



SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION IN AFRICA

Peer Reviewed Book Chapter

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*Dept of Sociology and Anthropology, Faculty of Social
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CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

Udegbe Chigozie Charles,

Department of Educational Management. Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Igbariam.

Olofinkua Vincent Kayode, PhD

Department of Educational Management, St. Augustine College of Education, Akoka, Lagos State

Email: volofinkua@staugustinecollege.edu.ng

ORCID: 0009-0001-8327-7341

ONAFOWOPE Mary Adesola, PhD

Department of Educational Management, St. Augustine College of Education, Akoka, Lagos State

Email: conafowope@staugustinecollege.edu.ng

ORCID: 0009-0001-3408-4164

Oweikpodor Vera Gbaeprekumo (Ph.D)

Educational Management and Foundations Delta State University Abraka

Email: gbakumovera@gmail.com

oweikpodor.vera@delsu.edu.ng

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1216-0565>

Awadiegwu Amaka Emmanuela

Department of Educational Management. Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Igbariam.

Nwankwo Nkechi Chinelo (Ph.D)

Department of Educational Management. Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Igbariam.

EDOR JOB JOHN

Department of Educational Management. Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Igbariam

Ugwunnamchi Uchenna Jacinta Ph.D

Department of Educational Foundation, School of Education, St Paul's College of Education Nnewi Anambra state

Unachukwu Ijeoma Blessing (Ph.D)

Department Of Economics Education, Federal College of Education, (Technical) Umunze

ONAFOWOPE Mary Adesola, PhD

Department of Educational Management, St. Augustine College of Education, Akoka, Lagos State

Email: conafowope@staugustinecollege.edu.ng

ORCID: 0009-0001-3408-4164

OLOFINKUA Vincent Kayode, PhD

Department of Educational Management, St. Augustine College of Education, Akoka, Lagos State

Email: volofinkua@staugustinecollege.edu.ng

ORCID: 0009-0001-8327-7341

OWEIKPODOR Vera Gbaeprekumo (Ph.D)

Educational Management and Foundations Delta State University Abraka

Email: gbakumovera@gmail.com

oweikpodor.vera@delsu.edu.ng

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1216-0565>

Ughenu, Nwamaka Perpetua

Department of Educational Management. Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Igbariam.

Eke, Ben Ethel, PhD.

Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling, Faculty of Education, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt

Oranusi Ndidi Stella.

Department of Educational Management. Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Igbariam.

Victor Olugbenga Ayoko

Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Open University of Faculty of Education, National, Nigeria

Email: victorayoko@gmail.com

SALIHU, Habibat Atti Ph.D

Centre for Management Development. North Central Zonal offices, Abuja

Email: habmumin@yahoo.co.uk

Dr. Rauf Olaiya Sarafadeen

Department of Educational Foundations, Federal University, Lafia

Email: rauf.olaiya@fulafia.edu.ng

Niyi Jacob Ogunode - PhD

Department. Of educational management, faculty of education. University of Abuja, Nigeria **ORCID ID:**0009-0002-3381-8688.

Email: niyijacobogunode@gmail.com

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EVALUATING THE BENEFITS OF THE FG ASUU AGREEMENT PACT 2026 IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF UNIVERSITIES IN NIGERIA.

By

Victor Olugbenga Ayoko

Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Open University of Faculty of Education, National, Nigeria

Email: victorayoko@gmail.com

Abstract

The development of university education in Nigeria has been persistently challenged by inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, weak research capacity, unfavorable conditions of service, and recurrent industrial actions, particularly between the Federal Government and the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). In response to these challenges, the Federal Government and ASUU entered into the FG–ASUU Agreement Pact 2026 as a renegotiated framework aimed at stabilizing the university system and promoting sustainable development. This chapter evaluates the benefits of the FG–ASUU Agreement Pact 2026 in the development of universities in Nigeria. Using a conceptual and analytical approach, the chapter examines key areas of impact including academic staff welfare, research and innovation, infrastructural revitalization, institutional governance, industrial harmony, and learning continuity. The analysis reveals that the agreement has the potential to enhance staff motivation, reduce brain drain, improve research output, strengthen university autonomy, and stabilize academic calendars. The chapter concludes that the FG–ASUU Agreement Pact 2026 represents a strategic policy instrument for revitalising Nigerian



universities, provided its provisions are fully implemented, adequately funded, and continuously monitored.

Keywords: Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Federal Government, University education

1.0 Introduction

Universities occupy a strategic position in Nigeria's national development agenda as centres for human capital formation, knowledge production, research, and innovation. However, the Nigerian university system has, over the years, been confronted with persistent challenges such as inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, unfavourable working conditions for academic staff, and recurrent industrial disputes. These challenges have frequently resulted in disruptions of academic activities, weakened research capacity, and declining global competitiveness of Nigerian universities. At the centre of many of these challenges is the long-standing industrial relationship between the Federal Government of Nigeria (FG) and the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU).

In response to decades of unresolved disputes and the adverse effects of repeated strikes on the university system, the Federal Government and ASUU entered into a renegotiated agreement known as the FG-ASUU Agreement Pact 2026. The agreement represents a critical policy intervention aimed at addressing fundamental issues relating to academic staff welfare, university funding, infrastructure development, research support, institutional autonomy, and industrial harmony. Beyond resolving labour disputes, the pact seeks to reposition Nigerian universities for sustainable growth and improved performance in teaching, research, and community service.

This chapter therefore focuses on evaluating the benefits of the FG-ASUU Agreement Pact 2026 in the development of universities in Nigeria. It examines how the provisions of the agreement contribute to improved academic staff motivation, research capacity, infrastructural revitalisation, governance efficiency, and stability of academic calendars. By assessing these benefits, the chapter provides insight into the extent to which the agreement can serve as a catalyst for strengthening Nigeria's higher education system and advancing national development objectives.

2.0 Conceptual Terms

2.1 Concept of University

A university is an institution of higher education that offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in various fields of study. It provides students with opportunities to further their academic knowledge



and develop their skills through lectures, seminars, research projects, and practical experiences. Universities also offer a range of services and resources to support students, such as career counseling, financial aid, and extracurricular activities. A university is a higher education institution that offers various academic programs and degrees. It typically consists of multiple colleges or schools, each focused on a different area of study, such as business, medicine, or engineering. Universities are responsible for conducting research and providing students with a broad range of academic resources and opportunities, such as internships, study abroad programs, and student organizations. Students attend universities to gain knowledge and skills in their chosen field, and ultimately earn a degree that can lead to career opportunities ((Ogunode, 2026).

2.2 Concept of Trade Union:

A trade union is an organization that represents and advocates for the rights and interests of workers in a particular industry or sector. In the academic setting, trade unions are often formed by faculty and staff to negotiate for better working conditions, wages, and benefits. They may also provide support and resources for members and organize protests or strikes to address issues with their employers. A trade union, also known as a labor union, is an organization formed by workers in a specific trade, industry, or profession. The main purpose of a trade union is to protect and promote the interests of its members, such as improving working conditions, wages, and benefits. Trade unions also negotiate with employers on behalf of workers to resolve any disputes or issues that may arise (Ogunode, 2026).

A trade union is an organized association of workers formed to protect and promote the economic, social, and professional interests of its members. Trade unions engage in collective bargaining with employers, advocate for improved working conditions, and represent workers in disputes. In higher education, trade unions serve as platforms through which academic and non-academic staff negotiate with university management and government authorities on matters such as: salaries and allowances, Conditions of service, Job security, Academic freedom and institutional autonomy and Welfare and retirement benefits Trade unions are legally recognized in Nigeria under labour laws and operate as pressure groups within industrial relations systems. Their activities often include negotiations, dialogue, advocacy, protests, and, as a last resort, industrial action.

Nigerian universities have several trade unions representing different categories of workers. These unions play critical roles in shaping university governance, staff welfare, and education policy implementation.



Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU)

ASUU is the most prominent trade union in Nigerian universities, representing academic staff in public universities. Established in 1978, ASUU advocates for:

- Improved conditions of service for lecturers
- Adequate funding of public universities
- University autonomy and academic freedom
- Quality teaching and research standards

ASUU has historically used strikes and negotiations to press its demands, making it a central actor in Nigeria's higher education industrial relations.

Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU)

SSANU represents senior non-teaching staff such as administrators, librarians, technologists, and other professionals. The union focuses on:

- Career progression
- Fair remuneration
- Improved working conditions
- Participation in university governance

Non-Academic Staff Union of Educational and Associated Institutions (NASU)

NASU represents junior non-teaching staff in universities. Its concerns include:

- Job security
- Minimum wage implementation
- Welfare benefits
- Workplace safety

Roles of Trade Unions in Nigerian Universities

Trade unions in Nigerian universities perform several important functions:

- **Collective bargaining** between staff and government



- **Protection of workers' rights**
- **Advocacy for improved funding and infrastructure**
- **Promotion of institutional accountability**
- **Conflict management and dispute resolution**

2.5 FG–ASUU Agreement Pact 2026

The Federal Government (FG)–ASUU Agreement Pact 2026 is a renegotiated collective bargaining agreement aimed at addressing long-standing disputes between the Nigerian government and academic staff in public universities. It represents a continuation and revision of earlier agreements dating back to 1992, 2009, and subsequent memoranda of understanding.

Background to the Agreement

Persistent conflicts between ASUU and the Federal Government have revolved around:

- Poor funding of universities
- Inadequate staff remuneration
- Deteriorating infrastructure
- Pension and retirement concerns
- Violation of university autonomy

Prolonged strikes arising from these issues negatively affected academic calendars, student progression, and Nigeria's higher education reputation, necessitating a comprehensive renegotiation.

Key Components of the FG–ASUU 2026 Pact

The agreement addresses several critical areas:

Improved Conditions of Service

The pact includes salary reviews, enhanced allowances, and welfare provisions aimed at improving lecturers' living and working conditions.



Research and Academic Development Support

Provisions were made to strengthen research funding, conference participation, and scholarly productivity.

Infrastructure Revitalizations

The agreement commits the government to targeted funding for rehabilitating laboratories, libraries, and teaching facilities.

Pension and Retirement Benefits

Improved retirement security for academic staff is included to ensure dignity after service.

University Autonomy and Governance

The pact reaffirms institutional autonomy, academic freedom, and merit-based leadership processes.

Industrial Harmony and Academic Stability

The agreement aims to reduce industrial conflicts and ensure stability in the university system through structured dialogue and implementation timelines.

3.0 Result and Discussion on Benefits of the FG–ASUU 2026 Agreement for University Education Development in Nigeria

Improved Academic Staff Welfare and Motivation

One of the most significant benefits of the 2026 FG–ASUU Agreement is the comprehensive improvement in the welfare of academic staff in Nigerian public universities. The agreement addresses long-standing concerns over poor remuneration, inadequate allowances, and unfavorable working conditions that have historically undermined staff morale. Improved salaries and reviewed allowances directly enhance lecturers' economic security, enabling them to meet basic needs such as housing, healthcare, and family responsibilities. When academic staff are adequately compensated, financial stress is reduced, allowing them to devote greater attention to teaching, research, mentoring, and community service. This improvement in welfare also restores dignity to the academic profession, which is essential for maintaining professionalism and ethical standards within universities. From a development perspective, motivated academic staff are more likely to adopt innovative teaching methods, engage students actively, and contribute meaningfully to curriculum development. Consequently, improved welfare under the agreement strengthens the



human capital base of universities, which is central to sustainable university education development.

Enhanced Retention of Academic Staff and Reduction of Brain Drain

The 2026 agreement contributes significantly to reducing the persistent problem of brain drain in Nigeria's university system. For decades, inadequate remuneration and poor working conditions have pushed many experienced lecturers and professors to seek employment in foreign universities or non-academic sectors. By improving conditions of service, the agreement makes academic careers in Nigeria more attractive and competitive. This encourages experienced scholars to remain within the system and discourages early exit from academia. Retaining seasoned academics is crucial because they provide institutional memory, academic leadership, and mentorship for younger lecturers and postgraduate students. In terms of educational development, reduced staff turnover promotes stability in departments and faculties, ensures continuity in academic programmes, and improves the quality of supervision for undergraduate and postgraduate research. A stable academic workforce ultimately enhances the credibility and effectiveness of Nigerian universities.

Strengthening Research Capacity and Knowledge Production

Another major benefit of the FG–ASUU 2026 Agreement lies in its emphasis on strengthening research and scholarly activities. The agreement recognizes that universities are not only teaching institutions but also centres of knowledge production and innovation. By improving research-related allowances, supporting conference participation, and encouraging academic publications, the agreement creates an enabling environment for sustained research productivity. Enhanced research funding allows lecturers to undertake empirical studies, access scholarly databases, collaborate internationally, and disseminate findings through reputable journals. Stronger research capacity contributes directly to university education development by improving the quality of teaching, as lecturers integrate current research findings into classroom instruction. Moreover, increased research output enhances the global visibility and ranking of Nigerian universities, attracts international collaborations, and supports evidence-based policymaking at national and institutional levels.

Improved Pension and Retirement Security for Academics

The 2026 FG–ASUU Agreement also addresses pension and retirement concerns, which have historically discouraged long-term commitment to academic careers. Improved retirement benefits ensure that academics who dedicate decades of service to teaching and research can retire with dignity and financial stability. When retirement security is guaranteed, academic staff are more



likely to remain committed to the system throughout their careers. This reduces anxiety about post-retirement life and allows senior academics to focus on mentoring younger scholars and contributing to institutional development until retirement. From a developmental standpoint, a secure retirement system strengthens intergenerational continuity within universities. Experienced professors can gradually transfer knowledge, research culture, and academic values to younger staff, thereby sustaining institutional quality and academic traditions.

Revitalizations of University Infrastructure

A critical benefit of the FG–ASUU 2026 Agreement is its focus on addressing infrastructural decay in public universities. Years of underfunding have resulted in dilapidated lecture halls, obsolete laboratories, inadequate libraries, and overcrowded hostels. Through stabilization and restoration funding commitments, the agreement supports the rehabilitation and upgrading of academic infrastructure. Improved laboratories enhance science-based learning and research, while modern libraries and digital resources support effective teaching and independent study. Better infrastructure also improves health and safety conditions for both staff and students. Infrastructure development is fundamental to university education development because the quality of physical and digital learning environments directly influences teaching effectiveness, research quality, and students’ learning experiences.

Promotion of Institutional Autonomy and Good Governance

The 2026 agreement reinforces the principle of university autonomy and academic freedom, which are essential for effective governance. By reducing excessive external interference in academic and administrative decision-making, universities are better positioned to pursue their academic mandates. Autonomy promotes merit-based leadership selection, transparent governance structures, and accountability within institutions. When academic leaders are chosen based on competence and integrity, decision-making aligns more closely with educational goals rather than political considerations. Strong governance structures improve institutional efficiency, foster trust among stakeholders, and enhance the capacity of universities to implement reforms that support teaching, research, and community engagement.

Improved Work–Life Balance and Social Welfare

The agreement also expands welfare provisions related to leave, insurance, and social protection. Improved maternity and paternity leave, health insurance, and sabbatical opportunities contribute to better work–life balance for academic staff. Such provisions are particularly important for promoting gender equity within universities, as they support the retention and progression of female academics. When staff well-being is prioritized, universities benefit from higher



productivity, lower burnout rates, and a more inclusive academic environment. A healthy academic workforce is essential for sustainable university education development, as it ensures continuity in teaching and research activities.

Stability of Academic Calendars and Learning Continuity

One of the most far-reaching benefits of the FG–ASUU 2026 Agreement is its potential to reduce industrial conflicts and stabilize academic calendars. Frequent strikes have disrupted learning schedules, delayed graduations, and undermined public confidence in the university system. A stable academic calendar improves students’ academic planning, reduces financial and psychological stress, and enhances the overall efficiency of the education system. It also improves Nigeria’s international academic reputation, as predictable academic schedules are a key criterion for global partnerships and student exchange programmes. Learning continuity is central to university education development, as it ensures timely completion of programmes and improves graduate quality.

Contribution to National Development

Ultimately, the benefits of the FG–ASUU 2026 Agreement extend beyond universities to national development. Well-funded, stable, and research-oriented universities produce skilled graduates, innovative solutions, and critical knowledge needed for economic growth, social development, and governance reform. By strengthening university education, the agreement supports human capital development, technological advancement, and evidence-based policymaking, all of which are essential for sustainable national development.

4.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter has examined the benefits of the FG–ASUU Agreement Pact 2026 in the development of universities in Nigeria. The analysis demonstrates that the agreement addresses several fundamental challenges that have historically undermined the effectiveness of the Nigerian university system. By prioritizing improved conditions of service for academic staff, enhanced research support, infrastructural development, institutional autonomy, and industrial stability, the pact provides a comprehensive framework for strengthening teaching, research, and community service functions of universities.

The chapter further establishes that improved staff welfare and retirement security can enhance motivation, productivity, and retention of experienced academics, thereby reducing brain drain. Similarly, commitments to research funding and infrastructural revitalizations are critical for improving the quality of academic programmes and global competitiveness of Nigerian universities. Importantly, the emphasis on industrial harmony and structured dialogue between the



government and ASUU holds significant potential for stabilizing academic calendars and restoring public confidence in the university system.

Overall, the FG–ASUU Agreement Pact 2026 can be regarded as a pivotal intervention in Nigeria’s higher education sector. However, its success depends largely on political will, transparency, sustained funding, and the commitment of all stakeholders to uphold the terms of the agreement in the interest of national development.

Based on the discussions and findings of this chapter, the following recommendations are proposed:

- 1) The Federal Government should ensure the full and timely implementation of all provisions of the FG–ASUU Agreement Pact 2026 to prevent renewed industrial disputes and sustain academic stability.
- 2) Government should institutionalize dedicated funding mechanisms for universities, including research grants and infrastructure funds, to support the long-term objectives of the agreement.
- 3) Independent monitoring committees involving government representatives, ASUU, university management, and civil society should be established to track compliance and assess the impact of the agreement.
- 4) Regular consultation and dialogue between the Federal Government, ASUU, and other university unions should be prioritised to address emerging issues before they escalate into industrial conflicts.
- 5) Universities should leverage the provisions of the agreement to strengthen research culture, encourage interdisciplinary studies, and foster partnerships with industry and international institutions.
- 6) The Federal Government should respect and protect university autonomy while promoting transparent and accountable governance structures within institutions.
- 7) The FG–ASUU Agreement should be periodically reviewed to reflect economic realities, global best practices, and evolving needs of the Nigerian university system.

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Concluding Synthesis

This edited volume, *Sustainable Education in Africa*, presents a robust and multidimensional exploration of the evolving dynamics shaping educational systems across Nigeria and the broader African context. The contributions collectively interrogate critical issues such as digital transformation, artificial intelligence in educational planning, gender inclusivity, economic constraints, institutional effectiveness, and the intersection of education with national development priorities.

A synthesis of the chapters reveals that sustainable education in Africa is inherently complex and requires an integrated, systems-oriented approach. While technological advancements offer transformative potential for improving educational access, quality, and administration, their successful implementation is dependent on enabling environments characterized by adequate infrastructure, policy coherence, and human capacity development.

Furthermore, the persistence of structural barriers—including underfunding, inequality, insecurity, and governance challenges—continues to impede progress. The contributors consistently emphasize that achieving sustainability in education necessitates deliberate, inclusive, and context-sensitive policy interventions that address both systemic inefficiencies and emerging global trends.

Importantly, this volume reinforces the position of education as a strategic instrument for sustainable development, aligning with global development priorities while responding to local realities. The insights generated herein contribute meaningfully to scholarly discourse and provide actionable knowledge for stakeholders across the education sector.

Implications for Practice

Drawing from the collective contributions of this volume, several practical implications emerge for policymakers, educational leaders, and practitioners:

- **Policy and Governance:** Governments should prioritize coherent and forward-looking educational policies that integrate technology, inclusivity, and sustainability into national development agendas.
- **Investment in Infrastructure:** There is a critical need for sustained investment in digital infrastructure, learning facilities, and instructional resources to support modern educational delivery systems.
- **Capacity Building:** Continuous professional development for educators and administrators is essential, particularly in the areas of digital literacy, data-driven decision-making, and innovative pedagogy.
- **Equity and Inclusion:** Educational interventions must intentionally address gender disparities, socio-economic inequalities, and access challenges affecting marginalized populations.
- **Research and Innovation:** Institutions should foster a culture of research and innovation to generate context-relevant solutions and inform evidence-based practices.
- **Collaboration:** Stronger partnerships among governments, private sector actors, development agencies, and academic institutions are necessary to drive sustainable educational transformation.

Editors' Note

The editors of this volume express profound appreciation to all contributing authors for their scholarly rigor, intellectual depth, and commitment to advancing knowledge in the field of education. The diversity of perspectives represented in this work reflects the complexity of educational challenges and opportunities within Africa.

We also acknowledge the invaluable contributions of peer reviewers, editorial board members, and institutional supporters whose efforts ensured the academic quality and integrity of this publication.

This volume is conceived not only as a scholarly resource but also as a catalyst for dialogue, policy reform, and practical innovation. It is our expectation that the ideas presented herein will inspire further research and contribute to the ongoing transformation of education systems across the continent.