

ASUU's Perception of the National Industrial Court (NIC) in Handling of Disputes between ASUU and the Federal Government of Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: Universities over the years have experienced a rash of incessant strikes and academic disruptions due to disputes arising from protests and agitations for adequate funding from government to spur research and provide the necessary infrastructure for conducive and purposeful studies. The National Industrial Court (NIC) was established as the final court in the land that determines trade disputes and related matters. This study was carried out to understand ASUU's perception of the National Industrial Court (NIC) in dispute resolutions and enforcement of agreements involving the Federal government. The study adopted Social Schema Theory and Perception - In-Action Theory. A descriptive research design was employed for the study, using both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. The study sample consisted of 816 respondents across the universities in Southwest, Nigeria. A stratified simple random sampling technique was employed to get respondents from the ranks of lecturers in the chosen universities. Also, In-depth Interviews were conducted with male and female respondents and content analysis was employed for qualitative data. The findings indicated that majority of the respondents (74.5%) declared that federal government did influence NIC judgement on ASUU. The correlation findings $R = 0.042$ (0.080) illustrated that there was a very weak non-significant relationship of 0.042 between the job position and the level of confidence in National Industrial Court (NIC). Consequently, the acts by government have prompted disruptions in the academic calendar of universities, with a gradual but steady decline in the standards of education and the flight of the best and brainy academics to advanced capitalist western nations.

KEYWORDS: ASUU's Perception, National Industrial Court, Federal Government, Nigeria.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Nigeria is a country blessed with abundant human and material resources but the socio-economic and political realities in the country have consistently generated mass poverty, disease, ignorance and insecurity. Due to these inconsistencies, the Nigerian state has lacked the ability to provide the infrastructural amenities and funding needed to sustain adequate developmental programs and this has pitted successive governments against interest groups like trade unions and organizations with vested interests and stakes in the affairs and survival of the country and the people within.

Over the years, trade unions have sprung up to challenge and oppose governments' handling of affairs as it affects not only union members but the generality of Nigerians. This has brought about situations of conflict instigating industrial crisis between trade unions and the federal government. One of the trade unions that have been in successive battles with the federal government over the years is the Academic Staff of Union of Universities (ASUU).

Due to the resolve to ensure a stable industrial climate and ensure a peaceful and timely end to disputes, as emphasized in the Court of Appeal decision, in the case of *Oshiomhole & Anr V FGN & Anr* (2007) 7 NLLR (pt. 18) page 164 at 189, "One

can understand the spirit of the respondents which seems to be geared towards achieving better social economic conditions for their members and the generality of the citizenry of this great Nation. That is alright. But by embarking on strikes, I dare say, the problem will be more compounded. I believe that meaningful discussions, dialogues and conciliations, rather than strikes, will achieve more positive results to the satisfaction of both parties, and the general citizenry" (Emezue, 2009).

Onyearu(2011) stated that the Federal Government poised towards sustaining a sound economic base and accelerating rapid industrial growth and "probably to replicate international best practices and create a contemporary dispute resolution mechanism... to adjudicate on all issues emanating from industrial relations and labour market breakdown"... created a special court known as the National Industrial Court to adjudicate on trade disputes, through the legislative Act of Section 19(1) of the Trade Dispute Decree No. 7 of 1976.

The National Industrial Court (hereinafter referred to as NIC), was established to act as the supreme and final judicial authority in industrial dispute matters in the country but over the years, one cannot fail to see the reluctance of trade unions to seek redress at the NIC in disputes with the Federal Government and this has thrown aspersions upon the integrity and effectiveness of this specialized court.

This 'special' court was established to be a superior court with exclusive jurisdiction on labour disputes arising from employer-employee relations, trade union- management relations and all matters arising from workplace disputes and conditions of service, health, safety welfare of labour employees, workers and matters incidental thereto and connected therewith (NIC 2011). Procedures before the Court is regulated by the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended), National Industrial Court Act, 2006 and the National Industrial Court Rules, 2007, the Trades Disputes Act, 1990 (as Amended).

Based on the above mentioned provision establishing it, the NIC has met with little or no success in proffering amicable and acceptable settlement to disputes before it involving the federal government and ASUU; this has momentarily thrown a shadow of doubt on its effectiveness and relevance in dispute management. Therefore this study was geared at examining how the National Industrial Court is viewed and perceived by the Academic Staff Union of Universities(hereinafter referred to as ASUU), in their disputes with the Federal Government and its effects on tertiary education and its implications for industrial relations in Nigeria.

THE PROBLEM

The issue of industrial strikes occasioned by disputes and or conflicts is a recurring matter in the industrial relations climate in Nigeria and this has brought untold hardship and economic losses not only to organisations and groups involved in these disputes but also the socio-economic climate of the country.

In the case of ASUU and the FG, it has led to disruption of academic calendar of tertiary institutions nationwide making learning and research difficult for students and this has adversely affected the quality of education in our institutions of higher learning and invariably, the quality of students and degrees awarded. Also these incessant strikes over the years have put a heavy strain on ASUU-FG relationship with each party viewing the other with grave suspicion. In the light of this, the National Industrial Court by constitutional provision is saddled with the supreme jurisdictional authority to adjudicate on industrial / trade disputes and in this regard, to ensure that a peaceful and vibrant industrial relations climate is maintained to boost system confidence, attract investments and enhance economic activities.

This study was carried out to understand ASUU's perception of the NIC in dispute resolutions and enforcement of agreements involving the Federal government. Suffice to say, the problem of strikes and industrial disputes between ASUU-FG will be addressed squarely to ensure that tertiary education is not destroyed and ensure that graduates are well grounded in theoretical and practical knowledge in their fields of study so as not to churn out half-baked and unemployable graduates

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- i. Does ASUU's perception of NIC influence its actions?
- ii. Is ASUU's behaviour and attitude towards the NIC influenced by how it perceives or views the NIC?
- iii. Has the NIC conducted itself in a manner to show without doubt, it is an institution of justice, equity and truth?
- iv. Can the judicial pronouncements from NIC in disputes with the federal government be accepted by ASUU without citing bias or a conspiracy to deny it justice?
- v. Can the NIC in its right, enforce judgements on ASUU and FG?

OBJECTIVES

The following objectives were carried out:

1. To examine ASUU's perception of NIC in dispute matters involving it and the federal government.
2. To examine the reluctance of ASUU to approach NIC for settlement of industrial disputes with the federal government.
3. To investigate how effective industrial strike actions by ASUU are in negotiating their demands.
4. To investigate the nature of relationship between ASUU and FG.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Going by past research on organizational behavior and its implication for industrial relations, the issue of perception has been attributed as a defining factor for individual and organizational actions (Wilson, 2003) and suggests that it is an influencing factor in peoples' response, action and or reaction towards others, issues and events (Lewan & Duchan, 1971).

SOCIAL SCHEMA THEORY

Perception is a process through which individuals select, organize and interpret or attach to events happening in the environment (Sekaran, 2009) and or respond to information (McCuddy, 2003). Perception is sometimes described as the process of constructing mental representations of distal stimuli using the information available in proximal stimuli. (Retrieved from the world wide web on 31 May, 2014).

Due to perception, the response to the information or events happening can be "distorted distortions" (Wilson, 2003) that can lead to stereotypes in organizations and these stereotypes, have an elusive nature, difficult to identify and harder to control and through stereotyping, perception can be an influencing factor in behavior, as well as biasing the decisions of the perceiver.

Luthans (2002) described perception as a concept of understanding the unique interpretation of a situation and not an exact recording of it. According to Eagly & Carli (2003) these stereotypic inferences yield prejudice against individual group members when stereotypes about their group are incongruent with the attributes associated with success in certain classes of social roles. Recent research studies according to Coetzee, Louw and Jooste (2005) have suggested that things such as organizational structures affect the perception of procedural fairness, the language and the labeling of the decision process affects perceptions of trustworthiness of the decision maker and the influence tactics used affect the perception of performance evaluation fairness.

Social Schema theory is attributed to cognitive psychology which describes how ideas, or concepts are represented in the brain, and how they are categorized.

When we see or think of a concept, a mental representation otherwise referred to as a *schema* is activated, bringing to mind other information which is linked to the original concept by association and this often happens unconsciously.

Therefore judgments are formed as a result of this schema activation which goes beyond the information actually available, since many of the associations the schema evokes, extend outside the given information. This may influence thinking and social behavior regardless of whether these judgments are accurate or not.

PERCEPTION - IN-ACTION THEORY

Gibson (2002) referred to perception-in-action as the notion that perception is a requisite property of animate action; that without perception, peoples' actions would be unguided, and without action perception would serve no purpose. In other words, animate actions require both perception and motion, and perception and movement can be described as "two sides of the same coin, the coin is action".

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology to be used in carrying out this research study will involve the use of quantitative research technique (questionnaires). The study sample consisted of 816 respondents across the universities in Southwest, Nigeria. A stratified simple random sampling technique was employed to get respondents from the ranks of lecturers in the chosen universities. This research method was chosen because the university lecturers' positions are ranked based on their status:

professors, associate professors, senior lecturers, lecturers, assistant lecturers, and graduate assistants and therefore separating the population elements into non-overlapping groups. The completed questionnaires were put into the Statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis generating frequencies, percentages and tables. Consequently, the data analysis and its interpretations were located and discussed in relation to ASUU's perception of the NIC.

DATA PRESENTATION AND FINDINGS

Table 1: Socio-Economic and Demographic Characteristics

Age years	Frequency	Percentage %
20 – 29	159	19.4
30 – 39	270	33.1
40 – 49	216	26.5
50 yrs and above	171	21.0
Total	816	100
Sex	Frequency	Percentage %
Male	541	63.0
Female	275	37.0
Total	816	100
Religion	Frequency	Percentage %
Christianity	567	69.5
Muslim	226	27.7
Traditional belief	23	7.0
Total	816	100
Monthly Income	Frequency	Percentage %
below 200,000	162	19.9
200,001 - 300,000	249	30.5
300,001 - 400,000	181	22.2
400,001 - 500,000	121	14.8
500,001 and above	103	12.6
Total	816	100
Position	Frequency	Percentage %
Ass Lecturer	126	15.4
Lecturer II	157	19.2
Lecturer I	127	15.6
Senior lecturer	194	23.8
Ass professor	109	13.4
Professor	103	12.6
Total	816	100

Source: Fieldwork: (2014)

Table 1 above shows the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of 816 respondents on the ASUU's perception of the National Industrial Court (NIC) in handling of disputes between ASUU and the Federal Government. For the age distribution, the data shows that the respondents age range between 20-70 years which is in line with labour force age. While the majority of respondents between ages 30-39 years and 40-49 years 33.1% and 26.5% respectively constitute the highest, meaning that in the study areas, majority are still within the labour force. Those between ages 20-29 years 19.4% while 21.0% of the respondents were 50 years of age and above.

The religion affiliation of the respondents shows that 69.5% of the respondents were Christians; 27.7% were Muslim and 7.0% practice Traditional religion. An examination of the monthly income reveals that the population consists of higher income earners. The figure shows that majority of the respondents were between the average income of N200,001 – N300,000 (30.5%), those with income below N200,000 were 19.9% while those that earned between N300,001 – N400,000

of the respondents were 22.2%. Respondents with income between N400,001 – N500,000 and N500,001 and above constitute 14.8% and 12.6% respectively.

Furthermore, majority of the respondents (15.4%) were Assistant Lecturers. These people might not really understand what is going on at the union level. The lecturer II were 19.24% while 15.6% were lecturer I. 23.8% and 13.4% were senior lecturers and associate professors respectively while professors were 12.6%.

EXAMINATION OF ASUU'S PERCEPTION OF NIC IN DISPUTE MATTERS INVOLVING IT AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

This section describes the various responses given by the respondents and their implications to the questions that were raised in the course of the research. Also, the table and interviews responses were interpreted using content analysis to bring out the possible explanation of the results.

Table 2: Respondents' Perception Dispute Settlement By NIC

Perception about NIC in dispute resolution between ASSU and Federal Govt	Frequency	Percentage %
Not Sure	63	7.7
Not Biased	254	31.1
Biased	499	61.2
Total	816	100.00
NIC is effectives of in resolving disputes between ASUU and Federal Government	Frequency	Percentage %
Not sure	35	4.3
Effective	273	33.5
Not effective	508	62.3
Total	816	100.00
Federal Government influences NIC's decisions on ASUU	Frequency	Percentage %
Not sure	37	4.5
No	171	21.0
Yes	608	74.5
Total	816	100.00
Preference of the replacement of NIC with another body	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	520	63.7
No	142	17.4
Not sure	98	12.0
No Comment	56	6.9
Total	816	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, (2014)

The table above shows the frequencies and percentages of respondents' perception about the activities of NIC in resolving issues between ASUU and Federal Government. 61.2%, which is the highest percentage of the respondents were of the view that NIC is biased in resolving issues between ASUU and government while 7.7% of the respondents were not sure of the level at which NIC operates. 31.1% of the respondents had a different perception that NIC were not biased.

An examination on whether NIC were effective enough in resolving disputes between ASUU and Federal Government, 33.5% of the respondents believed that NIC is effective in resolving disputes while 62.3% declared that NIC were not effective and 4.3% of them were of the not sure of the effectiveness of NIC in resolving disputes

Furthermore, examining the influence of government on NIC judgement, 4.5% of the respondents were not sure whether NIC were influenced by government or not; 21.0% of the respondents were of the view that NIC were never influenced by federal government on its judgement while majority of the respondents (74.5%) declared that federal government did influence NIC judgement on ASUU.

Moreover, 63.7% of the respondents were of the opinion that NIC should be replaced by another body, 17.4% of them said that NIC should not be replaced. This assertion is corroborated by an interview with a 55 years old respondent. He was of the view that:

“Replacing NIC is not the issue because it is very difficult to disagree with your employer. You know that teeth cannot bite the finger that feeds it. If NIC is replaced, who is going to inaugurate another body? Is it not government? Independence and commitment is what we need within the organisation” (IDI/Male/August 21, 2014)

To support the findings, literature shed more light on it that; under past and successive governments in Nigeria, the ruling class have always viewed with suspicion the activities of trade unions and this was asserted to by Alalade(2004) stating that:

“Government bases its relationship with Trade Unions on absolute authority. The ruling class strives to brandish the doctrine of sovereignty on all groups within and outside the country. Thus, threat of strikes notwithstanding, at the bargaining (or negotiating) table, government retains the power to accept, select or modify agreements between union representatives and government representatives”.

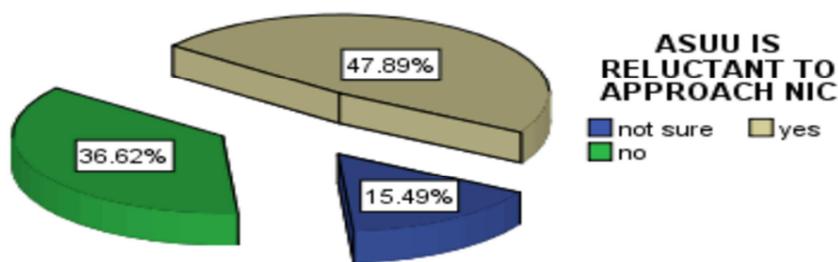


Fig. 1.

Fig. 1 above shows result of the respondents' perception on ASSU's reluctance to approach NIC. Here, it is indicated that 47.9% of the respondents were of the view that ASSU is reluctant to approach NIC, 36.6% said no while 15.5% of them were not sure.

In supporting the brevity of ASUU toward the approaching NIC, literature put it that, ASUU has over the years established itself as a union to be reckoned with as it is described as a body whose "historical mission is to play the role of creating new values, producing knowledge for freeing our people from the systematic domination to which our people have been subjected since slavery through colonization to the present" (ASUU, 2011, pp 14). Based on the above, ASUU cannot be that intimidated to feel reluctant of approaching NIC in any way.

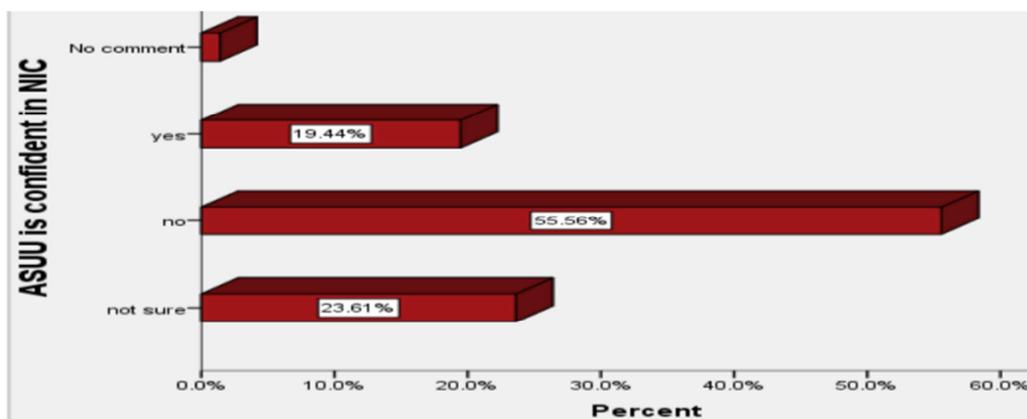


Fig. 2.

Fig.2 above shows the respondents' opinion on the ASUU's confidence in NIC. It is indicated that 19.4% of the respondents were of the view that ASUU has confidence in NIC while 55.6% of them had the belief that ASUU lacks confidence in NIC. It is also shown that 23.6% of the respondents were not sure whether ASUU has confidence in NIC or not. Buttressing this, an interviewee made this comment:

"To my own understanding, ASUU has lacked confidence in NIC for long. The body is quickly influenced by federal government" I don't really believe in its judgment anytime there is dispute between ASUU and Federal Government"

(IDI/Female/August 22, 2014).

Amadi (1999) refutes and disagrees in his analysis: "...experience has shown that the resort to the NIC, a government constituted body, may not serve any useful purpose for since the inception of military government of General Buhari in 1983 and in particular from the Babangida era (1985-1993) to the present regime, the NIC apparently is more of a political institution than a judicial one. Arguably therefore, the NIC would not want to upset the government's resolve in its dealing with trade unions".

Table 3: NIC's Judgement In Favour Of ASUU

ASUU's grievance warrant judgment from NIC in its favour	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	441	54.0
No	136	16.7
Not sure	143	17.5
No Comment	96	11.8
Total	816	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2014

An examination on whether ASUU's grievance warrants favourable judgement from NIC, 54.0% of respondents indicated that ASUU's grievance warrants favourable judgement from NIC while 16.7% said that ASUU's grievance warrants does not favourable judgement from NIC. Few percentages of respondents (17.5%) declared of no assurance on the discourse while the majority of the respondents (11.8%) did not have any comment on the subject matter.

This is corroborated by the interview of a 42 years old man;

"I noticed that anytime ASUU wanted to dialogue with federal government, it always resulted in deadlock until there was strike, which has been only language understood by Nigerian government"

(IDI/Male/August 21, 2014)

In support of the above, however, Egbokhare (2001) pointed out ASUU disputes with the Federal government at the last count had recorded seven major strikes and according to Anikpo(2011), six of which occurred between 1992 and 2001, four of which lasted a minimum of three months each dating back to 1980, when the association declared a trade dispute with the then government headed by President Shehu Shagari over university autonomy, funding, salaries and academic freedom. This set the stage for subsequent strikes and disruptions to academic life in Nigerian universities.

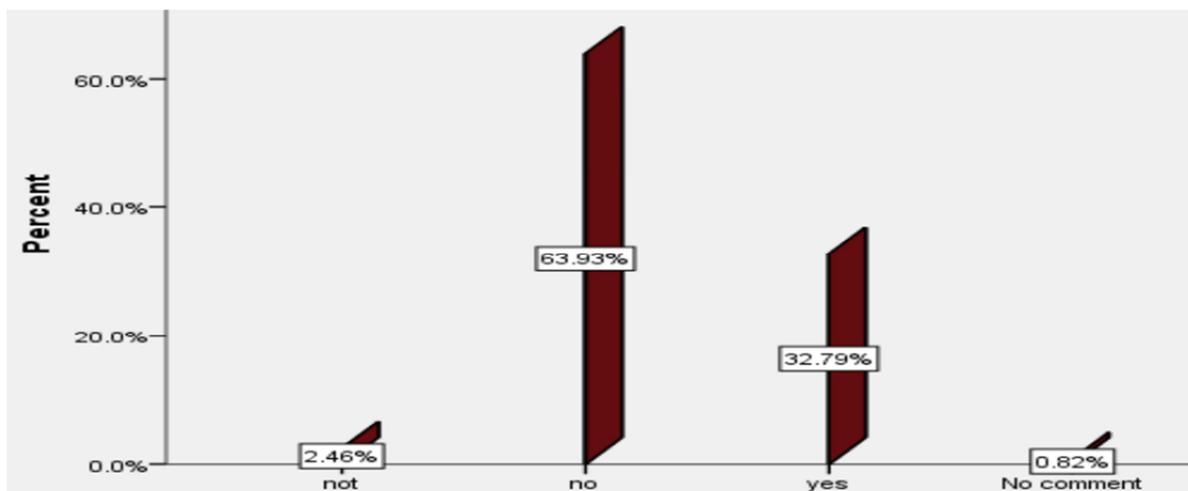


Fig. 3. Any Alternative Option Other Than Going on Strike

Fig. 3 bar chart above shows that 32.8% of the respondents were of the view that ASUU has alternative option other than going on strike; 64.0% of them said no, that ASUU does not have alternative option other than going on strike while 2.5% were not sure and 0.8% them did not make any comment.

However, literature depicts that In their submissions, Emiola(1979), Ogunniyi(1991) and Aturu(2005), agree that the body of eminent jurists on the bench of the NIC, versed in labour and industrial laws are expected to ensure that employers and employees alike, (and for the purpose of this study, the Federal Government and ASUU), settle their differences amicably in a timely and orderly fashion and ensure that both parties submit themselves to the judicial pronouncements of the court, to be bidding on all parties concerned, without any likelihood of bias, favouritism and or ill feeling.

Furthermore, Amadi (1999) refutes and disagrees in his analysis: "...experience has shown that the resort to the NIC, a government constituted body, may not serve any useful purpose for since the inception of military government of General Buhari in 1983 and in particular from the Babangida era (1985-1993) to the present regime, the NIC apparently is more of a political institution than a judicial one. Arguably therefore, the NIC would not want to upset the government's resolve in its dealing with trade unions".

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Table 4: Relationship Between ASUU And Federal Government

The nature of relationship between ASUU and FGN	Frequency	Percentage %
Very Cordial	93	11.4
Cordial	107	13.1
Not Cordial	580	71.1
No Comment	36	4.4
Total	816	100.0
The incessant strike has had impact on ASUU – FGN relationship	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	593	72.7
No	102	12.5
Not Sure	94	11.5
No Comment	46	5.6
Total	816	100.0
Opinion on ASUU's demand	Frequency	Percentage %
Reasonable	707	86.6
Unreasonable	18	2.2
Don't know	17	2.1
No comment	74	9.1
Total	816	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2014

The table above depicts that 11.4% of the respondents were of the view that the nature of relationship between ASUU and FGN were very cordial while 13.1% of them did believed that the nature of relationship between ASUU and FGN were cordial. 71.1% of them were of the opinion that the nature of relationship between ASUU and FGN were not cordial in any form and 4.4% of them did not give any comment.

To examine the impact of the incessant strike on ASUU – FGN relationship, 72.7% of the respondents indicated that it has impact on their relationship while 12.5% were of the view that it does not have any impact. 11.5% of the respondents showed that they were sure if it has impact on their relationship whiles 5.6% of the respondents did not give any comment;

This is corroborated by the interview of a 60 years old respondent;

“The incessant strike surely has impact on ASUU’s relationship with federal government. The only language understood by our government is strike”

(IDI/Female/August 17, 2014).

An examination on whether the respondents’ opinion on ASUU’s demand, 86.6% of the respondents indicated that it is reasonable; 2.2% said not reasonable while 2.1% did not know and 9.1% of them did not have any comment.

Table 5: Job Position and Level of Confidence in NIC

Job Position	Level of confidence in NIC						Total	
	Low		Moderate		High			
Ass Lecturer	71	56.3%	46	36.5%	9	7.2%	126	100.0%
Lecturer II	93	59.2%	45	28.7%	12	12.1%	157	100.0%
Lecturer I	98	7.2%	19	15.0%	10	7.8%	127	100.0%
Senior Lecturer	119	61.3%	52	26.8%	23	11.9%	194	100.0%
Associate Professor	99	90.8%	6	5.5%	4	3.7%	109	100.0%
Professor	82	79.6%	13	12.6%	8	7.8%	103	100.0%
Total	562	68.9%	181	22.2%	73	8.9%	816	100.0%

$\chi^2 = 2.526$; $df = 3$; *Asymp. Sig. 2-sided = 0.006*; $P < 0.05$; $R = 0.042$; *Asymp. Sig = 0.080*

Source: Fieldwork, 2014.

Examining the relationship between the respondents’ job position and the level of confidence in NIC, a closer examination of the table above indicates that there is correlation between the respondents’ job position level and the level of confidence in NIC.

The result signifies that there is significant relationship between education job position level and the level of confidence in NIC. Hence, it can be deduced that the higher the job positions of the respondents, the higher the loss of confidence in the judgment of NIC and vice-versa.

Furthermore, the correlation findings $R = 0.042$ (0.080) illustrated that there was a very weak non-significant relationship of 0.042. Hence, there was a relationship between job position level and the level of confidence in NIC. The findings from the chi-square test coupled with the support of the findings obtained from the correlation result indicate that even when there was an association between the respondents with higher job position and the job position level and the level of confidence in NIC judgement, it also pointed out that there was a relationship between higher job position and lacking confidence in NIC. People with higher job positions such as professors will have little confidence in the judgement made by NIC and even lack confidence in Federal government promises.

To corroborate the above findings, the key in-depth interview with a respondent indicates that;

“I don’t really believe or rather have confidence in NIC judgment. It is a biased organisation that always shows support for federal government whenever any dispute erupts between ASUU and FGN”

(IDI/Female/August 14, 2014)

Amadi (1999) refutes and disagrees in his analysis: “...experience has shown that the resort to the NIC, a government constituted body, may not serve any useful purpose for since the inception of military government of General Buhari in 1983 and in particular from the Babangida era (1985-1993) to the present regime, the NIC apparently is more of a political institution than a judicial one. Arguably therefore, the NIC would not want to upset the government’s resolve in its dealing with trade unions”.

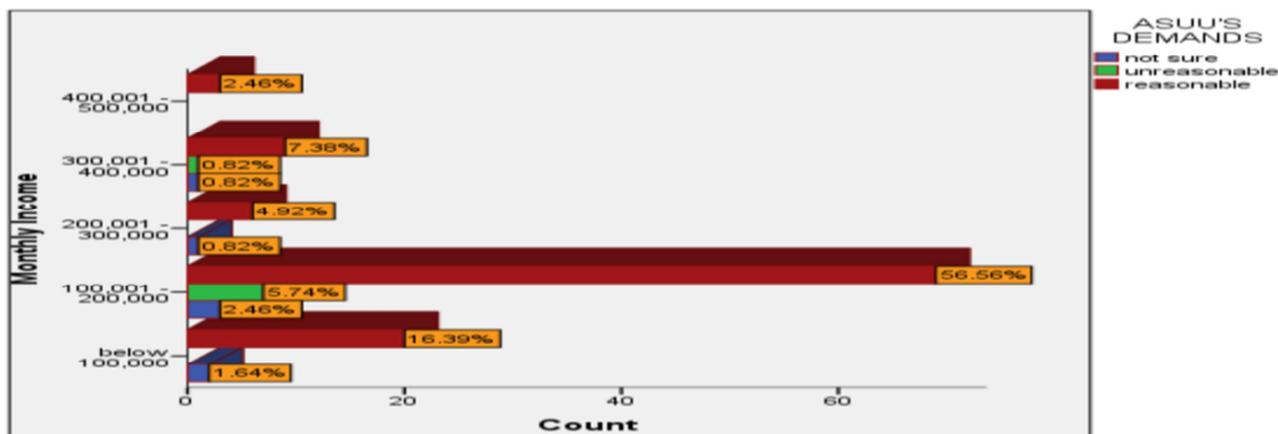


Fig. 4. Respondents' monthly income and opinion on ASUU'S demands

From the chart above, 16.4% of the respondents that earned monthly income ₦200,000 and below responded that the ASUU's demands are reasonable while 1.6% of them said that they were not sure and none of them indicated that the demand was unreasonable. 56.6% of the respondents that earned between ₦2100,001 - ₦300,000 said that the ASUU's demand is reasonable while 5.7% of them indicated not reasonable and 2.5% of the respondents were not sure.

Furthermore, 4.9% of those who earned between ₦200,001 - ₦300,000 responded that the ASUU's demands are reasonable while 0.8% of them were not sure, and those that had monthly income ranging from ₦300,001 - ₦400,000 and that indicated that the ASUU's demands are reasonable were 7.4% while 0.8% each indicated that the ASUU's demands are unreasonable and not sure respectively. This indicates that the higher the income, the lower the perception of the respondents about whether their demand is reasonable or not and vice-versa.

Furthermore, the chi-square result ($\chi^2 = 5.199 (0.000)$) depicts that there was an association between monthly income and the ASUU's level of demands from federal government. Also, the correlation result $R = -0.020 (0.045)$ also points out that there was a relationship between monthly income and the perceptions of the respondents on the ASUU's demands though there was a negative significant relationship between the two variables. Although, this explains that monthly income really influences the level at which the ASUU members would perceive their demand attitude. That is, if the income level increases, though, there will still be demand, but it will be minimal.

DISCUSSION

From the findings, the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of 816 respondents on the ASUU's perception of the National Industrial Court (NIC) in handling of disputes between ASUU and the Federal Government. For the age distribution, the data shows that the respondents age range between 20-70 years which is in line with labour force age. While the majority of respondents between ages 30-39 years and 40-49 years 33.1% and 26.5% respectively constitute the highest, meaning that in the study areas, majority are still within the labour force. Those between ages 20-29 years 19.4% while 21.0% of the respondents were 50 years of age and above.

The religion affiliation of the respondents shows that 69.5% of the respondents were Christians; 27.7% were Muslim and 7.0% practice Traditional religion. An examination of the monthly income reveals that the population consists of higher income earners. The figure shows that majority of the respondents were between the average income of N200,001 – N300,000 (30.5%), those with income below N200,000 were 19.9% while those that earned between N300,001 – N400,000 of the respondents were 22.2%. Respondents with income between N400,001 – N500,000 and N500,001 and above constitute 14.8% and 12.6% respectively.

The result also indicated that 47.9% of the respondents were of the view that ASSU is reluctant to approach NIC, 36.6% said no while 15.5% of them were not sure.

In supporting the brevity of ASUU toward the approaching NIC, literature put it that, ASUU has over the years established itself as a union to be reckoned with as it is described as a body whose "historical mission is to play the role of creating new values, producing knowledge for freeing our people from the systematic domination to which our people have been

subjected since slavery through colonization to the present” (ASUU, 2011, pp 14). Based on the above, ASUU cannot be that intimidated to feel reluctant of approaching NIC in any way.

In the examination of the relationship between the respondents’ job position and the level of confidence in NIC, a closer examination of the table above indicates that there is correlation between the respondents’ job position level and the level of confidence in NIC.

The result signifies that there is significant relationship between education job position level and the level of confidence in NIC. Hence, it can be deduced that the higher the job positions of the respondents, the higher the loss of confidence in the judgment of NIC and vice-versa.

Furthermore, the correlation findings $R = 0.042$ (0.080) illustrated that there was a very weak non-significant relationship of 0.042. Hence, there was a relationship between job position level and the level of confidence in NIC. The findings from the chi-square test coupled with the support of the findings obtained from the correlation result indicate that even when there was an association between the respondents with higher job position and the job position level and the level of confidence in NIC judgement, it also pointed out that there was a relationship between higher job position and lacking confidence in NIC. People with higher job positions such as professors will have little confidence in the judgement made by NIC and even lack confidence in Federal government promises

CONCLUSION

The Academic Staff Union of Universities over the years has waged a running and protracted battle with successive Nigerian governments through the strike options, over government’s lackadaisical attitude to the development of education, with its insincerity of purpose in negotiations and non-implementation of collective agreements. These acts by government have prompted disruptions in the academic calendar of universities, with a gradual but steady decline in the standards of education and the flight of the best and brainy academics to advanced capitalist western nations.

Also government’s dishonesty, total lack of integrity, un-seriousness and unwillingness to appreciate the importance of education in national development and of recent, age elongation for the academics from sixty-five (65) years to seventy (70) years to retain those retiring academics with proven years of experience to train and nurture budding academics served as major bone of contentions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the literature and study evidence, on ASUU’s Perception of The National Industrial Court (Nic) In Handling of Disputes Between ASUU And The Federal Government of Nigeria, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. National Industrial Court is the final court in the land that determines trade disputes and related matters should independent and unbiased in its intervention.
2. Government at all levels should be sincere in making good of their promises to workers
3. National Industrial Court should function to ensure that the challenge of managing industrial and trade disputes are overcome and disputing parties obey the rule of law and allow common sense prevail so that people and the society don’t suffer.
4. ASUU should find another means of making it’s demand known to the government insted of engaging in acts that prompt disruptions in the academic calendar of universities that result in declining the standards of education in Nigeria.

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