



## IPPIS Policy and the Challenges of its Implementation in the Nigerian Universities: A Conceptual Discourse

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**Abstract.** The Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System (IPPIS) programme was introduced by the Nigeria Federal Government supported by the World Bank as one of the measures of Public Service Reform. Prior to the introduction of this scheme, Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) received their recurrent costs on monthly basis as subvention. The above arrangement gave room for the MDA's to disburse money sent to them whenever and however they deemed fit. This therefore according to records led to financial misconduct in the Nigerian Civil Service. The huge amount spent on recurrent expenditure, if not monitored and cut down through appropriate government policy, could lead to cases of corruption the civil service. Hence, the need for Nigerian Government to provide accurate and correct number of civil servants under her care and to an extent minimize budget estimate via IPPIS programme. This research work examined the benefits and problems of incorporating the university system into IPPIS programme by Federal government of Nigeria. The paper undertakes a theoretical grinding of critical issues under study by adopting a review of periodic publications, journals and related secondary materials. The research used qualitative method in the study. The study revealed that, university system does not reject IPPIS but argued that IPPIS do not adequately capture its flexibility and peculiarities. So, there is the need to take into consideration its demand in the IPPIS software application via UTAS software. The study also discovered many shortfalls and benefits of incorporating university system in to IPPIS programme by the federal government. The study therefore recommends that the implementation of IPPIS policy by federal government should adequately capture the flexibility and peculiarities of the University System; and that, both parties (Federal

government and University community) should consider likely consequences of their misunderstanding which might negatively affect the general public.

**Keywords:** IPPIS Policy, UTAS Software, Federal University Gashua-Nigeria, Government, Employees

### 1. Introduction

In Nigeria all the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDA's) draw their personnel costs from the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF). The exert number of personnel being paid in the nation cannot be easily ascertained due to non-availability of required and necessary information. As a result of none availability of the exert number of public servants in the country, it has become difficult for government to have an accurate wage data for planning and budgeting purpose. The Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System (IPPIS) project seeks to resolve this and also reduce the Federal Government of Nigeria expenditure on overheads.

In October 2006, the federal government embraced the Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System (IPPIS) to provide a reliable and comprehensive database for the public service to address ghost workers syndrome, facilitate human resource planning, eliminate manual record and payroll fraud, facilitate easy storage, update and retrieve personnel records for administrative and pension processes, and facilitate convenient staff salary administration payment with minimal waste and leakage (Public Service Institute of Nigeria, 2011).

Amongst the objectives of the reforms of government is to entrench transparency and accountability in the public service Human Resources (HR) records and payroll administration. This is because successive governments have observed gross inadequacies in the payroll and personnel records in the public service. Several efforts have been made to reduce these challenges, but they tend to worsen with time, resulting in greater incidence of accessing reliable data for human resources planning and management, chaotic state of pension administration; ghost worker syndrome and various forms of payroll and credential fraud.

Manual computation of salary and documentation of personnel information has been compounding the problem of transparency and accountability. This also affects accuracy in computation of salary giving room to overpayment or underpayment of salaries, omission of staff name in monthly payment, wrong calculation of promotion and pension that is due to staff and ex-staff as the case may be. The introduction of the Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System scheme, it was felt that if properly implemented and managed, would go a long way in eradicating or at least bringing the above mentioned problems to the barest minimum. Policy implementation in the public service of the third world countries has become an interesting topic. The success of the policy requires the availability of resources, intergovernmental structure relations, and local government commitments in providing reports to the central government, the influence of policy opponents, the interpretation of objectives, and the community itself as the determinant of policy success (Paulus, et al. 2018).

Corruption is a major societal problem in the 21st century. It is prevalent in developing countries as well as in the developed ones. During the 1980s and 1990s, major banking frauds and corruption scandals occurred in many countries. Nigeria has experienced its fair share of such scandals, especially during the military era and even in the current democratic dispensation. The impact of corruption on our national economy has manifested in different types of political, social, and economic vices. This led to the formation of the EFCC by the Obasanjo administration to find ways of tackling and eradicating corruption in our society (Anifowoshe, 2002).

Agboola (2009) observed that corruption is so pervasive in Nigeria that it has turned public service for many into a kind of criminal enterprise. Graft has fueled political violence, denied millions of Nigerians

access to even the most basic health and education services and reinforced police abuses and other widespread pattern of human rights violations. One of the most common kinds of corrupt practices in the Nigerian public service is the payroll fraud which is the use of “Ghost workers” to divert money to sham identities. According to Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (2006), a ghost worker is someone recorded on the payroll system, but who does not work for the business. This ghost worker can either be a real person who is placed knowingly or not on the organisation’s payroll or it could be a factitious person invented by a dishonest employee. They explained further that ghost worker fraud is commonly perpetrated in organisations when the number of employee are large, particularly when the employees are spread out of the headquarters through the field administration across the geographical locations and payroll operations are less likely to be exposed to such fraud.

Idris, Adaja & Audu (2015) agreed that small businesses can also fall victims if payroll operations are being managed by single person who, unfortunately, happens to be a fraudster or who does not ensure stringent checks on the payroll process. The deceitful worker will compromise and need access to the payroll system in order to add the ghost that is, the person who has some form of direct access to the payroll system. They explained further that the purpose of ghost workers is for the fraudster (worker) to collect the salaries that are being paid out to the ghost workers. The annual salaries paid to any worker in a year can be quite a significant amount, the cumulative monetary loss by the government, due to several ghost workers can be a robust amount if the fraud goes undetected over the years

According to World Bank, as cited in Agboola (2018), employees responsible for human resources and payroll often deal with some information, such as employee identification information, employee salary information and employee status. Payroll is the sum of all financial records of salaries for an employee’s wages, bonuses and deductions. In accounting, payroll refers to the amount paid to employees for services they provided during a certain period of time. Two separate departments gathering, that is, storing and using the same information independently make for duplication of efforts, possibility for human error and more liability because of the sensitive nature of employee information. An integrated payroll system is one that allows both human resources and payroll staff to access the same information without duplicating paperwork or files,

creating efficiencies that save time and money and reduce liability of human efforts.

## 2. Conceptual Clarifications

Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System (IPPIS) is a department within the office of the Accountant General of the Federation (AGF) of Nigeria which is responsible for payment of salaries and wages directly to government employees' bank accounts with appropriate deductions and remittances of 3<sup>rd</sup> party payments such as: Federal Inland Revenue Service, State Boards of Internal Revenue, National Health Insurance Scheme, Pension Fund Administrative, Cooperative Societies, National Housing Fund, Bank Loans and Associations Dues (Department of IPPIS, 2012). The IPPIS is an IT-enabled facility being put in place to establish a reliable and comprehensive database for the public service, facilitate manpower planning, eliminate record and payroll fraud, facilitate easy storage, update and retrieval of personnel records for administrative and pension processes and staff remuneration payment with minimal wastages and leakages (Enakirerhi & Temile, 2017).

Aderounmu (2017) states that information system is a set of tools, processes and methodologies (such as coding/programming, data communications, data conversation, storage and retrieval, systems analysis and design, systems control) and associated equipment employed to collect, process and present information. An information system is the information and communication technology that an organisation uses, and also the way in which people interact with this technology in support of business processes. Aderounmu, Adagunodo & Akinde (2012) cited in Olumuyiwa (2018) observed that information systems have become the backbone of most organisations that bank could not process payments, governments could not collect taxes, hospitals could not treat patients, and supermarkets could not stock their shelves without the support of information systems. In almost every sector especially government, information systems play a vital role in IPPIS in payment of employee salaries. Everyday work, communication, information gathering and decision making all rely on information technology. When they visited bank to make an electronic payment inquiry, they interact with bank's information system rather than with personnel of the bank. They argue for advantages of viewing an information system as a special work system and a work system is a system in which human or machines perform processes and activities using resources to produce specific products or services for customers.

According to Aganga (2011), Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System (IPPIS) is one of the Federal Government reforms initiative conceived to transform the Nigerian Public Service and make it more efficient and effective in service delivery. The IPPIS initiative is aimed at improving the public financial management and providing a centralized payroll system in the country. IPPIS is designed to enroll into the platform, all federal government ministries, departments and agencies, that draw personnel cost fund from consolidated revenue fund. The AGF said when fully functional, the system will help solve the challenges of lack of efficiency, central control, central management, edition of figures and the elimination of replacement of personnel costs in the country.

Okonjo-Iweala (2011) opined that the objectives of the IPPIS policy amongst others are to centralize payment of workers' salaries, facilitate convenient staff remuneration payment with minimal wastage, facilitate easy storage, updating and retrieval of personnel record for administrative and pension processing. It also enhances manpower planning and budgeting and ascertains actual personnel emoluments of the federal government employees. She explained further that IPPIS has actually reduced corruption by virtually eliminating ghost-worker syndrome where applied, thereby reducing the cost of governance. Since the inception of the policy in 2007 to December 2014, it saved government ₦185 billion representing the difference between the money that government would have released to MDAs based on their estimated nominal roll submissions and the amount actually paid through the IPPIS platform. A breakdown of this shows that ₦416 million was saved in its first month of operation and at the end of three years ₦2 billion was realized. IPPIS successfully enrolled 237,917 members of staff and willed out 60,450 ghost workers. Furthermore, it reduced the red-tape involved in manual payroll in salary administration (Okonjo Iweala, 2011).

Enakirerhi & Temile (2017) explored the Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System (IPPIS) in Nigeria by looking critically at the challenges of implementation of IPPIS; benefits to be derived when IPPIS is fully implemented and what the future holds. The study which is descriptive in nature outlined that accurate and reliable personnel information, reduction or elimination of corrupt and sharp practices, facilitation of modern scientific and accurate budgeting and forecasting are the major benefits of IPPIS. These benefits are, however, threatened by skills transfer problem, poor supporting infrastructure, technological barriers for infer MDA

transfer, resistance from stakeholders and lack of will for accelerated implementation.

Enakireehi & Temile (2017) cited in Agboola (2018) agreed that the Integrated Personnel and Payroll System is a good programme no doubt. The whole world is now in the era of technological knowhow and Nigeria cannot afford to be left behind. The Nigerian government regards the implementation of a computerized system as the most critical component of addressing the huge amount of personnel cost and it will accelerate improvement of human management effectiveness, increase confidence in government payroll cost and expenditure management, improvement in overall management reporting and planning, etc. to an extent that it can be achieved, if adequate care is taken to ensure proper implementation of the programme in Nigeria.

### **2.1 Stakeholders and Their Roles in the IPPIS Project**

According to Nwosu (2010), a stakeholder is a person who has interest (stake) in a system or who is affected by or who can influence but not directly involved with the system. From the above, it means that in carrying out the IPPIS project some people or group of people are directly concerned and each of them must contribute his/her quota at one stage of the project or another until it successfully roll-out service-wide. She further observed that IPPIS has some stakeholders which can be categorized as follows: The custodian of the IPPIS system; Civil Servants; Operators/Schedule officers; MDAs Personnel/Salary Managers; Control Agencies; and the Third Party Agencies.

### **2.2 The Custodian of the IPPIS System**

The custodian office has a core responsibility of ensuring the successful delivery of IPPIS so that the set objectives and aims of the system can be achieved. This office carries out this duty by:

- Liaising/connecting with all other stakeholders involved in the delivery of the pilot.
- Ensuring subsequent roll-out of the system until a service-wide implementation is achieved.
- Providing general visibility and awareness of the IPPIS programme within the entire public sector.
- Ensuring the gains envisaged by Government are achieved and sustained.

Office of the Accountant General of the Federation is the office of the government that is saddled with the

above responsibility and so it is the custodian of IPPIS (Nwosu, 2010).

### **2.3 Operators/Schedule Officers**

The operators/schedule officers are the technical people who have been trained to operate the IPPIS on daily basis to perform/record personnel and payroll activities that occur in the database at the various data centres of the MDAs. The quantity of data being captured into IPPIS and the accuracy of staff emoluments that are paid into salary bank accounts of civil servants are being determined by the operators/schedule officers' skill. This set of people needs training and re-training not just once but on a regular basis so that they can perform optimally.

### **2.4 Civil Servants**

These are people whom IPPIS is meant to reform. They are the major entity whose records are being stored and managed by the IPPIS. The project is centered on the civil servants; therefore they are directly or indirectly affected by the success or failure of the operation.

### **2.5 MDAs Personnel/Salary Managers**

These are the middle/top level technocrats that use the information generated by IPPIS for decision making and management reporting. They too, are greatly affected by the quality of data inputted into IPPIS as wrong data will automatically lead them into wrong decision making. People here are the Head of Salary and Personnel records sections and Directors of Personnel/Finance of MDAs. They supervise and interact directly with the operators of IPPIS.

### **2.6 Control Agencies**

As the name implies, they are the government departments that examine carefully the information generated from IPPIS before they exert some measures of control as a way of putting checks and balances into the system. Their work is to make sure that the information recorded is consistent and if not, alarm is raised. The control agencies can effectively plan, monitor and control information flow with comprehensive database of personnel records. They make sure that the performance of IPPIS to bring about the desired gains for which it was implemented is achieved. The control Agencies includes the following: Office of the Head of Service of the Federation (OHCSF), Budget Office (BOF), Office of the Auditor General for the Federation (OAGF),

Central Bank of the Nigeria (CBN) (Flag off and Sensitization of IPPIS, February 7, 2011).

### 2.7 Third Party Agencies

The third party agencies to IPPIS are: Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS), State Board of Inland Revenue services (BIRS), Pension Commission (Pen-Com), Cooperative Societies, Unions and Associations. However, Office of the Accountant General of the Federation (OAGF) generates mandate and salary remittance. The OAGF is directly in control of the implementation of IPPIS, hence the custodian of the system. They perform the following roles:

- Maintenance and control of the IPPIS database which contains the personnel records of all Federal civil servants.
- Supervision and management of IPPIS implementation for attainment of its set objectives.
- Prescription of standard and uniform infrastructure for the capturing of employment biometric data and processing of payroll.
- Prescription of internal control and guidance and ensuring their compliance to the operation of IPPIS.
- Organization of periodic training for operators/users of IPPIS.
- Provision of cash backing mandates to the CBN in respect of warrants issued by BOF for the payment of staff salaries.
- Attending to queries and complaints arising from IPPIS implementation.
- Analyzing report generated by the MOAs and BOF with a view to identifying areas that need further attention.

In addition, Federal Civil Service Commission (FCSC) is responsible for maintenance of ICT and termination of appointment into Federal Service (Flag off and Sensitization of IPPIS, February 7, 2011).

Also, Nigeria Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) is responsible for maintenance of ICT infrastructure on which the IPPIS runs; while, Office of the Head of Civil Service of the Federation (OHCSF) is responsible for establishment control and Cadre Management. They design the organization structure of the Federal

Civil Service and provide a framework for which employees are placed when employed, promoted or transferred. Their roles are summarized as follows:

- Keeping records of career progression, that is, movements of all staff, either by way of promotion/demotion, transfers or termination of appointment.
- Maintaining detailed personnel records of Federal Civil Servants.
- Liaising with MDAs and Pool office in the compilation and custody of personnel records. Once more, Office of the Accountant General of the Federation (OAGF) is responsible for mandate generation and payroll process to CBN. The following constitute the processes that take place in (OAGF).
- Principle system Analyst OAGF-receives notification of closed payroll run, payroll report and the warrant from Director Funds, OAGF.
- Generates transaction files for each payment type example, salaries, tax payment, pension contributions, union dues, loans repayment etc.
- Prepares payroll transaction files for transfer to CBN on electronic media (e.g.CD).
- Generates report for mandate generation. Some of these reports include payroll summary, bank analysis, payroll register, End of month analysis and management summary report.

Office of the Auditor General for the Federation is responsible for audit and control oversight. They examine closely all the financial transactions that are recorded/performed with IPPIS by the operators to ensure compliance with laid down rules and regulations.

Budget Office (BOF) is responsible for payroll warrant release, using the information available from IPPIS; they plan ahead the recurrent expenditures to be incurred on personnel emoluments in the incoming year. They also compare actual salary payment with what has been budgeted for. Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) sends the mandate to NIBSS for e-payment into individual employee's bank accounts. Funding of salary payments is done through banks' settlement account with the CBN. Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System Plc operates Automated Direct Credits Service to facilitate the payment of civil servants' salaries nationwide through banks. They deliver payment instructions to all banks electronically and ensure that they credit beneficiary same day (Flag off and Sensitization of IPPIS, February 7, 2011).

### 3. Empirical Review of IPPIS Policy in other Countries

Government of Rwanda since 2008 developed and implemented an Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System (IPPIS). This is an in-house developed solution. The IPPIS replaced the legacy

payroll system with added functionalities to assist in human resource management. Detailed user manuals and high-level technical documentation were written and modeled using internationally accepted standards. In 2014 the Rwandan government got assistance from the World Bank to improve the system functionality. This requirement was necessary as a result of changes in the operational environment and also changes in the standard governmental procedures related to human resource management (Rwanda's PFMRS, 2013, 2014) cited in Ibanichuka, (2019).

Schwalbe (2007) said "Just as Information Technology Projects have poor track record of meeting projects goals, they also have poor record in meeting budget goals. Adams, et al, (1992) cited in Ibanichuka (2019), replicated the work of Davis (1989) to demonstrate the validity and reliability of his instrument and his measurement scales. The main problem, with the implementation of the IPPIS being implementation of all modules which include Career Development and Succession Planning, Job Evaluation, Grievance Management, Disciplinary Process Management, Employee Contract Management, Organization Structure and Talent Management which were not initially planned in the initial design. To address this problem and to ensure the identified requirements are integrated, the Government sorted assistance of a consultant to work with MDAs, and developed a detailed requirement analysis which involved all stakeholders, documented all workflows and processes, identified and documented business interfaces with external systems, defined the expected input and output for business processes.

In 1999, the Tanzania's Government through the Public Service Management started implementation of a HR and payroll system. In 2010, a business process review was conducted and presented to stakeholders that additional system development was necessary to improve the system functionality. Upgrading of the Lawson system was carried out under many challenges including lack of donor support that had initially supported development of the system. Several reviews of the IPPS identified that the system do not meet the basic requirements for managing both HR and Payroll data. The reviews identified weak implementation strategy that made the system centralized at the Ministry of Public Service. Since then, this has changed and the system decentralized in MDAs (PSRP reports, 2006, 2007, and 2010) in Ibanichuka, (2019).

Adopting information systems could be impeded by laws and regulations but also poor system support. The integrated personnel and payroll information system and integrated financial management and information system have been able to enhance accountability and transparency in the management of government resources. More so, the Ministry of Finance observed in 2013 that the (IPPIS) has enhanced efficient personnel cost, planning and budgeting as personnel cost was based on actual verified aim and not estimates (Idris, Adaja & Audu (2015).

Uganda has been implementing an Integrated Payroll and Personnel System (IPPS) since 2009. The current Oracle database, licenses and operating system have never been updated since 2009. The system was reviewed in 2015. Results from the review indicate that the system data is incomplete; there were inaccuracies between actual payroll data and the IFMIS system. Human Resource Officers were not aware of actual payments made and whether they tallied with the figures computed in the IPPS Payroll. IPPS currently has no alternative Business Continuity & Disaster Recovery Capability. DRS Server has no functional storage as it was taken to replace storage at the production site which had crashed with no replacement as yet. DRS is not connected to the network therefore replication is not working and no back-ups stored in offsite location (Uganda IPPS, (2015) cited in Ibanichuka, (2019).

#### **4. Brief History of IPPIS Policy in Nigeria**

Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System (IPPIS) was first initiated by the Federal Government of Nigeria in the year 2006. The intention was to improve the effectiveness and efficiency in the storage of personnel records and administration of monthly payroll in such a way to enhance confidence in staff emolument costs and budgeting. IPPIS is a child of the Federal Government Reform Programme which was conceptualized at the Bureau of Public Service Reform (BPSR) for the purpose of centralized payment of all civil servants in the employment of the Federal Government. The IPPIS project started in April 2007 with the enrolment of the seven pilot Ministries, Departments and agencies (MDAs). It was financed through a World Bank facility of about USD 4.9 million. It was finally transferred to the Office of the Accountant General of the Federation in 2008. The seven pilot Ministries were: Federal Ministry of Education, Federal Ministry of Works, Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget Office of the Federation, Federal Ministry of Information and Communication, Ministry of Foreign

Affairs, and National Planning Commission (Nwosu, 2010).

The intention was that the system would be implemented in accordance with parts of the world where Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is used to improve management reporting and information. At the initial stage of formulation and planning of the project, Bureau for Public Service Reforms was the custodian of the IPPIS. The scope of the project was to cover the administration of the FGN's human resources beginning with establishment control and cadre management. It would cover all the activities that have to do with recruitment, promotion, transfers, and career movements until appointment termination. The system was to track all the financial transactions that are related and linked to personnel emoluments. For the sustenance of the system, the Federal Government commissioned a formidable consortium of ICT firms that have world class professional capabilities in networking, connectivity, software development and integration for the implementation of the project (Nwosu, 2010).

According to Aganga, (2011), the Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System (IPPIS) is one of the Federal Government Reforms Initiative conceived to transform the Nigerian Public Service and make it more efficient and effective in service delivery. The IPPIS initiative is aimed at improving the public financial management and providing a centralized payroll system in the country. IPPIS is designed to enroll into platform, all federal government ministries, departments and agencies, that draw personnel cost fund from consolidated revenue fund. The AGF said when fully functional, the system will help solve the challenges for lack of efficiency lack of central control, lack of central management and lack of rendition of figures. Besides, he said, the elimination of replacement of personnel costs in the country.

The huge amount of ghost workers in the previous years is alarming and berating but IPPIS is only objective for pragmatic solution of ghost workers from the payroll system. For example, the federal government has recovered 23, 846 non-existent employees from its payroll according to Festus Akanbi, a Special Adviser to Finance Minister, Kemi Adeosun. Consequently, the salary bill for February 2016 reduced by 2.293 billion naira (10.5 million euros and to \$11.5 million) when compared to December 2015 when the BVN audit process commenced. He explained further that the Ministry announced that it would undertake periodic checks

and utilize computer-assisted audit techniques. The ministry was working with the financial crimes agency and the National Pension Commission to identify irregularities and the aim was to recover salaries and pension contributions related to the ghost workers in the service (Sunday Punch, 2016).

## 5. Theoretical Foundation

This study on the implementation of IPPIS policy in the Nigerian Universities by Federal Government is based on the Equity theory, which suggests that employee perceptions of what they contribute to the organization, what they get in return and how their return-contribution ratio compares to others inside and outside the organization, determine how fair they perceive their employment relationship to be. Adams in Gerhart, (1995) opined that perceptions of inequity are expected to cause employees to take actions to restore equity. Unfortunately, some such actions like quitting, lack of cooperation especially in form of fraud may not be helpful to the organization.

Cowherd & Levine in Gerhart (1995) added that individuals often compare their pay to that of people higher in the organization structure. If lower level employees feel inequitable treated, they may seek to reduce their effort to achieve equity. In government organizations, government spending and taxation are key tools of fiscal policy. Government expenditure refers to the recurrent and capital expenditure incurred by the public sector for the absorption and maintenance of its resources (Anyaduba, 2013).

Recurrent expenditure is the ongoing expenditure of an organization or expenses that occur repeatedly which involve the payment of salaries, travelling expenses and other miscellaneous expenses. It is paid from the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) and no such expenditure may be incurred except on the authority of a warrant duly signed by the Minister of Finance (Ani, 1998). This means that salaries are paid from recurrent expenditure of government and they are monitored using fiscal policy to avoid over spending. It is used by governments in an attempt to maintain economic growth, high employment and low inflation (Ibanichuka, et al. 2019). The policy is based on the theory of British economist John Maynard Keynes also known as Keynesian economics. This theory basically states that governments can influence macroeconomic productivity levels by increasing or decreasing tax level and public spending. It in turn, curbs inflation, increase employment and maintains a healthy value of money (Heakal, 2013). According to Weil (2008), cited in Ibanichuka, et al (2019), fiscal policy is said to be tight or contraction when revenue is higher than

spending (government budget in surplus) and loose or expansionary when spending is higher than revenue (budget is in deficit).

## 6. Challenges of Implementing IPPIS Policy in the Nigerian University System

According to Academic Staff Union of University (ASUU), Lagos Chapter (2019), the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information system has the following challenges:

### 6.1 IPPIS Violates the University Autonomy

Universities operate differently from the civil service and as such cannot be seen as appendages of Ministries, Departments and Agencies of Government. It is on this premise that, in addition to the Act establishing each University, there is the Universities Miscellaneous Provisions (Amendment) Act 2003 which clearly states in section 2AA that the power of the council shall be exercised, as in the Laws and Statutes of each University and to that extent, establishment circulars that are inconsistent with the laws and statutes of the University shall not apply to the Universities.

Furthermore, the 1992 Act establishing the Federal Universities of Agriculture Section 8 (1 and 4) of the first schedule states that "Subject to the provisions of this Act relating to the visitor, the Council SHALL be the governing body of each University and SHALL be charged with the general control and superintendence of the policy, finance and property of the University. The Council SHALL ensure that proper accounts of the University are kept and that the accounts of the University are audited annually by an independent firm of auditors approved by the Council" From the foregoing, it is clear that aside from the release of the approved budgetary provision, the OAGF has no business in the superintendence, financial control and cost saving measures in the University. This power and responsibility is vested on the Governing Council of each Federal University. The Presidential directive that all employees of Federal Government in MDAs that fail to enroll in IPPIS by October 2020 would not receive salary is not in line with the establishment laws of the Universities and it is a ploy to forcefully enroll our members into IPPIS. By the establishment law, University staffs are employees of their respective Councils. Therefore, the said directive cannot be applied to Universities. The notion that Government is Council and Council is Government as being argued by AGF is incorrect as all members of the Council are not government appointees. It is our

sincere belief that the President will not violate his Oath of Office to abide by the Constitution and the Law of the land when he stated during his swearing into office "...that in all circumstances, I will do right to all manner of people, according to law..." Therefore, where there is conflict between the law and policy/directive, the law takes precedence.

IPPIS is a breach of ASUU-FGN Agreements of 1992, 2001 and 2009: "It was agreed that the Universities should be allowed to operate in compliance with their enabling laws, statutes, rules and regulations in conformity with due process and within the laws of the land" paragraph 5.10, 1992 ASUU-FGN Agreement. "Circulars from ministries SHALL be deemed invalid to the extent that they are inconsistent with the laws and regulations of the Universities and the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria" 2001 ASUU-FGN Agreement (item iv under Powers of Council "Each University SHALL arrange its own cost saving measures" (2009 ASUU-FGN Agreement. pp 25).

IPPIS does not recognize nor adequately capture the flexibility and peculiarities of the university system in terms of replacement/recruitment of staff, movement of staff (visiting, adjunct and part-time), the process of promotion of academics in professorial cadre, retirement age of 65 and 70 years for academics who retired before reaching professorial cadre and those on professorial cadre respectively, remuneration of staff on sabbatical, external examiners, external assessors and earned academic allowances (EAA). Technically speaking, IPPIS is a scam. It creates more problems than it resolves to buttress. The IPPIS system only recognizes staff members that are on permanent and pensionable appointments. "The IPPIS restricts the ability of universities to employ much-needed staff at short notice. Such staff, when recruited, may not be paid until cleared by the Office of the Accountant General of the Federation (OAGF), thus creating avenues for corruption. The dynamism associated with staff recruitment will become cumbersome with the introduction of IPPIS," (Chairperson, ASUU, Lagos Chapter, 2019)

In addition, Mr Ogunyemi who addressed the Senate President described IPPIS as a scam and threat to national security. He also said the payment system violates university autonomy. He noted that contrary to the law expressly backing the Governing Councils of each Federal University to exercise full control over the finances of the universities, IPPIS "lacks constitutional backing; neither is it supported by any Act of the National Assembly" (Premium Time,

2019). The ASUU President said one of the biggest challenges of IPPIS is that it poses great threat to 'national security. The system, he said, is not strategic for a sovereign nation in a world system where almost all countries are vulnerable to sabotage by international cybercriminals and states. He also added that "The IPPIS is not a home-grown initiative; rather it is a prescription of the World Bank, which ultimate consequence is to create anarchy and therefore, retard the growth and development of Nigeria" (Premium Time, 2019).

The union leader said 'IPPIS cannot address specific processes of promotion of academics. For example, the promotion exercise in the professional cadre, which is subject to external assessment that may last for several months; in such cases, when the outcome of the exercise is returned positive, the beneficiary is paid arrears from the beginning of the assessment process; but this cannot be captured by IPPIS' Premium Time (25th Sept. 2019). Implementation of IPPIS in Nigerian Universities will further localize their operations and perspectives, thus negatively impacting their ranking in the global academic community," he added (Premium Time, 2019).

## 7. Conclusion

The study discovered that university system does not reject IPPIS but argued that IPPIS does not adequately capture its flexibility and peculiarities. Thus there is the need to take into consideration its demand in the IPPIS software application. To help government to achieve, the Academic Staff Union of Universities has developed what it called University Transparency Accountability Software. This software accommodates the peculiarities of the University system with the added advantage of addressing fraud in the payroll system. From the foregoing, we can also conclude that the implementation of IPPIS and UTAS will to a great extent reduce the capacity and opportunity of fraudulent individuals who perpetrate payroll fraud by including names of ghost workers in the payroll of governments at all levels.

In addition, IPPIS does not recognize nor adequately capture the flexibility and peculiarities of the University System in terms of replacement/recruitment of staff, movement of staff (visiting, adjunct and part-time), the process of promotion of academics in professorial cadre, retirement age of 65 and 70 years for academics who retired before reaching professorial cadre and those on professorial cadre respectively, remuneration of staff on sabbatical, external examiners, external assessors and earned academic allowances. It was

also discovered that proper implementation of Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System will significantly eliminate payroll fraud thereby reducing government recurrent expenditure. The IPPIS policy is likely to offer good results in the society if properly implemented and managed. Hence, it will go a long way in eradicating ghost workers and double-dealings in the Nigerian public service which is minimal in the university system.

## 8. Recommendations

The Integrated Personnel and Payroll System is a good programme no doubt. The whole world is now in the era of technological knowhow and Nigeria cannot afford to be left behind. Government goals for introducing IPPIS programme which includes improved human management effectiveness, increase confidence in government payroll cost and expenditure management, improvement in overall management reporting and planning, etc. can to an extent be achieved if adequate care is taken to ensure proper implementation of the programme in the university system.

Since IPPIS does not recognize nor adequately capture the flexibility and peculiarities of the University System in terms of replacement/recruitment of staff, movement of staff (visiting, adjunct and part-time), the process of promotion of academics in Professorial Cadre, retirement age of 65 and 70 years for academics who retired before reaching Professorial Cadre and those on Professorial Cadre respectively, remuneration of staff on sabbatical, external examiners, external assessors and Earned Academic Allowances. This study therefore, recommends that the implementation of IPPIS should be replaced by University Transparency and Accountability Software to cater for the needs and peculiarities of the University System.

Government should make sure that they improve on the programme by making use of feedback from people. This can be achieved by ensuring that the IPPIS office receives both civil servants complaints and that of the concerned parties like ASUU and equally attend to them. Government wants the Integrated Personnel and Payroll Scheme to succeed in Nigeria as it did in other developed countries, this can be achieved if only more efforts is put to careful implementation of the project with the co-operation of the civil servants.

However, the fact remains that there are people who are expert in negative acts in every society, Nigeria is

not an exception. Nigeria is one of the countries where people, instead of developing new ideas and improving on existing technology, will rather develop on how to scatter and destroy other people's effort. Government should therefore enact laws and decrees that will be guiding the programme. Offenders of the law should be punished without fear or favour. This will act as a deterrent to others.

The general principle of control in the payroll department is evident amongst many of the best practices of payroll standards. Payroll systems should never be solely handed by one employee. For instance, the employee running the system should be different from the approving the payroll. There is need for rotation of the responsibility of payroll operations between a numbers of people to reduce any opportunity for fraudulent activities. It is difficult to entirely eliminate ghost worker fraud, implementing stringent controls and frequent checks can reduce the risk of such payroll fraud and save the organization on unnecessary monetary losses and time

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