



INDUSTRIAL STRIKES AS OBSTACLES TO WORKERS' PERFORMANCE AND HIGH PRODUCTIVITY IN NIGERIA: THE DISBANDMENT OF THE LABOUR PARTY AS PANACEA TO INCESSANT STRIKES

Lawretta Adaobi Onyekwere, PhD

Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences,
Rivers State University, Nkpolu, Oronworukwo, Port Harcourt
ORCID ID: 0000-0001-5640-3907;
Email: lawretta.onyekwere1@ust.edu.ng

Abstract

Industrial strike actions cannot be avoided since they are inevitable aspects of work teams. Universally, the effects of industrial strike actions on the economy, public health and security of both personnel and employer/management of labour are better imagined than described. Since the effect of strike action hinders the competence of workers leading to lower productivity in organizations, this paper examines organizational strikes as obstacles to workers' performance and high productivity in Nigeria with the view to disbanding the labour party and the adoption of true collective bargaining principle free of deceit. From literature reviewed, the paper revealed that the formation of the Labour party in Nigeria has weakened the power of Nigeria Labour Congress, an umbrella organization for trade unions in Nigeria to any fruitful collective bargaining negotiation in moment of strikes. Secondly, the paper showed dissatisfaction with salary and incentive problems, wrongful dismissal of workmen are some of the commonest reasons associated with organizational strikes. In addition, the paper uncovered the arbitrary use of lockouts by government/employers of labour as a solution to strike action rather than the adoption of the practice of true collective bargaining tools to reconstruct the broken bridge. Based on this, the paper concludes that one of the factors affecting the industrial strike is the continued existence of the Labour Party as the mouthpiece of labour organizations and the absence of true collective bargaining principles. Based on this, the paper recommends the disbandment of the labour party by workers and the enthronement of the practice of true collective bargaining devoid of deceit to make their voice heard and enhances social peace; help to reduce strikes through providing a formal structure for labour-management cooperation towards improving workers' competence and productivity.

Keywords: Industrial strike action; Management; Workers; Disbandment of labour Party; True collective bargaining;

Introduction

In Nigeria, there have been industrial strike actions from the pre-colonial days, but never has the authority of the Nigeria Labour Congress been this weakened nowadays. Prior to this era, industrial strike actions have occurred due to the refusal of management/employers of labour to enhance working conditions in the workplace environment in order to improve workers' performance and increase productivity. In most cases, government has responded positively to restore trust and confidence to workers. But in others, particularly since the formation the Labour Party for workers, government no longer sees merit in agitations leading to strike actions declared. Strictly speaking, government regards trade unions as an opposition political party today. It is in this vein that government has always been indifferent towards workers' dissatisfaction with salary and incentive problems, wrongful dismissal of workmen, and other issues of utmost concern.

In his assessment, Omotoso (2020) said those who created the Labour Party in Nigeria never bothered to study the history of the Labour Parties in Britain, in France, in Germany and in the Netherlands, and if they did, they would have learnt that the Labour parties in these countries were made up of the mergers of groups with similar ideological positions and similar ideological thinking. But in Nigeria, it is rather the radical thinking individuals that metamorphosed into organizing labourers into a Labour Party! Perhaps, this explained the only reason why Dr. Jeremiah Olatunji Otegbeye founded the Socialist Workers and Farmers Party of Nigeria in 1963, but nothing concrete about workers' welfare including their working environments was achieved.

The second attempt to found a Labour Party was in 2002 when the Labour Party was specifically founded by the Nigerian Labour Congress. In 2007, Dr. Olusegun Mimiko used its platform to run for the governorship position in Ondo State in 2007 elections. Prior to this era, the Labour Party had no substantial representative in the political firmament of Nigeria. Unfortunately, Dr. Mimiko left the Labour Party before the end of his second term as governor of Ondo State. As a result of dabbling into politics unprepared, the once strong voice of Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) agitating for improved working conditions of workers was lost. At the moment, the trade union is being viewed as political party, an opposition party playing politics rather than as a union that once represented the collective interests of workers! Consequent upon this anomaly, the Nigerian industrial landscapes have been characterized with industrial strike actions in private, corporate and government organizations without stop; several man-working hours have been lost, unprecedented work stoppage resulting to the loss of trillions of naira leading to lower productivity.

The constant strikes by the NLC over disagreements with government/employer of labour have affected the pace of development in Nigeria as many development projects by government and non-governmental organizations were halted during these strikes. Today, industrial strike is one of the most predictable outcomes when employees working as a group decide to protest against some problems they believe are unfair and need to be tackled by management to improve workers' performance and job productivity in the organization they work. For all intents and purposes, the phenomenon of incessant strikes has attracted the attention of well-

meaning Nigerians and stakeholders. According to Okene (2008), strike is a temporary stoppage of work by a group of employees in order to express a grievance or enforce a demand. In most cases, it could involve a complete withdrawal of workers' services due to conflict of interests as regards wages and working conditions. Since an industrial strike is a very powerful weapon used by trade unions and other labour associations to get their demands accepted, Lewis, French and Steane (1997) assert that strike within an organization is inevitable because of the incompatibility of goals that arises from opposing behaviours. Explaining further, Aspinall (2007) says strike actions affect long term partnership and positive communication between labour, unions and government, and breed distrust among the parties involved.

Fundamentally, the first industrial strike action ever recorded in the world occurred at the building site of the Tower of Babylon. Biblically, the book of Genesis (Chapter 11: 3 -9) narrated how the workers decided to build a big city with a tower to reach the sky, so that they can make a name for themselves and possibly too, reach God, but that mission was aborted without any form of dispute; workers disappointedly down tools and dispersed because they could neither understand the motive behind God's action or one another. Why the change of language? Could it be that they were jointly going to ask for higher wages and allowances from God after reaching the sky, the supposed home of God? Why did God (represented by management) halt the project to the disappointment of the workers? Still, could management have accused workers of indiscipline, unruliness, disorderliness, disruptive behaviour, aggression, hostility, violence, as is common these days? From all perspectives, the author without doubt acknowledged that there was indeed an industrial strike action, but the decision to frustrate workers out of their desire to enhance productivity was unilaterally taken as in common these days in Nigeria. Unlike in other climes, managers spend a lot of their working time dialoguing with workers to restore organizational harmony when strikes occur, but with the workmen at the building site of the Tower of Babylon, they were surreptitiously locked out. In reality, can management prevent (lockout) employees from working without any cogent reasons being known to them?

In Nigeria, it is important to state that the first pronounced industrial strike action was recorded between June and July 1945 in which 43,000 workers went on strike for forty days. The strike of 1945 occurred for two reasons. Firstly it occurred due to the rising cost of living for workers. One of the main reasons was the high rate of inflation and the refusal to increase workers wages despite the difficult times. Another reason was racial discrimination against Nigerian workers. Nigerian workers disagreed with the higher wages and other privileges accorded their European colleagues and unanimously agreed that it was time to halt this discrimination. As a result, 17 labour unions of 43,000 workers across Nigeria went on strike until their demands were met. For the next 37 days, the effect of the strike was devastating and it left a nationalistic imprint that later changed the nation

Whether it is admitted or not, strikes action is a basic factor of every trade and industry system due to some unresolved conflicts of interests between employer and employee that needed to be addressed, but failed. Without mincing words, conflict of interest has ever been present in human social existence and it is inevitably difficult to eliminate it completely at the

workplace; having actors with diagonally opposing interests engaging themselves toward goal attainment. Surprisingly, Egwaikhede and Aniwa (2005) averred that industrial strike action previously regarded as European disease has gradually gained access to the economies of underdeveloped nations, particularly Nigeria thereby making lives of citizens very difficult.

From the foregoing, an industrial strike action represents expression of disagreement, hostility, negative attitudes, antagonism, aggression, rivalry, and misunderstanding between employees and management. Corroborating this assertion, Wogu (1969) documented some notable industrial strike actions that had taken place in Nigeria. Among them were the historic Aba women's Riot that resulted from the attempt to impose direct taxation on women in Eastern Nigeria.; the 1938 Railway workers' strike, the 1941 Nigerian union of railway men strike, the 1945 General strike, the 1947 UAC employees, the 1949 Coal miners' strike, the 1950 Mercantile workers' strike, the 1959 Airways workers' union strike, amongst others. All these industrial actions took place prior to independence and ever since independence; industrial actions have recurring decimals in the country.

Ever then, Nigeria has witnessed a plethora of industrial strikes to the extent that they have increasingly constituted threats to attaining organizational set-goals. In view of the foregoing, the government has released a White paper (October, 2018) that has the clause: No Work, No Pay in a bid to curtail the frequency of industrial strikes in the country. Regrettably, the obnoxious clause has not helped matters as in recent years since industrial strike is an inevitable aspect of organizations that cannot be avoided. In reality, it is evident that industrial strike actions in organizations are common phenomena owing to the diversity of workforce in organizations.

It is therefore the thrust of this paper to beam its searchlight on industrial strike action as an obstacle to employees' performance and productivity in Nigeria with a view to finding out how the formation the Labour Party for workers, has provoked government not to see any merit in agitations of trade unions as previously.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Nigeria has witnessed huge increases in the number of industrial strikes and they have become frustrating to the attainment of organizational set-goals. With the formation of Labour Party, a political party for workers, an opposition part in waiting, many state governors have arm twisted workers into a take-it-or-leave-it pay, lower than the national minimum or refused to pay all together. Besides, the most disheartening commentary on the state of inactive state exhibited by the leadership of Nigerian workers is the unfortunate acknowledgement that on the two occasions that President Muhammadu Buhari campaigned for the office of President of Nigeria, he made no promises to workers. Evidently, strike actions have characterized the Nigerian industrial landscapes without stop; several man-working hours have been lost, unprecedented work stoppage resulting to the loss of trillions of naira. Further, there is dissatisfaction with salary and incentive problems, wrongful dismissal of workmen, the issues of hours of work and rest intervals, minimum wages to mention, but a few. Most frighteningly is the frequent use of lockouts by government/employers of labour as solution to strike action rather than the

adoption of true collective bargaining tool to restore normalcy to organizations to improve workers' performance and increase productivity. From the foregoing, it is obvious that protracted industrial disputes have affected workers, and organizations. Historically, it is obvious that employment and non-employment related issues are the major problem responsible for the frequency of industrial disputes in Nigeria. Based on the foregoing, the paper therefore argues that since industrial strike action has negatively impacted on the performance and productivity of workers, there is the absolute need to disband the Labour party and adopt true collective bargaining principle to improve workers' performance and job productivity. To this effect, this study has the following the specific objectives:

1. To examine how industrial strike actions embarked upon by workers are no longer taken seriously by management/employer of labour
2. To examine why workers embrace any collective bargaining tool presented to them as real without understanding most proposals presented are full of deceits
3. Finally, to proffer realistic explanation on the way forward towards increasing productivity, employees' performance and above all, halting industrial strikes in organizations.

In the quest to reconstruct the broken bridge, some fundamental questions were formulated. These questions include amongst others (a) how does the formation of Labour Party affect industrial strike actions? (b) Does industrial strike actions embarked upon by workers really attract the management/employer of labour to resolving them genuinely?

Despite the above questions begging for answers, strike action is often seen as the most effective tool left in the hands of workers to compel a headstrong employer to recognize and bargain faithfully with their unions or representatives, but in actual fact, collective bargaining with deceits has been in practice all these years. In view of this, the paper begins its surgery by looking at the establishment of Nigeria Labour Congress and the fate of workers in Nigeria under the present dispensation.

The Establishment of Nigeria Labour Congress and the fate of workers in Nigeria

The establishment of the International Labour Organization was to give backing to unionism the world over. It was against this backdrop that the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) was founded as the umbrella body of the Nigerian workers. Just like labour organizations in other societies, the NLC has had its unfair share in industrial conflicts, ending in strikes of varying magnitude with harrowing consequences, yet workplace justice is not achieved. In Nigeria, the fundamental task of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), according to Onuoha(2011), is to protect, defend and promote the right, privileges and the interest of all trade unions affiliated to the congress, their individual members and the working class generally

through the attainment of the following among others: promoting, defending and maintaining the right and interest of labour; assisting in the complete organization of all workers eligible for membership of the organization affiliated to the congress irrespective of creed, state of origin, sex, religion and/or political beliefs and affiliating to or subscribing to, or assisting any other workers' organization in Africa whose aims and objectives are similar to those of the congress.

Workers' rights encompass a large array of human rights from the right to decent work and freedom of association to equal opportunity and protection against discrimination. Specific rights related to the workplace include health and safety in the workplace and the right to privacy at work, amongst many others. Nigerian labour law looks into the rights, working conditions, minimum wage, termination clauses, and many other rules set by the government of Nigeria. The current version of the act was put into place in 2004, five years after their current constitution was established. That means there is nothing in the 1999 (as amended) that speaks to the rights of the Nigerian worker. Out of the 109 senators and 360 members of the House of Representatives, none of them has attempted to champion workers rights, largely because most of them are guilty of trampling on the rights of their employees.

As a matter of fact, the Buhari administration may have increased minimum wage to N30, 000 per month, but increase in utility tariffs and astronomical cost of living have made nonsense of the new pay package (Okon-Ekong, 2021). Aside from this, many state governors have arm twisted their workers into a take-it-or-leave-it pay, lower than the national minimum or refused to pay all together. Besides, the most disheartening commentary on the state of inactive state exhibited by the leadership of Nigerian workers is the unfortunate acknowledgement that on the two occasions that President Muhammadu Buhari campaigned for the office of President of Nigeria, he made no promises to workers. According to Okon-Ekong (2021), if he ever did, it was perfunctory and lost in the cacophony of dancing and music and abuses against political opponents that usually characterize the planned riotous action to engage the voting public by political parties. As a result, Nigerian workers, if truth be told, are totally handicapped and have nothing to hold against the administration. After all, it formed the Labour Party in 2002 as the party for social democracy. Besides, it would be recalled that Mr. Adams Oshiomhole, former President of the NLC and former Governor of Edo State turned his back against the very platform that brought him into national prominence, and by implication, made nonsense of Labour nationally. Despite this betrayal, the emergence of Dr. Olusegun Mimiko as governor of Ondo State, between February 2009 and February 2017 on the ticket of the Labour Party was good for the party. However, like Oshiomhole before him, Mimiko was only a fair weather friend of Nigerian workers. As soon as his tenure was over, he joined the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), but later dealt Labour its most injurious stab in the back by forming the Zenith Labour Party, another political party that shared similar ideology as the Labour Party and fished in the same pond for members. Unfortunately, the registered political vehicle of Nigeria workers has been largely available to persons who they cannot rely on in times of difficulty.

Despite the very important functions of Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) as observed, there is no gainsaying that the Ayuba Wabba-led Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) has been the most docile and compromised since its formation. According to Okon-Ekong (2021), it has largely

failed to be watchful and prompt to meet danger or emergency. In many instances, it has not been quick to perceive and act on behalf of workers. Nowadays, the Nigerian workers have been systematically emasculated. In addition, workers have been left on their own as institutions of state has further brought stiffer policies at their expense. The betrayal by labour by their own protagonists, explained why successive administrations since the turn of the current political dispensation have made life harder for Nigerian workers. Obviously, the abandonment of Nigerian workers is worrisome. These days, it is easy to predict that workers are most likely to down tools. As the New Year 2022 begins, 2021 was a year that will be noted in Nigeria, among other things for multiple disruptions in the workplace. At the moment, a larger workers' crisis is still looming large, but this can be avoided with a purposeful attempt on the part of employers-both in the private and public sector-to allow the processes that promote genuine and mutually beneficial reconciliation. The larger implications of this for our democracy are too profound to be ignored.

A brief history of Industrial strike actions in Nigeria

Industrial strike actions have occurred prior to the country's political independence. The refusal of management/employers of labour to enhance working conditions in the workplace environment in order to improve workers' performance and increase productivity as well as demand for rise in wages and other entitlements so as to avoid industrial strike actions has always culminated into workers embarking on industrial strike actions. It is important to state that in 1942 many trade unions in Nigeria became federated under the name: Federated trade unions of Nigeria. The newly formed federated trade union controlled all unions under it.

Sequel to this, the first pronounced industrial dispute that resulted into an industrial strike action was recorded between June and July 1945 in which 43,000 workers went on strike for forty days. The strike of 1945 occurred for two reasons. Firstly it occurred due to the rising cost of living for workers. One of the main reasons was the high rate of inflation and the refusal to increase workers wages despite the difficult times. Another reason was racial discrimination against Nigerian workers. Nigerian workers disagreed with the higher wages and other privileges accorded their European colleagues than their Nigerian counterparts and it was time to halt this discrimination. Sequel to this, 17 labour unions of 43,000 workers across Nigeria went on strike until their demands were met.

Aside from this, there was the second strike, the Enugu Coal Miners strike of 1949. The grievances occurred due to the belief that the management was intentionally holding up their salary; this belief was sensationalized by Nationalist Press. As a result, the coal miners issued a sit-down strike in the mines, refusing to work until their demands were met. Fear gripped the government and had the explosives in the mines removed, for fear they would use it towards their demands. Fearing that this action would lead to the closure of the mines, the miners alerted the Market Women who came with sticks and machetes to prevent any further removal of the explosives. Tensions would eventually heat up and the Police fired into the Protesters killing 21 Miners and Injuring 51 others. The events that occurred at the Enugu Coal Miners strike led to an eruption of anger across cities in Nigeria and meant more ammunition for the Zikist

Movement against the colonial Government. Riots and Looting would occur in Aba, Calabar, Port Harcourt and Onitsha.

From the foregoing, it is evident that the emergence of wage employment, labour union and interactions between employees and employers of labour cannot be ignored in discussing the history of industrial disputes in Nigeria. Prior to independence, the Nigerian Railway Workers Union and the Nigerian Union of Teachers were some of the unions in existence. Since then, and till today, several key unions across the country have continued to mount pressure on the governments, threatening planned strikes and securing settlements through collective bargaining. For example, there have been several strikes by the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Trade Union Congress (TUC), the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Senior Staff Non-Academic Union (SSANU) and Non-Academic Staff Union of Universities (NASU) at different periods in a bid to improve working environments, welfare of workers (wages and other vital demands) and the economy via increased productivity.

It is worthy to acknowledge that the Trade Dispute Act No. 7 of 1976 is the operative law for settling trade/industrial strikes in Nigeria. According to the stated Trade Dispute Act No. 7 of 1976, the law directs employers and employees to voluntarily settle disputes. It provides for both parties to appoint a mediator where they cannot amicably settle. If the mediator is unable to resolve the dispute within the stipulated time, either party can report the dispute to the Minister of Labour who is charged to select a Conciliator to reconcile their disagreements. But where the mediator is unsuccessful, the Minister is directed to refer the dispute to the Industrial Arbitration Panel (IAP). The IAP has tripartite representation (i.e, Government, Employers and Workers). After IAP makes its award, if any party still has objections, the dispute is then referred to the National Industrial Court, (NIC) whose ruling shall be final and binding (NLC State Level Schools, Module 4).

Regardless of the above laid down mechanisms and procedure for dispute resolution, experiences in developing and developed nations, particularly in Nigeria, hold that the weapon of strike is often the most effective instrument left in the hands of employees to compel a recalcitrant employer to recognize and bargain faithfully with their unions or representatives, to comply with the terms of a collective agreement or to generally make improvements regarding the terms and conditions of employment of workers (Okene, 2011).

Employees are prohibited from striking according to the section 22 of Industrial Disputes Act, 1947. Employees, who are working in a public utility service, cannot go on a strike without giving a notice of strike within the six weeks before striking. They cannot go on strike either within fourteen days of providing the strike notice or before the expiry of the date of strike specified in any such notice. The same rule applies to the employers. Employers who are carrying on a public utility service cannot lockout any of their employees without giving them a prior notice within six weeks before the lockout or within the fourteen days of giving such a notice. Moreover, the notice of strike or lockout is to be given in a prescribed manner showing the number of persons involved in the strike/lockout. A notice should be issued on the day on which the lockout is declared just to intimate the appropriate authorities about the lockout. The employer is supposed to report the number of notices of strikes received by him to the

appropriate government or the authority prescribed by the government within the five days of receiving such notices.

The concept of Industrial strike action

The term industrial strike action has been defined varying by social scientists and there seems to be no one single agreed definition. Generally, strikes are the off-shoot of more basic maladjustments, injustice, and economic disturbances. It is fundamentally a short-term cessation of work by a group of employees in order to express their grievances or to enforce a demand concerning changes in work conditions. According to Section 2(q) of the Industrial Dispute Act, 1947, "Strike is a cessation of work by a body of persons employed in any industry acting on combination, or a concerted refusal under a common understanding of a number of persons who are or have been employed to continue to work or to accept employment". Section 47, NIC Act 2006 also defines an industrial strike as "...any dispute between employers and workers or between workers and workers which is connected with the employment or non-employment, or the terms of employment, and physical conditions of work of any person". Illuminating further, Ogunbameru and Oribabor, (2000) argued that in all; there is an unhealthy relationship between key actors in an industrial setting. From this, it is apparent that strike actions over time have been used as a tool by union leaders in registering their grievances concerning pay and conditions.

Going by this explanation, it is obvious that an industrial strike action is a stoppage of work by a group of workers employed in a particular industry over some complaints which management is adamant to resolve. According to Alo (1999) & Nwokocha (2014), it is an incontrovertible fact that, when and where workers are denied participation in protest against contending issues as a result of dictatorial and authoritarian employer styles of leadership, the outcome on the part of employees will be intolerance, absenteeism, espionage and sabotaging to every effort that seems to subjecting them inhumanly in the work environment. In the course of this hanging-in-the-balance scenario, productive capacity of the worker is affected and thus every progressive activity regarding work in the organization suffers until situations normalizes. It is in view of this assertion that Okene(2008) said a strike action is a temporary stoppage of work by a group of employees in order to express a grievance or enforce a demand. However, it could also involve a complete withdrawal of workers' services, leading to a man-made breakdown of industrial services, and this level of total withdrawal of services by employees usually occurred when other measures adopted to reach agreement on contending issues fail.

In developing countries and even some advanced countries, the regularity of industrial strike actions in both public and private settings, and unionized or non-unionized have been worrisome. In Nigeria, industrial strike actions have become endemic to society as a whole. Writing on this ugly trend, Anyim, Chidi and Ogunyomi(2012) argue that Nigeria has had her share of industrial disputes in different sectors of her socio-political and economic development. For example, the Nigeria Labour Congress, NLC, and Trade Union Congress, TUC, the two major umbrella bodies of workers union in Nigeria mobilized workers on January 9th 2012 for an indefinite strike action because of government removal of fuel subsidy which ultimately increased the price of petrol per litre from N65 to N141 on January 1st 2012. During the

nationwide strike then, substantial man-hour was lost, and the country's economy, in the assessment of economy analysts, was negatively affected as the volume of trade on the floor of the Nigeria Stock Exchange (NSE) fell by 82 percent, local flights were grounded and the drilling and lifting of crude oil was hampered. Despite this ugly scenario that played out, Nigeria has continued to experience incessant strike actions by different trade unions, namely, Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP), Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Joint Health Sector Union (JOHESU) to mention but a few.

By these explanations, it is evident that an industrial strike action is a stoppage of work by a group of workers employed in a particular industry. It also includes the refusal of a number of employees to continue work under their employer. For Schermerhorn(2005), industrial strike action appears in industrial situations as any disagreement over issues of substance or emotional antagonisms that create friction between individuals or groups. Earlier, Adeoti (1980) stated that industrial strike action is expressed in different terms such as strike action, industrial unrest, industrial disharmony, trade dispute, etc. A situation like this is characterized by the inability of those concerned to iron out their differences (Ige and Aina, 2011). According to Iheriohanma (2007), industrial conflicts have bedeviled the industrial atmosphere in the country and this is expressed in the significant work stoppages and loss of man hours. Since the intensity of industrial strike actions over and over again varies from one sector to another; and from one country to another, Osabuohien & Ogunrinola (2007) argue that the absence of peaceful working relationship among actors at the workplace present conditions that are inimical to organizational success and productivity.

Essentially, industrial strike action occurs when an organized group of employees of a company stops working because of a disagreement over pay or conditions (Hornby, 2001). According to him, it can be seen as an action/attitude exhibited by a group of people (that is, employees or students) to express their level of disagreement with a view to attracting favourable responses from those concerned. Commenting earlier, Fajana (1995) in Adewole and Adebola (2010) viewed industrial conflict as the inability of the employers and employees to reach agreement on any issue connected with the subject of employers-employees' interactions. Aside from this, in a classic explanation, Hyman (1972) defined strike as a temporary stoppage of work by a group of employees in order to express a grievance or enforce a demand. It is not all work stoppages that amount to strike action in its real sense. In yet another description, Okougbo(2004) says it is "...usually arises from a complaint or a grievance which is left unsettled or unattended to by the authority or management that is charged with the responsibility for settling the grievance at the primary level". Furthermore, Scheuer (2006) explained that strike is temporary; strike is a special type of collective action; it is about employees and lastly, strike is not impulsive. In their assessment, Agba, Ushie & Agba(2009) maintain that the unceasing crises that affect both the public and private sectors of the economy have posed unspeakable hardships on the citizenry with negative consequences leading to massive poverty, retrenchment of workers, decline in economic growth and development, and so on.

Basically, the agreement of a group of workers to stop working to protest against something they think is unfair where they work is a basic right. As a result, they withhold their services in order to pressurize their employment or government to meet their demands. Demands made by strikers can range from asking for higher wages or better benefits to seeking changes in the workplace environment. Strikes sometimes occur so that employers listen more carefully to the workers and address their problems. Industrial strike action when kept within tolerable limits can be a source of creativity and performance enhancement; it becomes destructive when these limits are exceeded. An optimum level of conflict needs to be maintained by an organization, i.e. there should be enough conflict to prevent stagnation, stimulate creativity, allow release of tension and initiate the seeds of change and rejuvenation, yet not so much as to be disruptive or deter co-ordination of activities.

Causes of Incessant Industrial Strike Actions in Nigeria

Strike actions are often caused by several factors and researchers over time have attempted to document the several causes of strike actions in Nigeria and elsewhere. It is very apparent going by the availability of literature that industrial strikes can occur due to several reasons. Some of these include, Dissatisfaction with organizational/industrial policy, Salary and incentive problems, Increment not up to the mark, Wrongful discharge or dismissal of workmen, Withdrawal of any concession or privilege, Hours of work and rest intervals, Leaves with wages and holidays, Bonus, profit sharing, provident fund and gratuity, Retrenchment of workmen and closure of establishment, Dispute connected with minimum wages to mention, but a few.

It is obvious that these strike actions have constituted threats to workers' livelihood, organizational set-goals and the country as a whole. From this angle, the author could confidently contend without contradiction that a strike action is caused by the unfair treatment that workers receive from their employers. For Clark (2012), when employees perceive that they are not being treated fairly with respect to pay and condition of service, there is bound to be disagreement between the employees and the employers and failure to reach agreement culminates in strikes. For instance, organizations have set goals which they hope should be met by employees and failure to meet up with these goals result in an impasse that likely degenerate into strike actions. In some cases, workers in some cadres or lower ranks complained of victimization by those perceived to be on superior cadres or ranks. This has in no small measure affected the morale of staff and has degenerated into a 'full-blown' strike. Apart from this, violation of legislation or rule has been identified as another important cause of strike actions in Nigeria. The employment bond entered into between the employees and employer remains requisite as long as the agreement is on. When there is breach of contractual agreement by employer, there is bound to be an impasse which may eventually climax in strike actions.

Types of strikes

There are several forms of strikes documented by management scholars. Among them are analyzed underneath

Economic Strike:

Under this type of strike, labourers stop their work to enforce their economic demands such as wages and bonus. In these kinds of strikes, workers ask for an increase in wages, allowances like traveling allowance, house rent allowance, dearness allowance, bonus and other facilities such as increase in privilege leave and casual leave.

Sympathy Strike:

This is a solidarity action embarked upon by workers who are not directly involved in the dispute. Sympathy strikes merely express moral and fractional support aimed at bringing pressure on the employer involved in the trade dispute. When workers of one unit or Industry go on strike with sympathy with workers of another unit or Industry who are already on strike, it is called a sympathetic strike. The members of other unions involve themselves in a strike in other undertakings. The workers of the sugar industry may go on strike in sympathy with the fellow workers of the textile industry who may already be on strike.

General Strike:

It means a strike by members of all or most of the unions in a region or an industry. It may be a strike of all the workers in a particular region of industry to force demand common to all the workers. These strikes are usually intended to create political pressure on the ruling government, rather than on any one employer; it may also be an extension of the sympathetic strike to express generalized protest by the workers.

Sit down Strike:

In this case, workers do not absent themselves from their place of work when they are on strike. They keep control over production facilities. But it does not work. Such a strike is also known as “pen down” or „tool down” strike. Workers show up to their place of employment, but they refuse to work. They also refuse to leave, which makes it very difficult for employers to defy the union and take the workers' place. In June 1998, all the municipal corporation employees in Punjab observed an open down strike to protest against the non-acceptance of their demands by the state government.

Slow down Strikes:

Employees remain on their jobs under these types of strikes. They do not stop work, but restrict the rate of output in an organized manner. They adopt go-slow tactics to put pressure on the employers.

Sick-out Strikes (or sick-in):

In this strike, all or a significant number of union members call in sick on the same day. They do not break any rule because they just use their sick leave that was allocated to them on the same day. However, the sudden loss of so many employees all in one day can show the employer just what it would be like if they really went on strike.

Wildcat Strikes:

These strikes are conducted by workers or employees without the authority and consent of unions. In 2004, a significant number of advocates went on wildcat strike at the city civil court premises in Bangalore. They were protesting against some remarks allegedly made against them by an Assistant Commissioner.

Lockouts:

A lockout is a work stoppage in which an employer prevents employees from working. It is declared by employers to put pressure on their workers. This is different from a strike, in which employees refuse to work. Thus, a lockout is employers' weapon while a strike is raised on part of employees. According to Industrial Disputes Act 1947, lockout means the temporary closing of a place of employment or the suspension of work or the refusal by an employer to continue to employ any number of persons employed by him. A lockout may happen for several reasons. When only part of a trade union votes to strike, the purpose of a lockout is to put pressure on a union by reducing the number of members who are able to work. For example, if a group of the workers strike so that the work of the rest of the workers becomes impossible or less productive, the employer may declare a lockout until the workers end the strike. Another case in which an employer may impose a lockout is to avoid slowdowns or intermittent work-stoppages.

Picketing:

When workers are dissuaded from work by stationing certain men at the factory gates, such a step is known as picketing. If picketing does not involve any violence, it is perfectly legal. Pickets are workers who are on strike that stand at the entrance to their workplace. It is basically a method of drawing public attention towards the fact that there is a dispute between the management and employees. Amongst others, the purpose of picketing is to stop or persuade workers not to go to work; to tell the public about the strike and to persuade workers to take their union's side. In India, there is another type of strike called *Gherao*. In Hindi, *Gherao* means to surround. It denotes a collective action initiated by a group of workers under which members of the management are prohibited from leaving the industrial establishment premises by workers who block the exit gates by forming human barricades. The workers may gherao the members of the management by blocking their exits and forcing them to stay inside their cabins. The main object of gherao is to inflict physical and mental torture to the person being gheraoed and hence this weapon disturbs the industrial peace to a great extent.

Implications of Industrial Strikes

As earlier defined, strike represents the exercise of workers fundamental right to withdraw their services through the temporary stoppage of work for reasons not unconnected to poor working conditions. Essentially, situations which appear to contradict workers' wishes and aspirations or which threaten the fulfillment of their needs often result in strike action in order to demand for improvement in both their well-being and work environments. When a union embarks on strike actions, it is these workers rights that are harnessed by the trade union to embark on strike action. The strike is a very potent tool and can be very powerful if the workers on strike represent irreplaceable labour, or if the production loss incurred by the employer during the strike is very significant. The strike also makes the management take the union seriously in future negotiations; as such a successful strike enhances the bargaining position of the union for the next negotiation. A successful strike improves the economic well being of the members of the trade union as they can win a salary increase as a result of strike action. Besides, striking workers also stand the risk of losing substantial income during the period of the strike. In

addition, employers may often invoke the no-work-no -pay law. Unfortunately, when this happens, leaders of unsuccessful strikers are crushed by both the workers they represent and the management they negotiate with.

Industrial strike action could largely fuel cost-push and excess liquidity inflation in the national economy as a result of workers' winning large wage concessions following the success of a strike action. Yet again, a strike prone country is not likely to attract foreign investment from foreign industrials, thereby constituting a barrier blocking achievement of state development objectives. Based on these, it will be erroneous to argue that strikes are without costs to the economy. For a start, strikes, whether in government, corporate or private organizations, are detrimental to the growth and attainment of organizational set-goals. The most explicit effect of strike on the employer is the loss of productivity. The loss of output automatically leads to inability to meet customers' demands and the failure to make available customers' desires on schedule. Since organizations exist for profit maximization, loss of profit indicates that organizations are running at a loss and this is detrimental to attaining organizational goals. The long-term cost of the strike to the employer is the loss of employees who may not return after the strike. Strike therefore tends to repute good relationship between managers and trade union leaders because it could lead vengeful action against union leaders

In their contributions, Agba, Ushie & Agba(2009) maintain that the unceasing crises that have obviously affected both the public and private sectors of the economy has posed untold hardships on the citizenry with negative consequences leading to decline in economic growth and development, massive poverty, retrenchment of workers, and so on. According to Iheriohanma (2007), industrial conflicts have bedeviled the industrial atmosphere in the country and this is expressed in the significant work stoppages and loss of man hours. Osabuohien & Ogunrinola (2007) argue that the absence of peaceful working relationships among actors at the workplace present conditions that are inimical to organizational success and productivity.

From the following, it is evident that when strikes occur, government, corporate organizations and workers suffer untold hardships. It is in this respect that Scheuer (2012) contended rightly that both parties often for third parties to incur costs. Some of these generalized costs are among the reasons legislators restrict the use of strikes (Novitz, 2003). For companies, they lose earnings and possibly market share; employees lose their wages and unions lose money they spend on supporting the striking workers. In addition, strikes have led affiliates of the NLC and TUC in conjunction with their civil society partners; the Joint Action Forum (JAF) and the Civil Society Coalition (CSCO) stage peaceful/violent protests along major streets chanting anti-labour songs thereby causing serious traffic jams.

Generally, strike actions oftentimes bring about disruption in the socio-economic calendar of organizations. Industrial strike actions inevitably affect the smooth running of organizations in order to meet set-goals. The temporary refusal of workers to work has in no small measure resulted in developing and redesigning new calendars for delivery of goods and services demanded by customers. Once there is a strike, it has a tendency of leading to a shortfall in the expectation of employees, employers/management and above all, customers' demands. Above all, industrial strike actions negatively affect the morale of workers and employers of labour.

Though strikes actions are embarked upon to achieve certain demands but when the periods extend longer than necessary, the morale of workers may not be that high. Most workers may find it difficult to achieve their organizational set-goals.

Furthermore, it has been observed that these incessant strike actions may not be too healthy for the equipment and facilities used in the production of goods and services because most of the chemicals and other facilities may timeline; failure to adhere to the period stipulated by the manufacturers of these raw products will lead to a huge economic loss to management. In other words, once there is strike action, this equipment and facilities are abandoned and they are not maintained in line with the guidelines for maintaining equipment and facilities. Most of the equipment and facilities begin to wear out or depreciate. Some of these equipment and facilities need to be cleaned and grease from time to time to avoid rusting or depreciation.

The need to disband the Labour Party and ensure the practice of true collective bargaining

The Nigeria Labour Congress as presently constituted has ceased to be neutral in negotiation with government. Nigerian workers, through its organizations, Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), if truth be told, are totally handicapped and have nothing to hold against the administration. After all, it formed the Labour Party in 2002 as the party for social democracy. Besides, it would be recalled that Mr. Adams Oshiomhole, former President of the NLC and former Governor of Edo State turned his back against the very platform that brought him into national prominence, the stage was set for the gradual dethronement of Labour. Despite this betrayal, the emergence of Dr. Olusegun Mimiko as governor of Ondo State, between February 2009 and February 2017 on the ticket of the Labour Party was good for the party. However, like Oshiomhole before him, Mimiko was only a fair weather friend of Nigerian workers. As soon as his tenure was over, he joined the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), but later dealt Labour its most injurious stab in the back by forming the Zenith Labour Party, another political party that shared similar ideology as the Labour Party and fished in the same pond for members. Unfortunately, the registered political vehicle of Nigeria workers has been largely available to persons who they cannot rely on in times of difficulty.

In the attempt to reconstruct the broken bridge and bring back trust and confidence to all warring factions in organizations, there must be a total disbandment of the Labour party. But if it must continue to exist, Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) must disassociate itself from the political party that claims to represent her when in actual fact, no representation of any kind has been observed for years now. Apart from this submission, the tenets of true collective bargaining must be upheld in order to achieve organizational set-goals. To ensure the broken bridge was reconstructed to improve workers' competence and productivity, true collective bargaining can be viewed as the most developed form of representative or collective voice, as it is typically carried out within a framework of rules, procedures, and rights set out in national and international law.

The term 'collective bargaining' was first used by an economic theorist, Beatrice Webb, in 1891 as one of the founders of the industrial relations field in the UK (Webb 1920, cited in

Flanders 1968). She and her partner Sidney Webb described collective bargaining as a process through which workers come together and send representatives to negotiate over their terms and conditions of employment. According to them, it was a better collective alternative to individual bargaining – or ‘one of the methods used by trade unions to further their basic purpose “of maintaining or improving the conditions of their (members’) working lives’.

Going by Webbs’ definition, it is obvious that the importance of collective action on the part of workers in establishing and negotiating formal agreements is highlighted. Aside from this, collective bargaining, has generally, according to Windmuller et al (1987), cited in Traxler(1994) been defined as ‘a process of negotiation, joint decision-making, or joint regulation between groups who represent both employer and employee interests; and which implies the ‘negotiation and continuous application of an agreed set of rules to govern the substantive and procedural terms of the employment relationship’. It is different from consultation or joint problem-solving because it results in formal, bargained agreements or contracts to which both parties are obliged to adhere during an agreed upon period.

The kind of integrative or ‘mutual gains’ involved in collective bargaining promotes trust, reduces strike rates, increases productivity, and wage moderations. In addition, from time immemorial, the tenet and spirit of mutual partnership anchored on consensus building promote organizational policies thereby ensuring that the frosty and dehumanizing labour policies of organizations are abandoned. Admittedly, it is obvious that the existence of industrial strike actions over time have been used as a tool by union leaders in registering their grievances concerning pay and other conditions of their employment that have changed from what they were at the beginning.

Since the concern of the employees’ organization or union is primarily that of workers such as their material, spiritual, social, and psychological needs (Otobo, 2000). The above points out that the employers including their managers on one side and employees on the polar side have diagonally opposing interests at all times, hence a conflict situation is inevitable. Based on this, strikes by workers do not attract the management employer to make and implement policies, particularly over the delay on the payment of workers’ salaries and other demands. The formation of Labour Party seems to be clog in the wheel of progress, and until the party is disbanded, every other avenue to reconcile the lingering differences will continue to fail.

In spite all these, industrial strike, distasteful as it is, performs various functions for the two sides of industry. Most strikes involve attempts by either the union or management to change the bargaining position of the other party or it may be used to effect a change in the structure of bargaining, such as changing from enterprise bargaining, to multi-employer bargaining or vice-versa. (Fashoyin, 1992)

Strictly speaking, the concept of true collective bargaining without fraud has gained acceptance and international recognition in private and public sectors; however, the principles that underlay the practice have been applied differently in countries over the world. In Nigeria, workers have always desired collective bargaining as the best approach to consider prior to embarking on strikes. But considering the effects of the formation of the Labour party in Nigeria, the power of Nigeria Labour Congress, an umbrella organization for trade unions, has been

weakened and as a result, there has been no fruitful collective bargaining negotiation in moment of strikes. In reality, Nigeria workers would appreciate the meaningfulness of true collective bargaining without deceit as a very important weapon to ensure that the set-goals of employer/management and those of employees are achieved. This is because true collective bargaining is all about negotiations which take place between an employer, a group of employers or one or more employers' organizations, on the one hand, and one or more workers' organizations, on the other hand, for determining working conditions and terms of employment, and/or regulating relations between employers and workers, and/or regulating relations between employers or their organizations and a workers' organization or workers' organizations. Essentially, collective bargaining without deceit is an important mechanism in promoting industrial democracy, the safeguard of which should be encouraged by an enabling framework provided by the government through legislation. The private sector should be encouraged to participate in free voluntary collective bargaining with little or no government interference. As earlier upheld, collective bargaining should be without deceit or manipulation of any form and in both public and private sectors, modalities should be put in place to ensure that employees, both public and private across all sectors are free to participate in true collective bargaining as this advance the productivity of labour which in turn aids socio-economic development.

Generally, collective bargaining without deceit provides workers with the opportunity to exercise 'collective voice' in decisions concerning work organization or pay setting. This can reduce hiring and training costs associated with quits (Doellgast 2008) and provide worker input on changes in production that may stimulate increased efficiency (Addison et al. 2001; Huebler and Jirjahn, 2003). In essence, the uniqueness of true collective bargaining without deceit involves formal negotiations between two organizations representing employer and worker interests. Despite the fact that unions and bargaining institutions have come under pressure in the past four decades, true collective bargaining remains a viable form of voice because it benefits from collective bargaining institutions and enhances social peace, helping to reduce strikes through providing a formal structure for labour-management cooperation. In effect, collective agreements can help to correct inefficiencies associated with information asymmetries, underinvestment in human capital, and arbitrary management. They can be a means for establishing transparent administrative rules and procedures, such as internal labour markets (Doeringer and Piore 1971; Osterman and Burton 2006).

Conclusion

The effect of strike actions is better imagined than described. From all perspectives, organizational strike action is an enemy to achieving organizational set-goals. Since organizational strike action influences workers' performance and productivity, it has remained an obstacle to employees' performance and high productivity. Based on this, organizational strike has done more damage than good to workers. Managements have very important functions to play, particularly in reconstructing the broken bridge so as to restore trust, confidence and above all, sincerity to workers in order to avert possible strike action again.

However, workers must disassociate themselves from the Labour Party so as to experience true collective bargaining as a negotiation tool towards attaining organizational set-goals.

Recommendations:

Thus, for the effects of industrial strike actions on the economy, public health and security of both personnel and employer/management of labour to be addressed, the following recommendations have been proffered:

1. The formation of the Labour party in Nigeria has weakened the power of Nigeria Labour Congress, an umbrella organization for trade unions in Nigeria to any fruitful collective bargaining negotiation in moment of strikes. Therefore, there should be a complete the disbandment of the labour party and the practice of true collective bargaining devoid of deceit. Strictly speaking, the concept of true collective bargaining has gained acceptance and international recognition in the private and public sector, the practice of true collective bargaining devoid of deceit should be seen as the best approach to resolve industrial strikes.
2. Government should ensure social justice and equity in handling all issues pertaining to various cadres of staff so that they (workers) can begin to see their employers as role models rather than dictators in order to attain organizational set-goals.
3. Salaries and other allowances of workers should be paid promptly so that they can be motivated to excel in performance and increase productivity. In addition, an atmosphere of cordiality should exist between the worker and the management. This will guarantee employee performance and effective implementation of organizational working policies towards attaining set-goals.
4. Furthermore, efforts should be made by the management to organize seminars/workshops on organizational conflict management from time to time for the employees. This will enable employees to learn about conflict and how it can be effectively managed for individual and organization effectiveness.
5. Aside from this, management has a major role to play so as to avert possible strike action, therefore management should be responsive, considerate and ready to understand the plight of the love of the workers at heart. An atmosphere of cordiality should exist between the worker and the management. This will guarantee employee performance and effective implementation of government working policies.

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