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Perceptions of the Impact of Trade Union Disputes on University Management

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Abstract- This study investigated the major factor associated with trade union disputes and the impact of the disputes on university management. Two research questions were raised and three hypotheses tested. The sample consisted of 281 academic staff, 166 non- academic and 14 students' union Executive members. The multi-stage stratified sampling technique was utilized in selection of subjects for the study. A questionnaire titled Trade Union Disputes in Nigeria University Questionnaire" (TUDNUQ) was designed to elicit information from respondents-Data obtained were analyzed statistically using Z test and F- Radio test (ANOVA), percentages and standard deviation. From the analysis of data it was found that poor conditions of service and remuneration, under- funding of the University system, poor communication between management and unions, autocratic leadership styles of some university administrators, non-participation of union in university decision making process and government intervention in universities' internal management were the major factors associated with trade union disputes in Nigerian universities. The main impact of trade union disputes in Nigerian universities included disruption of academic calendar and programmed, low morale among staff, brain drain among professional staff and poor relationship between unions and management.

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Perceptions of the Impact of Trade Union Disputes on University Management

Dr. Orok B. Arrey

Abstract- This study investigated the major factor associated with trade union disputes and the impact of the disputes on university management. Two research questions were raised and three hypotheses tested. The sample consisted of 281 academic staff, 166 non- academic and 14 students' union Executive members. The multi-stage stratified sampling technique was utilized in selection of subjects for the study. A questionnaire titled Trade Union Disputes in Nigeria University Questionnaire" (TUDNUQ) was designed to elicit information from respondents-Data obtained were analyzed statistically using Z test and F- Radio test (ANOVA), percentages and standard deviation. From the analysis of data it was found that poor conditions of service and remuneration, under- funding of the University system, poor communication between management and unions, autocratic leadership styles of some university administrators, non-participation of union in university decision making process and government intervention in universities' internal management were the major factors associated with trade union disputes in Nigerian universities. The main impact of trade union disputes in Nigerian universities included disruption of academic calendar and programmed, low morale among staff, brain drain among professional staff and poor relationship between unions and management. Responsibility in the sampled universities differed significantly in their perceptions of the impact of trade union disputes on students' academic programmes and on government intervention in universities' internal management. As a result of the conclusions derived from the study, it was recommended that the Government should inject more funds into the university system and the Education Tax funds should be disbursed appropriately and on time, the conditions of services of university staff should be made more attractive. The Staff unions should be meaningfully involved in the university governance and decision making process. Also, a joint consultative forum should be formed where the various groups can meet and discuss common problems, and sort out their differences with little or no disruption to the system. Collective bargaining should be utilized by university administration to resolve all grievances and trade union disputes in order that industrial peace may thrive on the campuses.

I. Introduction

Universities occupy a strategic position in the education ladder of the nation. They help to produce the much needed high level manpower essential for the nation's growth and development. They are also centres of excellence, research and store-houses of knowledge (Federal Republic of Nigeria 1981, p, 8). The university staffs play a major role in the running of the system and in the achievement of the organizational goals. They constitute the" life wire" of the organization. It is therefore obvious that the survival of the university depends on the relationship existing between labour and management. This relationship can be sustained if there is industrial peace and harmony amongst the work force.

The Nigeria University as a social group is made up of students (who are to receive education), academic staff Lecturers, who are to carry out teaching and research activities, non- academic staff junior and senior who are to carry out various support tasks and top administrators who coordinate the activities of the stakeholders, and groups. These stakeholders, with widely varying priorities, aspirations and own perception, ail exist, working towards the achievement of organization goals. Management sees to the administration and work ability of the system, while the students are at the centre of the educational system. All activities are carried out within the university and directed towards developing their personality to the fullest.

When university workers enter into the employment contract, it is with the agreement to provide their labour, while employment in return accepts to provide conducive working conditions for the supply of such services. But in most cases, when these agreements are not kept, workers become frustrated. In their individual attempts the gain equitable treatment, they respond by forming trade unions to satisfy important needs.

The university staff unions are representative of the various subgroups and they assign themselves the responsibility of negotiating grievances on behalf of the groups. Within the Nigerian university system, exist such unions as:

- Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASSU)
- Senior Staff Association of Nigeria Universities (SSANU)
- Non-Academic Staff Union of Universities (NASU)

Nigerian Universities and the society at large have been witnessing serious problems in recent years in the area of trade union disputes. These disputes which culminate in strike action result in the eventual closure of the universities. There has been an increase in trade union activities over the past seventeen years in

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every sector of the Nigerian economy. These work stoppages involved a huge loss of man-days and a great loss in productivity (Central Bank of Nigeria Report, 1990). This situation must be ameliorated if the universities are to witness some measure of industrial peace. The frequent occurrence of trade disputes in Nigeria universities has done incalculable damage to the over all development of the institution. Nwaokoio (1995) asserts that from 1981 to date, the universities have witnessed the largest number of strikes in the education sector. The series of industrial action has seriously affected the level of academic development within the university. The purpose of this study therefore was to investigate the major factors associated with disputes in Nigerian Universities and the .perceived impact of the disputes on university management.

To guide the study the following questions were raised:

- What are the factors' associated with trade- union disputes in Nigerian universities.
- What is the impact of trade union disputes on Nigerian university management?
- Is there any difference between male and female and staff perception on the impact of trade union disputes on industrial peace in Nigerian universities?
- Is there any significant difference in the perception of respondents in the first, second and third generation universities as regards the impact of trade union disputes on inter- union relationship in Nigeria universities?
- there any difference in the perception of respondents in federal and state universities on the impact of trade union disputes on students' academic

The following null hypotheses were generated from questions 3- 5 and tested.

- There is no significant difference between male and female staff perception on the impact of trade union disputes on industrial peace in Nigeria universities.
- There is no significant difference in the perception of respondents in the first, second and third generation universities as to the impact of trade union disputes on inter - union relationship in Nigerian universities.
- There is no significant difference in the perception of respondents in federal and state universities on the impact of trade union disputes on students' academic programmed.

In the context of the study, first generation universities refer to the first set of federal universities established In Nigeria before 1975, second generation universities are the second set of federal universities, while third generation universities third generation universities refer to the third set of federal and state universities established on Nigeria between 1981-1986.

II. Methodology

The design of the study was ex-post facto as it utilized the descriptive survey research method to examine factor associated with trade union disputes in Nigerian universities. The independent variables (sex ownership and generation) were already in existence, and ail the events of interest in the study have also occurred. There was therefore no manipulation of variables of the study.

The population comprised of all staff on Nigerian universities who were members of the staff union (ASUU, NASU, and NANS).

The multi -stage stratified random sampling procedure was adopted in the selection of universities and subjects for the study to ensure adequate representation of the different subgroups in the population Out of the 36 Nigeria universities at the time of the study (24 federal - and 12 state - owned universities) 4 federal and 2 state - owned universities were selected respectively, from selected faculties. 10% of the academic staff (281), 5% of the non academic staff (166) and 144 students' union executive members was randomly selected using the simple random sampling procedure. This consisted of 306 males and 255 females. Two hundred and eight were from the federal universities, while two hundred and eighty- one were from state university- The students' union executive members were included in the sample because they were representative of the entire student body, and also because students are the basic raw materials in the university educational system.

The main instrument used in this study was a questionnaire titled "Trade Union disputes in Nigerian Universities Questionnaire" (TUDNUQ). The instrument was on a 5 - point Likert scale yielding interval data. This instrument was designed after a through review of both indigenous and foreign literature on trade union disputes. The instrument consisted of 40 items grouped in to 6 sections A -E. each section was intended to obtain particular information from the respondents.

Section A:- sought general information (which were socio- demographic in nature) from the respondents. It inquired about their sex, marital status, highest academic qualification, union affiliation, job experience and so on.

Section B:- comprised 4 items eliciting information on the impact of trade disputes on inter-union relationship in the universities. It was directed at finding out the respondents' perception about relationship between staff, students and management in times of crisis.

Section C:- comprised 12 items designed to elicit information from respondents' on whether perception of

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their working environment and conditions of service give them job satisfaction.

Section D:- comprised 7 items eliciting information on the impact of trade union disputes on students' academic work.

Section E:- comprised 4 items, which sought respondents' opinion on the impact of trade disputes on government's intervention in university internal management.

The instrument was subjected to criticism by experts in industrial relations and university management. Suggestions and recommendations of the experts were incorporated in the final draft of the instrument. This procedure ensured the content and construct validity of the instrument.

The reliability of the instrument was determined using the split - half reliability coefficient. A pre-test was carried out on 20 subjects who would not form part of the sample for the study. The Pearson product moment reliability coefficient 'r' was applied to measure the reliability, and the coefficient obtained was. 60 which was stepped up with the spearman brown formula. The coefficient resulting from the correlation of the scores of two halves of the test was 70, which indicate the degree to which the two halves were equivalent, and as a result, reflected the internal consistency of the instrument.

On the whole, 600 questionnaires were given out. However, the number of questionnaires properly completed and returned was 561 (93.5%).

The data collected through the questionnaire (TUDNUQ) were computerized for statistical analysis, The statistic package for the social science (SPSS) was used, to analyze the data. The statistical methods employed were simple percentages, z-test for two independent means and the one way Analysis of variance (ANOVA) and F-radio test.

The responses got from section B- E on the interval scale were converted to nominal data. The frequencies of the responses were calculated and percentages were used to determine the major factor associated with trade union disputes.

Hypotheses 1, 2and 3 were analyzed by applying the statistic z-test of difference between two independent means, while the F- Radio test (ANOVA) was utilized to analyze hypothesis 2 and 3.

III. Analysis of Data

Five hundred and sixty one subjects (93.5%) provided information for the study. Six institutions were selected for the study and questionnaire were administered on the subjects and retrieved. The respondents were categorized by gender as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 : Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Males	306	54.5
Females	255	45.5
TOTAL	561	100.0

The figures in Table 1 indicate that 306 (54.5%) of the respondents were males, while 255 (45.5%) were females.

The subjects were further classified by their unions as shown in table 2.

Table 2 : Distribution of Respondents by Union / Groups

Union/Groups	Frequency	Percentage
(i) National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS)	114	20.3
(ii) Non- Academic Staff Unions Academic Staff Union universities (ASUU) 281	166 281	29.7 50.1
TOTAL	561	100.00

An examination of the data in table 2 reveals that 144 (20.3%) of the respondents were students, 166 (29.7%) were non- academic staff while 281 (50.1%) were academic staff.

Respondents were also categorized on the basic, of institution ownership as shown in Table 3.

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Table 3 : Distribution by Institutional Ownership

Ownership	Frequency	Percentage
a) River State University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt b) Enugu State University of science and Technology, Enugu — state owned c) University of Benin Benin City d) Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-ife — federally owned e) University of Jos, Jos f) NnamdiAziki University, Awka — federally owned		
TOTAL	551	100.0

The total number of respondent who were from state owned universities was 281 (50.1%) while 280 (50%) were from federal universities, the respondents were also grouped according to the generation of the universities. 187 and third generation universities had 93 (26.6%) and 281 (50.1%).

The following section answers the question asked in the study.

Question one (a)

- What are the major factors associated with trade union disputes in Nigerian universities?

The question was to determine the major factors associated with trade union disputes in Nigeria universities. The result of the analysis is as show in Table 4.

Table 4 : Major Factor Associated With Trade Union Disputes In Nigeria Universities

Major factor associated with trade union disputes in Nigeria universities	Factor Frequency	Percentage	
i) Poor condition of services and remuneration	306	54.5	
ii) Under funding of the university system	120	21.5	
iii) Poor communication between Management and Unions	61	10.9	
iv) Autocratic Leadership styles of some University Administration	52		
v) Non - participation of Unions in university decision making process	20	9.3	
vi Government intervention in university internal management	2	0.4	
Total		561	100.0

An examination of Table 4 shows that 306 of 561 respondents (54.5%) perceived that poor conditions of service and remuneration were the major factors associated with trade union disputes. One hundred and twenty respondents (21.4%) perceived under funding of the university system as a major factor associated with industrial unrest in Nigerian universities-Sixty- one of the 561 respondents (10.9%) perceived poor communication between management and union as one of the main factors associated with trade union disputes. While 52 (9.3%) were of the opinion that the autocratic leadership styles of some university administrations was

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the major factor association with crisis in Nigeria universities.

Also- 20 (3.6%) respondents perceived non-participation of unions in university decision making process as a factor associated with trade disputes, while 2 (0.4%) of the total respondents perceived government intervention in university internal management as one of the major factors associated with industrial unrest in Nigeria universities-

Question *one (b)*

- What is the impact of trade union on the universities?

Table 5 : Perceived Impact of Trade Union Disputes on the University

Perceived impact of trade union Disputes Universities	Frequency	Percentage
i) Disruption of Academic Calendar and programmed	290	151 7
ii) Low morale among staff and students	142	25.S
iii) Brain drain and attrition among professional staff.	79	14.08
iv) Poor relationship between unions.	50	8.9
TOTAL	561	100

The data in Table 5 shows that 290 (51.7%) respondent perceived disruption of academic calendar and programme as the most serious impact of trade union disputes on the universities, while low morale among staff and students was perceived as the most serious impact 142 (25.3%) respondents. Brian drain and attrition among professional staff was perceived by 79 (14.08%) respondents as the most serious impact of industrial crisis on Nigerian universities. 50 (8.9%) of the total respondents perceived poor relationship between unions as the most serious impact of trade union disputes on Nigerian universities.

The hypotheses proposed for the study were tested and discussed as follows:

- *Hypothesis Two*

Ho1: there is no significant difference between male and female staff perception on the impact of trade union on industrial peace in Nigerian Universities.

In testing this hypothesis, the z-test was employed to determine if there was any significant difference in the perception of male and female staff respondent on the impact of trade union disputes on industrial peace in Nigerian universities.

The analysis of the data is as shown in table 6 below.

Table 6 : *Z* Test of Difference Between Male and Female Respondents' Perception on The Impact of Trade Union Disputes on Industrial Peace in Nigerian

Sex	No. of Cases	Mean X	S.D	Calculated Z-test	Critical value of Z-test	Decision
Female	255	15.8	0.0			Not significant
				1.36*	1.96	
Male	306	15.4	2.8			

P <05

As depicted on table 6, the Z- test calculated value of 1.36 is less than the Z-test critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of sign9ficate. Therefore, the hypothesis of no significant difference in the perception of male and female respondents on the impact of trade union disputes on industrial peace in Nigerian universities is retained. This signified that male and female respondents were not different in their perception on the impact of trade union disputes in industrial peace in Nigerian universities.

- *Hypothesis Two*

H02: there is no significant difference in the perception of respondents in first second and third generation universities regarding the impact of trade union disputes on inter-union relationship in Nigerian universities. The one way analysis of variance test (ANOVA) was employed to investigate this hypothesis. The result obtained is show in table 7.

Table 7 : Analysis of Variance of Subjects' Perception in First, Second and Third Generation Universities on the Impact of Trade Union Disputes on Union

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F-Radio	Critical F-Radio	Decision
Between Group	2	304.45	152.22	17.23*	19.50	Not
Within Groups	558	1928.83	8.83			

P <05

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The calculated F- test of the one- way analysis of variance test for respondent in the three sets of universities was 17.23, while the critical F- radio value of 19.50; level of significant was higher. The hypothesis of no significant difference in the perception of respondents in first, second and third generation universities on the impact of trade union on inter-union relationship is retained. This implies that subjects, in the first, second and third generation universities did not differ significantly in their perception on the impact of trade union on inter- union disputes on inter-union relationships.

- *Hypothesis three*

HO3: there is no difference in the perception of federal and state universities on the impact of trade union disputes on student' academic programmes.

The result of the analysis of data relating to this hypothesis are shown on Table 8.

Table 8 : Z- Test Analysis of the Subjects Performance in Federal and State Universities on the Impact of Trade Disputes on Students Academic Programme

Ownership of University	No. of Respondents	Mean X	S.D	Calculated Z-test	Critical Value of Z-test	Decisions
Federal	280	27.34	4.66	-3.360*	±1.96	Significant
State	281	28.68	4.13			

*p <.05

An observation of the data in table 8 indicates that the calculated Z-test value is -3.360, while the critical Z-test value of 1.96 is lower. As a result, subjects in federal [1] and state universities differed significantly in their perceptions on the impact" of trade union disputes on student's academic programme at 0.05 level of significance.

IV. Major Factors Associated with Trade Union Disputes in Nigerian Universities

The findings on the major factors associated with trade union disputes indicate that many variables are associated with trade union disputes in Nigerian universities. Amongst major factors identified are poor conditions of service and remuneration, under-funding of the university system, poor communication between management and unions, autocratic leadership styles of university administrators, non-participation of unions in the decision-making process in the universities and government interference in university interns! management. This finding agrees with the views of Obiegbu (1994), ASUU (1986), Dimowo (1991), Chuta (1995) that, the issue of poor conditions of services and remuneration, lack of university autonomy coupled with "chronic under-funding"[1] of the universities, are some of the major factors associated with frequent industrial crises in these institutions.

These major factors have led to long drawn battles between Governing Council and University trade unions, sometimes culminating in resort in industrial courts. In the last decade the universities have become varitable "battle fields" either between the academics and non-academic staff or university administrator. These trade union disputes sometime result confrontation, protests, demonstration and the intervention of security agents. The government, being tie sole proprietor of university education quickly intervenes in the internal management of the universities by the appointment of Sole Administrators. Such appointments often compound the problems in the institutions, leading to further crisis between government and the trade unions. At the end the institutions are closed down resulting in changes and disruption of academic calendars and programmes.

The findings suggest that the disruption of academic calendars and programmes were the most serious impact of union disputes on the system. Other factors that had serious-, impacts, on the university system include; low morale amongst staff and students, brain drain and attrition among professions; staff and poor relationship between unions. This finding corroborates the opinion of Nwaokolo (1935), who earlier noted that from 1981 to 1936, the universities had -witnessed the largest number of strikes in the education sector. This according to him has adversely affected the level of academic development within the universities leading to disruption of academic calendars and programmes.

The findings on the perceived impact of trade union disputes further shows that many workers in the Nigerian universities, especially the academic staff low morale due to the poor economic situation in the university system and the country in genera!. This finding supports the opinion of Obiegu (1994). Fashoyin (1988) and Otobo (1987), who had earlier stated that poor conditions of service and remuneration coupled with under-funding of the universities have gone £ long

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way to erode employees' dedication to their jobs, in their views, economic issues have been so central in many of the trade union disputes in Nigerian universities.

The view of the Presidential Committee on Brain Drain (1989), ASNU (1993), Dimowo (1991) and Obiegbu (1994) agree with findings of the study, that the exodus of staff from the universities is due to the manifest poor attention given to the university system because of "inadequate funding". This problem has eroded the status and income of academics. This disillusionment and frustration in their own views led to the mass exodus of academic staff from the Nigeria Universities to Europe, Ghana, North America and the Gulf.

The perceived impact of Trade union disputes on Nigerian universities has gone a long way to show that it has led to disruption of academic calendars and programmes, lowered the morale of workers, engendered industrial peace and good relationship between unions and has consequently led to brain drain and attrition; among professional staff. During industrial unrest, the universities are closed and academic programmes are eventually disrupted. At such times the students suffer some hardship and inconveniences and their morale is also dampened. This leads to academic underdevelopment, as the institutions remain closed for a greater part of the session.

a) *Sex and Perception of Respondents on the Impact of Trade Union Disputes on Industrial Peace in Nigeria Universities*

Sex had no significant influence on the respondents' perception of the impact of trade union disputes on industrial peace in Nigeria Universities. Consequently, there was no significant difference in the responses based on gender as illustrated in Table 8.

However, the finding of the study is inconsonance with that of Ogonor (1997), conflict management adopted by University administrators.

This similarity in response may be attributed to the fact that sex is not a& determining factor in the university work environment. Jobs and responsibilities are assigned to employees irrespective of sex. There is no sex bias. as the university is managed like any other forma! organization.

b) *Generation of Universeties and Perception of Respondents on the [Mpact of Trade Union Dispute on Inter Unson Relationships*

The generation of the universities made no significant contribution to respondent's perception of the impact of trade union disputes on inter-union relationship. Therefore there was no significant different in the responses based on the generation of universities as they did non differ in their perception on the impact of trade union disputes on inter-union relationship based on the data in table 7.

The similarity in response of subjects from first second and third generation universities may be due to the fact that all Nigerian universities irrespective of generation are managed by either federal or state government Since they are managed on behalf of the federal or state government by the NUC, in conjunction with the Federal/State Ministries of Education: who see to the smooth running of the institutions.

The reasons for the observed, differences in the mean scores of respondents from State and Federal Universities could be due to the fact that administrators in state universities are closely monitored by the proprietors (State Governments). This may be due to the fact that the lion's share of their budget goes to education.

Therefore, State university administration in order to avoid industrial unrest and closure of the universities may tend to utilize the disputes strategy to resolve disputes than administration in Federal universities. This is to ensure that student's morale is not dampened with frequent disruption of the universities system.

The finding of this agrees with the view of ASUU (1986-1994) and Obiegbu (1994) who stated earlier that in some universities some students demonstrate during crisis to snow their dissatisfaction with such disputes. When there is any industrial unrest in the universities, the students become victims of circumstances, as academic calendars are changed, universities are closed and they are forced to go on holidays. The closure of the universities has some impact on students[1] morale as it sometimes result in killings, arrests, and wanton destruction of properties.

The finding of the study agrees with the finding of Ogonor (1987), who stated that there was a significant difference between university administrations in federal end state universities in the utilization of the formal disputes strategy Administration in state universities used the formal disputes strategy, more than those in federal universities.

V. Conclusion

The following conclusion were drawn from the finding of the study:

Poor condition of service and remuneration, under funding of the university system, poor communication between management and unions, autocratic leadership styles o" some university administrators, nor- participation of union in University decision- making process and government intervention in university intern?' management were the major factor associated with trade union disputes in Nigerian universities.

The main impact of trade union disputes on Nigerian universities were disruption of academic calendar and programme. Low morale among staff and

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students, brain drain and attrition among professional staff, and poor relationships between union and management.

The finding of the study also indicated that students, society, employees, parents and management were most affected in times of trade union disputes. Male and female respondents did not differ in their perception on the impact of trade union disputes on industrial peace in Nigerian universities. Also, students academic and non- academic staff in first, second and third Generation universities did not differ in their perception on the impact of trade union disputes on inter union relationship in the universities.

a) Implication of Findings for Educational Administration

The study revealed that poor condition of service and remuneration and under-union disputes resolution, and should be utilized by university administration in order to restore industrial peace on campuses.

Based on the foregoing finding and conclusion, the following recommendation are made.

- Government should inject more funds into university system through private participation and the education tax funs should be disbursed appropriately and in time.
- The conditions of service of University staff should be made more attractive.
- University administrators should democratize the governance of the universities, so that the different subgroup will be meaningfully involved in the governance and decision-making process.
- A joint consultative forum should be formed by university administration, through which the various sun groups can meet regularly and discuss common problem, and sort out their differences with little or no disruption of the system.
- Vice-chancellors as heads of the university administration should be willing to tolerate and give students a sense of belonging, by allowing them a say in the affairs of the system to which they belong.
- Collective barging strategies should be utilized by university administrators for resolution of all trade union disputes in order that industrial peace may thrive in the universities.

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