

# Effects of Academic Strike and Covid-19 Pandemic on Students Academic Activities During Lockdown in Higher Institutions

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**Abstract:** This research aims to explore the impact of both Academic Strikes and the COVID-19 Pandemic on the academic pursuits of students in Higher Institutions during lockdown. The study also sought to identify the challenges faced by students in maintaining their academic activities during this period. The study employed a Descriptive Survey Design, two Public Institutions in Oyo State, Nigeria, were purposively selected with 500 students chosen from each institution. Frequency and simple percentage were used to analyze the result and the hypotheses were tested using T-test and linear regression. The results indicated that Academic Strike does not significantly influence on students' academic activities. However, there was a significant perception among Nigeria students regarding the use of e-learning with their traditional education. The study also revealed significant challenges encountered by students in their academic pursuits during the both Academic Strikes and the COVID-19 Pandemic lockdown. Based on these findings, it was recommended that educational administrator should be flexible in addressing issues to prevent negative impacts on academic performance of students. Additionally, government and policymakers should communicate the influence of often Academic Strikes and the COVID-19 Pandemic on students' academic performance. Therefore, effective legislation should be implemented to guide responses to academic strikes and potential future pandemics.

**Key words:** e-learning, COVID-19 Pandemic, students' academic activities, higher institutions

## 1. Introduction

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, E-learning was growing approximately 15.4% yearly in educational institutions around the world without uncertainties or pressure on those institutions or on students (Dao Thu & Duong Hong, 2021; Stub, 2020). Educational institutions began providing most of their services online, including lecturers and different assessments via several platforms in synchronous and asynchronous modes. Education is the panacea that liberates individual from slavery while the university is the brain box of a nation and the key to success (Watson-Vandiver & Wiggan, 2021). Education plays a lead role in ensuring the transformation of countries from developing to a developed nation and the education system in Nigeria comprises of the primary, secondary and tertiary institution (Bashir, Yusuf, Musa, & Luka, 2022; Abolo, 2019; Oguche, 2018; Adamu &

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Nwogo, 2015). Tertiary education is an advanced education system in which students are developed to be qualified as professional in their various career level. In Nigeria, tertiary education includes the colleges, polytechnics, and universities which are assumed to be the highest level of a tertiary institution. This study interest is on the university as a tertiary institution. University is a citadel of knowledge for learning and quality research where the future giant is built in the university system (Enakrire, Kehinde & Mayowa-Adebara, 2023; Lis, 2021; Bianco, Varanda & Chiles, 2017).

There have been series of strike actions in the nation's educational sector and especially tertiary institutions. The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and the Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP) embarked on strike in 2020 and 2021 respectively while the Colleges of Education Academic Staff Union (COEASU) strike in 2019 are recent incessant strike actions which have led to school disruption and stress among all concerned stakeholders. This often cause a big setback in educational industry in Nigeria and calls worries that necessitate drastic action by the nation.

The emergence of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) originated in Wuhan, China, in December 2019, initially recognized as an unidentified pneumonia. The International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses later identified the causative agent as the novel coronavirus, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2). By January 2020, the World Health Organization declared it a global pandemic, as it rapidly spread worldwide. Nigeria reported its first case on February 27, 2020, prompting governmental actions such as travel restrictions, quarantines, social distancing, and lockdowns globally, impacting various sectors negatively, including business, education, health, and tourism (Mahdy, 2020; Bamidele & Daniel, 2020; Ibeh, Enitan, Akele, Isitua & Omorodion, 2020)

Previous researchers stressed that COVID-19 pandemic lock down has affected all levels of education system worldwide (Ikoko, & Oyetola, 2020; Ogunode, Ndubuisi & Terfa, 2021). Educational sector in Nigeria have either temporarily closed or implemented localized closures affecting many undergraduates and postgraduate students in the country (Goni, & Yerima, 2021; Ogunode et.al., 2021). Many universities around in Nigeria either postponed all face-to-face campus activities with virtual teaching and learning to minimize gatherings and hence decrease the transmission of virus. However, these measures lead to higher economical, medical, and social implication on both economic and educational sectors (Mahdy, 2020). Due to the suspension of traditional method of teaching and learning in universities in Nigeria lockdown during Covid-19, switched to online way of teaching students becomes effective, Ikoko, and Oyetola (2020). Therefore, the method of learning provides an alternative way to minimize either the contact between students themselves or between the students and lecturers. However many students have no access to online teaching due to lack of either the means or the instruments due to economical and digital divide. Few studies highlighted COVID-19 in relation to educational studies. This study was conducted to analyze the combined effect of ASUU strike and COVID-19 pandemic lockdown on the academic performance of Nigerian university students during the lockdown.

Hence, the learning approach offers an alternative means to reduce interactions among students and between students and lecturers. Unfortunately, numerous students lack access to online education due to economic constraints and the technological tools needed for them at that time. Also, Limited research has explored the intersection of COVID-19 and educational studies. This investigation aims to assess the collective impact of the ASUU strike and the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown on the academic performance of Nigerian university students during the enforced restrictions.

### **1.1 Research Question**

This study sought to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the challenges confronting students on their academic activities during lockdown?
- 2) What is the perception of Nigeria students towards e-learning Covid-19 pandemic lockdown in public institutions in Oyo state, Nigeria?
- 3) What are influence of academic strike on students' academic performance in public institutions in Oyo state, Nigeria?

### **1.2 Research Hypothesis**

Two hypotheses were tested for this study as follows:

Ho1: There is no significant difference between students' challenges on their academic activities on academic strike and Covid-19 pandemic.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in students' challenges on their academic activities among male and female during academic strike and Covid-19 pandemic.

## **2. Review of the Literature**

This section cited previous researchers with discussion regular strike actions in Nigeria, effect of COVID-19 pandemic disturbance student's academic activities in the campus.

### **2.1 Persistent Strike Actions in Nigeria**

The unfair treatment causes a strike action that workers receive from their employers (Nkanu, Otu & Baku, 2023; Busayo & Oluwaseun, 2022; Clark, 2016). Most of the strike actions in Nigerians have resulted from the poor application of collective bargaining from staff with the Nigerian government. Many instances, such as the 2011, Nigeria Labour Congress warning strike over the national minimum wage and that of 2020, Academic Staff Union of Universities

(ASUU) and Colleges of Education Academic Staff Union (COEASU) strikes, highlight the consequences of inadequately implementing collective agreement with government (Opone & Kelikwuma, 2021; Ajewole, 2014). The 2021, Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP) strike affecting Federal Colleges of Education also resulted from the failure to adhere to collective bargaining agreement with Nigerian government (Nkanu, Out & Baku, 2023; Yohanna & Diggah, 2022).

### **2.2 Academic Strike and Students Academic Performance**

The relationship between academic strikes and students' academic performance is a vital consideration for any nation aspiring to advance through transformative programs and structural adjustment (Gbaa, 2022; Murtala, Nelly & Ogunode, 2022). Education, integral to cognitive, psychomotor, and affective development, is a societal bedrock. The frequent strikes in Nigerian universities, polytechnics and Colleges of education detrimentally impact academic commitment and success in educational system in Nigeria. The clashes stem from ideological differences between academic unions and the government, often concluding in strikes as the language understood by the government (Abada, Odey & Odey, 2023). The union's demands centered on revitalizing the declining education standard, include infrastructure improvement, budgetary allocation fulfillment, and optimal conditions of service. Unfortunately, these strikes endanger students, leading to inadequate preparation for evaluations, delayed graduations, diminished economic value, and compromised educational objectives.

### **2.3 Covid-19 Lockdown and Students Academic Performance**

The global COVID-19 pandemic has compelled educational institutions worldwide to shift from traditional face-to-face teaching to online, distance, or remote learning methods (Masha'al et al., 2020). As of January 22, 2021, the pandemic had affected 96,267,473 people, causing 2,082,745 deaths globally (World Health Organization, 2021). In the Philippines, 509,887 infections and 10,136 deaths were reported (Espiritu, Anlaca & Jamora, Philippine Department of Health, 2021). The escalating cases and associated stressors have raised concerns about students' psychological well-being and academic performance (Hussien et al., Alfatoosi, 2020). Even before the pandemic, studies revealed high stress levels among Nigerian students (Mussi, Grasso, 2020). The lockdown further intensified stress levels among undergraduates (Gallego-Gómez et al., 2020). The unprecedented challenges of COVID-19 underscore the need for academic institutions to promptly address changes in student training and education (Oducado & Soriano, 2021). Evaluating students' experiences and academic performance in the new learning platform is essential, serving as a crucial indicator of education quality (Oducado et al., 2020). Understanding the impact of online learning on academic performance is vital for assessing curricular changes (Elshafeey, Masdi, Amir et al., 2020). Additionally, assessing students' satisfaction with the online learning environment is crucial for identifying strengths, evaluating instruction quality, and pinpointing areas for improvement. Student satisfaction plays a pivotal role in online education's effectiveness, influencing performance, motivation, retention, program completion rates, and overall outcomes (Fatani, 2020). Therefore, study delves into student evaluations regarding their education in the new learning modality, exploring various outcomes and experiences associated with this educational shift.

### **2.4 Rationale for the Study**

In light of the above, the present study focuses on the effects of the 2020/21 staff Union Strike which collided with lockdown from pandemic on Nigerian students' academic performance and propose policy measures to mitigate such disruptions in the education system. Students consistently find themselves at the mercy of these strikes, facing the jeopardy of compromised educational success during periods of academic unrest. Research of this nature can offer guidance to encourage collaboration between government and university Union in determining effective modalities to address challenges during strike in education sector.

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1 Research Design**

The descriptive research survey was adopted for this study, which aims at collecting data and describing them in a systematic way. The descriptive research design was therefore suitable to ascertain the effect of academic strike and covid-19 pandemic lock down on students' academic performance in public institutions in Oyo state, Nigeria.

### **3.2 Population**

The target population for this study are made up of students from two (2) public institutions in Oyo state, Nigeria, the University of Ibadan and the Polytechnic, Ibadan in Nigeria.

### **3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques**

This study adopted the purposive sample technique. Hence, questionnaire was administered to five hundred students in each public institutions in Oyo state, Nigeria. This makes a total of a thousand (1000) students.

The table below shows the public institutions and the number of students to be sampled:

S/n	Name of school	Population size	Sample size
1	University of Ibadan, Ibadan	35,000	500
2	The polytechnic, Ibadan	19,000	500
Total		54,000	1000

### 3.4 Quantitative Analysis

The statistical packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) were used for the coding and analysis of the questionnaires in simple percentage and Chi-square distribution and the results were reported in terms of descriptive statistical analysis.

### 3.5 Research Instruments

The instrument used for this study was a questionnaire. The questionnaire was sub-divided into four (4) sections ranging from sections A to D. Section A, focus on the demographic information of the respondents. Section B contains influence of academic strike on students' academic performance in public institutions in Oyo state, Nigeria, section C is made up of structured questions on perception of Nigeria public students towards e-learning during lockdown, section D structured the questions on challenges confronting students on their academic activities during lockdown. The instrument was constructed with simple and clear sentences to solicit the needed data. Sections B, C, D and E has a rating scale Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD), Undecided (U), Agree (A) and Strongly Agree (SA)

## 4. Results and Discussion

The obtained data from the selected public institutions was used to answer the research question.

Research Question 1: What are the challenges confronting students on their academic activities during lockdown?

**Table 1 Challenges Facing Students' Academic Activities During Covid-19 Pandemic Lockdown**

Items	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total
Lack of study motivation due to limited access to colleges & friends	43.2	32.2	13.1	8.5	3.0	100
Lack of access to library facilities	32.7	41.7	6.5	13.6	5.5	100
Lack of access to study materials	22.2	32.3	11.1	26.8	7.6	100
Lack of access to instructors and tutors for instruction & guidance	28.1	35.2	12.1	17.6	7.0	100
Home chores during the academic strike and Covid-19 pandemic lockdown	43.4	27.3	11.1	12.1	6.1	100

The table above revealed the Challenges facing students' academic activities during academic strike and Covid-19 pandemic lockdown. The result shows that lack of study motivation due to limited access to colleges & friends, lack of access to library facilities, lack of access to study materials, lack of access to instructors and tutors for instruction and guidance, and Home chores during the academic strike and Covid-19 pandemic lockdown constitute Challenges facing students' academic activities during academic strike and Covid-19 pandemic

lockdown. Majority (75.4%) of the respondents agreed that lack of study motivation due to limited access to colleges & friends is a challenge facing students' academic activities during academic strike and Covid-19 pandemic lockdown. 74.4%, 54.5%, 63.3% and 70.7% also agreed lack of access to library facilities, lack of access to study materials, lack of access to instructors and tutors for instruction and guidance, and home chores during the academic strike and Covid-19 pandemic lockdown respectively were challenges facing students' academic activities during academic strike and Covid-19 pandemic lockdown.

Research Question 2: What is the perception of Nigeria students towards e-learning Covid-19 pandemic lockdown in public institutions in Oyo state, Nigeria?

**Table 2 Perception of Nigeria Students Towards E-Learning Covid-19 Pandemic Lockdown**

Items	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total
E-learning saved my time, energy and resources during Covid-19 pandemic	49.7	35.7	3.5	8.0	3.0	100
During Covi-19 pandemic, e-learning helped me retain learnt information better	28.1	45.2	7.5	17.6	1.5	100
E-learning prevented my exposure to the public there by curbing the chances of contracting Covid-19	48.7	34.7	9.0	7.0	0.5	100
E-learning during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown was cost effective compared to the traditional learning	34.3	38.4	9.1	14.6	3.5	100
E-learning during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown offered me better access to learning information/materials	38.2	35.2	10.1	14.6	2.0	100
E-learning during the Covid-19 pandemic prevented me access to friends; making learning non-interactive and difficult	32.7	38.7	8.5	15.1	5.0	100
I couldn't concentrate to learn during e-learning since there was no one to monitor me	39.2	32.2	9.0	13.6	6.0	100

Table 2 reveals the result that reflects the perception of Nigeria students towards e-learning Covid-19 pandemic lockdown in public institutions in Oyo state, Nigeria. The result is evident that larger portion of the respondents (85.4%, 73.3%, 83.4%, 72.7%, 73.4%, 71.4% and 71.4% respectively) opined E-learning saved time, energy and resources, helped retain learnt information better, prevented exposure to the public thereby curbing the chances of contracting Covid-19, was cost effective compared to the traditional learning, offered better access to learning information/materials, however, prevented access to friends; making learning non-interactive and difficult, limited concentration to learn since there was no one to monitor them during the Covid-19 pandemic. A least of the respondents (11%, 19.1%, 7.5%, 18.1%, 16.6%, 20.1% and 19.6% respectively) perceived otherwise. This shows that, use of e-learning saved time, energy and resources, helped retain learnt information better, prevented exposure to the public thereby curbing the chances of contracting Covid-19, was cost effective compared to the traditional teaching and learning, offered better access to learning information/materials, however, prevented access to friends; making learning non-interactive and difficult, and limiting concentration to learn since there was no one to monitor them during the Covid-19 pandemic in public institutions in Oyo state, Nigeria.

Research Question 3: What is the influence of academic strike on students' academic performance in public institutions in Oyo state, Nigeria?

**Table 3 Influence of Academic Strike on Students' Academic Performance**

Items	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total
There was a decline in my communication and writing skills during academic strike	41.7	30.2	7.5	14.6	6.0	100
I lost interest in my academic pursuit due to incessant strike action	17.2	48.5	8.1	18.7	7.6	100
There was a massive decline in my reading habit during the academic strike	34.3	33.3	11.1	13.6	7.6	100
There was an increase in my CGPA when examination were conducted after strike action	17.6	33.2	15.6	24.6	9.0	100
I lost confidence in academics as being significant to my career during academic	27.1	31.2	15.1	13.1	13.6	100

strike						
I couldn't approach examination questions confidently after academic strike	34.8	23.7	7.6	22.7	11.1	100
Academic strike contribute to my academic performance positively	13.1	32.2	12.6	25.1	17.1	100

Table 3 shows the result expressing the influence of academic strike on students' academic performance in public institutions in Oyo state, Nigeria. The result revealed that majority of the respondents agreed there was a decline in communication and writing skills, loss of interest in academic pursuit, massive decline in reading habit, loss of confidence in academics as being significant to my career, loss of confidence in approach examination questions after the strike action, however, it contributed positively to academic performance as there was an increase in CGPA when examination were conducted after strike action with total percentage responses of 71.9%, 65.7%, 67.6%, 58.3%, 58.5%, 45.3%, and 50.8% respectively. On other hand, 20.6%, 26.3%, 21.2%, 26.7%, 33.8%, 42.2% and 33.6% respectively of the respondents declined. This shows that a decline in communication and writing skills, loss of interest in academic pursuit, massive decline in reading habit, loss of confidence in academics as being significant to career and loss of confidence in approach examination questions after the strike action constitute the influence academic strike had on students' academic performance in public institutions in Oyo state, Nigeria.

## 5. Testing Research Hypotheses

The research hypotheses formulated were tested and the following results were obtained:

Decision rule: If P-value < 0.05, reject the null hypothesis otherwise accept.

HO<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference between students' challenges on their academic activities on academic strike and Covid-19 pandemic.

**Table 4 Regression Analysis to Determine the Influence of Academic Strike on Students' Academic Performance**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	B	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	.670	1	2.610	.670	.422	.516 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	1568.648	988	.130	1.588		
Total	1569.318	989				

Table 4 reveals regression analysis to determine the influence of academic strike on students' academic performance. The result revealed that academic strike does not significantly predicts academic performance of students ( $B = 2.610 + 0.130$  and  $p = 0.516$  at  $p < 0.05$ ). This shows that Academic strike does not significantly influence students' academic performance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

HO<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference in students' challenges on their academic activities among male and female during academic strike and Covid-19 pandemic.

**Table 5 T-test Statistics on the Difference in Students' Challenges on Their Academic Activities Among Male and Female During Academic Strike and Covid-19 Pandemic**

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Lack of study motivation due to limited access to colleges & friends	Male	450	1.99	1.170	8.449	.004
	Female	545	1.94	1.008		
Lack of access to library facilities	Male	450	2.04	1.184	2.145	.143
	Female	545	2.28	1.175		
Lack of access to study materials	Male	450	2.49	1.286	.102	.750
	Female	540	2.79	1.278		
Lack of access to instructors and tutors for instruction & guidance	Male	450	2.51	1.328	16.785	.000

	Female	545	2.31	1.187		
Home chores during the academic strike and Covid-19 pandemic lockdown	Male	445	2.33	1.332	33.587	.000
	Female	545	1.92	1.151		

Table 5 reveals the result of the T-test Statistics on the difference in students' challenges on their academic activities among male and female during academic strike and Covid-19 pandemic. The result revealed significant difference between male and female students' challenges in their academics such as Lack of study motivation due to limited access to colleges & friends (0.004), Lack of access to instructors and tutors for instruction & guidance (0.00), and Home chores during the academic strike and Covid-19 pandemic lockdown (0.00) at  $p < 0.05$  whereas there is no significant difference between male and female students in Lack of access to library facilities (0.143) and Lack of access to study materials (0.750) at the same level of significance. This reveals that there is no significant difference between male and female students in some of the challenges faced in their academic during academic strike and Covid-19 pandemic and there exist a significant difference in some. Therefore, the null hypothesis was partially accepted.

## 6. Conclusion

Based on the influence of academic strikes on students' academic performance. It is revealing from the research questions that there is a decline in students' academic due to often staff academic strikes. On Nigerian students' perception of e-learning, it is also concluded based on the findings that e-learning saved time and energy and improved the overall learning processes.

Also there was many challenges on students' academic performance during strike and Covid-19 pandemic lockdown. The result also shows that the educational activities during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown positively pose more significant challenges to students' academic activities.

Lastly, there is a positive relationship between the department and the study's independent variable, which reveals that students' academic performance is influenced by the academic strike and Covid-19 pandemic lockdown. In this regard, the stakeholders should put measures to manage the situation in case of a pandemic. Furthermore, the right policy should be put in place to fund lasting solutions to incessant academics in tertiary learning institution in Nigeria.

## 7. Recommendation

In accordance with the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- 1) Educational administrators should be ready to shift ground on issues to avert academic strikes due to impending dangers on students' academic performance.
- 2) Students are to be aware of the influence of academic strikes & Covid-19 academic on their academic performance.
- 3) Teachers are to know the influence of academic strikes and Covid-19 on students' performance and how to manage the situation not to affect educational goals and objectives.
- 4) Government officials should live up to the expectation of releasing the necessary funds to avert an academic strike.
- 5) Policymakers are to make known the influence of academic strike and Covid-19 pandemic on students' academic performance, in lieu of this, functional and effective legislation should be put in place to guide



pandemic and academic strike.

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