of this study is to examine the perceived impact of industrial actions on the academic performance of students in tertiary institutions in Delta State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to find out:

1. Causes of industrial action among various unions of Nigeria tertiary institutions.
2. Extent industrial action among various unions influences the academic performance of students in Nigerian tertiary institutions.
3. Strategies to mitigate industrial actions among various unions of Nigeria tertiary institutions.
4. The difference in Causes of industrial action among various unions of Nigeria tertiary institutions based on gender.
5. The difference in the extent of industrial action among various unions influences the academic performance of students in Nigerian tertiary institutions based on gender.

### Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the causes of industrial actions among various unions of Nigeria's tertiary institutions?
2. To what extent do industrial actions among various unions influence the academic performance of students in Nigerian tertiary institutions?
3. What are strategies to mitigate industrial actions among various unions of Nigeria tertiary institutions?

### Hypotheses

The following formulated hypotheses were tested at a .05 level of significance

1. The difference in the mean ratings on the causes of industrial actions among various unions of Nigerian tertiary institutions is not significant based on gender.
2. The difference in the mean ratings on the extent industrial actions impacts the academic performance of students in Nigerian tertiary institutions is not significant based on gender.

### Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was adopted in the study. The population for this study consisted of all the students of tertiary institutions in Asaba Delta State, Nigeria. The sample of this study was 217 (80 males and 137 females) students in Delta State University of Education, Agbor. A structured questionnaire titled 'Impact of Industrial Action on Students' Academic Performance Questionnaire' (IIASAPQ). The instrument was a four-point rating scale with response options of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD), Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE). The face and content validation of the instrument was done by experts in Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach Alpha method, which yielded a reliability coefficient of .73 and indicated that the instrument was reliable for the study. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation statistics to answer the research questions. The decision rule was that any item with a mean score of 2.50 and above was regarded as agree or great extent, while the reverse is the case of any item with a mean score below 2.50, such was regarded as disagree or low extent. The null hypotheses were tested using a *t*-test. The decision rule was that any null hypothesis with a *p*-value < .05 was accepted, whereas; the reverse was the case for any null hypothesis with a *p*-value > .05.

### Results

Research Question 1: What are the causes of industrial actions among various unions of Nigerian tertiary institutions?

**Table 3**

*Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on Causes of Industrial Action among Various Unions of Tertiary institutions in Nigeria (N=217)*

Items	SA	A	D	SD	M	SD	Remark
Negligence of tertiary institutions by the Federal Government of Nigeria	114	48	39	16	3.20	.98	Agree
Dilapidated and uncondusive nature of tertiary institutions in Nigeria	94	6	67	50	2.66	1.25	Agree
Failure of the Federal Government to honor the agreement with the various unions	58	95	38	26	2.85	.95	Agree
Poor welfare and remuneration package of the staff of the various unions	125	52	28	12	3.34	.90	Agree
Instability in the policies of the government both at the central and state levels	43	102	20	52	2.63	1.06	Agree
Grand mean/SD					2.94	1.03	Agree

Note. Field survey data, 2022

Data analyzed in Table 3 indicate mean and standard deviation scores on causes of industrial actions of various unions of Nigeria tertiary institutions. The respondents rated all the items above a

mean score of 2.50, which indicates agreement among the respondents that instability in the policies of the government both at the central and state levels, poor welfare and remuneration

package of the staff of the various unions, among others are causes of industrial actions of various unions of Nigeria tertiary institutions. The evidence of this is also shown in a grand  $M = 2.94$ , which is above a mean score of 2.50, consolidating agreement among the respondents. The grand  $SD = 1.03$  indicates that the

respondents had a similar view on the causes of industrial actions among various unions of Nigeria's tertiary institutions.

Research Question 2: To what extent do industrial actions among various unions impact the academic performance of students in Nigerian tertiary institutions?

**Table 4**

*Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on the Extent Industrial Actions among Various Unions Impact Academic Performance of Students in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria (N=217)*

Items	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	M	SD	Remark
Examination malpractice among students in order to succeed at all cost	99	54	23	41	2.97	1.15	High extent
Half-baked graduates from various tertiary institutions	53	104	11	49	2.74	1.07	High extent
Racketeering of certification among students in tertiary institutions	43	127	22	25	2.87	.86	High extent
Reduced and low grades among students	48	131	21	17	2.97	.80	High extent
Poor study habit that leads to low academic performance among students	60	121	22	14	3.05	.80	High extent
Students' lack of interest in school leads to poor academic performance	37	146	20	14	2.95	.72	High extent
An unhealthy lifestyle among students leads to poor academic performance.	53	104	44	16	2.89	.86	High extent
Grand mean/SD					2.92	.89	High extent

Note. Field survey data, 2022

Analysis of Table 4 reveals mean and standard deviation scores on the extent industrial actions among various unions impact the academic performance of students in Nigerian tertiary institutions. The respondents rated all the items above a mean score of 2.50, indicating that students' lack of interest in school leads to poor academic performance, reduced and low grades among students, poor study habit that leads to low academic performance among students to a great extent are the impact of industrial actions of

various unions on the academic performance of students in Nigeria tertiary institutions. The above is evidently revealed in a grand  $M = 2.92$ . Furthermore, the grand  $SD = .89$  indicates that the respondents were homogeneous in their responses on the impact of industrial actions of various unions on the academic performance of students in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Research Question 3: What are strategies to mitigate industrial actions among various unions of Nigerian tertiary institutions?

**Table 5**

*Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on the Strategies to Mitigate Industrial Actions among Various Unions of Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria (N=217)*

Items	SA	A	D	SD	M	SD	Remark
Reorientation of various unions of tertiary institutions to use other alternatives of drawing government attention instead of strike actions	120	57	27	13	3.31	.91	Agree
There should be legislation for tertiary institutions in Nigeria to be independent	100	37	32	48	2.87	1.22	Agree
Regular industrial dialogue between the tertiary institution unions and the federal government	112	48	36	21	3.16	1.02	Agree
Regular funding of capital intensive in all tertiary institutions in Nigeria	105	41	32	39	2.98	1.16	Agree
The federal government should consider the welfare of various unions very important at all times	124	48	24	21	3.27	1.00	Agree
The federal government should promote a healthy relationship with various unions	40	134	29	14	2.92	.76	Agree
There should be a special court to handle disputes between the federal government and the unions, as this will avoid unnecessary industrial actions	123	42	34	18	3.24	1.00	Agree
The federal government should, as a matter of urgency, increase budgetary allocations to the education sector based on the recommendations of UNESCO	100	49	18	50	2.92	1.21	Agree
Grand mean/SD					3.04	.98	Agree

Note. Field survey data, 2022

Table 5 shows mean and standard deviation scores on the strategies to mitigate industrial actions among various unions of Nigeria's tertiary institutions. In addition, Table 5 shows that the respondents rated all the items above a mean score of 2.50, and

this reveals that regular funding of capital intensive nature in all tertiary institutions in Nigeria, legislation for tertiary institutions in Nigeria to be independent, among others are the strategies to mitigate industrial actions of various unions of Nigeria tertiary

institutions. Furthermore, the grand  $M = 3.04$  is empirical evidence supporting the agreement among the respondents on the strategies to mitigate industrial actions among various unions of Nigeria's tertiary institutions. The grand  $SD = .98$  indicates the respondents had a similar opinion on the strategies to mitigate

industrial actions among various unions of Nigeria tertiary institutions.

Hypothesis 1: The difference in the mean ratings on the causes of industrial actions among various unions of Nigeria tertiary institutions is not significant based on gender.

**Table 6**

*The difference in the Mean Ratings on the Causes of Industrial Actions among Various Unions of Nigeria Tertiary Institutions Based on Gender*

Gender	N	M	SD	df	t	p
Male	80	44.7	8.69	215	.755	.640
Female	137	43.6	8.88			

Note.  $p > .05$

Table 6 reveals that a  $t$ -test was run to test the difference in the mean ratings on the causes of industrial actions among various unions of Nigeria's tertiary institutions based on gender. The result shows that the  $t$ -value is .755 and the  $p$ -value  $> .05$  ( $.640 < .05$ ), the null hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, the difference in the mean

ratings on the causes of industrial actions among various unions of Nigeria's tertiary institutions is not significant based on gender.

Hypothesis 2: The difference in the mean ratings on the extent industrial actions impact the academic performance of students in Nigerian tertiary institutions is not significant based on gender.

**Table 7**

*The difference in the Mean Ratings on the Extent Industrial Actions Impacts Academic Performance of Students in Nigeria Tertiary Institutions Based on Gender*

Gender	N	M	SD	df	t	p
Male	80	43.98	9.15	215	1.166	.425
Female	137	42.49	9.00			

Note.  $p > .05$

Analysis of Table 7 shows that the  $t$ -test was run to test the difference in the mean ratings on the extent industrial actions impact the academic performance of students in Nigerian tertiary institutions based on gender. The analysis reveals that the  $t$ -calculated value is 1.166, and  $p$ -value  $> .05$  ( $.425 > .05$ ), the null hypothesis was accepted. Hence, the difference in the mean ratings on the extent industrial actions impacts the academic performance of students in Nigerian tertiary institutions is not significant based on gender.

### Discussion

One of the findings revealed that instability in the policies of the government both at the central and state levels, poor welfare and remuneration package of the staff of the various unions, among others, are causes of industrial actions among various unions of Nigeria tertiary institutions, and, the difference in the mean ratings on the causes of industrial actions among various unions of Nigeria tertiary institutions is not significant based on gender. This consolidates the findings of triangulation of scholars (Abaekwume et al., 2022; Nwokeneme, 2012) that unions of various tertiary institutions embark on industrial actions because of poor welfare of members, and infrastructural problems, among others.

Furthermore, the findings of this study revealed that students lack interest in school, which leads to poor academic performance, reduced and low grades among students, and poor study habit that leads to low academic performance among students. To a great extent, the impact of industrial actions of various unions on the academic performance of students in Nigerian tertiary institutions and the difference in the mean ratings on the extent industrial actions impact the academic performance of students in Nigerian tertiary institutions is not significant based on gender. This agrees with the findings of Abaekwueme et al. (2022) that industrial actions negatively impact students' academic performance in terms of poor grades and lack of concentration in studies, among others.

Finally, the findings revealed that regular funding of capital intensive in all tertiary institutions in Nigeria, and legislation for tertiary institutions in Nigeria to be independent, among others, are the strategies to mitigate industrial actions among various unions of Nigeria's tertiary institutions. This is in consonance with the findings of Abaekwueme et al. (2022); Amadi and Urho (2015); Benson (2015) that efficient management, government sincere, and regular dialogue with workers, among others, can be used to reduce incessant industrial actions in tertiary institutions.

### Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study, therefore, concludes as follows that instability in the policies of the government both at the central and state levels, poor welfare and remuneration package of the staff of the various unions, among others, causes of industrial actions among various unions of Nigeria tertiary institutions. Industrial actions of various unions impact the academic performance of students in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Legislation for tertiary institutions in Nigeria to be independent, among others, the strategies to mitigate industrial actions among various unions of Nigeria tertiary institutions.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study made the following recommendations:

1. The federal government should ensure that there is a smooth and regular dialogue with various unions of tertiary institutions so as to avoid incessant strike actions.
2. The unions of various tertiary institutions should understand the impact of their industrial action on the academic performance of the students, therefore, seek alternative means of dispute and conflict resolution with the federal government instead of resorting to strike actions.
3. The federal government should consider the welfare of staff of various unions a priority and solve any impending issues which may give rise to strike actions by these unions.
4. The federal government should enact a law that will make tertiary institutions independent in the country, as this will help to avoid regular industrial disputes.

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