THE IMPACT OF ASUU-STRIKE ON NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' INFORMATION BEHAVIOR: A STUDY THROUGH THE LENS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC LOCKDOWN

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the impact ASUU-strike has on Nigerian student's information behavior using the concept of social disruption, and adopting a descriptive survey research design. The study integrated the COVID-19 Pandemic global lockdown effects, in order to create a better understanding of the impact of ASUU-strike to readers unfamiliar with the subject, especially those outside Nigeria. The findings of this study revealed that ASUU-strike shuts down universities, disrupted academic activities and denied students access to information resources located on campus. Data used in this study was obtained from an online survey administered to an approximate sample size of 250 participants drawn from Imo State University (IMSU). Data was analyzed and results indicated that due to lack of access to information sources located on campus, student's information behavior (information needs, information seeking and information use behaviors) were negatively impacted during ASUU-strike.

Keywords: ASUU-Strike, Social Disruption, Information Behavior, Information Resources, Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The study was carried out on students enrolled in Imo State university, Owerri (IMSU), Nigeria. The university was established Imo State in 1981 through a law passed the State House of Assembly. Subsequently, a series of amendments in 1985, 1986, and 1992, the university took-off academic activities in a temporary located (former Madonna High School, Ihitte), with permanent location at the lake Nwebere campus Ikenegbu Owerri in Imo State. According to the institutions official website (http://imsu.edu.ng/site/history.php), IMSU records over 11 faculties, 63 departments, over 15,000 students, and adequate human resource to maintain administrative and academic responsibilities. The various employment categories, which include senior, junior, academic and non-academic staff, gave rise to the labor unions in Nigerian universities. This paper is focused on ASUU, which like other unions (e.g. Senior Staff Association of Nigerian University (SSANU)) caters to its members, and the advancement of university education in the society (Adeniji, & Adekunjo, 2010).

The acronym ASUU stands for Academic Staff Union of Universities. This labor-union present in all Nigerian universities, is composed primarily of academic staff/faculty. The union positions itself to advancing Nigerian university education through scholarship, as well as offering protection to its members. To achieve its goals, the association predominantly embarks on strike, which regardless of the successes achieved, attracts its share of criticism due to the disruptions strikes cause in the society. To defend its integrity from such allegations of meaningless strikes, the union denies embarking on strikes motivated by selfish interest other than questions of systemic injustice, underfunding of universities and poor staff welfare (Ogbette, 2017). Unfortunately, some researchers differ in opinion as they regard ASUU-strike as basically fruitless and a high risk (Aidelunuoghene, 2014).

The juxtaposition of ASUU-strike and coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) within the context of social disruption, increases the ability of reader's, especially those unfamiliar with the subject ASUU-strike in Nigerian universities to tag along. Though ASUU-strike and coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic may differ in causes, however, their effect lead up to social disruption. Basically, while ASUU-strike is local to Nigeria universities, the (COVID-19) pandemic pose global challenges (Ige, 2013; Onye, 2016; Ikoni, & Ogundele, 2020). Be that as it may, social disruption, regardless of the causes, creates social chaos in societies and disorganization to institutions (Park & Stokowski, 2009).

Finally, this study intends to addressed the research question: How do ASUU-strike impact students information behavior and access to information sources located on-campus? By answering the question posed, this study provides empirical evidence on the problem of incessant ASUU-strike, which Wahab (2018) described as detrimental rather than beneficial to Nigerian universities. Hence, social disruptions, such as ASUU-strike and COVID-19 pandemic, have capacity to affect individuals and organizations, as well as threaten the overall stability of social relationships in societies.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Students Information Behavior

Wilson (2000), described both information behavior to encompass information needs, information seeking and information use. Okoh & Ijiekhuamhen (2014) listed the university library, information centers such as cyber cafés, science laboratories and lecturers chief among information sources students utilize. The location of information resources on campus motivate the culture of social clustering exhibited by Nigerian students and a driving force behind their collaborative information seeking behavior. Basically, depending on group's body of knowledge (Hirsh, 2000). Also, it is not uncommon for a group to exhibit unique patterns of information behavior (Leckie, Pettigrew, & Sylvain, 1996).

Whether individually or collaboratively, studies suggest that students seek and use information for lack of information sufficient enough to address their needs (Devadason& Lingam, 1997).Krikelas (1983) described information seeking a process undertaken to satisfy a perceived need. However, it is difficult for students to use information without access to resources or sources of information, which is likely the case during strike. Ironically, despite growing worldwide adoption of innovative technologies, universities in Nigeria, such as the

one under study, rely solely on traditional methods of educational delivery. The reliance on resources physically located on campus may increases chances of strike interfering with students information needs, ability to seek and use resources that are located on campus. These resources include libraries, colleagues, lecturers, databases, books etc. (Echezona, Okafor, & Ukwoma, 2011).

2.2 ASUU-Strike In Nigerian Universities

Generally, strike as the refusal to work, is a legitimate forms of industrial action recognized by the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which grants workers the right to join trade union that protects their interest (Worugji & Archibong, 2009). These provisions gave unions, such as ASUU, the legitimacy to embark on strike as a means to achieving beneficial employment conditions in Nigeria under the protection of the industrial relations practice in Nigeria. Ige (2014,), defines ASUU as academic staff union of universities, and is composed primarily of academic staff/faculty, which unfortunately are responsible for most strikes in Nigerian universities. Isiaka (2001), believes that ASUU-trike is specific to the environment and country's' industrial relations pattern.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

Theories and models enable researchers to better understand the information behavior of specific group of students, including students whose information behavior may be affected by certain peculiar factors, such as ASUU-strike in Nigerian public universities. This study applies Zipf's principle of least effort to explain any changes in students information behavior after experiencing ASUU-strike(s), which findings have shown that interruption to information sources have the capacity of affecting students choice of information resources (Onye, 2016). Lastly, the principle of least effort was applied to this study based on the assumption that certain conditions (such as disruption, convenience, familiarity and ease of us) could influence students information behavior.

3.0 METHODS

This study adopts a quantitative method, which Pickard (2008) regards as dominates most social science research because it is effective in describing observable scenarios. The instrument of data collection was a three-point Likert scale questionnaire (disagree, neutral, and agree) designed to gather demographic information that would help answer the research questions. A probability sampling method was adopted to give students in IMSU equal opportunity among the sample size of 250 respondents. As a descriptive study, the authors analyzed data using percentage and count. The survey questions include: (1) how do strikes affect your (student) information needs? (2) how do strikes affect information resources you (student) use? Finally, (3) how do strikes affect information sources due to location?

4.0 RESULTS

In this section, three tables specifically designed to address the focus of this study were analyzed based on the responses provided by the respondents.

Table one below shows that the information needs of students were affected during strikes. The respondents indicated that: information for research (155, 60.54%) was the most affected, and information to update knowledge (167, 44.23%) as the least affected. Other areas include information related to education/program (195, 71.69%), followed by entertainment (173, 67.04%), and information for coursework, exams, assignments, term-paper (172, 64.9%).

Table 1

Do strikes affect your information needs?

Variables	Aggregate Scores			Total $n =$
	Disagree: n/%	Neutral: n/%	Agree: n/%	
Because of strikes, students do not consider information related to their education/program a priority	66, 24.26%	11, 4.04%	195, 71.69%	272
Because of strikes, students do not consider information related to their coursework (exams, assignments, term papers) a priority	74, 27.93%	19, 7.17%	172, 64.9%	265
Because of strikes, students do not consider information to update knowledge a priority	70, 26.92%	23, 8.85%	167, 44.23%	260
Because of strikes, students do not consider information for career building a priority	79, 30.15%	19, 7.25%	164, 62.6%	262
Because of strikes, students do not consider specific information (e.g., entertainment) a priority	63, 24.42%	22, 8.53%	173, 67.04%	258
Because of strikes, students do not consider information related to their research a priority	80, 30.65%	23, 8.81%	155, 60.54%	261

Results shown in table two indicates that the two information resource mostly affected by strike, were students inability to access the library (242, 90.63%) and the inability of students to interact with lecturers/professors (221, 78.71%). The table showed that majority of the respondent agreed that strike affected classroom meetings (216, 82.45%), and students mostly had their lecture notes/handouts (210, 80.46%) during strikes. that this is followed by journals (61, 22.99%), e-resources (72, 27.58%). Surprisingly, the table showed that internet (88, 33.85%) is areas of information-use.

Table 2

Are you able to access information resources during strike?

Variables	Aggregate Scores			Total *n =*
	Disagree: *n/%*	Neutral: *n/%*	Agree: *n/%*	
Students are not able to access the library	19, 7.12%	6, 2.25%	242, 90.63%	267
I am not able to interact with lecturers/professors	14, 5.28%	16, 6.04%	235, 88.68%	265
I am not able to interact with fellow students/colleagues	42, 15.97%	14, 5.32%	221, 78.71%	263
There are no classroom meetings	23, 8.78%	23, 8.78%	216, 82.45%	262
I have only lecture notes/handouts	24, 9.19%	27, 10.34%	210, 80.46%	261
Internet is not available	88, 33.85%	26, 10.00%	146, 56.15%	260
Electronic resources (databases) are not available	72, 27.58%	21, 8.05%	166, 64.37%	261
Journals are not available	61, 22.99%	25, 9.58%	176, 67.44%	261

Nearly all the respondents indicated on table three that students could not access information sources located on-campus during strike (251, 91.95%). This is obviously one of the dangers of universities relying solely on traditional system of educational delivery in this age technology. It is not surprising that information sources located off-campus (219, 72.96%) are barely affected by strike. While it is puzzling why students rarely used information sources located off-campus due to: fees (52, 19.7%); or distance, extra effort, energy, work-input (183, 61.31%). The other responses showed that most students do not use information sources located off-campus during strike (219, 72.96%); or are not aware of those sources (184, 69.69%).

Table 3

Do you have access to the location information sources during strike?

Variables	Aggregate Scores			Total *n =*
	Disagree: *n/%*	Neutral: *n/%*	Agree: *n/%*	
During strikes, students do not have access to	13,	9, 3.30%	251,	273

Variables	Aggregate Scores			Total n =
	Disagree: n/%	Neutral: n/%	Agree: n/%	
available information sources located on-campus	4.77%		91.95%	
During strikes, students do not use information sources located off-campus	27, 10.24%	18, 6.82%	219, 72.96%	264
During strikes, students are not aware of information sources located off-campus and do not use them	58, 21.97%	22, 8.33%	184, 69.69%	264
During strikes, students do not use off-campus information resources due to cost (fees)	52, 19.7%	25, 9.47%	187, 70.83%	264
During strikes, students do not use off-campus information resources due to distance (energy, work-input)	53, 20.08%	28, 10.61%	183, 61.31%	264

5.0 DISCUSSION

Based on the results obtained for the question addressing information sources, it was found that ASUU-strikes targeted mainly information sources located on-campus. This explains research findings suggesting that students rely mostly on information sources physically located on campus (Ossai-onah, 2013). According to Mann (1993), the university library provided sources that best address student's general needs and specific information on individual subjects. Unfortunately, certain library incentives, such as free access to library collections, such as textbooks, journals, newspapers, magazines, e-journals, e-theses, and dissertations (Mohammed, 2019), could prevent students from using other relevant sources of information (Okoh, & Ijiekhuamhen, 2014).

Also, results showed that due to strikes student information needs to be reduced to specific areas as evidenced in the kinds of information they used after strikes. For example, projects (including theses and dissertations) were mostly preferred after strikes, which may highlight student's concentration in exam performance instead of acquiring the knowledge required by their programs. Furthermore, the reduction in e-resources usage could be due to poor ICT infrastructure or simply unreliable electricity supply (Damilola, 2013). Nonetheless, sudden changes in student's information needs (passing exams) and use of specific information (projects, thesis, and dissertations) after strikes could indicate an anomaly (seek-out shortcuts), in other words, detrimental to information behavior (Jiao & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).
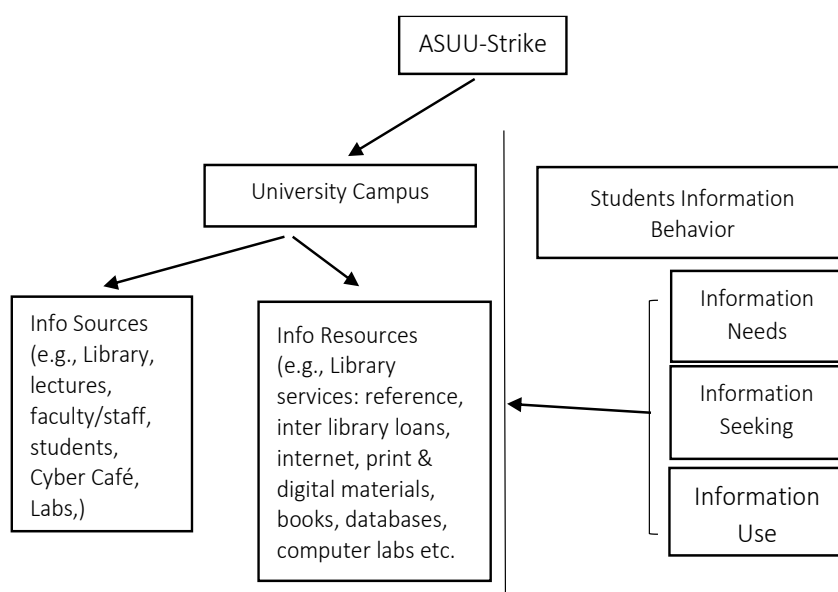
6.0 CONCLUSION

We may conclude from the findings of the study that ASUU-strike negatively impact students information behavior by constantly interrupting academic activities in Nigerian universities. In a more severe terms, the results also reveal that frequent ASUU-strikes has psychological

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consequences that could affect students mental health and general wellbeing. Although further studies are required to ascertain the implications of ASUU-strike on students' mental health, one cannot deny that social disruption, whether from ASUU-strike and COVID-19 pandemic, cause devastation to both people and societies. Similar to Cerulli, et., al. (2020) claim that COVID-19 pandemic wrecked a global scale devastating mental health havoc; incessant ASUU-strike on the other hand has frustrated and traumatized Nigerian students (BBC, 2019).

In conclusion, Nigerian universities should adopt emerging and relevant technologies that support innovative online teaching (e.g. synchronous and asynchronous, hybrid formats). According to Hannah (2013), a stable learning environment promotes positive learning output and creativity in students. Hence, Nigerian universities could tackle incessant ASUU-strike by adopting measures capable of ensuring uninterrupted academic activities and information delivery. As the diagram below shows, the confinement of academic activities and support services in a physical location makes it possible for ASUU-strikes to affect students information behavior.

As the diagram below illustrates, ASUU-strike has the capacity to shutdown universities causing disruption to academic activities, and the normal operations of services (such as libraries, labs etc.) needed to support teaching and learning. When students are denied access to resources located on campus, it also renders them incapable of seeking or using information to satisfy their needs (Makinde, Jiyane, &Mugwisi, 2019). Unfortunately, since Nigeria is yet to automate its method of educational delivery (i.e. relevant technologies that support online, hybrid teaching/learning formats etc.), ASUU-strike may continue to disrupt academic activities, including students information needs, and ability to seek or use resources located on campus.

In conclusion, the authors hope that synthesizing the COVID-19 pandemic with ASUU-strike, within the concept of social disruption, would broaden research approach regardless of academic background. Nevertheless, whether research on the topic gains wider coverage or

not, Nigerian universities should remember that the success of an educational institution depends on the provision of information resources to students (Oladunjoye, Omiunu, & Yomi-Owojori, 2018), and ASUU-strike is a major obstacle to achieving quality education. Additionally, this study that ASUU-strike impacts students information behavior, confirms Kuhlthaus' (1991) findings that information void creates fear and increases the level of anxiety in students.

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