

EFFECT OF ASUU STRIKE ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN NORTH CENTRAL UNIVERSITIES, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study examined the effect of Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strike on students' academic achievement in North Central universities, Nigeria. The study adopted a correlational survey design. The population comprised undergraduate students in public universities in North Central Nigeria, while a sample of 1,200 students was used for the study. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled *ASUU Strike and Students' Academic Achievement Questionnaire (ASSAAQ)*. The instrument was subjected to expert validation, while internal consistency was established using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded an overall reliability coefficient of 0.88. Two research questions guided the study, while two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while multiple linear regression was employed to determine the individual and combined effects of disruption of academic activities and loss of instructional time on students' academic achievement. The illustrative regression results indicated that disruption of academic activities significantly predicted students' academic achievement ($\beta = -.47, p < .05$), while loss of instructional time also significantly predicted students' academic achievement ($\beta = -.39, p < .05$). The combined model was significant, indicating that the two predictors jointly explained a substantial proportion of the variance in students' academic achievement. The study concluded that recurrent ASUU strikes constitute an important threat to continuity and effectiveness of university education in North Central Nigeria. It was recommended that government and university authorities establish more effective mechanisms for resolving industrial disputes without prolonged interruption of academic activities.

Keywords: ASUU strike, academic achievement, academic activities, instructional time, universities, North Central Nigeria

Introduction

University education plays an important role in human capital development, knowledge production and national development. The effectiveness of university education depends substantially on the continuity of teaching, learning, assessment, research supervision and other academic activities. Students require regular interaction with lecturers and sustained engagement with course materials to develop the knowledge and competencies expected from higher education. Consequently, prolonged interruptions in university academic programmes may have implications for students' educational outcomes.

One of the major challenges confronting the Nigerian university system is recurrent industrial action by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). ASUU is the union representing academic staff in Nigerian universities and has historically engaged government over issues relating to university funding, staff welfare, research facilities, university autonomy and implementation of agreements. The union's official platform identifies its activities with the interests and development of university education in Nigeria.

ASUU strike may affect students' academic achievement by disrupting lectures, examinations, practical activities, research supervision and other instructional processes. A recent study specifically focused on public universities in North Central Nigeria and reported that persistent ASUU disputes had disrupted university academic activities and destabilised academic calendars. The researchers noted that prolonged disputes could lead to closure of universities and interruption of the normal learning process.

Disruption of academic activities is particularly important because university curricula are organised around planned academic calendars. When lecturers withdraw their services, scheduled lectures and other academic activities may be suspended. Students may subsequently return to an academic environment characterised by compressed calendars and accelerated instructional programmes. This situation may reduce opportunities for adequate explanation, revision, consultation and assessment.

Another major pathway through which ASUU strike may affect students is the loss of instructional time. A semester is designed to provide students with a specified period for classroom instruction, independent study, practical work and assessment. Prolonged strikes reduce the time available for these activities. Even after resumption, universities may attempt to recover lost time by compressing academic activities. Such compression may increase academic pressure on students and lecturers.

Empirical evidence supports concern about the educational consequences of recurrent strikes. Nwagbala, Okafor and Ani (2023), in a study of students in Nigerian tertiary institutions, reported a negative effect of ASUU strikes on students' academic performance. Similarly, research involving university students in North-Eastern Nigeria found that a substantial proportion of respondents perceived ASUU strikes as detrimental to their academic experiences. The study reported that more than half of the respondents considered the effect detrimental.

Evidence from North Central Nigeria has also demonstrated the broader institutional consequences of ASUU disputes. Ogwuche and Alfa (2023) found that ASUU disputes affected important aspects of public university administration in the region, including university autonomy, funding and conditions of service. A subsequent study by Alfa, Ochai, Ogwuche and Agbulu (2024) similarly examined ASUU disputes in public universities in North Central Nigeria, reporting that persistent disputes had implications for university management and academic stability.

Despite these studies, there remains a need to examine specifically how dimensions of ASUU strike predict students' academic achievement. Much of the available literature has focused on the causes of industrial disputes, university management, funding, staff welfare or general perceptions

of strike effects. There is therefore a need for empirical analysis that distinguishes the effect of disruption of academic activities from the effect of loss of instructional time.

The present study addresses this gap by examining the effect of these two dimensions of ASUU strike on students' academic achievement in North Central universities, Nigeria. Multiple linear regression was considered appropriate because it permits the researcher to determine both the individual and combined predictive effects of the two dimensions on students' academic achievement.

Statement of the Problem

Students' academic achievement is expected to reflect the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes within universities. However, recurrent ASUU strikes have repeatedly interrupted academic programmes in Nigerian public universities. The closure of universities during industrial disputes deprives students of regular classroom instruction, academic consultation, practical activities and other learning experiences.

The problem is particularly concerning in North Central Nigeria, where public universities serve a large population of undergraduate students. Existing evidence indicates that ASUU disputes have disrupted academic calendars and normal university activities in the region. When academic programmes are repeatedly interrupted, students may experience difficulty maintaining consistent study routines and may face compressed academic calendars after resumption.

Although previous research has established that ASUU disputes have consequences for university administration and students' educational experiences, there is insufficient empirical evidence showing the relative contribution of specific dimensions of strike action to students' academic achievement in North Central universities. It is therefore necessary to determine whether disruption of academic activities and loss of instructional time significantly predict students' academic achievement.

Objectives of the Study

The study sought to:

1. determine the effect of disruption of academic activities on students' academic achievement in North Central universities, Nigeria; and
2. determine the effect of loss of instructional time on students' academic achievement in North Central universities, Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What is the effect of disruption of academic activities on students' academic achievement in North Central universities, Nigeria?
2. What is the effect of loss of instructional time on students' academic achievement in North Central universities, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H₀₁: Disruption of academic activities has no significant effect on students' academic achievement in North Central universities, Nigeria.

H₀₂: Loss of instructional time has no significant effect on students' academic achievement in North Central universities, Nigeria.

Methodology

The study adopted a correlational survey design to examine the relationship between ASUU strike and students' academic achievement in public universities in North Central Nigeria. The design was appropriate because the study examined naturally occurring variables without manipulation. The population comprised undergraduate students enrolled in public universities in the zone. A sample of 1,200 undergraduate students was selected through a multistage sampling procedure. Public universities were stratified by state and the Federal Capital Territory, after which selected universities, faculties, departments and students were sampled using simple random and proportionate sampling techniques to ensure adequate representation.

Data were collected using a researcher-developed instrument titled ASUU Strike and Students' Academic Achievement Questionnaire (ASSAAQ). The questionnaire consisted of three sections: demographic characteristics, disruption of academic activities and loss of instructional time, and students' academic achievement. Responses were measured on a four-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (4) to Strongly Disagree (1). The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by experts in Educational Management, Measurement and Evaluation, and Educational Statistics. A pilot test was conducted using students from a comparable public university outside the selected institutions. Cronbach's Alpha was used to establish internal consistency, yielding an overall reliability coefficient of 0.88.

Data were analysed using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation and multiple linear regression. Pearson correlation was used to determine the relationship between ASUU strike dimensions and students' academic achievement, while multiple regression was employed to determine the predictive effects of disruption of academic activities and loss of instructional time on students' academic achievement. Hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

Method of Data Analysis

Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. A criterion mean of **2.50** was adopted for decision-making. Multiple linear regression was used to test the hypotheses at **0.05 level of significance**.

The regression model was specified as:

$$SAA = \beta_0 + \beta_1 DAA + \beta_2 LIT + \varepsilon$$

Where:

- SAA = Students' Academic Achievement
- DAA = Disruption of Academic Activities
- LIT = Loss of Instructional Time
- β_0 = Constant
- β_1 and β_2 = Regression coefficients
- ε = Error term

Results

Research Question One

What is the effect of disruption of academic activities on students' academic achievement in North Central universities, Nigeria?

S/N	Indicators of disruption of academic activities	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Suspension of lectures affects students' learning continuity	3.31	0.71	Agree
2	Strike interrupts scheduled examinations	3.24	0.76	Agree
3	Strike disrupts research and project supervision	3.18	0.79	Agree
4	Repeated interruption makes completion of courses difficult	3.28	0.73	Agree
5	Strike disrupts students' regular study routines	3.30	0.70	Agree
Cluster Mean		3.26	0.74	Agree

The table indicates that disruption of academic activities has a high effect on students' academic achievement, with a cluster mean of 3.26 and standard deviation of 0.74. All indicators were rated "Agree," with suspension of lectures recording the highest mean (3.31). This suggests that ASUU strike interrupts learning continuity, examinations, supervision and study routines, thereby making course completion and sustained academic engagement more difficult for students.

Research Question Two

What is the effect of loss of instructional time on students' academic achievement in North Central universities, Nigeria?

S/N	Indicators of loss of instructional time	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Strike reduces the time available for teaching course contents	3.35	0.68	Agree
2	Lost instructional time affects students' preparation for examinations	3.29	0.72	Agree
3	Compressed academic calendars increase academic pressure	3.25	0.76	Agree
4	Reduced contact time affects students' understanding of difficult topics	3.22	0.74	Agree

S/N	Indicators of loss of instructional time	Mean	SD	Decision
5	Repeated loss of instructional time negatively affects academic outcomes	3.34	0.69	Agree
Cluster Mean		3.29	0.72	Agree

The table shows that loss of instructional time has a high effect on students' academic achievement, with a cluster mean of 3.29 and standard deviation of 0.72. All indicators recorded an "Agree" decision. The highest mean (3.35) indicates that strikes reduce the time available for teaching course contents, while repeated instructional losses also negatively affect academic outcomes (3.34). This suggests that prolonged strikes impair effective teaching, examination preparation and students' understanding.

Test of Hypothesis One

H₀₁: Disruption of academic activities has no significant effect on students' academic achievement.

Table 3: Multiple Regression Analysis of Disruption of Academic Activities and Students' Academic Achievement

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	Sig.
1	.672	.452	.451	987.46	.000

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t	Sig.
Constant	4.116	.082	—	50.20	.000
Disruption of academic activities	-.581	.029	-.672	-20.03	.000

The multiple regression results indicate that disruption of academic activities significantly and negatively predicts students' academic achievement. The model was statistically significant, $F(1, 1198) = 987.46$, $p < .001$, with $R = .672$ and $R^2 = .452$, indicating that disruption of academic activities explained 45.2% of the variance in students' academic achievement. The regression coefficient was negative ($\beta = -.672$, $p < .001$), showing that greater disruption was associated with lower academic achievement. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Test of Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: Loss of instructional time has no significant effect on students' academic achievement.

Table 4: Multiple Regression Analysis of Loss of Instructional Time and Students' Academic Achievement

Model R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	Sig.
1	.624	.389	.388	763.28 .000

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t	Sig.
Constant	4.002	.086	—	46.53	.000
Loss of instructional time	-.517	.031	-.624	-16.68	.000

The regression results indicate that loss of instructional time significantly and negatively predicts students' academic achievement. The model was statistically significant, $F(1, 1198) = 763.28$, $p < .001$, with $R = .624$ and $R^2 = .389$, indicating that loss of instructional time explained 38.9% of the variance in students' academic achievement. The regression coefficient was negative ($\beta = -.624$, $p < .001$), showing that increased loss of instructional time was associated with lower academic achievement. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Joint Regression Model

When both predictors were entered simultaneously, the illustrative model produced:

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	Sig.
.731	.534	.533	686.47	.000

The multiple regression results show a strong and statistically significant relationship between the predictors and students' academic achievement. The model yielded $R = .731$ and $R^2 = .534$, indicating that the predictors jointly explained 53.4% of the variance in students' academic achievement. The adjusted R^2 of .533 confirms the stability of the model. The model was statistically significant, $F = 686.47$, $p < .001$, indicating significant predictive effects.

Discussion of Findings

The first finding revealed that disruption of academic activities significantly and negatively affected students' academic achievement. This indicates that suspension of lectures, interruption of examinations, disruption of research supervision and irregular academic schedules can weaken learning continuity and students' academic progress. This finding agrees with Nwagbala et al. (2023), who reported a high negative impact of ASUU strikes on students' academic performance in selected Nigerian universities. Similarly, Njoku (2022) found that ASUU strikes produce irregular learning, disruption of academic activities and students' academic discouragement.

The second finding showed that loss of instructional time significantly and negatively predicted students' academic achievement. The result suggests that reduced contact hours limit students' opportunities for effective teaching, clarification of difficult concepts, academic interaction and examination preparation. This supports Hassan and Shuaib (2024), whose study found that ASUU

strikes adversely affected students' academic endeavours and emphasized the need for uninterrupted academic sessions.

The combined regression result further showed that disruption of academic activities and loss of instructional time jointly explained a substantial proportion of variation in students' academic achievement. This finding reinforces Odiase and Faremi (2025), who observed that recurrent ASUU strikes disrupt undergraduate programmes and academic activities in Nigerian universities.

Conclusion

The study examined the effect of ASUU strike on students' academic achievement in North Central universities, Nigeria. Based on the illustrative regression analysis, disruption of academic activities and loss of instructional time were significant negative predictors of students' academic achievement. The findings suggest that prolonged industrial disputes can undermine the continuity of teaching and learning and create conditions that may adversely affect students' academic outcomes.

The study concludes that resolving disputes between ASUU and government in a timely manner is important for maintaining stable academic calendars and protecting students from prolonged interruptions to their university education.

Recommendations

1. Government and ASUU should strengthen institutional mechanisms for early resolution of industrial disputes so that disagreements concerning funding, staff welfare, university autonomy and other issues are resolved before they result in prolonged suspension of academic activities.
2. Universities should develop structured academic recovery plans following any industrial action, including realistic adjustment of academic calendars and adequate provision for completing essential course contents, examinations and academic supervision without compromising instructional quality.

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