JOURNAL OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE
ISSN Print: 2992-2763 – ISSN Online: 2992-4618 | Vol. 3, No. 3 / September, 2025
https://www.jopd.com.ng

ACADEMIC STAFF UNION OF UNIVERSITIES AND THE IMPACT OF INTEGRATED PAYROLL AND PERSONNEL INFORMATION SYSTEM IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES IN NIGERIA

By

OGAJI Tijani Adamu
Department of Political Science, Federal University Dustin-Ma, Katsina
ogajitijaniadamu1@gmail.com
08088230100

Elijah Bem Tativ, PhD
Department of Political Science, Federal University Dustin-Ma, Katsina
tbelijah@fudutsinma.edu.ng
0803 8817641

Isaac Iorhen Akuva , PhD
Department of Political Science, Federal University Dustin-Ma, Katsina
akuvaisaac@gmail.com
08032103989

Abstract
This study examines the implications of the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) on federal universities in Nigeria, focusing on its impact on institutional autonomy and recruitment processes. The research was motivated by the persistent conflict between the Federal Government and the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), which opposes IPPIS for its perceived incompatibility with academic operations. Using a survey design, data were collected from 282 academic staff at Federal University Dutsinma and Federal University Dutse, analyzed quantitatively, and supplemented with interviews. The study employed David Easton's System Theory (1957) to analyze the policy's institutional dynamics. Findings reveal that 54.7% of respondents agreed IPPIS slowed recruitment, while 63.8% viewed it as a violation of university autonomy. Additionally, 68.2% highlighted administrative inefficiencies due to centralized fund management. The study concludes that while IPPIS aims to curb fraud, its rigid framework disrupts academic flexibility and institutional independence. Recommendations include restoring university autonomy, adopting flexible recruitment processes, adhering to legal provisions safeguarding university governance, and exempting tertiary institutions from IPPIS. The study advocates for dialogue between stakeholders to design systems that balance accountability with the unique needs of academia.

Keywords: IPPIS, University Autonomy, ASUU, Staffing Delays, Higher Education Governance

Introduction
The persistent friction between the Federal Government of Nigeria and the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has highlighted significant tensions surrounding the adoption of the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) for salary administration in federal universities. Introduced in 2007, IPPIS was designed to enhance transparency, accountability, and efficiency in the payment of federal workers by centralizing payroll management (Egbas, 2019). While the government views the system as a critical tool for combating payroll fraud and ensuring proper tax remittances (Odogwu, 2020), ASUU has strongly opposed its implementation in universities, citing issues related to institutional

autonomy, administrative inefficiencies, and the exclusion of unique academic work arrangements (Egbas, 2019; Aluko, 2020). ASUU has raised concerns about the potential negative impact of IPPIS on academic freedom and research activities within universities.

ASUU's resistance stems from concerns that IPPIS fails to accommodate the complexities of academic employment, such as sabbatical leave, visiting scholar arrangements, and earned academic allowances (Egbas, 2019). Moreover, reports of underpayments, wrongful deductions, and non-recognition of contract and part-time staff have fueled the union's criticism, with some contract lecturers already dismissed from institutions such as the Federal University Wukari and Bayero University Kano (Aluko, 2020). According to the government, previous payroll platforms like the Government Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS) enabled the proliferation of ghost workers and inappropriate tax practices, leading to substantial tax shortfalls, reportedly up to ₦800 billion, which the Joint Tax Board has billed to the federal government (Odogwu, 2020). The government has since implemented the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) to address these issues and ensure transparency in payroll management. However, the lack of recognition for contract and part-time staff remains a contentious issue for unions and educators across various institutions in Nigeria.

Before the implementation of IPPIS in Nigerian higher education institutions, Federal Universities in Nigeria faced significant challenges in planning and budgeting due to the outdated system of manual payroll and personnel information management. This manual system permitted the inclusion of non-existent employee benefits, fraudulent personnel records such as fictitious retirees, the collection of multiple allowances and gratuities, credential forgery, as well as the falsification of retirement ages and first appointment dates (Sambo, 2020). Consequently, budgeting and planning within federal universities relied on estimates because the manual payroll and personnel information system failed to accurately reflect the true staff numbers of the institutions (Sambo, 2020). This created opportunities for universities to budget excess amounts beyond their actual needs. Such activities deprived the federal government of essential funds required to support capital projects. These issues jeopardized development initiatives and the effective implementation of government policies.

In response, successive governments, including the Buhari administration, initiated reform strategies aimed at reducing recurrent expenditures through suitable policies to prevent overspending government revenues on salary payments, which adversely affected other pressing sectors. These include the creation of the International Public Sector Accounting Standard, Government Integrated Financial Management Information System, International Financial Management Information System, and Treasury Single Account. The goals of these reforms have not yet been entirely achieved, nevertheless. The Bureau of Public Service Reforms, as part of the Economic Governance Reform, recommended using IPPIS to replace the conventional wage payment mechanism because of the shortcomings of the previous systems.

Now, eight years after the program's inception, researchers found it necessary to determine whether the introduction of IPPIS has truly met its goals of openness and aids in the fight against corruption in the government's Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs). This is especially pertinent as prior studies on IPPIS primarily focused on its effectiveness in combatting the ghost worker issue within the civil service; the effects of IPPIS on federal government recurrent spending; and its impact on reducing payroll fraud, among other topics. No research known to the researchers has specifically addressed tertiary institutions, particularly federal universities. It is within this context that this study is conducted to bridge the knowledge gap by examining the implications of IPPIS implementation on federal

universities, using the experiences of Federal University Dutsinma and Federal University Dutse as case studies. It explores the broader political and institutional dynamics involved and assesses how the IPPIS-ASUU standoff affects the governance and functionality of Nigeria's higher education system.

Research Objectives

i. Establish if the IPPIS policy's implementation has caused a breach of the autonomy of Federal Tertiary Institutions.
ii. Ascertain the policy's implementation has caused a slowdown in hiring at Federal Tertiary Institutions.

Literature Review

Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU)

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) was established in 1978 as the principal trade union representing academic staff in both federal and state universities in Nigeria. Prior to its formation, academic staff were collectively represented by the Nigerian Association of University Teachers (NAUT), formed in 1965. Founding members of ASUU included academic staff from institutions such as the University of Lagos, Ahmadu Bello University, Obafemi Awolowo University (formerly University of Ife), University of Ibadan, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and the University of Benin (Osagiobare et al., 2019). ASUU operates alongside other unions such as the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU), the National Association of Academic Technologists (NAAT), and the Non-Academic Staff Union (NASU). Although not a trade union, the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) remains a key stakeholder in university affairs.

ASUU's primary mission is to protect and advance the professional, economic, and welfare interests of its members, while also engaging with broader national issues of education policy, governance, and public accountability (Anikpo, 2011; Egbegi & Iheriohanma, 2018). Unlike its predecessor, NAUT, which maintained a relatively passive posture in labor advocacy, ASUU embraced a more assertive approach to industrial relations. This shift has resulted in recurring industrial actions, most notably strikes arising from the federal government's perceived failure to meet the union's demands on university revitalization, academic autonomy, and equitable funding. These prolonged disputes have led to significant disruptions in the academic calendar and deterioration in the quality and efficiency of university education in Nigeria (ASUU, 2005; Egbegi & Iheriohanma, 2018). The prolonged disputes have also negatively impacted the morale and well-being of both students and lecturers, further exacerbating the already strained educational system in Nigeria. The continuous cycle of strikes and disruptions has raised concerns about the long-term sustainability of higher education in the country.

Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System

The Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) is a centralized, technology-driven payroll platform introduced by the Federal Government of Nigeria in 2007 as part of its wider civil service reform agenda. The system was initially piloted in seven Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), with the goal of establishing a reliable and comprehensive employee database that would eliminate ghost workers, enhance financial accountability, and streamline personnel administration (OAGF, 2020). Funded partly by the World Bank under the Economic Reform and Government Project (ERGP), IPPIS was later transferred to the Office of the Accountant General of the Federation for full implementation.

According to Enakirerhi and Temile (2017), IPPIS serves as a strategic intervention to improve public sector efficiency by automating salary payments, supporting manpower planning, and facilitating accurate recordkeeping for administrative and pension purposes. Similarly, Farajimakin and Anichebe (2019) view the system as a key reform mechanism for eliminating fraud, preventing duplicate employments, and fostering transparency in government payroll processes. Despite these intended benefits, the implementation of IPPIS in federal universities has been met with resistance from ASUU. The union argues that the system undermines university autonomy and is structurally incapable of accommodating the peculiarities of academic work, such as sabbaticals, visiting appointments, and earned allowances. This opposition has culminated in prolonged conflicts, as highlighted in the introduction, and reflects a broader tension between centralized governmental control and institutional independence in Nigeria's higher education system.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts system theory as a theoretical framework of analysis. David Easton's System Theory (1957) provides a foundational framework for analyzing political processes and institutional responses within a given environment. At its core, the theory conceptualizes a political system as a network of interrelated structures and functions that convert societal inputs, such as demands and supports, into authoritative decisions or outputs (Easton, 1957). This input–output model is cyclic, where outputs produce feedback that, in turn, reshapes subsequent inputs. Within this theoretical lens, a functioning political system must continually adapt to ensure equilibrium by responding to societal pressures and maintaining legitimacy.

In the context of Nigeria's higher education sector, Easton's framework is particularly relevant in understanding the persistent conflict between the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and the Federal Government of Nigeria over the implementation of the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS). ASUU's resistance to IPPIS on the grounds of its incompatibility with academic workflows, university autonomy, and delayed remuneration constitutes a clear demand for input into the Nigerian political system (Okebukola, 2021). Similarly, ASUU's conditional engagement with state institutions, despite its grievances, reflects a form of continued but strained support.

Methodology

Research Design

Survey design was used in this study. This was done through the administration of questionnaire to the Academic Staff of Federal University Dutsinma and Federal University Dutse. The survey design is relevant to this study, because sample from the population was used and inference were made on the entire population.

Research Population

The population of this study was drawn from the 677 academic staff of Federal University Dutsinma and 578 academic staff of Federal University Dutse (Source: information unit of the respective universities, 2023). Therefore, the total population of this study is 1, 255. Also, staff of IPPIS office form of the population of the study.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The researcher adopts the Taro Yamane (1967) formula to determine the appropriate sample size for the study.

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)2}$$

Where:

n = sample size

N = population size (1,255)

e = margin of error (0.05)

$$n = \frac{1,255}{1+1,255(0.05)2}$$

$$n = \frac{1,255}{4.1375}$$

$$= 303$$

Thus, the sample size for this study is approximately 303 respondents, which ensures sufficient representation of the population.

Method of Data Collection

Data for this study were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. The primary instruments used for data collection included questionnaires and interview. A five-point Likert scale was employed in the questionnaire, with response options arranged as follows: Strongly Agree, Agreed, Undecided, Disagreed, and Strongly Disagree.

Data Presentation and Analysis

A total of 303 questionnaires were distributed equally between the two institutions, with each institution receiving 150 questionnaires, representing 50.0% of the total distributed questionnaires. Federal University Dutsin-Ma recorded 145 returned questionnaires, accounting for 51.4% of all returned questionnaires, while Federal University Dutse returned 137 (48.6%) questionnaires.

Table 1: Demographic Distribution of Participants

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Sex	Male	246	87.2	87.2	87.2
	Female	36	12.8	12.8	100.0
Marital Status	Single	82	29.1	29.1	29.1
	Married	174	61.5	61.5	90.6
	Divorced	26	9.4	9.4	100.0
Age	25–35 years	75	26.7	26.7	26.7
	36–45 years	107	37.9	37.9	64.6
	46–55 years	37	13.1	13.1	77.7
	55 years and above	63	22.3	22.3	100.0

Institution	Federal University Dutsin-Ma	144	51.1	51.1	51.1
	Federal University Dutse	138	48.9	48.9	100.0
Total Participants		282	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey (2025)

Table 1 provides a comprehensive overview of the demographic characteristics of the 282 participants who took part in the study. The sex distribution reveals a significant male dominance, with 246 males (87.2%) and only 36 females (12.8%), indicating a gender imbalance among respondents.

In terms of marital status, the majority of participants were married (61.5%), followed by single individuals (29.1%) and a smaller proportion of divorced respondents (9.4%). This marital pattern is consistent with the age distribution, where the majority of participants fell within the 36–45 years (37.9%) and 25–35 years (26.7%) age brackets — typically marriageable and professionally active age groups in Nigerian society.

The age structure highlights that most participants were in their productive middle age, which aligns with the typical demographic profile of staff in tertiary institutions, especially those who have acquired significant educational and professional experience before securing academic or administrative roles.

The institutional distribution was relatively balanced between the two universities: Federal University Dutsin-Ma had a slightly higher number of respondents (51.1%) compared to Federal University Dutse (48.9%). This close representation suggests a fairly equal level of participation across the institutions, enhancing the reliability and comparability of findings drawn from both sites.

Table 2: Introduction of IPPIS Policy has slowed down Recruitment in Federal Universities in Nigeria

Statement	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Strongly Disagree	22	7.8	7.8	7.8
Disagree	26	9.2	9.2	17.0
Undecided	80	28.4	28.4	45.4
Agree	96	34.0	34.0	79.4
Strongly Agree	58	20.6	20.6	100.0
Total	282	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field survey, (2025)

Table 2 presents the perception of respondents on the statement: "The introduction of the IPPIS policy has slowed down recruitment in federal universities in Nigeria." The data obtained reveals that 130 respondents (34.0%) agreed with the statement, while 79 respondents (20.7%) strongly agreed. This indicates that a combined 54.7% of respondents supported the assertion that the IPPIS policy has slowed down recruitment. On the other hand, 30 respondents (7.9%) strongly disagreed, and 35 respondents (9.2%) disagreed, making a combined 17.1% of respondents who did not believe that the IPPIS policy has had such an impact. 108 (28.3%) of the participants were undecided, suggesting neutrality or lack of sufficient knowledge on the subject. The cumulative percentage further emphasizes that 45.3% of respondents either disagreed or were undecided, while the remaining 54.7% affirmed that the IPPIS policy has slowed down recruitment. These results imply that although the majority of respondents acknowledge the policy's impact on recruitment processes, there is a notable fraction of respondents who either disagree or are uncertain, indicating varying perspectives or levels of awareness regarding the policy's effects.

Combining the responses above, an interviewee from Federal University Dutsin-Ma, conducted on the 8th of October, mentioned that the implementation of IPPIS has resulted in a delay in hiring within federal tertiary institutions in Nigeria. He noted that the IPPIS framework only acknowledges employees with permanent and pensionable positions. "The IPPIS limits the capacity of universities to hire urgently needed personnel. When such staff are brought on board, their salaries may not be disbursed until they receive clearance from the Office of the Accountant General of the Federation (OAGF), thereby opening doors for corruption.

Table 3: IPPIS Restricts the Ability of Universities to employ much-needed Staff at Short Notice.

Statement	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Strongly Disagree	24	8.5	8.5	8.5
Disagree	38	13.5	13.5	22.0
Undecided	80	28.4	28.4	50.4
Agree	110	39.0	39.0	89.4
Strongly Agree	30	10.6	10.6	100
Total	**282**	**100**	**100**	

Source: Field survey, (2025)

Table 3 examines respondents' perceptions regarding the statement: "IPPIS restricts the ability of universities to employ much-needed staff at short notice." Findings of the study show that 110 respondents (39.0%) agreed with the statement, while 30 respondents (10.6%) strongly agreed. Conversely, 24 respondents (8.5%) strongly disagreed, and 38 respondents (13.5%) disagreed, making a combined 22.0% of respondents who did not perceive the IPPIS policy as restrictive in this context. 80 respondents (28.4%) were undecided, reflecting uncertainty or a lack of strong opinion on the matter. The cumulative percentage highlights that 50.4% of respondents either disagreed or were undecided, while the remaining 49.6% affirmed that the policy restricts universities' hiring flexibility. It can be deduced from the results that while a majority of the respondents view IPPIS as a limiting factor in the prompt

employment of staff, a substantial number remain neutral or disagree, indicating varying perspectives on the policy's impact.

A respondent from the Federal University of Dutse expressed that the flexibility regarding staff hiring has turned problematic with the implementation of IPPIS. He remarked that concerning employment in the universities, "The authority over hiring is no longer with the University administration. Universities have experienced significant staff losses, yet replacements cannot be made because approval is required from various offices. You might wish to replace a certain category of staff and will need to obtain consent, and they will respond; submit my list first. If there is a Vice-Chancellor bold enough to declare they do not require the type of personnel being proposed, they will insist you accommodate them," he lamented.

Table 4: IPPIS makes it Difficult for the Universities to recruit evenwhen they have Shortage of Manpower

Statement	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Strongly Disagree	4	1.4	1.4	1.4
Disagree	26	9.2	9.2	10.6
Undecided	107	37.9	37.9	48.6
Agree	95	33.7	33.7	82.3
Strongly Agree	50	17.8	17.8	100.0
Total	**282**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Source: Field survey, (2025)

Table 4 examines respondents' opinions on the statement: "IPPIS makes it difficult for universities to recruit even when they have a shortage of manpower." The findings reveal that 95 respondents (33.7%) agreed with the statement, while 50 respondents (17.8%) strongly agreed. Conversely, 4 respondents (1.4%) strongly disagreed, and 26 respondents (9.2%) disagreed. 107 respondents (37.9%) were undecided, indicating a significant portion of the sample who may either lack sufficient information or hold a neutral stance on the matter.

The cumulative percentages indicate that 48.6% of respondents either disagreed or were undecided, while 51.4% affirmed that IPPIS poses challenges to staff recruitment during manpower shortages. These results suggest a fairly divided perception, with a narrow majority acknowledging the restrictive impact of IPPIS on timely hiring, while a substantial number of respondents remain uncertain or unconvinced of its effects.

Additionally, a respondent interviewed on October 8th remarked that "It is regrettable that the Vice-Chancellors who once recruited the finest staff for their universities can no longer hire even the most junior staff without permission from multiple government agencies. External interference in university governance is increasing daily, a troubling indication of the potential complete erosion of the so-called 'autonomy' of universities. 'I observe troubling signs and administrative hurdles that not only undermine the morale of the Vice-Chancellors (and the primary officials) but severely limit the vast developmental and innovative opportunities in these institutions.' He concluded that the integration of IPPIS into the university framework has hindered university administrators in their hiring processes.

Table 5: IPPIS Payment System Violates University Autonomy

Statement	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Strongly Disagree	22	7.8	7.8	7.8
Disagree	34	12.1	12.1	19.9
Undecided	46	16.3	16.3	36.2
Agree	105	37.2	37.2	73.4
Strongly Agree	75	26.6	26.6	100.0
Total	**282**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Source: Field survey, (2025)

Presented in Table 5 is the respondents' view on the statement: "IPPIS payment system violates university autonomy." The results indicate that 105 respondents (37.2%) agreed, while 75 respondents (26.6%) strongly agreed. Conversely, 46 respondents (16.3%) were undecided, 22 respondents (7.8%) strongly disagreed, and 34 respondents (12.1%) disagreed that the IPPIS system is infringing on university autonomy. The cumulative percentages show that 36.2% of respondents either disagreed or were undecided, while 63.8% recognized a potential violation of university autonomy by the IPPIS payment system. The findings show that majority of respondents perceive the IPPIS system as conflicting with the principles of university autonomy, although a notable minority either disagreed or remain neutral on the issue.

A respondent from Federal University Dutsin-Ma remarked that the enactment of the IPPIS policy has resulted in the infringement of the independence of federal higher education institutions in Nigeria. He pointed out that universities function differently from the civil service and therefore should not be regarded as extensions of Government Ministries, Departments, and Agencies. It is based on this understanding that, alongside the Act that establishes each University, there exists the Universities Miscellaneous Provisions (Amendment) Act 2003, which explicitly indicates in section 2A that the authority of the council must be executed according to the Laws and Statutes of each University. Consequently, establishment circulars that conflict with the laws and statutes of the University shall not be applicable to these institutions.

Table 6: Introduction of a Central Payroll System is an Infringement of the Autonomy and Right of Federal Universities

Statement	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Strongly Disagree	5	1.8	1.8	1.8
Disagree	5	1.8	1.8	3.6
Undecided	86	30.5	30.5	34.1
Agree	119	42.2	42.2	76.3

Strongly Agree	67	23.8	23.8	100.0
Total	**282**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Source: Field survey, (2025)

Table 6 examines the statement: "The introduction of a central payroll system is an infringement of the autonomy and rights of federal universities." The results reveal that 119 respondents (42.2%) agreed with the statement, while 67 respondents (23.8%) strongly agreed. Conversely, 86 respondents (30.5%) were undecided, and 5 respondents (1.8%) strongly disagreed, with another 5 respondents (1.8%) disagreeing. No respondents strongly agreed with the statement, emphasizing a limited extreme consensus, although agreement was dominant at the moderate level. The findings show that while the majority of respondents recognize the central payroll system as an infringement on federal universities' autonomy, some participants were uncertain, and only a negligible fraction outright disagrees. This suggests that, while a significant proportion of respondents believe the central payroll system violates university autonomy, a notable number of individuals remain undecided or unconvinced, highlighting a divided perception on the issue.

Additionally, another respondent interviewed pointed out that IPPIS contravenes the ASUU-FGN Agreements from 1992, 2001, and 2009: "It was resolved that universities ought to function in accordance with their enabling laws, statutes, rules, and regulations while adhering to due process and the legal framework of the country" (paragraph 5.10, 1992 ASUU-FGN Agreement). "Circulars emitted from ministries SHALL be considered null and void to the degree that they conflict with the laws and regulations of the universities and the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria" (2001 ASUU-FGN Agreement). Moreover, the respondent characterized IPPIS as fraudulent and a risk to national security. He further remarked that the payment mechanism undermines university autonomy. He emphasized that, contrary to the law explicitly empowering the Governing Councils of each Federal University to wield complete authority over the universities' finances, IPPIS "lacks constitutional endorsement; nor is it supported by any Act from the National Assembly."

A respondent from the University of Dutse expressed that a significant issue with IPPIS is that it presents a substantial risk to national security. He mentioned that the system lacks strategic relevance for an independent nation in a global context where nearly all countries face threats from international cybercriminals. Additionally, he remarked that "The IPPIS is not an indigenous initiative; it is instead a directive from the World Bank, which ultimately leads to disorder and thus hinders Nigeria's growth and progress." He argued that IPPIS would disrupt the university system, in addition to being contrary to university regulations and autonomy.

An academic staff member in Dutsin-Ma in an interview remarked that the adoption of IPPIS in federal tertiary institutions is connected to the matter of university independence and the unique characteristics and framework of Nigerian universities. As centers for knowledge generation and dissemination, universities frequently collaborate with or rely on professors, specialists, and facilitators from other institutions. Once again, it is essential to acknowledge that such partnerships or collaborations reinforce the idea that academia embodies flexibility, vibrant intellectual discussions, and the sharing of concepts and viewpoints. However, one positive aspect of such arrangements is that they facilitate the dissemination of knowledge and ideas. The implementation of IPPIS in Nigerian universities has diminished all such collaboration and reliance. When considering that IPPIS is managed from Abuja, it would be nearly unfeasible for a visiting professor or external examiner from, for instance, the

University of Lagos to be accurately registered and compensated by the University of Port Harcourt for academic or other professional services provided at the latter institution.

Table 7: IPPIS has slowed down the Federal Universities' Administration due to the Non-flow of Funds for Effective Administration as a result of the Centralization of Universities' Funds

Statement	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Strongly Disagree	5	1.8	1.8	1.8
Disagree	0	0.0	0.0	1.8
Undecided	85	30.1	30.1	31.9
Agree	192	68.2	68.2	100.0
Strongly Agree	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Total	**282**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Source: Field survey, (2025)

Presented in Table 7 is respondents review on the statement "IPPIS has slowed down the Federal Universities' administration due to the non-flow of funds for effective administration as a result of the centralization of universities' funds." The data reveals that the majority of respondents, 192 (68.2%), agreed with the statement. 85 (30.1%) were undecided, and 5 (1.8%) strongly disagreed with the statement. No respondent disagreed or strongly agreed, demonstrating a polarized response, with most opinions clustering around agreement or indecision. The findings of the study shows that while there is a dominant perception that IPPIS centralization slows down effective administration in federal universities, a significant level of uncertainty persists among respondents, potentially due to varying experiences or insufficient understanding of the policy's impact.

Another respondent from Federal University Dutse, interviewed on October 17, 2024, remarked that universities function differently from civil service and therefore should not be regarded as extensions of Ministries, Departments, and Agencies of Government. It is on this basis that, alongside the Act founding each University, the Universities Miscellaneous Provisions (Amendment) Act 2003 explicitly states in section 2AA that "the authority of the council shall be executed, in accordance with the Laws and Statutes of each University and to that extent, establishment circulars that contradict the Laws and Statutes of the University SHALL NOT APPLY to the Universities." Moreover, the 1992 Act that established the Federal Universities of Agriculture, Section 8 (1 and 4) of the first schedule, asserts that "Subject to the provisions of this Act concerning the visitor, the Council SHALL be the governing body of each University and SHALL oversee the general control and supervision of the policy, finance, and property of the University. The Council SHALL guarantee that accurate records of the University are maintained and that the accounts of the University are audited annually by an independent auditing firm approved by the Council."

From the above, it is evident that besides the release of the sanctioned budgetary allocation, the OAGF has no role in the oversight, financial management, or cost-saving measures within the University. This authority and obligation are entrusted to the Governing Council of each Federal University. The Presidential directive that all Federal Government employees in

MDAs who do not register in IPPIS will not receive salaries does not align with the founding laws of the Universities and serves as a tactic to coercively enroll our members into IPPIS. According to the establishment law, University staff are employees of their respective Councils. Consequently, this directive cannot be enforced in universities. The assertion that Government constitutes Council and Council constitutes Government, as claimed by AGF, is erroneous since not all Council members are government appointees. Thus, the respondent indicated that the introduction of IPPIS undermines the University's autonomy to hire qualified local and international scholars, paralleling the global trend. The primary concern with this, according to the president of ASUU, is that it will deprive Nigerian Universities of high-quality human resources in specific fields, particularly where personnel is limited. The enforcement of IPPIS within the universities has resulted in the mass termination of all contract staff.

Discussion of Findings

The study's findings reveal a clear divide between the federal government's objectives for IPPIS and the realities faced by academic institutions. A majority of respondents (54.7%) agreed that IPPIS has slowed recruitment, attributing this to bureaucratic bottlenecks and the centralization of hiring approvals. For instance, interviewees noted that universities can no longer hire staff promptly due to mandatory clearances from the Office of the Accountant General, which disrupts academic planning.

Furthermore, 63.8% of respondents viewed IPPIS as infringing on university autonomy, citing its failure to recognize the distinct nature of academic employment, such as sabbaticals and part-time roles. This aligns with ASUU's argument that IPPIS treats universities like civil service entities, disregarding their statutory autonomy under Nigerian law. The centralization of payroll management also raised concerns about administrative inefficiencies, with 68.2% of respondents agreeing that IPPIS delays fund disbursement, hampering institutional operations.

The study highlights the need for a middle ground. While IPPIS aims to curb fraud, its rigid framework clashes with the flexibility required in academia. Respondents supported ASUU's proposed UTAS as a tailored alternative, emphasizing participatory policy design. The findings call for urgent dialogue between the government and stakeholders to reconcile accountability with institutional autonomy, ensuring Nigeria's higher education system remains functional and competitive.

The study contributes to policy making by assisting the government to develop efforts to successfully implement policy relating to openness and corruption in public organization so as to prevent future failures, oversights, sabotage, and other potential complications in public organizations. Additionally, the study would be valuable to the employees of federal institutions, allowing them to strategize their finances accordingly, prepare for retirement, and be better equipped for future challenges.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the IPPIS controversy underscores the need for policies that are inclusive, participatory, and reflective of the unique operational realities of institutions. While automation and accountability are important, they must be balanced with respect for institutional autonomy and the specific needs of the academic environment. Sustainable solutions lie in genuine dialogue between the federal government and ASUU, and in the design of systems that integrate technological efficiency with the complex dynamics of higher education governance in Nigeria.

Therefore, it is essential to consider these requirements in the IPPIS software application. To assist the government in achieving its goals, the Academic Staff Union of Universities has created what it refers to as the University Transparency Accountability Software. This software caters to the unique needs of the university system while also tackling fraud within the payroll system. Based on the above, we can further infer that the execution of IPPIS and UTAS will significantly diminish the capacity and opportunity for fraudulent individuals to engage in payroll fraud by incorporating the names of fictitious employees in the payroll of governments at every level.

Recommendations

The Federal Government Should Restore University Autonomy in Administrative and Staffing Matters.

The federal government should allow Timely and Flexible Recruitment Processes. This flexibility is crucial to ensure the uninterrupted delivery of academic programs and to fill staffing gaps promptly.

The government should adhere strictly to the provisions of the Universities Miscellaneous Provisions (Amendment) Act, 2003, which guarantees autonomy to university governing councils.

Since the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) is not designed to suit the administration and management of tertiary institutions, therefore, the federal government should remove all tertiary institutions from the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS)

REFERENCES

Adeyemi, K., & Abiodun, R. (2021). IPPIS and staff recruitment challenges in Nigerian universities. *Journal of Educational Policy and Administration,* 6(1), 45–58.

Ajayi, O. (2016, November 12). Nigeria government saves N12billion from salaries.

Anikpo, F. (2011). *Marx's theory of history: A bourgeois critique*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Alabi, A. T., & Okemakinde, T. (2020). The politics of university funding and ASUU strikes in Nigeria. *Journal of Educational Management and Policy, 6*(1), 23–35.

Aluko, O. (2020, May 15). Paying lecturers without biometrics fraudulent, says ASUU. *Punch*. https://punchng.com/ippis-paying-lecturerswithout-biometrics-fraudulent-says-asuu/

Dahl, R. A. (1971). Polyarchy: Participation and opposition. Yale University Press.

Egbas, M. (2019). *The 2009 ASUU strikes: Issues, intrigues and challenges*. Port Harcourt: Freedom Press.

Easton, D. (1957). An approach to the analysis of political systems. World Politics, 9(3), 383–400. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008920

Egbegi, F. R., & Iheriohanma, E. B. J. (2018). Exploring the synergic relationship between ASUU and federal government in restoring industrial harmony in Nigeria public universities. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 23*(3), 14–23.

Enakirerhi, L. I., & Temile, S. O. (2017). IPPIS in Nigeria: Challenges, benefits and prospects. *International Journal of Social Science and Economic Research, 2*(5), 3490–3497.

Farajimakin, G., & Anichebe, A. (2019). Jobs nowhere but everywhere: Resolving Nigeria's crisis through information technology. *Inaugural Lecture Series 304*, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, July 4.

Ikelegbe, A. (2005). Public policy analysis: Concepts, issues and cases. Imprint Services.

Odogwu, T. (2020). IPPIS and the ghost workers syndrome in Nigeria's public sector. *Scholars Journal of Economics, Business and Management, 5*(8), 773–778.

Onuoha, J. (2020). Bureaucratic bottlenecks and staffing delays in Nigerian universities: The IPPIS dilemma. *Nigerian Journal of Public Sector Management,* 12(2), 88–102.

Okebukola, P. (2021). IPPIS and the challenges of university autonomy in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Higher Education Studies, 15*(2), 45–59.

Osagiobare, E. O., Odiaka, S. I., & Egharevba, M. E. (2019). Academic staff union of universities (ASUU) and the struggle for university autonomy in Nigeria. *International Journal of Educational Administration and Policy Studies,* 11(3), 25–32.

Uzochukwu, A. (2015). E-government implementation in Nigeria: An assessment of Nigeria's global e-governance ranking. *Journal of Internet and Information System, 2*(1).