

Influence of Incessant Strikes on Teachers' Professional Training: The University of Nigeria Experience

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Abstract

The study examined the influence of incessant strikes on the professional training and development of student teachers in Nigerian universities. Three research questions were posed to guide the study. Two questionnaires structured on a four point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (SA=4) to Strongly Disagree (SD=1) were used to collect data. Ninety six (96) third and fourth year students and twenty four (24) lecturers from the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka were purposively used for the study. The analysis was done using mean and standard deviation. Mean above 2.50 was accepted while mean below it was rejected. Results revealed that frequent strikes in the university influence teachers' academic and professional training. To this end, it was recommended that the government should stand up to its educational responsibilities as a way of stamping out frequent strikes in the educational system. Other recommendations include that teacher education courses like other professional courses should last for five years.

Keywords: teaching practice, strikes, teacher education.

INTRODUCTION

The attainment of the goals and objectives of education in any nation is largely dependent on the professional competencies of teachers. The Nigerian government affirmed this when the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) stated that no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers. A teacher commonly is understood to be a person who imparts knowledge to others. This definition is too simplistic because not every person who imparts knowledge is a teacher. A teacher must undergo and complete a teacher training course which is a planned programme of training in both principles and practice of education. Teachers must also undertake a period of internship as part of the period of training. A teacher, therefore, can be seen as a professional who deliberately uses knowledge gained, experiences, skills, competencies, interests with the help of instructional materials, methods and techniques to inspire learning (Mkpa, 2009). A teacher's primary mission is to help and facilitate learning. He/she is also expected to be a role model whose personality lends itself to imitation by learners. A teacher is expected to also be an embodiment of the ethics, values, moral standard of the community in which he/she operates. The level of competence expected of teachers should

encompass not only the standard of their teaching but also the conformity of an acceptable set of values. This is so because what sets teachers apart as professionals is their daily close contact with young people and the consequent necessity to act as positive role models (Wallace, 2008).

Teaching is a profession and like other professions worldwide, the practitioners are expected to have special knowledge and skills in the art and science of teaching which non-professionals do not have. Such knowledge and skills should make a marked difference between people who practice teaching without prior training and the professionally trained ones. Mkpa (2005) described a teacher as a person who has knowledge, skills and special training in teaching, explaining and educating. The process of academic and professional preparation of teachers is what is commonly referred to as teacher education.

TEACHER EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Teacher education is an aspect of tertiary education that is concerned with equipping prospective teachers with relevant knowledge and skills that will enable them to function effectively in the teaching profession. Mukhtari (2013) defined teacher education as the professional education of teachers towards attainment of attitudes, skills and knowledge considered desirable so as to make them efficient and effective in their work in accordance with the needs of the society at any point in time. By this definition, teachers are professionally made and not born. Accordingly, Oriafor (2009) stated that teacher education is the sum total of educational experiences to which the learner (prospective teacher) is exposed to in preparation for being inducted into the sacred and noble profession of teaching. All these definitions stress the need for training in teaching. The Nigerian government echoed the same truth when the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2004) stated that all teachers in the educational system shall be professionally trained based on clearly specified goals and objectives. The essence of the training is for teachers to be properly grounded in academics, be pedagogically skilled and be groomed in sociological and cultural characteristics of the society in which the learners are born. Teachers should also be adequately grounded psychologically to be able to handle learners with care (Eze, 2009). This position is highlighted also in the FRN, (2004) where the goals of teacher education in Nigeria are stated. The goals of teacher education according to FRN (2004:39) are:

- To produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our educational system.
- To encourage the spirit of inquiry and creativity in teachers
- To help teachers fit into social life of the society and to enhance their commitment to national objectives
- To provide teachers with intellectual and professional background, adequate for their assignment and make them adaptable to changing situations in the society and
- To enhance teachers' commitment to the teaching profession

To achieve these goals and objectives, the Federal Republic of Nigeria in the National Policy on Education (2004) further certified some tertiary institutions for the education and professional training of teachers. These include the faculties of education in the universities, colleges of education, institutes of education, National Teachers Institute (NTI), schools of education in polytechnics, National Institute for Nigerian Languages (NINLAN) and National Mathematics Centre (NMC). These institutions are required to prepare teachers for primary, post primary schools, colleges and universities. To qualify for the award of Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) or B.ScEd/B.AEd degrees, a prospective teacher would have to fulfil designated course requirements and also undergo a three month period of internship in a school (teaching practice). To qualify as a professional, the student teacher requires practical knowledge in teaching and school administration. For example, a doctor requires at least one year of housemanship in a specialist hospital, a pharmacist requires one year of internship in a pharmaceutical company or hospital, an engineer, at least one year of industrial experience in an engineering establishment and a lawyer requires at least one year of practical experience in a law school to qualify a professional.

The professional training of teachers generally involves four fundamental components namely:

- General studies, which include selection of courses students are given to improve their overall general knowledge in language and communication, ICT, science and society etc;
- Professional studies, which include courses in the broad areas of Educational Psychology, Foundations of Education, Curriculum Studies, Philosophy, Sociology as applied to education, Comparative Education, School Administration and Educational Technology;
- Studies related to the students intended field of teaching which could be in the arts, social sciences or sciences; and
- Teaching practice, which is the practical component of teacher education programme (Lassa, 1996, Mukhtari, 2013).

These elements or components of teacher education programme are meant to improve the general educational background of the trainee teachers, increase their knowledge and understanding of the subjects they are to teach, pedagogy

and understanding of children and learning, and the development of practical skills and competencies. Oriafor (2009) on his part summarised these four fundamental elements of teacher education programme into two parts namely the theoretical part and the practical component. The theoretical parts comprise the principles and practice of education and include courses in the general, professional and teaching subject areas as earlier mentioned. The practical component on the other hand is teaching practice, which is internship in the professional training of teachers. Oriafor (2009) further stated that in the training of teachers, there must be an appropriate balance between academic subject content and educational courses while teaching practice must be accorded significant attention in terms of duration and supervision. Teaching practice should serve as a transition period when trainee teachers get acquainted in the art and science of teaching.

Teaching practice therefore, is an essential aspect of teacher education programme. According to Hanies (1960), teaching practice is a period of time during which trainee teachers are assigned to secondary schools for supervised teaching experience as part of their training programme. During this period, trainee teachers are expected to observe professional practice of other qualified and experienced teachers and to carry out teaching under expert supervision. This allows them the opportunity to gain first hand experiences and reflect upon the theoretical knowledge and understanding which they have gained during their training. They are also expected to understand the school environment and participate actively in the day to day activities of students as they learn. By so doing, they will be able to handle their anxieties and fears which they may bring into the teaching proper. They will experience firsthand some of the challenges they might face when they get employed and so develop competency. They are allowed to try out any new ideas they have or have learned and fully participate in all professional activities both inside and outside school. According to Gower and Walters (1983), teaching practice allows student teachers the opportunity to integrate the teaching theories, principles, techniques they have learnt into practice. Socialisation of teachers takes place during teaching practice. They engage with students and grow their experience and practice as well as establish appropriate relationships. Their performances are assessed by their supervisors and designated members of staff of the placement schools who may act as trainee mentors. As stated by Andabia (2013), trainee teachers are not only expected to teach but to act as form teachers, game teachers and participate in all other school activities as regular teachers.

At the university level, teacher education programme allows for twelve weeks (three months) of teaching practice. The twelve weeks of teaching practice are divided into two periods. First period involves six weeks of introductory teaching practice usually in the first year for students in a three year programme and second year for students in a 4 year programme. Second period involves another six weeks period of intensive teaching in the second and third years of students study. The primary purpose of teaching practice is to enable trainee teachers to learn about the actual work of the teacher in the classroom as well as how the school functions in

general. It is also meant to expose trainee teachers to the realities of effective teaching, help them to try out methods of teaching and gain practical classroom experience under expert supervision (Osuala, 2004). It is during the period of teaching practice that teachers like other professionals are prepared professionally for the onerous task of teaching. In spite of the importance of teaching practice in the professional training of teachers, trainees find it difficult to undergo this much needed training due to frequent strike actions that have rocked the educational system over the years. This state of affairs may affect teacher education programmes and the quality of teachers to be produced.

Strike Actions

Strike is a form of industrial action that has to do with workers refusal to work as a protest for inadequate services or poor condition of work (Edinyang & Ubi, 2013). Strikes take place in response to employee grievances or disagreements between employees and employers. Strikes became rampant during the industrial revolution, when mass labour became important in factories and mines. At that time, strikes were quietly made illegal as factory owners had far more political power than workers. Most western countries partially legalized strikes in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Since 1970 to present time, workers demand for improved conditions of work and wages have increased the number of strike actions, as government, most of the time, would not accurately satisfy the needs and requests of workers. A good example in Nigeria is that of Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) frequent disagreements with the federal government (Aideumuoghene, 2014).

ASUU is one of the staff unions of universities in Nigeria. According to Aideumuoghene (2014), ASUU emerged after the collapse of the then Nigerian Association of University Teachers (NAUT), to fight the ever diminishing quality of Nigerian university education. ASUU has frequently used industrial strikes to draw the attention of government to the deplorable state of teaching and learning in the universities and all the other tertiary institutions in Nigeria. As a result, ASUU has become the most notable staff union in Nigeria. According to Edinyang and Ubi (2013), strikes generally are rare but ASUU strikes cannot be said to be rare as no year has passed by since 1999 without ASUU embarking on strike as shown in the table below.

Year	Period of Strike
1999	5 months strike
2001	3 months strike
2002	2 weeks strike
2003/2004	6 months strike
2005	3 days strike
2006	3 days strike
2007	3 months strike
2008	1 week strike
2009	4 months strike

2010	5 months strike
2011/2012	3 months strike
2013-14	5 months strike
2015	--
2016	2 weeks
2017	--

Source: www.statistense.info ASUU strike

Cumulatively, the Nigerian university system has spent over two years observing different strike actions between 1999 and 2014. The causes of ASUU strikes are diverse and multiple ranging from breakdown in collective bargaining, to failure of government to implement agreements reached with ASUU.

The use of strike as a bargaining instrument by ASUU has in large measure succeeded in drawing the attention of government to the deplorable state of teaching and learning in the universities and all the tertiary institutions, however, the effect of the often repeated disruption of academic programmes can be enormous on the quality of graduates, especially teachers produced by universities. This is because ASUU strikes over the years have led to indefinite closure of most universities in Nigeria. Most of the ASUU strikes in recent time also occurred when trainee teachers were supposed to be in schools for their practical teaching. By the time universities reopened, secondary school students had finished their school year. It is against this scenario that most school principals complain that trainee teachers are sent to schools by the universities at the wrong time and that the activities of the trainee teachers disrupt academic programmes of schools. Lecturers and trainee teachers rarely have enough time to make up for the academic time lost due to strike actions. This also affects the quality of teaching practice as both student teachers and supervising lecturers struggle with the available time to meet up with the trainee teachers' academic course work which also runs concurrently with the teaching practice.

Teaching practice is the life wire of teacher education programme just like internship, housemanship and law school in the professional training of medical doctors, pharmacists and lawyers respectively, and should be accorded that status. While the professional training of doctors, pharmacists, lawyers take not less than one year of supervised internship in specialised institutions designed and equipped for their professional training. The programme cannot easily be interrupted by strike actions because of the existence of registered autonomous professional bodies that regulate the training and practices. Training of teachers takes only three months in public schools controlled by government. As noted by Eze (2009), without teaching practice or without giving it appropriate qualitative touch, teacher education programme will be shallow and ineffective. It is against this background that this study set out to assess the influence of frequent ASUU strikes on the academic and professional preparation of teachers in Nigeria.

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the influence of strikes on academic preparation of teachers?
2. What is the influence of strikes on the professional training of teachers?
3. What strategies should be adopted to improve teachers' professional training?

METHOD

A descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. The population of the study is 988 and is made up of 165 lecturers and 823 third and final year students in the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. A sample size of 96 students and 32 lecturers were purposively drawn for the study (4 lecturers and 6 students each from the 8 departments in the Faculty of Education, UNN).

The instruments used for the study were two questionnaires designed by the researchers. The first questionnaire was made up of two parts; A and B. Part A contained 16 item statements that sought information on the impact of strikes on academic preparation of teachers in the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Part B, contained 16 item statements that elicited information on the impact of strikes on student teachers' professional training.

The second questionnaire which contained 10 items was for lecturers. It sought to ascertain the strategies that will be employed to improve trainee teachers' professional training. Both questionnaires have a four point modified Likert scale with response options of Strongly Agree (SA=4), Agree (A=3), Disagree (D=2), and Strongly Disagree (SD=1).

The internal consistencies of the instruments were determined using Cronbach alpha. The students' instrument yielded a coefficient reliability of .76 for part A, and .81 for part B. While the lecturers instrument yielded a co-efficient reliability of .79. This justified the use of the questionnaires as the reliability coefficients were considered high.

The instruments were administered by the researchers themselves to avoid instrument mortality. A total of 96 students' questionnaires were distributed and 92 copies were duly completed and returned while the 32 lecturers' questionnaire distributed were all duly completed and returned. Data obtained were analysed using mean and standard deviation.

RESULTS

Research Question 1

What is the influence of strikes on academic preparation of teachers?

Table 1: Mean Rating of Respondents on the Impacts of Strikes on Academic Preparation of Teachers.

S/N	ITEMS	N	X	St.Dev.	Decision
1	Academic content of courses is not covered	92	3.26	.810	Agree
2	Seminars and workshops to help teachers learn are suspended during strikes	92	3.10	.776	Agree
3	Strikes lead to students maladjustment	92	3.50	.845	Agree
4	Students are not sufficiently exposed to teaching methods because of strikes	92	3.54	.747	Agree
5	Students morale is not low due to strikes	92	2.15	.992	Disagree
6	Examinations are rushed even when content is not covered	92	3.27	.865	Agree
7	Practical work during lectures is not compromised	92	2.03	.894	Disagree
8	Questions set during examinations after strikes are usually shallow to reflect what is taught	92	3.22	.839	Agree
9	Evaluation of student teachers is compromised as lecturers are in a hurry to submit scores	92	3.36	.603	Agree

10	Most assignments given during strikes are not graded by lecturers	92	2.08	.700	Disagree
11	Student teachers suspend academic activities during strike	92	2.65	.977	Agree
12	Teaching is done in depth after strike	92	1.91	.714	Disagree
13	Affective and psychomotor domains are usually not covered because of limited time	92	3.26	.660	Agree
14	Lecturers resort mainly to teacher centered learning as not sufficient time is left after strikes	92	3.48	.747	Agree
15	Students are exposed to examination malpractice to help them pass examinations they are ill prepared for	92	3.40	.984	Agree
16	Students fail to concentrate in their studies after strikes	92	2.67	1.02	Agree

Table 1, shows that items 1,2,3,4,6,8,9,11,13,14,15, and 16 have their mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50 set for the study and therefore, were accepted, while items 5, 7, 10 and 12 with mean scores of 2.15, 2.03, 2.08, and 1.91 respectively were below the criterion mean and indicate that students morale is low due to strikes, practical work during lectures is compromised, most assignments given during strikes are not graded by lecturers, and teaching is not done in depth after strike. The items indicated that standard deviation

(SD) ranging from .603 and 1.02 of the students responses show close agreement of ratings on the items.

Research Question Two

What is the influence of strikes on the professional training of teachers?

Table 2: Mean Rating of Respondents on the professional training of teachers

S/N	ITEMS	N	X	St.Dev.	Decision
1	Teaching practice goes on while lectures are in progress	92	3.26	.810	Agree
2	Period of teaching practice is reduced after strikes	92	3.04	1.01	Agree
3	Students on teaching practice reside in the schools where they are posted	92	1.80	1.11	Disagree
4	Students on teaching practice do not attend morning assembly and staff meetings in the schools where they are posted	92	2.29	2.72	Agree
5	Trainee teachers are assigned supervisors from the various schools where they are assigned.	92	3.58	.699	Agree
6	Student teachers on teaching practice do not grade scripts of pupils and submit results to the school authorities	92	2.56	1.05	Agree
7	Trainee teachers participate in games and excursions in the school where they are assigned	92	1.90	.972	Disagree
8	Student teachers write lesson notes and submit to subject heads of various schools	92	3.16	.917	Agree

9	Supervising lecturers visit the schools regularly and have discussions with student teachers	92	1.81	.917	Disagree
10	Lecturers correct notes of lessons of student teachers	92	2.07	.940	Disagree
11	Student teachers do not have a conference with the lecturers after each visit	92	2.10	2.66	Agree
12	Principals welcome student teachers because of wrong timing	92	2.06	.940	Disagree
13	Student teachers activities are seen as disruptive	92	2.96	.783	Agree
14	Teaching practice is sometimes scheduled when pupils are writing examinations	92	2.66	1.092	Agree
15	Topics taught by student teachers are usually those already taught by regular teachers	92	2.65	1.113	Agree
16	Student teachers are not assigned to senior classes or practical because of inappropriate timing	92	3.02	1.068	Agree

Results of the analysis of data in table 2 shows that items 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 11, 13, 14, 15 and 16 have mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50 set for the study. This means that the respondents agree that teaching practice goes on while student teachers receive lectures, the period of teaching practice is reduced due to strikes, students on teaching practice do not attend morning assembly and staff meetings in the schools to which they are posted, trainee teachers are assigned supervisors from various schools authorities, students on teaching practice do not grade scripts of pupils and submit results to the school authorities, students write lesson notes and submit to subject heads of various schools, students do not have a conference with the lecturers after each visit, student teachers activities are seen as disruptive; teaching practice is sometimes scheduled when pupils are writing examinations, and topics taught by student teachers are

usually those already taught by regular teachers. Items 3, 7, 9, 10 and 12 on the other hand, have mean scores below the criterion mean of 2.50. This means that respondents disagreed that students on teaching practice reside in the schools where they are posted, trainee teachers participate in games and excursions in the school where they are assigned, supervising lecturers visit the schools regularly and have discussions with student teachers, lecturers correct notes of lessons of student teachers, and principals welcome student teachers because of wrong timing. The standard deviation ranging from .69 to 3.57 showed that the opinions of the respondents were not far apart.

Research Question 3

What strategies should be adopted to improve teachers' professional training?

Table 3: Mean Rating of Respondents on the Strategies for Improving Teachers' Professional Training

S/N	ITEMS	N	X	St.Dev.	Decision
1	Teacher training education programme should be for a period of five years with one full year of internship	32	2.54	.928	Agree
2	The assessment of the trainee teachers should be done by both the lecturers and the subject teachers in the schools to which they are assigned	32	3.18	.900	Agree
3	The academic content of teacher educational programmes should be enriched to cover cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains	32	3.48	.975	Agree
4	Trainee teachers should be treated as members of staff of schools where they are posted	32	3.10	.919	Agree

5	Academic staff union should give the same concession to trainee teachers like they do to doctors, pharmacists and engineers	32	2.76	953	Agree
6	Trainee teachers should be exposed to workshops and seminars during the period of teaching practice	32	2.61	1.10	Agree
7	Trainee teachers should be paid stipend during teaching practice	32	2.82	975	Agree
8	Lecturers who supervise students should also receive stipend	32	2.53	.844	Agree
9	There should be cooperation between lecturers and teachers of the various schools during teaching practice	32	3.23	.647	Agree
10	Trainee teachers should have mentors in their respective schools where they are posted	32	2.94	.912	Agree

Table 3, shows that students agree with all the items 1 to 10 with mean scores of 2.54, 3.18, 3.48, 3.10, 2.76, 2.28, 2.61, 2.82, 2.53, 3.23 and 2.96 respectively. This indicates that lecturers agree that teacher training education programme should be for a period of five years with one full year of internship, the assessment of the trainee teachers should be done by both the lecturers and the subject teachers in the schools, the academic content of teacher educational programme should be enriched to cover cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains, trainee teachers should be treated as members of staff of schools where they are posted, academic staff union should give the same concession to trainee teachers like they do to doctors, pharmacists and engineers, trainee teachers should be exposed to workshops and seminars during the period of teaching practice, students should be paid stipend during teaching practice, lecturers who

supervise students should also receive stipend, there should be cooperation between lecturers and teachers of the various schools, and trainee teachers should have mentors in their respective schools. The items indicate standard deviation (SD) ranging from 1.10-957 of the lecturers response which shows close agreement of rating on the items.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

This study investigated the influence of frequent strikes on the professional training of teachers.

The findings of research question 1 on Table 1, showed that academic content is not covered; seminars and workshops to help teachers learn are suspended during strikes; strikes lead to students maladjustment; students are not sufficiently exposed to teaching methods, students suspend academic activities during strikes; lecturers resort mainly to teacher centered learning as not sufficient time is left after strikes; and students fail to concentrate in their studies after strikes. This means that the frequent disruption of academic programmes and indefinite closure of the universities due to ASUU strikes affect the academic preparation of teachers in the universities in Nigeria. This finding agrees with Edinyang and Ubi's (2013) observation that strike is a social ill not different from corruption because it eats into students' time which makes it difficult for students to be fully and properly 'baked' within the designated educational time frame. Another interesting finding of this study is that students disagreed that their morale is not low due to strikes, most assignments given during strikes are graded by lecturers, and also that teaching is done in depth after strikes. This simply means that frequent ASUU strikes affect the coverage of academic content and lower students' interest and concentration in their studies and probably their performance. This finding is also in agreement with the view of Kagbaranen (2012), who observed that frequent ASUU strikes dwindle the academic performances of students. Effective learning or an enhanced academic performance is achieved through the successful coverage of course contents by lecturers before examination. The inability of lecturers to cover their course content before examination exposes students to examination malpractices.

The findings of this study on Table 2 showed that students agreed that teaching practice goes on while lectures are in progress, and period of teaching practice is reduced due to strikes. The finding also showed that students on teaching practice, because of time lost during strikes, are unable to complete tasks expected of them. Such tasks include attending morning assembly, attending staff meetings, grading of students' scripts. Many of the trainee teachers even do not have enough time to write lesson notes and submit to subject heads in the various schools. This implies that teaching practice which is the practical component of teacher education programme is compromised by students and supervisors due to frequent strike actions. This is a worrisome finding. Teaching practice is designed to provide opportunities under typical school conditions for trainee teachers to secure experience in observing and participating actively in diverse educational activities of teaching in the school (Eze, 2009). Another worrisome finding is that respondents disagreed that

supervising lecturers visit the schools regularly and have discussions with student teachers, correct notes of lessons of student teachers, and have a conference with the trainee teachers after each visit. The essence of teaching practice is to expose trainee teachers to the realities of effective teaching and help them to try out methods of teaching and gain practical classroom experience. This is the reason why trainee teachers on teaching practice are assigned to supervisors to monitor, supervise and evaluate them. The goals of teaching practice however, are eroded when supervisors for one reason or the other fail to carry out their supervising work effectively.

On the strategies to be adopted to improve teachers' professional training, Table 3, showed that students were of the opinion that teacher training education programmes be extended to a period of five years with one full year of internship instead of four years with 3 months of internship. This is an interesting finding. It shows that teachers are beginning to understand the professional nature of their work and the need to be prepared professionally like other professions such as medicine, pharmacy, law etc. Other suggestions made by students include that assessment of the trainee teachers should be done by both the lecturers and the subject teachers in the school, and that trainee teachers be given the same concession by the academic staff union like they do to doctors, pharmacists and engineers. The students were also of the opinion that students and lecturers who supervise them during teaching practice be paid stipend as is obtainable in other professional courses. This will help the students and supervisors offset some of the expenses they incur during the period of teaching practice.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study focused on the influence of incessant strikes on the teachers' professional training. Teachers are like pillars on which the whole educational system rest. Their educational and professional training are crucial to the attainment of the goals and objectives of the educational system in any nation. The essence of teachers' professional training is to equip teachers with relevant knowledge and skills in the teaching profession. To this end, the professional training of teachers takes trainee teachers through course work, teaching pedagogy and related fields of study, and also internship (teaching practice). The programme of teaching practice is designed to enable teacher trainees learn about actual work of the teacher in the classroom and school in general.

Strike actions though used extensively to draw the attention of government to the many problems of education in Nigeria has enormous impact on the professional training of teachers in higher institutions. The quality of education in any nation is dependent on the quality of her teachers and the quality of teachers is dependent on the quality of their professional training more especially, teaching practice which is the practical aspect of their training and the hallmark of teacher education programme. Teachers are regarded as the backbone of schools. Without them, schools cannot function. If they are poorly trained, the entire educational system is bound to falter.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper makes the following recommendations

1. Considering the importance of teacher education in the attainment of the goals and objectives of education in Nigeria, government should increase its funding of tertiary education as a way of reducing frequent strikes in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.
2. Teacher training education programme should be increased from a period of four years with 3 months of internship to a period of five years with one full year of internship.
3. Government should also ensure that every legitimate agreement reached with ASUU and other staff unions concerning welfare of staff and students are implemented in due time.
4. The concession given to other professional courses like medicine, law, pharmacy, engineering by academic staff union during strikes should also be extended to teacher education.
5. Student teachers should participate in all aspects of the school programme/curriculum while on teaching practice exercise

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