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The Effect of Strikes on Students Who Attended Imo State University, Nigeria, from 2012 -2017: A Phenomenological Study

Innocent Okechukwu Ntiasagwe

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The Effect of Strikes on Students Who Attended Imo State University, Nigeria,
from 2012 -2017: A Phenomenological Study

by

Innocent Ntiasagwe

A Dissertation Presented to the
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences of Nova Southeastern University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Nova Southeastern University
2020

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**Nova Southeastern University
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences**

This dissertation was submitted by Innocent Ntiasagwe under the direction of the chair of the dissertation committee listed below. It was submitted to the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences and approved in partial fulfillment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Conflict Analysis and Resolution at Nova Southeastern University.

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Dedication

This dissertation study is dedicated to my mother, Mrs. Rose N. Ntiasagwe who saw this day years before myself and did everything she could encourage and prayed for me. She answered the Lord's call the year I enrolled in this program. Rest in Perfect peace mama, I did it for you. To my father, Mr. Bede A. Ntiasagwe, (Rtd RSM Nig. Army), who went to the Lord January of 2018, you sacrificed the little funds you had to make sure I got to where I could reach. To my great father and mother in-laws, Mazi Maxwell Okoro and Virginia Okoro, the best in-laws anyone could have. To beautiful and intelligent wife, Dr. Mrs. Charity Ntiasagwe who gave me all the mental, emotional and educational support I needed through this journey. My gifts from God, my wonderful children, whose mere being inspired me to finish what I started so that they too can see to completion whatever they started.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables	v
List of Figures	vi
Abstract	vii
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study	1
Background	8
Statement of the Problem	15
Purpose of the Study	16
Research Questions	17
Rationale and Significance	18
Definition of Key Terms	19
The Dissertation Organization	21
Summary	21
Chapter 2: Literature Review	23
Introduction	23
Theoretical Framework	25
Theoretical Framework: Authority and Conflict - Ralf Dahrendorf	26
Industrial Relations - Craig's Model	27
Institution of Higher Education in Nigeria	31
Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in Nigeria	33
The Causes of ASUU Strike Conflict with States and Federal Authorities of Nigeria	41
Impact of ASUU Strikes on Students' Performance	43

Resolution of Strike Action	49
Collective Bargaining	50
Summary	53
Chapter 3: Qualitative Research Methodology.....	54
Introduction.....	54
Phenomenology.....	56
Strengths of Phenomenology	57
Limitations of Phenomenology.....	57
Transcendental Phenomenology	58
The Epoche	59
Sampling, Subjects, Access, and Setting	59
Participant Demographics.....	63
Data Collection	64
Research Questions.....	65
Data Analysis Process and Procedures	66
Summary	71
Chapter 4: Findings.....	72
Introduction.....	72
Findings of Data Analysis.....	73
Invariant Horizons	73
Major Themes	77
Lost Time	78
Lost Momentum.....	80

Lost Opportunity.....	82
Demoralizing.....	85
Frustration.....	86
Crime and Violence	87
Low Confidence.....	90
Finances	93
Idle	95
Active / New Opportunity.....	95
Textural-Structural Description - Essence of Experience.....	97
Textures and Structures of Experience	97
Goal of Research.....	97
Essence of Experience	98
Summary	101
Chapter 5: Discussion, Analysis, Conclusions, and Recommendations.....	102
Introduction.....	102
Ralf Darhendorf’s Conflict Theory.....	102
Industrial Relations - Craig’s Model.....	103
Discussion of Findings.....	104
Limitations	106
Recommendations for Further Study	106
Recommendations for Conflict Resolution.....	108
Contribution to the Field of Conflict Studies.....	111
Conclusion	111

References	113
Appendix A: General Informed Consent Form	126
Appendix B: Exemption Letter from Institutional Review Board.....	130

List of Tables

Table 1. The number of Universities in Nigeria as of 2019.....	14
Table 2. Some popular strikes by ASUU 1999-2017	41
Table 3. Participant Demographics.....	64
Table 4. Themes.....	78

List of Figures

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework68

Abstract

This research focused on the effect of the university strikes from 2012 to 2017, on students of Imo State University, in the Imo State of Nigerian. The study used a qualitative methodology, specifically, transcendental phenomenology. In-depth interviews were used to collect data. Eight student participants (alumni), who had attended Imo State University were interviewed. Appropriate approval was obtained from the Nova Southeastern University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The meaning of the student's lived experience was analyzed. The researcher identified the main causes of strike action and its effect on students at Imo State University and the conflict among its stakeholders. This study revealed that ASUU strike action had a negative impact on the application of university curricula. The findings of the study showed that strike action affected the student's graduation. In a four-year degree program, students end up earning a bachelor in six or seven years. Another factor to consider is the disruption in academic programs because of the effect of strike action on the quality and quantity of students' learning habits. Strike action had a negative effect on students' learning abilities, and those students lost preparedness and readiness to learn at the time of strike; hence their educational attainment became adversely affected. It is recommended that the government and other educational stakeholders stand up to their responsibility and stabilize the education system while stamping out strike actions in the system for effective human development in the field of social studies.

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

There is a problematic record of strikes which have plagued colleges and universities in Nigeria: strikes of every stripe and shape. When the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in Nigeria decided to go on a nationwide strike, the unintended negative effect the action would cause stakeholders were neither anticipated nor predicted at the time. Strikes have brought countless damages to the nation as well as to the other stakeholders in the education sector (Ukwu, 2013).

Ujumadu and the ASUU (as cited by Ige, 2013) reported that they went on numerous strikes within 2009 and 2010, due to negligence, failure, and government refusal to sign the collective bargaining agreement between the two agencies. Other instances that have led to the ASUU strikes always stem from issues of national interest and lack of understanding between the government and the union representatives. For example, there was an alleged removal of fuel subsidy which sparked off a 59- day strike; another was a two-week warning strike; and another six-month industrial action; the list seemed endless. In 2018, the ASUU also embarked on an indefinite strike due to the fact that government failed to fully implement all outstanding issues as contained in the memorandum of agreement (MOA) of 2017 and concludes the renegotiation of the 2009 agreement (Akure, 2018). These incessant strikes became a cankerworm eating deep into the lives of many university undergraduates leading to their detriment.

The ASUU began as an Association of University Teachers (AUT), formed in 1965. It was registered in 1978, as Association Staff University Union (ASUU); the year that marked the beginning of the academic freedom and university autonomy suffering due to poor funding of education, as well as the universities. Assault on academic

freedom was the subject of resistance by the ASUU throughout the 1980s. The ASUU had branches in many Federal Universities, and under the direction of its first, President Dr. Biodun Jeyifor (University of Ibadan), its principal objectives were drafted. They are as follows:

1. To organize all academic staff who are qualified for membership.
2. To regulate the relation between academic staff and employers and between members.
3. To establish and maintain a high standard of academic performance and professional practice.
4. To establish and maintain a just and proper conditions of service for its members.
5. To advance the education and training of its members.
6. To provide benefits and other assistance to its members.
7. To encourage the participation of its members in the affairs of the University system of a nation.
8. To protect and advance the socio-economic and cultural interests of the nation and
9. To pursue such other objectives that are lawful and are not in consisted with the spirit and practice of trade unionism (ASUU constitution, 1978 as amended in 1984). (Ogbette, Eke, & Ori, 2017, p. 21)

According to Ike (as cited in Adeleke, 2016, para. 1), a university fulfills one major function; it is a knowledge and value provider. It either stands or fails in its ability or inability to deliver on these criteria. Basically, a university has a responsibility to its

learners and failure to follow through on this responsibility means failure on the part of its leadership and government.

The impact of strikes is immense and can be very overwhelming to students. For example, imagine an athlete in a 200-meter race, who is about 100m into the race only to be abruptly asked by the referee to “freeze” at no fault of their own. How do you think that athlete would feel, when she/he is asked to start again and then “freeze” again without any explanations or prior notice? There is no doubt that this call by the referee would definitely throw that athlete off balance and into confusion and her/his finishing time would be extended. In the same vein, the effect of the breaks in academic sessions when the ASUU goes on a strike can be just as devastating, affecting the students both psychologically and socially (Daily Post, 2011). These incessant strike actions being witnessed in the educational sector call for concerns by the nation at large, because the disputes between the two parties are often rooted in point(s) of defined disagreements. The disagreements or conflicts between government and university communities frequently end up in impasse. These impasses often disrupt and undermine academic schedules. The truth, according to one popular African adage is that, “the grass suffers when two elephants fight.” In this analogy, the grass can be students, parents, and/or guardians who are left to bear the consequences of these ASUU vs. government disagreements either physically or psychologically. The two elephants are the ASUU and the Federal government.

Higher education can make an important contribution to building a stronger society, ending extreme poverty, and boosting shared prosperity. It can serve the community by contributing knowledge and advanced skills as well as basic

competencies and research. Knowledge plays a growing role in the global economy, driving economic growth and productivity. (World Bank Group, 2017, p. 1)

It cannot be overemphasized enough that any country with a poor education system leaves nothing but an inglorious future to both present and future generations of its citizenry. According to literature, in 2004, the Nigerian National Planning Commission which is in charge of higher education in Nigeria categorized the country's education system as "dysfunctional" due to crumbling institutions and ill-prepared graduates (Library of Congress, 2008). According to Kagbaranen, any government that does not encourage the education of its youth out rightly compromises the future of its entire nation and also that such government is not worth living (in Amadi & Precious, as cited in Offem, Anashie, & Aniah, 2018, p. 2).

The quality of university education as described above was in terms of students' learning and research outputs of the universities. A high-quality university is expected to contribute positively to national development through quality teaching and research activities for 21st century global competitiveness, (Ige, 2013). Nwankwo as cited by Dahida and Adeshola (2013) "explains why merit has been the watchword in the university system - a system a student must first be certified worthy in character and learning before being admitted into the Honors Degree Hall" (p. 1).

There are enormous problems facing the education system in Nigeria. Indeed, over the years, education in Nigeria has suffered much neglect manifested in the form of inadequate funding, inconsistent policy changes; lack of infrastructure and disruption of the school system. These problems in the education system have

been very disturbing. In fact budgetary allocations to education in Nigeria have been grossly inadequate leading to agitations by lecturers and students about obsolete equipment, old and outdated textbooks and journals including poor remuneration for lecturers especially at the tertiary level, which have also heightened the level of brain drain in the country as many of them moved to different parts of the world in search of greener pastures. (Iruonagbe, Imhonopi, & Egharevba, 2015, p. 53)

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (as cited in United Nations General Assembly, 1948), identified quality basic education as a fundamental human right that promotes the development of the individual and enables citizens to achieve their full potential. Education therefore is the foundation of national development, therefore the strikes which have led to a prolonged closure of Universities in Nigeria for several months at a time (Ukwu, 2013), were a violation of the fundamental human rights of Nigerian university students in their education. At the Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All (CSACEFA), Mrs. Ochekepe, representing the Minister of Federal Ministry of Water Resources, spoke about the various university strikes and called on individuals and advocates of universities to appeal to the ASUU to call off these incessant strikes that are badly affecting parents and students especially.

Speaking at the same Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All (CSACEFA), Mr. Boye, Director with the Ministry of Education, asserted that, strike is perceived as a loss on every side; it not only affects parents, students and instructors, but it also affects community at large (Ukwu, 2013). This study served to add to the body of knowledge in conflict resolution regarding educational crisis in Nigeria.

Shining more light on the impact of strike in Nigerian universities, Ukwu (2013) noted that strike creates a backlog of students who otherwise were supposed to graduate at a certain time, but instead were delayed from graduating on time or as scheduled. Subsequently, one delay can have a domino effect on the admission process of new or incoming students, whose start date will remain uncertain until the strike is called off. And by the time the ASUU strike is called off, it would have accumulated a significant amount of academic stress on the students and their instructors, collectively. The various courses workload that should have been distributed, were not yet allotted, yet others were preparing to come into the school (Ukwu, 2013).

The time students wasted at home doing nothing pertaining to their education was time wasted that can never be regained. In some cases, students diverted into a life of crime, just to occupy their time and some became bandits and thugs for politicians as a means to make money in order to sustain their lives. In addition, crimes such as armed robbery, kidnapping, rape, and cultism became prevalent because of the strikes (Ejikemeuwa, 2016). This has exacerbated youth offenders and criminal behaviors plaguing the societal peace and order in Nigeria.

Another example of the impact of ASUU strikes on students and their parents is the case of students forfeiting their annual boarding or apartment rental fees to landlords. No consideration is given by universities and/or landlords to refund money to either students or their parents for fees that they have already been charged prior to the strikes. In some cases, this condition caused students to start engaging in negative vices because, according to a popular saying that “an idle mind is the devil’s workshop” (Ukwu, 2013). It is also a loss to parents with students staying at home on a strike with no end in sight.

Students staying at home caused a big financial strain on the pocket of some parents, who are sole providers for their students; in Nigeria context, parents sponsor their child's education for as long as it takes their child to graduate from college or university.

Because of its role in the development and vitality of any nation, education therefore should not be politicized or pawned by special interest groups or agencies (Ejikemeuwa, 2016). Around the world, venture in university education is a critical element of national development, and according to research there are three principal ways nations invest in university education in their efforts to contribute to national development:

First, society expects its university to produce highly skilled personnel in technology, engineering, management and other professions; secondly, universities have the responsibility of producing their own corps of academic personnel that is, the intellectual resource pool that will, through scientific research generate new knowledge and innovation to solve developmental problems. Thirdly, universities produce teachers, administrators, and managers for other levels of human resources development institutions. (Ejikemeuwa, 2016, p.2)

Referencing his country, Nelson Mandela (1997) stressed that the progress of his country's reconstruction efforts largely depended on the progress they made in educating their population. He also added that the power of education extends beyond the development of skills needed for economic success; and can contribute to nation-building and reconciliation. Education therefore is the engine that drives the growth and development of a nation, however, the Nigerian government has failed to understand that

education must be pragmatic in nature if it is to create any meaningful impact in the life and living conditions of the people (Iruonagbe et al., 2015).

Background

According to Ejikemeuwa (2016), industrial action or strike is employees' refusal to work against their employers' inadequate treatment of them. The ASUU strike is a protest by academic and non-academic staffs of Nigerian universities against the government for their failure to meet their collective bargaining agreement. The ASUU strikes have led to corruption and other societal vices on different levels. On the students' level, some have engaged in examination malpractice and other inappropriate behaviors with their professors in order to pass their exams; and on the instructors' level, some have taken bribes and have sold handouts to students just to get by.

The primary motivation for corruption worldwide is human nature, fueled, streamlined, and triggered by greed in addition with desires of some individuals to acquire wealth, power, and control over the great majority (Nwaokugha & Ezeugwu, 2017).

In fact, corruption is responsible for poor infrastructural development in Nigeria's education industry that can be partly seen in the abandoned project syndrome that has become synonymous with Nigeria's education system. Corruption is responsible for the neglect of staff and student's welfare services, staff and students lack of motivation and total disenchantment with the development of appropriate behaviors that are conducive for the acquisition of knowledge upon which a people and their state can develop. (pp. 10-11)

According to Emenyonu (as cited by Nwaokugha & Ezeugwu, 2017),

Students...have not had the privilege of completing any academic year... today products of Nigerian universities cannot compare with their counter parts in other parts of the world or indeed other parts of Africa... Today, Nigerian university graduates in most cases reflect the sorry picture of timidity, total lack of confidence or at best hollow intellectuals that beg for sympathy. (p. 11)

Strikes have interfered with the time students receive actual instruction towards their education, which makes it difficult for students to be fully and properly ready to graduate within their designated graduation time frame. Strike also known as industrial action means any action which affects, or is likely to affect the terms or conditions of workers acting in combination or under a common understanding as a means of compelling their employer to accept or not to accept terms or conditions affecting their employment (Given & Grace, 2014).

According to Ike, the Elliot Commission of 1943 started the history of university education in Nigeria. This commission further led to the establishment of the University College of Ibadan (UCI) in 1948. The UCI was an affiliate of the University of London (as cited in Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2008, p. 2). According to Ibukun (as cited by Amini-Philps & Goodluck, 2015), UCI faced numerous challenges at its inception. UCI's problems ranged from rigid constitutional provisions, poor staffing, low enrollment, and high dropout rates. The Ashby Commission was ordered by the federal government in April 1959, to act as advisor regarding Nigeria's higher education needs. This commission was required for the first two decades of the country's higher education program. However, in 1960, before the submission of the Ashby's Commission report, the Eastern Region government established its own university in Nsukka known as the

University of Nigeria. The University of Ife, now Obafemi Awolowo University (Ile-Ife) was established after the completion of the Ashby report in 1962 by the Western Region. Other universities that were established in 1962 were the University of Lagos, established by the federal government and the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria established by the Northern region.

According to Babalola, Adedeji, and Erwat (2007), UCI and the University of Lagos became full-fledged universities in 1962, which means both universities were the first two federal universities in Nigeria. The other three universities remained regional. In 1970, there was a newly created mid-western region. The university in this region is the University of Benin. During the period of 1960-1970, six universities were established; they are traditionally known as first generation universities.

Universities in Nigeria were closely monitored by the government during this period. Political motivation influenced the appointment of vice-chancellors as well as lay members of the council (Babalola et al., 2007). The period from 1975-1980 saw the third national development plan in which the federal government established seven universities: three more than the proposed four. Additionally, in 1975, the government took over four regional universities, (University of Calabar in Florin, University of Jos in Sokoto, University of Maiduguri in Port Harcourt, and Ado Bayero University in Kano); these are known as second generation universities.

From the 1980s to the early 1990s, third-generation universities were established. These universities are the Federal University of Technology in Owerri, Makurdi, Yola, Akure and Bauchi. Federal or state universities are found in Ondo, Imo, Akwa-Ibom, Cross-River and Lagos states (Anyamele, 2004).

From 1991 to present, fourth-generation universities were established. These include state, Nigeria open universities and private universities. There are 174 universities currently operating in Nigeria according the National Universities Commission (NUC, 2019).

Praveen (2011) noted that the disputes between employees and employers on any ground, which could finally result to strikes or lockouts, would affect both parties on either the short or long run. And in the case of the ASUU strikes, Olabisi reiterated that even when the strike is called off, the damage is already done, questioning the quality of education that students were intended to receive (as cited in Ukwu, 2013). He further stressed the disastrous nature of the ASUU strikes on students. Some stakeholders are of the opinion that the strike has not only encouraged shabby jobs among university lecturers in lecturing students but has also contributed to the poor ranking of Nigerian tertiary institutions due to the quality or lack thereof of their products often referred to as “half-baked” graduates (Ukwu, 2013). According to the Academic Ranking of the World Universities (ARWU), no Nigerian university was ranked among the top 500 universities of the world in 2010 (ARWU, 2011) and none were ranked among the top 1000 universities of the world from 2012-2017 (ARWU, 2019). However, the University of Ibadan, was ranked 1st in African university ranking in 2019 and was ranked 32nd in Africa and 2,310 in the world according (ARWU, 2019).

The academic ranking of the world universities is determined by several indicators such as the academic or research performance of alumni, staff, including Nobel Prizes, Fields Medals, major cited researchers and articles indexed in major citation publications and the per capita academic performance of an institution (ARWU, 2010).

Salmi (2009), argued that what makes a world class university is not only the presence of talented students and staff, but also the abundance of “educational and financial resources, and good governance and administration” (p. 7). Salmi (2009), further opined that “highly sought-after graduates; cutting-edge research; and dynamic technology transfer are the products of a world-class university” (p. 6). In addition, highest ranked universities were defined as:

...the ones that make significant contributions to the advancement of knowledge through research, teach with the most innovative curricula and pedagogical methods under the most conducive circumstances, make research an integral component of undergraduate teaching, and produce graduates who stand out because of their success in intensely competitive arenas during their education and (more important) after graduation. (Salmi, 2009, p. 71)

It is undoubtedly that strike actions not only disrupt academic calendars and programs, they affect other entities such as the West African Examination Council (WAEC), the Joint Matriculation Examination Board (JAMB) and the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC). It does not matter whether the strike was carried out by the lecturers or by the students, it still disrupts academic programs and impedes on knowledge opportunities (Amadi & Precious, 2015).

Delay in the release of Admission list. It is pertinent to note that a lot of prospective university students do not know their fate regarding admission because of strike action.

1. Most academic activities for school year are distorted. This is one of major cause of producing unqualified graduate who are deficient in their fields of

study. In the same vein, students who are supposed to do a four-year course end up spending six years in the school. Such strike periods also have the tendency of leading undergraduates into some social vices like prostitution, oil bunkering etc. “An idle man” they say “is the devil’s workshop” they say! There is therefore, the need for a re-evaluation of the education sector.

2. When learning is suspended for a long period, the students’ reading abilities fall, even the knowledge acquired during the learning period is even forgotten by some students. These turn some students into certificate seekers instead of knowledge seekers. (Amadi & Precious, 2013, p. 51)

The focus of this dissertation was on the interruption of academic activities in Nigerian universities, more so, the effect of the ASUU strikes on students in Nigeria universities. The continual strikes action, regardless of how it began or who started it, has unintentionally impacted the academics calendar of university students; this generally presented a lot of challenges causing an increase in the duration of their study or year of graduation; performance in examinations; as well as their final grading (Ajayi, 2013).

There is a general belief that education in all developing countries makes a substantial contribution to a nation's growth and development. The availability of a body of literature emphasizing the importance of education as an agent of human resources development, coupled with the experience of developed nations, shows that as an economy grows larger and more complex, so does the desire for high-level manpower, which attests to the above conventional wisdom.

As former U.N. Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, upon receiving an honorary degree from the University of Ghana in 2000, urged the audience of college students:

The university must become a primary tool for Africa's development in the new century. Universities can help develop African expertise; they can enhance the analysis of African problems; strengthen domestic institutions; serve as a model environment for the practice of good governance, conflict resolution and respect for human rights; and enable African academics to play an active part in the global community of scholars, according to United Nations Information Service, 2000. (as quoted in Bloom, Canning, Chan, & Luca, 2014, p. 26)

Addo (2010) suggested that higher education can be a force in boosting the size of human capital development; economic growth; equal rights and opportunities; and quality research and national planning. According to Shultz (as cited by Addo, 2010), "Higher education is a powerful channel for spreading the forces of change. A change is initiated directly by preparing the students to cope with life, and to solve new social problems through research" (p.5). Higher education also affects people's mindset in a manner that leads to positive changes. For instance, an educated individual would limit family size because he or she understands the negative effect of having quality children in the family.

Table 1

The number of Universities in Nigeria as of 2019

Federal Universities	43
State Universities	48
Private Universities	79

Source: National Universities Commission, (NUC, 2019). Abuja record (In public domain)

Statement of the Problem

While many scholars have investigated different aspects of ASUU strikes including its social ills and its effects on the academic performances on students in various universities in Nigeria, this research added to the existing literature, and specifically explored the extent to which the ASUU strikes affect the different facets of student lives. Students across several institutions of higher learning in Nigeria were regularly confronted with strikes, either by the academic and/or non-academic staff union of various universities. A significant number of these strikes' actions were triggered by disagreements between the government and the unions of various universities, arising from non-implementation or partial implementation of former agreements reached (Kagbaranen, 2012).

The disagreement or lack of understanding between government and academic staff and/or non-academic staff frequently ended in gridlock that generally disrupted and sometimes even undermined academic calendar and higher education in Nigeria. These repeated strikes undoubtedly decreased the academic performances of students. As learning is suspended for a long period of time, students' reading abilities suffered to the detriment of the educational system, particularly in a developing setting like Nigeria. The main concern here is that strikes undermined the entire educational system such that students who lawfully seek certificates now spend too much time earning those certificates (Kagbaranen, 2012).

The incessant strikes carried out by the ASUU have unintentionally affected the students of Nigerian universities. It typically posed a lot of challenges to students by prolonging their program completion and graduation. This idle time was often frustrating

to students whose home condition may not be favorable and many times lead them to become vulnerable and easy recruits for criminal activities such as armed robbery, kidnapping and rape (Ajayi, 2013).

While much has been researched about the quality of university education in Nigeria, this study was conducted to document an awareness and understanding of how these university strikes affected students because these had yet to be systematically documented (Ige, 2013; Okoroma, 2008; Saint, Hartnett, & Strassner, 2003; Timilehin, Esohe, Osalusi, & Babatope, 2010). Therefore, this research examined how series of these strikes affected student employment, future admission, as well as their graduation. It was found that students were impacted negatively by the strikes with respect to their university education. Furthermore, assumptions exist that students must have some perspective regarding the effects of the ASUU strikes, (Ige, 2013; Okoroma, 2008; Saint et al., 2003; Timilehin et al., 2010), therefore this exhaustive research was conducted in order to collect data rather than depend on assumptions.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore the affects as a result of the ASUU strikes on students and to discover in what ways these strikes affect the different facets of their lives: specifically the lives of alumni students in Imo State University, from 2012-2017, using a phenomenological approach. Processes aligned with qualitative research guided this phenomenological approach and provided insight into the student perspective. Bassey stated, “The purpose of research is trying to make a claim to knowledge, or wisdom, on the basis of systematic, creative and critical enquiry” (as cited in Schuemann, 2014, p. 7).

Research is the cornerstone of building a case, or a story. It's the center, the hub, and the well upon which you can draw your knowledge. While the word research can conjure up images of stacks of books, toiling over papers with highlighters and digging until the underneath of your fingernails are dirty and raw, there's a beautiful part of research that is often overlooked; experience. (Latimer, 2014, para. 1)

The researcher looked for specific patterns to emerge that represented the personal experiences of the participants of this study. The emerged phenomenological themes were utilized to reveal students' experiences and understanding of the extent to which the ASUU strikes have impacted not only their university education, but also other facets of their lives and those of the other stakeholders (Schuemann, 2014).

According to Marshall and Rossman, a qualitative study seeks to "explore, explain, or describe a phenomenon" as cited by (Schuemann, 2014, p. 6), therefore investigating how students perceive the effect of the ASUU strikes was the foundation of this dissertation. Phenomenology study is among the several forms of qualitative research that attempts to examine the lived experiences of human beings and gain understanding of the fundamental truths of their lived experience (Byrne, 2001).

Research Questions

1. How do students experience the effect of ASUU strikes?
2. How do students understand the effect of ASUU strikes?
3. How do these ASUU strikes during academic sessions shape student meaning of the university experience?
4. How do the ASUU strikes impact students learning experience?

5. How do the ASUU strikes affect student performance?
6. How do the ASUU strikes impact student's relationship with those involved?
7. What adjustments if any did the student make as a result of the ASUU strikes?

Rationale and Significance

Although there is some existing research about the quality of university education in Nigeria (Okoroma, 2008; Saint et al., 2003; Timilehin et al., 2010), little was known about the effects of the series of labor strikes in Nigerian universities on students. I was overwhelmed by the strikes costs and started to wonder how this ASUU strikes conflict would affect students and what lived experiences of the phenomenon they hold to tell. In the last two decades, Nigerian universities have been subjected to serial staff union strikes that have resulted in interruptions of the Nigerian university system. Therefore, this study was conducted to examine the impact of these incessant ASUU strikes on students' education in Nigeria Universities. This researcher also explored how students perceived the ASUU strikes using a phenomenological approach and utilized the results of the findings to explore the need for future study. Findings will be used to further inform the ASUU and the government to reflect on their own leadership (Ige, 2013; Okoroma, 2008; Saint et al., 2003; Timilehin et al., 2010).

Discovering and deciphering students' experiences and their understanding of the ASUU strikes could provide varied insight for stakeholders to reflect upon and make some desirable changes that will not only be beneficial to the university students but could also potentially change the overall climate of disorder and crime that has been perpetuated by the serial ASUU strikes in Nigeria. Because students' voices are vital in their educational process, they stand to benefit from the results of this research, as it will

provide them information stemming from the experiences of their peers in other Nigerian universities. Introducing the students to the themes that emerged from the lived experiences of the subjects might foster unity among the students as well as inspire a collective student voice in the structural process. “Research indicates that students, as individuals, shoulder the greatest responsibility when determining the effect people, programs, services, and activities have on their university experience” (Schuemann, 2014, p.12).

Through this research, the researcher provided considerable empirical evidence to expose the effects the ASUU strikes have on university students’ lives. By qualitatively analyzing students’ stories relating to the ASUU strikes, the researcher added value to the voices that students bring to their educational process and this phenomenological study may inspire future studies.

Definition of Key Terms

The following key terms are used throughout this dissertation. To ensure that readers develop a better understanding, these definitions will be used to assist with context of the research presented in this paper.

- Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU): can be defined as a trade union whose activities being lawful and not inconsistent with the spirit and practice of trade unionism are covered by the laws of the land (Nnamdi Azikiwe University, 2020).
- Accreditation: This is “a system for recognizing educational institutions (universities and programs offered in these institutions) for a level of performance, integrity and quality which entitles them to the confidence of the

educational community, the public they serve and the employers of labor”

(NUC, 1989, p. 2).

- Epoche: Is a Greek word meaning to refrain from judgement, to abstain from or stay away from the everyday, ordinary way of perceiving things (Moustakas, 1994, p. 33).
- Labor or Strike: According to Flippo (as cited in Isiaka, 2001) “is a concerted and temporary withholding of employee services from the employer for the purpose of exacting greater concessions in the employment relationship than the employer is willing to grant at the bargaining table” (p. 39).
- Nigerian Universities Commission: a dynamic regulatory agency acting as a catalyst for positive change and innovation for the delivery of quality university education in Nigeria (NUC, 2009a).
- Phenomenon: It is the concept being experienced by the subjects in a study which may include psychological concepts such as grief, anger, and behavioral concepts (Moustakas, 1994).
- Phenomenology: referred to knowledge as it appears to consciousness, the science of describing what one perceives, senses, and knows in one’s immediate awareness and experience (Moustakas, 1994, p. 33).
- University Governing Council: The Council is the supreme governing authority of the University responsible for those policy decisions which have financial implications, the general management of the affairs of the University, and, in particular, the control of the property and expenditure of the University (University of Ibadan, 2019).

The Dissertation Organization

This study was structured to contain a five-chapter design. Chapter one established a foundation for finding and overviewed key approaches and considerations. Chapter two investigated existing literature and established a framework through which the dissertation roadmap was built upon. Chapter three describes the methodological instruments employed to steer the inquiry. Chapter four introduces thematic data emerging from the proposed research questions and presents the findings of the study. Chapter five offers a discussion of the findings and discusses theoretical conclusions concerning student experiences and understanding of the effects of ASUU strikes on students of Imo state university in Nigeria. It also presents recommendations for further study, recommendations for conflict resolution, and the contribution of this study to the field of conflict analysis and resolution.

Summary

Chapter one presented the fundamental framework for the dissertation and offers an outline of the major concepts surrounding the effect of ASUU strikes on students of Imo State University from 2012-2017. The topic was considered researchable because of the minimal amount of scholarly literature that exists. This introductory chapter includes the background, statement of problem, purpose of study, rational and significant of the study, as well as key terms. The research questions were presented as the main component of the research and provided for a dual layer of inquiry: first, this researcher explored how students experience and understand the ASUU strikes and then further probed into how this perspective might have shaped their education experience. The

potential benefits associated with investigating this evolving phenomenon were described as possible interest to stakeholders.

The researcher's reason for choosing a phenomenological method through qualitative discovery is fully discussed later in chapter three. The one concept in this study was to examine the effects of ASUU strikes on students in Imo State University from 2012 to 2017.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter two presents the literature review for this study. Following an introduction to the literature review, this researcher discusses the theoretical framework used to inform this study. This study utilized two theories through which to examine the conflict between the parties. In the first section, this conflict was examined through Darhendorf's theory of authority and conflict (Dahrendorf, 1959). This researcher then examined the conflict through Craig's industrial relations theory (Craig, 1975). The next section provides an overview of the Institution of Higher Education in Nigeria which is followed by a section that discusses the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in Nigeria. The next section discusses the causes of ASUU strike conflict with States and Federal Authorities of Nigeria followed by a section that discusses the impact of ASUU strikes on students' performance. The researcher then provides information on resolution of strike action followed by a summary of collective bargaining. The chapter is concluded with a summary.

Introduction

The literature reviewed for this study established the pertinence of continued research regarding the impact of higher education strikes on students in Nigeria. This study is central to the ASUU strikes as affecting the students of Imo State University. Copious amounts of studies focused on education in Nigeria, were concentrated on admission policies, collective bargaining process, quality of higher education and funding of the university system (Odebiyi & Aina, 1999; Okoroma, 2008; Saint et al., 2003; Timilehin et al., 2010). Very few research address the affects that ASUU strikes have on Nigerian universities students. This gap in research supported the justification for this

study. The purpose of this study, therefore, was to examine the perceptions of students on the relationship between ASUU strikes and its effects.

In order to build on the knowledge of other scholars, this researcher reviewed applicable literature published over six years. The search was extended to publications between 2000 to date, to obtain the most relevant journal articles. As with other studies, “the purpose of the literature review is for the researcher to understand the intellectual heritage and intellectual genealogy associated with the study” (Laureate Education, as cited Ige, 2013, p. 23). The literature review served to align the study in the context of a stream and flow of knowledge. The keyword search technique was used for previous research including labor strikes, labor unions, ranking of universities, quality of education, industrial relations, perceptions, qualitative, transcendental phenomenology, National Universities Commission (NUC), Nigerian university system and higher education in Nigeria.

A high-level quality study is expected to positively contribute to national growth through quality teaching and quality research activities that would meet the 21st century global competitiveness. The preponderance for investors in the Nigerian university system is to understand the differences in their perceptions on issues affecting their students and academic performance as expressed by the Nigerian Universities Commissions (1982). “The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who can learn, unlearn and relearn” (Alvin Toffler, as cited in World Bank, 2000, p. 83).

The purpose of university education, as articulated by the university planners of Nigeria, is to help bring about and respond to desired directions and the place of change in society and in the economy (Nigerian Universities Commission, 1982).

University education ideally provides both general and specific instruction, designed to uplift the human spirit as well as fill vacancies in a growing economy. At its highest level, the purpose is to train young people to become professionals in their chosen field. (Nigerian Universities Commission, 1982, p. 3.3)

According to Johnson (2005),

It is logical to understand why challenges pertaining to education have been met with so much contention: its fundamental importance upon class stratification, generational wealth, and social status enhances its value.

Educational attainment is outcome determinative and translates into differences in high school graduation rates, college attendance and completion, and ultimately, the differences in income and socioeconomic status that underlie our most critical social problems. (p.5)

Theoretical Framework

This study was designed to establish a research focus on the effects of ASUU strikes on students of Imo State University by applying a phenomenological approach. Essentially phenomenological research was designed to uncover the construction of meaning made by the human experience on an individual level (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004). Principles of phenomenology were interwoven throughout this research designed to safeguard appropriate representation of the lived experiences of the participants in this research. Demonstration of the essence of the participants'

perspectives validates the accuracy as represented by the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Employing a qualitative investigation is suited to developing a comprehensive foundation that aided in the initial discovery of themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The literature reviewed was intended to construct the parameters of the study and reliably identify themes and patterns that emerged through the data analysis. Focusing first on the students' independent knowledge about the ASUU strikes and students' achievements, the investigatory effort, and then attempted to further define the students' perspectives regarding the effect of the strikes on the students.

Theoretical Framework: Authority and Conflict - Ralf Dahrendorf

Ralf Dahrendorf's conflict theory emerged by way of a critical evaluation of the works of Karl Marx (Dahrendorf, 1959). Dahrendorf posited that Karl Marx's description of capitalism was generally accurate, as written by Marx, in the 19th century. He, however, contended that it became outdated in the 20th century, as the basis for explaining conflict. It was Dahrendorf's position that important changes had occurred in countries, termed "post-capitalist societies", such as the United States of America and Britain.

Dahrendorf recognized that, there was a new middle class that emerged between the two main classes that Marx predicted would become polarized. This new class of workers was made up of skilled and semi-skilled workers: essentially white-collar workers made up of clerks, nurses, and teachers among other mid-level workers. Measures taken by the state had reduced income and wealth inequalities. Upward social mobility became more commonplace and the tightly held connection between ownership and control of industries weakened and was eventually dismantled. Managers, not

owners, exercised the daily control of the means of production. These changes rendered Marx's theory that conflict was based on the ownership or non-ownership of the means of wealth, invalid. The close association between wealth and power was deemed non-effectual since shareholders could hold a company's wealth without the authority to exercise close control over the management within the company. It is such changes that Dahrendorf argued that conflict could no longer be based solely on economic division or the two classes identified by Marx. Dahrendorf identified authority as being concerned with conflict (Dahrendorf, 1959).

Application of Dahrendorf's theory of conflict to this study, it can be posited that the authority exerted by the Federal Government to make decisions that are contrary to the interest of the ASUU. The diametrical position is fertile ground for conflict that resulted in grievances of the ASUU and culminates in various strikes.

Industrial Relations - Craig's Model

The Craig's model of industrial relations was an enhancement over John Dunlop Schema and was based on Talcot Pearson's' paradigm (Adams, 1983). Craig's model followed David Easton's analysis of political life that described the industrial relations systems as a composite private and public parities operating in an environment. It is, basically, a system that is concerned with the allocation or rewards to employees for their services, and the conditions under which the said services are rendered (Craig, 1975). Industrial relations, therefore, is the structural setting in which the employee-employer relationship occurs. This relationship usually exists between management and workers; but especially workers represented by a union. Industrial relations encompass employers, employees and government; and universities and the organizations through which their

interaction are mediated. The objectives that are paramount to industrial relations are, first, the protection of the interest of management and labor. This is achieved through the fortification of the highest level of mutual understanding. Second, goodwill between staff; third, evading industrial conflict or strife and fourth, develop harmonious relations.

The industrial relations system, according to Craig, must give priority to the terms and conditions of employment over the rules of work. This is the fundamental focus of Dunlop's industrial relations system (Adams, 1983). In this situation, the union uses a strike action to accomplish goals through agitation to improve the conditions of service as a production of the industrial relations system. Craig combined the rules and substantive issues, the specific actor objectives in the systems model (Adams, 1983). Labor strikes, in Craig's model, have dual functions as conversion mechanisms and outputs of the industrial relation system (Chaulk & Brown, 2008). The model suggests that external inputs from the environment act as influencers on the participants of the industrial relation system, and through a series conversion mechanisms, such as collective bargaining process and labor strikes, parties convert the input into both organizational and worker-oriented output (Brown, 2003; Chaulk & Brown, 2008).

Additionally, procedures for converting inputs to outputs are day-to-day relationships among individuals in the workplace and their perceptions of work. These create a complicated set of relationships concerning those between managers, workers and managers, workers themselves and other workers, and their union leaders (Craig, 1975). Craig saw three actors of the system (labor; government and private agencies; and management) as being impacted by internal inputs (power, values, and goals of the actors) that flow from the external inputs of the external environment (Brown, 2003).

In Nigeria, the NUC regulates the Nigerian university system, including the industrial relation system. The NUC as an agency of the government is authorized to coordinate the earlier development of the Nigerian university system (NUC, 2009b). The university is comprised of teaching and non-teaching staff, represented by their respective unions. The four unions in the system are the ASUU, NAAT, SSANU and NASU. These unions are supposed to work melodiously with university management in repositioning the system to achieve the objectives for which the universities were established. Regrettably, this has not been the case, as the unions, at different times, are engaged in industrial disputes (strikes) with their respective university authorities and the federal government over matters that should have been deliberated and resolved harmoniously. The ASUU serial industrial crisis in Nigerian universities, on many occasions, mandated the federal government to appoint a team to negotiate, on its behalf, with the university-based unions to restore permanent peace in the system. The NUC, as the regulatory agency always plays a pivotal role in ensuring hitch-free collective bargaining between the federal government and the university-based unions. Reasons for most of the strikes in the universities have been tension for increased funding of the system and non- implementations of collective bargaining agreements, which were on condition of service of staff according to Esenwa (as cited by Ige, 2013). Craig's model suggests that:

Strikes when used as a conversion mechanism to achieve union goals impact the worker-oriented output of employee affect and actors of the system via the feedback loop; and through the feedback loop, the output of the strike can positively or negatively impact workers reactions towards their union and employer. (Brown; Chaulk & Brown, as cited by Ige, 2013, p. 26)

Craig refined the Dunlop framework in at least three major dimensions:

1. He introduced 'withinputs', which included the goals, values and power of the actors in the industrial relations system.
2. Outputs of the industrial relations system were shown to have an impact on the environmental inputs through a feedback mechanism.
3. Instead of the technological, market and budgetary context in Dunlop's framework, Craig defined broad societal environment in terms of economic, social, political and legal inputs into the IR system. (Craig, as cited by Hameed, 1982)

In the context above, some of the factors persuading the actors in the Nigerian university system are the external inputs such as the legal subsystem that supports the rights of the workers to strike (Isiaka, 2001; Worugji & Archibong, 2009) and a political subsystem, that stands against the rights of the workers to strike with the enactment of various Trade Union Acts (Abu, 2007). Some other factors include the public opinion (social subsystem) on the current state of Nigerian universities. In terms of the social subsystem, research has shown that public opinion on the issue of serial labor strikes and the causes of the low quality of the Nigerian universities are not uniform (Library of Congress, 2008; Odebiyi & Aina, 1999; Okoroma, 2008; Saint et al., 2003; Timilehin et al, 2010). According to (Ige, 2013)

Chaulk and Brown (2008) used a survey method to access workers' reaction to their union and employer following a five-month long strike. Using a t-test data analysis, they found that the strike had a negative effect on workers' job satisfaction, work climate satisfaction, management satisfaction, organizational

commitment, and union commitment. The study and its finding were consistent with Craig's model of feedback loops. (p. 27)

The Craig model suggests that the external environment factors influence the goals, values, and power of the actors and the outputs of the university system, the quality of their productivity, which in turn will influence the quality of the universities, as was true for the IRS. The perception of the actors on the effects of the serial labor strikes on the quality of the universities may differ. A lecturer may see labor strike as the right of the workers irrespective of the damages the action may cause in the system (Worugji & Archibong, 2009) and the students may see the effects of the action differently (Okuwa & Campbell, 2011). The research questions of this study were based on the above submission and some of the literature review in this chapter.

Institution of Higher Education in Nigeria

Across the world, universities are recognized as cores of excellence. They are institutions that safeguard knowledge that change the world.

Higher education reduces or lowers literacy rate which most likely will lead to a more rapid developed society. In a society with a higher level of education, there is less likely to be prevalent ignorance, poverty, disease, crime and other social vices. The level of education among the population determines the level of corruptions among the citizens (Dahida & Adeshola, 2013).

The university serves as a barometer for the entire society, in that, it advances and diffuses the knowledge that impacts every sphere of humanity. Its output is critical for the advancement and maintenance of the various structures of society. The role of education is instrumental in promoting socio-economic, political and cultural development of

nations. Ibukun (as cited by Amini-Philps & Goodluck, 2015), posited that the main relevance of university education in Nigeria is to provide the much-needed manpower to accelerate that country's growth and development.

As stated in the national policy on education 2004, the goals of university education among others include:

- Contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training.
- Develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and the society.
- Development of intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environment.
- Acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-relevant and useful members of the society.
- Promote and encourage scholarship and community services.
- Forge and cement national unity and
- Promote national and international understanding and interactions. (Amini-Philps & Goodluck, 2015, p. 200)

The acknowledgement of the value of education as a necessary instrument for development has influenced many nations to allocate significant portion of their wealth to establish various levels of educational institutions. Ajayi and Ekundayo (2008) cited that allocation of funds to higher education should not be viewed as an expense but as an investment for the long-term benefit to society. The increased demand for university

education in the last twenty years reflects the importance of higher education for society in general but specifically for the individual.

Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in Nigeria

In 1978, the ASUU was created as a medium to protect its members' interest and to allow academicians to respond to critical problems posed to higher education in Nigeria (Ibrahim & Alagbu, 2014). The following is a description of a series of events depicting industrial actions by the ASUU. The recollection of events was included to provide important scenarios and timeline that central to the conflict and the serial industrial actions.

In 1980, the resistance against the termination of six University of Lagos lecturers saw the ASUU employing industrial action. This was followed in 1980 and 1981, by the ASUU strikes. The reasons provided for such extreme action were stymie the flow and reverse the problem of brain drain, increase funding for universities, address the issues of insufficient salaries, improve conditions of service which included an overhaul of the university system. The Elongated University Salary Structure (EUSS) engaged in negotiations in 1983, but this was a bone of contention in 1988 due to lack of implementation of the original negotiated agreement (Odiagbe, 2012).

The content of ASUU's actions increased in political overtures which became evident in 1984 to oppose the deregulation of the economy and the resistance to military dictatorship. In 1985, there was a military regime's authoritarian decree 16 that allowed the NUC to assume the responsibility of the senate and external authorities to regulate Nigerian universities programs. The ASUU responded with another strike in 1986; this time it was in protest against the introduction of Structural Adjustment Program (SAP)

that was initiated by President Babangida's administration. The ASUU members were also protesting the mobile police killing of students from the Ahmadu Bello University. The government accused the members of the ASUU of inciting dissention against the administration. The year 1987 saw the demand, through strikes, for the ASUU demanding to be included in a joint negotiation committee between themselves and the federal and the fulfillment of the Elongated University Salary Scale (Adeniji & Adekunjo, 2010).

After its August 7, 1988 proscription, the ASUU was allowed to resume its activities in 1990. However, in May and July of 1992 it went on strike to demand compliance with the negotiated agreement between the organization and the government regarding working conditions in the universities. An agreement was eventually reached in September of that year settling the matter. The ASUU was banned a second time because of its refusal to participate in the Industrial Arbitration Panel (IAP) to stymie its industrial action and enter negotiations once again. The use of industrial action by the ASUU was employed once more in 1994, this time to renegotiate the previous agreements of 1992. They also demanded the reinstatement of more than eighty lecturers who were terminated by Prof. Isa Mohammed, the then vice chancellor of the University of Abuja, and in an act of resistance to the annulment of the presidential election of June 1993. ASUU continued to utilize industrial action when they went on strike to protest Dr. Assisi Asobie, President of ASUU (Bello & Isah, 2016).

The declaration of industrial action for university funding and the reinstatement of forty-nine professors who were dismissed from the University of Ilorin for their part in a previous strike that was mounted in 2001. Industrial action was applied to address a

litany of issues in 2003; the issues on the table were non-compliance to previously agreed negotiations, salary disparities, poor university funding, and retirement age. The years from 2003 to 2011 were filled with a series of industrial actions by the ASUU; the complaints were the same as prior years. The most egregious complaint by the ASUU that led to industrial actions was the political definition of the ASUU grievances by the federal government; this tactic served to dishonor prior agreements that were negotiated. The reframing of the disputes, by the government was also an attempt to restructure the collective bargaining framework and its process. The implication of this reframing meant that ASUU members were forced to negotiate with their University Governing Council (UGC). The UGC is an autonomous body that was approved by the federal government in 2003. The UGC was established through the University Miscellaneous Provisions Act (2003) in which representatives of the government were appointed to negotiate on its behalf. However, these representatives had no mandate to honor the previously negotiated agreement of 2009, which impacted the retirement age of university professors from 65 to 70. This change of the age of retirement was passed into law in 2012 by the National Assembly (Okuwa & Campbell, 2011, p. 298).

The year 2018 marked ASUU's fortieth anniversary and the organization has endured despite the many social and political unrests it faced in Nigeria. The origins of the ASUU occurred during the decline of Nigeria's oil boom. The country was grappling with a series of failures by the political leaders to effectively utilize the wealth from the oil industry for a sustainable welfare system; and military dictatorship became common place, effectively eroding fundamental rights and freedom of Nigerian citizenry (Sabo & Muhammad, 2018).

The 1978 establishment of ASUU, replacing its less ideological forerunner, the Nigerian Association of University Teachers (NAUT), designed to address university employees' rights at the end of colonialism, was a reaction to the deterioration of education in the country under military. This period saw the unwillingness of military regimes to advance Nigeria education policies and the application or respect for institutional autonomy. The ASUU strikes persisted regardless of the various military regimes that came into power in Nigeria. Historically; records indicate that the military regimes had engaged in a more predominance of mistreatment of universities administrative autonomy in comparison with other democratic government, (Sabo & Muhammad, 2018).

For many who were a part of the academic system during that time, the sentiments regarding NAUT, was that it was docile and incapable of addressing the current issues. There was the belief that a more proactively militant union was needed, capable of pushing for meaningful change in Nigeria's educational system. State funds were being diverted to unsuccessful ventures while funding for education declined rapidly. Professions in higher education lost its formerly held status of influence and student-centered focus eroded in the universities during the military era. The autonomous universities fell to the detriment of a militaristic system. The factors cited above solidified the determination of the founders of the ASUU as an avenue of resistance to the oppressive and undemocratic leadership policies. The core objectives of the then newly formed ASUU are listed below: (Ogbette et al., 2017).

- a. The organization of academic staff who are members of the union

- b. Regulation of relations between academic staff and employers and between members
- c. Establishment and maintenance of a high standard of academic performance and professional practice
- d. Establishment and maintenance of just and proper condition and service for its members
- e. The protection and advancement of the socio-economic and cultural interests of the union.

From its inception, the ASUU was more politically inclined than its predecessor, NAUT. According to Obosa (as cited Odiagbe, 2012), ASUU formation was ignited by Obasanjo's military dictatorship's repressive measures associated with the 1978 Uthman Mohammed omission report on the "Ali must go" students' protest. The NAUT's conciliatory approach was abandoned by those who favored the ASUU direct confrontational approach. The first task of the ASUU during this period was to resist the usurpation of the UGC's disciplinary function by the federal government. This interference of the federal government in the university system was one of the initial issues of the union's dispute relating to university autonomy. Due process and academic freedom were compromised by means of internal repression enforced by the surrogate vice chancellors who wielded power over appointments, promotions and disciplinary actions against academic staff (Odiagbe, 2012).

A report by Justice Belonwo and his committee prejudiced President Shehu Shagari's decision to order the dismissal of six union members from the University of Lagos in 1980. These six ASUU members and lecturers' dismissal hinged on their

critique and opposition of the government. The vehement objection of the ASUU regarding the dismissal resulted in the case going all the way to the Supreme Court in 1986 culminating in the court's ruling in favor of the UNILAG lecturers (Aluko, 2010).

The removal of President Shehu Shagari did not thwart the relentless work of the ASUU in its struggle to improve university education in Nigeria and the working conditions for its members. With these focal points the ASUU organized a National Conference in 1994. The various issues concerning Nigerian academics dominated the event. The brain drain left Nigeria's educational infrastructure even more depleted than it was previously. These challenges led the ASUU to take a stronger radical position merging the fight for the basic rights of its members and the pursuit of a meaningful higher education in the country (ASUU, 2008).

The ASUU integrated its struggles with those of the wider labor movement, by agreeing to a pact with NLC from 1982 to 1986 under the leadership of Mahmud Modibbo Tukur. The ASUU membership with the NLC saw to its inclusion in high profile discussions on major issues affect the country. The development of the ASUU as a major player in the country's political affairs reached a head, when President Ibrahim Babangida initiated efforts to stamp out the union, led by Atahiru Jega (1987-1993) by disaffiliating it from the NLC in 1988. That same year saw the ASUU's first strike responding to the government's attempt to weaken its position and increase the repression of academicians and students.

The year 1987 presented another round of contention; this time it was the Jabril Aminu, the then Minister of Education, dismissal of ASUU president Festus Iyayi and Dr. B. Agbonifoh who was a member of the union's executive branch, on charges of

subversion. However, these charges were already dismissed. In 1988, there was another factor with broader implications. The ASUU took industrial action against the government's SAP. The SAP was a directive of the World Bank and other international organizations attempt to privatize the educational system therefore removing subsidies for education along with the deregulation of other sectors in Nigeria. The ASUU was subsequently banned by the government until 1998 (Odoziobodo, 2015).

Under General Abdulsalami, in a bid to restore the dignity of the military, all of the members of the ASUU who were dismissed during the Abacha's regime, were reinstated. On May 25th of 1999, an agreement of interim measure between General Abdulsalami's regime and the ASUU was secured. The measures included increase of academic staff income; however, it did not affect basic staff salaries nor did it effectively affect issues of concerns about funding and autonomy. According to Odoziobodo (2015), the Abdulsalami government in another agreement with ASUU in 2001 made a commitment to adjusted university workers allowance and promise further negotiations in the future (ASUU, 2008). The latter was never realized.

Obasanjo's administration ushered in a new era of democracy in 1999. This eight-year democratic leadership (1999-2007) focused on a plan for the educational sector. The year 2000 began with new negotiations where an agreement was reached that the federal and state governments would allocate at the least 26% of their annual budget towards education. This allocation was to begin in 2001. When the 2001 budget was announced, the allocation promised for education was not materialized. This led to the breakdown in communication and the ASUU engaged in industrial action (Odoziobodo, 2015).

The government approached the ASUU with the proposition of an informal agreement to stop the strike until more formal negotiations could be arranged. After one week of negotiations, the ASUU pulled out and resumed the industrial action (ASUU, 2008). Consequentially, an agreement was completed on June 30, 2001 with the offer of a 22% salary increase for the employees and assurances of autonomy at the university. Pressure from the government shortly after the agreement resulted in the termination of 49 members of the union who had previously refused to end the strike prior to the June agreement. A \$68 million loan from the World Bank to improve educational standard was used as a bargaining tool to disrupt the rights of the union's collective bargaining power (ASUU, 2008). A series of strikes, from 2002 to 2003, preceded the cancellation of collective bargaining, introduction of union fees, the termination of 49 lecturers at the University of Ilorin and the \$68 million loan from the World Bank through the controversial NUSIP project among other factors.

Table 2

Some popular strikes by ASUU 1999-2017

Year	Strike Duration
1999	Five months
2001	Three months
2002	Two weeks
2003/2004	Six months
2005	Three days
2006	Three days
2007	Three months
2008	One week
2009	Four months
2010	Over five months
2011/2012	Three months
2013	Over five months

(Source: Aidelunuoghene, 2014, p. 9)

The Causes of ASUU Strike Conflict with States and Federal Authorities of Nigeria

The ASUU strikes in Nigeria institutions had become very challenging. This left students and parents split in their views of who is to be held accountable for the persistent 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. Apart from the

sentiments being expressed by people, not so much effort in the form of research has been extended towards this industrial crisis. (Ogbette et al., 2017, p. 16)

The ASUU embarked on strike as a “weapon in industrial relation” in the seventies.

Isamiah, as cited by Ogbette et al., (2017), stated that,

...social scientists showed no interest in professional unionism because until very recently, trade unionism was regarded as a working-class phenomenon and generally thought to be inconsistent with the ethics and status of professional employees. More so, most senior employees would prefer to call their organization associations rather than unions. (p. 16)

Preceding ASUU strikes earlier in 2003 were caused 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. Since 2003-2013, the above reasons have almost remained central in ASUU demand and the cause of ASUU crises (NAUT, as cited by Ogbette et al., 2017, p. 16).

Emphasizing on the causes of ASUU strikes, Adavbiele stated (as cited by Ogbette et al., 2017),

...x-ray the causes of strike actions as; unfair treatment to the employees/victimization, violation of legislation and poor application of the provision of collective bargaining.

Osabuohien and Ogunrinola (n.d), observes 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. (p. 16)

Prof. Biodun Ogunyemi, once the president of ASUU, reported on few of the agreement negotiated with the government and stated, as cited by Ogbette et al. (2017).

That government had reneged on a 2013 agreement to revitalize universities with 1.3trillion over a period of six years. The first year, the government was to release N200billion, which it did, but it took a long time for us to access it. But since that release in 2013, no single has been released thereafter. For 2014, N220billion was not released. Again 2015 and 2016, nothing was released up to the third quarter of 2017. In all, we can estimate the outstanding amount to be about N825billion for revitalization of our universities and in the last two years, what has been allocated to education in the between six and seven percent. (p. 16)

Impact of ASUU Strikes on Students' Performance

Societies have traditionally viewed the schools as the formal institutions of learning. The learning process is structured in a cohesive manner to optimize learning and engagement in a communicative environment. As society becomes more complex, many parents are realizing the challenges of coping with the children's learning process and styles of acquiring and retaining information. The task of the demands of children's learning needs is passed on to the formalized education structures of schools. The children are placed in an environment that assists them in adjusting to the social attitudes, norms and values demanded by the larger society (Darling-Hammond, Flook, Cook-Harvey, Barron, & Osher, 2019).

Schools are one of the cornerstones of the society, which constitutes the pillars of learning, training and mentorship. These factors all encompass education. The definition shows a direct contrast to the impact of the ASUU industrial actions on Nigerian students' academic performances and the national economy of the country. This section considers the effects ASUU strike on students' performance and national development.

Several scholarly studies have reported that stoppage during academic calendar negatively affects students learning and performance. A study on the "Perception of Fairness Following a Strike" concluded as stated below that stoppage of academic calendar have negative effects on students in several ways (Fiksenbaum, Wickens, Greenglass, & Wiesenthal, 2012).

The 12-week strike had a negative psychosocial impact on students. During the dispute, undergraduates' satisfaction with their academic program declined, as did their sense of having a faculty member to turn to for assistance. In the aftermath of the strike, students reported that the dispute had caused them moderate financial concern. Students' plans had been somewhat to moderately affected by the dispute. Their plans for travel were the most affected, likely because the winter break was cancelled and the winter semester was extended into the summer term. Plans for graduation were the least affected, which is consistent with the fact that only 26 students in this sample identified themselves as being in their graduating year. (Fiksenbaum et al., 2012, p. 39)

Fiksenbaum et al., (2012) posited that:

The results of this study have several implications. First, undergraduates are negatively affected by a labor strike. Students in a labor dispute are subject to

uncertainty and inconvenience associated with forced changes to their plans for employment, travel, and future education, and they experience financial strain. (p. 39)

When stakeholders perform their roles adequately, the effect of learning in schools occurs (Asuquo, as cited in Edinyang & Ubi, 2013). Learning, therefore, is hampered when there is conflict among stakeholders. When there is failure in the performance of a stakeholder's required responsibility, the infringement of the rights of others and disruption of the process it breeds an environment that is not conducive to effective learning. Good human relations are central to teachers' and students' wellbeing and the process of learning (Asuquo, as cited in Edinyang & Ubi, 2013). Any conflicts in schools directly affect the academic process and adversely impact students' ability to perform at their highest potential. Strike actions are direct disruptions that interrupt and impede academic activities (York University, as cited in Edinyang & Ubi, 2013).

As Ogbette et al. (2017) discussed the findings on the impact of ASUU strikes; they disclosed that ASUU strikes led to negative effect on enactment of universities national curriculum. Bello (as cited by Ogbette et al., 2017) stated that, for the period of ASUU strike action, universities programs remained partially not fully executed. These situations lead students to seek to acquire their degree by any means necessary but completing the required the education and notwithstanding the cost.

The study revealed that ASUU strike had negative impact on enactment of universities national curriculum. The finding agreed with that of Bello (as cited by Ogbette et al., 2017), who reported that, during strike action, universities curriculums were not fully implemented. As a result, students struggled to acquire certificates at all

cost without actually fulfilling the required educative process. According to Kazeem and Ige (as cited in Edinyang & Ubi, 2013), there is no academic activity during strikes action; students are not in classes until the strike is called off and most of the time students are not given a chance to make up for lost time as a result of the ASUU strike.

Edinyang and Ubi (2013) stressed that, effective learning was continually obstructed by lack of ability to effectively carry out curriculum of the syllabus on time before the examination is administered. They further concluded that any interruption in academic schedules as a result of strike action affect the quality and quantity of students' learning routine and insisted that such interruption influenced their intensity, collaboration with fellow students and teachers. "Disruptions in academic programs served as nonmotivational factor to the students as it discouraged their learning habit" (Edinyang & Ubi, 2013, p. 116).

Adesulu (as cited by Ibrahim & Alagbu, 2014) noted that ASUU strike has impacted the quality of graduates coming out of Nigerian universities hence time lost as a result of strikes that would have been used in delivering lectures will not be recovered when the strikes are called off. According to Olusegun (as cited by Ibrahim & Alagbu, 2014) one of the major adverse effects of ASUU strike was the reduction of quality of graduates from Nigerian universities due to the fact that time should have been devoted to implementing the curriculum but was lost as the result of strikes and added that this situation "led to half-baked" products of university graduates in Nigeria.

Though noted that studies have shown that ASUU strike action impacted the quality of education in Universities, they agreed with most conclusions concerning the relationship between job satisfaction, need satisfaction, motivation and job performance,

therefore job performance of teachers depended on job satisfaction, according to (Ifinedo; Ladebo; Ubom; Ubom & Joshua, as cited by Ogbette et al., 2017). Nwachukwu (as cited by Ogbette et al., 2017), posited that physiological needs, security needs, social needs, self-esteem needs and self-actualization needs are significant predictors of the job performance of Nigerian teachers.

Sommer (as cited by Ogbette et al., 2017), said “when a group of employees voluntarily joins a labor union or other formal organizations, and this group goes on strike, the overall employee performance will suffer” (p. 116). Similarly, both Iheanacho and Isangedighi (as cited by Ogbette et al., 2017), concluded,

...that effective learning was achieved when students were emotionally and psychologically stable and that during strike action, students become emotionally and psychologically unstable especially on the perception that it would cause them to stay at the institution longer than expected, hence affecting their learning habit. (p. 116)

Isangedighi (as cited by Ogbette et al, 2017), assumed that strike action had negative effect on students’ learning ability and that students had lost time to prepare and readiness to learn as a result of ASUU of strike which ends up hurting their educational realization.

Kazeem and Ige (as cited in Edinyang & Ubi, 2013), opined that, strikes lead to the closure of schools that is a disruption in academic programs. The timeframe of these disruptions may be specified or indefinite. At the periods of disruption, academic activities are stalled and until there is resumption academic life, most of the time students are denied the opportunity to make up for lost time. The incessant ASUU industrial

actions have thwarted the progress of students, increased malcontent among learners and subjected students' to pitiable conditions, eroded student-teacher relations and created a festering of examination malpractice.

Olukunde's (as cited in Edinyang & Ubi, 2013) assessment of the situation asserts that the disruption to academic programs by the ASUU strikes give students an undeserved year of extension to their study. Both Isangedighi and Iheanacho (as cited in Edinyang & Ubi, 2013) posited that students achieve effective learning when there is emotional and psychological stability. On the other hand, emotional and psychological instability occur when there is disruption as presented by strike actions. These instabilities are associated with the students' perception that their prolonged academic activities interrupt other aspects of their lives.

Maliki and Ekpekin-Ekanem (as cited in Edinyang & Ubi, 2013) stated that the individual student's study habits determine the quality and quantity of the student's learning however, disruptions in academic activities such as strikes result in faulty study habits leading to poor learning and constant failure in academic pursuit. Compared to universities that do not have disruptions, students maintain better study habits, engage with their peers and teachers regularly and comprehend study material at a higher level than their peers who face disruptions. They exhibit stronger academic performance.

Isangedighi (as cited in Edinyang & Ubi, 2013) believed that the impact of a stimulus on a person's senses triggers their response and because each person is a, "thinking-feeling" entity, the correct stimuli can impair or enhance one's abilities. Using the strike action disruption as a stimulus to academic learning, this industrial action has a negative impact on the students' learning ability. As a result, learning interruption occurs

when a strike stimulus is present. This interruption occurs because the students lose preparedness and readiness when the strike is interjected into the learning process effectively affecting the students. To combat the disruption to their learning outcome some students resorted to examination malpractice in order to circumvent the problem and “achieving” their goals. This action by students did not result in effective learning and undermined the process.

Knowing the importance of stability of university academic calendar on education, the continual ASUU strikes action in the Nigerian universities had become troublesome and had undermined the curriculum of educational sector. Record has shown that, between 1988 and 2013, the ASUU had carried out 16 strike actions. Abdulsalam (as cited by Ibrahim & Alagbu, 2014) reported that ASUU carried out strikes in 1988, 1992, 1994 and 1996. According to Aghatise (as cited by Ibrahim & Alagbu, 2014), the ASUU had embarked on strikes in 1999, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013. The incessant ASUU strikes in Nigeria have interrupted academic calendar, left academic pursuits of academic world disorganized, and distract the routine learning process (Kazeem & Ige, as cited by Ibrahim & Alagbu, 2014).

Resolution of Strike Action

Even though there have been failures in some attempts to resolve the ASUU conflict with the government, there should be serious commitment on both parties to resort to conflict resolution to put an end to this crisis. The conflict resolution mechanism or process, by which the main objective would be achieved, would be to resolve the conflict by including the use of third party for mediation during the negotiation. This

would involve setting up mechanism and processes for the purpose of resolving conflicts. It would also involve the use of the third party and negotiation processes involving mediation as well as legislative processes of reconciliation, arbitration inquiry and judgment by the national industrial inquiry and judgment by the national industrial courts.

Collective Bargaining

According Okene (as cited by Olulu & Udeorah, 2018), collective bargaining is “a process of negotiation and conclusion of collective agreements on the demands of workers concerning certain improvements in the terms and conditions of employment” (p. 63). “Black’s Law Dictionary defines collective bargaining as ‘negotiations between an employer and the representatives of organized employees to determine the conditions of employment, such as wages, hours, discipline, and fringe benefits’” (Olulu & Udeorah, 2018, p. 63).

The Collective Bargaining Convention (1981, No. 154) explains the term collective bargaining as extending to all negotiations which take place between an employer, a group of employers or one or more employers’ organizations, on the one hand, and one or more workers’ organizations, on the other hand, for determining working conditions and terms of employment, and/or regulating relations between employers and workers, and/or regulating relations between employers or their organizations and a workers’ organization or workers’ organizations. Collective bargaining thus involves a situation where representatives of organized employees meet with the employer or its representatives in an atmosphere of mutual cooperation and respect, to deliberate

and reach agreement on issues affecting both parties. (Olulu & Udeorah, 2018, p. 63)

Moreover, part of the resolution strike is through the Declaration of Trade Dispute Act, which calls for due process of resolving or entirely preventing strike. The Trade Dispute Act as amended provided for the machinery for setting trade dispute between an employer and trade union. The act avoidance of doubt is not met for resolving contractual problems between the employer and employee in their individual capacities. The individual employer does not declare a trade dispute, it is the union that does so, if even it's done to resolve the individual contract of employment (Olulu & Udeorah, 2018).

The enduring crisis between the Federal Government and ASUU, has led to the closures of universities in the country over the years now. The position of the ASUU has always been that the Federal Government should be held accountable for the standoff: for refusing or failure to implement an already reached agreement by which both parties signed willingly. The government claimed to be constrained by the state governments opposition, and insisted that they were in a better position to negotiate the salaries of their lecturers in state universities, hence the federal government would not allow any agreement entered by the states, hence federal government would say it was forced on them, under the principles of collective bargaining (Vanguard News, 2009).

Edoba Omoregie,Â in this piece, however, questions the rationale of this assertion in the light of international instruments to which Nigeria is a signatory and its municipal legislations on labor matters and concludes that collective bargaining is not only a normative mechanism for harmonious labor relations, but that its adoption in the FG/ASUU renegotiation process is consistent with the country

international obligations and its extant municipal legal regime. (Vanguard News, 2009, para. 3)

Excerpt:

The meaning, purpose and relevance of collective bargaining as an effective tool of harmonious labor relation have been subjects of extensive discussion since the first comprehensive international instrument on collective bargaining came into being in 1948. Article 2 of The Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention of 1948 which defines collective bargaining is virtually replicated in the Trade Disputes Act of Nigeria. (Vanguard News, 2009, para. 4)

Furthermore,

The Act provides as follows in s. 48: Collective agreement means any agreement in writing for the settlement of dispute relative to terms of employment and physical condition of work concluded between-(a) an employer, a group of employers or organizations representing workers, or the duly appointed representative of any body of workers, on the one hand; and (b) one or more trade unions or organizations representing workers, or the duly appointed representative of any body of workers on the other hand. (Vanguard News, 2009, para. 5)

The federal government of Nigeria endorsed this Treaty on October 17, 1960 and also approved the Collective Bargaining Agreement of 1981 which is the most recent international instruments on Collective Bargaining Agreement (Vanguard News, 2009).

Summary

Chapter two reviewed pertinent literature spanning students, institutions of higher education in Nigeria, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in Nigeria, and

causes of ASUU strike conflict with the states and federal authorities in Nigeria. It discussed the impact of ASUU strikes on student's performance, resolution of the strike action, collective bargaining, the theoretical framework and the research questions that propelled this study. The literature review opened the doors for later analysis as the themes that emerged through the lived experiences of the participants were examined through the data analysis. The literature reviewed in this Chapter established a tangential groundwork of knowledge encompassing the phenomenon. The literature examined in chapter two confirmed the need to explore how and what students experience and understand ASUU strike in Imo state university in Nigeria. These were the research areas and plausible discoveries at the inception of the planning of my inquiry that I believed were important to set my study in the framework of current literature. Later in chapter four, following research methodology, I developed and further defined these connections to assist emphasize the themes that emerged within the data.

Chapter 3: Qualitative Research Methodology

Introduction

This research focused on the effect of strikes on students in Imo State University, Nigeria and the extent to which it impacted other facets of the students' lives using a phenomenological approach. The researcher employed qualitative research that focused on one concept (Creswell, 2013). The one concept in this study was to examine the effects of ASUU strikes on students in Imo State University from 2012 to 2017.

Generally, qualitative research builds a holistic picture, analyzing words and reporting detailed views of the participants (Schuemann, 2014). The limited amount of literature related to this topic was the main reason why the researcher decided to conduct a qualitative research as it allowed for an in-depth analysis of the participants' responses to this unique situation. Quoting Creswell, Schuemann (2014,) described qualitative research as “an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explores a social or human problem” (p.14). While Denzin and Lincoln (2003) further explained that qualitative research involves an interpretive analysis of the people's experiences in their natural setting. This supports the use of qualitative research in human actions in space and time, and the capturing of thoughts and feelings of the participants. Furthermore, the use of a quantitative research method, would have limited the voice of the participants and the complexity of the participant's narrative and experiences (Schuemann, 2014).

Qualitative research can be done in several forms such as ethnography, phenomenology, case study, grounded theory and narrative research (Creswell, 2013).

For this paper the researcher used a phenomenological study approach to examine the effect of strikes on students of Imo State University, Nigeria from 2012- 2017.

The justification for using phenomenological study is that phenomenology focuses on several individuals lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon. According to Creswell, a phenomenological approach seeks to explore, describe and analyze the meaning of subjects' lived experiences. Their descriptions included "what' they experienced and "how" they experienced" as cited in Schuemann, (2014). "A theoretical point of view that advocates the study of direct experience taken at face value and one which sees behavior as determined by the phenomena of experience rather than by external, objective and physically described reality" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011, p.18). Creswell (2013) also added that, "phenomenological study describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon, while, phenomenologists focus on describing what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon" (p. 76).

With this method the researcher's interest was to show "how complex meanings are built out of simple units of direct experience" (Schuemann, 2014). Utilizing a phenomenological approach offered the researcher the opportunity to produce not only a description, but also a comprehensive interpretation of the meaning of the lived experiences of the participants (Creswell, 2013): in this case, as it relates to the effects of the ASUU strikes on Imo university students. After determining that phenomenological approach was appropriate for this study, the following suggestions as outlined in Creswell (2013) were included in the design and served as a procedural map for this

dissertation which explored how the ASUU strikes impact university students in Imo State, Nigeria:

- a phenomenon of interest to study is identified
- the researcher recognizes and specifies the broad philosophical assumptions of phenomenology
- data are collected from the individuals who have experienced the phenomenon
- the participants are asked two broad, general question: “What have you experienced in terms of the phenomenon? What context or situations have typically influenced or affected your experiences of the phenomenon?”
- data analysis occurs through organized “clusters of meaning” and from these clusters evolves both textural and structural descriptions of the experience which leads to a composite description that presents the “essence” of the phenomenon. (Creswell, 2013, pp. 80-81)

The term phenomenon is the central concept that was examined by the phenomenologist. It is the concept being experienced by the subjects in a study which may include psychological concepts such as grief, anger and behavioral concepts.

Phenomenology

According to Creswell (2013), phenomenological study describes the “common meaning for several individuals, of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomena” (p. 76). Phenomenological study has its strengths and limitations; it can provide a rich and detailed view of a human experience, but the clarity of its data often depends upon the articulateness of the participant and the objectiveness of the researcher in interpreting

the data without bias (Hycner, 1985). Following is a more detailed list of specific strengths and limitations of phenomenology.

Strengths of Phenomenology

- Seeks to find the universal nature of an experience and can provide a deeper understanding.
- The themes and meanings of an experience emerge from the data. The qualitative nature of phenomenology allows the researcher to notice trends and look at the big picture. The data is not fit into a statistical test that confines or restricts the interpretation.
- Helps to understand a lived experience and brings meaning to it. This may contribute to the development of new theories, changes in policies or changes in responses.
- Results may help expose misconceptions about an experience. It may be a means to have the voices of the participants heard which may prompt action or at least challenge pre-conceived notions and complacency (Hycner, 1985).

Limitations of Phenomenology

- The research participants must be able to articulate their thoughts and feelings about the experience being studied. It may be difficult for them to express themselves due to language barriers, age, cognition, embarrassment and other factors.
- Phenomenology requires researcher interpretation, making phenomenological reduction an important component to reduce biases, assumptions, and pre-

conceived ideas about an experience or phenomenon. Researcher bias is difficult to determine or detect.

- Results are not statistically reliable, even with a larger sample size. It does not produce generalizable data.
- It may be difficult to gain access to participants.
- Presentation of findings may be difficult. The subjectivity of the data may lead to difficulty in establishing reliability and validity.
- Policy makers may give less credibility to phenomenological study.
- Gathering data and data analysis may be time consuming and laborious (Hycner, 1985).

Transcendental Phenomenology

Between the various types of phenomenology (transcendental and hermeneutic), the researcher chose to utilize the transcendental approach. Transcendental phenomenology is the study of the lived experiences of subjects that allows the development of a perceptive inclusive of external, physical, isolatable stimuli, bracketing out of stimuli and capturing the “essence” of the experience (Moustakas, 1994).

Allen (1999), stated that the key differences between transcendental and hermeneutic is that transcendental phenomenology is “foundationalist” meaning that it seeks a correct answer and a “valid” interpretation of texts independent of factors in the interpreter. Hermeneutic phenomenology is “non-foundationalist”, in that it focuses on the meaning that arises from the interpretive interaction between historically produced texts and the reader.

The Epoche

According to Husserl and Moustakas, “the researcher must set aside prejudice, prior knowledge, judgements and preconceptions about the phenomenon to hear the contribution of research participants with an open mind” (as cited in Daley, 2017, p. 8).

Transcendental phenomenology focuses on people’s meaning of a lived experience of a concept or phenomenon. The researcher used interviews as the main form of data collection. Interviews kept the participants focused and helped the researcher build rapport with the participant as well as gather rich data quickly. Interviews granted the researcher the option of reviewing sensitive subjects. Interviews were held over the telephone which was more convenient for the research participants. The interviews were no longer than 35 minutes and were recorded using a digital voice device. The interview questions were semi-structured, giving the researcher the flexibility to ask follow-up questions. Therefore interview questions were limited to seven pre-determined and well-structured questions that offered the researcher enough room to ask follow-up questions. The researcher remained mindful not to wear out the participants while trying to get enough response for the data analysis (Schuemann, 2014). Questions were open-ended, in an effort to elicit subjective narrative from the participants, which were utilized to inform the study. This structure of interview was necessary for this study as it provided the researcher with the opportunity to listen to the participants so as to draw follow-up questions from their answers.

Sampling, Subjects, Access, and Setting

The researcher chose phenomenology to generate a broad account of lived experiences of the students in Imo State University in relation to their understanding of

ASUU strikes effects. With this method the researcher revealed both the universal and/or complex meanings derived from the simple units of the direct experiences of the students (Schuemann, 2014).

The standard or criteria for selecting the research site stemmed from personal interest as a parent of a student at Imo state university. Another factor was accessibility of the demographics who responded to the research questions. The two criteria that were considered in selecting respondents for the research included: (a) students must have attended the Imo state University between 2012- 2017; (b) students should indicate that they had experienced a minimum of three or more ASUU strikes as a student enrolled at Imo State University between 2012 and 2017.

Sample size was based on projected ability to carefully seek saturation of developing ideas; and progressively moving through a sample or samples can help with conceptual clarity until no additional concepts emerge (Schuemann, 2014).

The study sample included eight student participants (alumni) who attended Imo State University. Appropriate approval was obtained from the Nova Southeastern University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Documentation was not needed from Imo State University IRB for approval since participants are all alumni of the institution who were in attendance from 2012 to 2017 and had no affiliation with Imo State University at the time of the study. Nova Southeastern University has a designated Institutional Review process for approving research conducted at their University.

Researchers in qualitative design suggest that study samples can go from one individual to as many as eight and that research saturation can be attained with two to up to 10 participants (Schuemann, 2014). The sample of this study was based on

interviewing eight students with the contingency of two more students were available as back up if they had been needed to broaden the data samples and to further clarify emerging data until informational saturation occurred. Ultimately, eight alumni were interviewed.

The participants' welfare was protected throughout this study. Participants received and acknowledged by signing a document that explained the scope of the study and outlined the avenue to withdraw from completing the study at any time had they ever felt they would be harmed by the process. The document indicated a participant's ability to terminate involvement without consequences. The researcher strictly adhered to the code of confidentiality and preserved all data in a protected environment. Participants' information was coded with a participant chosen penname from the beginning of the study and was not represented by any other identifiers from that point on. Ethical principles related to scholarly finding through autonomy, beneficence, and justice helped promote trustworthiness of the process and guided the researcher's subjective efforts throughout all aspects of the study (Schuemann, 2014).

Again, the total sample for this phenomenological study included eight students from one research location, Imo State University. It was important that the student respondents would have experienced long term exposure to the ills of the ASUU strikes, and who could best articulate the impact the ASUU strikes have made on their university education as well as their overall well-being other than themselves. Two additional considerations were made to achieve a balanced blend of student demographics and experience. These included gender and identification. My goal was to discover students

who could speak to their experience and understanding of the effects of the ASUU strikes.

Additionally, I sent out an email delineating the scope and purpose of the investigation and encouraged potential participants to respond to email to indicate their interest in participation. I responded back through email to those who indicated their interest to participate in the study. A follow-up email was sent to arrange a convenient time for an interview with those who met the inclusionary criteria. Participants signed a consent and confidentiality form through an online link provided to them in advance which outlined the purpose, eligibility, involved commitment, discussion of risks and benefits, and associated confidentiality of their experience. The researcher provided interview dates at least three days in advance to participants and also sent them a reminder email a day before the date of the interviews.

The interviews were conducted over a one week period through Skype, face-time or telephone call to participants. Prior to the interview, the researcher reviewed the consent form submitted online by the participants to ensure clarity of the process. A signed consent form was accepted as an acknowledgment that the participant understood the terms and conditions of the interview process, as well as their timeliness in providing documentation of their responses to subsequent or follow-up questions that may arise from their initial responses to the research questions.

This study posed minimal risk to the participants. This researcher maintained the anonymity of the participants through pseudonym and did not offer any monetary compensation to participants for their involvement in this research. Rather, participants may be satisfied knowing that they contributed to a research idea *vis-a-vis* the ASUU

strikes and its effect on university student experiences. All participant identification and responses was secured and treated with anonymity. Pennames were assigned at the time of consent to replace personal identification information of the participants and their subsequent information was submitted under their chosen pennames (Schuemann, 2014).

The researcher maintained the custody of the data collected for the purpose of this research study and provided a summary of the data collected from the respondents and reported it with their pseudonyms or designated names (such as student A,B,C ...).

Participant Demographics

For the purpose of confidentiality, the study participants were assigned pseudonyms as participant identifiers for data coding and identification in this report for purposes of reporting the findings in this study. Creswell (2013) stated “researchers need to protect the anonymity of the participants by assigning numbers or aliases to them to use in the process of analyzing and reporting data” (pp. 230–231). Participant names and numbers were based according to the order in which the researcher conducted participant interviews. The assigned pseudonyms have no association to the participants that would compromise their identities.

The researcher conducted eight semi-structured interviews in this transcendental phenomenological study. All participants were students who attended Imo state University from 2012 to 2017, which qualified them to participate in this study, “The effects of ASUU Strikes on Student (alumni) Of Imo State University (IMSU).” Altogether, the participants collectively went through and observed 36 ASUU strikes during study years at IMSU. Considering the number of ASUU strikes the students went through, lived experience was habitually directly tied to the conflict they experienced,

this researcher resolute that each individual participant would facilitate a deeper understanding of the primary essence of the inquiry. Participant demographics are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Participant Demographics

Number of Years in School	Participant Pseudonyms	Gender	Year Graduated	Number of Strikes Experienced
7	Ekem	Female	2015	5
7	Onye	Male	2014	4
6	Ejim	Male	2014	4
6	Ezeh	Male	2013	4
6	Mbam	Female	2014	5
7	Ozim	Male	2015	5
6	Chim	Female	2016	5
7	Chen	Male	2018	4
Total #Years: 47	Participants: 8	5 Males 3 Females		Total # of Strikes Experienced: 36

Although this interview was suitable for this type of study, however it was time consuming and labor-intensive. Furthermore, it was possible for the interviewer to influence responses, which could have resulted to interviewer bias. Additionally, interviews can generate a lot of information that would need to be processed; analysis was also time-consuming (Schuemann, 2014).

Data Collection

The researcher used phenomenological interviewing for data collection. Phenomenological interviewing is a specific type of in-depth interviewing grounded in a philosophical tradition of phenomenology, which is the study of lived experiences and the ways we understand those experiences to develop worldview (Schuemann, 2014).

Research Questions

There were three major research questions used to describe the students lived experiences of the ASUU strikes in IMSU. All three questions followed the theoretical frameworks provided by Moustakas (1994). Previous qualitative research assisted in the development of the questions. Seven open-ended research questions were asked of the participants in order to answer the three major research questions. They are shown below, categorized according to the major research questions they inform:

1. How do students experience and understand the effect of the ASUU strikes?

- i. How do students experience the effect of ASUU strikes?
- ii. How do students understand the effect of ASUU strikes?

2. How does the ASUU strikes during academic sessions shape student meaning of the university experience?

- iii. How do these ASUU strikes during academic sessions shape student meaning of the university experience?
- iv. How do the ASUU strikes impact the relationship with students?

3. How do the ASUU strike impact students learning experience?

- v. How do the ASUU strikes impact students learning experience?
- vi. How do the ASUU strikes affect student performance?
- vii. What adjustments, if any, did the student make as a result of the ASUU strikes?

Data Analysis Process and Procedures

A transcendental phenomenological study focuses on the analyses of textural descriptions, structural descriptions and the combination of both in efforts to derive the overall essence of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). And through textural descriptions “the researcher examines “what” the participants’ experienced, while through structural descriptions the researcher identifies “how” the participants experienced the phenomenon in terms of the “conditions, situations and contexts” (p. 80).

Additionally, the data analysis method suitable for this research is known as transcendental phenomenological reduction, hence horizontalization and phenomenological reduction are steps used in conducting each individual transcript before arriving at the textual structural description. Which, if methodically applied will achieve a textural-structural synthesis and essence of the experience. The researcher focus of this study was the participants’ lived experiences and not the researcher’s interpretation of their experiences; here the researcher must “bracket out as much as possible their own experiences” (Creswell, 2013, p. 80) about the phenomenon. Moustakas (1994), modified data analysis method of transcendental phenomenological model, highlights conceptual patterns and describes the process that the researcher employed in this investigation.

Analysis of the data followed the modification of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method as cited in Moustakas (1994). Listed below are the various stages of analysis according to this method:

1. Using a phenomenological approach, obtain a full description of your own experience of the phenomenon.

2. From the verbatim transcript of your experience complete the following steps
 - a. Consider each statement with respect to significance for description of the experience.
 - b. Record all relevant statements.
 - c. List each nonrepetitive, nonoverlapping statement. These are the invariant horizons or meaning units of the experience.
 - d. Relate and cluster the invariant meaning units into themes.
 - e. Synthesize the invariant meaning units and themes into a description of the textures of the experience. Include verbatim experience.
 - f. Reflect on your own textural description. Through imaginative variation, construct a description of the structures of your experience.
 - g. Construct a textural-structural description of the meanings and essences of your experience.
3. From the verbatim transcript of the experience of each of the other co-researchers, complete the above steps, a through g.
4. From the individual textural-structural descriptions of the co-researcher's experiences, construct a composite textural-structural description of the meanings and essences of the experience, integrating all individual textural-structural descriptions into a universal description of the experience representing the group as a whole. (pp. 121-122)

Reliability of each statement to the experience.
Record the relevant statements.
Invariant horizons: nonrepetitive, nonoverlapping statements.
Theming: cluster the related invariants.
Description of the textures of the experience -synthesize the invariants meaning units and themes.
Construct a description of the structures of experience.
Construct a textural-structural description of the meanings and essence of the experience

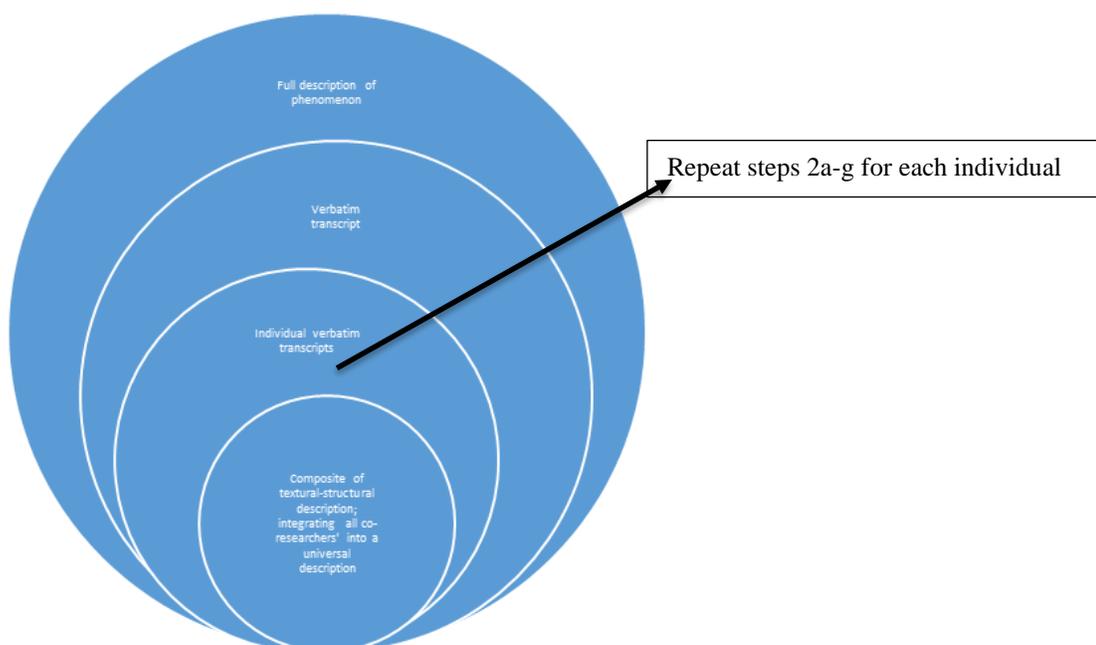


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework.

(Modified from the conceptual framework by Schuemann, 2014, p. 9).

For any discrepancies noted during the course of this study, the researcher reviewed the notable statements, interpretive meanings, and themes and rectified any concerns identified. It was imperative that the researcher repetitively review the materials to be used for data analysis. The data collection materials may include but are not limited to writing materials or devices for coding and facilitated project organization to achieve categorical saturation, according Locke (as cited in Schuemann, 2014, p. 87).

Data collected through these interview processes revealed a vivid narrative of students' experience relative to their understanding of the ASUU strikes. The data analysis replicated that of Schuemann, (2014) in which the researcher first begin by “chronologically bracketing the commentary and begin phenomenological data reduction, to tracking the words that represents the emerging category topics that might form categories of meaning” (p.88). This helped the researcher determine direction for further analysis. The researcher also identified the underlying points that evolved within the data to further form the development of central topics. The subsequent phase required coding and memoing which was much more clarified after the researcher organized and clustered the data into common categories which lead to the development of themes, removed overlapping and repetitive statements and identified meaning units from the raw interview data (Moustakas, 1994, p. 118).

The final stage required that the researcher further analyze the developing categories in order to determine what prior category and theme they best aligned with and utilized that information to generate both textural and structural report (Creswell, 2013). In addition, Schuemann (2014) suggested for researchers to “think deeply about the evolving categories and search for alternative understanding prior to converting the emergent categories into thematic units and using the themes to compose a descriptive report” (p. 88).

For example, the researcher first read through all of the transcribed interviews in their entirety and then spent some time reflecting upon the statements of the participants. Each statement was then considered with respect to significance for description of the experience. The researcher recorded 79 relevant statements and then created a list of 21

non-repetitive, non-overlapping statements. The latter represents the invariant horizons or meaning units of the experience (Moustakas, 1994).

The researcher then related and clustered the invariant meaning units into themes (Moustakas, 1994). To accomplish this, the researcher read through the participants' statements again and organized them into a grid by similarities in content. Subsequent review provided the researcher identified evolving underlying points which provided further direction for analysis. The researcher then organized and clustered the statements into common categories which led to the development of themes. Through the analysis, the researcher identified 10 themes which are presented in Table 3 in chapter four.

Using these categorizing strategies, the researcher then generated a comprehensive description of "how" (structural) and "what" (textual) students' lived experiences of the ASUU strikes have impacted their university education as well as their overall well-being. The final stage of confirming themes involved summarizing, validating, if necessary, and modifying ideas prior to settling on the general and unique themes to make the composite summary (Schuemann, 2014, p. 88).

As an illustration, after the first two reviews of and reflection upon participant statements, the researcher developed a list of invariant horizons (Moustakas, 1994). The researcher then organized the statements into a grid by similarities in content and identified evolving underlying points. A subsequent review began to reveal themes which the researcher documented. Beginning with the theme of "lost time", the researcher then grouped together all statements that mentioned lost time directly or indirectly. For instance, Chim made a statement that directly mentioned lost time, "I lost a year in school, making it a sum of six years instead of five years because engineering is a five-

year school.” Whereas Onye mentioned lost time indirectly, “the first thing the strike did to me as a student was it disrupted my academic calendar because we have to push forward.” The mention of “push forward” indicates that the graduation date of the participant was pushed forward or delayed which cost them time.

The researcher continued with the review and analysis, grouping all statements related to lost time. The researcher then repeated this process with remaining nine of ten identified themes. The researcher continued by presenting findings which include each theme supported by a description of the theme and whether it was related to the meaning of the experience or the lived experience. Each theme is also supported by verbatim participant statements. The researcher then constructed a composite of the textual-structural description of the meanings and essences of the experience, integrating them into a universal description of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). The resulting description represents the group as a whole. The findings of the study are presented in chapter four.

Summary

This chapter explored the research strategy, its methodology, population sampling, sampling strategy and sample size. Additionally, the purpose and rationale for employing a phenomenological study to examine the effect of strikes on students was provided. The data analysis employed horizontalization and phenomenological reduction which are steps that were used in conducting each individual transcript before arriving at the textual structural description. The researcher also described the instrumentation and materials for the study, its reliability, validity and limitations, researcher’s roles, and ethical concerns associated with the study.

Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

This study was conducted to gain a deeper understanding of effects of ASUU strike perceived by alumni of Imo State University from 2012 to 2017 by exploring their lived experiences specifically of the ASUU strike. The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the lived experiences of alumni of Imo state university who perceived ASUU strikes at the time of their study. Chapter four comprises the results of this transcendental phenomenological study that responded to the following research questions, addressing how to identify, avoid strikes, reconcile, mitigate, manage, and resolve conflict experienced by the alumni of IMSU.

Phenomenology uses a researcher's personal interest to develop questions (Moustakas, 1994). My research topic emerged as I served as a guardian or sponsor to two university students in Nigeria. Both students were my nieces; one graduated in seven years and the second one graduated in six years. Keep in mind that these were supposed to be four-year programs but due to the ASUU strikes, it took an extra five years collectively before they could graduate with bachelor's degrees. As a sponsor/guardian, the ASUU strikes encroached into my finances as I was forced to spend additional money outside the normal school fees, feeding and boarding as well as housing.

An investigative review of existing literature revealed that there were no qualitative researches focusing on effects of ASUU strikes on students in IMSU. In that regard, this study focused on the shared similarities and experiences among alumni students of IMSU from 2012 to 2017.

The foundation of the study was found in the research question: How do students experience and understand the effect of ASUU strikes?

The remainder of this chapter describes this phenomenon using the participant's voice and provides an overall understanding of the experience. Moustakas (1994) implied that it is essential to examine the experience from many angles and perspectives in order to understand the entire phenomenon being investigated. Because of this recommendation, interviews were used to compile a well-rounded description of the study.

Findings of Data Analysis

As discussed in chapter 3, analysis of the data followed the modification of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method as cited in Moustakas (1994). The researcher utilized a phenomenological approach and obtained a full description of the experience of the phenomenon by each participant by conducting interviews using open-ended questions. A verbatim transcription of the interviews was then performed, and each participant was assigned a pseudonym for confidentiality.

Invariant Horizons

Each statement was then considered with respect to significance for description of the experience. The researcher recorded 79 relevant statements and then created a list of 21 non-repetitive, non-overlapping statements. The latter represents the invariant horizons or meaning units of the experience (Moustakas, 1994), and are presented below:

1. I started my pharmacy school in 2011. It was supposed to last for five years, but I finished that program for like seven or eight years because of strike (Chen).

2. We were not having enough time per semester... It leaves us with a lot of, unknow, uncertainty in terms of you being able to take your curriculum activity into your hands to predict where you can finish and how you perform. ...all the time lost during strike are never recovered. They are never recovered (Chen).
3. It is frustrating, and people tend to lose focus at that point in time. So, if you have a momentum, you're doing well in your studies, a strike tends to go against the momentum that you have (Ejim).
4. Each time I come back from the strike, I will have to start – I am relearning things I have learned, refreshing my mind and getting prepared again and getting prepared as in adjusting to the environment again and getting myself in a place and in the mindset of learning, because when you're out of school, one year of school is like two years out of your mind (Onye).
5. It affects your strengths, your enthusiasm, and every other make up that make you a student, thereby demoralizing you for the rest of that semester (Cham).
6. I feel like the frustration I had was that other schools, people in private schools were moving ahead with their education, and they were gonna graduate on time (Ejim).
7. This is gonna negatively affect the society because if you don't take more students inside, they end up having some criminal activities, doing some illegal issues, or becoming more of a user of society and not having a productive effect on society (Ezem).

8. There is no doubt some students might get themselves into counseling, try killing themselves, you know, killing people, smashing people's cars on the street. You know, students are no longer safe on campus because – or even walking on the streets of the capital because they can, they're gonna snatch their handbags, you know, and take their money from them out of frustration. And a lot of girls went into prostitution. And for the fact that the ASUU strike delayed their studies, maybe in the future they start looking for a way to buy certificates because they want to make it up in the future, you know, to better their life. So those are some of the negative effects. Buy the certificate, going to armed robbery, snatching people's purse on the street, forcing them into prostitution. And more, they're killing and stealing, was just too much (Mbam).
9. And so this major strike and period led to a riots from the students, which led to a number of them being injured in the cause or trying to stop or calm the, the riot. So some students got injured and some were hospitalized, as a result of that, some lost their valuables, cash money, phones (Ekem).
10. Most times they have a job which will probably be ready for them ... But because of one thing or the other, the strike is gonna affect them today. There is a backlog. They are not gonna actually get that position. They might give it to someone else probably who came back from overseas – who is a Nigerian who came back from overseas studies. They're gonna miss the employment (Ezem).

11. I had to miss my time for national youth service corps (NYSC). The place I was meant to be posted for NYSC wasn't prepared actually because I had everything all planned out actually in my own time (Ezem).
12. All right, the adjustment I had to make was I had to change my goals in life because ever since – I always wanted to be in the business sector. So because of the ASUU strike and because of missing the course of study I was meant to do in the United States, I changed from the business perspective to more public policy and governmental agencies (Ezem).
13. I would say that students are beginning to create like an adaptive mindset toward the ASUU strike and seeing it as a norm because of the low confidence they have in the government and in the educational system basically (Ozim).
14. The inability for the government and ASUU union to reach this consensus made them to go on this strike. Just like they saying goes in Nigeria, “when two elephants are fighting, the grass suffers”. ... So who are the grass over here? We the students are the grass, because the government, probably they don't care about it because their kids are overseas studying where there's nothing like strikes (Ezem).
15. It made me understand that this – it exposes the unseriousness of the Nigerian government because if they have the interest of students, the strike will be the last thing to be experienced by any student of the country (Onye).
16. Maybe our parents not getting value for their money, for the tuition they paid, because at the end of the day you paid for a session and then your son or daughter didn't go to school almost half of the session or almost two-thirds of

the session. At the end of the day they will rush everything and then be less effective, that we will stop having graduates which are not well trained because they lost the whole year of a given program (Chen).

17. Your university experience is quite frustrating at that particular point in time because, think about it, you are paying for rent. You are paying for a whole year's rent. Imagine when there's a strike for a whole year. You lose that rent (Ejim).

18. But with this strike coming in place, it destabilizes some of these families' economy or financial status because they have to make their kids come back home (Ezem).

19. We have to put on hold whatever was going on in school just to be idle for a moment. Students who are out of school, they are idle. They are doing nothing (Onye).

20. During the ASUU strike, I use that period of break to see if I can acquire some more knowledge. Like I enrolled in an IT course to try to learn how to use computer (Ozim).

21. But personally, at such times where I experienced such things. That'd be the part time job or I learned a skill that' would help me (Ekem).

Major Themes

The researcher then related and clustered the invariant meaning units into themes (Moustakas, 1994). Through the analysis, the researcher identified 10 themes which are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Themes

Theme
Lost time
Lost momentum
Lost opportunity
Demoralizing
Frustration
Crime and violence
Low confidence
Finances
Idle
Active/New opportunity

Following is a discussion of each major theme that was identified in this study.

Each discussion contains participant statements related to the theme followed by an explanation of how the participant statements illustrate that particular theme.

Lost Time

Several participants expressed that they lost time due to the strikes by the ASUU. Lost time is related to the lived experience of these students. Some referred to lost time as the time they lost during the strike or the extra time they had to spend studying when the strike(s) ended and classes resumed. Others attributed lost time to delayed graduation dates. Some students were delayed by a year, while others were delayed for several years.

Chen stated that, “I started my pharmacy school in 2012. It was supposed to last for five years, but I finished that program for like seven or eight years because of strike.” The participant further elaborated with the following statement will demonstrates the participant’s lived experience,

We were not having enough time per semester... It leaves us with a lot of, unknown, uncertainty in terms of you being able to take your curriculum activity into your hands to predict where you can finish and how you perform. ...all of the time lost during strike are never recovered. They are never recovered. (Chen)

Ekem, Ezeh, Mbam and Chim provided similar statements related to their lived experiences. In their statements, the participants not only indicated the loss of several years, but also pointed out that students never recover that time.

But we, the answer in strike that students do experience, you find that sometimes you spend six years compared to it costs of four years and sometimes you go on to spend, it's nine years compared to the costs of five years. (Ekem)

Ezeh stated, “I went to the University of Nigeria between the dates or the years of 2009 to 2013, but I graduated in 2014.” Mbam said, “So there was a lot of obstacles on my side because the ASUU strike in that, you know that you're going to graduate in four years, but you finally graduated in five years.” Chim remarked, “I lost a year in school, making it a sum of six years instead of five years because engineering is a five-year school.”

These statements illustrate the theme of lost time as part of the students’ lived experience in that the participants described loosing time in the weeks or months that classes were suspended due to the strike(s). They also described loosing time due to

having to devote extra time studying the material that was not covered during the strikes because the material would not be taught by the professor once classes resumed.

Participants expressed the greatest loss of time due to delayed graduation dates. At a time when they should have already graduated and begun their careers, they were still in school due to class disruptions caused by the strikes.

Lost Momentum

The next theme is lost momentum. Several participants gave statements describing how the sudden cessation of all classes and campus activities caused them to lose their momentum. Lost momentum is related to the meaning of the experience for these participants.

Ejim made some statements related to the meaning of the experience. This participant stated, “It is frustrating, and people tend to lose focus at that particular point in time. So if you have a momentum, you're doing well in your studies, a strike tends to go against the momentum that you have” (Ejim). Later in the interview, Ejim stated,

When there's an ASUU strike, if you had a momentum before the ASUU strike, you can lose that momentum. You can fail a course or two, and when you fail two courses in a Nigerian university like IMSU, you are bound not to graduate when you are supposed to graduate. (Ejim)

Onye lamented,

Each time I come back from the strike, I will have to start – I am relearning things I have learned, refreshing my mind and getting prepared again and getting prepared as in adjusting to the environment again and getting myself in a place

and in the mindset of learning, because when you're out of school, one year of school is like two years out of your mind. (Onye)

Ezeh stated,

How it affected me, one very important situation is there. Learning is a continuous process. If you don't continue putting in effort in the learning process, it leaves you, just like mathematics. You more you do mathematics, the more you get better at it. The more you leave it, the more it leaves you. (Ezeh)

Mbam described lost momentum with the following statement:

It was very poor because you go to school, you want to go to school every day to learn, to understand what the teacher is teaching, all of this stuff. And you're out of school and all the things that you learn, everything has just disappeared from your memory. And it's like when school reopens it's like you are a beginner.

You're coming back to start all over again. So it was very hard. It was very, very hard. It was a very big setback, a big setback for me and for other students.

(Mbam)

These statements illustrate the theme of lost momentum as part of the meaning of this experience because they describe the process of these participants working towards a goal only to have everything come to a complete stop because of the ASUU strikes. In addition to starting over once classes resumed after the ASUU strike was called off, participants mentioned that they found it difficult because of relearning previous materials, catching up on missed materials for which there was no instruction or grace period in which to do so, and preparing for the final exams which were often expected to be completed very soon upon their return to the classroom. Additionally, they would need

to realign their goals related to previously arranged employment or graduate school.

These statements contribute to the meaning of their experience because they were forced into sudden changes which forced them to learn to be adaptable and flexible.

Lost Opportunity

Lost opportunity is another theme that emerged and was a factor that fed the frustration of students affected by one or multiple strikes by the ASUU. This theme is also related to the meaning of the experience for these participants as some lost opportunities that were related to participating in volunteer service; completing research; enrolling in their chosen graduate studies program at another university following their time at Imo State University – and therefore their chosen field of study; and lost employment opportunity.

Ekem and Ezeh spoke of the lost opportunity to complete their time for National Youth Service Corps.

Like, because this particular one happened at a time when students were about to write their final exams and then go onto the national youth service called program and boom, the next thing we heard was there was going to be a strike and everything had to be on hold. (Ekem)

I had to miss my time for national youth service corps (NYSC). The place I was meant to be posted for NYSC wasn't prepared actually because I had everything all planned out actually in my own time (Ezeh).

Ezeh further described the lost opportunity to complete a specific research project with one of their professors:

2013 I was doing a course study...on international trade on how to fix the Nigerian economy. I was working with this company in Australia which was connected to me by my professor then in the western Nigeria. So I was in the middle of this research study linked to me by my professor. Boom, ASUU went on strike...I couldn't work with this professor. That was the last part of the professor's contract with the university before he goes back to Australia. So that destabilized my research paperwork. It destabilized my research. It affected my cases, research, and everything because I couldn't work with this professor because he has gone from the strike. It was like the world has come to an end, and I had to start looking for a new professor, to start looking for a new research topic. So it really affected me in a negative way.

Ezeh made more statements that demonstrate the domino effect of lost opportunity as the ASUU strikes caused them to miss the opportunity to enroll in their chosen field of study for their master degree, adjusting their life goals because they lost the opportunity to study in their chosen field, and lost employment opportunity due to delayed graduation:

I had to do this to go for Youth Service so I could be able to do my master's in another state because I didn't want to leave the Nigerian environment without doing my Youth Service. And I had the deadline to meet up with my admission for the United States. Negatively, I didn't meet up with my academic year for my school and the university and the United States because of this ASUU strike. So my learning experience, which I was meant to get more advanced learning in the United States, has been slowed down, which made me to miss to register with the

academic session. ...I wanted to do international business, but because I missed it because of the ASUU strike I had to end up doing business administration when I got to the United States. So this really changed my learning experience because it made me to divert from what I had interest in to what I didn't really have interest in. (Ezeh)

Ezeh also described how they had to change their goals in life because of the lost opportunity to enroll in a specific program following their anticipated graduation from Imo State University.

All right, the adjustment I had to make was I had to change my goals in life because ever since – I always wanted to be in the business sector. So because of the ASUU strike and because of missing the course study I was meant to do in the United States, I changed from the business perspective to more public policy and governmental agencies. (Ezeh)

Most times they have a job which will probably be ready for them ... But because of one thing or the other, the strike is gonna affect them today. There's a backlog. They're not gonna actually get that position. They might give it to someone else probably who came back from overseas – who is a Nigerian who came back from overseas studies. They're gonna miss the employment. (Ezeh)

Lost opportunities for students affected by ASUU strikes presented in different forms. These statements illustrate lost opportunity as part of the meaning of their experience because they were forced to adapt to situations that resulted in further lost opportunities. As described by the participants, some lost the opportunity to complete their volunteer service. Some experienced lost opportunities to conduct particular

research under the guidance of their chosen professor. Others lost opportunities of employment because their graduation date was delayed. Still others lost the opportunity to study their preferred major because of missing program start dates at the university they were accepted to attend following completion of their current program. This resulted in some eventually accepting jobs in different fields rather than following their dream.

Demoralizing

Another theme that emerged in this study is demoralizing. Synonyms for demoralizing are, disheartening, discouraging, depressing, crushing, and distressing. This theme is related to the students' lived experience as it affected their very core; it affected them emotionally and mentally.

One statement that was identified as an invariant meaning (Moustakas, 1994) was made by Cham who stated, "It actually affects your strengths, your enthusiasm, and every other make up that make you a student, thereby demoralizing you for the rest of that semester" (Cham).

Ekem spoke of losing their passion and the view they had when they began their studies. This was due to the fact that they experienced an ASUU strike just before exams after they had spent time and effort studying and preparing.

...at the end of the day, the particular student here is demoralized like the view, that passion, that view, you had, originality to go in this study and come out with a degree, by the day being diminished, by the being killed because you can't imagine someone studying for a whole month to write them exams, make good grades and come out and all of a sudden the person wakes up to, hear that, okay,

this exam is not going to hold this exam has been called off because we are striking (Ekem).

Ozim stated:

So the ASUU strike just makes you lose a little hope, lose hope in actually fulfilling what you started in school. I've got a job in an oil company and I've started going to work. I started working on the rig you know, which is different from what I studied in school. And ever since, I haven't even practiced anything else what I studied in school. (Ozim)

These statements vividly demonstrate the theme of demoralizing as part of the participants' lived experience because these participants describe how crushing and discouraging it was to be working towards a major goal (earning a degree and graduating which would lead to a future career) just to have their studies unceremoniously interrupted. Ekem mentioned losing their passion and vision they had when they began their studies because they had spent a lot of time and effort studying for final exams only to have everything come to a complete halt due to a situation completely out of the participant's control.

Frustration

Demoralization leads to frustration. Several participants made statements related to feeling frustrated as a result of the ASUU strikes. Frustration is a theme related to the lived experience of these participants as frustration is something that affected these participants intensely. Ejim remarked, "I feel like the frustration I had was that other schools, people in private schools were moving ahead with their education, and they were gonna graduate on time" (Ejim). Ejim also expressed frustration about not knowing when

the strike would end. “People get fed up. And three, frustration that you just don't know when it is ever going to be called off.”

While Ejim felt frustration upon realizing that their peers in the community who attended private school were going to graduate and not knowing when the strike would be called off, Onye expressed frustration over the fact that they were expected to complete a tremendous amount of work in a short period of time in order to earn the certificate for the class. Onye stated, “when we get back to school, you still have to continue from where you stopped, thereby making it – causing so much delay and giving you so much workload to do within that short timeframe.”

These participant statements illustrate the theme of frustration as part of their lived experience because these students were affected by a situation completely beyond their control. They were fully aware that their peers that attended private school were going to graduate while they had to wait and wonder “when” the strike would end. They were frustrated because they were given no grace period to complete the workload which included missed coursework, the remaining coursework, and exam preparation.

Crime and Violence

Another theme that emerged was that of crime and violence a result of, and in response to the ASUU strikes. This theme is the epitome of the participants’ lived experience given that criminal and violent actions can have anticipated and unanticipated consequences. The following statements were identified as invariant meanings (Moustakas, 1994). Ezeh stated,

This is gonna negatively affect the society because if you don't take more students inside, they end up having some criminal activities, doing some illegal issues, or

becoming more of a user of society and not having a productive effect on society.

(Ezeh)

Mbam provided a lengthy and very descriptive response regarding crime and violence due to the ASUU strikes. This respondent pointed out that in addition to theft, vandalism, prostitution, and killing, some students engaged in bribery in order to buy certificates for their programs.

There is no doubt some students might get themselves into counseling, try killing themselves, you know, killing people, smashing people's cars on the street. You know, students are no longer safe on campus because – or even walking on the streets of the capital because they can, they're gonna snatch their handbags, you know, and take their money from them out of frustration. And a lot of girls went into prostitution. And for the fact that the ASUU strike delayed their studies, maybe in the future they start looking for a way to buy certificates because they want to make it up in the future, you know, to better their life. So those are some of the negative effects. Buy the certificate, going to armed robbery, snatching people's purse on the street, forcing them into prostitution. And more they're killing and stealing, was just too much. (Mbam)

Not surprising, students' frustration lead to responding to the ASUU strikes by having riots. Unfortunately, these riots did not result in the ASUU and government reaching an agreement and therefore the strike continued. Ekem described riots along with injuries that resulted in hospitalization. They further described loss of valuables,

And so this major strike and period led to a riots from the students, which led to a number of them being injured in the cause or trying to stop or calm the, the riot.

So some students got injured and some were hospitalized, as a result of that, some lost their valuables, cash money, phones. (Ekem)

In addition to the above remarks, Mbam described how involvement in crime ruined their careers by involving themselves in crimes.

It actually ruined their career because a lot of students now engage themselves into some negative things, some negative lifestyles, you know, that wasn't appropriate at all, and a lot of parents were very disappointed for the effect of the ASUU strike in the life of the students. ... some females started prostitution.

(Mbam)

Mbam also elaborated on the practice of some teachers taking advantage of students by asking for bribes in order to receive their completion certificates:

And people now, some of the lecturers now going to bribing and things like that because the government is not forthcoming financially. It's not supporting the school and things like that. So now the teachers start, will start asking them for money to pass them, for them to pass their exams, you see. The government, poor government and poor teachers that are very greedy and always want to take advantage of students just to enrich their pockets. (Mbam)

Ozim described how the practice of bribery to receive completion certificates (rather than study and complete the required work) creates graduates that do not have the required knowledge to enter the workforce in their field of study:

So the workforce, which is the human resources and youths, that is where we have the most unskilled youths because they go to school and have certificates but what

they studied in school they really can't defend it, and they really don't have another skill to back it up with. (Ozim)

Onye spoke of having to disassociate themselves from friends that had engaged in criminal activities while not at school during the ASUU strikes. Once these students returned to school, many found it difficult or impossible to cease their criminal activities and other students refused to associate with them. They even went so far as to stop inviting them to social activities.

When we get back to school, your friends and all those things, some of them, they were already hooked up to things that were not okay as a student. ... So now you have to lose that friend or you join him. ... Socially we lost friends at the end of – at the return of every semester, and then some of the activities you have like social events, they all have to be adjusted. (Onye)

These participant statements demonstrate the theme of crime and violence as part of the participants' lived experience in a very vivid manner. The participants describe different acts of criminal activity: teachers bribing students to give them a completion certificate (rather than actually teach the material); students engaging in robberies, cultism, prostitution, and stealing. These statements also describe riots that took place and resulting injuries from these riots as well as from other crimes, such as robberies and vandalism.

Low Confidence

Many statements were given related to low confidence as a result of the ASUU strikes. Low confidence is a theme that is related to the meaning of the experience for these participants. There were many things that contributed to students having low

confidence in the university system of Nigeria as evidenced by the fact that this theme had the highest number of related statements. Four statements were identified as invariant meanings (Moustakas, 1994).

A prime example of low confidence is demonstrated in this statement provided by Ozim, which indicates their low expectations of the program even before they enter it.

I would say that if students are beginning to create like an adaptive mindset toward the ASUU strike and seeing it as a norm because of the low confidence they have in the government and in the educational system basically. (Ozim)

Participants Ekem, Ezeh and Chen made statements related to the fact that the wealthy and those in government send their children abroad to attend university or they send their children to private institutions. This is a practice that fosters low confidence in the university system. “You see most of the politicians and those made the plans that can afford it. That's the reason why you see most of them do send their children abroad out of Nigeria to school” (Ekem). Ezeh echoed this sentiment in the following statement,

The inability for the government and ASUU union to reach this consensus made them to go on this strike. Just like they saying goes in Nigeria, “when two elephants are fighting, the grass suffers”. ... So who are the grass over here? We the students are the grass, because the government, probably they don't care about it because their kids are overseas studying where there's nothing like strikes. (P4)

Chen provided a similar statement about children being sent to other school systems:

We see a university education as something you cannot predict when you're going to finish. So, because of strikes, most people didn't go to public school, public university where our government is in charge. Most people went to school in

private institutions, which is not dependent on one or two things from government that have led to strike. (Chen)

Onye echoed the sentiment of low confidence by pointing out that they perceive that the Nigerian government does not take the interest or welfare of the students seriously. This participant stated:

In general, it made me understand that this – it exposes the unseriousness of the Nigerian government because if they have the interest of students, the strike will be the last thing to be experienced by any student of the country. (Onye)

Chen also expressed feelings of low confidence because they have doubts that parents are getting what they pay for when they send their children to public universities in Nigeria.

This participant stated,

Maybe our parents not getting value for their money, for the tuition they paid, because at the end of the day you paid for a session and then your son or daughter didn't go to school almost half of the session or almost two-thirds of the session. At the end of the day they will rush everything and then be less effective, that we will stop having graduates which are not well trained because they lost the whole year of a given program. (Chen)

These statements demonstrate the theme of low confidence as part of the meaning of this experience for these participants. Some of the participants actually use the words “low confidence” in their statements. Participants made statements that they do not have confidence in the Nigerian government and/or the ASUU. They do not believe they are receiving a proper education that will adequately prepare them for their chosen careers; they do not believe that their parents are getting what they paid for; they do not believe

the government or the ASUU act in the best interest of the student. The statements that best demonstrate the low confidence felt by the participants and others in their communities is demonstrated through their statements that many people choose to send their children to other countries to attend university or to private schools in order to avoid their studies and lives being disrupted by an ASUU strike.

Finances

The theme of finances is part of the lived experience for these participants because repeated strikes take a financial toll on students and their parents. Most students return home during periods of strikes because there are no activities at the school. Some are able to find jobs while others are not. The students who do not find jobs become a financial burden on their parents because their parents have already paid for tuition and rent. Some participants indicated that families plan for the expenses of tuition and rent, but they do not plan to support their children when they are forced to return home from a strike.

Several participants make remarks that were related to finances as a result of the ASUU strikes. Ejim stated,

Your university experience is quite frustrating at that particular point in time because, think about it, you are paying for rent. You are paying for a whole year's rent. Imagine when there's a strike for a whole year. You lose that rent. (Ejim)

Ezeh stated, “But with this strike coming in place, it destabilizes some of these families' economy or financial status because they have to make their kids come back home. Ezeh further commented about having to seek employment, “Personally, when I

was home I was idle. I was forced to start looking for an extra job, which is not fast coming”.

Ekem also gave a statement related to financial stress: “So, in those years, you're spending your time, you are spending, your money, take a toll on you emotionally, psychologically drains you physically and otherwise.”

Onye also spoke of financial matters, expressing concern for parents and caregivers that have to continue paying for students during the times of strikes and for extended periods of time due to delayed graduation.

When it comes to economics, your parents, whom are the funding people for your education – who are funding your education, now because of this extension of the strike, they have to keep on paying for your upkeep because when you graduate within the timeframe, you can go get yourself a job, and they will be done with whatever they're spending. During this period of time, they have to still keep caring for you. ... They provide for you from your toothpaste to the food you eat. It's biting deep in their pocket because of your presence around. (Onye)

These participant statements demonstrate the theme of finances as part of the lived experience for these participants as they clearly described how parents lose funds already paid for tuition and room and board. They also voice concern for parents and caregivers who must continue to pay for the upkeep of their children as they are forced to return home during the time of a strike. Some find it necessary to seek employment to assist with finances. Losing money and providing care for student(s) for a time period that was already paid for are things that caused stress for both students and parents.

Idle

Some participants spoke about students becoming idle during the ASUU strikes. The theme of idle is related to the lived experience of these participants as it literally describes their state of being. The participants elaborated that idleness often led to undesired behaviors and criminal activity. As described in the criminal activity theme, engaging in criminal activity produces many unfortunate consequences.

Onye stated, “We have to put on hold whatever was going on in school just to be idle for a moment. Students who are out of school, they are idle. They are doing nothing.” Ejim eluded to idleness when this participant was wondering what to do. “I started to see myself concentrating or focusing on things that are totally irrelevant because I feel like, ‘Hey, we’re on strike, so what should we do?’” (Ejim). Both Ejim and Chen remarked, “An idle mind is the devil’s workshop”.

These participant comments illustrate the theme of idle as being part of their lived experience because idleness was the result of all activities and classes coming to a stop. Unfortunately, their lives came to a halt and they found themselves wondering what to do. They even related an idle mind to something very negative: the devil’s workshop. Two participants made this remark, demonstrating that idleness impacted them in a negative way.

Active / New Opportunity

Some participants made statements stating that they were active or used the time during the ASUU strikes to seek new opportunities. The theme of active/new opportunity is related to the meaning of the participants’ experience because it was the result of their lives being interrupted by the ASUU strikes. Even though three participants spoke about

students being idle during the strikes, all eight participants found more productive ways to occupy their time during the ASUU strikes. Three participants studied alternative education materials to further their knowledge in their chosen field or enrolled in a different school to learn a new skill. The remaining five participants found full or part-time jobs to help with finances. Some even found jobs that contributed to gaining knowledge and experience in their chosen field of study.

Two statements were identified as invariant meanings (Moustakas, 1994). Ozim stated, “During the ASUU strike, I use that period of break to see if I can acquire some more knowledge. Like I enrolled in an IT course to try to learn how to use computer. Ekem responded to the researcher with, “But personally, at such times where I experienced such things. That'd be the part time job or I learned a skill that' would help me.”

Ezeh not only found a job, but it benefited his future career. The participant stated,

But positively it affected me because – it benefited me because I had to go into the workforce to get – to find a job for myself to earn a little bit more money to support myself when I go back to school. It made me to get better experience. I had to go work in a hotel in Abia State. I was given the reception manager. I was in charge of people coming in and making sure they are being taken care of. Customer service manager, I was being in charge of that. So I gained the experience of what I was trying to study in school to deal with the real world.

These participant statements demonstrate the theme of active/new opportunity as part of the meaning of the experience because they describe what happened in their lives

as a result of the ASUU strikes. Participants described seeking employment opportunities to enable them to gain experience in their chosen field while others enrolled in classes to continue learning while classes were cancelled at the university. These very actions added valuable meaning to this experience for them.

Textural-Structural Description - Essence of Experience

Textures and Structures of Experience

The researcher then synthesized the invariant meaning units and themes into a description of the textures of the experience, which represents “what” (Moustakas, 1994). Verbatim experiences were utilized through full and/or partial statements provided by the participants. The researcher followed this by a period of reflection and through imaginative variation, constructed a description of the structures of the participants’ experiences. Structures represent the “how” of the experience. Finally, the researcher constructed textural-structural descriptions of the meanings and essences of the experience (Moustakas, 1994).

Goal of Research

The goal of this research was to study the effect of strikes on students of Imo State University, Nigeria and the extent to which it impacted other facets of the student’s lives using a phenomenological approach. The researcher employed qualitative research focusing on one concept (Creswell, 2013). The one concept in this study was to examine the effects of ASUU strikes on alumni of Imo State University from 2012 to 2017.

The researcher constructed a composite of the textural-structural description of the meanings and essences of the experience, integrating them into a universal

description of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). The resulting description represents the group as a whole.

Essence of Experience

There is no warning before an ASUU strike happens during academic sessions. Imagine a student working for days on a special project or pouring their heart and soul into studying for final exams only to find out that the ASUU is going on strike and everything they were working on comes to a grinding halt and their efforts may have been for nothing. After an ASUU strike is announced, all activities and instruction at the university cease immediately. The professors leave campus so there is no one to teach the student or answer their questions regardless of the length of the strike. The students often have not been issued all of their materials and they lose valuable instruction time in class for weeks or months at a time.

Upon return to class, there is no provision given for the time and instructional material missed; the students' are expected to familiarize themselves with previously taught material, study the material that would have been taught during the time missed, and study the remaining material often in periods as short as two weeks before they are expected to sit for their final exams. Often students fail their final exams and therefore will be forced to retake class(es) which sometimes will not be offered until the following or subsequent academic year. As a result, students experience delayed graduation dates; some students are delayed by a year, while others are delayed for several years.

This derailment of their education studies results in lost momentum. Students lose focus on their studies because their minds are suddenly on other things as their psyches spiral out of control focusing on all of the resulting implications of an ASUU strike. One

day they are in the middle of a huge research project or studying for final exams, and boom! The ASUU goes on strike. Everything they have been working for vanishes before their eyes.

The students completely lost their enthusiasm causing them to feel demoralized. This disheartening, crushing, depressing feeling causes them to lose their passion and vision of why they entered the program. Demoralization leads to frustration. Students feel frustration because their efforts seem to be for nothing. They are at the mercy of a situation completely out of their control and they have no idea when the strike will end. Their frustration grows as they realize their peers in the community who are studying abroad or attending private schools are going to graduate on time and leave them behind.

Their frustration level spikes even higher when they realize that they are going to lose the opportunity to accept the job that was offered to them upon graduation. Not only are they going to miss their opportunity to complete their time for National Youth Service Corps, which is completed before moving on to a graduate program, but their graduation will now be delayed and likely one of their peers who studied abroad or attended private school will get that job which was waiting for them.

Then it gets worse! They have already been accepted into a graduate program overseas to study in a program that will enable them to achieve their life goals. But now their graduation will be delayed for an indeterminate amount of time. Their spot in the program is given to another student and when they are finally able to enroll in the graduate program they desired, no spots are available; they are forced to change their major and therefore adjust their career goals.

The student experiences frustration and realizes they have lost valuable opportunities. The student has a choice to make; like a few of their classmates, they could remain active in positive activities or find new opportunities. After all, three of their classmates decided to engage in extra study activities to further their knowledge in their chosen field or they enrolled in a different school to learn a new skill. Five of their classmates found that contributed to gaining knowledge or experience in their chosen field of study.

However, they are demoralized and have lost their momentum which leads to idleness. They are broke and they return home to their family. Their family now has the added financial burden of supporting them during the strike. They look for a part-time job but are unsuccessful. The financial stress begins to take a toll on them emotionally and psychologically to the extent that some students begin to engage in criminal activity. The student smashes a car window and snatches a handbag trying to get some money.

Even though their parents are disappointed in them, they do not realize yet that their involvement in crime will potentially ruin their reputation when they return to campus or it could limit their options when seeking career opportunities. But great news! The strike has been called off and everyone can return to class now.

Upon arrival, students realize that they have to relearn all of the previous materials, learn the materials that were missed during the strike, learn the remaining material and study for the final exam that is coming up in two weeks. The student also finds themselves shunned by friends and excluded from social activities because of their involvement in criminal activities. So they just try to focus on getting their certificate but the amount of studies is too overwhelming. They find out they can just bribe the teacher

for their completion certificate. They take the easy way out and bribe the teacher not realizing they are only cheating themselves because they will not have the required knowledge to enter the workforce in their field of study.

They have their certificate which is all that seems to matter in a university system where students have such low confidence that they expect that there will be at least one strike during their four or five-year program. But meanwhile, students are back in class, dreading the day when this cycle will begin again.

Summary

The effects of ASUU strikes during academic sessions were a profoundly memorable experience for the participants. It left them with vivid recollections of instructional time lost, increased cost of living for those self-sponsors, and inappropriate behaviors engaged by some students. In some cases, participants experienced feelings of hopelessness about the future in contexts related to the experience as they tried to make meaning of it all. The essence of students' experiences captured in this study was total disappointment, discouragement and delay in their education.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Analysis, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

This research focused on the effect of ASUU strikes on students (alumni) in Imo State University, Nigeria and the extent to which it impacted other facets of the students' lives using a phenomenological approach. In this chapter, research findings that were presented in chapter four are discussed. This is a phenomenological study of alumni who attended Imo state university from 2012 to 2017 and had experienced multiple strikes. I will present an analysis and discussion of findings as it pertains to the theories and methodology that I used in this study. I will discuss the findings in consideration of the literature review and their relevance to my study. I will also discuss the limitations and implications of the study, as well as its contribution to the field of conflict studies. Lastly, I will present conclusions, regarding the findings and the need for further research.

Ralf Dahrendorf's Conflict Theory

As the ASUU strike due to various issues and concerns with the federal government, the impact weighs down on students. Like the saying goes, when two elephants' fights, the grass will pay the price. The grass in this case is the students who are left to bear the burden of the conflict between the ASUU and the federal government. The Ralf Dahrendorf's conflict theory emerged by way of a critical evaluation of the works of Karl Marx (Dahrendorf, 1959). He argued that Karl Marx's description of capitalism was generally accurate, as written in the 19th century but became outdated in the 20th century, as the basis for explaining conflict. Dahrendorf's position was that important changes had occurred in countries, termed "post-capitalist societies", such as the United States of America and Britain as he recognized that, there was a new middle

class that emerged between the two main classes that Marx predicted would become polarized. Actions taken by the state had decreased income and wealth inequalities.

Managers, not owners, exercised the daily control of the means of production.

Dahrendorf argued that conflict could no longer be based solely on economic division or the two Dahrendorf identified authority as being concerned with conflict (Dahrendorf, 1959).

Application of Dahrendorf's theory of conflict to this study, it can be posited that the authority exerted by the Federal Government to make decisions that are contrary to the interest of the ASUU. The diametrical position is fertile ground for conflict that results in grievances of the ASUU and culminates in various strikes that had unintended negative effects on students.

Industrial Relations - Craig's Model

Craig's model followed David Easton's analysis of political life that described the industrial relations systems as a composite private and public parties operating in an environment. The system is worried about the rewards to employees for their services, and the conditions under which they provide the services (Craig, 1975). Industrial relations encompass employers, employees and government; and universities and the organizations through which their interaction are mediated.

The objectives that are paramount to industrial relations are, first, the protection of the interest of management and labor. This is achieved through the fortification of the highest level of mutual understanding. Second, goodwill between staff; third, evading industrial conflict or strife; and fourth, develop harmonious relations. Craig (1975) argued that priority must be given to employee terms and conditions over the rule of

work. In this situation, the union uses a strike action to accomplish goals through agitation to improve the conditions of service as a production of the industrial relations system. Craig saw three actors of the system (labor; government and private agencies; and management) as being impacted by internal inputs (power, values, and goals of the actors) that flow from the external inputs of the external environment (Brown, 2003).

The NUC, a government agency authorized to coordinate the earlier development of the Nigerian university system, controls the Nigerian university system including the industrial relation. The NUC, as the regulatory agency always plays a crucial role in ensuring hitch-free collective bargaining between the federal government and ASUU. The university is made up of teaching and non-teaching staff, represented by their respective unions.

The ASUU's serial industrial crisis in Nigerian universities, on various instances, required the federal government to appoint a team to negotiate on their behalf, with the ASUU in order to restore permanent peace in the system. Reasons for most of the ASUU strikes in the universities have been tension for increased funding of the system and non-implementations of collective bargaining agreements, which were on condition of service of staff (Esenwa, as cited by Ige, 2013).

Discussion of Findings

This study revealed that ASUU strike actions had a negative impact on application of universities curricula. The finding concurred with that of Bello (as cited by Ogbette et al., 2017), who asserted that, during strike action, universities curriculums were partially implemented. As a Result, students struggled to acquire certificates which led to students seeking to obtain them at all cost without actually fulfilling the required

university curriculums. Kazeem and Ige (as cited in Edinyang & Ubi, 2013), indicated that, all academic curriculum are shut down during strike action at the institutions and when strikes are called off, students are not given the opportunity to make up for lost times. Edinyang and Ubi (2013) emphasized that effective learning was constantly disrupted by failure to successfully implement curriculum or of syllabus on time before the examination is given. In addition, Adesulu (as cited by Ibrahim & Alagbu, 2014), argued that ASUU strike impacted the quality of graduates coming out of Nigerian universities because time lost as a of ASUU strikes that should have been used for providing the curriculum was not reinstated after the strike. Olusegun (as cited by Ibrahim & Alagbu, 2014) asserted that one of the adverse effects of ASUU strike was the reducing of quality of graduates from Nigerian universities because the time lost as a result of ASUU strikes that should have been used for lecturing will not be recovered.

The second finding of the study showed that, strike action affected the student's graduations. In a four-year degree program, students end up earning bachelor in six or seven years. Sommer (as cited by Ogbette et al., 2017) emphasized that, when a group of workers willingly joins a labor union or any other recognized unions, when the group goes on strike, the overall employee productivity will suffer. The research again disclosed that ASUU strike affected the learning habit of students. The conclusion of the study was comparable with that of Iheanacho and Isangedighi (as cited in Edinyang & Ubi, 2013), that asserted that effective learning was achieved when students were emotionally and psychologically stable. Students are stressed when ASUU goes on strike, they become emotionally and psychologically unstable especially on the perception that it would lead

them to staying in school and not knowing what to expect therefore affecting their learning habit.

Edinyang and Ubi (2013) agreed that disruption in academic programs as a result of strike action affects the quality and quantity of students' learning habits. Isangedighi (as cited by Ogbette et al, 2017), opined that strike action had negative effect on students' learning abilities and that students lost preparedness and readiness to learn at time of strike hence their educational attainment becomes adversely affected. In the Study findings, Edinyang and Ubi (2013) cited disruptions in academic programs served as non-motivational factor to the students as it discouraged their learning habit.

Limitations

- The researcher originally intended to use Skype for data collection but due to internet connectivity problems had to use telephone interviews. The phone interviews did not allow the researcher to see the expression and reactions of the participants, which was a limitation.
- The busy schedules of the participants and researcher represented a problem in terms of data collection.
- The 7 hours' time difference also posed a scheduling issue making the interview harder to confirm.

Recommendations for Further Study

This phenomenological study presented an initial view surrounding the essence of how students experience and understand the effect of strikes in Imo state university.

Previously conducted studies had not explored the ASUU strikes effects on students of Imo state university. The limitations involved with my study include limiting

factors specific to phenomenological examinations. Whereas the form of discovery on this study centered on the essence of the lived experience of a particular population, other characteristics of the ASUU strike and effects were not explored. As the ASUU strike impacted students' university experience, the stakeholders' perspective was not included in the study. Not having stakeholders' perspective is a limitation. The participants in my research were all alumni of who graduated with a specific time period; this limits how well the findings apply to the general student population. This speaks to the study's lack of represented diversity in both setting and sample. My study contributes to learning how students experience and understand the effects of ASUU strike in Imo state university. The findings are best identified through the perspective of the eight students that I interviewed for my study.

My study's findings propose a foundation from which to expand on future inquiries and continue to explore the developing dynamic. The three areas I suggest for further research consideration are:

1. The impact of ASUU strikes on parents and faculty members;
2. Increasing the target population to include a more diverse student base, including federal and state universities; and
3. A study of how ASUU strikes impact male and female gender.

I recommend future studies explore the ASUU strikes effect on academic faculty and parents. Whereas there is some indication of opinions by both parents and academic staff; some students in this study expressed their parents and faculty perspectives that students have in the education system as they are part of the stakeholders. Some students in my interviews indicated their interest to support this recommendation.

I recommend further study to expand upon the specific population to include the noninvolved student perspective, more diverse student demographics, and differing types of universities. The involved student population was intentionally targeted in this study due to the increased likelihood that they had experienced the effect of strikes in their university. While my research findings support the negative effects, students experienced as a result of ASUU strikes, the uninvolved university student voice is missing from the comparison.

I also recommend further study of how ASUU strikes impact males and females respectfully from one geographical location. My interview did not include male and female gender perspectives. Male and female perspectives of ASUU strike and the impacts would be future study. Many of those interviewed in this study described their feelings as very negative, sad, frustrated to say the least, about the effects of ASUU strike as a student.

Recommendations for Conflict Resolution

The enduring crisis between the Federal Government and ASUU, has led to the closures of universities in the country over the years now. The position of the ASUU has always been that the Federal Government should be held accountable for the standoff, for refusing or failure to implement an already reached agreement by which both parties signed willingly. The government has claimed to be constrained by the state governments opposition, and insisted that they were in a better position to negotiate the salaries of their lecturers in state universities, hence the federal government would not allow any agreement entered by the states, hence federal government would claim that it was forced on them, under the principles of collective bargaining (Vanguard News, 2009).

Collective bargaining is the process by which management representing employer and organized labor, represented by union, resolve differences, and arrive at an agreement. Over an issue affecting both through discussion and negotiation, management and labor are therefore the two parties involved in collective bargaining. Collective bargaining is dynamic in nature and democratic binding on both parties and involved the processes of deliberation, pervasive agreement, haggling and negotiation between management and labor union. Its adoption in handling matter affecting management labor guarantees industrial harmony.

Notwithstanding the many failures in attempts to resolve the ASUU conflict with the government, there should be serious commitment on both parties to resort to conflict resolution to put an end to this crisis. The conflict resolution mechanism or process, by which the main objective would be achieved, will be to resolve the conflict by including the use of third party for mediation during the negotiation. This involves setting up mechanism and processes for the purpose of resolving conflicts. It involves the use of the third party and negotiation processes involving mediation as well as legislative processes of reconciliation, arbitration inquiry and judgment.

There are five steps to the negotiation process (Lombardo, 2013).

1. Preparation and planning - both sides organizes and gather essential information for a useful negotiation.
2. Definition of ground rules - guidelines and procedures are set up for the planned negotiation.

3. Clarification and justification – Each party discusses their position taking the opportunity to educate each other about their position to support their initial request
4. Bargaining and problem solving - . Here in the stage where concessions of give and take will be made by both parties
5. Closure and implementation – This last process formalizes the agreement that has been reached and forming and procedures that are required for implementation and monitoring.

Following these steps, therefore the federal government of Nigeria and the ASUU need realignment in the conversations when they are in disagreement. Both parties should seek to lower the conflict occurrence and rather engage in more constructive and trust building discussions. The FGN and ASUU should seek to earn a mutual trust in their interaction with one another thereby allowing negotiation to effectively resolve the conflict (Lombardo, 2013).

Recommendations for students during ASUU strikes period:

Students should cultivate the habit of studying at home and using the public library during strikes. Students could improve their performance in areas like Microsoft Office suite and other computer programs that can give them a comparative advantage in the long term. In some cases, students should use the strikes period to learn vocational skills, which might improve the opportunities of getting a job that could help them financially.

Following an ASUU strike, at stake, is the well-being of students. It has been well established that stress can lead to a variety of health-related consequences, including

sleep disturbances and drinking. As such, the Universities can alleviate students' psychological effects of strikes by providing counseling (emotional support) and information on alternative places where they can find counseling during the strikes.

Contribution to the Field of Conflict Studies

This study focused on the effect of strikes on students in a Nigerian University from 2012 to 2017. The ASUU strikes in Nigeria institutions had become very challenging and left students and parents split in their views of who is to be held accountable for the persistent crises.

This study underscores the importance of integrating conflict resolution tools into finding lasting resolution to conflict between the government and ASUU. Mainly, integrating strategic conflict resolution skills in the resolution process has the potential to reduce or void conflict among stakeholders and enhance communication. Good communication is generally more difficult to achieve and maintain when working without a mediator.

It is expected that the findings in this study will further contribute to the field of conflict analysis and resolution by highlighting how conflict resolution creates a common ground for harmony between the two stakeholders thereby avoid strike of any kind. In this case, students would go back to learning without the threat of strike and actually graduate when they are scheduled to graduate.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has revealed that ASUU strikes caused a significant negative effect on students' perception and quality of their university experience in Imo state university, Nigeria. Based on the data gathered, perceptions are that ASUU strikes

negatively affected students learning and performances and reduced the quality of their university education experience in Nigeria. In disparity, ASUU strikes focus on faculty needs for teaching and research and for improving working conditions in the universities, which seem to be undermined by the federal government.

The encouraging outcomes of ASUU strikes in improving the working conditions of staff in the universities could still have been achieved with effective dialogues between the relevant stakeholders. The ASUU strikes may bring about positive outcomes for university staff and have adverse impacts that outweigh any benefits as it clearly shows how negatively students were affected. Therefore, constructive and effective collective bargaining should be applied as the framework by which the ASUU and the federal government review the disputed matters that led to strike and aim to abolish the conflict's triggers. To this end, constructive and effective dialogue and collective bargaining in conflict resolution practices are still among the greatest social inventions that bring about a lasting resolution to the institutionalized industrial conflict.

We should not forget that the students are the ones most affected by these strikes, and so far, there are no concrete efforts to ameliorate the difficulties students face. The government, faculty, and parents should implement initiatives that can provide at least some sense of continuity in the student university work, even if it is in an informal setting.

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Appendix A: General Informed Consent Form



General Informed Consent Form
NSU Consent to be in a Research Study Entitled

A Phenomenological Discovery of The effect of Strikes on Students of Imo State University

Who is doing this research study?

College: Department of Conflict Analysis and Resolution, College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, Nova Southeastern University

Principal Investigator:
 Innocent O. Ntiasagwe, MA

Faculty Advisor/Dissertation Chair: Elena Bastidas, Ph.D.

Co-Investigator(s): N/A

Site Information:

Funding: Unfunded

What is this study about?

The purpose of this research study is to examine the effects of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strikes on Students. To determine the extent to which these strikes affects the different facets of students' lives. This researcher will explore how students perceive the ASUU strikes using a phenomenological approach.

Why are you asking me to be in this research study?

You are being asked to be in this research study because:

You are a former student and you attended the university between 2012 and 2017 and have experienced at least three ASUU strikes during the time you were in IMSU.

What will I be doing if I agree to be in this research study?

While you are taking part in this research study, you will be part on an interview . The interview session would take 30 to 45 minutes.

As a participant, this is what you will be doing:

Answer questions that would be asked during the interview. The interview will contain seven questions and few follow up questions when necessary. The interview will be you and I over the phone.

Could I be removed from the study early by the research team? There are several reasons why the researcher may need to remove you from the study early. Some reason are: if participants wish to be removed from the study for any reason.

Are there possible risks and discomforts to me?

This research study involves minimal risk to you. To the best of our knowledge, the things you will be doing have no more risk of harm than you would have in everyday life.

What happens if I do not want to be in this research study?

You have the right to leave this research study at any time or refuse to be in it. If you decide to leave or you do not want to be in the study anymore, you will not be penalized. If you choose to stop being in the study before it is over, any information about you that was collected **before** the date you leave the study will be kept in the research records for 36 months from the end of the study and may be used as a part of the research.

What if there is new information learned during the study that may affect my decision to remain in the study?

If significant new information relating to the study becomes available, which may relate to whether you want to remain in this study, this information will be given to you by the investigator. You may be asked to sign a new Informed Consent Form, if the information is given to you after you have joined the study.

Are there any benefits for taking part in this research study?

There are no direct benefits from being in this research study.

Will I be paid or be given compensation for being in the study?

You will not be given any payments or compensation for being in this research study.

Will it cost me anything?

There are no costs to you for being in this research study.

How will you keep my information private?

Information we learn about you in this research study will be handled in a confidential manner, within the limits of the law and will be limited to people who have a need to review this information. This data will be available to the researcher, the Institutional Review Board and other representatives of this institution, and any regulatory and granting agencies (if applicable). If we publish the results of the study in a scientific journal or book, we will not identify you. All confidential data will be kept securely lock box and stored. All data will be kept for 36 months from the end of the study and destroyed after that time by shredding all the data.

Will there be any Audio or Video Recording?

This research study involves audio recording. This recording will be available to the researcher, the Institutional Review Board and other representatives of this institution. The recording will be kept, stored, and destroyed as stated in the section above.

Because what is in the recording could be used to find out that it is you, it is not possible to be sure that the recording will always be kept confidential. The researcher will try to keep anyone not working on the research from listening to or viewing the recording.

Whom can I contact if I have questions, concerns, comments, or complaints?

If you have questions now, feel free to ask us. If you have more questions about the research, your research rights, or have a research-related injury, please contact:

Primary contact:

Innocent Ntiasagwe can be reached at 1 803-606-5183

Research Participants Rights

For questions/concerns regarding your research rights, please contact:

Institutional Review Board
Nova Southeastern University
(954) 262-5369 / Toll Free: 1-866-499-0790
IRB@nova.edu

You may also visit the NSU IRB website at www.nova.edu/irb/information-for-research-participants for further information regarding your rights as a research participant.

Research Consent & Authorization Signature Section

Voluntary Participation - You are not required to participate in this study. In the event you do participate, you may leave this research study at any time. If you leave this research study before it is completed, there will be no penalty to you, and you will not lose any benefits to which you are entitled.

If you agree to participate in this research study, sign this section. You will be given a signed copy of this form to keep. You do not waive any of your legal rights by signing this form.

SIGN THIS FORM ONLY IF THE STATEMENTS LISTED BELOW ARE TRUE:

- You have read the above information.
- Your questions have been answered to your satisfaction about the research.

Adult Signature Section

I have voluntarily decided to take part in this research study.

Printed Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

Printed Name of Person Obtaining
Consent and Authorization

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent &
Authorization

Date

Appendix B: Exemption Letter from Institutional Review Board

MEMORANDUM

To: **Innocent Ntiasagwe**

From: **Ransford Edwards, Ph.D.,
Center Representative, Institutional Review Board**

Date: **April 2, 2020**

Re: **IRB #: 2020-157; Title, "The Effect of Strikes on (Alumni)Students who
attended Imo State University, Nigeria from 2012 -2017: A Proposed
Phenomenological Study"**

I have reviewed the above-referenced research protocol at the center level. Based on the information provided, I have determined that this study is exempt from further IRB review under **45 CFR 46.101(b) (Exempt 2: Interviews, surveys, focus groups, observations of public behavior, and other similar methodologies)**. You may proceed with your study as described to the IRB. As principal investigator, you must adhere to the following requirements:

- 1) **CONSENT:** If recruitment procedures include consent forms, they must be obtained in such a manner that they are clearly understood by the subjects and the process affords subjects the opportunity to ask questions, obtain detailed answers from those directly involved in the research, and have sufficient time to consider their participation after they have been provided this information. The subjects must be given a copy of the signed consent document, and a copy must be placed in a secure file separate from de-identified participant information. Record of informed consent must be retained for a minimum of three years from the conclusion of the study.
- 2) **ADVERSE EVENTS/UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS:** The principal investigator is required to notify the IRB chair and me (954-262-5369 and Ransford Edwards, Ph.D., respectively) of any adverse reactions or unanticipated events that may develop as a result of this study. Reactions or events may include, but are not limited to, injury, depression as a result of participation in the study, life-threatening situation, death, or loss of confidentiality/anonymity of subject. Approval may be withdrawn if the problem is serious.
- 3) **AMENDMENTS:** Any changes in the study (e.g., procedures, number or types of subjects, consent forms, investigators, etc.) must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation. Please be advised that changes in a study may require further review depending on the nature of the change. Please contact me with any questions regarding amendments or changes to your study.

The NSU IRB is in compliance with the requirements for the protection of human subjects prescribed in Part 46 of Title 45 of the Code of Federal Regulations (45 CFR 46) revised June 18, 1991.

Cc: **Elena P Bastidas, Ph.D.
Ransford Edwards, Ph.D.**