

Full Length Research

Effects of Industrial Action on Workers' Productivity in Auchi Polytechnic Auchi, Edo State, Nigeria.

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Accepted 12 May 2022

Abstract

Purpose: This study examines the effects of industrial action on workers' productivity in Auchi Polytechnic. This paper identifies the extent to which strike determines workers' productivity in Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi. The paper also ascertains the extent to which picketing determines workers' productivity in Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi. Find out the extent to which work-to-rule determines workers' productivity in Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi.

Design/Methodology/Approach: Descriptive design adopted. The research instrument used for data collection in this study was the questionnaire. The population for the study is two thousand, two hundred and sixty (2260) staff of Auchi polytechnic. The total population was large and as a result the researcher selected a sample size of three hundred and forty (340) using Taro Yemane formula for sample size determination. Availability or convenience sampling technique was adopted in this study. The researchers administered and retrieved the completed questionnaire from the respondents. The statistical methods employed to analyze the data are the descriptive and inferential statistical methods.

Findings: This paper reported that strike, picketing and work-to-rule determine workers' productivity in Auchi polytechnic, Auchi. The hypotheses tested showed that there is a significant relationship between strike, picketing and work-to-rule and workers' productivity.

Research implication: Government, employers and Auchi Polytechnic management should ensure that workers are adequately motivated and remunerated to prevent industrial action such as strike, picketing and work-to-rule.

Originality/Value: The paper provided valuable insight into the effect of industrial action (strike/picketing/work-to-rule) on workers' productivity and need for government and Auchi polytechnic management to ensure that workers are provided with befitting working conditions and environment in order to prevent industrial actions in the institution and as such foster workers' productivity.

Keywords: industrial action, workers, productivity, polytechnic, Auchi

Cite This Article As: Enaini, S.O., Aliu, O.H (2022). Effects of Industrial Action on Workers' Productivity in Auchi Polytechnic Auchi, Edo State, Nigeria. *Inter. J. Acad. Res. Educ. Rev.* 10(3): 64-72

INTRODUCTION

Employees hold a strategic position in an institution due to their importance in the manufacturing process. They play an incalculable part in achieving numerous organizational aims and objectives, as well as the government's economic plan. Employers and employees will always have problems and disagreements, whether about compensation or the general state of the workers' service. Industrial action has become so common and disruptive in Nigerian universities that it has impeded the growth of some polytechnics (Ojielo, 2002). Industrial action has become so common and disruptive in Nigerian universities that it has impeded the growth of some. Industrial actions are unavoidable at many

firms around the world, according to Ilevbare, Ojeleye, and Ilevbare (2012). Industrial action, according to Sherlekar (2001), encompasses all forms of opposition or adversarial relationships among individuals, groups, and/or organizations. Industrial action is a conflict, disagreement, or battle between two parties marked by open antagonism and deliberate interference with the other party's goals and objectives (Fajana 2000). Industrial action, according to Bankole (2011), happens when two or more people or groups believe they have incompatible aims and activity interdependence. Industrial action is a conflict between or among industrial relations players, usually over matters of contrasting interest. The following is an example: Individual owners and managers on the one hand, and working people and their organizations on the other, exhibit a wide range of behavior and attitudes that indicate resistance and divergent orientations.

According to Otobo (2005), collective action takes place amongst groups, with personality and other structural characteristics playing a role. It also tends to limit the phenomenon to what occurs between two opposed groups, owners/managers versus workers and their organizations. Industrial action may result in negative feelings, resentment, and hostility among employees, preventing them from working together as a team, resulting in a drop in work performance, low productivity, customer loss, high labor turnover, negative effects on the organization's goodwill, and eventual collapse. To avoid the aforementioned consequences, it is critical to develop a work performance measuring system that will serve as an indicator of whether employee job performance is improving or declining (Ilevbare, Ojeleye & Ilevbare 2012).

Statement of the problem

Auchi Polytechnic has been plagued by frequent industrial actions in the past due to disagreement between personnel, management, and the government. Staff and their trade unions frequently view industrial action as the sole way to safeguard and promote their socioeconomic interests, and as a result, they routinely engage in it. Inadvertently, the polytechnic staff persistent industrial actions have harmed not just academic activity in the institution, but also worker productivity. Industrial activities have far-reaching implications for union-management and government relations. The government, polytechnic administration, and other stakeholders should step up their efforts to stop this monster from destroying our educational system. Industrial action has serious ramifications, and unless immediate action is made to address this heinous phenomenon, the Nigerian educational system would suffer greatly. This study seeks to evaluate the effect of industrial action on worker productivity at Auchi Polytechnic in this context.

Objective of the study

The main objective of this study is to investigate effect of industrial actions on workers of Auchi polytechnic productivity. Specifically, the study sets out to:

- i. identify the extent to which strike determine workers' productivity in Auchi polytechnic, Auchi
- ii. ascertain extent to which picketing determine workers' productivity in Auchi polytechnic, Auchi
- iii. find out the extent to which work-to- rule determine workers' productivity in Auchi polytechnic, Auchi.

Research Questions

The following research questions are raised for this study

- i. To what extent does strike determine workers' productivity in Auchi polytechnic, Auchi?
- ii. To what extent does picketing determine workers' productivity in Auchi polytechnic, Auchi?
- iii. To what extent does work-to- rule determine workers' productivity in Auchi polytechnic, Auchi?

Research Hypotheses

- i. There is no significant relationship between strike and workers' productivity in Auchi polytechnic, Auchi
- ii. There is no significant relationship between and workers' productivity in Auchi polytechnic, Auchi
- iii. There is no significant relationship between work-to- rule and workers' productivity in Auchi polytechnic, Auchi

Review of related Literature

Strikes are frequently mentioned in talks of industrial action. Strikes are the most visible and consequential form of industrial strife. However, they are, regrettably, only a component of the conflict phenomena (Fashoyin, 2005). The study of conflict has been claimed to comprise "the entire range of conduct and attitudes that indicate opponents and management on the one side, and working people and their organizations on the other. Industrial action, according to Sherlekar (2001), encompasses all forms of opposition or antagonistic relations inside or among individuals, groups, and/or organizations. Industrial action is a conflict, disagreement, or struggle between two parties that is marked by open animosity and/or intentional interference with the other party's goal achievement (Fajana 2000). The firm strives to maximize service delivery through the use of workers' services, while employees strive to maximize the benefits that come with providing their labor services, such as comfortable pay and other benefits. It is stated that they (workers and management) would want to end any sort of strike (particularly work stoppage) rather than allow it to degenerate since they will suffer some form of loss (Mas, 2004). According to Ivancevich (2007), a strike is an attempt by employees to stop working in order for their employer to make more concessions. It is said to be a primary negotiation tool utilized by labor unions. It can range from an economic strike, in which employees cease working until their demands for better working conditions are met, to a sit-down strike, in which employees strike but continue at work. Osuorji and David (2014) investigated the effect of incessant strikes on academic performance of business education students in Abu, Zaria. Aiming to determine the extent to which the strike action has affected academic performance of Business Education students in ABU, Zaria; and to assess the perception of students about incessant strikes on academic performance of Business Education in ABU, Zaria. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The result shows that incessant strikes by lecturers have a resultant effect on the academic performance of the students. Fashina (2001) attributes the causes of industrial crisis in the Nigerian workplace to policy inconsistencies and wrong placement in organizational priorities on the part of the management. When employers place higher premium on capital input far above the workers without appreciating that the latter makes the former productive, would brood industrial rancor. This connotes that poor remuneration may be a strong cause of industrial crisis. Low level of workers' motivations with respect to remuneration (both promptness and total package) has been a bone of contention between the workers and employers.

Work-to-rule is a job action in which employees do no more than what is required by their contract's rules and strictly adhere to all safety and other regulations, which may cause a slowdown or decrease in productivity because they are not working during breaks or unpaid extended hours and weekends (for example, checking email) (Morgan, 1998). This type of action is less disruptive than a strike or lockout, and following the rules is less likely to result in disciplinary action. Work-to-rule as a form of industrial action can include refusal to work overtime, duty travel, or signing up for additional responsibilities that need employee consent (Wikipedia, 2022).

Picketing, on the other hand, according to Twarog (2006) is a kind of protest in which individuals (called pickets or picketers) assemble outside a place of business or a site where an event is taking place. This is frequently done to deter others from entering ("crossing the picket line"), but it can also be done to bring public attention to a subject. Picketers usually try to avoid becoming violent. It can have a variety of goals, but the most common one is to put pressure on the targeted party to satisfy specific criteria or discontinue activities. This pressure is applied by causing harm to the business through customer loss and poor publicity, or by deterring or prohibiting personnel or customers from visiting the site, preventing the firm from running regularly. Picketing is a popular practice used by trade unions to discourage dissident members, members of other unions, and non-unionized workers from working during strikes. Those that labour despite the strike and cross the picket line are referred to as scabs (Beckett, 2009 cited in Wikipedia ,2022).

Theoretical framework

This is based on the wage bargaining theory proposed by John Davidson. Wage fixing, according to this view, is based on the negotiating power of workers/trade unions and employers. Wages tend to be higher when employees are more powerful in the negotiation process. If the employer plays a larger role, salaries are likely to be low. According to this idea, pay rates have an upper and lower limit, and the actual rates between these limitations are set by the employers' and workers' negotiating strength. The salaries and hours of labour were ultimately set by the relative negotiating strength of the employers, according to John Davidson, the first proponent of the bargaining theory of wages.

Research Methodology

The impacts of industrial action on worker productivity in Auchi polytechnic are investigated using a descriptive design. In this study, a descriptive survey is ideal because it allows for the examination of a very small and big population using a questionnaire to establish the present status of industrial activities and staff productivity at Auchi Polytechnic. The participants in this study are all Auchi polytechnic employees. As a result, the population is two thousand two hundred and sixty (2260) (Auchi Polytechnic Staff Telephone Directory, 2019). The TaroYemane formula for sample size determination was used by the researchers to determine the study's sample size.

$$\text{Formula: } n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n = Sample size
 N = Population size
 e = Sampling error or level precision.

$$n = \frac{2260}{1 + 2260(0.5)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{2260}{1 + 2260(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{2260}{1 + 5.65} \quad n = \frac{2260}{6.65}$$

$$n = 340$$

As a result, a sample size of 340 employees was chosen for the study. In this study, the availability or convenience sampling technique was used. The study used just those respondents (employees) who were available and willing to participate. The questionnaire was employed as a research tool in this study. The questionnaire was created in accordance with the research objectives and other pertinent information. There were two sections to the questionnaire: Section one featured the respondents' biographical information, whereas section two dealt with issues raised by the study's research questions. The statistical methods employed to analyze the data are the descriptive and inferential statistical methods. The descriptive methods employed are the frequency tables and simple percentages while the inferential method employed is the Kendall's tau-b with test of its significance. Kendall's tau-b (τ_b) correlation coefficient (Kendall's tau-b, for short) is a nonparametric measure of the strength and direction of association that exists between two variables measured on at least an ordinal scale. It is considered a nonparametric alternative to the Pearson's product-moment correlation when your data has failed one or more of the assumptions of this test. It is also considered an alternative to the nonparametric Spearman rank-order correlation coefficient (especially when you have a small sample size with many tied ranks).

The formula is given by

$$\tau = \frac{(C - D)}{C + D}$$

where:

C = the number of concordant pairs

D = the number of discordant pairs

Assumptions

a. Your two variables should be measured on an ordinal or continuous scale. Examples of ordinal variables include Likert scales (e.g., a 7-point scale from strongly agree through to strongly disagree), amongst other ways of ranking categories (e.g., a 5-point scale explaining how much a customer liked a product, ranging from "Not very much" to "Yes, a lot"). Examples of continuous variables (i.e., interval or ratio variables) include revision time (measured in hours), intelligence (measured using IQ score), exam performance (measured from 0 to 100), weight (measured in kg).

b. Kendall's tau-b determines whether there is a monotonic relationship between your two variables. As such, it is desirable if your data would appear to follow a monotonic relationship, so that formally testing for such an association makes sense, but it is not a strict assumption or one that you are often able to assess.

RESULTS

The data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed using simple descriptive analysis of frequency counts and percentage in order to determine responses to the items in the questionnaire and to describe the characteristics of the respondents in terms of their views. A total number of three hundred and forty (340) copies of the questionnaire was administered and 330(97. 1%) returned completed from the respondents and were subsequently used in the study.

Table 1. Respondents' demographic characteristics (n =330)

	No of the respondents	%
Gender		
Male	153	46.4
female	177	53.6
Educational Qualification of the Respondents		
SSCE	44	13.3
NCE/ND	55	16.7
HND/BSC	98	29.7
PGD	28	8.5
MSC/MBA	74	22.4
Ph.D	31	9.4
Age Distribution of the Respondents		
18 – 25	89	27.0
26 – 33	104	31.5
34- and above	137	41.5
Total	330	100

Source: (Fieldwork, 2021)

Table 1 reveals the gender distribution of the respondents with female 177 (53.6%) and male 153(46.4%). This implies that the majority of the respondents in this study are females. On the Educational Qualification of the respondents, HND/BSC has the highest number of respondents with 98 (29.7%), followed by MSC/MBA with 74 (22.4%). Others are NCE/ND with 55 (16.7%), SSCE with 44 (13.3%), Ph.D31 (9.4%) and PGD 28 (8. 5%). On the age distribution of the respondents, respondents within the age bracket of 34 and above with 137 (41.5%) are of the majority. Followed by respondents within the age bracket of 26 – 33with 104 (31.5%). While respondents within the age bracket of 18 – 25with 89 (27.0%) came last.

Table 2. the extent strike determine workers productivity in Auchi polytechnic, Auchi

Extent	No	%
Very Little Extent (VLE)	--	--
Little Extent (LE)	--	--
Little Extent (LE)	--	--
Some Extent (SE)	19	5.8
Great Extent (GE)	20	6.1
Very High Extent (VHE)	291	88.1
Total	330	100

Source: (Fieldwork, 2021)

Table 2 shows the extent strike determine workers productivity in Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi. 291 respondents representing (88.1%) agreed to a Very High Extent that strike determines workers productivity in Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi. 20(6.1%) responded that strike determine workers productivity to a great extent. 19(5.8%) responded that strike determine workers productivity to some extent.

Table 3. The Extent Picketing Determine Workers Productivity in Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi

Extent	No	%
Very Little Extent (VLE)	--	--
Little Extent (LE)	--	--
Little Extent (LE)	--	--
Some Extent (SE)	--	--
Great Extent (GE)	188	57.0
Very High Extent (VHE)	142	43.0
Total	330	100

Source: (Fieldwork, 2021)

Table3 reveals the extent picketing determine workers productivity in Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi. Respondents representing 188 (57.0%) agreed picketing determine workers productivity in Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi to Great Extent. 142(43.0%) responded that picketing determine workers productivity to a Very High Extent.

Table 4. The Extent Work-To- Rule Determine Workers Productivity in Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi

Extent	No	%
Very Little Extent (VLE)	--	--
Little Extent (LE)	--	--
Little Extent (LE)	--	--
Some Extent (SE)	--	--
Great Extent (GE)	140	42.4
Very High Extent (VHE)	190	57.6
Total	330	100

Source: (Fieldwork, 2021)

Table 4 reveals the extent work-to- rule determine workers' productivity in Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi. Respondents representing 190 (57.6%) agreed work-to- rule determine workers' productivity in Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi to Very High Extent. 140(42.4%) responded that work-to- rule determine workers' productivity to a great extent.

Hypothesis 1

H₀: There is no significant relationship between Strike and workers' productivity

H₁: There is significant relationship between Strike and workers' productivity

Table 5. Relationship Between Strike and Workers' Productivity

		Strike	Workers Productivity
Kendall's tau_b	Strike	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
		N	330
Workers Productivity	Workers Productivity	Correlation Coefficient	-.645**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
		N	330

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The value of the Kendall's tau-b correlation (-0.645) shows that there is a high negative and significant (since $0.000 < 0.05$) correlation between strike and workers' productivity. Therefore, reject (H₀) Null Hypothesis and accept (H₁) the alternative hypothesis which states that there is a significant relationship between strike and workers' productivity in Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi . This implies that strike have significant effect on workers' productivity.

Hypothesis 2:

H₀: There is no significant relationship between Picketing and Workers' productivity

H₁: There is significant relationship between Picketing and Workers' productivity

Table 6. Relationship Between Picketing And Workers' Productivity

			Picketing	Workers Productivity
Kendall's tau_b	Picketing	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.464**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	330	330
	Workers Productivity	Correlation Coefficient	-.464**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	330	330

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The value of the Kendall's tau-b correlation (-0.464) shows that there is a moderate negative and significant (since 0.000<0.05) correlation between Picketing and employees' productivity. Therefore, reject (H₀) Null Hypothesis and accept (H₁) the alternative hypothesis which states that there is a significant relationship between picketing and workers' productivity in Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi. This is an indication that picketing has significant effect on workers' productivity.

Hypothesis 3:

H₀: There is no significant relationship between Work-to-rule and employees' productivity

H₁: There is significant relationship between Work-to-rule and employees' productivity

Table 7. significant relationship between Work-to-rule and employees' productivity

			Work to Rule	Workers Productivity
Kendall's tau_b	Work_to_Rule	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.591**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	330	330
	Workers Productivity	Correlation Coefficient	-.591**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	330	330

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The value of the Kendall's tau-b correlation (-0.591) shows that there is a high negative and significant (since 0.000<0.05) correlation between Work-to-rule and employees' productivity. Therefore, reject (H₀) Null Hypothesis and accept (H₁) the alternative hypothesis which states that there is a significant relationship between Work-to-rule and workers' productivity in Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi. This shows that Work-to-rule have significant effect on workers' productivity.

Discussion of findings

The result of this study revealed that strike determines workers' productivity in Auchi polytechnic, Auchi to a very high extent. This finding is in conformity with Osuorji and David (2014) that investigated the effect of incessant strikes on academic performance of Business Education students in Abu, Zaria. Aiming to determine the extent to which the strike action has affected academic performance of Business Education students in ABU, Zaria; and to assess the perception of students about incessant strikes on academic performance of Business Education in ABU, Zaria. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The result shows that incessant strikes by lecturers have a resultant effect on the academic performance of the students.

The study also revealed discovered in that picketing determines workers' productivity in Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi to a

Great Extent and Very High Extent. This finding corroborates Twarog (2006) that stated that picketers normally endeavour to be non-violent. It can have a number of aims, but is generally to put pressure on the party targeted to meet particular demands or cease operations. This pressure is achieved by harming the business through loss of customers and negative publicity, or by discouraging or preventing workers or customers from entering the site and thereby preventing the business from operating normally. Picketing is a common tactic used by trade unions during strikes, who will try to prevent dissident members of the union, members of other unions and non-union members from working. Those who cross the picket line and work despite the strike are known pejoratively as scabs.

It was also discovered that work-to- rule determine workers' productivity in Auchu polytechnic, Auchu to Very High Extent and to a great extent. This finding is in agreement with study of Work-to-rule is a job action in which employees do no more than the minimum required by the rules of their contract, and precisely follow all safety or other regulations, which may cause a slowdown or decrease in productivity, as they are no longer working during breaks or during unpaid extended hours and weekends (checking email, for instance). Mas (2004) further posits that the effects of industrial action in public organisation in Nigeria have both micro and macro implications. At the microeconomic level, the workers of the unions involved lose their immediate pay and hence their market purchasing powers that result in reduction in welfare. On the other hand, the employer whose workers are on strike loses the union services and as a result becomes unable to meet their customers' orders; this invariably affects their returns and profit margin. While at the macroeconomic level, it results to loss of output of goods and services.

CONCLUSION

Industrial action occurs when two or more people or groups perceive that they have incompatibility of goals and interdependence of activity. Industrial action is a disagreement between or among institution unions and institutions management mostly over issues of divergent interest such as poor remuneration, low level of workers' motivations, poor working conditions, and breach of collective agreement and policy inconsistencies and wrong placement of institutional priorities.. This pointed out that strike, picketing and work-to- rule affect workers' productivity to a very high and great extent in Auchu polytechnic, Auchu. Industrial action comes with dire consequences ranging from low productivity, poor performance, exodus of trained personnel and disruption of official activities and closure of the institution for a period of time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following are recommended:

- i. Government and Auchu polytechnic management should ensure that staff are adequately motivated and remunerated to prevent industrial action and thereby facilitates increase productivity.
- ii. Government and Auchu polytechnic management should ensure that workers are provided with befitting working conditions and environment in order to prevent industrial actions in the institution and as such foster productivity.
- iii. Government and Auchu polytechnic management should ensure that every collective agreement reached with staff dishonored and strictly adhere to in order to prevent industrial actions.
- iv. Government and Auchu polytechnic management should put an end to all forms of inconsistencies in the institution policies and wrong placement priorities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The researchers want to use this medium to thank Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TEFUND) and Auchu polytechnic for sponsoring this study. Without TEFUND intervention through Auchu polytechnic, Auchu, this study would not have been a reality today.

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