

Chapter 11

Mapping Action Plan for Prevention and Management of Multi-Dimensional Conflicts in the Nigeria University Environment

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Introduction

At the emergence of the University system in Nigeria, with the establishment of University of Ibadan in 1948, (Ajayi, 1975), conflict, of whatever dimension, from the university environment was little known. However, the socio-political and economic challenges bedeviling the country began to manifest too in the University environment leading to different categories of conflicts which became more pronounced in the last two decades. Conflicts from the University environment in Nigeria can be classified multi-dimensionally - conflicts between academic staff and University's authorities, conflicts between academic staff and government, conflicts between non-academic staff and University's authorities, conflicts between non-academic staff and government, conflicts between students and University's authorities, conflicts between students' and government, and conflicts between students and academic/non-academic staff.

Over the years, different action plans and strategies had been implemented to address or resolve conflicts emanating from the university environment in Nigeria; however, such action plans and strategies have not been able to produce permanent solution to conflicts occurrence as more and more conflicts emerged leading to incessant interruption in the academic calendar. It, therefore, becomes imperative to revisit discussions of conflicts in the university environment in Nigeria with a view to providing workable action-plan for the prevention and management of conflicts in Nigerian Universities. This is the aim of this chapter contribution.

University as a System of Critical Knowledge Production

The word 'University' is derived from the Latin words *universitas magistrorum et scholarium*, which means "community of teachers and scholars" (The Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th Ed. 1911). However, the modern term University was derived from the classical Latin word, *universitas*, which means "the totality" or the "whole" (Verger, 1992). Newman (1996) in "*the idea of the University*" contended that: A University is a place whither students come from every quarter for every kind of knowledge; a place for the communication and circulation of thought, by means of personal intercourse; a place in which the intellect may safely range and speculate and a place where inquiry is pushed forward,

discoveries verified and perfected, and error exposed - by the collision of mind with mind and knowledge with knowledge.

The Universities are founded on the general recognition that economic growth and global competitiveness are increasingly driven by knowledge and that Universities play a key role in that context (Salmi, 2009). Universities also play a crucial role in the development of economic systems based on disseminating knowledge and innovation, promoting a more resource-efficient economy, and competitiveness to foster cultural growth as well as social and territorial cohesion (Salvioni, Franzoni, & Cassano, 2017).

The enormous roles and functions of the Universities inform the reason why contemporary societies and governments pay them so much attention (Boulton & Lucas, 2008). In the world of globalisation, Universities are now regarded as crucial national assets. Governments worldwide perceive Universities as vital sources of new knowledge and innovative thinking, providers of skilled personnel and credible credentials, contributors to innovation, attractors of international talent and business investment into a region, agents of social justice and mobility, and contributors to social and cultural vitality (Boulton & Lucas, 2008). The cultural and social growth of a country is associated with the quality of the education system which finds its most advanced expression in University and post-University education (Rowe, 2007).

In essence, a University is for cultivation of the intellectual power and the methodological studies of academic disciplines (Ruegg, 1992). The University is developmental in nature; functioning as centre for knowledge pursuit, promotion and dissemination of research, the provision of intellectual leadership and manpower development, promotion of social and economic modernisation, as well as intercontinental unity and international understanding (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2017). Universities are, therefore, citadels of learning and development which exist primarily to produce high quality and excellent graduates, create and advance the frontier of knowledge, develop standards for judging the merit of ideals, and advance civilisation (Olayinka, 2024).

Furthermore, a University, as a higher learning institution, brings men and women to a high level of intellectual development in the traditional professional disciplines and high-level of research (Alemu, 2018). The University stands for humanism, for tolerance, for progress, for the adventure of ideas, for the search for truth, and for the onward march of humans towards ever-higher objectives. It was in this context that Tilak, (2015) submitted that “if the Universities discharge their duties adequately, then all is well with the nation and the people”. Presently, the Nigerian University System comprises a total of 264 Universities, 53 of which are owned by the Federal Government, 62 owned by the various State Governments while the remaining 149 are Privately owned (Olayinka, 2024).

Conceptualising Conflicts, Classification and Causes of Conflicts within the University Environment in Nigeria

Conflict, according to Merriam-Webster Dictionary, is generally defined as (a) a clash or sharp disagreement in ideas, interests or purposes between two or more people or groups; (b) when two people or groups disagree and the disagreement causes friction; (c) when two or more people or groups come into collision or disagreement and clash; when two or more people or groups have contradictory ideas; or when two or more people or groups are at variance in position; (d) a serious disagreement and argument between two or more people or groups; (e) a phenomenon that arises when there is a disagreement or clash between individuals or groups due to incompatible goals, interests, or values. These definitions of conflicts stress common features which include disagreement, clash, friction, and contradictions in ideas, interests, values, and purposes between two or more individuals or groups.

Therefore, conflicts in the University environment can simply be defined as a serious disagreement and argument in ideas, interests, or values between components units in the University system (the academic staff, non-academic staff, and students) and University authorities on one hand and government (Federal and States) on the other hand. Conflicts, and the factors contributing to such conflicts, in Nigerian university environment can be classified into seven categories:

Conflicts between Academic Staff and University Authorities - Conflicts between academic staff with Universities authorities frequently occur in the Nigerian university environment. The causes of such conflicts usually include: poor condition of service, stringent promotion guidelines, delay in payment of entitlements, perceived autocratic leadership style of university authority, and inadequate or insufficient resources and infrastructure for teaching, among others. Another potential source of conflict between academic staff and university authorities is the victimisation of lecturers by Universities authorities which has made ASUU to declare 10 September every year as *Victimised Lecturers' Day* in Nigeria. The day is set aside by ASUU to alert the world about unending managerial crises and the travails of lecturers in public universities in Nigeria. Victimisation of lecturers have manifested in termination of appointments by University authorities, withheld salaries, and denial of promotion to lecturers for trying to protect the welfare of academic staff. Universities where victimisation of lecturers are more pronounced included: The Kogi State University, Ebonyi State University, Lagos State University, Ambrose Alli University, Federal University of Technology, Owerri, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, among others (Osodeke, 2024).

Conflicts between Academic Staff and Government- Conflicts between academic staff with government, especially Federal Government, often occur as a result of many factors such as: poor salary of academic staff in comparison with other lands, poor remuneration of other entitlements, delay in payment of Earned Academic Allowances (EAA), non-implementation of ASUU-Federal Government Collective Agreement, forced imposition and compulsory enrolment of academic staff in Federal Universities in *Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System* (IPPIS), and paucity of qualified academic staff, among others. Moreover, there is the high possibility of a conflict emerging between academic staff and the National Universities Commission (NUC) over the forceful implementation of the *Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards* (CCMAS) introduced by the National University Commission (NUC) by the Universities. Conflicts between academic staff with government usually lead to strike actions often called by the National Union of Academic Staff in Nigerian University - the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU).

Conflicts between Non-Academic Staff and University Authorities - Conflicts between non-academic staff and Universities authorities usually occur due to the following: staff condition of service, delay in payment of entitlements, perceived autocratic leadership style of university authorities, inadequate or insufficient resources/infrastructure for enhancing working performance, non-involvement and consultation of non-academic staff in decisions making, and perceived under-estimated recognition of the relevance of non-academic staff in the university environment, among others.

Conflicts between Non-Academic Staff and Government - Conflicts between non-academic staff with government also emanate as a result of: poor salary of non-academic staff in comparison with other lands, poor remuneration of other entitlements, delay in payment of collectively agreed entitlements with University-based non-academic unions - the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities, (SSANU), the Non-Academic Staff of Educational and Associated Institutions (NASU), and the National Association of Academic Technologists (NAAT) by government, non-implementation of collective agreements jointly reached with University-based non-academic unions by Federal Government, compulsory enrolment of non-academic staff in Federal Universities in *Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System* (IPPIS), and paucity of qualified non-academic staff, among others.

Conflicts between Students and University Authorities - Conflicts between students with Universities authorities also occur in the Nigerian University environment. The causes of such conflicts usually, among others, include: increase in school fees, increase in ancillary services fees to be paid by students, poor quality of available infrastructure for learning, non-recognition or disrespectful acts to students' rights, non-involvement of students in decisions making process, especially on students' welfare, insufficient communication with

students through their union representatives, and interference in students' union election.

Conflicts between Students with Government - Conflicts between students with government also occur in the Nigerian University environment. The causes of such conflicts usually, among others, include: increase in school fees, poor or inadequate provision of resources for learning, non-consultation with the National Students Union - The National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) -before the implementation of students-related policies.

Conflicts between Students and Academic/Non-academic staff - Occasionally, conflicts between students with academic and non-academic staff also occur in the Nigerian University environment. The causes of such conflicts usually, among others, include: sexual harassment of female students either by academic staff or non-academic staff, high-handedness of academic and non-academic staff in the offices, disrespectful acts from academic and non-academic staff to students' rights, limited attendance of academic staff in classes, persistent failure of students in some courses, and poor inter-personal relationship between academic and non-academic staff with students.

The discussion above of the classification and causes of conflicts in the University environment in Nigeria clearly shows its multi-dimensional nature. The resultant effects of such conflicts, depending on the magnitude, are as follows:

a. Short-term closure of the University - Short-term closure of the University could last between one to three months. This implies temporary disruption of academic activities with students forced to go home resulting in learning loss and unstable academic calendar.

b. Long-term closure of the University - Long-term closure of the University could last between six months to one years or more. This implies a long disruption of academic activities with students forced to go home for a longer period resulting in more learning loss time, prolonged unstable academic calendar, and declining students interest in University education.

c. Possibility of students' involvement in nefarious activities or social vices - When universities are closed due to conflicts and students are forced to go home, there is the possibility of them getting involved in nefarious, immoral, iniquitous, and criminal activities or social vices such as extortion, armed robbery, rape, murder, cybercrime, use of drugs, among others.

d. Invocation of 'no work, no pay' rule - If academic or non-academic staff embark on strike action, government can invoke the 'no work, no pay' rule which implies no payment of salaries to the staff involved during the period of the strike. This usually leads to brain drain when lecturers seek greener pastures in foreign lands. The 'no work, no pay' rule was invoked by the Buhari administration throughout the eight-months that ASUU members were on strike the last time.

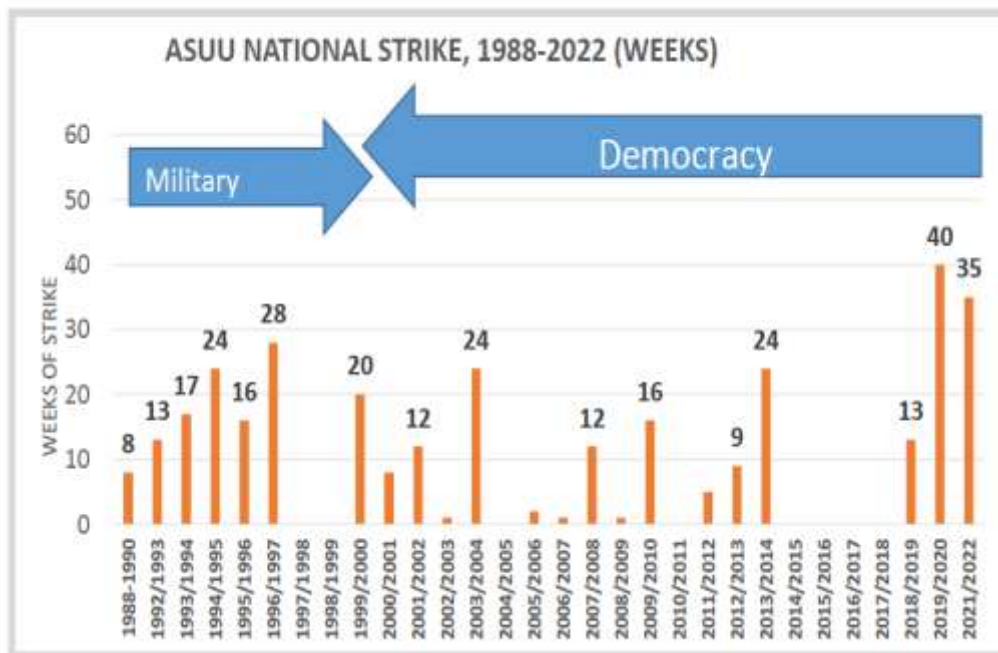
e. Prolongation of completion time of study or graduation by the students -

When universities are closed as a result of conflicts, whether short-term or long-term, the implication is that the completion time of study or graduation by the students is prolonged beyond the specified duration. This results in incremental cost of learning.

Breakdown of Conflicts in Nigeria's University Environment in the Last Three Decades

The most prominent conflict in Nigeria's University environment, which often lead to prolong or long-term closure or shutdown of Universities, is the ASUU national strike. Figure 1 shows ASUU national strikes between 1988-2022 and the number of weeks each of the strike lasted. Between these periods (1988-2024), ASUU embarked on national strike actions twenty-two (22) times lasting between 8-40 weeks leading to the closure of the universities and disruption of academic calendars and schedules. The cumulative total time lost, as a result of the ASUU national strikes in Nigerian Universities, has been calculated to be 6 years and 3 months (Olayinka, 2024).

It is instructive to state clearly that National ASUU has, most of the 22 times, embarked upon strike actions over non-implementation of ASUU-Federal Government Collective Agreement, especially the 2009 jointly negotiated agreement, poor funding of the university system resulting in poor educational infrastructure, inadequate laboratories and classrooms, and shortage of qualified lecturers. Recently, ASUU also went on strike action over the forced imposition and compulsory enrollment of academic staff in Federal Universities in *Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System (IPPIS)* which it has strongly opposed.



Source: Olayinka, A. I., (2024). *The Future of the Nigerian University System*. 28th Convocation Lecture, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti Delivered on 2 April, 2024.

Even though, non-academic staff in each University in Nigeria often times embarked on internal strikes, such strike actions do not often lead to closure of universities by the University's authorities. However, both internal and national strikes, embarked upon by the non-academic staff in Nigerian Universities, in one way or the other, lead to disruption of academic activities where lecture rooms are often locked and students, sometimes, prevented from attending classes.

Similarly, students strike actions, leading to boycotts of lectures, occur often within each University in Nigeria. However, such boycotts of lectures do not usually lead to prolonged or long-term closure of each University except in a situation of serious internal security breach which might lead to destruction of university's properties or loss of lives. Invariably, most strike actions in Nigeria's University environment, which often results in prolonged closure of the Universities and disruption of academic schedules and calendars, has been that of ASUU national strike actions. It is pertinent to state also that the conflicts in Nigeria's University environment, leading to strike actions by different University-based unions, mostly occur in Federal and State Universities and not from privately owned Universities.

Reasons why Conflicts have become Unending within the Nigeria's University Environment

Even though conflicts in human affairs are inevitable, they must, however, not become incessant and unending. In the University environment in Nigeria, conflicts are becoming incessant and unending hampering the unpleasant interruption of academic schedules and calendars. The reasons why conflicts seem unending in Nigerian University environment include, but not limited to, the following:

Non-Tracking and Inaction of Universities Authorities and Government to Conflicts Early Warning Signs in the University System - Every conflict in University environment in Nigeria usually gives early warning signs that show that something is not right with the potentiality of its outbreak. Early warning signs, which are a key component of a comprehensive conflict prevention strategy, help to assess the situations of a threat to peace and prepare actions to such threat based on information and indicators (Boutros-Ghali, 1992). However, University authorities and the Federal and States Governments usually fail to track information and indicators on these early warning signs which would have helped them to prepare and provide appropriate response mechanisms to avoid full-scale conflict. Therefore, non-tracking and inaction to conflicts early warning signs in the University system by University authorities and government has largely contributed to the unending conflicts in the University environment in Nigeria.

Inaction by University Authorities and Governments to Ultimatum or Strike Notice given by University-based Unions - Ultimatum refers to the final demand or statement of terms given by the University-based unions to avert full-scale strike action. Ultimatum or strike notice is a requirement under labour law and unfortunately University authorities and governments do not usually act on such ultimatum or strike notice until it blossoms into full strike action. The failure of University authorities and governments to take action during the period of the ultimatum or strike given by unions has largely contributed to the unending conflicts in the university environment in Nigeria.

University Authorities and Governments are often not Proactive in Anticipating Conflict Situations - Being proactive connotes that an individual don't wait for things to happen or unfold before he/she responds. The opposite of proactive is reactive which implies that an individual wait for things to happen or unfold before he/she responds. It appears that University authorities and governments, especially the Federal Government, are not proactive enough to respond to preventing conflicts occurrence in the University environment in Nigeria. They are more reactive in nature - waiting for the conflict to happen or unfold before they respond. The reactive nature of University authorities and

Federal Government to conflict situations rather than being proactive has also contributed to the unending conflicts in University environment in Nigeria.

Conflict Resolution/Management is Accorded more Attention than Conflict Prevention - Since University authorities and Federal Government usually wait for conflict to happen or unfold in the University environment in Nigeria before they take action which is the basis of conflict resolution/management rather than anticipate the likelihood of conflict occurrence and take action to prevent it which is the basis of conflict prevention, it implies that University authorities and Federal Government in Nigeria place premium, or more attention, to conflict resolution/management than conflict prevention. This has also largely contributed to the unending conflicts in University environment in Nigeria.

The Challenges of Formulating University Education Policies in Nigeria - There are many policies formulated for the development of University education in Nigeria and proper-functioning of the system; some of which include (a) recruitment policies - entry qualification, professionalism and welfare policies, (b) staff development policies, (c) infrastructural facilities policies, and (d) lecturers-students ration policies. However, these policies are often drafted or formulated without due consideration for the local environment of implementation as well as the economic, social, and political factors (Ogunode, Ajape & Jegede, 2020) leading to forced acceptance of these policies by the University-based unions. This has equally contributed to the unending conflicts in University environment in Nigeria.

Federal Government's Non-Implementation of Agreements reached with University-Based Unions - A case in point is the Federal Government's non-implementation of the 2009 Agreements with ASUU and the Re-Negotiated Agreements which has lingered for over six years now. A cardinal part of the Agreements was the revitalisation fund to upgrade Nigerian Public Universities to standard with the injection of 200 billion Naira yearly, through Needs Assessment Report, for five years. Since 2013, only one year has been paid. Another cardinal part of the Agreements was the non-payment of the accumulated Earned Academic Allowances of Academic Staff for over six years now. The Federal Government's non-implementation of Agreements reached with ASUU and other University-based unions has also largely contributed to the unending conflicts in the University environment in Nigeria.

Unilateral Decision by University Authorities and Governments on Students' Welfare- Students welfare in University environment in Nigeria encompasses services that promote the physical, mental, emotional, intellectual and social well-being of students. In other words, students' welfare is wide range of services put in place by university authority to ensure sound learning by students in the University campuses (Subair, 2008; Ajani, Okunola & Subair, 2010). These services include, among others, students' health and safety, teaching and study

environment, campus environment, residences, and school fees. Most times, students' welfare services in the University environment in Nigeria are decided unilaterally by University authorities and governments without inputs from the students' representatives. This has often led to disaffection from the students leading to conflicts in Nigeria's University environment.

Bias and Prejudice in the Selection of Committee System Members in Nigerian Universities - The law that established Universities in Nigeria empowers University authorities to appoint committees which act as consultative and advisory bodies on matters relating to administrative policies and academic programmes. The use of the committee system in Nigerian Universities helps to enhance adequate participation in decision-making, pooling of knowledge, and the integration of diverse opinions on administrative and academic matters (Okai, Wordu, & Amaoge, 2019). However, one of the major criticisms in the selection of Committee Members in the University environment in Nigeria has been that selected or appointed Committee Members are largely those who are loyal to the Vice Chancellors (Okai, Wordu, & Amaoge, 2019). This bias and prejudice in the selection of members of the University's Committee System has been one of the reasons for the unending conflicts in the University environment in Nigeria.

Inadequate Funding of Public Universities in Nigeria - One of cardinal reasons why the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has frequently engaged the Federal Government of Nigeria, resulting in strike actions, has been the inadequate funding of public Universities in Nigeria. Osodeke (2024) noted that public universities are still being funded with the pre-2009 Agreement Scale rather than the Re-Negotiated Funding Scale. ASUU has often decried the deliberate and continued underfunding of public universities because it degrades and under-develops the capacity of Universities to deliver their mandates. The consequences of the inadequate funding of public Universities in Nigeria has manifested in infrastructural decay, insufficient provision of infrastructural facilities, poor teaching and learning environment, and brain drain of academic staff to other countries. Therefore, inadequate funding of public Universities in Nigeria has been the major reason for ASUU recurring strike actions in the University environment in Nigeria.

Delay in the Re-Constitution of Universities Governing Councils by Federal Government - The University (Miscellaneous Provision Act, 1993 No. 11) substituted by Universities (Miscellaneous Provision Amendment Act 2003) is the enacted Act for constituting the Governing Councils of all Federal Universities in Nigeria. The Act specifies the composition, tenure, powers, and independence of the Councils to exercise its function. The University Governing Council is so important in University administration in Nigeria because it approves university's annual budget, supervises staff recruiting and promotion, approves new academic programmes, and ensures that the university functions in accordance with its goals

and objectives. However, such Governing Councils are not constituted on time to oversee the University administration in Nigeria after tenure expiration and dissolution. For example, in May, 2024, ASUU decried a situation where Nigerian Universities operated for close to a year without Governing Councils and had to issue a two-week ultimatum to the present government to reconstitute the Governing Councils before they were reconstituted. This could have led to another strike action by the ASUU. Therefore, delay in the re-constitution of Governing Councils of public Universities in Nigeria can contribute to conflict in University environment.

Recommended Action Plan for Prevention and Management of Conflicts within the Nigeria's University Environment

Identifying Conflicts Early Warning Signs in the University System and the Necessity of Timely Response - To ensure conflicts are reduced in University environment in Nigeria, Vice Chancellors and Governments are urged to put in place mechanisms for identifying conflicts early warning signs. Such early warning signs can be got from feedbacks from Congresses of the University-based unions, press interviews granted by unions leaders, press releases from the unions leaders, strike notices, and informal interactional relationship with the union's leaders. These mechanisms will provide adequate information and indicators to Vice Chancellors and Governments of potential conflicts in the University environment.

Similarly, to get Vice Chancellors and other Principal Officers of each University adequately prepared for promoting the culture of peaceful relationship with University-based unions, it is advocated that conflict prevention and management skills be included in the selection criteria of Vice Chancellors and Principal Officers. During the interview stage, a conflict scenario can be simulated and aspiring Vice Chancellors should be made to provide a blueprint of how they will detect and respond to the conflict early warning signs. Through this process, the Vice Chancellors are already prepared with conflict prevention and management skills which they can deploy in the occurrence of conflict situations in the University environment.

Ultimatum or strike notice given by unions should be accorded due attention and prompt action - University authorities and Government, Federal and States, should accord due attention and prompt action to ultimatum or strike notice usually given by unions in the University environment in Nigeria before the commencement of strike actions. Inaction to strike notices from University authorities and Government has often led to full-scale strike actions from the unions. Prompt action or response to ultimatum or strike notices will help to minimise conflicts occurrence in the University environment in Nigeria.

For example, on August 10, 2024, a 21-day strike notice was given by ASUU to the Federal Government through a letter sent to the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment and Ministry of Education over the following demands: an end to third-party deductions of ASUU members' fund; stoppage of illegal retirement of academic staff; removal of Universities from the Single Treasury Account; inadequate funding for the revitalisation of Nigerian Public Universities; delay in re-negotiating the 2009 agreement which has left academic staff in Nigerian Universities on the same salary structure for over a decade; and the continued payment of academic staff through the IPPIS platform despite the December 2023 directive by the Federal Executive Council that academic staff of Federal Universities be removed from IPPIS platform.

Others demands include: the need by Federal Government to review and sign the re-negotiated Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN)-ASUU Agreements: the erosion of University autonomy, the unchecked proliferation of public Universities, the unpaid backlog of Earned Academic Allowances (EAA) which has amounted to 50 Billion Naira, the payment of the withheld salaries of ASUU members, and abuse of Universities laws. If this strike notice is not accorded prompt action by the Federal Government, another full-scale strike action from the union looms. The last strike by ASUU during the regime of President Muhammadu Buhari lasted eight months and left the academic calendar of universities in Nigeria in disarray.

Development of Proactive Mechanisms in Anticipating Conflict Occurrence - University authorities and Governments, Federal and States, should become proactive to conflict prevention rather than reactive to conflict resolution/management by developing proactive mechanisms to prevent occurrence of conflicts in the University environment in Nigeria. University authorities and Governments should not wait for conflict to unfold or erupt before it is attended to. They should adopt proactive mechanisms and not reactive mechanisms.

Conflict Prevention should be Accorded More Importance than Conflict Resolution/Management - University authorities and Governments should accord more importance to conflict prevention rather than conflict resolution or management in line with the popular Nigerian adage: *prevention is better than cure*. It is better to stop something before it happens instead of having to deal with its consequences after it has already happened. Therefore, both University authorities and Governments should prevent conflicts from happening in the University environment rather than dealing with such conflicts after they had happened.

University Education Policies should be Formulated with Many Factors taken into Consideration. Federal and State governments must take into due

consideration many factors in the formulation of University education policies particularly recruitment policies - entry qualification, professionalism and welfare policies, staff development policies, infrastructural facilities policies, and lecturers-students ration policies in Nigeria. Factors to be accorded utmost importance when formulating policies to guide University administration and management in Nigeria should include the local environment of implementation, the economic, social and political factors as well as inputs from all the University-based unions (the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU), the Non-Academic Staff of Educational and Associated Institutions (NASU), and the National Association of Academic Technologists (NAAT).

Strict Implementation by Federal Government of the Agreements reached with the University-based Unions - Federal and State governments are urged to strictly implement agreements reached with any of the four unions in the University environment in Nigeria. This is a case of *INTEGRITY*. Any government that fails to honour agreement lacks integrity and suffers legitimacy deficiency. Integrity is the hallmark of a legitimate government. Once a government constitutes a negotiating team with University-based unions, it implies that such government is ready and willingly to accept and implement all Agreements reached during the negotiation process. However, the reverse is the case with governments in Nigeria with their consistent failure to honour and implement Agreements reached with the University-based unions. A case in point is the 2009 Re-negotiated Agreements reached with ASUU. This has made the Union to constantly accuse the Federal Government of non-implementation of the Agreements and the basis for the recent strike notice to the Federal Government on 10 August, 2024. If the Federal Government is truly interested in minimising conflicts within the University environment in Nigeria, it should, on her own part, honour and implement the 2009 Re-Negotiated Agreements with ASUU.

Students' Involvement in Decision-Making on their welfare by University Authorities - To minimise conflicts with students in the University environment in Nigeria, University authorities are urged to adequately involve students' representatives in decision-making process on students' welfare. The essence of the legalising students' union in all Universities in Nigeria is to ensure that students are not excluded or sidelined in any decision involving them. Therefore, to promote cordial and harmonious relationship between students and University authorities, students must always be carried-along in all decision-making processes involving their welfare.

Democratising the Selection of Committee System Members in Nigeria Universities - The criticism that Committee Members in University environment in Nigeria are often selected on the basis of their loyalty to the Vice Chancellors needs to be substituted with democratic means of selection where interested

aspirants are made to contest for any Committee they are interested in. If this suggestion is implemented, it will no longer be a source of potential conflict occurrence in the University environment in Nigeria.

Review of Existing Trajectory on Funding of Public Universities in Nigeria -

The existing trajectory where about 90% of public Universities expenditure is financed by the Federal Government urgently needs to be reviewed if proper funding of public Universities in Nigeria is to be achieved. There is the need for the establishment of scientific benchmark comprising many sources of funding public Universities in Nigeria rather than the over-reliance on government source. The private sector establishments must come in to assist in funding the University system through an enactment of a law in this direction. Other sources must also be worked-out to complement government funding.

Prompt constitution of Universities Governing Councils by Government after Tenure Expiration or Dissolution -

The constitution, composition and inauguration of Governing Councils in Nigerian Universities should be promptly done after tenure expiration or dissolution for proper functioning and administration of Universities in Nigeria. It amounts to the promotion of illegality in the University environment if the constitution of Governing Councils is unnecessarily delayed. A situation where the constitution of Universities Governing Councils was not done after one year of dissolution by the present government until an ultimatum was given by ASUU Federal Government of Nigeria was unfortunate and unimaginable. Therefore, Federal and State Governments in Nigeria are urged to accord a top priority to the constitution of University Governing Councils within, at most, one month, after tenure expiration or dissolution of the Councils.

Conclusion

The incessant and unending nature of conflicts in the University environment in Nigeria ought to be a cause for concern to Federal Government, State Governments, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU), the Non-Academic Staff of Educational and Associated Institutions (NASU), the National Association of Academic Technologists (NAAT), and to individual Nigerians. The implications and consequences of conflicts in the University environment in Nigeria to academic calendars stability have been well-documented in literature and in this paper. The time to pay serious attention to massive reduction of conflicts in Nigerian universities is now. It is in this context that this paper advocates a comprehensive action plan for conflict prevention and management in University environment in Nigeria. It is hope that the action plan, identified and discussed in this paper, if faithfully and religiously implemented, will go a long way to

providing valuable insight on how conflicts can be reduced to a minimal level in the University environment in Nigeria.

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