

STRIKES IN ESSENTIAL SERVICES: A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE RIGHT TO STRIKE BY LECTURERS IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) is a trade union that was established to protect the welfare of lecturers in Nigeria's public universities. However, following ASUU's inception in 1978, the organisation has encouraged its members to disrupt academic activities at public universities for at least 25 times over a period of 42 years (i.e. 1980 to 2022). In particular, since Nigeria's return to democratic rule in 1999, ASUU's industrial actions have brought about at least 15 semesters or 7 years of disruptions in the academic activities of Nigeria's public universities. Therefore, the study critically examined ASUU's right to strike as well as the implications of outlawing such right by considering the Nigerian public universities as rendering essential services. The study was based on textual data from secondary sources such as published research articles, newspaper publications, historical, government and policy documents from intergovernmental organisations such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The analysis of these textual data suggest that lecturers in the Nigerian public university system are overworked and underappreciated and that incessant strikes embarked upon by ASUU to improve the welfare of its members could have long-term economic repercussions as incessant disruptions in academic activities potentially stifles the labour market of a sustainable pipeline of highly qualified individuals. However, the study also found that if ASUU's right to strike is banned under the guise of providing essential services, Nigerian universities might offer their students poor quality education since underappreciated and overworked lecturers might not give their students the best education possible. The study recommends that the Nigerian government should take a cue from other countries that have effectively reconciled their public university lecturers' right to embark on strike with maintaining a continuous delivery of high standards in public education.

Keywords: *Essential Services; Higher Education; Nigeria University System; Right to Strike.*

1. INTRODUCTION

At a time in human civilisation that developed nations like the United States of America, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Canada, Australia, Japan and China seemed fully transitioned into knowledge-based economies, education might be a key driving force for developing economies like Nigeria to experience enhanced economic development. Nonetheless, Trinh's (2023) bibliometric analysis of how nations could achieve sustained development showed that higher education could equip students with specialised knowledge, competencies, and critical thinking abilities that are necessary to enhance technical knowledge, improve the human development index and address difficult societal issues such as poverty, environmental degradation, hunger, crime, poor healthcare delivery, lack of infrastructure and power. What Trinh (2023) implies is that universities as part of the higher education system are 'essential' to the development of a country. This is because, as supposed 'fountains of knowledge,' universities inculcate in the student the skills that stimulate innovation, propel economic expansion, and advance societal progress (Gao, Ding, Chen & Min, 2019). Consequently, contemporary studies (e.g. Esekpa, 2021; Gao *et al.*, 2019; Trinh, 2023) show that higher education promotes an economy's inclusive growth by lowering inequality and catalysing social mobility. As a result, a country's priority on higher education is not just an investment in her people but also a critical strategy to national advancement. In what seems as acknowledgement and recognition of higher education as a path to national development, the Federal Government of Nigeria through the National Policy on Education (2013, as cited by Dimowo, Omokide & Otaru, 2022) mandates universities to: (a) conduct research preferably by utilising indigenous knowledge to advance Nigeria's development; (b) collaborate with relevant stakeholders such as governments, the private sector and the global community in conducting ground-breaking research and disseminating the findings to the benefit of the larger society, and (c) engage in relatable research or projects and also disseminate practical knowledge that engender a sense of communal existence. Perhaps, the mandate to universities in Nigeria through the National Policy on Education is the basis for the duties of research, instruction (teaching), and community service that are often ascribed to the lecturers in Nigeria's universities (Dimowo *et al.*, 2022).

Meanwhile, in Nigeria, academic, administrative and technical workers' in public universities organise themselves into four trade union groups: the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Senior Staff Association of Nigeria Universities (SSANU), Non-Academic Staff Union

of Educational and Associated Institutions (NASU), and National Association of Academic Technologists [NAAT] (Ogunode, Jegede, Chinwuba & Musa, 2022). However, as these trade unions groups go about their business of seeking enhanced welfare and improved conditions of work for their members (Iguh, Ewulum & Ikpeata, 2021), their activities over the past forty-two (42) years in most cases have resulted in strikes leading to several disruptions of activities strikes in Nigeria's public universities (Anonaba, 2015; Ardo, Ubandawaki & Ardo, 2020).

The study is predicated on the following grounds: First, available contemporary evidence (Dimowo *et al.*, 2022; Gao *et al.*, 2019; Trinh, 2023) suggest that higher education has the capacity to fully transit a country into a knowledge-propelled economy. This position often refers to the seemingly 'essential' nature of university services to human capital development, wealth creation, employment generation, enhancement of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and overall national development (Trinh, 2023). Yet, studies emanating from Nigeria (Ahaotu & Ogunode, 2020; Ardo *et al.*, 2020; Sheidu, 2022) conclude that the incessant and often prolonged incidences of disruption in academic activities by the striking academics, administrative and technical workers have led to these universities being perceived as performing at Talcott Parson's sick (dysfunctional) state (Arogundade, 2023). Similarly, some studies (Ibanga, 2015; Ibrahim, 2015) even consider strike in Nigerian public universities as a major contributor to a declining quality of graduates in the country's labour market over the years. According to Dominguez-Whitehead (2011), given the importance of higher education to national development, the continued incidences and prevalence of strikes and protests within the public university warrant continued researchers' attention. Second, Anyogu and Wosu (2023) observe that perhaps in recognition of need for an undisrupted higher education system to national development, the administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu might have invoked the provisions of Section 43 (1) (a) Trade Dispute Act, 2006 otherwise referred to as the 'no work, no pay rule' (by withholding the salaries of university workers for the entire 8-month period the 2022 industrial action lasted) to discourage Nigerian university workers from disrupting academic activities. Nevertheless, studies (Adeogun, 1972; Anyogu & Wosu, 2023; Okene, 2011) point out that a class struggle between two seemingly unequal actors in the State and the university workers might worsen the already declined state of education in Nigeria since underappreciated and overworked lecturers might not inculcate (in their students), the best possible knowledge that would enhance national development.

Third, Anyogu and Wosu' (2023) study posits that while strike is recognised under Nigerian law, to advance knowledge in the field of employment and labour relations the question of whether certain categories of public sector workers have a right to strike should be conceptualised and investigated by researchers as a distinct problem. As a starting point, Okene (2012) urges scholars to critically investigate the opposition to the public sector's right to strike. Okene's (2012) stance is grounded on the observation that, if section 7(1) of the Trade Disputes Act 2004 is strictly followed, workers in the public sector seemed outlawed from exercising the right to strike. Okene's (2012) position seems consistent with Treu and Felice's (1991) assertion that, over the past 20 years, employment relations in the public service have come under pressure for reforms. Okene (2012) also validates Riccucci's (2011) argument that research concerning public-sector workplace relations ought to be more consistent to curb repeated incidences of trade disputes. In a related study, Ozaki (1987) observes that the government's approval and execution of austerity measures in the public service – an area it could most effectively and easily regulate in terms of employment—has caused workplace relations in the public sector experience a difficult patch in many countries of the world. As a result, Ozaki (1987) notes that it appears reasonable to focus on the challenges facing the harmonious coexistence of actors in the public sector workplace relations. After all, a recent study by Timothy and Okene (2023) observes that healthy workplace relations are germane for sustainable growth in Nigeria.

Thus, to address the three research gaps mentioned above, the study's overarching objective is to investigate the intricacies surrounding ASUU's right to strike and the potential consequences of prohibiting such rights by considering public university education in Nigeria as an essential service. Arising from this overarching objective, the specific focus of the study is to:

- i. Examine ethical and legal grounds for the justification of ASUU's right to strike in relation to international best labour practices.
- ii. Discuss possible benefits from the federal government's prohibition of ASUU's right to strike on the basis of providing essential services.
- iii. Proffer practical steps for key actors in the industrial relations system of public university education in Nigeria to achieve a balance between ASUU's right to strike and the country's dire need for quality and uninterrupted public educational services.

The study is warranted because university workers' strike over the years have brought disruptions to academic calendar with attendant implications for: (i) student's progress with knowledge acquisition, (ii) public universities' reputations for producing graduates lacking in employability skills, and (iii) Nigeria's overall socioeconomic advancement. Besides, in the context of State-funded public university education, this study is one of the very few investigations from Nigeria that addresses a crucial gap in the knowledge of how to strike a balance between lecturers' constitutionally guaranteed rights and the need for uninterrupted quality public service.

Additionally, the study seems unique because it attempts to examine the often interwoven workplace rights and fundamental human rights by contrasting these rights with the idea that public education is an 'essential' service that should be provided continuously. Furthermore, the study intends to add to the body of knowledge in human resource management and employment relations with practical implications for the enhancement of the service delivery of public sector universities in Nigeria in the areas of governance and policymaking. For instance, findings emanating from the study could influence policy decisions by providing a detailed perspective that might result in more efficient procedures for resolving industrial disputes within Nigeria's public university workplace relations system. This study helps to balance the needs of the larger society for uniform and quality educational services with the interests of the members of the academic community.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Guided by the research objectives, this segment of the study combines conceptual, empirical, and theoretical analyses of relevant extant literature to provide a solid basis for grasping the research problem. The conceptual review segment lays out the definitions of the key concepts that the researcher considers important to the research. The theoretical review segment analyses the applicability and limitations of pertinent theories or ideologies in relation to the research. The empirical review segment concludes the literature review by highlighting the patterns, trends, and gaps in the body of knowledge. This multipronged approach guarantees a comprehensive review of the relevant literature whilst laying the foundation for a nuanced investigation of the intricacies surrounding public university lecturers' right to strike in Nigeria and the potential consequences of prohibiting such rights by the State under the guise of protecting an 'essential' service.

2.1 Concept of Essential Services

Berry and Stuart (2021) describe essential services workers as individuals whose schedule of daily duties involve the provision of services that attend to the basic needs, safety, health and wellbeing of the public such as members of the armed forces, police, hospitals, fire-fighters, electricity, water, postal and telecommunications. Similarly, Pérez-Muñoz (2023) explains that essential services are services rendered by individuals through their organisations in an industrial relations system that if interrupted, might bring about substantial discomfort or harm to the general public. The study by Pérez-Muñoz (2023) further notes that ideally, the services rendered by organisations such as armed forces, police, emergency medical workers and firefighters are considered ‘essential’ because if interrupted, might bring about substantial discomfort or harm to the general public. However, in recent times, some national governments have considered the possibility adding the educational sector to the list of essential service providers. This considering, according to Pérez-Muñoz (2023) implies that workers in the educational institutions potentially face fresh huddles on their freedom to strike including outright prohibitions.

Similarly, in a study commissioned by the Sectoral Policies Department of the International Labour Office, Geneva, Switzerland, Knabe and Carrion-Crespo (2019) posit that services that deliver public goods, sustain the wellbeing of the citizenry and contribute to the overall enhancement of the society and economy as delivered by important sectors such as health, utilities (electricity, water etc.), education, fire-fighters, police, army, transport, fire-fighting, postal and telecommunications are considered to be in the best interest of the public. As such, most member States of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) have deployed a number of measures to ensure uninterrupted delivery of such basic services, by declaring them as essential services (Knabe & Carrion-Crespo, 2019). In other words, Knabe and Carrion-Crespo (2019) imply that through the instruments of national legislation and jurisprudence, the idea of ‘essential services’ in practice, limits the workers’ rights on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise, (ILO Convention No. 87 of 1948) particularly, in the public sector of most member States.

Consequently, Knabe and Carrion-Crespo’s (2019) study draws attention to the excessively wide definition of the term “essential services” by most ILO member States with the disregard in their definition of services that are essential in the strict sense of the term. Accordingly, Knabe and Carrion-Crespo (2019) posits that to achieve an ideal definition of essential services, ILO member States must consider factors such as work conditions, environmental circumstances as well as the

possibility and probability that public safety or wellbeing might directly suffer due to disruption in such services. According to Le Roux and Cohen (2017), on the basis of Conventions 87 (Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise) and 98 (Collective Bargaining and Protection of the Right to Organise) of the ILO, the concept of essential services must be defined or interpreted from the very narrow perspective of services that if interrupted would threaten or expose the life and personal safety or health of the whole or a segment of the populace to acute danger. Le Roux and Cohens (2017) noted that with the exception of South Africa and to a little extent, Namibia, the rest of the South African sub-regional countries including Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe seem to ignore the narrower conceptualisation of essential services that focuses on the essential service itself rather than the broader route of conceptualisation based on the sectors in which such services are rendered.

In a related study, Pillay (2001) reports that Section 203 of South Africa's 'Labour Relations Act (LRA), 1995 construes essential services as services rendered by organisations through their workers that if interrupted endanger the life, personal safety or health of the generality or any part of the populace. It also includes, services rendered by the South African law enforcement agencies and parliament. In similar vein, according to conceptualisation of the South African Essential Services Committee, for a service to qualify as 'essential' within South Africa's industrial relation system, such services must face the threat of either partial or full interruption, irrespective of whether such interruption. Within the ambit of this interpretation, services that the interruption could be feasibly avoided through the outsourcing of labour or services that industrial actions are unlikely to be interrupted perhaps due to mechanisation or computerization might not be designated as essential (Pillay, 2001).

Similarly, Kanyangi's (2021) study suggests that workers in Kenya do not enjoy an absolute to embark on strike. This position is in consonance with Section 80 (1) (a) and (b) of Kenya's Labour Relations Act 2007 that construes 'essential services' as such services rendered by organisations through their employees that if interrupted, would expose the life of an individual or health of the public or any portion of the population to danger.

In Nigeria, Iguh, Ewulum and Ikpeata (2021) reports that by virtue of Section 48(1) of the Trade Disputes Act (TDA) Cap T8, LFN 2004 together with Paragraph 2 (c) of the first schedule to the

TDA essential services comprise any service that is put in place, rendered or sustained by the local, state and federal government of Nigeria, statutory authority or private enterprises for the maintenance of ports, harbors, docks or aerodromes or for, or in relation to the movement or transportation of individuals, goods or livestock's by means of the air, rail, road, sea or river.

According to Iguh, Ewulum and Ikpeata (2021), the extensive legislative provision in Nigeria regarding essential services in particular, outlaws workers or their trade unions as well as employers or the association of employers from embarking on strike. As such, potential defaulters by virtue of Section 41(1) of the TDA risk a penalty of ₦10, 000 or six months imprisonment or both. Besides, the President of Nigeria is empowered by Section 1(1) of the TDA (Essential Services), Cap 433 LFN 1990 to proscribe trade unions or employers' associations for their failure to provide essential services (Iguh et al. 2021). Nevertheless, Calitz and Conradie (2013) noted the concern by stakeholders such as parents, guardians and the general public regarding the disruption of academic activities by teachers strikes has added to call that educational sector should be included in the definition of essential service.

2.2 Concept of Strike

Obindu and Kelechi (2021) describe strike as essential instrument in the armoury of trade unions worldwide for the defense and propagation of the rights and collective interests of their members. This definition construes the right to strike as a consequent counter-veiling force of workers against to the oppressive powers of the employers, the State and agents of the State. Consequently, Obindu and Kelechi (2021) posit that the relevance and potency of workers and their trade unions heavily rest on their exercise of the right to strike. According to Obindu and Kelechi (2021), strikes have been a prominent feature of Nigeria's industrial and employment relations system since the 20th century with the country's educational sector the most affected among other sectors of Nigeria's economy.

In a related development, Adavbiele (2015, as cited in Obindu & Kelechi, 2021) recalls that worker's strike began in Nigeria during the early 20th century with strikes by Aba women (1929), Railway workers (1938), Nigerian Union of Railway [men] (1941), General strike (1949), UAC employees (1947), Coal miners (1949), Mercantile workers (1950) and Airways Workers union (1959) constituting watersheds in the Nigeria's struggle for independence from Britain and in the history of labour movement in the country (Wogu (1969, as cited in Obindu & Kelechi, 2021).

In consonance with Section 48(1) of the Trade Disputes Act, 2004, strike or industrial action comprises both '*cessation of work*' and '*refusal to continue to work*'. Particularly, Section 48(1) of the Trade Disputes Act, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 construes '*cessation of work*' as purposefully working slower than normal or less efficiently than usual and '*refusal to continue to work*' as an unwillingness to work efficiently, or quickly as usual (Iguh et al., 2021).

From the perspective of socialism and democracy, Antentas (2022) suggests that strikes are integral part of social movements that embody wider issues in the society. In similar measures, the studies by Hodder and Mustchin (2024), Nok-Chun, Schaller and Skaperdas (2020) as well as Pheiffer and Mphidi (2024) collectively construe strike as collective actions involving dissent and strategic disruptions by workers against management decisions aimed at balancing management's wield of power. Accordingly, related extant studies (e.g. Daniluk-Jarmoniuk, 2020; Hamark, 2022; Lyddon, 2021; Vesper & König, 2022) describe strike as a potent instrument deployed by trade unions to express their grievances with the State or their employers as well as collectively press home the demands of their members which includes but not limited to mass of stoppage of production or the act of quitting work pending the negotiated settlement of their demands. Similarly, Uzoh's (2021) study conceptualises a strike as the collective bargaining by workers through their unions for enhanced working conditions.

From the perspectives of law and human rights, Brudney (2021) as well as Essex and Weldon (2022) describe strikes as fundamental right of workers to counter or oppose perceived oppressive policies by the State or unfair labour practices by the employer. Particularly, Brudney (2021) describes the right to right as an expression of trade union freedoms but also a fundamental human right aimed at protesting and guarding against perceived injustices or oppressive tendencies in an industrial relations system.

According to Brudney (2021), while strikes empower workers to lawfully obstruct production such rights are not absolute. However, Okene (2009) observes that the exercise of worker's right to strike in Nigeria are marred by derogations and restrictions under the guise of protecting essential services by the State leading to infractions on international labour standards established by the International Labour Organisation

2.2 Theoretical Framework of the Study

The study is anchored on the pluralist and radical theories of employment and labour relations. The pluralist and radical theories are part of the three-arm frames of reference in employment and labour relations by Alan Fox that also includes the unitary theory. According to Gold Kaufman, Barry, Wilkinson, Lomas, and Gomez (2021), the pluralist and radical theories of employment and labour relations came out of studies conducted by Alan Fox in 1966 and 1974 as frames of reference models to explain the nature and consequences of employee-employer relationships in organisations. The Fox's (1966, 1974) frames of reference in employment and labour relations started off as just pluralist and unitary theories but later expanded to include the radical perspective at various points in time.

In a related study, Gold (2021) observes that the transformation of Fox's frame of reference in employment and labour relations at some point in time involves the inclusion of neo-pluralism as a subtype theory within the three principal frames of reference in unitary, pluralist, and radical theories.

Nonetheless, the basic assumption behind the Alan Fox's (1966; 1974) pluralist theory of employment and labour relations is that work systems in organisations is a complex system that involve several individuals and interest groups that are propelled by legitimate but often contrasting objectives. In this regard, platforms or avenues such as trade unions, collective bargaining, and conflict resolution mechanisms exist to balance these often-contrasting interests and manage inherent opposing objectives of several individuals and interest groups within and outside the workplace (Dundon, Wilkinson & Ackers, 2023; Salesnia, 2024).

Therefore, within the confines of the pluralist theory, one might argue that the disruption of academic activities in Nigerian public universities as a result of ASUU's strike and the Nigerian government 'no work, no pay' policy which led to the non-payment of striking public university workers salary in 2022 both represent conflicting actions by two separate interest groups that are propelled by legitimate but contrasting objectives.

Particularly, ASUU's industrial action from the perspective of the pluralist theory is a struggle by a trade union through collective action to achieve the greater good of promoting workers' rights and tackling exploitation by the Nigerian State. In the same vein, President Buhari administration's 'no work, no pay' policy which led to the non-payment of striking public university workers salary

in 2022 represents the State's exercise of authority and sovereignty in a pluralist industrial relations system (Okene, 2012).

In a related development, the basic assumption of the radical theory of employment relations (Fox, 1966; 1974) is that power imbalances and conflicts characterise workplace relationships between actors (e.g., employers, employees, and the state) within an industrial relations system (Barry & Wilkinson, 2021; Cradden, 2011; Kaufman *et al.*, 2021). What this implies from the perspective of radical theory was that trade unions functioned within an industrial relations system to advance workers' rights, mobilise collective action to confront exploitation (Barry & Wilkinson, 2021; Kaufman *et al.*, 2021).

Therefore, within the confines of the radical theory, one might argue that the disruption of academic activities over the years as a result of ASUU's strike in Nigerian public universities was a part of the struggle via collective action to achieving the greater good of promoting workers' rights and tackling exploitation by the Nigerian State. Similarly, the radical theory could be used to explain the President Buhari administration's 'no work, no pay' policy which led to the non-payment of striking public university workers salary in 2022.

According to Okene (2012), study implies that a strike by government workers amounts to a rejection of the State's authority and sovereignty. Consequently, Okene (2012) observes from the standpoint of radical theory that the State's exercise of authority and sovereignty in an industrial relations system is an indication that the government is unwilling to cede territory to any individual or group representing collective interests, like the unions of workers in Nigerian universities such as ASUU, SSANU, NASU, and NAAT.

Further from the perspective of the radical theory of employment relations, university workers' strike might have been construed as an attack or a vote of no confidence and an affront to sovereign authority of Nigeria, which every (sovereign) State must take confrontational steps (e.g. 'no work, no pay' policy or prohibition of workers' strikes in public universities as an essential service) to challenge. Therefore, the 'no work, no pay' policy or possible prohibition of strikes by university workers under the guise of 'essential services' (as enshrined in Sections 7(1) and 48(1) of the Trade Disputes Act, 2004) might be a way of protecting the Nigerian State's sovereignty.

However, despite the useful application of the Alan Fox's pluralist and radical theories in analysing and providing understanding regarding industrial disputes (e.g. Barry & Wilkinson, 2021;

Cradden, 2011; Kaufman *et al.*, 2021; Nwanze & Akudo, 2021), these theories have been subjected to some measure of criticisms in extant literature. For instance, Barry and Wilkinson (2021) suggest that although Alan Fox's pluralist theory purports to promote industrial democracy, the theory's assumption that an industrial relations system involves several individuals and interest groups that are propelled by legitimate but often contrasting objectives promotes adversarial relationships between actors such as workers, employers and the State to the detriment of promoting a harmonious and fair industrial relations system.

Similarly, critics (Brandl, 2022; Cradden, 2011; Hameed, 1982; Siebert, Martin, Bozic & Docherty, 2015) frown at the radical theory's emphasis on structural inequality and class conflict in industrial relations systems. Particularly these critics consider the radical theory's penchant for ignoring the opportunities for cooperation in workplace relations as unduly conflictual. Nonetheless, following more than 50 years since their emergence, the Alan Fox's unitarist, pluralist, and radical theories have been applied in more than 700 peer-reviewed studies to explain and aid understanding in the areas of labour ideologies and tactics, workforce governance policies and employment and labour relations paradigms and perspectives (Gold, 2021; Kaufman *et al.*, 2021).

2.3 Review of Empirical Literature

Emudainohwo's (2024) study compares the relevant statutory provisions guiding workers' right to strike under the Nigerian jurisprudence with the best international practices for exercising workers' right strike as stipulated by ILO's Committee on Freedom of Association (CFA). The study found that under Nigeria's industrial relations system, both the Trade Dispute Act (TDA) and the Trade Unions Act(TUA) place some onerous statutory conditions that stifle workers right to strike.

Particularly, Emudainohwo (2024) observes that the National Industrial Courts of Nigeria (NICN) in several of its decisions tends to follow the narrow interpretation of cases involving trade disputes. For instance, in the case of *Chigozie Sunday Nzekwe v Geoplex Drillteq Limited and another* NICN held that in consideration of the provisions of the TDA, the workers embarked on an illegitimate industrial action. Similarly, the NICN in *Attorney-General of Rivers State v Dr George Matthew Ela and others* as well as the case of *Greenville Liquefied Natural Gas Co. Ltd v Nigerian Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers* pronounced the workers in both cases

acted unlawfully for their failure to comply with the express provisions of sections 18(1) of the TDA and 31(6) of the TUA.

However, Emudainohwo (2024) concludes that under the strict observance of the international standards for workers' right to strike as stipulated under ILO's CFA requires the NICN to duly consider and respect the provisions of section 254 (2) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended).

In comparison with jurisdictions such as Ghana, South Africa and the United Kingdom, Anyogu and Wosu's (2023) study critically investigated the workers right to strike against available legal instrument in Nigeria. The study's analysis of secondary sources such as legal statutes, decided cases and relevant research reveals that unlike jurisdictions such as South Africa and Ghana, there is a lack of a statutory provision that expressly guarantees workers' right to strike in Nigeria.

Particularly, Anyogu and Wosu (2023) concludes that by laying down highly stringent conditions before strikes become lawful in Nigeria, section 18(1) of the Trade Dispute Act (in reality) prohibits workers' right to strike. The study concludes that in the absence of the right to strike, the workers and their unions become mere toothless bulldogs. Consequently, the study recommends that in tandem with international best practices such as ILO Convention 87 (Freedom of Association and Protection of Right to Organise) and 98 (Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining), the spirit and letter of labour statutes in Nigeria should be amended without delay.

In a related study, Ekumankama's (2023) critical review of secondary data suggests that the spirit of the law in relation to section 18(1) of the Trade Disputes Act 2006 merely spells out the conditions of conciliation, arbitration and mediation to prevent frivolous and unreasonable industrial actions by workers in Nigeria. According to Ekumankama (2023), the presence of international and national statutes such Article 8(1)(a) of the International Convention on economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Article 11 of the African charter on Human and Peoples rights (Ratification and Enforcement) Act and section 40 of the 1999 Constitution, Federal Republic of Nigeria are guaranteed by the Constitution and International Conventions as antidotes for unlawful attempts by government to ban or negatively restrict the existence of trade unions who can call out their members to engage in industrial actions.

Similarly, Nwogu and Anumadu (2023) examines the implications of Section 43 of the Trade Disputes Act (otherwise known as the 'no work no pay' principle) for the exercise of workers'

right to strike and industrial harmony in Nigeria's industrial relations system. The study was conducted against the backdrop of international statutes, conventions, treaties and national laws that provide for the right of workers to freely associate and form trade unions for the protection of their interests.

Nwogu and Anumadu's (2023) analysis of secondary data shows that Section 43 of the Trade Disputes Act was drafted into our statutes to discourage workers and their unions from indiscriminate industrial actions or to reduce incessant strikes in the polity due their adverse effects on the Nigeria's economy and manpower utilisation. And also concludes that some pieces of legislation like Section 43 of the Trade Disputes Act severely restrict workers right to strike in Nigeria. To ensure industrial harmony and a balanced employment and labour relations, the study recommends that the 'no work, no pay' rule in Section 43 becomes amended while organised labour prior to embarking on strikes should always conduct thorough impact assessment checks.

Similarly, Iguh et al. (2021), employs doctrinal research method to investigate the right of workers to strike in Nigeria viz a viz whether the prohibition of industrial actions in Nigeria's essential services sector is justifiable. The study's analysis of findings shows that against the provisions of the highest law in Nigeria (i.e. the Constitution), a subordinate law under the Trade Disputes Act illegitimately circumscribes the workers' rights to freedom of association and strike. Iguh *et al.* (2021) further observes that the Trade Disputes Act imposes great restrictions on essential services workers' exercise of their right. Additionally, the study finds that as a ploy to divest the fundamental rights of workers to strike as well as against the provisions of the Trade Disputes Act the Joint Consultative Committee (JAC) neither promotes nor enhances the welfare of the essential services workers.

Against the backdrop of the right to strike as the cornerstone of modern industrial relations system, Iguh et al. (2021) dissect the implications of the prohibition of strike under Section 18 of the Trade Disputes Act (TDA) particularly in relation to the procedural requirements that must be fulfilled before workers can lawfully embark on strike in Nigeria. The study finds that based on Section 18 of the TDA workers in Nigeria cannot embark on strike without taking the steps of reconciliation, arbitration and adjudication to resolve a dispute.

Additionally, the Iguh, et al. (2021) finds that the TDA outlaws strikes once any of these steps has been set in motion while workers are prohibited from embarking on strike to protest the award of an Arbitration Tribunal or of the decision of National Industrial Court. The study further finds that

workers who embark on strikes against the provisions of the TDA can be prosecuted and denied their wages. In view of the findings, Iguh et al. (2021) conclude that the provisions of the TDA makes it practically impossible for workers to lawfully embark on a strike under any circumstance in Nigerian. This according to Iguh et al. (2021) implies that strikes under the present day Nigeria are illegal and that workers in Nigeria practically lack any right to embark on strike.

However, Giame, Awhefeada and Edu's (2020) study posits that although Section 18 of the Trade Disputes Act portends a far reaching effect on Nigerian workers, the position that as such, workers in Nigeria seem to have absolutely lost their right to strike is unfounded.

Particularly, Giame et al.'s (2020) critical examination of relevant laws and positions of extant literature and judicial pronouncements suggests that while there seem to be some apparent restrictions on worker's exercise of the right to strike in Nigeria, the relevant laws (particularly Section 18 (1) TDA and Section 31 (6) (e) Trade Union Act) in the event that negotiations fail, do not absolutely ban or remove the deployment of industrial actions by trade unions to press home their demands. Instead, Giame et al. (2020) posits that the relevant statutes such as Section 18 (1) TDA and Section 31 (6) (e) TUA are enacted to curb incessant, unwarranted and indiscriminate deployment of strikes by trade unions as instrument of coercion in Nigeria.

Giame et al.'s (2020) position stems from the provisions of Article 8 (1) (a) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Article 11 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights (Ratification and Enforcement) Act and Section 40 of the 1999 Constitution that collectively guarantees the right of workers to strike under the recognition of freedom of association through one's trade union of their choice for the protection and defence of worker's interest.

Besides, Giame et al.'s (2020) contends that workers' right to strike is fundamental in Nigeria to the extent of the supremacy of the Constitutional provisions such as Sections 40 and 45 of the 1999 Constitution. The study further underscores the right of workers to strike in Nigeria through Section 43 of the TDA which recognises trade unions' right to picket workplaces as well as the immunity of workers exercising such right in a peaceful manner.

According to TEMPLARS (2024), the Supreme Court of Nigeria's landmark pronouncement in the case of *National Union of Electricity Employees v. Bureau of Public Enterprises* laid down a marker concerning the right of workers to strike in Nigeria wherein the apex Court held that the provisions under

sections 40, 37, 38, 39 and 41 of the 1999 Constitution which fundamentally guarantees workers' right to strike has to be read and subjected to the principle of what is reasonable within a democratic society.

This according to TEMPLARS (2024) suggests that trade union's right under section 40 of the 1999 Constitution along other fundamental rights provisions guaranteed under the 1999 Constitution, are not absolute. However, the study also concludes that notwithstanding, the rights of trade unions to embark on strike must always be subject to extant laws in Nigeria otherwise the exercise of such rights would be declared unlawful and illegal.

In a related study, the Enugu Division of the National Industrial Court of Nigeria [NICN] (2022) in the case of *Enugu State Government v NUT* held that having issued and served the legally required prior notices, the combined effect of sections 45(1)(a) & (b) of the 1999 Constitution, ILO Conventions, sections 7(6)(a) and 8(2) of the Trade Disputes Essential Services Act (TDESA) and section 48(1)(b) of the TDA is that public primary teachers in Enugu State under the aegis of the National Union of Teachers (NUT) are not essential services workers.

Particularly, the NICN with respect to *Enugu State Government v NUT* held that to the extent of their conflict with SS. 40 and 45(1)(a)&(b) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, sections 7(1)(b)(vi) & 8(b) of the TDESA are void while section 48(1)(b) of the TDA along with Paragraph 1 of the First Schedule of TDA are also void to the extent of classifying public primary school teachers in Enugu State as essential services.

The incessant and often prolonged incidences of disruption in academic activities by the striking academic, administrative and technical workers have come under repeated policy, administrative and research scrutiny (Ahaotu & Ogunode, 2020; Ardo et al., 2020). In terms of policy, Anyogu and Wosu (2023) recalled that perhaps in recognition of need for an undisrupted higher education system to national development the administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu might have invoked the provisions of Section 43 (1) (a) Trade Dispute Act, 2004 otherwise referred to as the 'no work, no pay rule' to discourage Nigerian university workers from disrupting academic activities by embarking on strike.

According to Anyogu and Wosu (2023), the application of the of the 'no work, no pay rule' principle to withhold the salaries of the Nigerian university workers by the Federal Government

of Nigeria means the striking university workers were not paid for the entire 8-month period the strikes lasted in 2022.

Meanwhile, Arogundade's (2023) study shows that following the formation of ASUU as a trade union in 1978, the body (ASUU) has over the course of forty-two (42) years (i.e. between 1980 and 2022) propelled its members to embark on strike on twenty-five (25) occasions. Arogundade (2023) also found that for more than four decades following the formation of ASUU to protect the collective interest of academics, strike has become a reoccurring feature of workplace relations within Nigeria's public university system to such extent that these universities could be perceived as performing at Talcott Parson's sick (dysfunctional) state.

According to latest investigations, following Nigeria's return to civil rule in 1999 ASUU strikes have occurred for a cumulative period of five (5) years (Ahiuma-Young, 2022) and fifteen (15) semesters [seven years] (Onyirioha, 2022) leading to a recurring loss of man-hours and disruption in students' academic pursuit.

In a related development, Obindu and Kelechi (2021) the implications of workers' strike action in our educational system. The study with its focuses on industrial action as a vehicle for achieving improved conditions of service by educational workers concludes that given the often-prolonged nature and frequency of strikes, Nigeria's educational system over the past two decades negatively impacted on the polity as students are unable to graduate within the prescribed period.

This therefore leaves these students and their families often disappointed with elevated levels of stress. Similarly, Shimawua's (2020) investigation of the role of trade unions' industrial actions in the performance of Nigeria's public universities shows that incessant and rampant strikes have led to loss productivity with negative effect on student's academic performance. Besides, Yohanna and Diggah's (2022) study concludes that due to the incessant occurrences of strikes, the students produced by public universities in Nigeria University seem half-baked.

Similarly, studies conducted with respect to the implications of the workers' exercise of the right to strike from different parts of Nigeria such as the North-east (Hassan & Shuaib, 2024), North-central (Mohammed & Hammangabdo, 2022), North-west (Nwagbala, Okafor & Ani, 2023), South-east (Abaekwume, Agundu, Agoha & Obinna-Akakuru, 2022; Ewa & Eze, 2023; Nwagbala, Okafor & Ani, 2023), South-south (Nein & Oyinmiebi, 2024), South-west (Awe, Tilije, alogun & Adeyanju, 2024; Oladejo & Ijimmyowa, 2024), concludes that the frequent strike by

academic staff of public universities in Nigeria have adversely reduced the quality of graduates from the federal universities in Nigeria as well as the global ratings of these universities.

Additionally, relevant extant literature concerning the implications of incessant and rampant industrial actions in Nigeria's public educational system such as Ogban, Otu and Utu-Baku (2023), Omozusi, William and Adeyanju (2023) and Murtala, Nelly and Ogunode (2022) suggest that the workers' strikes negatively impacted on the smooth planning of educational activities as well as the psychosocial and psychological wellbeing of students in Nigeria' public universities.

Similarly, Nwajioha, Achilike, Egwu, Ede and Agwu's (2021) study suggests that ASUU's incessant strike threatens to the enhancement of literacy in Nigeria as alters the academic calendar leading to a haphazard implementation of the academic curriculum. Nevertheless, given the long lingering and negative implications of strike the students, lecturers, universities and the Nigerian society, Abraham (2023) concludes that the management of strike in Nigeria through effective dispute settlement demands the attention of all relevant stakeholders such the government, education managers and academics.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study was anchored on data collected by the researcher from secondary sources. Particularly, the study utilised data from secondary sources such as published research articles, newspaper publications, as well as historical, government and intergovernmental policy documents. Literature (Kumara, 2022; Wickham, 2019) described secondary data research as the utilisation of good-fit data collected or documented by other researchers to solve pertinent research problems.

However, Wickham (2019) posited that in utilising secondary data to solve a research problem, the researcher should be mindful of the possible limitations of such research approach such as the secondary information being too outdated to deal with the issues of the present and also, the inherent inability of secondary data to statistically establish clear causal relationships among the contending variables.

Consequently, Lyons, Houghton, and Majumdar (2023) noted that researchers should be aware and therefore take important steps to mitigate data fitness, data quality, and ethical and legal risks of using secondary data for research. Figure 1 shows the search results of the relevant extant literature as well as the procedure that was adopted by the researcher in including the secondary

data that were used in the study. Particularly, the researcher utilised the PROMPT approach - this relates to the presentation, relevance, objectivity, method, provenance and timeliness of the included secondary data (i.e. journal articles).

Besides, by using secondary data, the researcher conducted a thorough, effective, economical, and time-saving study. Also, the thoroughness of the choice of secondary data allowed the researcher access to large volume and high-quality extant data that have been collected by different researchers on the subject matter at different points in time, providing valuable insights into trends and developments in the field of employment and labour relations. Additionally, by using already-existing data, the researcher was able to allocate scarce resources more effectively and efficiently, thereby being able to save money, time, and labour that would have been spent on planning how to recruit and access potential participants, data collection, and data cleaning (Lyons et al., 2023).

In addition, due to the use of secondary data, the study overcame the ethical dilemmas regarding participant consent and confidentiality associated with quantitative surveys. Wickham (2019) argued that the use of secondary data not only advances knowledge by highlighting areas that required further investigation but also enables the researcher to examine a delicate subject (such as the idea of education as a necessary service) without unduly burdening potential participants who might be too sensitive or emotionally invested to contribute to the research problem objectively.

To achieve this aim, the researcher searched secondary databases such as ERIC (Education Resources Information Center), GOOGLE SCHOLAR, SCOPUS and PROQUEST for relevant secondary data (i.e. scholarly journal articles). The key search terms (i.e. keywords) employed by the researcher include 'right to strike,' 'Nigeria public universities,' 'essential services in education,' 'ASUU strike,' 'labour disputes in education', 'international labour standards in education' and, 'industrial action in universities'. To ensure that up-to-date information were retrieved, the researcher limited the search to relevant studies published in revered journals within the last five years (i.e. 2020 to 2024).

The initial search of the databases (i.e. ERIC, GOOGLE SCHOLAR, SCOPUS and PROQUEST) produced seventy-five (75) peer reviewed journal articles that were written in English Language. The seventy-five (75) articles were further pruned down to thirty (30) studies that were utilised as part of empirical review in Section 2.3 of the study. Figure 1 shows the search results and the

procedures for the selection of the thirty (30) studies there were critically analysed by the researcher.

This study was solely based on textual data that was extracted by the researcher from secondary sources. The first limitation of conducting a research based on secondary data is that the researcher does not have a control over the objectivity of third-party data. Besides, conducting a study solely based on secondary sources of information such extant literature might overlook context-specific factors of a research problem or nuanced understandings that come from primary data that are collected from the lived-experiences of key stakeholders in this case, lecturers, students, and policymakers in government.

Nevertheless, the researcher ensured that the study specifically utilised secondary data that were retrieved from highly revered research databases. Additionally, the textual data that were extracted from these revered journal articles were critically appraised to understand their main arguments as well as determine, note and summarise their key contributions to the research objectives.

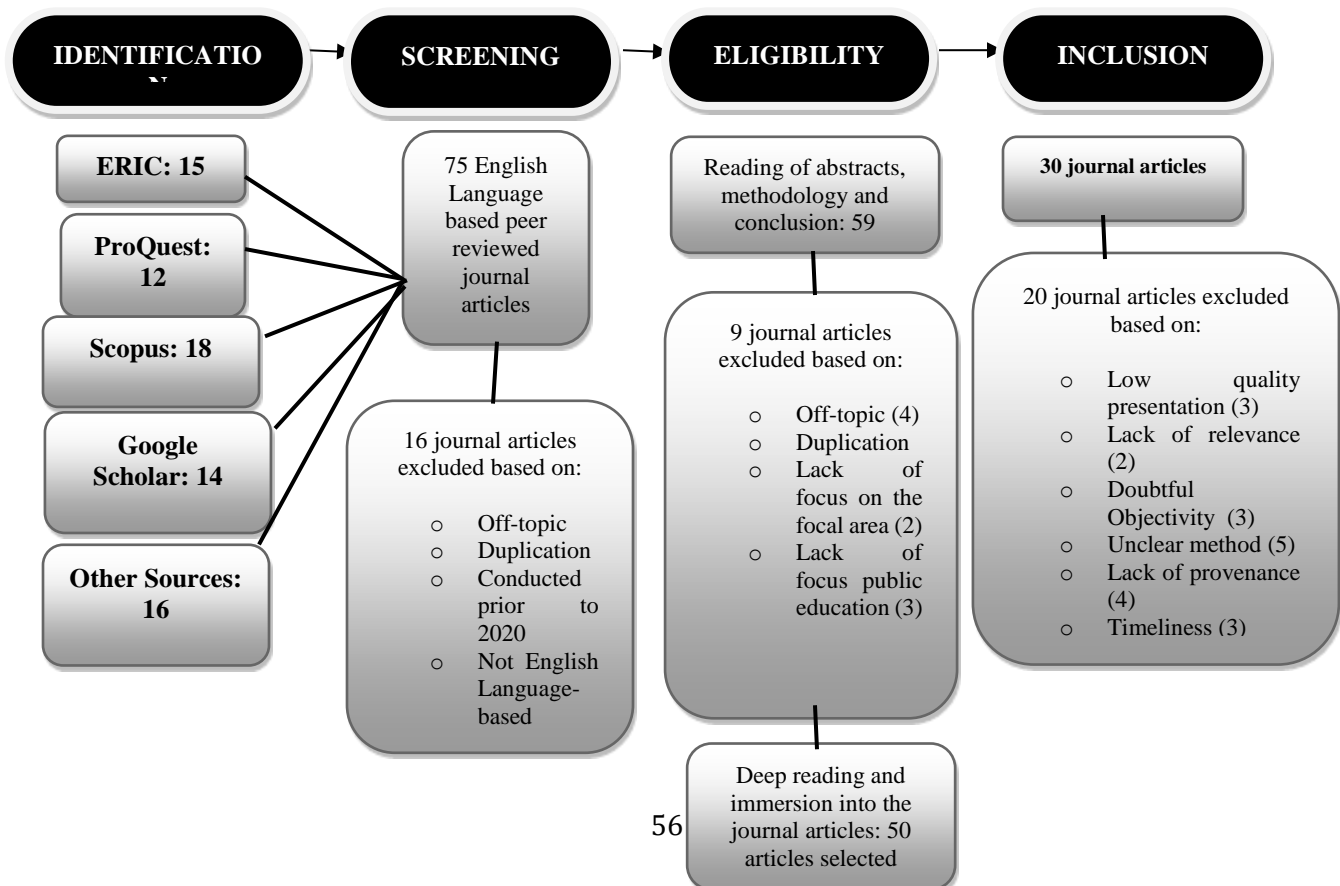


Figure 1: PRISMA framework showing the search and inclusion of secondary data utilised for the study.

Source: adapted from Trifu, Smidu, Badea, Bulboaca and Haralambi (2022)

4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Analysis of Secondary Data

The study was designed to critically examine ASUU's right to strike and the implications of outlawing ASUU's right to strike by considering the Nigerian public universities as rendering essential services. The analysis of textual data followed the pruning down of the secondary data to thirty (30) peer-reviewed journal articles (see Figure 1). The secondary data involving textual information were manually analysed by the researcher. The manual analysis of the textual data was conducted through two major steps. First, the researcher read each of the textual data's abstract, introduction, method, findings, discussion, and conclusions.

Second, the researcher proceeded to critically appraise the textual data, to grasp the main arguments as well as to determine, note and summarise the key contributions of each study to the research objectives. The summarisation and note taking allowed the researcher to synthesise information from the textual data and be able to look out for differences, similarities and gaps in knowledge. In other words, the process of manual data analysis allowed the researcher to identify patterns, trends and inconsistencies across different textual data in relation to the study objectives. The summary of the findings is presented on Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of the Findings in Relation to the Study's Objectives

Study Objectives	Supporting Literature	Summary of Findings
Examine ethical and legal grounds for the justification of ASUU's right to strike in relation to international best labour practices.	Anyogu and Wosu (2023); Ardo <i>et al.</i> (2020); Arogundade (2023); Awe <i>et al.</i> (2024); Emudainohwo (2024); Giame <i>et al.</i> (2020); Iguh <i>et al.</i> (2021); NICN (2022); Nwogu and Anumadu (2023); Ogban <i>et al.</i> (2023); Oladejo and Ijimayowa. (2024); Omozusi <i>et al.</i> (2023); Onyirioha, 2022; Shimawua (2020);	Nigerian public university system underappreciate and overwork their lecturers; Existing labour statutes seem at variance with the supremacy of the Constitution as well as international labour Conventions

	Yohanna and Diggah (2022); TEMPLARS (2024)	
Discuss possible benefits from the federal government's prohibition of ASUU's right to strike on the basis of providing essential services.	Abaekwume <i>et al.</i> (2022); Ahaotu and Ogunode, 2020; Ahiuma-Young, 2022; Anyogu and Wosu (2023); Ardo <i>et al.</i> (2020); Arogundade (2023); Awe <i>et al.</i> (2024); Ewa and Eze (2023); Hassan and Shuaib (2024); Mohammed and Hammangabdo, (2022); Murtala <i>et al.</i> (2022); Nein and Oyinmiebi (2024); Nwagbala <i>et al.</i> (2023); Nwajioha <i>et al.</i> (2021); Obindu and Kelechi (2021); Ogban <i>et al.</i> (2023); Oladejo and Ijimayowa (2024); Omozusi <i>et al.</i> (2023); Onyirioha, 2022; Shimawua (2020); Yohanna and Diggah (2022)	ASUU's strikes have caused incessant and prolonged disruption of academic calendar; ASUU's strikes have brought about persistent alterations in academic planning; ASUU's strikes have brought about abridged implementation of academic curricula; ASUU's incessant strike seems to diminish the quality of the ratings of Nigeria's public university education; ASUU's strikes seem to exacerbate existing societal inequalities by disproportionately affecting the vulnerable population
Proffer practical steps for key actors in Nigeria's industrial relations system to achieving a balance between ASUU's right to strike and the country's dire need for quality and undisrupted public university education services.	Abraham (2023); Anyogu and Wosu (2023); Iguh <i>et al.</i> (2021); Nwogu and Anumadu's (2023)	Joint Action Committee (JAC) seems to exist only in name; Collective Agreements seem hardly respected; Existing labour statutes do not allow ASUU to hold their employers accountable

Source: Developed by the researcher (2024)

4.2 Discussion

The first objective of the study was to examine ethical and legal grounds for the justification of ASUU's right to strike in relation to international best labour practices. Concerning this, the analysis of textual data showed that lecturers in the Nigerian public university system are overworked and underappreciated. This finding aligned with extant studies (e.g. Ogban *et al.* 2023; Oladejo & Ijimayowa 2024; Omozusi *et al.*, 2023; Onyirioha, 2022, Shimawua, 2020; Yohanna & Diggah, 2022) which reported that ASUU embarks on collective actions to demand for fair compensation and respect for human dignity.

Also, in relation to the first objective, the analysis of textual data showed that existing labour statutes in Nigeria seem significantly at variance with the supremacy of the country's constitution as well as the international labour conventions that was dully ratified by Nigeria's National Assembly.

This is in tandem with extant literature such as Anyogu and Wosu (2023), Ardo *et al.* (2020), Arogundade (2023), Awe *et al.* (2024), Emudainohwo (2024), Giame *et al.* (2020) and Iguh *et al.* (2021) which reported that against the back drop of international labour standards such as Convention 100 (equal pay for equal work), Conventions 87 (Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise) and 98 (Collective Bargaining and Protection of the Right to Organise), university workers defy restrictive extant local labour laws such as sections 18(1) of the Trade Disputes Act, 31(6) of the Trade Union Act as well as 7(1)(b)(vi) and 8(b) of the Trade Dispute Essential Service Act to call out her members to embark on strike to draw their employer's (Federal Government of Nigeria) attention to their working conditions.

Pursuant to the study's second objective on the possible benefits from the federal government's prohibition of ASUU's right to strike on the basis of providing essential services, the analysis of contextual data indicated that: (i) ASUU's strikes have caused incessant and prolonged disruption of academic calendar, (ii) ASUU's strikes have brought about persistent alterations in academic planning, (iii) ASUU's strikes have brought about abridged implementation of academic curricula, (iv) ASUU's incessant strike seems to diminish the quality of public university education and, (v) ASUU's strikes seem to exacerbate existing societal inequalities by disproportionately affecting the vulnerable population.

These findings are in consonance with relevant studies conducted in different regions of the Nigeria (e.g. Abaekwume *et al.*, 2022; Awe *et al.*, 2024; Ewa & Eze, 2023; Hassan & Shuaib, 2024; Mohammed & Hammangabdo, 2022; Nein & Oyinmiebi, 2024; Nwagbala *et al.*, 2023; Oladejo & Ijimayowa, 2024) which noted that the frequent and often prolonged strikes by academic staff of public universities in Nigeria have adversely reduced the quality of graduates from the federal universities in Nigeria as well as the their global ratings.

In relation to the study's third objective which relates to the practical steps for key actors in Nigeria's public university education system to achieving a balance between ASUU's right to strike and the country's dire need for quality and undisrupted public university education services, the analysis of textual data suggests that: (i) the Joint Action Committee (JAC) that is meant to periodically review working conditions in Nigeria's public university system seems to exist only in the labour statutes, (ii) Collective Agreements reached with ASUU seem hardly respected by

and the Federal Government and, (iii) existing labour statutes do not allow ASUU to hold their employers accountable.

These findings corroborate existing studies such as Abraham (2023), Anyogu and Wosu (2023), Iguh *et al.* (2021) as well as Nwogu and Anumadu's (2023) who concluded that there's need for the Federal Government of Nigeria and the constantly striking ASUU to seek a sustainable common ground.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that whereas existing labour statutes in Nigeria's industrial relations system are at variance with the supremacy of the Constitution and International Labour Conventions, lecturers in the Nigerian public university system are overworked and underappreciated. Therefore, based on the principle of natural justice, equity, human rights, respect for human dignity and international best labour practices, consistently overburdened and undervalued ASUU members are justified on embarking on collective demands for a fair recognition of their professional efforts. These findings underscore the moral, ethical and legal imperative for the continued expression of the rights to strike, especially in work environments where labour is overstretched, underappreciated, and barely protected by extant local labour laws.

Also, the study concludes that due to incessant and prolonged disruption of academic calendar, persistent alterations in academic planning and haphazard implementation of academic curricula, ASUU's right to strike has over the years presented some socio-economic challenges including but not limited to the exacerbation of existing social inequalities regarding the vulnerable population who depend on public university education as a ticket out of poverty and the saturation of the labour market with a pipeline of graduates lacking in employability skills. These conclusions imply that to sustain the essential services nature of public university education in Nigeria such as the continued building of human capacities to drive the economy and reduce social inequalities, ASUU's right to strike might need to be curtailed. While such a move portends immediate potential benefits, it might be practically impossible to legislate organisational citizenship behaviours as underappreciated and overworked lecturers might not be working at their optimal levels to provide the best possible education for the students.

Finally, the study concludes that the Joint Action Committee (JAC) meant to periodically review working conditions in Nigeria's public university system seems to exist only in the labour statutes;

while Collective Agreements reached with ASUU seem hardly respected by and the Federal Government, existing labour statutes do not allow ASUU to hold their employers accountable. These conclusions imply that removing significant barriers such as non-effectiveness of the JAC, disrespect of Collective Agreements and the inadequacy of extant labour statutes in holding powerful stakeholders accountable would minimise the frequency and impact of strikes on the polity while respecting the rights and human dignity of the lecturers. As a result, a harmonious industrial relations system is germane to enhancing the quality of public university education in Nigeria and improving the global rankings of Nigeria's federal universities. The study recommends from the foregoing that:

- i. Nigeria's industrial relation system needs to be reformed by aligning extant labour laws with international best labour practices.
- ii. Nigerian government should take cues from nations like South Africa, Egypt, and Ghana that have effectively reconciled their public university lecturers' right to embark on strike with maintaining a continuous delivery of high standard education.
- iii. Extant labour laws in the country needs to be reformed to empower actors to hold each other accountable. Besides, Nigeria's public university system needs to implement existing mechanism designed to recognise and reward ASUU members' contribution to teaching, research and community service. In this regard, to minimise the likelihood of prolonged strikes by ASUU, the Joint Action Committee (JAC) must be revived to effectively perform its statutory function.

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