



Research Paper

Analysis of Union Activism and Employee Morale of Academic Staff of Nigerian Universities. The Case of University of Port Harcourt from 2015 To 2023

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of union activism on the morale and job satisfaction of academic staff at the University of Port Harcourt from 2015 to 2023, guided by 3 research objectives and 3 research questions and employing Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory as a theoretical framework, the research employs a survey research design to gather comprehensive data directly from 303 academic staff members selected from University of Port Harcourt total number of 1,238 academic staff through purposive sampling and Taro Yamane formula. The study analyzes both primary data from questionnaires and secondary data from institutional records and union archives to provide a holistic understanding of the dynamics between union activities and employee morale. Key findings reveal that union negotiations have generally enhanced academic staff morale by addressing critical issues such as salaries, working conditions, and research funding. These outcomes underscore the effectiveness of union activism in securing tangible benefits and improving job satisfaction among academic staff. Conversely, prolonged strikes and industrial actions have been found to significantly diminish morale due to increased stress, disruptions to the academic calendar, and perceptions of institutional instability. This complex relationship highlights the nuanced interplay between union activities and academic staff morale over the studied period. Based on these findings, recommendations are proposed to strengthen conflict resolution mechanisms through robust negotiation frameworks, implement effective alternative dispute resolution strategies, and foster collaborative decision-making processes involving unions, academic staff, and administration. This study contributes to understanding the multifaceted impact of union activism on employee morale in Nigerian universities, emphasizing the importance of proactive management strategies to maintain stability and enhance overall academic staff well-being.

Keywords: *Union activism, Employee morale, Academic staff, Nigerian universities*

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I. INTRODUCTION

The analysis of union activism and employee morale among academic staff in Nigerian universities is a critical area of study within the broader context of labor relations and educational management. This topic encompasses various dimensions, including the historical context of unionism in Nigeria, the role of academic unions, the impact of union activities on employee morale, and the overall implications for the educational system. Union activism in Nigeria has deep historical roots, tracing back to the colonial era when labor unions were first established to protect workers' rights and improve working conditions. The evolution of unionism in Nigeria has been marked by significant milestones, including the formation of the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) in 1978, which unified various labor unions under a single umbrella (Otobo, 2016). In the academic sector, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), founded in 1978, has played a pivotal role in advocating for the rights of academic staff, addressing issues such as wages, funding, and working conditions (Oloruntoba, 2014). The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) is the primary body representing academic staff in Nigerian universities. ASUU's activities are centered around improving the welfare of its members, advocating for better funding for universities, and ensuring academic freedom. The union has been instrumental in negotiating better salary structures, securing funding for research, and resisting policies perceived as detrimental to the academic community (Akinyemi & Bassey, 2016). The union's activism often involves strikes and other forms of industrial action, which, while aimed at achieving long-term benefits, can

have immediate disruptive effects on the academic calendar and students' academic progress (Fapohunda, 2017). Employee morale is a critical factor in organizational performance and job satisfaction. In the context of Nigerian universities, the morale of academic staff can be significantly influenced by union activities. Positive aspects of union activism, such as successful negotiations for better pay and improved working conditions, can boost morale by making employees feel valued and supported (Obasi, 2020). Conversely, frequent strikes and prolonged industrial actions can lead to frustration and dissatisfaction among staff, particularly when such actions result in delayed salaries or prolonged academic sessions (Udeala, 2019).

Studies have shown that there is a complex relationship between union activism and employee morale. While some academic staff may feel empowered by their union's advocacy efforts, others may experience stress and uncertainty due to the disruptive nature of strikes and industrial disputes (Eme et al., 2015). Therefore, understanding this dynamic is crucial for developing strategies to enhance employee morale while maintaining effective union representation. The implications of union activism on the Nigerian educational system are profound. On one hand, strong unions like ASUU play a vital role in advocating for adequate funding, improved infrastructure, and better working conditions, all of which are essential for maintaining high academic standards (Aluede, 2015). On the other hand, the frequent disruptions caused by strikes can undermine the stability of the academic calendar, affecting students' learning experiences and potentially diminishing the international reputation of Nigerian universities (Ajayi, 2016). Addressing these challenges requires a balanced approach that recognizes the legitimate concerns of academic staff while also ensuring that the educational needs of students are met. Policymakers and university administrators must engage in continuous dialogue with unions to develop sustainable solutions that can enhance employee morale without compromising the academic mission of universities. The analysis of union activism and employee morale among academic staff in Nigerian universities is a multifaceted issue that requires a nuanced understanding of historical, social, and economic factors. While unions like ASUU play a crucial role in advocating for the rights and welfare of academic staff, their activities also have significant implications for employee morale and the overall effectiveness of the educational system. By exploring these dynamics, stakeholders can develop strategies to foster a supportive work environment that enhances academic excellence and promotes the well-being of both staff and students.

Statement of Problem

The University of Port Harcourt, like many Nigerian universities, has experienced significant union activism, particularly by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), from 2015 to 2023. This period has been marked by frequent strikes, negotiations, and industrial actions aimed at addressing issues such as salary arrears, funding deficits, and deteriorating working conditions. While union activism is essential for advocating for the rights and welfare of academic staff, it also has profound implications for employee morale and the overall academic environment. The problem lies in the dual impact of these activities: on one hand, they aim to secure better working conditions and resources for the staff, potentially enhancing morale and job satisfaction in the long term. On the other hand, the recurrent strikes and disruptions negatively affect the morale of academic staff, causing stress, uncertainty, and frustration. These disruptions also hinder the university's academic calendar, affecting students' learning experiences and potentially compromising the institution's academic reputation. Therefore, this study seeks to analyze the effects of union activism on the morale of academic staff at the University of Port Harcourt from 2015 to 2023. It aims to understand the balance between the positive outcomes of union advocacy and the adverse effects of industrial actions, providing insights that can help improve the working conditions and morale of academic staff while minimizing the negative impact on the university's operations.

Objective of the Study

The following objectives guided the study which are to:

1. evaluate how union activities, including strikes and negotiations, have influenced the morale and job satisfaction of academic staff at the University of Port Harcourt from 2015 to 2023.
2. analyze the benefits achieved through union activism, such as improved salary structures, enhanced working conditions, and increased funding for research, and how these outcomes have affected the morale of academic staff.
3. investigate the adverse effects of recurrent strikes and other forms of industrial action on the morale of academic staff, including stress, uncertainty, and disruptions to the academic calendar.

Research Questions

1. How have union activities, including strikes and negotiations, influenced the morale and job satisfaction of academic staff at the University of Port Harcourt from 2015 to 2023?

2. What benefits have been achieved through union activism, such as improved salary structures, enhanced working conditions, and increased funding for research, and how have these outcomes affected the morale of academic staff?
3. What are the adverse effects of recurrent strikes and other forms of industrial action on the morale of academic staff, including stress, uncertainty, and disruptions to the academic calendar?

Theoretical Framework

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (Motivation-Hygiene Theory)

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, also known as the Motivation-Hygiene Theory, is a psychological framework for understanding motivation in the workplace. Developed by Frederick Herzberg, the theory posits that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are influenced by two distinct sets of factors: motivators and hygiene factors (Herzberg, 1959). Frederick Herzberg, an American psychologist born on April 18, 1923, and passed away on January 19, 2000, is credited with the development of this theory. Herzberg earned his Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Pittsburgh and later conducted influential research on job satisfaction at Case Western Reserve University (Miner, 2005)

Herzberg's theory emerged from a study conducted in the 1950s and 1960s, where he interviewed engineers and accountants to identify what factors contributed to their job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. His findings indicated that satisfaction and dissatisfaction stem from different factors (House, 1967).

Motivators, or satisfiers, are factors that lead to job satisfaction and are intrinsically related to the nature of the work itself and its level of challenge. These include achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, advancement, and growth. These intrinsic factors motivate employees to perform better and contribute to higher levels of job satisfaction (Herzberg, 1968).

On the other hand, hygiene factors, or dissatisfiers, are related to the work environment and can lead to dissatisfaction if not adequately addressed. These include company policies, supervision, relationships with supervisors, working conditions, salary, relationships with peers, and job security. While these extrinsic factors do not necessarily lead to higher motivation when present, their absence can cause significant dissatisfaction.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory has important implications for management and organizational behavior. To increase job satisfaction, jobs should be enriched to include more motivators, such as increased responsibility, opportunities for advancement, and recognition. Organizations should ensure that hygiene factors like working conditions, salary, and company policies are adequate to prevent dissatisfaction. Motivators are essential for engaging employees, fostering innovation, and encouraging higher performance (Herzberg, 1968).

Application of the theory to the study

Applying Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory to a study on the analysis of union activism and employee morale of the academic staff at the University of Port Harcourt from 2015 to 2023 can provide valuable insights. Herzberg's framework helps differentiate between factors that lead to job satisfaction and those that prevent dissatisfaction, which can be instrumental in understanding the dynamics of union activism and employee morale in this context. In the context of the University of Port Harcourt, motivators are intrinsic factors that directly impact the job satisfaction of academic staff. These may include academic accomplishments such as research publications, successful student mentorship, and recognition in their field, which can significantly boost morale. Recognition from university administration, peers, and students for their work and contributions can enhance job satisfaction. Engaging in meaningful teaching, cutting-edge research, and scholarly activities that align with personal and professional interests also serves as a motivator. Having autonomy in their work, the ability to design curricula, and make academic decisions provides a sense of responsibility that enhances satisfaction. Opportunities for promotions, tenure, and career development within the university, along with continuous professional development opportunities such as attending conferences, workshops, and pursuing further studies, contribute to job satisfaction and growth.

Hygiene factors in the academic setting at the University of Port Harcourt include aspects of the work environment that, if inadequate, can lead to dissatisfaction among academic staff. These factors may include university policies related to employment, academic freedom, and union activities. The quality of management and support from department heads and university administration plays a significant role. The dynamics and communication between academic staff and university leaders, the physical environment, availability of resources, and infrastructure necessary for teaching and research are crucial. Compensation, including pay scales, benefits, and timely payment of salaries, are critical hygiene factors. Collegial relationships,

collaboration opportunities, and a supportive work environment, along with stability of employment, protection from arbitrary dismissals, and clarity of contract terms, are also important.

Union activism often arises from dissatisfaction with hygiene factors. At the University of Port Harcourt, union activities between 2015 and 2023 may have been driven by issues such as inadequate salaries, poor working conditions, or unfavorable university policies. Union efforts typically aim to address these hygiene factors to prevent dissatisfaction and improve the overall work environment. Using Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, the analysis of union activism and employee morale can be structured as follows. By examining the grievances and demands of unionized academic staff, we can identify key hygiene factors that have been sources of dissatisfaction, such as consistent issues with salary payments, inadequate facilities, or lack of support from university administration. Assessing how union activities have influenced these hygiene factors can provide insights into changes in employee morale. Successful union negotiations that lead to improved salaries, better working conditions, or more supportive policies can reduce dissatisfaction. Investigating the presence of motivators among the academic staff can shed light on overall job satisfaction. Surveys and interviews can help determine if academic staff feel recognized, find their work meaningful, and have opportunities for professional growth. Based on the findings, recommendations can be made to university management to focus on both hygiene factors and motivators. For instance, addressing salary and working conditions to prevent dissatisfaction while also creating opportunities for recognition and professional development to enhance job satisfaction. Applying Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory to the study of union activism and employee morale at the University of Port Harcourt from 2015 to 2023 provides a structured approach to understanding the factors influencing academic staff's job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. By addressing both hygiene factors and motivators, university management can create a more supportive and engaging work environment, ultimately leading to improved morale and productivity among academic staff.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW: EMPIRICAL REVIEW

In 2016, Adebayo A. conducted research titled "Union Activism and Job Satisfaction among Academic Staff in South-Western Nigerian Universities." The primary research question was: What is the relationship between union activism and job satisfaction among academic staff? The hypothesis proposed that union activism positively correlates with job satisfaction among academic staff. Utilizing the Social Exchange Theory as the theoretical framework, Adebayo found a positive relationship between union activism and job satisfaction. Active participation in union activities provided academic staff with a sense of belonging and support, thereby increasing job satisfaction. The study concluded that union activism significantly enhances job satisfaction and recommended that university management should constructively engage with unions to foster a supportive work environment (Adebayo, 2016).

Olawale T.'s 2017 research titled "The Impact of Union Activism on Employee Morale in Nigerian Universities" investigated how union activism affects employee morale. The hypothesis was that union activism significantly impacts employee morale. Using Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory as the framework, the research revealed that union activism positively affects employee morale by addressing critical hygiene factors like salaries and working conditions. The study concluded that active union participation helps in addressing employee grievances and improving morale, recommending regular dialogue between union leaders and university management (Olawale, 2017).

In 2018, Okonkwo. explored "Union Activities and Academic Staff Performance in Federal Universities in Nigeria." The research sought to understand the effect of union activities on the performance of academic staff. The hypothesis stated that union activities positively influence academic staff performance. Guided by the Resource-Based View, the study found that union activities, particularly those aimed at improving working conditions, positively impacted academic staff performance. The study concluded that supportive union activities enhance performance and recommended that unions focus on engagements that promote professional development (Okonkwo, 2018). Bello 2019 study, "The Role of Unionism in Enhancing Job Satisfaction among Academic Staff in Nigerian Public Universities," asked whether unionism enhances job satisfaction among academic staff. The hypothesis was that unionism significantly enhances job satisfaction. The Organizational Support Theory served as the theoretical framework. The study discovered that unionism significantly enhances job satisfaction by providing a platform for addressing grievances and advocating for better working conditions. It concluded that unionism is crucial for job satisfaction and recommended that university management support union activities aimed at improving employee welfare (Bello, 2019).

In 2020, Adeyemi. examined "Influence of Union Activism on Job Commitment of Academic Staff in Selected Nigerian Universities." The research question was: How does union activism influence job

commitment among academic staff? The hypothesis proposed that union activism positively influences job commitment. Using Job Embeddedness Theory, the study indicated that union activism positively influences job commitment by fostering a sense of security and belonging among academic staff. The study concluded that active union participation enhances job commitment and recommended strengthening union-management relations to maintain high job commitment levels (Adeyemi, 2020). Eze. conducted a 2021 case study titled "Unionism and Employee Morale in Nigerian Universities: A Case Study of the University of Lagos." The research investigated the impact of unionism on employee morale. The hypothesis was that unionism positively impacts employee morale. Using Equity Theory as the framework, the study found that unionism positively impacts employee morale by ensuring fair treatment and equity in the workplace. It concluded that unionism is vital for maintaining high employee morale and recommended continuous engagement between union leaders and university authorities to address staff concerns (Eze, 2021).

Ibrahim's 2021 study, "The Effect of Union Activities on the Job Satisfaction of Academic Staff in Northern Nigerian Universities," sought to understand how union activities affect job satisfaction. The hypothesis was that union activities positively affect job satisfaction. Psychological Contract Theory served as the theoretical framework. The research found that union activities positively affect job satisfaction by fulfilling the psychological contract between academic staff and university management. The study concluded that union activities are essential for maintaining job satisfaction and recommended fostering open communication channels between unions and management (Ibrahim, 2021).

In 2022, Usman. researched "Unionism and Employee Engagement in Nigerian Universities." The primary research question was: What is the relationship between unionism and employee engagement? The hypothesis proposed that unionism has a positive relationship with employee engagement. Utilizing Self-Determination Theory, the study revealed that unionism enhances employee engagement by providing a sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. It concluded that unionism is beneficial for employee engagement and recommended supporting union initiatives that promote employee well-being (Usman, 2022).

Chukwu, 2022 study, "The Impact of Union Activities on Work Environment and Job Performance in Nigerian Universities," investigated how union activities impact the work environment and job performance. The hypothesis was that union activities positively impact the work environment and job performance. Systems Theory was used as the framework. The research found that union activities improve the work environment and enhance job performance by advocating for better resources and working conditions. The study concluded that union activities are vital for improving job performance and recommended collaborative efforts between unions and management to sustain a conducive work environment (Chukwu, 2022).

In 2023, Adetunji, examined "The Relationship Between Union Activism and Employee Morale in Nigerian Public Universities." The research question was: What is the relationship between union activism and employee morale? The hypothesis proposed that union activism positively correlates with employee morale. Social Identity Theory served as the theoretical framework. The study found a positive correlation between union activism and employee morale. Active union participation fostered a sense of identity and solidarity among academic staff, which boosted morale. The study concluded that union activism is crucial for enhancing employee morale and recommended regular and meaningful dialogue between university management and union representatives to address issues promptly (Adetunji, 2023).

III. Methodology

The study adopts design survey research design for the analysis of union activism and employee morale among academic staff at the University of Port Harcourt from 2015 to 2023 facilitated the collection of comprehensive data directly from participants, ensuring a robust understanding of their experiences and perceptions. Questionnaires were distributed to academic staff to gather primary data on their personal experiences and perceptions of union activism and employee morale. Additionally, secondary data were obtained from institutional records, union archives, and previous studies to provide context and support for the survey findings, ensuring a comprehensive analysis of the trends from 2015 to 2023. According to the report documents submitted to the Honourable Minister of Education, Shehu Shagari Way, by the University of Port Harcourt, the report document titled "Submission Of The Report Of The 2016-2020 Presidential Visitation Panel To The University Of Port Harcourt" indicates that in 2020, the University of Port Harcourt had a total of 1,238 academic staff. Of these, 823 staff members, representing 66.5%, held a PhD degree as their minimum qualification. Consequently, 415 staff members did not possess a PhD degree. Therefore, the population of the study stands at 1,238 academic staff. The Taro Yamane formula calculates sample size n based on a population N , precision e^2 (typically 0.05 for 95% confidence). For a population of 1,238, applying $e^2 = 0.0025$ yields a

sample size of approximately 303, ensuring statistical reliability in research sampling. Purposive sampling were used to select the 303 academic staff based on their active participation in union activities, aiming to represent diverse viewpoints and experiences relevant to the study on union activism and employee morale at the University of Port Harcourt from 2015 to 2023. This method ensures targeted inclusion of individuals with significant involvement, enriching the study with firsthand perspectives crucial to understanding the dynamics of academic staff morale influenced by union activities. The research questions were answered and data were analyzed using percentage, mean ratings data analysis.

IV. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Outcome of Questionnaire Distribution

Copies of questionnaire	Frequency	Percentage %
Administered	303	100
Retrieved	280	92%
Number not returned	23	8%
Total	382	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

From 303 distributed questionnaires, 280 were retrieved (92%), indicating high respondent engagement. Only 8% (23 questionnaires) were not returned, suggesting a generally positive response rate and effective data collection efforts during the 2024 field survey.

Research question one: How have union activities, including strikes and negotiations, influenced the morale and job satisfaction of academic staff at the University of Port Harcourt from 2015 to 2023?

Table 2: Summary of descriptive statistics of the mean standard deviation and percentage on How have union activities, including strikes and negotiations, influenced the morale and job satisfaction of academic staff at the University of Port Harcourt from 2015 to 2023?

Items	Strongly Agree (Count, %)	Agree (Count, %)	Disagree (Count, %)	Strongly Disagree (Count, %)	Mean (\bar{x})	STD (σ)	Remarks
Union strikes have positively impacted the morale of academic staff?	28 (10%)	84 (30%)	112 (40%)	56 (20%)	\bar{x} = 2.45	σ = 0.81	Generally positive
Negotiations have significantly improved job satisfaction among academic staff?	42 (15%)	98 (35%)	84 (30%)	56 (20%)	\bar{x} = 2.29	σ = 0.85	Generally positive
Union activities have contributed to a better work environment for academic staff?	56 (20%)	70 (25%)	98 (35%)	56 (20%)	\bar{x} = 2.54	σ = 0.74	Generally negative
Union strikes have negatively affected the morale of academic staff?	14 (5%)	42 (15%)	140 (50%)	84 (30%)	\bar{x} = 3.00	σ = 0.63	Generally negative
Union negotiations have effectively addressed key concerns and grievances of academic staff?	70 (25%)	84 (30%)	70 (25%)	56 (20%)	\bar{x} = 2.43	σ = 0.82	Generally positive

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The survey conducted at the University of Port Harcourt from 2015 to 2023 indicates that union activities, including strikes and negotiations, have had significant impacts on academic staff morale and job satisfaction. While negotiations generally improved job satisfaction and addressed concerns positively, union strikes often had a detrimental effect on morale. The data suggests a complex relationship where strikes may lower morale while negotiations tend to enhance job satisfaction, highlighting the diverse influences of union activities over the studied period.

Research question two: What benefits have been achieved through union activism, such as improved salary structures, enhanced working conditions, and increased funding for research, and how have these outcomes affected the morale of academic staff?

Table 3: Summary of descriptive statistics of the mean standard deviation and percentage on what are the benefits have been achieved through union activism, such as improved salary structures, enhanced working conditions, and increased funding for research, and how have these outcomes affected the morale of academic staff?

items	Strongly Agree f(%)	Agree f(%)	Disagree f(%)	Strongly Disagree f(%)	Mean (x)	STD	Total	Remarks
Do you agree that union activism has led to noticeable improvements in salary structures for academic staff at our university over the past eight years?	150 (54%)	90 (32%)	30 (11%)	10 (4%)	3.57	STD	280	Strongly agree.
Do you believe that enhanced working conditions, advocated through union efforts, have positively impacted your overall job satisfaction as an academic staff member?	135 (48%)	95 (34%)	20 (7%)	30 (11%)	3.68	STD	280	Strongly agree..
Increased funding for research, facilitated by union negotiations, has contributed significantly to improving academic staff morale and research productivity?	180 (64%)	75 (27%)	10 (4%)	15 (5%)	3.82	STD	280	Strongly agree.
In your opinion, has union activism regarding benefits like improved salary structures and working conditions had a noticeable positive effect on the overall morale of academic staff?	120 (43%)	75 (27%)	43 (15%)	42 (15%)	3.21	STD	280	Strongly agree.
The outcomes achieved through union activism, such as better salary structures and enhanced working conditions, have had a meaningful impact on academic staff morale at our university?	120 (43%)	75 (27%)	43 (15%)	42 (15%)	3.21	STD	280	Strongly agree.

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The data from the survey highlights strong consensus among academic staff at the university regarding the benefits of union activism. Improved salary structures, enhanced working conditions, and increased funding for research are widely acknowledged to have positively impacted morale, with a majority strongly agreeing on these improvements. These outcomes suggest that union efforts have been effective in not only securing tangible benefits but also in significantly enhancing overall job satisfaction and morale among academic staff over the past eight years.

Research question three What are the adverse effects of recurrent strikes and other forms of industrial action on the morale of academic staff, including stress, uncertainty, and disruptions to the academic calendar?

Table 4: Summary of descriptive statistics of the mean standard deviation and percentage on what are the adverse effects of recurrent strikes and other forms of industrial action on the morale of academic staff, including stress, uncertainty, and disruptions to the academic calendar?

Items	Strongly Agree f(%)	Agree f(%)	Disagree f(%)	Strongly Disagree f(%)	Mean (x)	STD	Total	Remarks
Recurrent strikes negatively impact your morale as an academic staff member?	180 (64%)	75 (27%)	10 (4%)	15 (3%)	3.71	1.088	280	Strongly agree.
Strikes and industrial actions cause undue stress among academic staff at our university?	150 (54%)	90 (32%)	30 (11%)	10 (4%)	3.57	1.047	280	Strongly agree..
Strikes and industrial actions create uncertainty about your academic responsibilities and duties?	135 (48%)	95 (34%)	20 (7%)	30 (11%)	3.54	1.042	280	Strongly agree.
Recurrent strikes disrupt the academic calendar and hinder academic progress?	180 (64%)	75 (27%)	10 (4%)	15 (3%)	3.71	1.088	280	Strongly agree.
Frequent industrial actions contribute to a negative perception of our university's stability and reliability?	120 (43%)	75 (27%)	43 (15%)	42 (15%)	3.14	1.172	280	Strongly agree.

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The data from the survey indicates a significant negative impact of recurrent strikes and industrial actions on the morale of academic staff at the university. These actions are strongly associated with increased stress, uncertainty about academic responsibilities, disruptions to the academic calendar, and a perception of reduced stability and reliability. The consistent agreement among respondents underscores the detrimental effects of such disruptions on overall morale and operational effectiveness within the academic environment.

V. DISCUSSIONS

The survey conducted at the University of Port Harcourt from 2015 to 2023 offers valuable insights into how union activities, such as strikes and negotiations, impact academic staff morale and job satisfaction. This discussion synthesizes the survey findings and supplements them with relevant secondary data and scholarly perspectives to provide a comprehensive understanding of these effects. The survey findings indicate significant impacts of union activities on academic staff morale and job satisfaction over the past eight years. There is a nuanced relationship observed between different types of union activities: Negotiations between the union and university administration generally improve job satisfaction among academic staff by addressing concerns related to salary structures, working conditions, and research funding. Academic staff strongly agree that these improvements positively affect their morale, demonstrating the effectiveness of union activism in securing tangible benefits. Conversely, union strikes have a detrimental effect on academic staff morale. The survey reveals that strikes increase stress levels, create uncertainty regarding academic responsibilities, disrupt the academic calendar, and diminish perceptions of stability. These factors collectively contribute to a negative impact on both morale and operational effectiveness within the academic environment. The data suggests a complex interplay between union activities and academic staff morale. While negotiations tend to enhance job satisfaction through resolving grievances and improving conditions, strikes paradoxically lower morale due to their disruptive and stressful nature.

To substantiate these findings, exploring secondary sources and scholarly literature on union activities in academic institutions is beneficial: Research by Deery and Iverson (2005) suggests that while union representation can positively influence job satisfaction by improving conditions and benefits, strikes and disputes often lead to increased stress and dissatisfaction among employees. This aligns with the findings from the University of Port Harcourt survey, emphasizing the dual impact of union activities.

Studies by Smith and Roberts (2010) indicate that academic staff highly value union representation for advocating fair treatment, adequate compensation, and professional development opportunities. Successful union negotiations in these areas significantly boost morale and job satisfaction. Conversely, prolonged strikes disrupt academic staff morale due to the resulting disruptions and uncertainties. According to Thompson (2018), frequent strikes and labor disputes can erode institutional stability and impair effectiveness in achieving educational goals. This broader perspective underscores the importance of maintaining a balance between union advocacy and operational continuity within academic institutions.

In summary the survey at the University of Port Harcourt provides empirical evidence of how union activities influence academic staff morale and job satisfaction. Negotiations generally enhance morale by addressing staff concerns, while strikes have detrimental effects due to increased stress and disruptions. These findings align with broader scholarly perspectives on union activities in academia, emphasizing the need for effective negotiation strategies to minimize negative impacts and maximize positive outcomes for both academic staff and institutions. Integrating primary survey data with secondary sources enriches the understanding of the dynamics surrounding union activities and their implications for academic environments. Further research and ongoing dialogue are crucial for developing strategies that foster a supportive and productive academic environment amidst evolving labor relations dynamics. Based on the extensive discussion provided, here are the four key findings:

1. **Impact of Union Activities:** The survey reveals that union negotiations at the University of Port Harcourt generally improve academic staff morale by addressing salary concerns, working conditions, and research funding, demonstrating the effectiveness of union activism in securing tangible benefits.
2. **Detrimental Effects of Strikes:** Conversely, union strikes have been found to significantly lower morale among academic staff due to increased stress, disruptions to the academic calendar, and perceptions of reduced stability, highlighting the disruptive nature of prolonged industrial actions.
3. **Complex Relationship:** The data suggests a nuanced relationship where negotiations enhance job satisfaction while strikes diminish it, underscoring the intricate dynamics between union activities and academic staff morale over the studied period.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above findings the following recommendations are made:

1. **Strengthen Conflict Resolution Mechanisms:** Establish robust negotiation frameworks that proactively address academic staff concerns before they escalate into strikes. By enhancing communication and transparency, potential disruptions can be minimized, ensuring a more stable academic environment.
2. **Invest in Alternative Dispute Resolution:** Develop and implement effective alternative dispute resolution mechanisms to manage conflicts between unions and administration swiftly and amicably. This approach can mitigate the negative impact of strikes on academic activities and staff morale.

3. Foster Collaborative Decision-Making: Promote a culture of collaboration and inclusive decision-making processes involving unions, academic staff, and administration. By encouraging dialogue and mutual respect, universities can cultivate a supportive work environment that enhances morale and productivity among academic staff.

VII. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the analysis of union activism and its impact on employee morale among academic staff at the University of Port Harcourt from 2015 to 2023 highlights several critical insights. Union negotiations have proven effective in enhancing academic staff morale by addressing pressing issues such as salaries, working conditions, and research funding. However, the detrimental effects of strikes, including heightened stress, academic disruptions, and perceptions of instability, underscore the challenges associated with prolonged industrial actions. This study reveals a complex relationship where proactive negotiations generally improve job satisfaction, while strikes have the opposite effect, illustrating the nuanced interplay between union activities and academic staff morale within Nigerian universities.

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