

Arresting the Tide of Potential Brain Drain among Academics in African Universities: A Case Study in Failure from a Nigerian Experience*

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Abstract

It is widely believed that the continued migration of African academics to the developed nations of the world has seriously weakened the academic institutions of African countries (Altbach, 2004). And realizing the magnitude of this problem, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) adopted as one of its cardinal objectives the task of reversing brain drain and turning it into a 'brain gain' for Africa. Underlying this realization is the fact that the failure of African governments to stem the tide of brain drain over the years, lies at the root of the escalated nature of this problem in the 21st Century.

This paper examines the 1992 Collective Bargaining Agreement [between the Federal Government of Nigeria and the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU)], which was primarily aimed at stemming the tide of potential brain drain among university academics in the 90s and beyond. And consequently, it reports the findings of a post-1992 survey of academics on the issue of job satisfaction and their willingness to leave the academic profession as a result of job dissatisfaction.

Using a multi-stage stratified and random sampling procedure, the study administered a five-point Likert Scale questionnaire instrument to eight hundred academics from seven universities spread across the country.

Results show that poor implementation and breach of the 1992 Agreement, made it difficult for the morale of academics to increase to a level that could stem the tide of potential brain drain. Specifically, the study found that 77% of the respondents experienced job dissatisfaction and had a state of low morale with a mean score of 2.67 on a 5-point scale. Furthermore, the findings show that 74% of the respondents expressed their willingness to leave the academic profession in Nigeria, and out of this, 49% expressed a very strong desire to do so.

The study concludes that the gradual decline of the morale of academics since after the 1992 Agreement has been largely responsible for the continued brain drain that was experienced in the mid-nineties and beyond. The implication therefore is that African governments generally and Nigerian government specifically, should be serious about instituting attractive human resource management policy regimes that can stem the tide of potential brain drain in the continent. This also calls for a continued existence of democratic regimes than the else while military dictators that were, neither accountable nor transparent.

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Introduction

In 1992, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in Nigeria called its members out for a protracted strike action in protest against poor conditions of service, under-funding of universities, and the erosion of university autonomy and academic freedom. Prior to the strike, ASUU had complained seriously about low morale among its members and the concomitant incidence of brain drain. However, under a collective bargaining framework, ASUU and the Federal Government of Nigeria signed an agreement in September of that year and consequently brought the strike to an end. The twin objectives of raising morale and checking brain drain among academics formed the cardinal basis of the Agreement.

The Agreement was widely acclaimed by academics themselves as a monumental achievement that had the potential to turn the fortunes of academics and the universities around. Briefly stated, the Agreement provided *inter alia* for (a) new and enhanced separate salary structure for academics (b) enhanced funding to the universities, (c) more autonomy to the universities, (d) introduction for the first time of a variety and range of academic allowances, (e) introduction of other enhanced fringe benefits to all categories of staff in the universities, (f) the relaxation of regulation prohibiting private practice by academics in professional fields such as medicine, law, pharmacy, business administration, etc, and (g) provision for a review of university laws to reflect the new realities of the Agreement.

Judging from the continued slide in the morale of academics and the concomitant increase in brain drain some years after the agreement was signed, it appears that the golden opportunity offered by this Agreement was not utilized by the government to turn things around and ultimately achieve the twin goals of raising morale and arresting brain drain among academics in Nigeria. Be that as it may, this chapter reports the findings of a post-1992 survey of academics on the issue of job satisfaction and the question of their willingness to leave the academic profession as a result of job dissatisfaction. And put differently, the chapter provides a historical analysis of the failure of the 1992 Agreement to raise the morale of Nigerian university academics and in its consequent failure to arrest brain drain. The chapter also draws some policy lessons from this human resource management failure of the Nigerian government.

In doing these, this chapter examines the grievances of ASUU in a brief historical perspective. Secondly, it examines briefly the problem of brain drain in Africa. Thirdly, it provides an overview of the salient provisions of the 1992 Agreement. Thereafter it presents the methodology of the work in section four while the findings and discussion constitute the focus of section five. Finally, the conclusion and implications are presented.

Grievances of ASUU in brief Historical Perspective

From its inception in 1978 as a trade union, ASUU had many running battles with successive military regimes that controlled the federal government of Nigeria as well as with the civilian government that was briefly in place between 1979 and 1983. Its battles and grievances revolved around four major issues that found expressions in the strikes of 1980, 1981, 1988 and 1992. The four major issues are (a) poor conditions of service, (b) under-funding of universities, (c) erosion of university autonomy and academic freedom, and (d) poor physical conditions of work (see for example ASUU, 1981). These grievances had antecedents that pre-dated the formation of ASUU in 1978. For example, according to the Cookey Report (1981), prior to 1974, the Nigerian universities operated a separate salary structure for their staff that enabled them to attract and retain the best brains from within and outside the country. But unfortunately following the recommendations of the Udoji Commission, the government included the universities in the unified public service structure in 1975 (see Udoji Report, 1974). And as the Cookey Report also rightly observed, prior to this harmonization, the salaries of university staff were a shade higher than those of equivalent post in the civil service. This point is important for one to appreciate the separate salary structure granted to academics by the 1992 Agreement. And unfortunately again, the unified structure, which upset the relativities between the university and the civil service, became a main source of dissatisfaction among academics from that period onwards.

One negative effect of the harmonization policy was the emergence of internal brain drain from the universities to the private sector and also from the universities to the mainstream sectors of the civil service. As early as 1976, the University of Nigeria Association of University Teachers (AUT) regrettably noted that 'many experienced academics are fleeing from the frustrations of university life into more rewarding and challenging sectors of our national life'. It further noted that this tragic development was one of the saddest chapters in Nigeria's national life, which could hardly have been otherwise given the loss of prestige and status by the universities (University of Nigeria, A.U.T, 1976).

By 1992, the situation had so deteriorated that according to ASUU (1992), Nigerian university academics were the worst paid compared with their counterparts anywhere in the world, including even poor African countries. During this period, the negative effects of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) being implemented by the military regime of General Ibrahim Babangida had become so palpable. For example, the erosion of the purchasing power of the Nigeria's local currency the Naira (N), through devaluation, was one of the consequences of SAP. It was against this background that ASUU used table 1 below to demonstrate its argument.

Table 1: Comparison between Salaries of Nigerian University Academics and their Counterparts in selected Countries (in U.S Dollars*)

Country	Lecturer I \$	Senior Lecturer/ Associate Prof. \$	Professor \$
1. U.S.A	-	37,511.00	61,475.00
2. U.K	20,400.00	N.A	45,900.00
3. Singapore	26,881.72	28,000.00	85,532.39
4. Jamaica	N.A	50,000.00	N.A
5. Zimbabwe	20,000.00	N . A	38,000.00
6. Kenya	3,600.00	N . A	7,000.00
7. Malawi	28,900.00	N . A	N . A
8. Nigeria	2,124.20	2,410.00	2,700.00

Source: ASUU National Secretariat, Ibadan, Dec. 1991.

*(a) The then prevailing Exchange rate used was N10 to a dollar.

(b) Figures for Nos. 1-7 are starting points on their salary scale.

(c) In case of No. 8 (Nigeria), Figures used were the maximum then.

In Naira terms then for example, the table shows that a US professor earned N614,750:00, Zimbabwe N380,000:00 while the Nigerian counterpart earned N27,000:00. But also not captured in the table is the fact that Cameroonian professors then were earning N159,660:00, while those in Botswana were earning N200,400:00 (ASUU, 1992). And worst still, between December 1991 and March 1992, the exchange rate rose astronomically from N10 to N20 to One US Dollar thereby reducing by half, what a Nigerian professor was earning when compared with his counterparts in table 1. Furthermore at the domestic level, the salary of academics was disappointingly very low when compared with salaries in the private sector or even with some parastatals in the public sector. For instance, a fresh university graduate in an oil company or merchant bank then, earned more than a fresh Ph.D degree holder lecturing in the university. In some exceptional cases, such fresh graduates earned more than a full professor. To worsen matters, some universities were unable even to pay the meager salaries regularly (Obasi, 1992; Daily Champion, 1992; The Guardian on Sunday, 1992).

On the issue of funding, the neglect of the universities by the government was even more palpable. The budgetary process entails the universities submitting their estimates through the National Universities Commission (NUC), which in turn makes a recommendation to the government through the Federal Ministry of Education. Usually there were gaps between what the universities request and what the NUC eventually recommends. But in the final analysis, there were wide gaps between what the universities requested for and what the government eventually gave to them. Table 2 presents federal government allocation to its universities between 1980 and 1990. The table clearly shows in column three that in 1981, the universities got just 63% of what they asked for and in 1982, this fell to 47%. It got worse in 1987 when they got only 37% of what they requested for. In the same light table 3, presents the data on funding between 1990 and 2001. The wide gaps between what the universities requested, what the NUC recommended, and eventually what the government granted to the universities, became over the years, a major feature of the funding profile of the universities. The table however shows that the best-funded years in that decade were 1992 and 1993 with the lowest differentials of 19% and 25% respectively, which were a reflection of the immediate positive impact of the 1992 Agreement.

Table 2: Federal allocations to Universities in Millions of Naira (1980/81-1990)

Year	Amount Requested	Amounted	Amount Received by	Amount Received as
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	by Universities	Recommended by NUC	Universities	% of what was requested
1981	508.56	343.51	321.91	63.3
1982	710.77	579.63	334.62	47.1
1983	767.52	634.53	371.47	48.4
1984	821.34	634.37	428.39	52.1
1985	694.61	446.02	421.90	60.7
1986	217.14	150.52	104.80	48.3
1987	176.16	125.99	65.15	37
1988	150.24	138.14	81.04	53.9
1989/90	139.07	102.05	66.29	47.7

Source: Adapted from NUC, 1991; Longe Report, 1991, & Obikoya, 2002

* Figures from 1986 adjusted to Naira Devaluation.

Table 3: Funding Trends in Nigerian Federal Universities (1990-2001) in Naira

Year	Amount Requested By Universities Both Recurrent and Capital	Amount Received By Universities Both Recurrent and Capital	Differential of What was Requested and What was Granted in Percentage (%)
1990	1,216,601,329.00	734,770,950.00	40
1991	1,453,291,051.00	783,816,895.00	54
1992	3,663,212,945.00	2,985,237,346.00	19
1993	5,075,859,925.00	3,801,529,278.00	25
1994	7,342,861,713.00	4,370,880,770.00	41
1995	11,328,520,905.00	6,056,784,806.00	47
1996	12,442,699,358.00	7,535,594,529.00	39
1997	15,820,155,501.00	5,348,173,942.00	66
1998	22,767,530,158.00	8,974,631,294.62	61
1999	40,884,109,125.00	11,831,930,271.98	71
2000	65,579,997,692.00	30,143,004,497.91	54
2001	68,911,759,219.11	31,170,080,668.17	55
Total	256,486,598,921.11	113,736,435,248.68	56

Source: Absolute Figures from Okebukola/NUC, 2002, and Percentages calculated by us.

In terms of their real funding values, a study by Hartnett (2000) reveals that there was steady decline in recurrent funding of the universities. For example, in 1996 and 1997, the total recurrent grants to the universities were at half their 1988 levels. And in per student terms, federal subventions lagged far behind enrollment growth. For example, by 1999, the total recurrent grants per student were at about one-third of their 1988 level.

Then on the issue of erosion of university autonomy and academic freedom, historical evidence shows that (a) there were cases of irregular dismissal, premature retirement and even deportation of expatriate academics on political grounds; (b) there were cases of irregular appointment, removal, imposition and even transfer of vice-chancellors in many universities; (c) there were cases of frequent abuse of Visitorial powers by the head of the Nigerian government; and (d) there were cases of imposition of non-applicable government circulars meant for the civil service on the universities, in sharp contradiction to the various laws establishing them (see Obasi, 1991).

Finally in the area of poor physical conditions of work, the reality of obsolete and decaying laboratory facilities, inadequate office and classroom spaces, dearth of modern office equipment, poor library facilities, among many others were major problems confronting the universities. In one study of the state of these facilities, 77% of academics expressed their dissatisfaction over the situation (Obasi, 1991).

Historically speaking, it was as a result of these problems that brain drain among academics persisted over the years in Nigeria. Let us briefly therefore examine the problem of brain drain in Africa against the background of these problems.

The Problem of Brain Drain in Africa

Brain drain in Africa is considered a major developmental problem even in the absence of continental wide reliable statistics on the issue (see NEPAD, 2001; Tebeje, 2005). It is on this basis that NEPAD adopted three-pronged objectives aimed at reversing brain drain. The first is to turn brain drain into 'brain gain' for Africa. The second is to build and retain within the continent critical human capacities for Africa's development. And the third objective is to develop strategies for utilizing the scientific and technological know-how and skills of Africans in the diaspora for the development of Africa (NEPAD, 2001). These objectives recognize the twin impact of *pull* (external attractive conditions that lure academics away from Africa) and *push* factors (internal frustrating conditions within Africa) that make brain drain inevitable. And these factors involve a wide range of economic, political, social, as well as internal university governance conditions, that continue to sustain the tide of brain drain. Over the years, both the pull and push factors have combined to make Africa loose its brains at a rate that made a deputy executive secretary of Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) to warn that unless African governments ensure that brains remain in the continent, in 25 years' time, Africa will be empty of brains (Barka, 2000). Some statistics presented below, seem to point towards this trend.

It is believed that in many African countries, more holders of doctoral degrees live and work abroad (Altbach, 2004; Emeagwali, 2000). For instance, estimates by the UN Economic Commission for Africa and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) show that 27,000 African professionals left the continent from 1960 to 1974. The figure rose to 40,000 from 1975 to 1984. Again, this rose to 60,000 from 1985 to 1989. And since 1990, it is estimated that at least 20,000 professionals leave the continent annually (see Facts and Figures, 2005; Mutume, 2003). In specific terms, Emeagwali (2000) observed that 'one in three African university graduates lives and work outside Africa'. But for Odumasi-Ashanti (2003), '70,000 African scholars leave yearly', while for Shinn (2002), 'there are more African-born scientists and engineers in the United States than there are in Africa'. Consequently, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that over 300,000 professionals reside outside Africa, and 30,000 of them have doctorate degrees (Facts and Figures, 2005).

And illustrating this pathetic situation with a Nigerian example, Mazrui (2003) observed that 'the best educated ethnic group in the United States is according to the U. S. Census Bureau, the population of Nigerians living in America'. It is estimated he said, 'that sixty four percent of Nigerians over eighteen years old living in the United States have one or more university degrees. Half the members of major Nigerian associations in the United States probably have master's degrees and doctorates'. And according to Emeagwali (2000), 'when Zik set foot in America in 1924, the number of Nigerians in the U.S. was probably less than ten. By the end of the twentieth century the number of Nigerians in the United States has risen to a quarter of a million'. Hence it is now widely believed that about 10,000 Nigerian academics are employed in the United States alone (Blair and Jordan, 1994; Shinn, 2002; Facts and Figures, 2005).

Furthermore, according to Outward Bound (2002), more Ethiopian holders of doctorates work outside Ethiopian than at home, and 30 percent of all highly educated Ghanaians and Sierra Leoneans live and work abroad (see also Altbach, 2004). The Republic of South Africa according to Altbach (2004) is losing many of its talented academics to the North, while at the same time it is recruiting from elsewhere in Africa'. On the whole therefore, the loss of African professionals to the Diaspora is said to be highest in Ethiopia, followed by Nigeria and then Ghana (Facts and Figures, 2005).

The consequences of these have been very devastating to Africa's quest for rapid development. While brain drain is said to have weakened African academic institutions (Altbach, 2004), Africa is said to be committing suicide by failing to offer greener pastures for its own intelligentsia (Ofori-Sarpong quoted in Facts and Figures, 2005). Hence for Emeagwali (2000), Africa is operating one third of its universities to satisfy the manpower needs of Western nations. And more specifically, one third of its education budget is therefore a supplement for the American education budget And for Russel (2002), this is a transfer of educational investments from poor countries to the rich ones. Furthermore, brain drain in Africa constitutes huge economic wastage especially when it is realized that university education is subsidized by taxpayers' money in many of these countries (see Ferguson, 2004?). And again, the International Office for Migration estimates that Africa spends four billion dollars a year on 100,000 foreign experts who are employed to make up for the serious loss of its professionals. (see Mazrui, 2003; Shinn, 2002).

The frustrating conditions under which academics in Africa carry out their work serve as a background against which the protracted 1992 strike in Nigeria can be understood. And it is also against this backdrop that the importance of 1992 agreement can be properly appreciated as a means of arresting brain drain. We shall now examine the major provisions of this Agreement?

Overview of the salient Provisions of the 1992 Agreement

In our introduction, we identified some of the key provisions of this Agreement. We shall in this section, provide further details on these various key aspects. The purpose is to provide a background necessary for examining the breaches of these provisions later in this chapter. We shall first of all start with the conditions of service.

Conditions of Service: The Agreement provided for an enhanced new and separate salary structure for academics. Secondly a new range of academic allowances was provided for in the agreement. Thirdly, existing general allowances for both academic and support staff were enhanced. Fourthly, many other fringe benefits were granted. And lastly, a provision was made for the establishment of university staff housing loan scheme.

Funding of Universities and Rehabilitation of Facilities and Infrastructure: The agreement made adequate provision for the quantum of resources required by the universities. Secondly, it identified sources of funding for sustaining the identified quantum of resources (for example, the proposal for the introduction of higher education tax). And thirdly, it made provision for restoration grants to enable the universities to rehabilitate their facilities.

University Autonomy and Academic Freedom: The agreement guaranteed the autonomy of the universities within the law. First, it recognized the need for reasonable balance between the external and internal membership composition of the Governing Councils of the universities. Although it provided for 8 external and 7 internal members, the vice-chancellors and deputy vice-chancellor(s) who are also members, were outside the 7 internal members, thereby enhancing the ability of internal members to provide reasonable check on any unnecessary interference of the government on university governance through its external appointees. Secondly, the appointment of vice-chancellors was democratized through allowing a broad-based participation of the university community. Thirdly, removal of vice-chancellors by the Visitor could only be done after due consultation with the Governing Council and Senate of the university. Fourthly, it provided for the review of the law establishing the National Universities Commission (NUC) and any other laws conflicting with the statutes and laws of the universities.

Fifthly, the universities were to play primary role in the admission process and as such, the relevant section of the law establishing the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) should be reviewed to annul the prevailing secondary role of the universities. Furthermore, the setting of national minimum standards and accreditation of the universities should be conducted by an academic body. And lastly, the Governing Councils of individual universities should be empowered to take charge of the responsibilities for the good management, growth and development of their respective universities. Consequently circulars from government ministries should be implemented by the Governing Councils only if they are adjudged to be consistent with the laws and regulations of the universities. The agreement therefore made provision for the review of all laws that fetter universities, bridge academic freedom, constrain the exercise of initiative and smother imagination.

Miscellaneous Provisions: The agreement relaxed the regulations prohibiting private practice by serving academics. Secondly, the need for liberalization of promotions to higher levels was recognized. Consequently, the existing NUC enforced pyramidal structure of academic staff establishment in universities, should be re-examined. Thirdly, the review of university laws should incorporate all the relevant aspects of the agreement. Fourthly, the priority areas of implementation of the agreement were identified to be (a) review of university laws; (b) enactment of enabling legislation for higher education tax; and (c) the provision of seed money for university staff housing loan scheme. And lastly, the agreement provided for its review in every three years.

Methodology

This study used a sample survey methodology complemented with documentary materials. The population of the study consisted of all academics in the Nigerian University system. As at 1987, the population of academics was put at 11,122 (NUC, 1992). But by 1992, this figure was put at about 8,000 as a result of brain drain. Consequently with a population of eight thousand academics, a sample of 10% (800) was selected from seven Universities. A multi-stage stratified sampling procedure was adopted in the selection of the 800 academics. The

stratification criteria were institutional affiliation, academic rank, gender, academic discipline, length of service, educational qualification and age. The seven universities were also representatively selected reflecting age, regional and geographical location, type (conventional versus specialized) and ownership structure (federal versus state-government).

An already standardized five-point Likert job satisfaction instrument was adaptively used to elicit data from the respondents in a survey carried out between 1994 and 1995. The mean scores of these responses were computed to identify the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction of respondents. These calculated mean scores were given ranges corresponding to very low, low, high and very high. Finally, these quantitative measures were in turn given qualitative designations or equivalence. The qualitative format of very High, High, Low and Very low, were then appropriately used to describe the levels of morale. Table 4 presents the different qualitative levels of morale and their corresponding range of mean scores.

Table 4: Identification of levels of Morale and their Corresponding Range of Mean Scores.

Levels of Morale	Corresponding Range of Mean Scores
Very Low	1 – 1.999
Low	2 – 2.999
High	3 – 3.999
Very High	4 – 4.999

The analysis involved the use of both descriptive and inferential statistics whose operation was carried out with the SPSS software. Specifically, means, percentages and the person's correlation coefficient were utilized in the analysis.

Findings and Discussion

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Some demographic characteristics of respondents captured in the study are gender, rank, qualification, length of service and age. The gender composition of the respondents shows that 85% of them were male while 14% were female academics. This is hardly surprising because in reality within the period, male academics constituted 88% while the female counterparts only constituted 12% (see NUC, 1992). With respect to rank, 65% of the respondents were in the position of lecturers I and below; 26% were senior Lecturers, while Associate Professors/Professors constituted 8%.

In terms of qualification, 10% of the respondents were first-degree holders; 45% had master's degree; while 41% held the doctorate. With respect to length of service, 39% of respondents were only five years or less in the service; 19% had not more than ten years; while another 19% spent not more than fifteen years. Then 12% spent sixteen years to twenty years, while those who spent twenty-one years and above were only 9%. The age composition of respondents shows that 15% were within the age of thirty-years or less; 44% were between thirty-one to forty years; 28% were between forty-one to fifty years, while 12% were above fifty years.

In summary, a comparative analysis of these demographic variables shows that majority of Nigerian academics sampled were relatively young and inexperienced. This gives credence to the view that many experienced academics had left the system following the worsening conditions of service in the universities then. For example, 39% of the respondents had spent only about five years in the service while 58% were under ten years of service. And again, 55% of respondents did not have the doctorate degree while 59% were within forty years or less in age. This no doubt confirms the view that the Nigerian university academics during the period under review were relatively young and inexperienced. This is one of the features of organizations experiencing high turnover rate of staff.

The Level of Morale of Nigerian University Academics

Three major job dimensions (namely the intrinsic, extrinsic, and physical cum environmental), were tapped with respect to their impact on the level of morale of Nigerian University academics. The various properties of

these three job dimensions were identified and utilized as specific indicators. Table 5 therefore presents the summary of the data generated from the 800 respondents sampled in the study.

Table 5 The Number and Percentage of Respondents on Different Levels of Morale (N = 800)

Degree of Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction	Corresponding Levels of Morale	Corresponding Range of Mean Scores	Number of Respondents on Various Levels of Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction/Morale	% of the Respondents on the various Levels
Highly Dissatisfied	Very Low	1 – 1.999	40	5%
Dissatisfied	Low	2 – 2.999	578	72%*
Satisfied	High	3 – 3.999	181	23%
Highly Satisfied	Very High	4 – 4.999	1	0%
Total			800	100%

Overall Mean Score of the Dissatisfied Respondents = 2.67

Standard Deviation = 0.41

The results in table 5 show that 72% of the respondents were dissatisfied in their job as measured by the three job dimensions. The results also reveal that the overall mean score of the respondents was 2.67 with a standard deviation of 0.41. These figures fall within the range of low morale as earlier indicated in table 4. It is interesting to note table 5 also shows that only one respondent (representing zero per cent) falls under the range of very high morale, while only one hundred and eighty-one respondents (representing 23%) fall under high morale. However, only forty respondents (i.e. 5%) had very low morale.

Given the representative nature of our sample, and a standard deviation of 0.41, one does not need to doubt that generally speaking, the average Nigerian University academic staff in many (if not all) the universities had a low level of morale during the period covered by the study. This could not have been otherwise, given the fact that Blair and Jordan (1994) also found out that the University of Ibadan (Nigeria) had the poorest salary in relation to some other African Universities studied within the same period. Secondly, they found out that members of staff of the University of Ibadan were the least satisfied in relation to those from other African universities. Thirdly, their study revealed that the University of Ibadan had the least quality of academic environment in relation to the other African Universities (Blair and Jordan 1994).

The findings of our study and those of Blair and Jordan raise the crucial question as to what happened to the supposed gains of the 1992 ASUU-Government Agreement. The Agreement as we noted provided measures meant to increase job satisfaction and raise morale of academics. But this appeared not to be the case.

A critical study of the implementation of the 1992 Agreement shows that the findings of our study are not far from reality. First, shortly after the Agreement was signed, a controversy over the parity between academic and non-academic staff (arising from the Separate Salary Structure for academics) emerged. It was such a serious problem that it immediately led to another strike in 1993 by ASUU, and strikes by other groups of the non-academic staff in both 1992 and 1993. As the academics struggled to defend their newly granted separate salary structure, both the senior and junior non-academic staff unions fought seriously against it. The problem was compounded following serious political problems associated with the annulment of June 12 presidential election considered widely to be free and fair which eventually led to the exit of General Babangida. Under the short-lived new Interim National Government and later the General Sani Abacha regime, the then Federal Secretary (Minister) of Education, Prof Ben Nwabueze declared in 1993 during another strike by ASUU to defend the Agreement, that indeed the Agreement was not binding on the Federal Government. He therefore announced the abrogation of the separate salary granted in the Agreement (usually referred to as the University Academic Staff Salary -UASS). He also announced that he had referred any dispute arising from this abrogation of UASS to the Wages Commission. According to him:

Government has very good reasons for its decision to place academics and non-academics on a uniform salary scale. In our view, disparity in basic salary scale and general fringe benefits has neither practice nor reason, nor principle to support it. It is a departure from long-standing practice, so long... as to have acquired the force of tradition. In the second place,

it ignores the fact that the University in Nigeria is not just a collection of persons working together in the same offices, as in the case of the civil service, it is also a territorial community whose members not only work together in the same institution but also live together in contiguous houses within an enclosed campus served by common facilities...

Finally, I want to leave no one in any doubt that Government will not go back to its decision to have a unified salary structure for academics and non-academics in our Universities while maintaining intact the two incremental points differential in basic salary and the special allowances granted to the academics under the 1992 Agreement (Nwabueze, 1993)

The controversy generated by the Minister's press statements was so serious when seen against the fact it led to a chain of crisis that eventually led also to the loss of one academic session by almost all Nigerian universities in the 1993/94 academic Session. The minister's first breach of the 1992 Agreement marked the beginning of what became a series of breaches afterwards.

We shall now provide more evidence on the breaches from our examination of ASUU official records as well as an interview we conducted with the then national president of ASUU, Dr Assisi H. Asobie. Our findings reveal very clearly that the Federal Government had breached the following sections of the Agreement:

- a) Section 4.1.1: *funding* (specifically on capital expenditure, the government budgeted only ₦0.8b out of the ₦1.2b agreed upon).
- b) Section 4.1.2(a): *Source of funding* (specifically on sharing of the proceeds from Higher Education Tax). No sharing was done.
- c) Section 4.1.2(b): *Stabilization Fund* (No amount was budgeted for in the 1993 fiscal year; and even the N100m that government set aside later, it had dipped its hands into it).
- d) Section 4.1.2(f): *A 3 Year Rolling Plan for the Universities*. (This had not been formulated at the time ASUU prepared a document on the breach of the Agreement).
- e) Section 5.7: *JAMB admission of second choice candidate*. Many qualified second choice applicants were rejected contrary to the agreement.
- f) Section 5.10: *Autonomy of Universities* (Government continued to dictate to University Governing Councils. This violation of autonomy with respect to appointment of Vice-Chancellor was one of the major causes of the 1994-95 ASUU strike).
- g) Section 5.16: *Powers of councils* (Governing Councils were still under the control of the Federal Ministry of Education and the NUC. The rejection of Economic rent on Campus Housing was an example).
- h) Section 6.1: *New Salary Structure for Academic Staff in Nigerian Universities* (Government Unilaterally announced the abrogation of the UASS).
- i) Section 6.2.2: *Excess workload Allowance* (There was still delay in its payment).
- j) Section 6.4(i): *Vehicle Loan Fund* (Not Yet created)
- k) Section 6.4(iii): *Furniture loan* (implemented only in some Universities).
- l) Section 6.4(xv): *Official Transport* (No department had benefited even one out of the two vehicles agreed upon).
- m) Section 6.4(xvi): *Secretarial Services for Professors* (Not yet implemented as required)
- n) Section 7.1: *Teaching Fellowship fund* (This had not been established).
- o) Section 7.2: *Provision for Teaching and Research Equipment* (Not yet as required).

With these violations, it was not surprising that ASUU went on strike in 1994 and this lasted up to the early part of 1995. The major issue in this strike centered on the violation of the provisions of the 1992 Agreement and Decree No. 11 of 1993 on the Appointment and Reappointment of vice-chancellors especially at the Federal University of Technology, Minna (see ASUU-UNN, 1994). Furthermore, the 1996 strike centered on the breach of other aspects of the agreement.

From the foregoing, it is clear that the 1992 Agreement was not implemented as expected. The lack of full implementation was a major cause of dissatisfaction among academics as high hopes raised by the Agreement became dashed soon after. And part of the reasons was that the enhanced salary and allowances that were paid as result of the Agreement, were quickly eroded by the high cost of living that kept rising as a result of the continued devaluation of the local currency under the structural adjustment programme of the government. Let us now explore the issue of how the dissatisfaction of academics and their low morale affected their desire to leave the profession.

The 1992 Agreement, Low Morale and Potential Brain Drain

We shall now provide further evidence to show that the 1992 Agreement failed to stem the tide of potential brain drain internally (to other sectors) or to other countries. As Blair and Jordan (1994) revealed, about 10,000 Nigerian academics work in the United States alone. This is definitely one example of the failure of the Agreement. Granted that this high figure was not only a post-1992 phenomenon since the brain drain issue became more serious following the introduction of SAP in 1986, one will wish to know the extent to which the 1992 Agreement succeeded in reducing this trend, given the fact that it set out to do so. Before 1992, a study by Obasi (1991) revealed that 62% of academics expressed their desire to change their job as a result of dissatisfaction on their job. It is interesting to find out if the 1992 Agreement had any positive impact in reducing the percentage of academics who desired to leave their profession as a result of job dissatisfaction. We shall explore this in table 6.

Table 6: Percentage of Respondents expressing opinion as to whether (a) they contemplated (desired) changing their job since after the 1992 Agreement; and (b) they are willing to change their job now if a new one is secured.

Exit Variable	Percentage of respondents Expressing Opinion on contemplation and willingness to change job				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Contemplated to change job since after the 1992 Agreement	4%	12%	17%	29%	38%
Willing to change job now if a new one is secured.	4%	10%	12%	25%	49%

This table shows that first, after the 1992 Agreement, 67% of respondents sampled had at one time or the other contemplated (desired) changing their job. Much more disturbing is the fact that more than half of this figure had a very strong desire to change their job. This is an indication that the 1992 Agreement did not succeed in preventing academics from desiring to change their job, which to many involved seeking for employment abroad.

Secondly, and equally disturbing is the fact that 74% of respondents were willing to leave the academic profession for a more materially rewarding job at the time of the survey. Again, 49% of this figure expressed a very strong desire to do so. This is evidence that the expected positive impact of the 1992 Agreement were not felt. This 74% shows an increase of 12% between 1989 and 1995 when compared to the 62% found by Obasi (1991).

The conclusion therefore is that the morale of academics at the time of this study had fallen below its pre-1992 level. Let us explore this assertion further with a correlational analysis between morale and both contemplation, and willingness to change job. The analysis reveals that the coefficient for contemplation to change job was -0.46 , and -0.39 for willingness to change job at the time of the survey. The P values for these two were 0.000 each. This finding shows that the willingness to change job at the time of the survey had a higher coefficient than the contemplation to change job in the past. This indicates that morale is also on the decrease over the years. The finding shows that both the contemplation to change job since after 1992, as well as the willingness to change job, were all caused by the low morale. This evidenced by the negative correlation which shows that as morale decreased, both contemplation and willingness to change job on the other hand, increased.

Our finding confirms the classical thesis by Vroom (1964) that the more satisfied a worker, the stronger the force on him to remain in his job, and the less probability of his leaving it voluntarily. The converse of this statement confirmed by our finding, is equally tenable. Generally also, our finding supports the negative correlation between morale and turnover as established by other classical works of Giese and Ruter, (1949), Kerr et al, (1951) and Webb and Hollander (1956). Furthermore, the pessimistic side of the findings by Blair and Jordan (1994) on selected African Universities of which the University of Ibadan (in Nigeria) had the worst profile is again confirmed by our

results. In that study, Blair and Jordan reported that 47% of staff sampled from seven African Universities, indicated their desire to leave their job.

It is important to explain that the desire by Nigerian academics to change job does not necessarily mean a desire to leave the academic profession. Like the study by Obasi (1991) revealed many academics who desired to leave the academic profession in Nigeria principally due to dissatisfaction on their job, however indicated their readiness to continue with it in the advanced countries of Europe and North America if they secure such opportunity. One conclusion that we draw from our present study and that of Obasi (1991) is the confirmation of the hypothesis that Nigeria academics still derive some measure of satisfaction from the **intrinsic content** of their job. In fact, despite the frustrating physical conditions under which they have been carrying out their work, as well as the poor conditions of service, Nigerian academics can still be said to have intrinsic love for their job. The brain drain would therefore reduce if the specific factors that cause low morale are adequately addressed. This was actually what the implementation of the 1992 Agreement failed to achieve.

Conclusion and Policy Implications

This study reveals that *morale has been low* among Nigerian University academics since the eighties and deteriorated further in nineties and beyond. It further reveals that the violations and non-implementation of certain important aspects of the 1992 ASUU-Government Agreement constitute a principal factor in the progressive reduction of morale of academics over the years. Consequently the study concludes inter alia that:

- (a) The poor implementation of the 1992 Agreement failed to raise the morale of academics to a level that could stem the tide of *potential brain drain* as many more academics indicated their willingness to leave their profession as a result of job dissatisfaction;
- (b) The positive impact of the 1992 ASUU strike that was felt during the early stage of the implementation of the Agreement, was short-lived due mainly to dissatisfaction with extrinsic and physical rewards of work and the intrinsic property of university autonomy and academic freedom;
- (c) There has been a gradual decline in the morale of academics since after the 1992 Agreement;
- (d) The Nigerian Government has failed to manage properly the high caliber specialized and professional manpower that abound in the universities and by this policy failure made brain drain a viable option for academics fade up with the system;
- (e) But in spite of this policy failure, Nigeria academics still derive some measure of satisfaction from the **intrinsic content** of their job. In fact, despite the frustrating physical conditions under which they have been carrying out their work, as well as the poor conditions of service, Nigerian academics can still be said to have intrinsic love for their job; and lastly,
- (f) Actual brain drain would therefore reduce if the specific extrinsic factors that cause low morale are adequately addressed.

Be that as it may, if one agrees with Roethlisberger (1941) that what physical health is to a physical organism, morale is to an organization, then one can fully appreciate the importance of raising morale as a mechanism for arresting brain drain in African universities. Since the existence of low morale in the universities implies dissatisfaction over the rewards of work, which in turn negates peaceful labour-management relations with its concomitant periodical disruption of academic calendar, then African governments should check seriously the gradual decline in the morale of academics as a way of arresting the tide of potential brain drain.

The incessant strikes by Nigerian university academics for about a quarter of a decade now, amply demonstrate the lack of good university governance. The incalculable harm done to the quality of university education in Nigeria by prolonged closures, shorter learning periods, and the eventual occasional loss of full academic sessions, demands that more serious efforts should begin towards the re-building of the university System.

Good university governance requires a dynamic managerial approach that recognizes the fact that *morale is a dynamic phenomenon*, which as Davis (1962) rightly observed, needs regular attention, diagnosis and treatment just as health does. In deed, good university governance requires periodical morale surveys which according to Davis is also a powerful diagnostic instrument for looking at workers' problems. There should therefore be a policy of periodical morale surveys of academics in every five years in Nigeria and other African universities. This will help to isolate specific causes of dissatisfaction prevailing within a given period.

Finally, with specific reference to Nigeria, we recommend that since the 1992 Agreement provided a solid foundation towards the re-building of the university system, its spirit and letter as well as subsequent reviews of its provisions in line with economic realities, should be faithfully implemented. Unfortunately, experience in recent years in Nigeria, demonstrates that this has not been so. In fact, many of the post-1992 strikes occurred simply because of the failure of the government to either implement fully the provisions of the 1992 Agreement or carry out its periodical review as provided in the Agreement.

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