



## **ACADEMIC STAFF UNION VERSUS GOVERNMENT NEGOTIATION STRATEGIES: A VERITABLE TOOL FOR SUSTAINING INDUSTRIAL HARMONY IN ONDO STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS, NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

The study assessed negotiation strategies adopted by ASUSS and the government for sustaining industrial harmony in Ondo State secondary school, Nigeria. The study adopted the survey research design using a quantitative approach. The population for the study comprised 300 Principals, 600 Vice-Principals, and 13,000 teachers from the 300 secondary schools in Ondo State. The sample was made up of 1500 respondents which comprised 90 principals, 180 vice-principals, and 1,230 teachers using a multistage sampling procedure. An instrument was used to gather data. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings of the study established that the causes of industrial disharmony between ASUSS and Ondo State Government were inadequate teaching and infrastructural materials (96.1%), unfavorable salary structure applicable in the State (97.3%), undue interference of government in union leadership and Government non-implementation of concluded agreements between ASUSS and Ondo State Government (93%). The findings also showed that the causes of the industrial disharmony have made ASUSS and Ondo State Government to have frequent disharmony annually (76.9%), every five years (76.7%), and biennially (76.7%). The results also indicated that the various negotiation strategies that have been adopted by ASUSS and government which include mediation (88.10%), conciliation (62.20%), arbitration (53.6%), formal Inquiry (99%), and reference to the National Industrial Court (99.10%). The results equally showed that the most effective strategies that were frequently used in enhancing industrial harmony were a board of inquiry (52%) and collective agreement (93.7%). The study concluded that mediation, conciliation, arbitration, formal inquiry, and reference to the National Industrial Court were the ASUSS and Ondo State Government negotiation strategies as a means of ensuring industrial harmony in Ondo State secondary schools.

**Keywords:** academic staff union, government, industrial harmony, negotiation strategies, secondary school

### **Introduction**

In the world today, industrial harmony could be regarded as mutual understanding, compatible interest, and extreme satisfaction of employers and employees in the place of work especially those about the terms and conditions of the contract, collective bargaining, and working conditions. In other words, industrial harmony could mean the ability of

employers to make provision for the employees as regards to their needs and all other necessary working materials that will assist the organization to carry out duties successfully. Thus, industrial harmony is geared towards the ability to reach a mutual agreement between the employers and employees on any issue about employers-employees' interactions or relations. According to Puttapalli and Vuram (2012), industrial harmony is majorly concerned with the mutual interaction between employees and management of the organization by stipulated terms and conditions that guide the employment as well as the workplace. This connotes that both the management and employees team all their effort willingly toward the achievement of the organization's stated objectives and aims. In line with the notion, Mannix (2001) disclosed that industrial harmony is a result of satisfaction derived from employer-employee relations. A cordial relationship between employer and employee is a signal to the development of any country. To Akuh (2016), industrial harmony has brought enhancement to labor productivity which in turn has improved the performance of the education sector, achieved economic growth, and enhanced the standard of living as well as the quality of life. This has created a peaceful working environment that is conducive to accommodate dialogue, tolerance, and other alternative ways to resolve industrial disputes. It has also created a high level of satisfaction for employees. Moreover, having industrial harmony could not mean that conflict of interest bargaining procedure will not exist but proactive, bargaining procedure and collective agreements could be the best method to adopt in preventing the conflicts bargaining procedure from transforming into an uncontrollable crisis.

The expected duty of management from the ideal place of work is to ensure industrial peace as well as harmony in the organization. Thus, as a party in the education sector and as a labor union, ASUSS are expected to foster the spirit of active co-operation and comradeship between teachers and other workers to enhance the social and economic well-being of members and establish welfare funds for the benefit of members of the Union. This is to provide a forum for the co-operation of teachers, the promotion of their welfare, protect the interest of education and the teaching profession throughout the federation. Generally, the parties of industrial harmony are primarily the employees, the employers, and the government. Sometimes, discord may arise among the parties involved which, if not resolved, may lead to industrial disharmony particularly strike actions. In the Nigerian educational system, many problems of incessant industrial disharmonies arise from a misunderstanding among employers, employees as well as the government. Sometimes, government and other education stakeholders do not act as they talk, which may inhibit industrial harmony and give room for protests and unrests which mostly take the form of strike actions by ASUSS.

The forms of protest embarked collectively by the employees are exemplified by demonstrations, mass meetings, strikes, and resolutions. Strikes and other industrial disharmonies are inimical to the achievement of educational goals and aspirations but they are avoidable and can be reduced to the barest minimum when the government, employers, and employees cooperate to harmonize their interests and efforts towards finding a feasible and sustainable panacea to issues bedeviling any of the education stakeholders. According to Adebisi (2015), ASUSS has a formidable voice to protect the interest and the welfare of secondary school teachers in terms of provision of appropriate working conditions, better pay, and reward systems to the knowledge of the government to positively act upon. Ladan (2012) said that the frequent occurrence of strike actions by ASUSS can be traced to poor conditions of service, low wages, and poor funding. Industrial actions could be sometimes used to put pressure on the government and employers to change policies or on the other way to fulfill mutual agreements between them. Industrial action is otherwise known as a labor strike. In this regard, Adebisi (2004) referred to industrial labor as work stoppage caused by the refusal of employees to work in their place of work. Labour strike usually

occurs in response to employees' grievances in line with history, most of the western countries partially legalized strike actions in the late 19th or early 20th centuries.

In Nigeria, especially in Ondo State, there has not been a long space of industrial harmony between ASUSS and government between 1985 and 1999 as the level of industrial disharmony was worse off during the military regimes. During this time, industrial disharmony also took the form of strike actions as a result of botched agreements especially on the part of the Federal and State governments as well as the use of inappropriate negotiation strategies on the part of both parties (Government and ASUSS). Consequently, during this period, Ondo State also had her share of these national industrial crises in her education sector just like every other state in the country. Industrial disharmony between ASUSS and the government appears to be a result of misunderstanding or use of ineffective strategies by the government during negotiation. However, sometime in the Fourth Republic in Nigeria (1999-2003), ASUSS, the then Nigeria Union of Teachers: secondary school wing embarked on a total strike across all the secondary schools in Ondo State as a result of unfavorable policy and lack of political will to honor mutual agreements. The strike lasted for nine months. In 2005, ASUSS in Ondo State embarked on a sit-down strike for the failure of the Ondo State government to implement the minimum wage policy of the Federal government. Before they embarked on this strike action, ASUSS had written severally and consulted with the government to intimate them of their displeasure and to implement the policy to foster industrial harmony but their consultations yielded no result until the Unions embarked on strike.

According to Adebisi (2010), in 2009, there was a warning strike that lasted for a week as a result of unfavorable government policy which stipulated that; compulsorily, all classroom secondary school teachers in Ondo State should be computer literate and must be ICT compliant before he/she would be recognized as a secondary school teacher in the State. The enforcement of this policy went as far as to require that all secondary school teachers must present Computer-Based Diploma certificates from notable awarding centers at the Ondo State Ministry of Education before such teachers' names would be included in the state's government payroll. At the end of the one-week warning strike, representatives of ASUSS were invited for a discussion with the Commissioner of Education and some other government representatives to present their grievances. After two days of marathon dialogue, both parties reached an agreement through collective bargaining that led to the re-modification of the policy, that all members of ASUSS in Ondo State should go back to work with or without their Certified Diploma Certificates in Computer-Based training but must compulsorily register with the Computer Training Institute which would be provided for by the government across all the secondary schools in Ondo State to train her teachers on the rudiments of Microsoft office tools. This re-modified policy was implemented and both the government and ASUSS had a win-win situation.

The crash of revenue in the global oil market in 2014 led to the state's reduction of Federal government monthly allocation which created another basis for industrial disharmony between ASUSS and Ondo State government as the latter was unable to pay three months outstanding salaries of the former in December 2015. ASUSS embarked on a local strike in solidarity with some other states of the federation protesting for their outstanding. Ondo State government engaged the representatives of the union and pleaded with them to understand that the situation was a result of the global trend and made reference to the good times of how the State government had treated them well. Based on this, ASUSS resumed and also pleaded with the government to come to their aid to boost their economic strength. The most recent was in June 2016, when all Ondo State workers, including ASUSS embarked on a total strike for 30 working days protesting for five months outstanding. The government also engaged the union in dialogue and pleaded with them to show some understanding and promised to pay a month outstanding which was

paid before ASUSS agreed to suspend the industrial action.

According to Amadi (1999), in Nigeria, the machinery for settling trade disputes was created by the Trade Dispute Act 1990. The machinery is founded on the hierarchy of procedures. At the base and apex of the hierarchy are the collective bargaining processes sometimes involving mediators and the National Industrial Court (N.I.C) respectively. Between these two are the Conciliator and the Industrial Arbitration Panel (I.A.P). The purpose of establishing these bodies is to provide an effective mechanism for ironing out differences between parties to a trade dispute without necessarily having resulting in strikes or lockouts (Amadi, 1999). ASUSS just like most pressure groups seeks the interest and welfare of her members as the main objective. Adebisi (2016) reported that ASUSS has not been an exemption in this regard to most Unions' objective and as such if there is persistent re-occurrence of industrial disharmony, then the usual negotiation strategies that have been adopted should be re-examined or re-modified for more effective negotiation strategies that would enhance industrial harmony (Adebisi, 2016). Osad and Osas (2013) clearly stated that government, in their negotiation needs to find new ways of working and negotiating. This could mean that the old principle of command, control, compliance of "they and we" must be challenged and abandoned. Modern business is too complex to profitably separate the thinkers and doers (Osad & Osas, 2013). Studies by Nwankwo, (2000) and Onuoha, (2001) have shown that over the last thirty years, the Nigerian education system has been witnessing an unprecedented industrial disharmony than any other social institution. This could be as a result of its strategic place both in the nation's hierarchy of priorities and how it is considered as a veritable instrument for national development. Due to the incessant occurrence of industrial disharmony, the Nigerian education system has become a shadow of itself with characteristics of non-payment of staff salaries, dilapidated structures, inadequate funding by the government, and brain drain.

However, Ajasa, (2015) posited that the Ondo State government's insensitivity to prioritizing the overhead cost of governance overpayment of salaries of ASUSS as at when due and diversion of funds meant for payment of teachers' salaries to other areas government that can easily make quick returns had constituted to part of the major reasons for industrial disharmony. This has led to a series of industrial actions by ASUSS in Ondo State secondary schools. Between 2010 and 2015, secondary schools' teachers embarked on strike actions seven times despite the negotiation strategies adopted by the government to enhance industrial harmony. Moreover, the studies intervening on industrial disharmony between ASUSS and government most especially in Ondo state are scanty. This has created a knowledge gap that has necessitated this study. Thus, it becomes expedient to examine strategies that would improve industrial harmony between ASUSS and Ondo State government in Ondo State secondary schools; hence this study.

The following research questions were raised to guide this study:

1. What are the causes of industrial disharmony between ASUSS and Ondo State government?
2. How frequent is the industrial disharmony between ASUSS and Ondo State government?
3. What are the negotiation strategies that have been adopted by ASUSS and the government in sustaining industrial harmony in Ondo State secondary schools?
4. Which of the strategies is the most effective towards improved industrial harmony between ASUSS and Ondo State government?

### ***Conceptual Reviews***

Negotiation could be regarded as of settle conflict in other to reach an agreement. Negotiation occurs in different organizations. According to Benjamin & Hideaki (2004),

negotiation is a process of combining different divergent positions into a joint agreement under a decision rule of unanimity. They further claimed that negotiation aims to resolve points of difference, to gain an advantage for an individual and also to craft outcomes to satisfy various interests of those involved. Besides, the negotiation could achieve win-win outcomes that will maintain industrial harmony in the organization. Industrial harmony is a sign that there is peace between the management and employee in the organization. In this notion, Akuh (2016) regarded industrial harmony as an industrial environment where employees along with their union and management understand, allow peace, and accept each other as partners in progress in a way that cooperation is ascertained on the rewards, performances, and outputs. Industrial harmony thus involves the ability of the employer and employees to have a proper dialogue concerning the terms and conditions of employment. But when there is no agreement between the employer and employee leads to industrial disharmony.

According to Fajana (2000), industrial disharmony means the inability of the employees and employers to reach an agreement on any issue about employers-employees' relationship. Fajana (2000) further disclosed that industrial disharmony mainly takes in the form of strikes. However, not all the time industrial disharmony takes the form of strike, it also takes other forms like sabotage, rudeness among others. In line with this notion, Muhammad (2014) opined that industrial disharmony occurred whenever the clash of interests exists in worker-management interactions. Industrial disharmony could be expressed in different terms such as trade dispute, strike action, industrial dispute, and industrial unrest. According to Akume and Abdullahi (2013), the causes of industrial disharmonies can be broadly classified into two categories: economic and non-economic causes. The economic causes will include issues relating to the untimely payment of staff salaries, conditions of work, bonus, allowances, working hours, leave, and holidays without pay as well as unjust layoffs and retrenchments. The non-economic factors include indiscipline on part of managers, victimization, and harassment of workers, favoritism, and ill-treatment of staff members.

### ***Empirical Reviews***

Sherwyn, Michael, and Judy (2000) conducted a study on the communication discipline. The results of the studies indicated that communication develops the whole person and improves the work of business. A study conducted by Karina (2013) aimed to contribute towards a more precise and comprehensive understanding of listening as management skills. The results suggested that perceived listening quality is linked to situational indicators of emotional well-being and interpersonal trust which enhance good labor-management relations. Meanwhile, Sherwyn, Michael, and Judy (2000) and Karina (2013) majorly focused on the communication aspect of employer-employee relations.

Awe and Ayeni (2013) carried out an investigation of Industrial Relations and National Productivity in Nigeria. The study indicated that productivity in Nigeria can be constrained by poor labor-management relations. The study further emphasized that outcomes of poor labor-management relations were strike actions and other forms of industrial disharmonies like sabotage. Based on the results of the study, improving workers' morale and motivation have been suggested as a way to improve labor-management relations and this can take many forms. Mba (2013) and Henry (2009) in their research reported that managers prefer the use of integrative management strategies which are relatively useful in minimizing the incidence of disruptive labor-management relations and having a positive impact on corporate productivity and organizational performance. A study conducted by Fajana and Shadare (2012) stressed that in the employment relationship, the interests of employers represented by management and employees represented by the labor union have often been opposed in work-organizations.

This has historically been the major cause of disruptive labor-management relations in unionized organizations, not only in Nigeria but also in developed nations.

### ***Theoretical Framework***

To better explain this study, this study hinged on the conflict theory propounded by Karl Marx (1848). The theory claims that a society is in a state of perpetual conflict due to competition for limited resources and that social order is maintained by domination and power, rather than consensus and conformity. According to this theory, those with wealth and power try to hold on to it by any means possible, mainly by suppressing the poor and powerless. The theory further argues that individuals and groups (social classes) within the society interact based on conflict rather than consensus. Through various forms of conflict, groups tend to attain varying amounts of material and non-material resources (e.g. the wealthy vs. the poor). More powerful groups will tend to use their power to retain power and exploit groups with less power.

The conflict theory is relevant to this study because the owner represents the Government while the tenant represents ASUSS. The government is the employer of ASUSS has the power to suppress them because they are the employer of labor who puts foods on government teachers' tables. The government may sometimes use its power not to honor agreements, thereby giving an avenue to exploit workers. Also, under the theory that conflict is an engine of change, some favorable policies and modifications of policies that affect ASUSS have taken place as a result of industrial disharmony between ASUSS and the government.

### **Method**

The study adopted the survey research design using a quantitative approach. The population for the study comprised 300 secondary School Principals, 600 Vice Principals, and 13,000 teachers from all the 300 public secondary schools in Ondo State. Given a total of 13,900. The sample for the study comprised 1,500 respondents. The multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted to select the respondents for the study. The secondary schools in the State were grouped according to the three Senatorial Districts within the State. A total of 90 secondary schools were in Ondo North Senatorial District; 107 secondary schools were in Ondo South Senatorial District while 103 secondary schools were in the Central Senatorial District. Three Local Government Areas were thereafter randomly selected from each of the Senatorial District. Ten secondary schools were then selected from each of the three LGAs using a purposive sampling technique based on the location of academic staff in each of the secondary schools. From the selected schools, 90 Principals, 180 Vice principals, and 1,230 teachers were selected using the convenience sampling technique. A self-designed research instrument titled "Assessment of Academic Staff Union of Secondary School's Negotiation Strategies Descriptive Questionnaire" (AASUSSNSDQ) was used to collect data for this study.

The instrument contained five sections: A, B, C, D, and E respectively. Section A contained demographic information of the respondents. However, Section B contained five items that were used to elicit information on issues regarding industrial disharmony. Section C also contained nine items that were to gather data on causes of constant industrial disharmony. Besides, Section D contained six items on general information on negotiation strategies, while Section E contained eight items that were used to elicit information on Academic Staff Union-government negotiations strategies and industrial harmony. Face and content validity of the instrument was established using experts' review, and the test re-test method was adopted to achieve the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.70. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive (frequency counts) and inferential (ANOVA) statistics. Descriptive statistics (frequency counts and percentage

scores) were used for Research Questions 1, 2, 3, and 4.

### Findings of the Study

#### **Research Question 1: What are the causes of industrial disharmony between ASUSS and Ondo State Government?**

Table 1: Causes of Industrial Disharmony between ASUSS and Ondo State Government

| Statements on the causes of industrial disharmony                                                        | Strongly Agree |      | Agree |      | Disagree |      | Strongly Disagree |       | C (%) |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|------|-------|------|----------|------|-------------------|-------|-------|
|                                                                                                          | F              | %    | F     | %    | F        | %    | F                 | %     |       |
| Dishonored agreements on the part of Government are mostly responsible for disharmony                    | 101            | 7.1  | 998   | 69.8 | 306      | 21.4 | 24                | 1.7   | 76.9  |
| Secondary School teachers' current salaries and wage structure as applicable in Ondo State               | 1373           | 96.1 | 17    | 1.2  | 20       | 1.39 | 16                | 1.11  | 97.3  |
| Some Government policies are responsible for Industrial disharmonies                                     | 350            | 24.5 | 890   | 62.2 | 81       | 5.7  | 108               | 7.6   | 86.7  |
| Deviation from collective agreements on the part of the Union                                            | 41             | 2.9  | 190   | 13.3 | 1127     | 78.8 | 71                | 5.0   | 16.2  |
| Inadequate teaching materials and infrastructural facilities for Teachers                                | 99             | 7.4  | 1181  | 88.7 | 33       | 2.5  | 18                | 1.4   | 96.1  |
| Low standard of conducive environment for effective teaching and learning processes                      | 859            | 60.2 | 498   | 34.9 | 64       | 4.5  | 6                 | 0.4   | 95.1  |
| ASUSS Leadership inadequacies with Nigerian labour laws in pursuance of agitations leads to disharmonies | 36             | 2.5  | 99    | 6.9  | 1192     | 83.4 | 102               | 7.1   | 9.4   |
| Undue interference of Government in Union leadership                                                     | 475            | 33.2 | 854   | 59.8 | 39       | 2.7  | 61                | 4.3   | 93    |
| Disallowance of secession of ASUSS from NUT through intimidation from Government                         | 898            | 62.8 | 200   | 13.9 | 31       | 2.17 | 300               | 21.13 | 76.7  |

Key: Agree and Strongly Agree Combined Response is represented by C

Table one shows that the causes of industrial disharmony between ASUSS and Ondo State Government were dishonoured agreements on the part of Government (76.9%), secondary school teachers' current salaries and wage structure as applicable in Ondo State (97.3%), some government policies (86.7%), inadequate teaching materials and infrastructural facilities for teachers (96.1%), low standard of conducive environment for effective teaching and learning processes (95.1%), undue interference of Government in Union leadership (93%) and disallowance of secession of ASUSS from NUT through

intimidation from Government (76.7%). Based on the results, it is therefore deduced that the causes of industrial disharmony between ASUSS and Ondo State Government were dishonoured agreements by Government, poor salary structure for secondary school teachers, unfavourable Government policies, inadequate infrastructural facilities and low standard of conducive environment.

**Research Question 2: How frequent is the industrial disharmony between ASUSS and Ondo State Government?**

Table 2: Frequency of Industrial Disharmony between ASUSS and Ondo State Government

| Statements on the frequency of industrial disharmony               | Strongly Agree |      | Agree |      | Disagree |      | Strongly Disagree |       | C (%) |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|------|-------|------|----------|------|-------------------|-------|-------|
|                                                                    | F              | %    | f     | %    | F        | %    | F                 | %     |       |
| There is usually industrial disharmony annually                    | 101            | 7.1  | 998   | 69.8 | 306      | 21.4 | 24                | 1.7   | 76.9  |
| Industrial disharmony takes place every other year                 | 1373           | 96.1 | 17    | 1.2  | 20       | 1.39 | 16                | 1.11  | 97.3  |
| My Union engages Government in industrial dispute every five years | 350            | 24.5 | 890   | 62.2 | 81       | 5.7  | 108               | 7.6   | 86.7  |
| ASUSS and Government disagrees biennially                          | 898            | 62.8 | 200   | 13.9 | 31       | 2.17 | 300               | 21.13 | 76.7  |
| ASUSS has enjoyed industrial harmony since the last ten years      | 41             | 2.9  | 190   | 13.3 | 1127     | 78.8 | 71                | 5.0   | 16.2  |

Source: Field survey, 2018

Table two shows that there was frequent industrial disharmony annually (76.9%), industrial disharmony took place every other year (97.3%), the Union engaged Government in industrial dispute every five years (76.7%), and ASUSS and Government disagrees biennially (76.7%). However, ASUSS has not enjoyed industrial harmony since the last ten years (83.8%). This emphasizes the assertion that there has been high frequency of industrial disharmony between ASUSS and Ondo State government. It therefore established that there was frequent industrial disharmony between ASUSS and Ondo State Government

**Research Question 3: What are the negotiation strategies that have been adopted by ASUSS and Government in sustaining industrial harmony in Ondo State secondary schools**

Table 3: Negotiation Strategies adopted by ASUSS and Government in sustaining industrial harmony

| Statements on negotiation strategies                                                                                  | Strongly Agree |     | Agree |     | Disagree |      | Strongly Disagree |      | C (%) |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----|-------|-----|----------|------|-------------------|------|-------|
|                                                                                                                       | F              | %   | F     | %   | F        | %    | F                 | %    |       |
| Collective bargaining that leads to unanimous agreement is a common strategy employed in settling Industrial disputes | 31             | 2.2 | 42    | 2.9 | 1066     | 74.6 | 29                | 20.3 | 5.10  |

|                                                                                                                           |     |      |      |      |     |      |     |      |       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|------|------|------|-----|------|-----|------|-------|
| Government Mediator and not a neutral Mediator is frequently used to broker peace during industrial disputes              | 194 | 13.6 | 1064 | 74.5 | 121 | 8.5  | 50  | 3.5  | 88.10 |
| Does Arbitration panels settle disputes between Government and ASUSS                                                      | 15  | 1.1  | 750  | 52.5 | 405 | 28.3 | 259 | 18.1 | 53.6  |
| Does government appoints Conciliators in attempt to resolve industrial disharmony                                         | 99  | 6.9  | 791  | 55.4 | 507 | 35.5 | 32  | 2.2  | 62.30 |
| Most often a Board of Inquiry is set up in the interest of both parties                                                   | 607 | 42.5 | 807  | 56.5 | 5   | 0.3  | 10  | 0.7  | 99.00 |
| National Industrial Court acts as the final resort and strategy haven exhausted all other strategy without desired result | 909 | 63.6 | 507  | 35.5 | 9   | 0.6  | 4   | 0.3  | 99.10 |

Key: Agree and Strongly Agree Combined Response is represented by C

Table three shows that a government mediator and not a neutral Mediator was frequently used to broker peace during industrial disputes (88.1%), arbitration panels settle use to dispute between Government and ASUSS (53.6%), government-appointed Conciliators in an attempt to resolve industrial disharmony (62.3%), Board of Inquiry often set up in the interest of both parties (99%), and National Industrial Court acted as the final resort and strategy haven exhausted all other strategy without desired result (99.1%) were negotiation strategies that have been adopted by ASUSS and Government in sustaining industrial harmony in Ondo State secondary schools. From the results, it was established that mediation from the government, a reference to an arbitration panel, government conciliation, setting of the board of inquiry, and national industrial court were negotiation strategies that have been adopted by ASUSS and the government in Ondo State.

***Research Question 4: Which of the strategies is the most effective towards improved industrial harmony between ASUSS and Ondo State Government?***

Table 4: Effectiveness of Negotiation Strategies

| Statements on the effectiveness of negotiation strategies                               | Strongly Agree |     | Agree |      | Disagree |      | Strongly Disagree |      | C (%) |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----|-------|------|----------|------|-------------------|------|-------|
|                                                                                         | F              | %   | F     | %    | F        | %    | F                 | %    |       |
| The National Industrial Court sufficiently settles disharmonies                         | 46             | 3.2 | 20    | 1.4  | 487      | 34.1 | 876               | 61.3 | 4.6   |
| Government engages in series of consultations before arriving at decisions              | 23             | 1.6 | 110   | 7.7  | 1195     | 83.6 | 101               | 7.1  | 9.3   |
| Government comes to negotiation table with series of options and not the use veto power | 25             | 1.7 | 407   | 28.5 | 897      | 62.8 | 100               | 7.0  | 30.2  |

|                                                                                                                      |     |      |     |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|------|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| The Use of Board of Inquiry is an effective negotiation strategy                                                     | 36  | 2.5  | 707 | 49.5 | 668  | 46.7 | 18   | 1.3  | 52   |
| Government Conciliator achieves harmonious relationship during and after industrial disputes                         | 49  | 3.4  | 37  | 2.6  | 28   | 2.0  | 1315 | 92.0 | 6.0  |
| Government genuinely exhausts all procedures to resolving industrial disharmony before embarking on litigation (NIC) | 112 | 7.8  | 44  | 3.1  | 1259 | 88.1 | 14   | 1.0  | 10.9 |
| There are cases where a mediator settles dispute between Union and Government                                        | 17  | 1.2  | 204 | 14.3 | 1180 | 82.5 | 28   | 2.0  | 15.5 |
| The strategy where both Government & Union skillfully agrees and implements collective agreements works best         | 954 | 66.8 | 385 | 26.9 | 31   | 2.2  | 59   | 4.1  | 93.7 |

Key: Agree and Strongly Agree Combined Response is represented by C

Table four shows that the use of Board of Inquiry (52%) and the strategy where both Government & Union skillfully agrees and implements collective agreements (93.7%) were strategies that most effective used towards improved industrial harmony between ASUSS and Ondo State Government. This indicated that Ondo State Government used a board of inquiry and collective agreements as strategies towards the improvement of industrial harmony with ASUSS.

The findings of the study established that the causes of industrial disharmony between ASUSS and Ondo State Government were Botched agreements by the Government, poor salary structure for secondary school teachers, unfavorable government policies, inadequate infrastructural facilities, and low standard of a conducive environment. The study is in line with Darmach (1986) who submitted that there was only one basic cause of industrial disharmony which is the clash of necessities between the political class and industrial prerogative. Darmach (1986) stressed issues of salaries and wages as the major cause or source of industrial disharmony. Furthermore, the study concurred with the study of Otobo (2005) who agreed that the government's industrial and economic policies, nature of labor legislation, unpatriotic and unethical behavior of political class among others constitute the external sources of industrial disharmony. The study was also corroborated with Otobo (2005) who argued that internal sources of disharmony include the nature of the physical environment of the workplace, orientation or social consciousness of workers, and low standard of a conducive environment for effective teaching and learning processes. The study also agreed with the study of Azzulence (1999) also supported the assertion that industrial disharmony can be caused when there is a breach of contract policy. These findings corroborated with the opinion of Onyeonoru (2005) who emphasized that industrial disharmony could arise as a result of the incompatible interest of workers and employers in the working environment, the disagreement arising from the clash of interest in terms and conditions of employment resulting from opposing view held by workers about their workplace. The findings also showed that the causes of the industrial disharmony have made ASUSS and Ondo State Government to be frequently industrial disharmony annually as well as every five years.

Moreover, ASUSS has not enjoyed industrial harmony for the last ten years in Ondo State.

The findings further established that to sustain industrial harmony between the ASUSS and the government in Ondo State different negotiation strategies have been adopted such as mediation from the government, a reference to an arbitration panel, government conciliation, setting of the board of inquiry, and national industrial court. The study corroborated the study of Onyeonoru (2005) who disclosed that collective bargaining is an institutional center of piece relations and the best method of conducting industrial relations. Besides, the findings corroborated the opinion of the Nigerian Labour Congress policy Document (2008) who stated that Collective bargaining remains the only solution to constant industrial disharmony, listed some of the conditions necessary for effective collective bargaining to be; freedom of association, favorable political climate, recognition of trade unions, power relationship, willingness to give and take, the ability of the parties to negotiate skillfully, avoidance of unfair labor practice by both parties, willingness to observe the collective agreement that emerges, and to reach an agreement between parties.

The results of the study further established the most effective negotiation strategy used between Ondo State government and ASUSS towards improving their industrial harmony was the board of inquiry and collective agreements.

### Conclusion

The ASUSS and Ondo State Government industrial harmony cannot be over-emphasized in the achievement of educational goals. Their harmony would strengthen the attainment of educational objectives. That is why it is imperative that Ondo State government and ASSU identify causes of industrial disharmony between them and adopted the most effective negotiation strategy that would strengthen and improve industrial harmony between them. Therefore, the Ondo State government and other states government are expected to strategies negotiation strategy that would allow industrial harmony with the ASSUS. The findings implicate that the government should adopt a negotiation strategy that would allow industrial harmony with the ASSUS.

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