

Application Of Rousseau's Social Contract In Conflict Resolution Between The Federal Government Of Nigeria And Academic Staff Union Of Universities

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Abstract

The study examined Rousseau's Social Contract (RSC) with the view to determining its applicability in resolving the conflict between the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) and Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). The study adopted a descriptive survey design in which five research questions were formulated. The population of the study consists of 3,921 subjects (13 directors of federal ministry of education and 3,908 academic staff of federal universities in South-East Nigeria). A multi-stage sampling technique was used in sampling 580 respondents (13 directors of federal ministry of education and 567 academic staff). A researcher developed questionnaire titled "Application of Rousseau's Social Contract in conflict resolution Questionnaire (ARSCCRQ) was used for data collection. Cronbach Alpha was used to ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument. This yielded reliability indices of cluster A, 0.84, Cluster B, 0.78, Cluster C, 0.88, Cluster D, 0.86 and Cluster E, 0.82 with an overall reliability score of 0.83. The five research questions were answered using mean (\bar{x}) and Standard Deviation (SD). An overview of the overall results showed that academic staff unions of the university were confronted with lots of challenges in Nigerian universities. The consequences of conflicts between the FGN and ASUU in Nigerian Universities among others include: disruption of academic calendar in the Universities and closing down of universities. The issue of university funding as proposed by ASUU can be resolved by adopting the tenets of Rousseau's general will contract. The issue of university autonomy as proposed by ASUU can be resolved through the tenets of Rousseau's direct democracy contract and that the issue of staff conditions of service as proposed by ASUU can be resolved by adopting the tenets of Rousseau's self enslavement contract. Considering the results of the study, the researcher among others recommends that: avenues such as seminars and workshops should be provided for the government and the university administrators to deliberate on issues regarding the university funding, university autonomy and staff conditions of service. This is necessary to ensure that the academics will neither develop attitudes of hostility towards the government nor the government becomes intolerant of the academic staff.

Keywords: Rousseau's Social Contract, Conflict, Conflict Resolution, Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN), University and Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU)

INTRODUCTION

Federal Republic of Nigeria, is a federal constitutional republic comprising 36 states with its Federal Capital Territory in Abuja. Nigeria is located in West Africa and shares land borders with the Republics of Benin in the west, Chad and Cameroon in the east, and Niger in the north with executive power exercised by the president (Stock, 2008). According to Toyin (2009), the president presides as both head of state and head of the national executive council. The Nigerian government adopted education as an instrument for national development (Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN), 2004). The

importance of education to the Nigerian society was captured in her National Policy on Education. The governments' commitment to this belief also resulted in the federal government takeover of education at all levels and from all organizations in the 1980s. When government cannot cope with running of education, private agencies were invited to participate in the running of schools. At the moment, Nigeria runs a system of education known as 9-3-4. This means nine years of basic education, three years of senior secondary and minimum of four years in the university.

The university is an institution at the highest level of education where one can study for a degree or research. Universities are recognized as centres of excellence, where knowledge is not only acquired, but also disseminated to those who require it. Universities educate future leaders and develop the high-level technical capacities that underpin economic growth and development (Odekunle, 2001). Thus, the main purpose and relevance of university education in Nigeria is the provision of much needed manpower to accelerate the socio-economic development of the nation. They are formal institutions set up by the society to be centers of learning, rich ideas and ideals. In its strict sense, Benjamin (2001) is of the opinion that universities are ivory towers, where instruction is given and received without harassment and undue influence from the outside world. The universal idea of the university is a community of scholars, free to pursue knowledge without undue interference from any quarters (Banjo, 2000). Universities are enterprises that produce and distribute a "public good", which is knowledge. Knowledge production is the focus of the universities and the production of knowledge is the drive behind teaching and research.

Management of university education in Nigeria can be looked at from two dimensions: the external and internal levels. At the external level, the universities are controlled by the federal government through the federal ministry of education. The Nigerian federal ministry of education is the government body that directs education in Nigeria. It was established in 1988. According to the federal ministry of education FME, (2003), functions of the federal ministry of education among others include: formulating a national policy on education, collating data for the purposes of educational planning and financing, maintaining uniform standards of education throughout the country, controlling the quality of education in the country through the supervisory role of the directors. Directors of federal ministry of education are staff of the federal ministry of education. They are senior officials of the federal ministry of education that directs education in Nigeria through various departments (Okojie, 2007).

By internal management each university is represented by a simple organogram. The first is the Visitor who is usually the Head of State or the Head of Government that established it, followed by the Chancellor, who is the titular head of the university and the Governing Council, which is headed by the Chairman (Pro-Chancellor) who is charged with the administrative functions in the areas of goal setting, policy formulation, staff development, general discipline, budget approval and liaison activities with the government (Adegbite, 2007). As stated by Ibukun (2001) the main organ regulating the internal academic activities of the universities is the Senate, headed by the Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar as the Secretary. According to the writer, the Senate regulates the academic activities of the university following the general guidelines provided by the federal ministry of education.

Specifically, the goals of university education in Nigeria include contributing to national development through high level relevant manpower training; developing and inculcating proper values for the survival of the individual and society; developing the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments; acquiring both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society; promoting and encouraging scholarship and community service; forging and cementing national unity; and promoting national and international understanding and interaction (FRN, 2004). The laudable goals which universities are expected to perform as enunciated above are pursued through its main functions and activities of teaching, research, dissemination of existing and new information, service to the community and being a storehouse of knowledge. Therefore, the important role which universities play in the society cannot be overemphasized.

However, despite the immense benefits of university education to nation building, the potentials of university education in the Nigerian society to fulfill these responsibilities is frequently thwarted by long-standing problems bedeviling the system. Odiya and Omofonmwan (2007) stated that there are various problems and constraints, which confront the Nigerian universities and these, have practically made it impossible for them to achieve their goals. Similarly, Ajayi and Ayodele (2002) stated that university education in Nigeria is in travail; the system is riddled with crises of various dimensions and magnitude. A number of multi-faceted problems have inhibited goal attainment and are raising

doubts, concerns and fears, all of which combine to suggest that the system is at across road. The university system in Nigeria has witnessed a lot of turbulent experiences. According to Odiya and Omofonmwan (2007), the crisis has been characterized by a combination of chronic under-funding, rapidly increasing student enrolment without a corresponding increase in provision, inadequacy of facilities, deterioration of physical infrastructure, a growing culture of arbitrariness and suppression in managing the institutions, demoralization of staff and students, incessant student riots and periodic staff strikes. Efforts at resolving and ameliorating these problems have often led to collision between the federal government of Nigeria and the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU).

ASUU is an acronym for Academic Staff Union of Universities formed to protect the interest of Academic Staff of Nigerian universities. Odiagbe (2012) defined ASUU as an association of Academic staff union of universities formed in 1978 after the collapse of the then National Association of University Teachers (NAUT), to salvage and redress the ever diminishing quality of Nigerian University education. ASUU was a successor to the NAUT that was formed in 1965 which protected the interest of academic staff of the Nigerian Universities. For Iyayi (2002), ASUU is a trade union and is like other trade unions comprising workers or employers, whether temporary or permanent to regulate the terms and conditions of the academic staff. The academic staff are the teaching and research personnel in the universities. They are lecturers of different levels in charge of teaching and research; notwithstanding their dual functions in the teaching and administrative positions such as Dean of Faculties, Head of Departments, Programme Coordinators and others. All the academic staff, despite their levels of academic attainment and functions, are entitled to be members of ASUU.

The major objective of ASUU is to protect the welfare of their members. In specific terms, Iyayi (2002) outlined the principles that guide ASUU as a union as follows: integrity, transparency and accountability; professionalism, objectivity and hardwork; courage, sacrifice and total commitment; internal democracy, teamwork and group solidarity, as well as patriotism, anti-imperialism and working class solidarity. In carrying out these principles, ASUU has been at loggerheads with both the government and university authorities. At the level of government, the union has always based its agitation on three major issues. These are: funding of the system, university autonomy; and conditions of service. According to Egbokhare (2001), the underfunding of the universities, assault on academic freedom and staff poor conditions of services were the subject of resistance by ASUU. These are the causes of conflicts between the Federal Government of Nigeria and the Academic Staff Union of Universities.

Conflict is a situation of disagreement between two parties. Ikejiani-Clark (2009) defined conflict as a natural and inevitable part of people working together, sharing diverse thoughts, concerns, perspectives and goals. This implies that when disagreement among people in a social milieu remains unresolved, they graduate into conflicts. Thus, conflict could be viewed as a by-product of the interaction of people or groups with different expectations, interests and backgrounds in the society. A conflict situation is therefore one that is characterized by the inability of those concerned to iron out their differences. According to Adejuwon and Okewale (2009), conflict is the result of interaction among people, an unavoidable concomitant of choices and decisions and an expression of the basic facts of human interdependence. It is a disagreement between two or more parties who perceive that they have incompatible concerns. For Best (2006), conflict is the pursuit of incompatible interests and goals by different entities. It is a situation where the disputants are hostile to each other or to one another in order to achieve their set goals or objectives, which are usually dictated by hierarchy of human needs, selfishness, possessiveness, greed, and political, cultural, psychological, sociological as well as religious motives. Conflicts are inherent and inevitable in any human organization. It occurs when two or more values, perspectives and opinions are contradictory in nature and have not been aligned or agreed upon yet; including when values and perspectives are threatened (Fisher, 2000).

Conflict exists at every level in the society, of which the university is not exempted. Conflicts in Nigerian universities are growing in number and complexity. The current university context is clearly more challenging than in the past. The range of conflicts and the fora available for their resolution are much more far-reaching than ever before. According to Egbokhare (2001), one of the primary causes of conflict between the ASUU and government is the conflict of perception of the mission of the universities. According to Egbokhare, ASUU sees its role as that of defending and protecting the interest of the country as a whole. It sees in the universities the role of a people's tribune, a critical watchdog for the society striving to curtail the excesses of the ruling class and the state whereas, the Government sees the universities

as organs of the state's bureaucracy, parastatals of a King which should be loyal to the national interest as defined and interpreted by the state.

Another contentious issue between the government and ASUU is that of university funding. The issue of funding has been a source of crisis in the Nigeria educational system. Various organizations, parents, labour unions, scholars and others have at various fora directed the attention of government to the poor funding of the system. For instance, Ibukun (2010) reported that between 1997 and 2007, average expenditure on education by the federal government, as a percentage of the annual budget was 5.1%. When related to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Federal government expenditure on education averages 1.1%. In addition, Arikewuyo (2004) reported that since the advent of democracy in 1999, funding of education dropped from 11.12% to 1.81% in 2003. UNESCO (2000) reported that unlike Nigeria which spends an average of 1.1% of its GDP and Gross Domestic Product (GNP) on education, other countries like Ghana spend 3.6%, Kenya 6.2%, and Zimbabwe 9.5%. The level of university funding has been going down and the government fails to understand the fact that the success of any school depends upon the resources available to it. As a result, ASUU has gone on strike for several times to press home its demand for increased funding for the system.

The issue of university autonomy and academic freedom has also been a vexed matter between government and ASUU. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2008:52) had recognized that: the internal organization and administration of each institution (of higher learning) shall be its own responsibility; the traditional areas of academic freedom for the institutions are to select their students, except where the law prescribes otherwise; appoint their staff; teach, select areas of research; and determine the content of courses. However, government has always hidden under the following clause, which says: "Government shall continue to respect this freedom as long as these areas are in consonance with national goals". The question is: What constitutes "consonance with national goals"? In actual practice, what is university autonomy? Ojedele and Ilusanya (2006) describe university autonomy as protection of the universities from interference by government officials in the day to day running of the institution especially on the issues related to the selection of student, the appointment and removal of academic staff including the vice-chancellors, the determination of content of university education and the control of the degree, standard and the determination of size and the rate of growth.

Indeed, university autonomy implies that each university must be governed according to the law that establishes it. Every university has its law, edict or even decree which spells out the functions of the various organs, such as Council, Senate, Congregation, Faculty, Department, Institute and others. But successive governments have often infringed on this autonomy, usually hiding under the cover of national interest. According to Ajayi and Ayodele (2002), government involvement in university governance has been a cause of strife between the government and ASUU over some time now. Universities suffered from arbitrary governance, rather than being a place where justice and truth are to be nurtured, the universities triumphed on mediocrity and untruths. As stated by Arikewuyo (2014), promotion was earned through sycophancy and the admission procedure became systematically bastardized. In addition, Arikewuyo (2004) stated that past and present governments have encroached on university autonomy. As stated by the author, staff and student unions were banned and unbanned at various times, many Vice Chancellors have been removed for not complying with directives from the government, a major General was even appointed as the sole administrator in a first generation university, many academics have been dismissed for instance, forty-nine academic staff of the University of Ilorin were dismissed for taking part in a nation-wide strike called by ASUU in 2001. Thus, if academics could be dismissed unjustly in a democratic government, one could imagine what would happen under a military regime.

Staff conditions of service is another contentious issue between the government and ASUU. This covers such areas as salary and allowances, retirement and pension, appointment, discipline and promotion of staff and others. It has been asserted that what academics are paid in Nigeria represent 0.0005 of the pay of their colleagues in Botswana and Ghana (Oyeneye, 2006). Of course, poor pay has led to the brain drain syndrome in the university system. In the analysis of Okogie (2004), the effect of staff poor conditions of service is evidenced in the brain drain, a phenomenon which has depleted universities in Nigeria seriously. The country has lost most of its experienced academics to other African countries such as Ghana, Rwanda, Kenya, South-Africa, to mention a few. According to the Federal Ministry of Education (2003), there were a total of 18,328 academic staff to look after 433,871 students and by NUC staffing norms, a total of 33,951 should be in the system. Therefore, the academic staff shortfall was 15,718 (46%) in the Nigerian Universities in 2000.

This situation amongst others led ASUU to use the weapon they know best to fight the federal government: industrial strike.

Strikes are usually undertaken by labour unions when talks have broken down during collective bargaining. The object of collective bargaining is to secure an agreement between the union and the government or company management as the case may be (Ojeifo, 2014). Clauses which may include a non-strike clause which prevents strikes, or penalize the union or the workers if they walk out while the agreement is in force may be inserted in the agreement. Characteristically, strike is reserved as a threat of last resort during negotiations between the disputing parties which may occur just before, or immediately after the agreement/contract expires.

Strikes are rare but ASUU strikes in Nigerian universities cannot be said to be rare. For instance in 1999/2000 there was ASSU strike for 5 months; 2001, 3 months; 2002, 2 weeks; 2003/2004, 6 months; 2005, 3 days; 2006, 3 days; 2007, 3 months; 2008, 1 week; 2009, 4 months; 2010, 5 months; 2011/2012, 3 months and 2013/2014, 6 months (Ojeifo, 2014). Equally, Omololu (2016) reported that with the release of the 2016 Annual Budget, allocation to education sector dropped from 11 percent in 2015 to eight percent in 2016. Coupled with the introduction of Treasury Single Account, (TSA), introduced by the Federal Government to check corruption in the system, the federal universities find it extremely difficult to discharge their core responsibilities of teaching, research and community services. Consequently, ASUU embarked on a one week warning strike on October 2nd, 2016. From the above analysis between 1999 and 2016 ASUU strike cumulatively in the university system is over 2 years.

There are multiple causes of ASUU industrial actions in Nigeria, ranging from breakdown in collective bargaining, failure to implement agreements among other factors. Consequently, Nigerian government resorts to certain hard-line postures in order to counter ASUU's strike actions. These include banning and unbanning of the union, seizure of salaries under the guise of no work no pay; ejection from government quarters, detention and others. As a result, ASUU's orientation became radical, more concerned with broad national issues, and undemocratic policies of the government. Thus, the issues are; is ASUU succeeding with its strikes with the Federal Government? Is there no alternative means of resolving these conflicts with the government without resort to strikes? Akpuru-Aja (2007) answered that without resort to strikes, disputing parties can come together, talk together, and resolve issues together in a frank and friendly environment via conflict resolution strategies.

Conflict resolution is a plan of action designed to enhance critical and innovative thinking to learn the process of diagnosing and interventions in the right ways. According to Ikejiani-Clark (2009), conflict resolution refers to the resolution of underlying incompatibilities in a conflict and mutual acceptance of each party's existence. Ikejiani-Clark further stated that the general thrust of conflict resolution is to help the disputing parties develop common norms, rules and regulations on utterances, attitudes, actions and aspirations to allow peace reign, rather than conflicts to reign. This is in line with the view of Akpuru-Aja (2007) that through conflict resolution methods, people will reach a joint decision on matters of common concern in situations where they are in actual or potential disagreement. Conflict resolution is borne out of the belief that conflict cannot be left alone. It needs to be put under control by interacting with the parties to develop common generalization or principles and practices that will return cordial relationship against conflicts.

Conflict resolution can be both formal and informal. According to Swanstrom and Weissman (2009), conflict resolution can either aim at resolving or terminating conflicts in an open and predictable process in accordance with legal principles or focus on efforts to increase cooperation among the parties. This is done to deepen the relationship of the disputing parties by addressing the conditions that led to the dispute, fostering positive attitudes and allaying distrust through reconciliation initiatives and building or strengthening the institutions and process through which the parties interact. As Neal (2003) had it, conflict resolution focused on the tendency to explore the roots of the conflict in order to identify creative solutions that the parties may have missed in their commitment to entrenched positions. This can be done via conflict resolution strategies, methods, principles and theories such as social contract.

Social contract is an agreement of social rights and duties. Redmond (2009) defined social contract as an agreement among individual people in a society or between the people and their government that outlines the rights and duties of each party. It is a voluntary agreement among people defining the relationship of individuals with one another and with government and by this process forming a distinct organized society. It derives from the ideas of the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778).

Jean-Jacques Rousseau was a citizen of Switzerland; French descendant and philosopher, social and political theorist, musician, botanist, and one of the most eloquent writers of the age of enlightenment. Rousseau was born in Geneva on June 28, 1712, and was raised by an aunt and uncle following the death of his mother few days after his birth. He was apprenticed at the age of 13 to an engraver, but after three years he ran away and became secretary and companion to Madame Louise de Warens, a wealthy and charitable woman who had a profound influence on his life and writings (Redmond, 2009). According to Redmond, Rousseau later became a close friend of Denis Diderot (1713-1784), French Encyclopedist and philosopher, who commissioned him to write articles on music for the French Encyclopédie. Thereafter, Rousseau's unconventional views antagonized French and Swiss authorities and alienated many of his friends, and in 1762 he fled first to Prussia and then to England (Kramnick, 2009). There he was befriended by the Scottish historian and philosopher David Hume (1711-1776), but they later parted ways and denounced each other in public letters. Rousseau's social life was often characterized by conflicts and resolutions which had profound influence on his philosophical writings. Some fruits of his prolific writings include *Discourse on Political Economy*, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, *Emile*, *Education*, *Confessions* and *Social Contract*.

The social contract theory of Rousseau is his critical exposition of the life of man in the society. Rousseau begins by reflecting on how man existed in the state of nature, that is, before the society emerged. He then proceeds to look at the evaluation of the society and its consequences for man. His target was to find out the legitimate ground for the governing of men in the society. Rousseau believes that men had natural liberty at the state of nature. He also asserts that the instinct for self-preservation is natural in all men. However, as men progressed in the exercise of their liberty in the state of nature, they experienced obstacles in their struggle for self-preservation. Such obstacles range from conflicts of interests to the inability of each man to provide enough resources to satisfy his needs. Rousseau thinks that there is the problem of how to organize men in the society. Their coming and working together forms what he interchangeably calls the social contract, social compact, body politic or sovereignty.

Rousseau considers invalid a contract by which one sells oneself into slavery. This is what he described as the contract of self-enslavement. Since selling oneself into slavery deprives one of the opportunities to exercise one's free will, it deprives all one's actions of their moral character (Wilmoore, 1985). He tries to establish a relationship between citizens that will provide each with adequate protection backed by the community while preserving the freewill and liberty of each. Rousseau's suggestion is the simultaneous alienation by each person of his rights to the absolute sovereign community (Cassirer, 1954).

Rousseau contends that in a contract of self-enslavement, there is no mutuality. The slave loses all. The contract negates his interests and his rights. It is entirely to his disadvantage. Since the slave loses his status as a moral agent once the slave contract is enforced, the slave cannot act to enforce anything owned to him by his master (Riley, 1982).

Rousseau advocates for communal justice. He views justice as the basis on which all men including the elites and recruits would agree to better the social institutions. Rousseau insists that justice should be the foundation of social institutions and social institutions cannot progress unless what is just triumphs (Cassirer, 1954). For Rousseau, all men are self-seeking and what is just would likely reflect on their consideration of personal advantage. In order to truly ascertain what is just, one would need to determine what principle a rational man, under conditions detached from the considerations of personal advantage and gain, would hold. He therefore, directs that social institutions can only be better when the elites and recruits reflect on the consequences of their actions and act based on the principles of communal justice.

Rousseau equally advocates for collective security. He upholds that man is always and naturally egocentric and selfish; filled with the quest for social, economic or political security which results to conflict and division. To save the society from self-destruction and develop a vision of a society better than the existing one, Rousseau advocates for collective security. By collective security, Rousseau contends that man's effort, comfort and benefits should be guaranteed and protected from suppression and threats in the society.

In the *Social Contract*, Rousseau relates that individuals in a democracy possess two wills, two contrary inclinations as to how to act politically, socially, and morally; the particular and general will which he described as the general will contract. According to Rousseau, the particular will of individuals represents their selfish impulses, the urge to satisfy personal interests and desires with little regard for the community to which they belong. Rousseau relates that individuals also possess a general will. He defines the general will as the civic impulses of citizens seeking to pursue the

common good within their community. He contrasts the general will with the particular will of individuals seeking only their personal good. Rousseau argues that the general will of the people, not the individual will of a king or the particular wills of nobility or clergy, should produce the laws that govern that community (Kramnick, 2009). Rousseau expected that the laws enacted via popular sovereignty will be general and impartial in form. A necessary condition for the development of a popular desire for generality in the applicability of the laws is the re-education of the populace (Cassirer, 1954).

Rousseau envisioned a direct democracy where citizens would meet in public assemblies and pass laws reflecting the interests and goals of the community. This is what he described as the contract of direct democracy. In this sense, the function of government for Rousseau was not simply to protect the private rights of individuals, as it was for liberal political theorists, such as John Locke (1632-1704), and Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826). Rousseau's contract of direct democracy emphasized the obligation of citizens to create a moral community where the general good triumphs over the particular will and personal interests. He compares the general will with a public conception of freedom, in which participation in the common life of a community liberates citizens from the chains of a narrow, selfish individualism. For instance, according to Kramnick (2009), citizens of the United States sometimes resent paying taxes to the government. However, they want the government to provide services that benefit everyone, such as schools and police protection. The tension between these two impulses demonstrates the conflict between the particular and the general will of individuals.

Relating the above instance to the collision between the federal government of Nigeria and the Academic Staff Union of Universities, the researcher therefore wonders if Nigerian government reflects the general will of her citizens. From all indications, no one knows government's justification for refusing to implement an agreement validly entered into by the FGN and ASUU on such flimsy excuse that it was not this government that entered into the agreement. Judging from the analysis of Nwabuisi (2000), an agreement which cannot be enforced or kept should not be undertaken, for it is like a sword which has no strength to secure a man at all. It is a known fact that the beauty of a king is in his regalia. In that sense, the strength of this nation and any other nation for that matter is in its educational standard. Education is a social good and it is the responsibility of the government to provide sound and worthwhile education and make it available for her citizens. However, if the Nigerian government undermines the general will, can anything be done to rescue it? These abnormalities therefore, aroused the interest of the researcher to investigate if Rousseau's social contract is applicable in conflict resolution between the Federal Government of Nigeria and the Academic Staff Union of Universities.

Research Questions

To guide this study, the following research questions were stated.

1. What are the challenges that ASUU faces in Nigerian universities?
2. What are the consequences of conflicts between the FGN and ASUU in Nigerian Universities?
3. In what ways can the issue of university funding as proposed by ASUU be resolved through Rousseau's general will contract?
4. In what ways can the contentious issue of university autonomy as proposed by ASUU be resolved through RSC of direct democracy?
5. In what ways can the issue of staff conditions of service as proposed by ASUU be resolved through RSC of self enslavement?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This chapter describes the research method employed in carrying out the study. The chapter focuses on design of the study, area of the study, population of the study, sample and sampling technique, instrument for data collection, validation of the instrument, reliability of the instrument, method of data collection and method of data analysis.

Design of the Study: Descriptive survey research design was adopted in this study.

Area of the Study: The study was carried out in Abuja, the federal ministry of education office, and all the federal universities in South East Zone of Nigeria. Abuja is the official capital of Nigeria since December 1991. It is located in

the Federal Capital Territory in central Nigeria. South East Zone of Nigeria is made up of five states namely; Abia State, Anambra State, Ebonyi State, Enugu State and Imo State. The area is bounded by Kogi and Benue States in the North, Cross River and Akwa Ibom States in the East, Rivers and Bayelsa State in the South and Delta State in the West. This area was chosen because of the predominance of Federal universities. Equally, there are long-standing crisis such as underfunding of the universities, assault on academic freedom, staff poor conditions of services, inadequacy of facilities and deterioration of physical infrastructure bedeviling Nigerian universities; this area inclusive. This gave rise to demoralization of staff and students, protests, unrests as well as incessant closure of schools for months in the wake of unrest. Hence, this informed the need on how Rousseau's social contract can be applied as a conflict resolution strategy in order to avoid further rot in the university system.

Population of the Study: The population of the study comprised 3,921 subjects (13 directors of federal ministry of education and 3,908 academic staff of federal universities in South-East Nigeria). Statistics available showed that the academic staff strength of the universities is as follows; University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) 1182, Nnamdi Azikwe university, Awka (UNIZIK) 898, Federal university of technology, Owerri (FUTO) 763, Michael Okpala university of Agriculture Umudike (MOUAU) 737 and Federal university Ndufu Alike Ikwo, Abakilika (FUNAI) 328 respectively. (Source: Personnel unit, federal ministry of education, Abuja 2016 and personnel service unit of federal universities in South East Nigeria, 2015/2016 session).

Sample and Sampling Technique: The sample size for the study comprised 580 respondents (13 directors of federal ministry of education and 567 academic staff of federal universities in South-East Nigeria). This was drawn from the target population of 13 directors of federal ministry of education and 3,908 academic staff in the federal Universities in South-East Nigeria. A multi-stage sampling technique was used to get the sample size for the study. This method of sampling is applied in stages until the researcher gets the sample for the study. Thus, four stages of selection were used in order to draw the sample for the study. For the first stage, purposive random sampling technique was employed to select three federal universities out of five. This includes: University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), Nnamdi Azikwe University, Awka (UNIZIK) and Federal university of technology, Owerri (FUTO). In the second stage, 5 faculties were randomly selected in each of the universities. In the third stage, 3 departments were randomly selected from each of the 5 faculties already sampled from the three federal universities. Finally, purposive random sampling was adopted to sample 20% of the subjects in the three universities. This includes: 236 academic staff from UNN; 179 from UNIZIK, 152 from FUTO plus 13 directors of federal ministry of education amounting to 580 as the sample size. The rationale for selecting 20% of the population is in line with Nwanna (1982: 72) who states that: "if the population of a study is in a few hundreds, a 40% or more samples will do; if many hundreds, a 20% sample will do; if a few thousands, a 10% will do; and if many thousands, a 5% or less will do". Thus, since the population of the study (3,921) runs into many thousands, 20% sample was considered appropriate for the study.

Instrument for Data Collection : A structured questionnaire titled Application of Rousseau's Social Contract in conflict resolution Questionnaire (ARSCCRQ) developed by the researcher was used for data collection. The questionnaire consists of two sections: Sections A and B. Section A comprises information regarding the demographic data of the respondents. Section B contains 50 items built on five clusters namely; Cluster A comprises 9 items on the challenges that ASUU faces in the Nigerian universities; Cluster B comprises 13 items on the consequences of conflict between the FGN and ASUU in the Nigerian Universities; Cluster C comprises 10 items on ways the issue of university funding as proposed by ASUU can be resolved through Rousseau's general will contract; Cluster D comprises 9 items on ways the issue of university autonomy as proposed by ASUU can be resolved through Rousseau's direct democracy Contract and Cluster E comprises 9 items on ways the issue of staff conditions of service as proposed by ASUU can be resolved through Rousseau's self enslavement Contract. The instrument was based on a four point rating scale with the following response modes for cluster A, B, C, D and E; Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with weight scores of SA= 4 points, A= 3 points, D= 2 points and SD= 1 point.

Validation of the Instrument: The instrument was given to three lecturers for face validation. Two of the validates majored in Philosophy of Education and one from Measurement and Evaluation, all from Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The validates were required to scrutinize the items of the instrument in terms of relevance to the study, the adequacy of the items in collecting data to address the purpose of the study. The validates examined the level and appropriateness of language of the items of the instrument. Also, the experts examined the clusters and matched them with research questions and hypotheses. The experts made comments, suggestions and criticisms independently which helped the researcher to modify and produce the final instrument. Consequently, items that were initially 48 were increased to 50.

Reliability of the Instrument: Twenty (20) copies of the questionnaire were trial tested on a sample of 10 head of divisions of federal ministry of education and 10 academic staff of the University of Benin which is outside the area of the study. To ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument, Cronbach Alpha statistical method was used. Reliability coefficient for the clusters of the instrument was; Cluster A, 0.84, Cluster B, 0.78, Cluster C, 0.88, Cluster D, 0.86 and Cluster E, 0.82. These gave an overall reliability index of 0.83. The result indicates that the instrument is reliable and therefore considered appropriate for use.

Method of Data Collection: The direct delivery and retrieval method was used for data collection. 580 copies of the questionnaire were administered directly to the respondents using four research assistants. The four research assistants were instructed by the researcher on how to distribute the instrument so as to ensure safe handling and maximum retrieval of the filled instrument. The contents of the instrument were discussed to let the research assistants be familiar with the modalities of administering the instrument in appropriate and effective ways. The reason for the instruction and using research assistants is to ensure that the actual respondents, directors of federal ministry of education and academic staff of federal universities indeed, filled the questionnaire. At the end, out of the 580 copies of the questionnaire administered, (13 directors of federal ministry of education and 567 academic staff of federal universities in South-East Nigeria) only 532 (11 directors of federal ministry of education and 521 academic staff of federal universities in South-East Nigeria) were retrieved.

Method of Data Analysis: To answer the five research questions, data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The decision benchmark was 2.50 which implies that any mean score from 2.50 and above were regarded as positive response while below was considered as negative response. The t-test statistics was used to test the three null hypotheses at 0.05 probability level.

RESULTS

This chapter presents the analysis of data collected. The results are presented in line with the research questions that guided the study.

Research Question 1: What are the challenges that ASUU faces in Nigerian universities?

Table 1: Mean scores and standard deviation of directors of federal ministry of education and teaching staff on the challenges that ASUU faces in Nigerian universities

| S/N | Items | Directors of Fed Minist of Edu | | | Teaching Staff | | |
|-----|--|-----------------------------------|------|----|----------------|------|----|
| | | MEAN | SD | DL | MEAN | SD | DL |
| 1. | Non-payment of salaries as at when due | 3.38 | 0.50 | A | 3.34 | 0.47 | A |

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--|-------------|-------------|----------|-------------|-------------|----------|
| 2. | Sudden change in University Policies | 3.23 | 0.43 | A | 3.19 | 0.39 | A |
| 3. | Denials of rights and privileges such as health care services | 2.46 | 0.51 | D | 3.50 | 0.50 | SA |
| 4. | Denial of rights and privileges such as accommodation | 2.53 | 0.51 | A | 3.44 | 0.49 | A |
| 5. | Non implementation of Government circular on staff welfare | 3.84 | 0.37 | SA | 3.85 | 0.35 | SA |
| 6. | Inadequate provision of physical amenities such as electricity | 3.46 | 0.51 | A | 3.44 | 0.49 | A |
| 7. | Allegation of corruption against university Administrators | 2.30 | 0.63 | D | 3.14 | 0.65 | A |
| 8. | Imposition of decisions on academic staff by the Government | 3.46 | 0.51 | A | 3.50 | 0.50 | SA |
| 9. | Discriminatory application of University rules and regulations by the Government | 3.07 | 0.64 | A | 3.15 | 0.65 | A |
| Cluster Mean | | 3.08 | 0.51 | A | 3.39 | 0.48 | A |

Key: SD = Standard Deviation; DL = Decision Level; SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; D = Disagree.

Table 1 presents the opinions of federal ministry of education officials and the university teaching staff on the challenges those ASUU faces in Nigerian universities. Items 1, 2, 4, 6 and 9 were accepted with the mean scores of 3.38, 3.34; 3.23, 3.19; 2.53, 3.44; 3.48, 3.44; 3.07 and 3.15 respectively. This displays the views of federal ministry of education officials and the university teaching staff that salaries were not paid as at when due. Equally, there is sudden change in university policies, discriminatory application of University rules and regulations by the Government and that university staff particularly; teaching staff were denied of their rights and privileges such as accommodation including inadequate provision of physical amenities such as electricity. In response to items 3 and 7, views of the respondents vary. Federal ministry of education officials disagree that rights and privileges such as health care services are denied and that university administrators were accused of corruption with the mean scores of 2.46 and 2.30 respectively. This is below the criterion point of 2.5 at four point rating scale. Teaching staff agree that rights and privileges such as health care services are denied and that university administrators were accused of corruption with the mean scores of 3.50 and 3.14 respectively which are above 2.5 criterion at four point rating scale. In response to item 8, federal ministry of education officials agree that there is imposition of decisions on academic staff by the Government with the mean scores of 3.46. On the other hand, teaching staff strongly agree that there is imposition of decisions on academic staff by the Government with the mean scores of 3.50. The table showed a cluster means of 3.08 with a standard deviation of 0.51 (for federal ministry of education officials) and 3.39 with standard deviation of 0.48 (for teaching staff).

Research Question 2: What are the consequences of conflicts between the FGN and ASUU in Nigerian Universities?

Table 2: Mean scores and standard deviation of directors of federal ministry of education and teaching staff on the consequences of conflicts between the FGN and ASUU in Nigerian Universities

| S/N | Items | Directors of Fed of Edu | | | Minist | Teaching Staff | | |
|---------------------|---|-------------------------|-------------|----------|--------|----------------|-------------|----------|
| | | MEAN | SD | DL | | MEAN | SD | DL |
| 10. | Disruption of academic calendar in the Universities | 3.30 | 0.48 | A | | 3.35 | 0.47 | A |
| 11. | Delay in payment of salaries | 3.69 | 0.48 | SA | | 3.64 | 0.47 | S A |
| 12. | Closing down of universities | 3.59 | 0.48 | SA | | 3.54 | 0.47 | S A |
| 13. | Loss of lives and property | 3.21 | 0.49 | A | | 3.58 | 0.48 | S A |
| 14. | Inability to achieve the goals and objectives of the institution such as provision of qualitative education | 3.00 | 0.70 | A | | 3.05 | 0.66 | A |
| 15. | Inability to achieve the goals and objectives of the institution such as development of relevant skills in students | 3.69 | 0.48 | SA | | 3.75 | 0.43 | S A |
| 16. | Inability to achieve the goals and objectives of the institution such as inculcation of national consciousness | 3.34 | 0.46 | A | | 3.38 | 0.44 | A |
| 17. | Low productivity among staff | 2.68 | 0.48 | A | | 2.64 | 0.46 | A |
| 18. | Unjust dismissal of staff | 3.69 | 0.48 | SA | | 3.75 | 0.43 | S A |
| 19. | Suspension of staff | 3.61 | 0.50 | SA | | 3.59 | 0.49 | S A |
| 20. | Loss of revenue as many students will move to neighboring African countries like Ghana, Benin and Togo to mention a few | 3.07 | 0.64 | A | | 3.10 | 0.62 | A |
| 21. | Psychological trauma on the part of students and staff who have to stay idle at home | 3.30 | 0.48 | A | | 3.24 | 0.53 | A |
| 22. | Poor performance of students in academic work. | 3.23 | 0.59 | A | | 3.19 | 0.60 | A |
| Cluster Mean | | 3.33 | 0.51 | A | | 3.36 | 0.49 | A |

Key: SD = Standard Deviation; DL = Decision Level; SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree.

Data on table 2 presented an in-depth explanation of the mean scores and standard deviations of the federal ministry of education officials and the university teaching staff on the consequences of conflicts between the FGN and ASUU in Nigerian Universities. All the items had their mean scores above the cut-off point of 2.5 at four point rating scale. This revealed that all the thirteen items are the consequences of conflicts between the FGN and ASUU in Nigerian Universities. For example, item 17, low productivity among staff had the lowest mean score of 2.68 and 2.64; followed by items 14 and 20, inability to achieve the goals and objectives of the institution such as provision of qualitative education and loss of revenue with mean scores of 3.00, 3.05; 3.07 and 3.10 respectively, indicating agree. The remaining items had mean scores ranging between 3.19 - 3.75. The table showed a cluster mean score of 3.33 with a corresponding standard deviation of 0.51 (for directors of federal ministry of education) and 3.36 with standard deviation of 0.49 (for teaching staff).

Research Question 3: In what ways can the issue of university funding as proposed by ASUU be resolved through Rousseau’s general will contract?

Table 3: Mean scores and standard deviation of directors of federal ministry of education and teaching staff on how the issue of university funding as proposed by ASUU can be resolved through Rousseau’s general will contract

| S/N | Items | Directors of Fed of Edu | | | Minist | Teaching Staff | | |
|-----|---|-------------------------|------|----|--------|----------------|------|----|
| | | MEAN | SD | DL | | MEAN | SD | DL |
| 23. | All categories of leaders both in the government and school settings being willing to make sacrifices for their political community | 3.30 | 0.63 | A | | 3.29 | 0.64 | A |
| 24. | Ensuring that general will of the people, not the individual will of a king produce laws that governs the university | 3.07 | 0.64 | A | | 3.15 | 0.57 | A |
| 25. | Ensuring that both government and academic staff reflect on the consequences of their actions and act considering the legitimate needs of others. | 3.00 | 0.71 | A | | 3.10 | 0.70 | A |
| 26. | Both the government and university administrators working selflessly and committed to the common good of their community | 3.23 | 0.72 | A | | 3.25 | 0.69 | A |
| 27. | Ensuring that the general good regarding the university funding triumphs over the particular will | 2.58 | 0.63 | A | | 3.62 | 0.57 | SA |

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|---|-------------|-------------|----------|-------------|-------------|----------|
| | and personal interests of the leaders | | | | | | |
| 28. | Ensuring that laws enacted via popular sovereignty will be general and impartial in form | 3.24 | 0.59 | A | 3.26 | 0.62 | A |
| 29. | Setting up standard for re-appraisal of the internal budgetary allocation and control of the university | 3.46 | 0.51 | A | 3.44 | 0.49 | A |
| 30. | Adopting a maintenance culture, to reduce the rate of decay of existing facilities for the common good of all | 3.32 | 0.63 | A | 3.30 | 0.64 | A |
| 31. | Subscribing for communal justice towards the expansion of physical facilities and equipment to meet the increasing student population | 3.38 | 0.50 | A | 3.40 | 0.49 | A |
| 32. | Responding without delay in the implementation and enforcement of the university funding for the good of the society | 3.46 | 0.51 | A | 3.44 | 0.49 | A |
| Cluster Mean | | 3.20 | 0.61 | A | 3.32 | 0.59 | A |

Key: SD = Standard Deviation; DL = Decision Level; SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree.

Table 3 displayed the assessments of directors of federal ministry of education and the university teaching staff on how the issue of university funding as proposed by ASUU can be resolved through Rousseau's general will contract. The results as presented on the table showed that all the items had their mean scores above the cut-off point of 2.5. This disclosed that all the items representing Rousseau's general will contract were viewed as how the issue of university funding can be resolved. Based on the analysis as reported on the table, item 27, ensuring that the general good regarding the university funding triumphs over the particular will and personal interests of the leaders had the lowest mean score of 2.58; followed by item 25 which focused on whether government and academic staff reflect on the consequences of their actions and act considering the legitimate needs of others with mean score of 3.00. The remaining items had mean scores ranging between 3.07 - 3.62 which are above the criterion mean of 2.5 at four point rating scale.

Research Question 4: In what ways can the contentious issue of university autonomy as proposed by ASUU be resolved through RSC of direct democracy?

Table 4: Mean scores and standard deviation of directors of federal ministry of education and teaching staff on how the issue of university autonomy as proposed by ASUU can be resolved through RSC of direct democracy

| S/N | Items | Directors of Fed of Edu | Minist | Teaching Staff |
|-----|-------|----------------------------|--------|----------------|
|-----|-------|----------------------------|--------|----------------|

| | | MEAN | SD | DL | MEAN | SD | DL |
|---------------------|---|-------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| 33. | Ensuring communal justice rather than quota system in the admission of students into the University | 3.07 | 0.75 | A | 3.20 | 0.67 | A |
| 34. | Ensuring proper harmonization of roles and functions of academic staff in a contract | 3.15 | 0.68 | A | 3.20 | 0.67 | A |
| 35. | Establishing extended understanding and cooperation between ASUU and the Government | 3.23 | 0.72 | A | 3.19 | 0.75 | A |
| 36. | Ensuring that academics in a contract are not degraded or harmed in any way | 3.30 | 0.48 | A | 3.35 | 0.47 | A |
| 37. | The university administrators taking part in the making of the laws themselves | 3.23 | 0.59 | A | 3.25 | 0.62 | A |
| 38. | Seeking an arrangement that will provide the university with greater guarantee of freedom in the appointment and tenure of staff | 3.46 | 0.51 | A | 3.44 | 0.49 | A |
| 39. | The academics choosing who becomes their leaders without Government interference | 3.54 | 0.63 | SA | 3.62 | 0.64 | SA |
| 40. | Reducing the extent of political interference in the affairs of the system most especially in the area of appointment of key officers | 3.38 | 0.50 | A | 3.40 | 0.49 | A |
| 41. | Ensuring that the activities of the visitation panels in the affairs of the university is impartial for the good of the society | 3.51 | 0.51 | SA | 3.56 | 0.49 | SA |
| Cluster Mean | | 3.31 | 0.59 | A | 3.35 | 0.58 | A |

Key: SD = Standard Deviation; DL = Decision Level; SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree.

Results in table 4 represented the opinions of the federal ministry of education officials and university teaching staff on how the issue of university autonomy as proposed by ASUU can be resolved through RSC of direct democracy. Based on the assessments, all the items had their mean scores above the cut-off point of 2.5 at four point rating scale. This revealed that all the nine items were impressively cuddled as how the issue of university autonomy as proposed by ASUU can be resolved through RSC of direct democracy. Items 33 and 34, which focused on ensuring communal justice rather than quota system in the admission of students into the University and proper harmonization of roles and functions of academic staff in a contract had mean scores of 3.07 and 3.15; followed by item 35, which sought to establish extended understanding and cooperation between ASUU and the Government with mean score of 3.19. The remaining items had their mean scores

ranging between 3.23 - 3.62. The table showed a cluster mean scores of 3.31 with a standard deviation of 0.59 (for directors of federal ministry of education) and 3.35 with a corresponding standard deviation of 0.58 (for teaching staff).

Research Question 5: In what ways can the issue of staff conditions of service as proposed by ASUU be resolved through RSC of self enslavement?

Table 5: Mean scores and standard deviation of directors of federal ministry of education and teaching staff on how the issue of staff conditions of service as proposed by ASUU be resolved through RSC of self enslavement

| S/N | Items | Directors of Fed of Edu | | | Minist | Teaching Staff | | |
|-----|--|----------------------------|------|----|--------|----------------|------|----|
| | | MEAN | SD | DL | | MEAN | SD | DL |
| 42. | Providing avenue for the government and the university administrators to express positive attitudes on staff conditions of service | 3.08 | 0.75 | A | | 3.20 | 0.67 | A |
| 43. | Ensuring that staff effort and benefits are guaranteed and protected from suppression and threats in the society | 3.18 | 0.68 | A | | 3.20 | 0.67 | A |
| 44. | Ensuring that staff comfort is for better services | 3.23 | 0.72 | A | | 3.19 | 0.75 | A |
| 45. | Ensuring that the academic staff and the government are better informed on how the university operates | 3.40 | 0.48 | A | | 3.45 | 0.47 | A |
| 46. | Ensuring that the academics will neither develop attitudes of hostility towards the government nor the government intolerant of the academic staff | 3.38 | 0.59 | A | | 3.30 | 0.62 | A |
| 47. | Ensuring existence of credible source of information and expression for staff to avoid misconception and differences in perceptions | 3.42 | 0.52 | A | | 3.44 | 0.48 | A |
| 48. | Encouraging the academics to exercise their free will at all times. | 3.54 | 0.66 | SA | | 3.52 | 0.68 | SA |

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|---|-------------|-------------|----------|-------------|-------------|----------|
| 49. | Government giving immediate attention to staff welfare | 3.38 | 0.50 | A | 3.40 | 0.49 | A |
| 50. | Having effective human relations between the Government and the academic staff. | 3.46 | 0.52 | A | 3.44 | 0.50 | A |
| Cluster Mean | | 3.34 | 0.60 | A | 3.36 | 0.58 | A |

Key: SD = Standard Deviation; DL = Decision Level; SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree.

Table 5 demonstrated the assessments of the directors of federal ministry of education and the university teaching staff on how the issue of staff conditions of service as proposed by ASUU can be resolved through RSC of self enslavement. The results as presented on the table confirmed that all the items had their mean scores above the cut-off point of 2.5 at four point rating scale. This implied that all the items were conceived as a means through which the issue of staff conditions of service as proposed by ASUU can be resolved. Based on the analysis as shown on the table, items 42 and 43, which sought to ascertain avenue for the government and the university administrators to express positive attitudes on staff conditions of service and ensure that staff effort and benefits are guaranteed and protected from suppression and threats in the society had the mean scores of 3.08 and 3.18; followed by item 44 which sought to ensure that staff comfort is for better services with mean score of 3.23. The remaining items had mean scores ranging between 3.30 - 3.54. This is above the criterion mean of 2.5 at four point rating scale. The table showed a cluster mean scores of 3.34 with a standard deviation of 0.60 (for directors of federal ministry of education) and 3.36 with a corresponding standard deviation of 0.58 (for teaching staff). This implies that both respondents agreed that the issue of staff conditions of service as proposed by ASUU can be resolved by adopting the tenets of Rousseau's self enslavement contract.

DISCUSSION

Challenges that ASUU Faces in Nigerian Universities

Research question one was concerned about the challenges that ASUU faces in Nigerian universities. It was discovered that academic staff union of the universities were confronted with lots of challenges in Nigerian universities. This implies that the university environment is not conducive for the teaching staff in discharging their duties such as teaching and research. This could lead to poor motivation of the academic staff and unscrupulous activities in the universities. No wonder Fatile and Adejuwon (2011) stated that no meaningful development can take place in a crisis ridden system as witnessed in the educational institutions in Nigeria today.

Based on the findings of the study, challenges that ASUU faces among others include; non-payment of salaries as at when due, sudden change in university policies, denials of rights and privileges such as health care services, accommodation and non implementation of Government circular on staff welfare. As explained by Odia and Ome (2007), infrastructural facilities such as buildings for the purpose of lectures, laboratories, studios, workshops, administrative blocks among others are lacking and if available are grossly inadequate. Facilities in Nigerian universities are inadequate, bad and outdated. In most universities, their buildings are as old as when the institutions were founded. It is worrisome to note that due to inadequate lecture halls, students are overcrowded in the available halls. Some are seen standing; some sitting on the windows while others are seen hanging around the corridors and corners of the classrooms (Baribor, 2003). The researcher observed that some engineering workshops operate under zinc sheds and trees. Many science-based faculties are running what is referred to as "Dry Labs", due to lack of reagents and tools to conduct real experiments. This situation is too horrendous and a challenge indeed. Still on issue at hand, Ajayi and Ekundayo (2012) reported that in many Nigeria universities, academic staff still use chalk boards even at this information age where teachers in other African countries such as South Africa, Ghana and others used multi-media facilities such as electronics boards to download information. Going by the above state of affairs, the issues at this juncture are; is the Nigeria educational standard falling

or has fallen? will the students see the university education as a means of acquiring certificates or the desired skills? No country develops without a sound educational system and the foundation is not the primary school rather, it is the university because it is the university that trains other levels. This being the case, the question then is; if the building blocks of a society falls apart what shall be the fate of that society? The answer may look quite simple, but it may not be so. The condition for teaching and learning in Nigeria tertiary institutions is horrible and grossly unacceptable. Consequently, Okogie (2004) lamented that Nigeria has lost most of its experienced academics to other African countries such as Ghana, Rwanda, Kenya, South-Africa, to mention a few as a result of sudden change in university policies. This could be why Nigeria universities have never attained any remarkable position in world global ranking.

Consequences of Conflicts between the FGN and ASUU in Nigerian Universities

The results of this section of the research showed that there are many negative consequences of conflicts between the FGN and ASUU in the educational sector and the Nigerian society at large. This situation is evident to corroded educational products of Nigeria tertiary education. As Kisanga (2014) painted the situation, qualities of graduates who seek for jobs presently prove that they only went to the higher institutions to earn degrees and higher diplomas, not to acquire actual practical skills that will enable them work professionally in different sectors. Painfully, evidence demonstrates that Nigerian universities only embark on mass production of graduates; quality is not considered. Rather quantity or how many graduates they produced annually is considered. The question then is: can these products stand on their own as marketable products? How far will these half baked products move the nation educationally and technologically?

Based on the findings of the study, the consequences of conflicts between the FGN and ASUU in Nigerian universities among others includes; disruption of academic calendar in the Universities, delay in payment of salaries, closing down of universities, loss of lives and property, low productivity among staff, unjust dismissal and suspension of staff. These findings are in line with earlier assertion of Jiya (2012) that there is a standstill for the children of this nation and the nation as a result of the conflicts between the FGN and ASUU. Jiya further described the nature of the standstill by illustrating that a final year student who should have graduated in a particular year may not be able to meet up. Consequently, this leads to loss of revenue as students will no more pay their fees and other charges during this period and any university depending on collection of fees from students to grease the system will not be able to overhaul the system anymore. Besides, many students will find their way to the neighbouring African countries like Ghana, Cameroun, Benin and Togo to mention a few, this means millions of scarce foreign exchange will be lost in the process.

Apart from the psychological trauma on the part of students and staff who have to stay idle at home or the unnecessary induced journeys as students have been known to die either as students are going home during the strike or when returning after strike, the most dangerous of all the consequences is social vices (Baribor, 2003). This includes peaceful or violent demonstrations. These activities lead to loss of life and properties as well as investment worth millions of naira. It often disrupts universities calendar, thereby putting the whole system at risk.

Ways through which the Issue of University Funding as Proposed by ASUU can be Resolved

This study as regards to research question three found that the issue of university funding as proposed by ASUU can be resolved by adopting the tenets of Rousseau's general will contract. One of such ways is by subscribing to communal justice towards the expansion of physical facilities and equipment to meet the increasing student population. This finding is in line with the tenets of Rousseau's general will contract that justice is the basis upon which all men including the elites and recruits would agree to better the social institutions. As Cassirer (1954) captured it, Rousseau insists that justice should be the foundation of social institutions and social institutions cannot progress unless what is just triumphs. Going by the above deposit, does it mean that all men are self-seeking and what is just would likely not reflect on their consideration if not of their personal advantage? Secondly, how can we as a society ascertain what is just? In an attempt to address this issue, Rousseau informed that in order to truly ascertain what is just, one would need to determine what principle a rational man, under conditions detached from the considerations of personal advantage and gain, would hold.

Based on the findings of the study, other ways the issue of university funding as proposed by ASUU can be resolved is by adopting a maintenance culture to reduce the rate of decay of existing facilities for the common good of all,

responding without delay in the implementation and enforcement of the university funding for the good of the society and all categories of leaders both in the government and school settings being willing to make sacrifices for their political community. This is in line with earlier assertion of Kramnick (2009) that social institutions can only be better when the elites and recruits reflect on the consequences of their actions and act based on the principles of communal justice. In this context, communal justice implies both the government and university administrators working selflessly and committed to the common good of their community. With this, there is no doubt that the general good regarding the university funding will triumph over the particular will and personal interests of the leaders.

Ways by which the Issue of University Autonomy as Proposed by ASUU can be Resolved

The findings with respect to research question four revealed that the issue of university autonomy as proposed by ASUU can be resolved through the tenets of Rousseau's direct democracy contract. Going by this finding, for autonomy of the universities and academic freedom, Rousseau reasoned that there is need for extended understanding and cooperation between the rulers and the ruled. With particular reference to the conflicts arising between ASUU and the Nigerian government, the latter must show extended understanding in dealing with ASUU whenever they make their demands.

Based on the findings of the study, the issue of university autonomy as proposed by ASUU can be resolved through Rousseau's direct democracy contract by ensuring that academics in a contract are not degraded or harmed in any way, seeking an arrangement that will provide the university with greater guarantee of freedom in the appointment and tenure of staff, ensuring that the activities of the visitation panels in the affairs of the university is impartial for the good of the society and by reducing the extent of political interference in the affairs of the system most especially in the area of appointment of key officers. These findings confirm the observation of Berthon (1998) that to save the society from self-destruction and develop a vision of a society better than the existing one, there is need for collective security. By collective security, the author contends that man's effort, comfort and benefits should be guaranteed and protected from suppression and threats in the society. Going by these findings, is lack of autonomy responsible for the collision between the federal government of Nigeria and the Academic Staff Union of Universities? According to Egbokhare (2001), the assault on academic freedom is the subject of resistance by ASUU and a major source of the collision between the Federal Government of Nigeria and Academic Staff Union of Universities. This situation demands urgent response so as to avoid further rot in the university system.

Ways through which the Issue of Staff Conditions of Service as Proposed by ASUU Can be Resolved

The result of this section of the research work showed that the issue of staff conditions of service as proposed by ASUU can be resolved by adopting the tenets of Rousseau's self enslavement contract. This finding agrees with the idea of Ojeifo (2014) that academic staff deserves unique conditions of service that would motivate them, like the intellectuals in other parts of the world, to attain greater efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery with regard to teaching, research and community service.

Going by the research findings, it is evident that to enhance staff conditions of service as proposed by ASUU, there should be avenue for the government and the university administrators to express positive attitudes on staff conditions of service, ensure that staff effort and benefits are guaranteed and protected from suppression and threats in the society, ensure that the academic staff and the government are better informed on how the university operates and government giving immediate attention to staff welfare. With particular reference to the conditions of service of academics staff in Nigeria, the reverse is the case. As Ojeifo (2014) analyzed the situation, upon all the remuneration of academics staff in selected African countries such as South Africa, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Kenya and Nigeria that Nigeria academic staff are the least paid. With this, is it possible for a worker who is least paid to put in his best? For Rousseau (1976), staff needs, interest and comforts should be provided for better services; if for any reason staff needs, interest and comforts are not considered, the consequences of such deprivation is conflict. The above deposit is in line with that of Egbokhare (2001) that staff poor conditions of services is a major source of the collision between the Federal Government of Nigeria and Academic Staff Union of Universities. This implies that there is a burning need on how the issue of staff conditions of service as proposed by ASUU can be resolved.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommends that;

- Government in conjunction with the ASUU through the federal ministry of education should provide avenues such as seminars and workshops for the government and the university administrators to deliberate on issues regarding the university funding, university autonomy and staff conditions of service. This is necessary to ensure that the academics will neither develop attitudes of hostility towards the government nor the government intolerant of the academic staff.
- ASSU together with other union leaders in the universities should ensure that the extent of political interference should be reduced in the affairs of the system most especially in the area of appointment of key officers.
- Government and school administrators should adopt a maintenance culture, to reduce the rate of decay and expansion of physical facilities and equipment to meet the increasing student population.
- Government should set up a standard for re-appraisal of the internal budgetary allocation and control of the university. They should respond without delay in the implementation and enforcement of the university funding for the good of the society.
- All categories of leaders both in the government and school settings should be willing to make sacrifices for their political community. They should reflect on the consequences of their actions and act considering the legitimate needs of society.
- School administrators should ensure that the activities of the visitation panels in the affairs of the university should be impartial for the good of the society. In this context, school administrators should seek an arrangement that will provide the university with greater guarantee of freedom in the appointment and tenure of staff.

Conclusion

It is evident from the findings of the study that there are various problems and constraints, which confront the Nigerian universities and these, have practically made it impossible for them to fully achieve their goals such as teaching and research. The university system in Nigeria has witnessed a lot of turbulent experiences. The crisis has been characterized by a combination of chronic under-funding, rapidly increasing student enrolment, inadequacy of facilities, deterioration of physical infrastructure, a growing culture of arbitrariness and suppression in managing the institutions, demoralization of staff and students, incessant student riots and periodic staff strikes. Efforts at resolving and ameliorating these problems have often led to collision between the federal government of Nigeria and the Academic Staff Union of Universities. These informed the need for the disputing parties to come together, talk together, and resolve issues together in a frank and friendly environment in line with Rousseau's social contract tenets.

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that more emphasis such as procurement and expansion of physical facilities and equipment should be given to the university to enable them meet the increasing student population. This is because they are the factory or the font for all educational planning and development. Equally, academic staff of the universities are the architects that design the superstructure upon which Nigerian education revolves. Consequent upon this ideological expression, the Nigerian education cannot rise above the quality of the academics staff in the system. Thus, major problems confronting the academic staff and the university in general such as under-funding, university autonomy and staff conditions of service can be resolved by adopting the tenets of Rousseau's social contract theory.

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