

STAFF WELFARE AND UNION ROLES IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

This study explored the dynamics of interactions between the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and its members, focusing on their perceptions of staff welfare in Nigerian universities. Drawing on Social Exchange Theory, the study examined how Academic Staff Union of Universities members invest in the union with expectations of reciprocal benefits, particularly in advocating for their welfare. A descriptive survey design was employed, with data collected from Academic Staff Union of Universities members in six universities through questionnaires and interviews. Findings reveal significant gender differences in perceptions of remuneration improvements since 2015, with male respondents showing more positive views. Moreover, while salaries for academic staff have increased nominally, inflation and economic factors have diminished their real value, leading to economic desperation among members. Academic Staff Union of Universities' efforts to secure earned allowances are commendable, yet political obstacles persist. The study underscores Academic Staff Union of Universities' vital role in improving member welfare and challenging government dominance in tertiary education governance. To address staff welfare, it is essential to prioritize negotiation over strikes, embrace multidimensional approaches to dispute resolution, and ensure timely payment of earned allowances. Overall, proactive dialogue, mutual respect, and effective conflict resolution are essential for enhancing academic staff welfare and educational standards in Nigerian universities.

Keywords: Academic staff, Agreement, ASUU, Federal Government, Remuneration, Staff welfare, State Government Union, Universities

1.0 Introduction

Trade unions are associations of employees or employers established to regulate working conditions as well as sustain a relatively stable relationship between employers and employees. Trade unionism is an important factor in ensuring workplace inclusiveness and harmony between the employer and the employees (Kaufman, 2004; and Schilinger, 2005). The colonial history of an organized trade unionism in Nigeria can be traced to 1912 when

the Southern civil service workers, under the colonial administration, organized themselves into the Southern Nigerian Civil Service Union (SNCSU), which was later changed to the Nigerian Civil Service Union (NCSU) in 1914 as a result of the amalgamation of both the Southern and Northern Protectorates of Nigeria. From 1919 to 1932, four unions were formed cutting across several sectors including the railway and the teaching establishments. They were the Nigerian Native Staff Union, the Nigerian Mechanic Union, the Nigerian Union of Railway Men and the Nigerian Union of Teachers (Tokunbo, 1985). Within this period, the interests of the associations focused mainly on promoting efficiency in the civil service and the advancement of the employment interests of members (Fashoyin, 1992).

Trade Unionism seems to be an integral part of the university system all over the world as university employees continuously engage authorities on better conditions of service. In Nigeria, for instance, the academic staff of universities of Ibadan, Ife, Lagos as well as that of the university of Nigeria and Ahmadu Bello University came together in 1965 to form the Nigerian Association of University Teachers (NAUT). However, following its critical stance on some national issues, the union was proscribed in 1973 by the General Gowon led administration. Not wanting to relent in the pursuance of better conditions of service, the university teachers again re-grouped under a different umbrella, i.e. The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in 1978 in order to provide a platform for a continuous agitation for better welfare. Besides this, the union emerged as a critical voice against the mismanagement of the oil boom revenues of the 1970s (Aluko, 2010).

Since its inception, ASUU has consistently advocated for the welfare of its members by engaging with government and university authorities on various issues affecting the Nigerian university system. Despite employing measures such as dialogues and strikes, the challenges persist. Notably, the inadequate funding of academic activities remains a key point of contention. Nigeria's government allocation to education falls short of international standards, with UNESCO recommending a minimum of 26% of GDP for education. In the 2019 fiscal year, only 7.05% of Nigeria's budget was allocated to education, highlighting the ongoing struggle for adequate funding in the sector. While in the 1970s and mid-1980s, the working conditions and pay structure of university workers in Nigeria were attractive to both local and international scholars, the current situation is demotivating due to an uncompetitive pay structure and poor administration of services. Despite ASUU's efforts to address these challenges, there has been a continuous decline in facilities and incentives, highlighting the overall poor state of Nigerian universities. (Onyeonoru, 1996; Oyewunmi & Oyewunmi, 2017; Onyeonoru & Bankole, 2001). Where as much is known about ASUU's commitment and participation in the struggles for a better Nigeria, a vibrant university system and a better welfare for its members (Onyeonoru, 1996; Onyeonoru & Bankole, 2001; Aluko, 2010; Ibietan, 2013; Oyewunmi & Oyewunmi, 2014, Oyewunmi & Oyewunmi, 2017); little or nothing is known regarding how its members see its efforts from their own individual perspectives. It is in this regard that the research endeavor has focused its attention on members' perception of the effectiveness of ASUU in pursuing improved staff welfare in selected South West universities in Nigeria. Hence, this study seeks to answer the question of how the academic staff members perceive the efforts of ASUU on improved staff remuneration and in pursuing earned allowances in Nigeria. Furthermore, the objective of this study is to investigate and examine the perception of academic staff members of ASSU's effort in improving staff remuneration and pursuing

earned allowances in Nigeria offering significant insight of how individual perceive the efforts of ASUU in improving the welfare of academic staff members.

This study investigates the effectiveness of ASUU in improving academic staff welfare, crucial for Nigerian universities and beyond. Hence, the study's significance is that it offers insights for university administrators to enhance staff performance and retain quality academics. Additionally, it educates on the implications of poor welfare programs, emphasizes management's role in incentivizing staff, and promotes industrial harmony. ASUU members gain a clearer perspective on union activities, fostering self-assessment and solutions to challenges. The study also provides a basis for further academia research.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Review

Unitarism

Unitarism in labor relations draws upon various intellectual traditions, including Scientific Management, Human Relations theory, and neo-human relations school. Scientific Management, attributed to Frederick Taylor, views workers as inherently selfish and lazy, necessitating coercion and direction to achieve organizational objectives. In contrast, Human Relations theory, led by Elton Mayo, emphasizes non-economic social rewards to align employees with management goals. Mayo's approach is perceived as anti-union and places greater focus on informal relations over formal structures (Ogunbameru, 2008). Unitarists advocate for harmonious relationships between employers and employees, emphasizing shared organizational goals. They believe in effective communication and strong leadership from management, expecting employee loyalty and commitment in return (Bray et al, 2005). Unitarism contends that industrial conflict arises from faulty communication or external agitators, rather than inherent differences of interest (Onyeonoro, 2005). While Scientific Management sees workers as self-interested and requiring control, Human Relations theory highlights the importance of social factors in influencing employee behavior. Both perspectives contribute to the broader Unitarist view, which prioritizes cooperation and mutual interests within organizations. However, Unitarism's emphasis on management authority and skepticism towards unions may overlook the complexities of workplace dynamics and the potential for collective bargaining to address employee concerns.

Marxian Theory

The Marxian theory posits that organizations primarily aim to exploit their employees, reflecting perpetual class struggle in capitalist societies as outlined by Karl Marx. Marx argued that history is shaped by the conflict between two classes with differing interests, driven by the pursuit of surplus profit through labor exploitation. Capitalism, according to Marx, leads to the accumulation of surplus value for capital owners rather than laborers (Leat, 2008). Key characteristics of Marxist theory include the belief in inherent conflict between employees and employers due to unequal distribution of wealth and power in capitalist societies. Owners of means of production hold superior power over laborers, with the state often favoring their interests. Vulnerability of individual employees prompts the

formation of worker collectives, such as unions, challenging management control and advocating for equitable distribution of resources (Bray et al, 2004).

2.2 Empirical Review

The study of Hammeed *et al* (2020) aimed to determine the effects of unionism on conflict, the consequences of conflict on organizational goodwill, and the influence of conflict resolution on worker performance. The study population consisted of 1,600 members, with a sample size of 95 determined using the Yamene formula. Utilizing simple linear regression analysis, the study investigated the relationship between conflict and organizational goodwill, the dependency of conflict on unionism, and the effect of conflict on worker performance. The results indicated that conflict positively influences organizational goodwill, conflicts are often dependent on union presence, and conflict resolution positively impacts worker performance within NASU at the University of Ilorin. Consequently, it is concluded that trade unionism significantly contributes to conflict resolution in industries, serving as a pivotal factor in controlling various aspects of production. The study recommended heightened attention to grievances, the incorporation of conflict resolution mechanisms across management levels, and proactive measures to facilitate smoother conflict resolution processes.

According to a study by Okeke *et al* (2021), the ASUU strike undoubtedly exerts significant influence on the psycho-social development of academic staff in Nigerian universities due to government measures taken during strike periods, including termination of ASUU leaders' appointments and financial hardships such as non-payment or reduction of salaries. The study examined the impacts of ASUU strikes on academic staff's psycho-social development in Nigerian universities using an ex-post-facto research design. From a population of 12,587 academic staff across five Federal Government-owned universities in the South-East Zone of Nigeria, 1000 subjects were selected via simple random sampling. Data was collected using a 25-item instrument titled "IASPSDAS," validated by education specialists, with a reliability coefficient (Cronbach Alpha) of 0.78. Research questions were addressed through frequency and mean analysis, revealing associations between ASUU strikes and feelings of frustration, withdrawal, low self-esteem, aggression, deviant behavior, and negative self-concept, among other effects. The researchers recommend that the Federal Government prioritize education and faithfully implement all tertiary education provisions outlined in the National Policy on Education document.

The study by Ndema (2022) evaluated the role of labor unions in safeguarding job security, facilitating timely promotions, organizing training programs, and ensuring prompt payment of pensions and gratuities for retirees in Enugu State. The theoretical framework utilized was the Pluralism theory proposed by Flanders and Fox (1970). Secondary data sources were employed for data collection, and contextual analysis was conducted. Findings revealed a lack of effective unionism in Enugu State since 2015, attributed to a challenging political environment. Consequently, essential welfare provisions such as job security, timely promotions, training programs, and retirement benefits have been irregularly provided, leading to adverse effects on workers' socioeconomic well-being, including poverty, hunger, and decreased work motivation. Recommendations include urging labor unions to advocate for improved welfare provisions in collaboration with government institutions to enhance workers' socio-economic conditions and organizational

performance. Additionally, unions should utilize legal avenues such as the industrial court to address any violations of workers' rights, as demonstrated to be effective in the past.

The study of Ogunode *et al* (2022) on contributions of trade/labour unions (ASUU, NASU, SSANU AND NAAT) to the development of public Universities in Nigeria assessed the contributions and challenges faced by these unions. Utilizing secondary data from both printed and online sources, the study found that trade unions have significantly contributed to university development through securing funding, enhancing human resources, improving infrastructure, and advocating for better salaries and welfare. However, challenges such as internal divisions, political instability, corruption, and insufficient capacity-building programs hinder their effectiveness. Recommendations include treating unions as development partners, implementing agreements, fostering collaboration among unions, enhancing leadership capacity, and combating corruption within union ranks to improve their image and effectiveness.

Kuja *et al* (2022) investigated the impact of trade union strategies on teachers' professional development and welfare in public secondary schools within Nairobi City County, Kenya. Specific objectives included assessing the extent of trade union involvement in teacher professional development, examining the influence of professional development on teachers' career progression, and evaluating teachers' satisfaction with union efforts in sensitizing professional development programs. Employing a descriptive survey design, the study targeted 2236 teachers across 87 schools, along with 11 KNUT and 7 KUPPET officials. A 30% sample size of 671 teachers from 26 schools was selected using stratified random sampling, while union officials were purposively sampled for their specialized insights. Data collection involved interview guides for union officials and utilized descriptive analysis techniques, presenting findings through frequency tables, bar graphs, and pie charts. Audio-recorded interviews were transcribed and compared with field notes for accuracy. Content validity of research instruments was ensured through expert review and piloting, while reliability was confirmed via test-retest methods, yielding a stability coefficient of 0.785 for teachers' questionnaires. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the National Council of Science and Technology. Results indicated a majority agreement among teachers regarding trade union involvement in professional development, with significant influence observed on career progression. However, dissatisfaction was noted among 40.4% of teachers regarding union efforts in sensitizing professional development programs. Additionally, trade unions provided performance certificates to 65.8% of teachers. A positive correlation was found between union strategies for professional development and teachers' welfare, suggesting that these strategies impact teacher welfare positively. Overall, trade union strategies for professional development significantly influence teachers' welfare in public secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya.

Nein & Oyinmiebi (2024) explored the impact of ASUU-Federal Government trade disputes on university education progress in Nigeria, focusing on three South-South universities from 2010 to 2022. These institutions faced disruptions due to disputes between FGN-ASUU, state government-ASUU, or university management, leading to losses in teaching hours and impacting the economy. Scholars debate whether such disputes hinder productivity or catalyze educational and socioeconomic transformation. The study

aimed to identify causes of disputes, evaluate their positive outcomes on infrastructure, and assess effects on educational quality. Using Hegelian Dialectics theory, primary data was collected from Universities in South-South Nigeria; University of Port-Harcourt, Delta State University and Niger Delta University, through questionnaires and focus group discussions. Results show that FGN-ASUU disputes spurred infrastructural advancements and contributed to education quality. Recommendations include adhering to the 26% education budget allocation and honoring ASUU agreements.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

Various theories have been developed to elucidate the dynamics of interactions within social systems, particularly concerning the relationship between the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and its members. The study employs Social Exchange Theory as a suitable framework to explain this interaction. This theory, rooted in social psychology and sociology, revolves around the concept of reciprocity, whereby individuals reciprocate interactions based on the rewards or punishments received. It assumes that individuals are rational actors who calculate costs and benefits in social exchanges, seeking to maximize rewards and minimize costs (Homans, 1961; Dokpesi, 2006). According to Social Exchange Theory, individuals evaluate the outcomes of their social exchanges against other alternatives, and may choose to leave relationships if perceived outcomes fall short. It emphasizes negotiated exchanges between parties, with distributive justice achieved when rewards align with investments. In the context of ASUU, members join the union with the expectation that it will advocate for their welfare. They invest time and effort in the union, expecting reciprocal efforts in return. However, if the union fails to fulfill its role in protecting members' interests, dissatisfaction may arise, leading to a breakdown in the relationship (Cook & Rice, 2003).

Homans (1961) further argues that individuals can become angry when they do not receive a fair rate of return. He posits that distributive justice exists when rewards align with investments, fostering reciprocity of gesture. Therefore, if members perceive a lack of fairness or reciprocity in ASUU's actions, it may lead to frustration and disengagement from the union. In the context of this study, Social Exchange Theory sheds light on ASUU members' expectations and the union's role in advocating for their welfare. Members invest time and resources in the union, expecting it to reciprocate by protecting their interests. However, if the union fails to fulfill its obligations, members may reassess their commitment to the union. The theory emphasizes the importance of fairness and reciprocity in maintaining stable and beneficial exchanges between ASUU and its members. Thus, understanding these dynamics is crucial for ensuring the effectiveness and sustainability of ASUU's advocacy efforts.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The research design chosen for this investigation is descriptive in nature. It employed a cross-sectional survey design, aimed at selecting a representative sample from six public universities in the South-Western States of Nigeria to generalize findings to the entire study population. The study utilized both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods to gather comprehensive insights. By triangulating information obtained through these

methods, a thorough analysis was conducted to assess members' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of ASUU in advocating for enhanced welfare for its staff.

3.2 Population and Sample

The study population consists of ASUU members from six universities: University of Lagos, Obafemi Awolowo University, Federal University of Technology, Akure, University of Ibadan, Ekiti State University, and Olabisi Onabanjo University. As of December 2018, the total ASUU membership across these universities was 5,346 individuals. The study focuses specifically on lecturers who have been employed at these universities since 2015 or earlier, allowing them to provide insights into changes occurring before and after this timeframe. Selection criteria for participants do not consider factors such as academic rank, gender, age, religious affiliation, level of union activism, or ethnic background.

The sample size for each of the six Universities was computed using the Taro Yamane (1964) formula:

$$X = \frac{N}{1+N(e)}$$

e= Level of confidence 95% (standard value of 0.05)

S/N	Universities	Population	Taro Yamane Workings $X = \frac{N}{1+N(e)}$	Sample Size	25% of Population
1.	UNILAG	857	$\frac{857}{1+857(0.05)}$	20	214
2.	OAU	1100	$\frac{1100}{1+1100(0.05)}$	20	275
3.	UI	1456	$\frac{1456}{1+1456(0.05)}$	20	364
4.	FUTA	767	$\frac{767}{1+767(0.05)}$	20	192
5.	EKITI	680	$\frac{680}{1+680(0.05)}$	20	170
6.	OOU	486	$\frac{486}{1+486(0.05)}$	20	122
				120	1336

Based on the Taro Yamane's formula, the minimum sample size is 536; however, 1336 questionnaires were administered in this study representing at least 25% of the total population of 5,346. This enabled us to control for fairness of the spread as well as problem of non-response. However, a total of 822 copies of the questionnaires were retrieved from the field in the six selected universities in the South-Western Nigeria, edited and analyzed for the study.

3.3 Sampling Techniques

Out of the 18 public universities in the South-West of Nigeria, six were purposively selected for their active involvement in ASUU's affairs and their established history. These universities include the University of Lagos, Obafemi Awolowo University, University of

Ibadan, Federal University of Technology Akure, Ekiti State University, and Olabisi Onabanjo University. To ensure representation from each institution, a stratified random sampling approach was employed, categorizing ASUU members by their academic rank from Assistant Lecturer to Professor. At each university, the ASUU branch secretariat assisted in identifying members who had been employed before 2015 using the union register. This list served as the basis for selecting the sample through systematic random sampling, with the sampling interval calculated based on the population size and desired sample size. This approach aimed to achieve balanced representation within the sample. For in-depth interviews (IDI), twelve participants, two from each South Western State, were purposively chosen based on their tenure and extensive knowledge of ASUU's struggles.

3.4 Validity and Reliability of Instrument

The study utilized two main instruments: a questionnaire and in-depth interviews. The questionnaire comprised two sections: Section "A" gathered socio-demographic data from respondents, while Section "B" included both open-ended and closed-ended questions aimed at detailed analysis of the research issues. The questionnaire was directly administered to union members, facilitated by twelve research assistants, with two Graduate Assistants from each of the six selected universities. These assistants were trained on data collection techniques prior to administration.

Content validity was employed to measure the representativeness and sampling adequacy of the responses, ensuring the questionnaire adequately measured the impact of union roles on staff welfare in Nigerian Universities. Additionally, a pilot study was conducted at the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State, South-West Nigeria, involving 30 respondents to test the questionnaire's reliability using Cronbach Alpha, yielding a coefficient of 0.82, indicating internal consistency. The research instruments were further evaluated by the researcher's supervisor and subject matter experts, and their feedback was integrated into the final questionnaire and interview guides.

3.5 Method of Data collection

Due to the nature of the study, the survey method was utilized for data collection, implying that not all individuals in the study population were directly involved. Instead, a representative sample size was selected to stand in for the entire population. The research was conducted and data were gathered in a single instance, employing a one-time survey approach within the survey methodology. This allowed the researcher to collect data from the field once, fulfilling the study's objectives.

3.6 Method of Data Analysis

The study used both qualitative and quantitative data. The quantitative data sets were collected through questionnaires and coded in a relational framework through the Statistical software used – SPSS software. Afterwards, the coding was framed and designed to assign the data accordingly. After coding of quantitative data sets, the qualitative data received through questionnaires were entered into the statistical package for the analysis. For the study, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 25.0 was employed. For the objective, which examined the perception of academic staff on the issue of staff

remunerations in Nigerian universities, inferential approaches were used to achieve the objective. The appropriate inferential statistical technique adopted was the Chi-square test of independence. Decision rule was based on the significance of p-value equals to or less than 0.05.

4.0 Result and Discussion of Findings

Data obtained for this study are presented in this section.

Table 1: Contingency table on appreciable improvement in the remuneration of academic staff since 2015 in the Nigerian universities and gender

Variables		Gender		Total	
		Male	Female		
Do you think there is appreciable improvement in the remuneration of Academic staff since 2015 in the Nigerian Universities	Yes	Count	449	0	449
		Expected Count	374.7	74.3	449.0
	No	Count	230	47	277
		Expected Count	231.2	45.8	277.0
	Don't know	Count	7	89	96
		Expected Count	80.1	15.9	96.0
Total	Count	686	136	822	
	Expected Count	686.0	136.0	822.0	
Chi-Square value = 492.365 Degree of freedom = 2 p-value = 0.00					

Source: Researcher's survey, 2024.

The cross tabulation of the variables in Table 1 was performed to find out if there was gender difference in the perception of an appreciable improvement in the remuneration of academic staff since 2015 in the Nigerian universities; or whether there was association between the perception of an appreciable improvement in the remuneration of academic staff since 2015 in the Nigerian universities, and gender. From Table 1, it seems that there was gender difference between those who claimed that there was no appreciable improvement in the remuneration of academic staff since 2015 in the Nigerian universities. It could be seen that more female respondents had negative perception of the subject being reviewed than were expected (47 vs. 45.8) and more male respondents had positive perception of the subject being reviewed than were expected (449 vs. 374.7). Furthermore, with a Chi-Square of 492.365 (d.f. = 2) the test rejects the null hypothesis ($p = 0.00 < 0.05$) that both variables were not independent. This finding therefore implies that gender did not only influence the submissions of the respondents regarding their perception of appreciable improvement in the remuneration of academic staff since 2015 in the Nigerian universities, it was also associated with it.

Table 2: Contingency table of adequacy of the salaries of academic staff in Nigerian universities before 2015 according respondents' universities

Variables		University						Total	
		Ago-Iwoye	EKSU	FUTA	OAU	UI	UNILAG		
How adequate do you think the salaries of Academic staff in Nigerian Universities before 2015	Adequate	Count	13	6	6	6	6	19	56
		Expected Count	9.2	9.7	9.0	9.3	9.1	9.7	56.0
	Fair	Count	21	25	25	31	25	26	153
		Expected Count	25.1	26.4	24.6	25.3	24.9	26.6	153.0
	Inadequate	Count	93	98	90	90	92	89	552
		Expected Count	90.7	95.4	88.6	91.3	90.0	96.0	552.0
Don't know	Count	8	13	11	9	11	9	61	
	Expected Count	10.0	10.5	9.8	10.1	9.9	10.6	61.0	
Total	Count	135	142	132	136	134	143	822	
	Expected Count	135.0	142.0	132.0	136.0	134.0	143.0	822.0	
Chi-Square value = 19.378 Degree of freedom = 15 p-value = 0.197									

Source: Researcher's survey, 2024.

The cross tabulation of the variables in Table 2 was performed to find out if there was university difference in the perception of the adequacy of the salaries of academic staff in Nigerian universities before 2015; or whether there was association between the perception of the adequacy of the salaries of academic staff in Nigerian universities before 2015, and the universities of respondents. From Table 2 it seems that there is no university difference among those who claimed the inadequacy of the salaries of academic staff in Nigerian universities before 2015. It could be seen that most had negative perception of the subject being reviewed than were expected (93 vs. 90.7; 98 vs. 95.4; 90 vs. 88.6; 92 vs. 90). With a Chi-Square of 19.378 (d.f. = 15) the test accepts the null hypothesis ($p = 0.197 > 0.05$) that both variables are not independent. The implication of this finding is that the perception of the adequacy of the salaries of academic staff in Nigerian universities before 2015 is not influenced by the unique conditions of the respondents' universities. Hence, across board, the salaries of academic staff in universities in Nigeria is inadequate. Before 2015, the salaries and other remunerations paid to academic staff in Nigerian universities was grossly inadequate. The academic staff members were inadequately motivated as a result of poor salaries and other remunerations, and this has been commented to have exacerbated brain drain syndrome in Nigeria in the past. These findings were backed up by the Herzberg's theory of motivational hygiene; which states that poor workers' pay and conditions of service lead to dissatisfaction in the workplace. He noted that an employee will only decide to quit his job if he or she sufficiently disliked the working conditions (Pemedede, 2007).

Comments from the in-depth interview stated that Academic Staff of Nigerian Universities not only find it hard to satisfy their basic needs such as feeding, clothing, and Shelter, work salaries in the government establishments are often irregular. The result is profound unease for those employed and under these circumstances. Staff of these Universities do have low morale and tend to be significantly demotivated. For instance, Johnnie (2008) described an average Nigerian academic Staff as a stranded person who can neither be found at his/her workplace nor his/her home. It therefore, follows that such a person or persons cannot afford to perform at efficiency level both at work and at home (Johnnie, 2008). This behaviour leads to declining productivity not just at individual level but at Union as well as at the level of the nation state (Johnnie, 2008).

Concerns regarding adequate salaries for University Staff and in particular academic staff of the six universities sampled, are thus central to the way I wish they conducted themselves in the discharge of their core functions. Nonetheless, in nominal terms, the total salaries received by the university academic Staff have increased since 2015. Comments from the survey informed that, in real terms, salaries had been significantly lowered in value by macroeconomic effects such as inflation and exchange rates. Consequently, the average University Staff has become economically poorer in comparison to his earnings in previous years since 2015. To quote one of the in-depth interviews conducted on the issue of poor salaries and remunerations with one of the Academic Staff interviewed, he replied “It is a deplorable development that Academic Staff of Universities and ASUU members inclusive, who are some of the brightest workers among the workforce in the country, are rewarded with wages, that are not attractive and are subjected to poor conditions of service”.

The implication therefore, is the growing sense of economic desperation among Academic Staff and ASUU members. According to comments proffered by respondents, many University lecturers have been forced to engage in non-academic related activities so as to maintain a reasonable living standard. For instance, many academic staff serve as consultants to government agencies and other corporate organizations; some operate private business both within and outside the university environment. Studies have recorded similar evidences such as academic staff running taxi business after work, while some have established private business (see Ushie *et al*, 2010). Another Lecturer interviewed at the Ekiti State University stated and I quote that: “If our package is very attractive, you cannot see lecturers engaging in other private businesses to support their income, such as running consultancy services, photocopying and printing services inside and outside the campus”.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

Historically documented disputes between ASUU and the Federal Government have been categorized into two main factors: economic and non-economic. Economic factors primarily revolve around the welfare of academic staff in Nigerian universities, encompassing issues such as inadequate salaries, earned allowances, and deficiencies in physical and learning infrastructure. The study focused exclusively on these economic components. The findings indicate that Nigerian academic staff receive lower salaries and remunerations compared to their counterparts in Africa and developed countries. Notably, during the 2009 negotiation between ASUU and the Federal Government, the lowest salary

structure proposed by ASUU was approved, with promises of gradual increments unfulfilled over the past decade. ASUU's efforts to expedite the collection of earned allowances are commendable, despite political factors hindering payment, including regionalism, neo-patrimonialism, and corruption. These challenges have profound negative implications not only for tertiary education but also for the entire education sector. Disputes over earned allowances persist, with state government-owned universities still awaiting their allowances. In summary, the study concludes that ASUU has significantly contributed to improving the welfare of its members, challenging federal dominance in tertiary education governance and upholding educational standards.

The study's conclusion offers several recommendations to foster constructive dialogue and resolve issues between ASUU and the government, aiming to enhance the welfare of academic staff and the quality of education in Nigerian universities. Firstly, ASUU should continue to provide clear and comprehensive clarifications on its demands to the government, presenting viable alternatives where necessary. In instances where concerns appear minor, ASUU could propose policies to offer practical solutions to the government, drawing from past experiences. Prioritizing negotiation and dialogue over resorting to strike actions for implementing agreements with the government is advised. Governments, including state authorities, should embrace multidimensional approaches proposed by ASUU to address disputes and ensure timely payment of earned allowances to academic staff in state-owned universities. Upholding agreements made during dialogue sessions and addressing conflicts related to education and national development are crucial. Overall, proactive dialogue, mutual respect, and effective conflict resolution mechanisms are essential for promoting the welfare of academic staff and enhancing educational standards in Nigerian universities.

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