

## **Effect of Industrial Action on Small and Medium-Scale Businesses Productivity and Operations**

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### **Abstract**

This study examines the effect of industrial action on small and medium-scale businesses (SMEs) productivity and operations. To achieve this, the study examines the effect of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strike on SMEs in and around the Federal University of Lafia (FULafia) Nasarawa. The study uses the Taro-Yamani Formula to determine the sample size. Questionnaires were used to collect data, and the Logit regression method was employed for the analysis. The result revealed that the ASUU strike has a negative and significant impact on SME operations in and around FULafia. Also, it reveals that the ASUU strike has an insignificant negative impact on SMEs' productivity in and around FULafia. The study, therefore, recommends that the government and other stakeholders should comply with whatever agreement is made with the striking union (ASUU) to avert strikes, as this not only cripples the academic calendar but also affects businesses and other economic activities within the environs of the universities

**Keywords:** *Industrial action; small and medium-scale businesses; operations; productivity; Logit model*



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### **INTRODUCTION**

SMEs are critical to the transition of developing countries. They typically account for more than 90% of all enterprises outside the agricultural sector, provide significant employment, and generate significant domestic and export earnings (Oladimeji, Eze & Akanni, 2018). As a result, SME development emerges as a critical tool in poverty reduction efforts. SMEs are in a better position to create jobs, promote industrialization, and increase the value of non-oil exports to the economy. SMEs are a low-cost way to achieve key macroeconomic objectives such as job creation, increased growth, and poverty reduction while also developing a country's entrepreneurial capabilities and indigenous technology. They also improve regional and sectoral economic balance by allowing industrial dispersal across sectors and locations, and they promote effective resource utilization in general, which is critical for engineering economic development and growth (Nwezi, Onwuka & Onyesom, 2017).

University provides an avenue for SMEs to develop around campuses in Nigeria as the campuses with thousands of students and lecturers provide a market for their products. Notable among the SMEs engage in restaurant businesses, café, salons, book shops and business centers, and so on. In the process, they earn income and provide employment. In recent years, Nigerian University education has been characterized by incessant strike actions at all levels of the

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educational system. The first notable strike in Nigeria occurred in 1945, and since then, various groups and unions have embarked on strike actions in various sectors of the economy. In Nigeria, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has recorded incessant industrial action that was mostly coordinated as a result of the breakdown of agreements between them and the federal or state governments. According to observations, the educational sector has taken the greatest hit of all sectors (Olakunle, 2011).

In order to get the government's attention on the issues that have bedeviled the nation's educational system for several months, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has considered a number of industrial measures. One of the most well-known of these activities is the strike, which is an abrupt cessation of work by the entire academic staff at the nation's public institutions. Strikes are mostly meant to put more pressure on employers or the government to alter particular policies and enhance worker welfare (Amadi and Precious, 2015).

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

Tertiary institutions in Nigeria have witnessed in recent times incessant closure as a result of industrial actions by the Academic Staff Union of the Universities (ASUU). The industrial action is mostly caused by the non-fulfillment of an agreement made by the Federal government of Nigeria to the union. Since the inception of ASSU (having a national executive that negotiates on behalf of the state and federal-owned University under an agreed arrangement by the Union and governments), there are records of strike actions - long and short time. But, before embarking on strike, demands or concerns to be addressed by governments are always articulated, which, many times, are unattended too often, making the union down-tool. This industrial action by ASUU disrupts the business activities of those within and outside the university environment.

Business owners have unintentionally been impacted by the ongoing industrial action by the (ASUU) and all of these industrial unions, which has negatively impacted their operations. In Nasarawa State, besides the critical and positive role SMEs played in economic growth, SMEs face numerous challenges ranging from ASUU strike, Senior Staff Association of Nigerian, end of session break, riot, power shortage, lack of capital, poor management skills, and competencies, and inadequate information, and corruption.

The survival and preservation of the right to an academic staff union in the Federal University of Lafia (FULafia) will raise many questions, including whether it will help or hinder the progress of SMEs' productivity in and around the university. Secondly, will the union undermine or support SME operations? These questions are very pertinent considering the fact that ASUU strikes have become regular occurrences in all federal universities in Nigeria, including FULafia, and the right to academic staff union has been constantly abused, and this has affected the performance of SMEs and the demand and supply chain of the small-scale businesses in and around the campus. However, it is on this basis that there is a need to examine the effect of the ASUU strike on small and medium-scale businesses (SMEs) in and around FULafia.

### **1.2 Research Question**

The research question is expected to provide an answer to the following questions: To what extent has the ASUU strike affected SMEs' productivity in and around FULafia, and what is the effect of the ASUU strike on the operations of SMEs in and around FULafia?

### **1.3 Objective of the Study**

The broad objective of this study is to examine the effect of industrial action on small-scale business productivity and operations. In contrast, the specific objective is to investigate the effect of the ASUU strike on the productivity of SMEs in and around FULafia and to examine the effect of the ASUU strike on the operations of SMEs in and around FULafia.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Conceptual of Industrial Action**

Industrial action also called strike action or labour strike, is a work stoppage caused by the mass refusal of employee(s) to work (Omolayo, 2000; Bamidele, 2020). Strikes are generally seen as workers' groups' last resort in pursuing their objectives, according to the International Labour Organization (2011), as they are the most obvious and divisive form of collective action in the event of a labour dispute. The strike was defined by the Industrial Disputes Act of 1947 as "the suspension or cessation of work by a group of persons employed in any industry acting in combination or a concerted refusal or a refusal under a common understanding of any number of persons who are or have been so employed to continue to work or accept employment." A strike is a period of time when an organized group of employees of an organization stop working because they disagree with the company's compensation or working conditions. A group of people (students or employees) expressing their degree of disagreement in an effort to elicit positive responses from those engaged can be characterized as it (Hornby, 2001). A strike is the cessation of work by a group of employees or a labor union representing the interests of the employees in an organization as a result of a deadlock in collective bargaining between this group of employees and their management or employer (Momodu, Gambo, and Momodu, 2014).

Industrial action also called strike action which, implies work stoppage caused by the mass refusal of employee(s) to work. A strike usually takes place in response to employee grievances (Bamidele, 2020). The cessation of work by members of ASUU is an industrial action witnessed in higher institutions in Nigeria. The labour strike embarked on by lecturers is a medium employed to press home their demands on the government.

### **2.2 Concept of SMEs**

SMEs can be segregated into three main sectors such as general business, manufacturing, and agriculture. SMEs are diverse in nature and can be established for any kind of business activity in an urban or rural area. It can be considered the backbone of the national economy (Eze, Oladimeji & Fayose, 2018). A business that is therefore defined as a small or medium enterprise in a developed country can be regarded as a large enterprise in a developing country. Even in developing countries, this definition changes over time (Ifekwem & Adedamola, 2016). The European Commission defines SMEs using three broad parameters: micro-entities, small companies, and medium-sized enterprises. By comparing data from a company, one can decide if it is a micro, small, or medium-sized business (European Commission, 2005). Central Bank of Nigeria (2005) viewed SMEs as any enterprise with a maximum asset base of 200million naira (excluding land and working capital) with no lower or upper limit of staff.

Productivity in business can be defined as a state of being productive. SMEs' productivity is measured by the rate of output per unit of input. As stated in the study of Yusuf and Adesanya

(2021), the productivity of SMEs is determined by various environmental factors which influence their productivity. These factors include; technological, social, economic, and political factors.

### **2.3 Empirical Review**

Ige, Adeyeye & Aina (2011) examine the factors that influence industrial conflicts in Nigeria from 1980-2010. The study used both primary and secondary data. The study employed descriptive analysis and simultaneous equation model techniques (SEMT) in analyzing the data. The findings reveal that changes in wage rate, price expectation, and union membership concentration influence industrial conflicts in Nigeria. The study further revealed that wages have a significant effect on strike activity.

Dim, Muogbo, and Akpunonu (2017) examine the Effect of Strike/ Industrial Action on Organizational Conflict. The study uses questionnaires and interviews to collect data. The data were analyzed using the Chi-square method and simple percentages. Their findings show that the management and government are responsible for the strike actions embarked upon by the workers as a result of their nonchalant attitude toward workers' complaints and grievances.

Olaniyi & Onajite (2019) examine the effect of incessant strikes on a business education program in Southwest Nigeria Universities. The population of the study was made up of 30 business educators and 1250 final year business education students. The study used a descriptive survey design. The study used Mean to answer the research questions, while the t-test was used to test all the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings show that incessant strike actions affect business education programs to a great extent in terms of loss of credibility, elongation of the academic calendar, wastage of material resources, low quality of teaching, research, and community service, production of half-baked graduates and host of others.

Omeje and Ogbu (2019) investigate the place of Labour Union Strikes in Public Institutions in Ebonyi State. The study used weighted mean scores and Chi-Square to analyse the data. The result shows that the labour Union strike brought about the disruption of the institution's program and altered the normal skill acquisition processes among students of the Institutions.

Nchelem and Loveday (2020) examine the relationship between strike action and workforce productivity in manufacturing companies in Rivers State. The study employed a cross-sectional survey design. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation while hypotheses were tested with Pearson's Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance. The results revealed that there is a significant relationship between strike action and workforce creativity. Also, there is a significant relationship between strike action and output quality.

Jolayemi and Fatomilola (2020) examine the direction of causality between industrial action and economic growth in Nigeria for the period of 1986-2018. The study analyses its data using co-integration and Vector Error Correction Model Granger causality techniques. The results reveal that there exists a long-run relationship between industrial action and economic growth in Nigeria. The causality test reveals unidirectional causality running from economic growth to industrial action, while it finds no empirical support for reverse causation.

From the above review, it was observed that no study had been conducted on the effect of the ASUU strike on SMEs' productivity and operations. The review also shows that no study made use of logistic regression as a method of analysis, nor did any study base a framework on

institutional theory. This study is, therefore, significant as it will help to fill the knowledge gap identified in these areas.

## **2.4 Theoretical Framework**

The study premised its framework on the institutional theory by Meyer and Rowan (1977). This is due to its applicability to businesses or society. Sustainable innovation and elements that are fundamental to the company, either internally or externally, are the main topics of institutional theory. Opportunities with normative, coercive, and mimetic drivers to influence small and medium-sized enterprises to shape environmental, social, or economic decision-making and to legitimize the vision of sustainable business practice are presented by the institutional theory of sustainable growth for small and medium-sized enterprises (Shibin et al., 2020; Caldera, Desha & Dawes, 2019). Institutional theory is a theory that is a deeper and more resilient aspect of social structure. Meanwhile, the industrial action embarked upon by university staff (ASUU strike) is a social behavior. Thus, this clearly shows the relationship between the institutional theory and ASUU Strike. The productivity and operations of any business depend on the environment (Yusuf and Adesanya, 2021).

In this framework, businesses are affected by some external factors which are beyond the control of the management, of which the ASUU strike is one. In this regard, this study draws insights from institutional theory. Sustainable business practices "promise profitability, resilience, and beneficial social and environmental benefits, and are an aim for an increasing share of small and medium-sized firms worldwide" (Caldera et al., 2019). Business owners are responding to institutional limitations in a variety of imaginative ways, including by implementing novel business methods, growing in courage and strength, participating in associations, attempting to give back to the community, and cooperating with the authorities (Eijdenberg, Thompson, Verduijn & Essers, 2019).

## **2.5 Hypotheses of the Study**

The proposed hypotheses of the study are as follows:

- a. ASUU strike does not affect SMEs' productivity in and around FULafia
- b. ASUU strike does not affect the operations of SMEs in and around FULafia

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study employs a descriptive survey research design. The study area for this research is the FULafia campus in Nasarawa state, Nigeria. Random sampling was used to select 150 respondents. Stratified sampling techniques were used to determine the size. However, the SMEs affected were eager to share their responses. 150 questionnaires were distributed and administered within and around FULafia, and 116 were returned. The 116 returned questionnaires were used for empirical analysis. The data were analyzed using simple percentages and logistic regression. The study adopted the model of Magaji, Hassan, and Yusuf (2022) as used in their work titled "Nexus between E-Banking and the Upsurge of Crime in Kaduna State, Nigeria," with a slight modification.

The logit regression is used to estimate the result. In order to examine the effect of the ASUU strike on SMEs' productivity and operations, two logistic regression models are specified to capture

the effect of the ASUU strike on SMEs' productivity and the effect of the ASUU strike on SMEs' operations.

To assess the impact of ASUU strikes on SMEs in FULafia, the *Logit Probability Model* is given as follows:

$L_i = P = 1$  if ASUU strikes affect SMEs in and around the FULafia campus, Nasarawa State; promotes growth;  $(1 - P)$ , if otherwise.

The dependent variable is SMEs, a binary variable that takes the value one (1) if small-scale businesses are affected by ASUU strikes and zero (0) if otherwise. While socio-economic factors are considered independent variables. The logistic Cumulative Distribution Model can be specified as follows:

$$Prob (y = 1) = 1/1+e \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

Taking the logarithm is:

$$Z_i = \alpha + B_1X_1 + B_2X_2 + \dots B_kX_k \dots\dots\dots (2)$$

If the error term (e) is taken into account, the logit model becomes:

$$Z_i = \alpha + \sum_{i=1} B_1X_1 + e_i \dots\dots\dots (3)$$

$$Z_i = \alpha + \sum_{i=2} B_2X_2 + e_i \dots\dots\dots (4)$$

$$\text{Therefore, } X_i = \alpha + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 e_i \dots\dots\dots (5)$$

$$SSBPR = \alpha + \beta_1ASUU + e_i \dots\dots\dots (6)$$

Where;

$L_i = P = 1$  if the ASUU strike affects SSBs in FULafia, Nasarawa State and  $(1 - P)$ , if otherwise.

$X_1 = SMEPR =$  Small and medium Scale enterprise's productivity

$X_2 = SMEOP =$  Small and medium Scale enterprise's Operations

The tables below present the summary of questionnaires administered and retrieved for SMEs owners in FULafia.

**Table 1. Summary of Questionnaire Administration for SMEs**

Questionnaire Details	Frequency	Percentage
Distributed Copies of the Questionnaire	140	100
Returned Copies of the Questionnaire	116	82.9
Unreturned Copies of the Questionnaire	24	17.1
Used Questionnaire	116	82.9

**Source: Field Survey, 2022**

Table 1 shows that out of the 150 questionnaires distributed, one hundred and sixteen (116) were returned and, at the same time, answered successfully. Thus, we used one hundred and sixteen questionnaires for the analysis.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Respondent Profile

Respondent profiles are identified by type of business in Table 1 that consist of Business Centers, Restaurant, Book shop, Salon, and Dry Cleaning.

**Table 2. Summary of Types of Businesses**

Nature of Business	Frequency	Percentage
Business Centers	61	52.6
Restaurant	33	28.4
Book shop	8	6.9
Salon	9	7.8
Dry cleaning	5	4.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2022**

Table 2 depicts that business centres are more with 52.6% of the entire SMEs in FULafia, followed by a restaurant at 28.4%, Book shops at 6.9%, Salon at 6.9%, and Dry cleaning at 4.3%. Below is the data analysis:

### 4.2. Result for Model 1: The Analysis of the effect of ASUU Strike on SMEs' Productivity

**Table 3. Case Processing Summary Model 1**

	Unweighted Cases <sup>a</sup>	N	Percent
Selected Cases	Included in Analysis	116	100
	Missing Cases	0	0
	Total	116	100.0
Unselected Cases		0	.0
Total		116	100.0

**Source: Researcher's Field work, 2022 (SPSS 16.0)**

We can see from Table 3 that we are modeling 116 cases here. No cases of missing information. All dependent and explanatory variables are complete are included in the analysis. The Table 4 below shows us firstly that we have coded our dependent variable in the right direction, and secondly,

**Table 4. Dependent Variable Encoding**

Original Value	Internal Value
No	0
Yes	1

**Source: Researcher's Field work, 2022 (SPSS 16.0)**

Table 5 shows categorical variable coding for the effect of the ASUU strike on SMEs in and around the FULafia campus.

**Table 5. Model 2 Classification Table<sup>a,b</sup>**

		Predicted			
		Does the ASUU strike affect your business productivity in and around the university?		Percentage Correct	
Observed		No	Yes		
Step 0	Does the ASUU strike affect your business productivity in and around the university?	No	0	17	0.5
		Yes	0	98	100.0
Overall Percentage				85.2	

**Source: Researcher's Field work, 2022 (SPSS 16.0)**

Table 5 above shows how fitted the model is. The result shows that the fitted model predicted an overall percentage of 85.2% correctly.

**Table 6. Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients (Model 1)**

		Chi-square	Df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	1.070	1	.301
	Block	1.070	1	.301
	Model	1.070	1	.301

**Source: Researcher's Field work, 2022 (SPSS 16.0)**

The omnibus result (*see Table 6*) revealed that the fitted model is significantly different from the base (null) model since  $p(0.301) > 0.05$ .

**Table 7. Cox and Snell R Square and Nagelkerke R Square Test (Model 1)**

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	95.282 <sup>a</sup>	.059	.016

**Source: Researcher's Field work, 2022 (SPSS 16.0)**

Table 7 shows that Cox and Snell  $R^2$  indicate that 59% of the variation in the dependent variable is explained by the predictor variable, which is assumed to be good enough.



**Table 8. Contingency Table for Hosmer and Lemeshow Test (Model 1)**

		<b>Does the ASUU strike affect your business productivity in and around the university? = No</b>		<b>Does the ASUU strike affect your business productivity in and around the university? = yes</b>			
		<b>Observed</b>	<b>Expected</b>	<b>Observed</b>	<b>Expected</b>	<b>Total</b>	
Step 1	1	16	16.000	84	84.000	100	
	2	1	1.000	14	14.000	15	

**Source: Researcher's Field work, 2022 (SPSS 16.0)**

Table 8 shows the Contingency of Hosmer and Lemeshow Test in determining the goodness of fit of the model.

**Table 9. Binary Logistic Regression (Model 1)**

		<b>B</b>	<b>SE.</b>	<b>Wald</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Exp(B)</b>	<b>95.0% C.I. for EXP(B)</b>	
								<b>Lower</b>	<b>Upper</b>
Step 1 <sup>a</sup>	ASUU	-.981	1.070	.840	1	.360	.375	.046	3.056
	Constant	2.639	1.035	6.500	1	.011	14.000		

**Source: Researcher's Field work, 2022 (SPSS 16.0)**

The developed equation model 1 is as follows:

$$\text{Logit (SMEPF)} = 2.639 - 981\text{ASUU}$$

Based on Table 9, it was observed that the estimated odds ratio of 0.375 indicates that ASUU Strike is 0.375 times more likely to affect the level of small-scale business performance in and around FULafia. The result shows that ASUU Strike has a probability level of 0.360, which is greater than 0.05 (5% level of significance); this implies ASUU strike has an insignificant effect on the productivity of the small-scale business in and around FULafia.

#### 4.3 Result for Model 2: The Analysis of the effect of the ASUU Strike on SMEs operations

**Table 10. Case Processing Summary (Model 2)**

		<b>Unweighted Cases<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Selected Cases	Included in Analysis		116	100.0
	Missing Cases		0	.0
	Total		116	100.0
Unselected Cases			0	.0
Total			116	100.0

**Source: Researcher's Field work, 2022 (SPSS 16.0)**

We can see from Table 10 that we are modeling 116 cases here. No cases of missing information. All dependent and explanatory variables are complete are included in the analysis.

Table 11 below shows us firstly that we have coded our dependent variable in the right direction and secondly, Table 11 shows categorical variable coding for the effect of the ASUU strike on Small Scale businesses in and around the university.

**Table 11. Model 2 Classification Table<sup>a,b</sup>**

Observed	Predicted		
	Does the ASUU strike affect your business productivity in and around the university?		Percentage Correct
	No	Yes	
Step 0 Does the ASUU strike affect your business operations in and around the university?	No 0	35	.0
	Yes 0	81	100.0
Overall Percentage			69.8

**Source: Researcher's Field work, 2022 (SPSS 16.0)**

This represents the level of predictive accuracy achieved by the fitted model. It can be observed from the classification Table 11 that the fitted model predicted an overall percentage of 69.8% correctly. That is 100.0% of the outcome yes of the variable small and medium scale enterprises are predicted correctly while 0.1% of the outcome no of the variable does ASUU strike affect business operations in and around the university is predicted correctly by the fitted model.

**Table 12. Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients (Model 2)**

		Chi-square	Df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	4.053	1	.044
	Block	4.053	1	.044
	Model	4.053	1	.044

**Source: Researcher's Field work, 2022 (SPSS 16.0)**

The omnibus result (*see Table 12*) revealed that the fitted model is significantly different from the base (null) model since  $p(0.044) > 0.05$ .

**Table 13. Cox and Snell R Square and Nagelkerke R Square Test (Model 2)**

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	138.005 <sup>a</sup>	.034	.049

**Source: Researcher's Field work, 2022 (SPSS 16.0)**

Table 13 shows that Cox and Snell R<sup>2</sup> indicate that 34% of the variation in the dependent variable is explained by the predictor variable, which is assumed to be good enough.

**Table 14. Binary Logistic Regression Result (Model 2)**

		B	SE.	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95.0% C.I. for EXP(B)	
								Lower	Upper
Step	ASUU	1.142	.564	4.094	1	.043	3.132	1.036	9.466
1 <sup>a</sup>	Constant	-.134	.518	.067	1	.796	.875		

**Source: Researcher's Field work, 2022 (SPSS 16.0)**

The developed equation model 2 is as follows:

$$\text{Logit (SMEOP)} = -0.134 + 1.142\text{ASUU}$$

From Table 14, it was observed that the estimated odds ratio of 3.132 indicates that ASUU Strike is 3.132 times likely more to affect the level of SMEs operations in and around FULafia. The result shows that ASUU Strike has a probability level of 0.043, which is less than 0.05 (5% level of significance); this implies ASUU strike has a significant effect on the operations of SMEs in and around FULafia.

The broad objective of this study is to examine the effects of industrial action on small-scale business productivity and operations. The findings show that the ASUU strike has an insignificant effect on SMEs' productivity. This finding is contrary to the findings of Nchelem and Loveday (2020), which conclude that there is a significant relationship between strike action and output quality. Similarly, the findings also show that the ASUU strike has a significant effect on SME operations around FULafia.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the finding of the study, it can be concluded that the ASUU strike has affected the business productivity around FULafia; the productivity and as well as employment generation around the university is also affected as a result of an incessant strike. The study has been able to answer the research questions and the specific objectives by forging the link between the ASUU strike and business activities around the university. The findings showed that the ASUU strike significantly impacted operations, commercial activities, and employment around the university.

The findings also align with the framework of the study. The theory made emphasizes how an external factor can affect or influences business, organization, and the economy. The university is an external factor; the strike of the staff of the university contributed significantly to the effect of SME's operation and productivity.

Based on the conclusion made, the following are recommendations:

1. In order to prevent the complete collapse of the educational sector, which would have a negative impact on small-scale enterprises in and surrounding universities, the government should also use the strategy of prompt discussion and promptly approve ASUU's requests.
2. Government and other stakeholders should comply with whatever agreement is made with the striking union (ASUU) to avert strikes, as this not only cripples the academic calendar but also affect businesses and other economic activities within the environs of the universities.

3. To address strike activity in Nigeria's public universities, initiatives include prompt payment of salaries, improvements to welfare, and research allowances for lecturers, as this will increase SMEs' operation and productivity.

#### **LIMITATION AND FURTHER RESEARCH**

The limitation of this study is that there is scanty literature on industrial action in Nigeria. Furthermore, no study has been conducted on the effect of industrial action on SMEs in Nigerian institutions. In order to fill this knowledge gap, further research should be conducted in this area employing other methodologies.

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