

Perceived Influence of Nigerian Union of Teachers on the Management of Educational Crisis in Secondary Schools in Abia State

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Abstract: *The study examined the perceived influence of Nigerian Union of Teachers on the management of educational crisis in secondary schools in Abia State. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. A structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data from 66 respondents comprising 12 educational administrators and 54 teachers drawn from the three education zones of Abia State. The data collected was analyzed using frequency distribution, descriptive statistics, and t-test statistics. The study found that educational management board in collaboration with NUT fight against crisis in the state by NUT helping in the protection of the rights of teachers and help the educational management board detect early warning of impending crisis; that NUT staff development programs of publishing and distribution of education journals and newspapers improve teachers' competences. NUT struggle for regular promotion of teachers and their staff promotion services which encourage teachers' performance and hard work in Abia State. All these are methods employed by the NUT to campaign for better working conditions of her members and educational issues which has been effective in the resolution of educational crisis in Abia State. The t-test results indicated there is no significant difference in the opinion of Educational Administrators and Teachers on how NUT legally protect all members, enhance social and economic wellbeing of teachers and on the methods through which NUT campaign on working condition of its members and educational issues in Abia State. The study recommended among other things that in other to enhance the social and economic wellbeing of teachers, the NUT needs to fight for the payment of teachers' salary as at when due. This will solve most of the work challenges faced by teachers in Abia State.*

Keywords: *Nigerian Union of Teachers, administrators, crisis and secondary school*

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) is one of the recognized professional bodies encompassing all primary teachers and others at Post-Primary levels of education in Nigeria. Nigeria Union of Teachers is the largest body of organized professional teacher in Nigeria; it has the responsibility to champion the cause of the teaching profession in Nigeria. Nigeria Union of Teachers was formed on 8th July, 1931 to create a united front for practitioners of teaching profession in the country. The first president of the group and chairman of the union in a letter dated 25th July, addressed to the secretary, T. K. Cameroon, July 1931 and the late Oludotun Ransome Kutu, the husband of Funmilayo Ransome-Kutu and father of Fela Anikulapo Kutu appealing for the recognition of the shoulders of NUT leadership, when he said: "By entrusting us in a large

number of teachers is difficult but a pleasant work of corporation with Education Authorities in this our beloved Nigeria... On May 27, 1972, the union joined with the Northern State Teachers Union, an association founded by Aminu Kano and a few northern Nigerian teachers in 1948. Extensively, the union has live up to its expectation as it has provided a body for the teachers in the country. Several strike actions were carried out by the union. All these may have influenced the activities of the union particularly as it has to do with pressing home their demands in the protection of their rights and privileges. (NUT study circle material, 2014).

Major objectives of the union cover the improvement and development in economic conditions of teachers and to create an avenue for educational development, general economic security for teachers in the country. No matter what alarms have rang that the world would be a worse place without teachers. Ukeje (2012) proved this statement by saying that: “the key to successful implementation and management of any education programme lies in the hands of teachers”. Human and national developments are interrelated and both are functions of people’s level of education and literacy. The achievement of education and literacy can only be realized through learning in either formal or non-formal settings which cannot completely dispense with services of teachers. Teachers therefore have always been and will continue to be fundamental asset in all forms of education process. Teaching being directly linked with the education process, teaching and teachers are and must be regarded as the greatest assets that contribute towards national development (NUT study circle material, 2014).

Education is regarded as an instrument per excellence for effective national development. Education is the way the individual acquires the physical, moral and social capacities demanded of him by the group into which he is born and within which he must function (Swift, 2016). This means education is a process through which individuals gain knowledge, develop attitude and acquires skills. The idea is built and incorporated into the nation’s philosophy of education which is reflected and emphasized in the objectives at each level of the education system Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2017). The study focused on the role of Nigerian union of teachers on the management of educational crisis in Abia State, Nigeria. The need to make teacher well developed and well recognized became very necessary in such developing State. Developing skills, enhancing productivity and ensuring the quality of teachers are very crucial on their academic performance. This in turn has the impact on improving quality standard of education and achieving educational objectives (NUT newsletter, 2015).

Considering the position of teacher in achieving educational objectives in the society, the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) Abia State Wing stressed that: “Teacher conditions” of services should be very vital part of educational planning programmes in the State; there is the need for professional school teachers who possess the requisite skills and knowledge to improve the standard of education throughout the state” (Dayi, 2012). In the support of NUT activities on the development of teachers, Fafunwa (2004) asserted that “the National Policy on Education reaffirmed that teacher education will continue to be given major emphasis in all educational planning, because no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers.” However, the (FRN, 2017) in her National Policy on Education directly states that all teachers in the Nigeria institutions from pre-primary to university level will be professionally trained and that teacher education programmes will be structured to equip teachers for the effective performance of their duties. Thus, training and re-training of teachers is one of the most important roles that NUT plays on the staff development in Abia State. Ukeje (2005) stated that “the professionally trained, competent, committed and well - motivated teachers are the central factor in effective management and implementation of the educational programmes toward the attainment of its

goals and national deployment”. NUT staff welfare services determined the great impact of teachers’ trade unions on developing teachers’ academic performance in Abia State. This commensurate the perception of Ejiogu (2003) as Maslow’s hierarchy of human needs; the basic needs which must be satisfied before others which are higher, become compelling since the psychological needs such as the need for food; shelter and safety take stages in human existence. It is also imperative to emphasize on the effort of NUT on upward of teachers’ remunerations for better conditions of service especially in a country where teachers suffer from low esteem and poor public image both of which are believed to be a function of one’s social status. Kazeem (2004) observed that teachers and other school workers tend to remain contented and reasonably motivated as long as salaries and allowances are paid in time and they are promoted regularly. However, staff promotion is a very crucial strategy of motivating teachers to encourage and develop their academic performance.

Promotion connotes boosting staff morale and motivating them to work harder, thereby increasing productivity and efficiency. Ojo (2008) opined that promotion is a position of greater authority and responsibility, more prestige, status and increase in pay. It is a vertical movement in rank and responsibility. From the aforementioned discussion, it is apparent that NUT activities encourage the implementation conditions of service for teachers in Abia State in particular and all over the country at large especially in the management of crisis.

Crisis is an event that is going to lead to an unstable and dangerous situation affecting an individual, group, community, or whole society. In secondary schools, crisis could be as a result of poor management of pupils in the school, lack of proper orientation during admission of students. The continuous growth of crisis in the secondary schools could make teachers refused to attend classes; some of the teachers might resign from their jobs. (<https://condemnint.net/education>). According to Onwe & Nwogbaga, (2014), crisis occur when there is sporadic use of violence that cause damage to symbols, lives and property. Severe crisis involves repeated use of force in an organized way with preparations. The scourge of cultism in Nigeria secondary schools is every day on the increase with the accompanying consequences of destruction and death with these the NUT should help in eliminating various cult groups in public secondary schools in Nigeria and in Abia state in particular. The NUT should help effectively in managing the school by planning ahead and ensure that there are enough teachers to be assigned for classes, has a hold of the school time tabling of activities, procure teaching materials, and retrain the teachers for the task ahead. The NUT should help to ensure that teachers’ salaries are been paid as at when due. The NUT is not expected to be partisan but neutrally tactful in carrying out the mandates of the political leaders who use education for political campaign.

Education in Nigeria is full of crisis. These crises are responsible for the poor standard of education in the country. Among many crisis, examination malpractice, cultism, low school enrollment, corruption, presence of quacks, and teacher quality as well as abandoned project. All these above problems necessitated this research work. It has become an idea from the background of this work that the Nigeria Union of teachers play a very useful role in our education system. However crisis has been reported in our education cycle and education crisis has been a nationwide scourge. Owing to this fact, this study tends to investigate the roles of NUT on the management of educational crisis in secondary schools in Abia State which is to the best knowledge of the researchers, no work has been carried out on this topic and in this area of study.

Research Questions

The following research questions were drawn to guide the study:

1. What are the various ways NUT protect all members of the Union in Abia State?
2. How does NUT enhance social and economic well- being conditions of its members?
3. What are the methods NUT campaign on working conditions of its members help to control educational crisis Abia State?

Research Hypothesis

- H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the opinion of teachers and educational administrators on how NUT protect all members of the union in Abia State
- H₀₂. There is no significant difference in the opinion of teachers and educational administrators on how NUT enhances social and economic well- being of teachers in Abia State
- H₀₃. There is no significant difference in the opinion of teachers and educational administrators, on how NUT campaigns on working conditions of its members control educational issues in Abia State

METHODOLOGY

The design of the study was descriptive survey design carried out with 66 respondents made up of 12 educational administrators and 54 teachers in secondary schools of the three Education Zones of Abia State. The respondents were selected through the Stratified random sampling technique for the selection of the sample for the study. The procedure for zoning system in which the Local Government was zoned based on the three education Zones of Abia State (Umuahia, Aba, and Ohafia). However, this technique was used for the selection of the respondents. To secure adequate representation of the respondents, the cluster sampling procedure was derived from the strata. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled "Perceived Influence of Nigerian Union of Teachers on the Management of Educational Crisis (PINUTMEC) structured along four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA)-4, Agree (A)-3, Disagree (D)-2 and Strongly Disagree (SD)-1. The instrument was validated by three experts from educational Management and measurement and Evaluation in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike for face and content validity. The reliability of the instruments was ascertained through a test re-test carried out using 10 Education administrators and 20 teachers outside the study area. A reliability coefficient of 0.87 was realized proving the instrument reliable since it consistently measured what it is expected to measure. The data collected from respondents were organized and tabulated using mean and standard deviation. Interpretation of data analyzed were systematically be subjected by discussion. The raw scores from the frequency was converted into percentages through the descriptive statistical techniques. Finally, formulated hypotheses of the research were tested using non-parametric statistics of t-test to analyze the data at 0.05 significant level. The results are presented on the tables below.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1: What are the various ways NUT protect all members of the union in Abia State?

To analyze the respondents’ perception on the above question, the mean and standard deviation were used and the result across the two groups – teachers and educational administrators and total is presented in the table below.

Table 1 Various Ways NUT Protect all Members of the Union

	Teachers		Educational Administrators		Total		Decision
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	
Educational management board in collaboration with NUT fight against crisis in the state	3.23	0.504	3.19	0.401	3.22	0.465	Agreed
The NUT helps in the protection of the rights of teachers in the educational system	3.46	0.762	3.00	0.793	3.28	0.803	Agreed
Nigerian Union of Teachers staff welfare services encouraged the government to provide official cars to the school principals and inspectors in Abia State	1.71	0.456	1.61	0.494	1.67	0.471	Disagreed
NUT helps the educational management board detect early warning of impending crisis in Abia State’	3.23	0.972	3.28	0.974	3.25	0.968	Agreed
NUT has been effective in the resolution of educational crisis in Abia State	3.48	0.603	3.78	0.422	3.60	0.556	Agreed
Pooled Mean						3.004	

Source: Field Survey 2019.

From table 1 above, the statements educational management board in collaboration with NUT fight against crisis in the state, The NUT helps in the protection of the rights of teachers in the educational system, NUT helps the educational management board detect early warning of impending crisis in Abia State and NUT has been effective in the resolution of educational crisis in Abia State recorded mean values of 3.22, 3.28, 3.25 and 3.60 respectively. These indicate that the respondents agreed to the statements that educational management board in collaboration with NUT fight against crisis in the state, The NUT helps in the protection of the rights of teachers in the educational system, NUT helps the educational management board detect early

warning of impending crisis in Abia State, and NUT has been effective in the resolution of educational crisis in Abia State since the mean values respectively are greater than the criterion mean value of 2.5. However, the respondents could not establish that Nigerian Union of Teachers staff welfare services encouraged the government to provide official cars to the school principals and inspectors in Abia State. This is because the mean value of these points is less than the criterion mean value of 2.5. The pooled mean of 3.004 indicates that the respondents agreed that the NUT legally protect all Members of the Union. This is owing to the fact that the pooled mean is greater than the criterion of 2.5.

Research Question 2: How does NUT enhance social and economic well-being conditions of its members in Abia?

The study used descriptive statistics for the analysis of the respondents’ views regarding on the ways NUT enhance the social and economic well-being conditions of its members and educational issues in Abia State.

Table 2. How NUT Enhance Social and Economic Wellbeing of Teachers in Abia State

	Teachers		Educational Administrators		Total		Decision
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	
Through NUT financial support to retired teachers establish small and medium Scale business in Abia State	1.61	0.493	1.94	0.893	1.74	0.693	Disagreed
NUT monitors state pension commission to ensure justice on payment of teachers’ retirement benefit in Abia State	1.88	0.334	1.83	0.378	1.86	0.350	Disagreed
NUT frequently organize seminar and workshop for teachers in Abia State	1.88	0.334	1.83	0.378	1.86	0.350	Disagreed
NUT staff development programs of publishing and distribution of education journals and newspapers improve teachers’ competences in the state.	3.48	0.603	3.78	0.422	3.60	0.556	Agreed
Teachers enjoy free use of NUT staff welfare services in Abia State	2.09	0.288	2.00	0.000	2.05	0.228	Disagreed
Pooled Mean	2.222						

Source: Field Survey 2019.

The mean values of NUT staff development programmes of publishing and distribution of education journal and newspaper improve teachers' competences in the state of 3.6, indicates that the respondents agreed to the statement that the NUT staff development programmes of publishing and distribution of education journals and newspapers improve teachers' competences in the state. While the respondents could not agree to the statements that through NUT financial support retired teachers establish small and medium Scale business in Abia State, NUT monitors state pension commission to ensure justice on payment of teachers retirement benefit in Abia State, NUT frequently organizes seminar and workshop for teachers in Abia State and Teachers enjoy free use of NUT staff welfare services in Abia State.

The overall mean indicates that respondents do not agree on how NUT enhance Social and Economic Wellbeing of Teachers in Abia. This is because the pooled mean value which is 2.222 is less than the criterion mean value of 2.5. Hence, the respondents are of the view that the NUT do not enhance the social and economic wellbeing of teachers in Abia State.

Research Question 3: What are the methods through which NUT campaigns on working conditions of its members control educational crisis in Abia State?

Table 3. Methods through NUT Campaign on Working Conditions of its Members control Educational crisis in Abia State.

	Teachers		Educational Administrators		Total		Decision
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	
Nigerian Union of Teachers struggle for regular promotion of teachers in Abia State	1.88	0.334	1.83	0.378	1.86	0.350	Agree
Progressive activities of NUT necessitate payment of teachers' arrears whenever they are promoted in the state	2.71	0.967	3.06	0.826	2.15	0.925	Disagree
The Nigerian Union of Teachers is able to eliminate forms of bias and injustice of payment of teachers' retirement benefits in Abia State	3.48	0.603	3.78	0.422	3.60	0.556	Disagree
NUT's staff promotion services encourage teachers' performance and hard work in Abia State	3.46	0.762	3.00	0.793	3.28	0.803	Agree
Apart from annual promotion system, NUT enhances staff promotion on qualification and teachers' performance in Abia State	3.55	0.502	3.47	0.506	3.52	0.502	Agree
Pooled Mean						2.51	

From table 3, from the mean values of Nigerian Union of Teachers struggle for regular promotion of teachers, NUT’s staff promotion services encourage teachers performance and hard work in Abia State and apart from annual promotion system, NUT enhance staff promotion on qualification and teachers performance in Abia State is greater than the criterion mean value respectively (3.28 and 3.52). This implies that the respondents agreed to the statements that Nigerian Union of Teachers struggle for regular promotion of teachers, NUT’s staff promotion services encourage teachers’ performance and heard work in Abia State and apart from annual promotion system, NUT enhances staff promotion on qualification and teachers’ performance in Abia State. Meaning that the respondents agreed that these are the methods through which NUT Campaign on Working Conditions of its Members control Educational issues in Abia State.

Nevertheless, the respondents disagreed that to the statements that the Nigerian Union of Teachers are able to eliminate forms of bias and injustice of payment of teachers’ retirement benefits and that the progressive activities of NUT necessitate payment of teachers’ arrears whenever they are promoted in the state. The pooled mean value of 2.51 indicates that the respondents agreed to the methods through which NUT Campaigns on Working Conditions of its Members control educational issues in Abia State

Table 4. Hypotheses testing

This part of the study presents and discuss the independent samples t-test results, which were used for hypothesis testing.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the opinion of Educational Administrators and Teachers on how NUT legally protects all members of the union in Abia State.

Table 4 Independent Samples t-test Result for Hypothesis one

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference
Equal variances assumed	0.001	0.970	0.628	90	0.532	0.34325
Equal variances not assumed			0.619	71.093	0.538	0.34325

Source: SPSS 25 Independent t-test result

From table 4.6 above, the Levene’s test for equality of variances suggest that equal variances should be assumed since the f-statistics probability (sig) is greater than 0.05. Thus, the assumption of equal variances and carry the t-test examination on the row of equal variance assumed. Considering the row “equal variances assumed”, the t-test value is 0.628 with a sig. value of 0.532 and mean difference of 0.34325, indicating that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of Educational Administrators and Teachers on the ways through which Nigerian Union of Teachers protect all members of the union. This implies that the study accepts the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the opinion of Educational Administrators and Teachers on how NUT legally protects all members of the union in Abia State. Meaning that the Educational Administrators and Teachers had statistically insignificant

difference in their opinions regarding the ways through which NUT protect all members of the union in Abia State.

H₀2: There is no significant difference in the opinion of Educational Administrators and Teachers on how NUT enhances social and economic wellbeing of teachers in Abia State.

Table 5. Independent Samples t-test Result for Hypothesis Two

	Levine's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Equal variances assumed	0.060	0.806	-1.305	90	0.195	-0.37103
Equal variances not assumed			-1.423	89.922	0.158	-0.37103

Source: SPSS 25 Independent t-test result

From table 5 above, the Levine's test for equality of variances suggest that equal variances should be assumed since the f-statistics probability (sig) is greater than 0.05. Thus, the assumption of equal variances and carry the t-test examination on the row of equal variance assumed. Considering the row "equal variances assumed", the t-test value is -1.305 with a sig. value of 0.195 and mean difference of -0.37103, indicating that there is no significant difference in the opinion of Educational Administrators and Teachers on how NUT enhances social and economic wellbeing of teachers in Abia State. This implies that the respondents are of the same view regarding the how NUT enhances social and economic wellbeing of teachers in Abia State. Thus, the study accepts the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the opinion of Educational Administrators and Teachers on how NUT enhances social and economic wellbeing of teachers in Abia State.

H₀3: There is no significant difference in the opinion of Educational Administrators and Teacher son the methods through which NUT campaigns on working condition of its members and educational issues in Abia State.

Table 6. Independent Samples t-test Result for Hypothesis one

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Equal variances assumed	3.418	0.068	-0.139	90	0.890	-0.04960
Equal variances not assumed			-0.147	87.864	0.883	-0.04960

Source: SPSS 25 Independent t-test result

From table 6 above, the Levene's test for equality of variances suggest that equal variances should be assumed since the f-statistics probability (sig) is greater than 0.05. Thus, the assumption of equal variances and carry the t-test examination on the row of equal variance assumed. Considering the row "equal variances assumed", the t-test value is -0.139 with a sig. value of 0.89032 and mean difference of -0.04960, indicating that there is no significant difference in the opinion of Educational Administrators and Teachers on the methods through which NUT campaigns on working condition of its members and educational issues in Abia State. This implies that the study accepts the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the opinion of Educational Administrators and Teachers on the methods through which NUT campaigns on working condition of its members and educational issues in Abia State. Meaning that the Educational Administrators and Teachers had no statistically significant difference in their opinions regarding the methods through which NUT campaigns on working condition of its members and educational issues in Abia State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Generally, the role of trade unions in organizations is a highly debated issue and has been for over a century. Researchers over the years have tried to examine the role of trade union on members' welfare, productivity, workplace environment and others. Considering the state of affairs in the country, especially Abia state where teachers and government have not really had smooth working relationship, it is necessary to investigate the perceived influence of Nigerian Union of Teachers on the management of educational crisis in secondary schools. With our current educational system being compared to countries around the world, there has been a push to raise the standards in our schools so that we can compete in the global marketplace and the foundation starts with teachers and educational administrators.

From the first research question, the respondents agreed on the ways through which Nigeria Union of Teachers protect all members of the union. This is because the pooled mean value of the research questions regarding the ways through which the NUT legally protects all members of the union based on the educational administrators and teachers' perception is 3.004, which is above the criterion mean value of 2.5. Hence, it was agreed that educational management board in collaboration with NUT fight against crisis in the state, The NUT helps in the protection of the rights of teachers in the educational system, NUT helps the educational management board detect early warning of impending crisis in Abia State, and NUT has been effective in the resolution of educational crisis in Abia State.

On how the Nigerian Union of Teachers enhances the social and economic wellbeing of teachers in Abia State, the respondents disagreed that the Nigerian Union of Teachers has not enhanced the social and economic wellbeing of teachers in Abia State. This is based on the fact that the pooled mean value of research question two is 2.22 which is less than the criterion mean value of 2.5. However, the respondents agreed that NUT staff development programs of publishing and distribution of education journals and newspapers improve teachers' competences in the state and Teachers enjoy free use of NUT staff welfare services. On the methods through which NUT campaigns on working condition of its members control educational crisis, the respondents agreed that Nigerian Union of Teachers struggle for regular promotion of teachers in Abia State and NUT's staff promotion services encourage teachers performance and hard work in Abia State

CONCLUSION

The study examined the perceived influence of Nigerian Union of Teachers on the management of educational crisis in secondary schools in Abia State. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. A well-structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data from sixty-six (66) respondents comprising of twelve (12) educational administrators and fifty-four (54) teachers drawn from the three educational Zones of Abia State. The data collected was analyzed using frequency distribution, descriptive statistics, and t-test statistics. While the descriptive statistics was used to analyze the opinion of respondents on the research questions, the t-test statistics was used to test the hypotheses. The analyses were done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. The study concluded that Nigerian Union of Teachers has no significant influence on the management of educational crisis in secondary schools in Abia State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made;

1. In other to enhance the social and economic wellbeing of teachers, the NUT needs to fight for the payment of teachers' salary as at when due. This will solve most of the work challenges faced by teachers in Abia State.
2. The NUT should restructure their welfare package to effective and efficiently assist her members even after active service. This will reduce the effect of non-payment of pension on the life of retired members.
3. This study recommends that the NUT should give organize workshops and training that open other streams of income for her members. This will improve the social and economic wellbeing of her members.

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