

Providing academic and administrative leadership in a Nigerian university

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Higher Education Management Series 1

About this publication

This publication was originally an Invited Paper in Commemoration of the 60th birthday anniversary of Professor Oluwatoyin Temitayo Ogundipe, Fellow Nigerian academy of Science, Vice-Chancellor, University of Lagos, on Sunday, 31st May 2020.

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Introduction

It gives me great pleasure to have been requested to contribute a chapter in a book in honour of Professor Oluwatoyin Temitayo Ogundipe, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lagos, as part of activities marking his 60th birthday. I have known Professor Ogundipe as a colleague, friend and brother over the past 20 years or so. I have watched him from a distance as a fine and accomplished scholar, a notable Botanist, Head, Department of Botany and Microbiology, Dean, School of Post Graduate Studies; Member, University of Lagos Council; Director, Academic Programmes Units; Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academics & Research), Fellow Nigerian Academy of Science and in his current preferment as Vice-Chancellor. His trajectory in university administration is very much similar to mine in many respects. Outside the shores of this country, both of us currently serve on the Board of Directors of the Africa Research Universities Alliance (ARUA). I have been very impressed with his doggedness, friendliness and impeccable character. I do exchange notes with him regularly as the challenges I face as Vice-Chancellor at Ibadan are for all practical purposes similar to the ones he confront at Lagos especially in terms of dealing with staff unions on account of gross underfunding from our proprietors.

What I have tried to do in this paper is to consider the role of the Vice-Chancellor as the academic and administrative head of a university, drawing from my experience over the last few years as the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ibadan. Without any doubt the problems facing the public universities in Nigeria, especially those owned by the Federal Government such as the University of Lagos and the University of Ibadan are very similar in many respects. Moreover, our enabling acts are also largely similar.

The recruitment process

The post of the Vice Chancellor of any Federal University in Nigeria is filled in accordance with the extant provisions of **Sections 3–6 of the University (*Miscellaneous Provisions*) Act 1993; and (Sections 2–4 of the University *Miscellaneous Provisions* Act 2003, 2007 ACT No.1- Amended)**. The Act which is referred to as the Universities Autonomy Act vests the power to appoint the Vice Chancellor on the Council. The Visitor is then informed after the appointment has been made. This was used in appointing a Vice-Chancellor at the University of Ibadan for the first time in 2010 and also for the subsequent exercise in 2015.

The Vice-Chancellor of a University is the chief academic officer, the chief administrative officer, the chief accounting officer, chief fundraiser and the chief image-maker of the institution. He/she is the academic leader of the institution. While administrators manage rules, regulations and protocols, and managers manage people and rules, the leader has the onerous responsibility to manage the vision and dreams of the institution, and set the agenda for development.

The candidate for the post of Vice Chancellor is required to possess a good University education and should be a proven, successful manager of human and material resources. Specifically, the candidate shall be expected to be a highly distinguished scholar of the rank of Professor, with a minimum of between five to ten years experience on that level and demonstrate ability to provide academic and administrative leadership for such a well-established institution; be a person of proven integrity; be not more than 65 years old as at the date of possible

assumption of duty; command the respect of the national and international academic communities through his/her track record; strengthen the bridges between staff, students and other members of the University community; be a person with a clear vision for the development of the University; enjoy excellent physical and mental health; attract the much-needed funds into the University.

In keeping with the contemporary world, a Vice-Chancellor is expected to be a dynamic, distinguished and internationally renowned scholar who demonstrates academic excellence in terms of quality publications, teaching, credible community service and proficiency in Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

The Vice-Chancellor shall hold office for a single term of five years only on such terms and conditions as may be specified in the letter of appointment. The retirement age for a professor in the Nigerian federal universities is currently 70 years and the occupant is often expected to serve out his term of office; hence the setting of the maximum age on assumption of office as 65 years. A similar scenario plays out in Ghana although the Vice-Chancellor of a public university can serve for more than one term but the retirement age for a professor in that country is 60 years, at which age a sitting Vice-Chancellor would be expected to step down.

As Chairman of Senate, the Vice-Chancellor provides leadership in articulating and determining the academic standards of the university and in ensuring the welfare of staff and students. By presiding at the meetings of the Appointments and Promotions Committee and of the Staff Disciplinary Committee, which are Joint Committees of Council and Senate, the Vice-Chancellor ensures that only those with a proven record, or an unmistakable promise, of a successful academic career are employed and that the ranks of academics at the university are scrupulously kept from any kind of pollution. At the same time, by presiding over the business of the Development Committee of Senate, the Vice-Chancellor is able to keep in view an orderly growth of the university's actual and projected contributions, nationally and internationally, to the growth and dissemination of knowledge.

In specific terms, he/she is to provide leadership, strategic vision and direction to enhance the academic programmes of the institution in terms of teaching, learning, research and research uptake; improve the educational and research opportunities; define and execute strategic plans, budget and evaluate performances to maximize impact; lead resource mobilization and fund raising efforts; guide and motivate faculty, staff and students to be their best.

The leadership skills expected of a Vice-Chancellor include innovativeness and harnessing innovation throughout the institution, competence, ability to simultaneously 'own' issues/stories and still give credit to those who did the hard work, internal and external networking, ability to think and act strategically, humility, compassion and never losing sight of the bigger picture. He/She must be able to build and lead a strong and credible team. Without any iota of doubt the expectations from a Vice-Chancellor are quite daunting. As alluded to by Adewole (2014), the Vice-Chancellor must indeed be a magician of some sort.

Staff and students would easily internalize and emulate the ideals of their leader if he or she is able to exert a huge positive influence on them literally becoming a role model to them (Idealized Influence). As a transformational leader, the Vice-Chancellor must have a clear vision that he/she is able to articulate to the university community. Besides having his/her own cut-out vision, he/she also must be able to inspire a **shared vision**. He/she must possess the ability to help followers experience the same passion and motivation to fulfil these goals (Inspirational Motivation).

The Vice-Chancellor has to encourage staff and students to explore new ways of doing things and new opportunities to learn. He/she must stimulate creativity in the institution (Intellectual Stimulation). Moreover, transformational leadership also involves offering support and encouragement to individual members of the university community. In order to foster supportive relationships, the leader must keep lines of communication open so that members of the community feel free to share ideas and so that leaders can offer direct recognition of the unique contributions of each follower (Individual Consideration).

The **Vision** of the University of Ibadan is, “to be a world-class institution for academic excellence geared towards meeting societal needs”, therefore, it intends to be ranked among the best Universities world-wide, in keeping with the **Mission** statement:

- To expand the frontiers of knowledge through provision of excellent conditions for learning and research.
- To produce graduates who are worthy in character and sound judgment
- To contribute to the transformation of society through creativity and innovation
- To serve as dynamic custodian of society’s salutary values and thus sustain its integrity

Why experience matters

Leaders have to make decisions on a regular basis. Invariably there is often more than one option to choose from. The leader has to draw on his/her experience in choosing a particular course of action in preference to the other. There is not mere theory but reality. Non-leaders lack competence and they are in the stage of Unconscious incompetence. The next stage is that of Conscious incompetence whereby an incompetent leader is aware of his/her limitations but he/she is yet to acquire leadership skills through training and leadership development. The third stage is that of Conscious competence whereby the emerging leader is aware of leadership skills. He/she is acquiring leadership competence through training and practice and is receiving positive feedback about performance. The final stage is that of the leader who, through training and experience is able to exhibit leadership skills involuntarily and he/she possesses ‘extra rational powers’. It is partly in recognition of this that someone aspiring to the position of Vice-Chancellor is often expected to have acquired some administrative experience as a Head of Department, Director of an academic unit, Dean of Faculty or Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

The Federal Ministry of Education has proposed a minimum of 10 years experience after a scholar has attained the full professorial status. This was one of the conditions adopted by the Council of the University of Ibadan in the appointment of a Vice-Chancellor in 2015. While Bayero University Kano (Kano State) specified a minimum of five years experience as a professor in their advertorial that appeared in May 2020, the University of Calabar (Cross River State) prescribed a minimum of nine years and the University of Uyo (Akwa Ibom State) 10 years. Some private universities such as Bowen University Iwo (Osun State), and Ajayi Crowther University Oyo (Oyo State) have also adopted a minimum of 10 years professorial experience for their advertorials in 2018 and 2020, respectively. This has the salutary effect of reducing the number of candidates who are *prima facie* qualified to a manageable size.

There is this conversation that I came across on WhatsApp between a reporter and a bank President on the Secret of Success:

‘Sir, What is the secret of your success?’ a reporter asked a bank president.

‘Two words’.

‘And, Sir, what are they?’

‘Right decisions.’

‘And how do you make right decisions?’.

‘One word’.

‘And, what is that?’

‘Experience’.

In other words, cognate experience acquired through training in leadership is invaluable to a leader in making the right decisions in office.

Choosing members of your management team

The first impression that one gets of a ruler and of his brains is from seeing the men he has about him – Niccolo Machiavelli

Ability without honour is useless - Cicero

Look for three things in a person- intelligence, energy and integrity. If they don't have the last one, don't even bother with the first two. Warren Buffett

The importance of loyalty, trust and friendship was recently emphasized in the example of President Obama and Joe Biden who served as his Vice-President from 2009-2017, as part of the campaign for the presidential election in the United States of America. Joe Biden while addressing voters in January 2020 said as follows about Barrack Obama:

If you notice, every major historian has written about the presidency and the vice presidency, and they've said of late, that no vice president or president has ever been closer than Barack Obama and Joe Biden in American history. That's been the consensus. And there's a reason for that, because we both trusted each other, completely. And we knew, and he knew from the beginning, I would never, ever, ever do anything, that was inconsistent with his interest.

Similarly Obama said the following words about Vice-President Joe Biden

Choosing Joe to be my Vice President was one of the best decisions I ever made, and he became a close friend. And I believe Joe has all the qualities we need in a president right now. He's someone whose own life has taught him how to persevere; how to bounce back when you've been knocked down.

It is apparent that they were a good pair during the Obama Presidency from 2009 to 2017. Experience elsewhere in different parts of the world has shown that most deputies/vices are

unlike Biden. They want to undercut the position of the President. They want his/her position almost immediately. They are usually disloyal and impatient while some of them do not add enough value to the ticket.

One of the toughest decision a Vice-Chancellor has to make is in the nomination or re-nomination for a second term of candidates for the position of a Deputy Vice-Chancellor, especially in a highly competitive environment where there are many suitably qualified candidates. At the University of Ibadan we have 465 full professors as at the end of January 2020 and in such a situation it is often a dilemma identifying two colleagues to nominate to Senate for each vacant position of Deputy Vice-Chancellor from the pool of many eminently qualified candidates. It calls for divine guidance in making a good shortlist. I have found the following admonition by a former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lagos, Bello (2016) very instructive in such situations:

It is time to elect a new Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor has to present candidates to Senate for election. The Vice-Chancellor is bombarded with interests from ambitious ‘powerful’ colleagues directly and through friends and cronies.

The Vice-Chancellor must understand that the success of his administration is solely in his purview and in spite of whatever pressures might prevail, the Vice-Chancellor should take his destiny in his hands. There may be consultations but the final choice must revolve around those he feels he would be able to work with and would be complimentary to his administration and not those necessarily oiling their ambitions. To avert tension, he should not disclose his final choices, even to the candidates, until quite close to the Senate meeting to reduce campaigns and bitterness.

Following from the above, I ensured a 50% reduction in the period of campaign for the position of Deputy Vice-Chancellor during my tenure to about one week as against at least two weeks that was the case hitherto. We also tried to find some ways of making the pre- and post campaign period less acrimonious.

Whether in the fresh nomination or re-appointment of a Deputy Vice-Chancellor or of any other senior officer of the University, such as Director of an academic unit I have developed over the past five years a checklist which I always consult for guidance (Table 1). The overriding desire has always being to put a round peg in a round hole without any sentimental or emotional considerations.

Since 1993 when the Federal Universities in Nigeria adopted the current template of a sitting Vice-Chancellor nominating two candidates to Senate pursuant to the Universities (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Amendment) Act 2003, Section (4), Subsection (2), whenever the post of Deputy Vice-Chancellor became vacant, the University of Ibadan has had 20 individuals serving in that capacity. Out of these, only eight, representing 40%, have served for two terms. I am very pleased that three out of these eight colleagues were people that I nominated for a second term in the current administration of the university. Indeed one of them, Professor Ambrose Emilolorun Aiyelari, Quondam Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration), former Dean of Agriculture and Forestry and a Professor of Agronomy, was barely 18 months into his

first tenure under my immediate past predecessor as at the time I resumed office as the Vice-Chancellor in December 2015. He was re-nominated in June 2016 for his second and final term thus being till date the first and only person in the last 27 years to deservedly have that privilege at the University of Ibadan.

Table 1: A checklist for choosing team members at the University of Ibadan, 2015-2020

S. No	Description
1.	Character: Integrity and honesty, especially fiscal discipline and responsibility
2.	Tremendous intellectual capacity
3.	Shared vision
4.	Demonstrable Competence
5.	Cognate Experience
6.	Energy/Drive/Hardworking/Enterprising/ Capacity to deliver
7.	Initiative/Creativity/Dynamism/Pro-activeness
8.	Amiable/Friendliness/Compassionateness/ Temperament. Avoid persons with Centrifugal personalities
9.	Be a person of courage, but humane, who can take decisive action(s) on the merit of facts and principles and not on the basis of sentiments or pressures from individuals and groups;
10.	Be an effective Insulator who is able to shield the boss. Your subordinate should not delegate power upwards. He/she should under no circumstance refer only very difficult issues to you. In the first instance, especially where the difficult decision to make is very obvious, rather than ask people to go and see the boss, he/she should be firm and decisive.
11.	Loyalty to the System and to the Principal
12.	Team Player (not too ambitious as to always try to undermine and upstage colleagues).
13.	Smart/ Intelligent/Quick-wittedness
14.	Good rapport and confidence of the staff unions.
15.	Discreet background check/Reference from well-meaning people who may know the prospective candidate.
16.	Forthrightness
17.	Broad minded world view
18.	Nobility of spirit
19.	Keen sense of justice and fair play
20.	Focus and passion for the job
21.	Not a puppet; No blind loyalty to the Principal.

Unstable academic calendar

The Nigerian Association of University Teachers formed in 1965 when there were only five universities in the country transformed into the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in 1978 and covers nearly all the academic staff in all of the public universities in the country. ASUU has been involved in various struggles against the government, both military and civilian, from 1988 till date. The main bones of contention are in respect of improved conditions of service for its members, university autonomy, funding and revitalization of Nigerian public universities, and reinstatement of the 49 lecturers who were sacked at the University of Ilorin, implementation of the 70 year retirement age limit for professors. The non-implementation of agreement reached between the Federal Government and ASUU has been implicated as a major source of subsequent industrial action (Albert, 2015).

As shown in Figure 1, the public university system in the country has lost about four years and seven months cumulatively to strikes over the last 27 years.

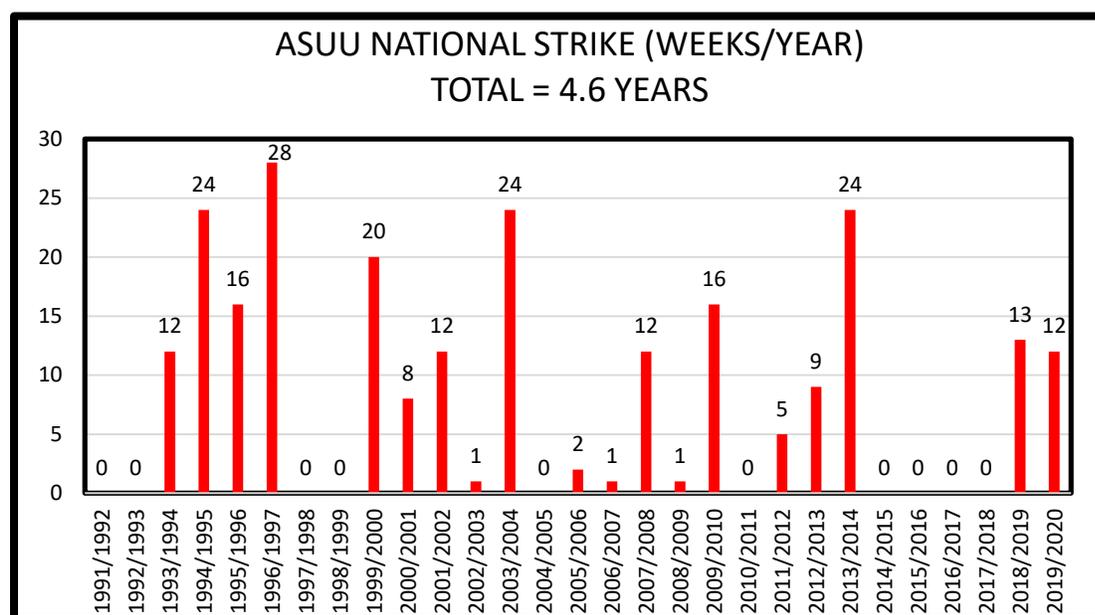


Figure 1: Duration of ASUU National Strike from 1993 till 2020 (The 2020 ASUU strike commenced on 9th March 2020 and has lasted for 12 weeks as at the time of this report)

Some specific issues that have led to industrial action by staff unions at the University of Ibadan over the last four and a half years are discussed below.

Personnel Grants as a stochastic phenomenon

The past in the present

Funding is very critical to the proper functioning of a university as a world-class centre of excellence for teaching/learning, research and innovation. The funds are required to among other things pay the salaries and wages of staff, capital projects including heavy investment in Information and Communication Technology, research and development, staff development, general administration, overhead for municipal services (water, electricity, road, drainage, cleaning/sanitation), staff/student welfare and academic support. In this section we will limit our discussion to the payment of salaries and wages. This is because salary payment has a life-cycle (periodicity) of one month and any disruption has a way of inducing heavy stress and a resultant strain on the system. When the elastic limit of the system is exceeded a crisis situation arises often in the form of strike by staff unions. Labour is the most important and only active factor of production. If the workforce is disgruntled on account of irregular and poor salary, getting the best out of them would be a herculean task with the attendant reduction in productivity.

The University of Ibadan has a record of gross-underfunding dating back to the early 1970s. Copious references have been made to this (Banjo, 1997; Adewoye, 2000; Falase, 2020). In the words of Professor Emeritus Ayodele Falase who served as Vice-Chancellor from September 2000 till September 2005 he found out early in his tenure as follows:

Part of the briefings given to me was that the University owed up to two months' salary arrears to its staff and, of course, they were not happy about it. The major reason for this was the abysmally inadequate funds given by Government to the University. My conviction, however, was that staff had to be paid their dues whatever the circumstances even if we had to take short-term loans to do so. I, therefore, directed the Bursar to find the money and pay the two months' arrears and this had the immediate effect of improving morale among the staff.

An organization or institution that has to resort to taking loans to pay salaries of its staff is obviously technically insolvent and should be on receivership but then the University was left with little or no other options to survive than taking such loans. The very poor financial position of the University then continued unabated so much so that the Council had to take some drastic positions in order to be able to meet its salary obligations some 21 months into his tenure. This was communicated to all members of staff in a letter dated 6th June 2002 and signed by the Registrar and Secretary to Council, Chief (Mrs) Moji Ladipo. As at that time, the University's total indebtedness was N1,248,435,923.44 out of which N780,361,675.35 was borrowed over time to pay salaries.

The Council directed that borrowings from whatever source, internal or external for the payment of salaries must stop immediately; any project without cash backing must not be commenced; emoluments should be paid only within NUC subvention without recourse to borrowing. All new appointments were frozen with immediate effect while all casual appointments were to terminate by the end of June 2002 while temporary appointments would cease by the end of June 2002.

Indeed soon after, the National Universities Commission, on behalf of the Federal Government conducted a Pay Parade in all federal Universities and Inter-University Centres in order to ascertain the Personnel Costs of all Universities and Inter-University Centres in August 2002.

It is to the eternal credit of Professor Emeritus Ayodele Falase's administrative acumen, transparent leadership, firm implementation of the Committee System as the basis for decision making in the University and prudent financial management that he succeeded in liquidating all the debts owed by the University by the end of his tenure. As a matter of fact it was at a send-off party to mark the end of his tenure which I organized as Dean of the Postgraduate School on 24th September 2005 that the Bursar of the University breezed in to the Senate Chamber, venue of the programme, to publicly announce the cheering news of complete total debt repayment by the university.

Other Vice-Chancellors at the University of Ibadan have similarly recollected their experiences in respect of funding (Bamiro, 2018; Adewole, 2014).

Contemporary situation with funding at the University of Ibadan

The experience at the University of Ibadan had been that the personnel cost grant received from Abuja in January would be the same amount to be expected in subsequent months of that year. This was the case in 2011 when the monthly personnel allocation was 752 Million Naira per month and in 2012 when the amount received per month was 883.4 Million Naira per month. There was a distortion the following year, 2013. A sum of 899.9 Million Naira was received per month from January till July. The salary due to members of ASUU was stopped from August to November on account of the National Strike by the union and only the salary for the non-academic staff was paid totaling 477 Million Naira per month. The salary arrears for members of ASUU were eventually released along with the December 2013 salary. Then in year 2014, the personnel cost received was fixed at 804.6 Million Naira per month throughout that year.

Unfortunately even for those years of relative stability the amount thus received may have no relationship with the budget of the University. It has for a very long time being the envelope system whereby the University is given some amount of money and it would be expected to operate within that envelope. Invariably there is a huge shortfall between what is needed and what is received. The release of funding is unpredictable. It is in fact a stochastic process. As shown in Figure 2, the personnel grants received by the University of Ibadan during the period from 2010 to 2019 shows a general increase towards a peak in 2013 and a decline in 2014. There was a slight increase in subsequent years. It may be noted, however, that the 2018 figures only got to the level attained five years earlier in 2013. Yet the number of staff had increased while many members of staff had been promoted. With the implementation of the new retirement age of 65 years for the non-teaching staff and 70 years for professors which became effective in May 2012, retirement of staff on account of attaining the mandatory retirement age was frozen from May 2012 till 2017. Moreover, additional staff were employed during the period. Ideally, the personnel cost should increase by 5 to 10% annually to account for growth and staff promotions.

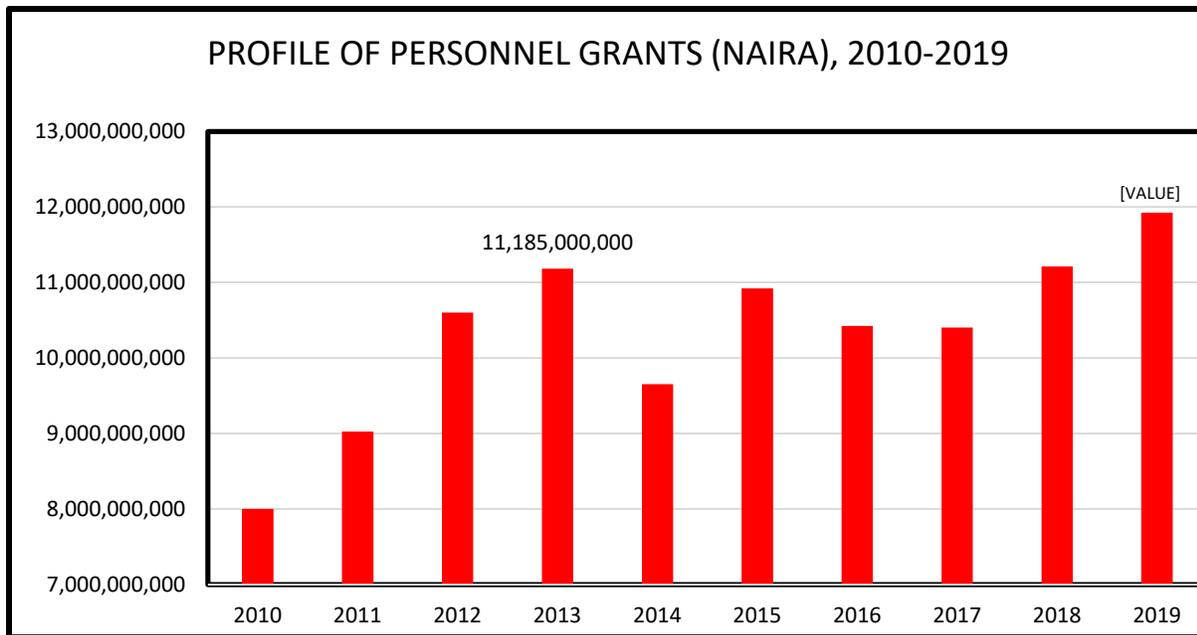


Figure 2: Profile of Personnel Grants received by the University of Ibadan from 2010 to 2019

The above picture is only a partial reflection of the situation on ground as salaries are paid monthly. In 2015, the University received the sum of N932,714,026.24 per month for payment of salary of staff from January till November. The amount was adequate to pay staff salaries for the respective months and there were in fact some left overs which was deployed in defraying part of the earned allowances due to all members of staff. However, the story changed for the worse for the last month of the year when the University received N663,972,634.60, whereas the amount required was N965,508,185.70. We were left with a huge shortfall to the tune of N301,635,551.10 (Figure 3). We were only able to pay the net salary while third party deductions, especially cooperative deductions and tax remittances to the Oyo State Government could not be remitted. In spite of this massive shortfall earned allowance to the tune of Fifteen Thousand Naira to each senior staff and Ten Thousand Naira to each Junior Staff was still paid, which for the entire staff of the University was in the neighbor hood of Seventy Seven Million Naira.

Inquiry from the Budget Office and the Office of the Accountant General of the Federation in Abuja in order to seek clarification was to the effect that the budget of all Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) were revised downwards in February 2015. In the case of the University of Ibadan our budget had apparently been reduced from about Nine Hundred and Thirty Two Million Naira per month to about Nine Hundred and Two Million Naira per month. We were thus expected to have had some savings to augment the shortfall in December but this was not to be. This was my first month in office as the Vice-Chancellor. It was as if the system was waiting earnestly on me to be in the saddle for the new regime of shortfall in salary to be unleashed on the system.

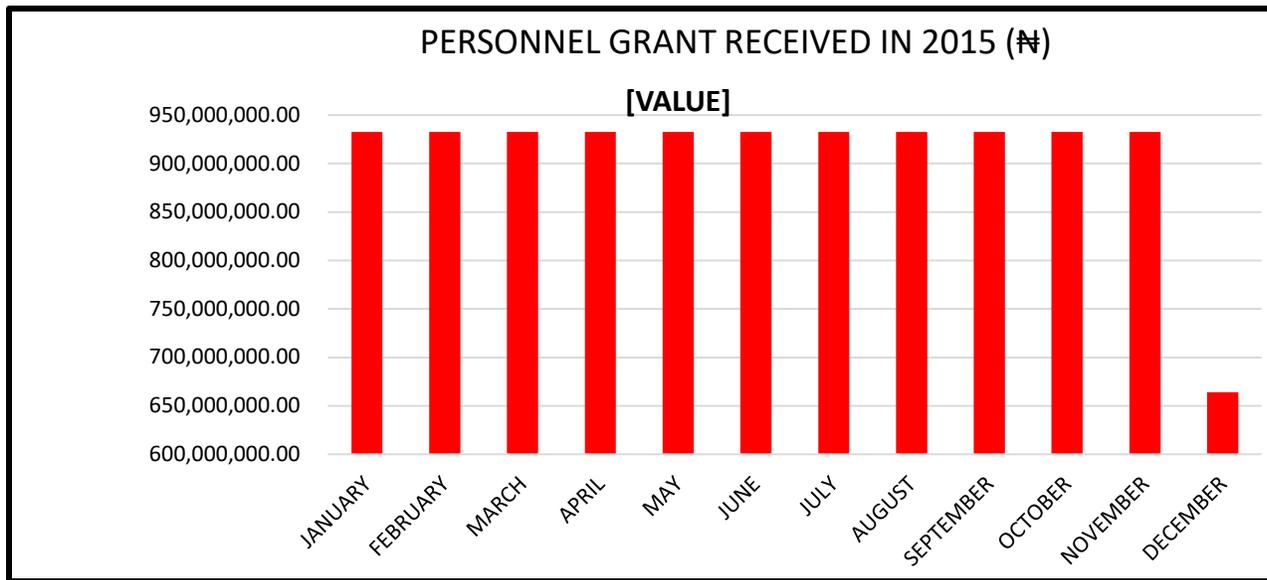


Figure 3: Personnel Grant received for payment of salary at the University of Ibadan in 2015

The problem of shortfalls in the payment of monthly salary continued in January 2016, when we received the sum of N782,346,445.59 (seven hundred and eighty-two million three hundred and forty-six thousand four hundred and forty-five Naira fifty-nine Kobo) as personnel Grants for the month, and it this continued till July of that year. The Management visited Abuja many times on this issue. Members of the non-academic staff unions in particular were unrelenting in protesting at every month end on account of the shortfall in salary. An orientation programme for new undergraduate students for the 2015/2016 academic session that was held at the International Conference Centre was violently disrupted as part of the methods they adopted to air their grievances.

The Honourable Minister of Education, Mallam Adamu Adamu, convened an interactive session held at the Auditorium, Federal Ministry of Education, Abuja, on Friday 3rd June 2016, to, among other issues, commence a conversation on some key issues concerning university education in Nigeria. On the issue of funding, the Honourable Minister, said *inter alia*:

I am aware that most of the universities are facing some shortages in their personnel costs for some months. I am also aware that discussion has reached conclusion stage with the Accountant General of the Federation with regards to offsetting the backlog of the shortfall and correcting the subsequent warrants of the personnel cost.

The speech by the Honourable Minister was the first official acknowledgment by the Federal Government that there was a shortfall in our personnel grants. It was such a big relief

and a soothing balm for me as the staff of the University of Ibadan were always on my neck to pay their full salary ever since I resumed office some seven months earlier.

Luckily for the University, through the efforts of Management and those of the staff unions, the Federal Government addressed the problem when it paid the first tranche of the shortfalls in salaries for the first four months of 2016 (Figure 4). This was the first ray of hope that the shortfalls would be paid sooner than later. Some respite at last although the problem was yet to be fully solved.

Following the shortfalls experienced in the University in 2016, in November 2016, a team of five officials from the office of the Presidential Initiatives on Continuous Audit (PICA) visited our University to look at the veracity of our claims of Shortfalls.

At the end of the exercise, there was an exit meeting between PICA consultant and the University Management where we were informed that we have not been complying with the Pension Act on 7.5% on Consolidated Salary as employee contributory pension. Subsequently, while we requested for N711,328,069.63 (seven hundred and eleven million three hundred and twenty-eight thousand sixty-nine Naira sixty-three Kobo) to pay our Shortfalls for seven months of May to November 2016, we were only given N516,239,902.53 (five hundred and sixteen million, two hundred and thirty-nine thousand nine hundred and two Naira fifty-three Kobo) only from this we paid what is due to each staff for the seven months whereas some deductions remain outstanding as at date to the tune of N61,337,372.71 (sixty-one million three hundred and thirty-seven thousand three hundred and seventy-two Naira seventy-one Kobo) made up as follows:

Oyo State PAYE (Main Campus)	N35,752,103.78
Oyo State PAYE (College)	N9,776,139.59
Senior Staff Housing Committee	N 2,127,701.58
NASU Loan with First Bank Nigeria	N 6,047,149.02
Housing Loan Skye Bank	<u>N 7,634,278.75</u>
	<u>N61,337,372.71</u>

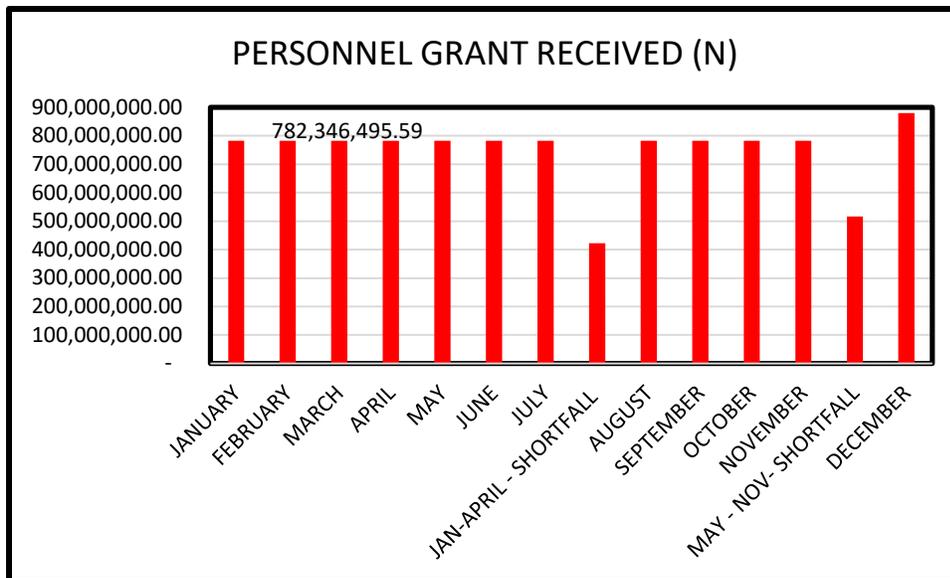


Figure 4: Personnel Grant received for payment of salary at the University of Ibadan in 2016 (Note that refund of shortfall of salary payments was made twice during the year)

The point must be made that I was always faithfully informing the relevant authorities in Abuja of any shortfall in our personnel grant, including the National Universities Commission, the Federal Ministry of Education, the Budget Office and the Office of the Accountant General of the Federation.

The Federal Government promised to release the shortfalls for the month of February totaling One Hundred and Thirty Nine Million Naira. The payment of the shortfalls in the salaries of January and February, 2017 by the University from its internally generated funds was predicated on the assurances given by the Federal Government in this regard. The shortfall in salaries since the beginning of that year was eventually released in September 2017 (Figure 5).

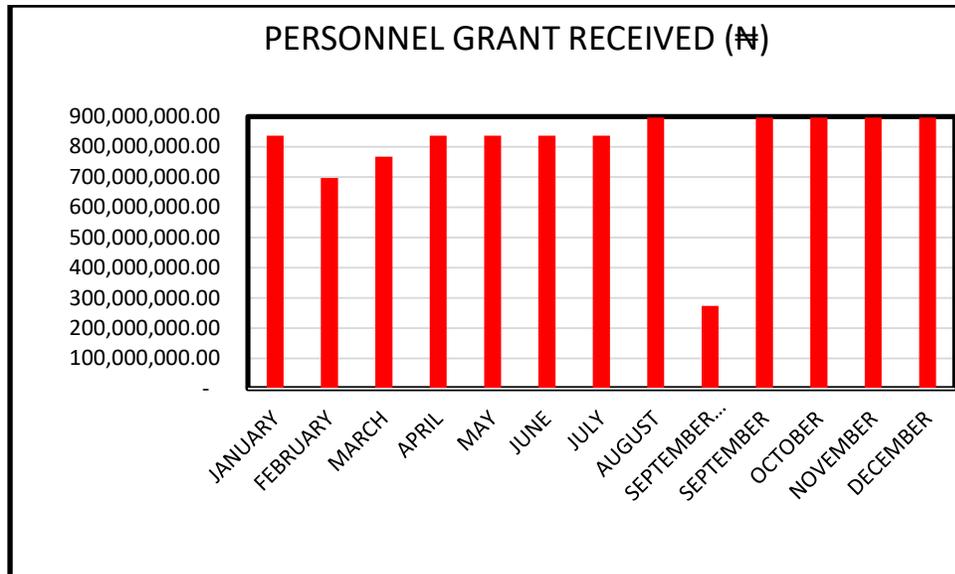


Figure 5: Personnel Grant received for payment of salary at the University of Ibadan in 2017 (Note that refund of shortfall of salary payments was made once during the year)

The personnel grant received in 2018 was of the order of 880 Million Naira per month which was barely enough to pay the salary from January till September of that year (Figure 6). However, we had difficulty in implementing the October increment. This later became a source of industrial dispute as we shall discuss later in this paper.

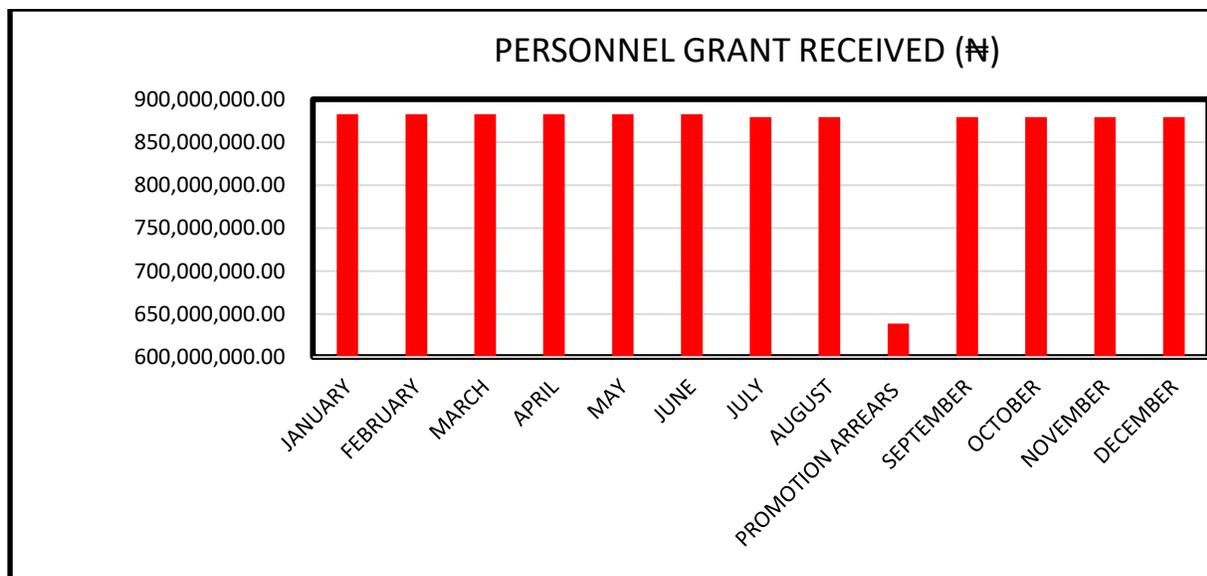


Figure 6: Personnel Grant received for payment of salary at the University of Ibadan in 2018

For the first half of year 2019, the University received N879,237,257.64 per month for payment of staff salaries. This was increased to N974,168,039.79 during the second half of the year, following the implementation of the 2019 Appropriation Act as approved by the National Assembly (Figure 7),

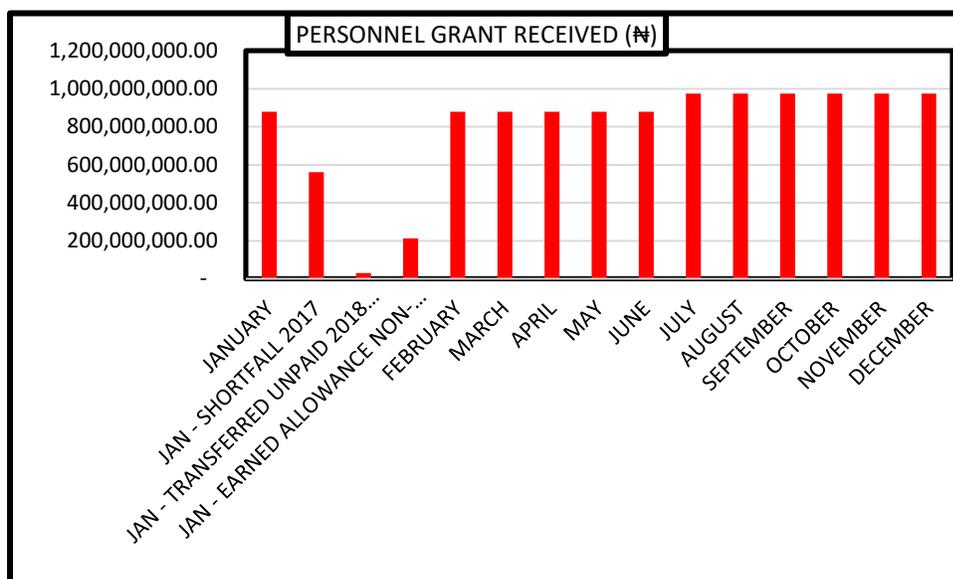


Figure 7: Personnel Grant received for payment of salary at the University of Ibadan in 2019

It may be noted that arrears of shortfall in salary payments was made to the University of Ibadan on five different occasions during the period from July 2016 to January 2019.

October increment

As clearly indicated in the Staff Information Handbook, the general incremental date of those in receipt of salaries on an incremental scale shall be October 1, provided that the salary on which increment is to be made is entered on not less than six months before October 1. This applies to regular appointments only. However, the issue of annual increments recently became contentious.

There were two major factors responsible for this. First, for about three years now the Office of the Accountant General of the Federation had been insisting that the financial year of the University should be changed from 1st October through to 30th September of the following year to 1st January to 31st December in conformity with the rest of the Public Service. The Registrar, Bursar and my humble self attended a meeting in Abuja in 2018 along with Principal Officers of other Federal Universities where the Accountant General of the Federation still reiterated this position of Government. Second, the Personnel Grants received to pay the salary for September 2018 was barely enough to pay the Salary for that month. The same amount was released to us for payment of October Salary.

To effect the October increment would have led to payment of 'amputated' (fractional) salary in the order of 97% of the salary entitlement of each staff. The shortfall for that month alone was to the tune of ₦26,996,013.11.

	Naira	Remarks
Amount required to pay October 2018 Salary with step increment	906,233,270.75	
Personnel Grant Received for payment of October 2018 Salary	879,237,257.64	97% of the amount required
Difference	(-26,996,013.11)	

The painful decision taken by Management in the circumstance was to pay all members of staff the same amount they earned in September 2018. This decision was explained to the leadership of the Staff Unions then and in fairness while they showed understanding to the precarious financial position of the University they pushed for the logical case that the University should agree to be owing the affected staff and there was no disagreement on this.

In order to ensure industrial peace and harmony Council directed that the October increment in salary for those who were yet to reach the bar of their salary scales be paid for 2018 and 2019. Management had to comply with this, although unfortunately many members of staff had the erroneous impression that we received the fund for implementation of October to

December annual increments from Abuja as part of our personnel grant; the answer is no. The university funded the six months arrears (October to December 2018 and October to December 2019) from her Internally Generated Revenue and the accruing arrears were all cleared between January and May 2020.

Staff School Matter

Vice-Chancellors of all Federal Universities were requested by the National Salaries, Income and Wages Commission during 2014 and 2015 to stop the practice hitherto whereby some Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) that own Staff Schools were funding such schools from the Federal Budget which had further led an increase in the wage bill of the Government. The circular stated thus:

Staff schools are established as private enterprises to be funded by the institutions that established them without transferring the burden of such wage bill to the Federal Government especially at this period of economic restructuring to minimize recurrent expenditure in favour of capital expenditure.

Consequently the Federal Government has directed that erring MDAs should forthwith, stop the funding of the salaries and allowances of the staff of their Staff Schools from the Federal budgetary allocation, failure of which will incur appropriate sanctions.

Moreover, the Budget Office of the Federation, in a circular dated 29th September 2015, issued a directive stating as follows:

Personnel/teachers of Schools affiliated to Institutions/Agencies (i.e. Staff Schools) should on no account, be included in the nominal roll of such institutions. Appropriate sanctions will be applied to defaulting agencies, as such actions will be treated as **willful introduction of ghost workers** (emphasis mine).

These circulars were due for implementation at about the period I assumed office as the Vice-Chancellor and a very good friend of mine who was equally Vice-Chancellor of a sister Federal University at the time was very kind enough to draw my attention to reference to ‘willful introduction of ghost workers’ by the Circular from the budget Office.

The Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities, a staff union to which teachers of the Staff Schools belong went on an industrial action in December 2015/January 2016. In response to this industrial action, the National Universities Commission (NUC) in a letter dated 29 January 2016 drew the attention of the Vice-Chancellors to the funding of Staff Schools established by Federal Government Institutions. The NUC reiterated that:

University Staff Schools are private enterprises and should, therefore, be funded by the institutions that established them without transferring the burden of their wage bill to the Federal Government.

The letter from the NUC went further to advise all the affected Federal Universities to note the clarification and take appropriate actions with the view to restoring normalcy in the Universities in the interest of the system and the Nation.

In compliance with the Federal Government circular, teachers of the Staff School at the University of Ibadan were removed from the nominal roll of the University with effect from January 2016. It may be noted that this was at a period at which the University of Ibadan started experiencing a massive downward reduction in the personnel grant received from Abuja for payment of staff salaries as alluded to elsewhere in this Chapter.

Although salaries of the teachers were no longer coming from Abuja the Management of the University was determined that no teacher should lose his/her job. Funding came from the fees paid by the pupils in the school which were later subsidized by the University. The teachers were placed on fractional salaries which was at 50% of their previous salary. This was later increased to 75%. All attempts by Management of the University to increase the fees paid by the pupils in order for the teachers to be able to receive the full compliment of their salaries met with stiff resistance by SSANU and some parents.

SSANU took the matter to the Abuja Judicial Division of the National Industrial Court of Nigeria (NICN) as Claimant in a suit against the Federal Ministry of Education and the National Salaries, Incomes and Wages Commission as Defendants. SSANU claimed that the Defendants is bound to implement the terms of the Collective Agreement dated 5th November 2009 between the Federal Government of Nigeria and SSANU. The Union further claimed that the various circulars, documents and letters issues by several agencies of the Federal Government amounted to a breach of the aforesaid Collective Agreement. It went further that the Staff Schools of the various federally-owned universities are bona fide employees of the universities to which the staff schools are attached and are entitled to security of tenure as evidenced by their various letters of employment.

In its judgment of December 2016, the National Industrial Court granted the reliefs sought by SSANU. The Federal Ministry of Education through the NUC informed Vice-Chancellors of all Nigerian Federal Universities acknowledged receipt of the court judgment and requested the Vice-Chancellors to stay further action on the matter pending government's final pronouncement on the issue.

Then in August 2019, the University received a communication from the Federal Ministry of Education, through the NUC, indicating mainstreaming of the payment of Staff School Teachers salaries into the National Budget. It may be pointed out that this was after we had already submitted our 2020 Budget Estimates to the relevant authorities in Abuja. Vice-Chancellors were to liaise with the Federal Ministry of Finance and the Office of the Accountant general of the Federation for the provision and release of funds to pay the arrears of salaries of the affected members of staff of the University Staff (Primary) Schools, while adequate provision should be made in the respective University 2020 Budget estimates for the purpose.

As part of the efforts of the Federal Government to enroll staff of the various universities into the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS), a team visited the University of Ibadan in November 2019. The teachers of our Staff were enrolled. The crisis with the payment of salary of teachers of the Staff School was only resolved when the teachers received bank alerts for February 2020 through the IPPIS. This then brought the agonizing experience of the previous four years and one month to a dramatic end. Indeed there was spontaneous wild jubilation as captured on various social media among members of SSANU who were on strike at the University Main Gate for a number of reasons of which the Staff

School matter was a vital component when the moment the Teachers started receiving bank alerts by mid-morning of 13th March 2020 for their February 2020 Salary. It was indeed a glorious end to a protracted Union-Management issue that lasted four years and one month.

As part of the strike embarked upon by my members of the Joint Action Congress comprising SSANU and NASU, the Staff School was closed effective 11th February 2020 and this closure subsisted till commencement of the nationwide lock down on account of the Federal Government response to the Coronavirus pandemic by the third week of March 2020.

As at January 2020, the outstanding total wage bill of teachers of the Staff School since January 2016 amounted to about Four Hundred and Thirty Million, Two Hundred and Nine Thousand Nine Naira and Forty Six Kobo (N430,209,009.46), which documentation has been communicated to the Federal Government for a refund.

‘Illegal’ Pension Deductions

The matter of Contributory Pension Scheme has been a source of complaint between staff unions and the Management of the University of Ibadan for some time now. It was one of the issues raised by all the four staff unions in March 2017. It was also one of the major bones of contention in the protracted strike by the Joint Action Congress of the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU) and the Non-Academic Staff Union (NASU). Council at its meeting of Tuesday, 10th March 2020 deliberated extensively on the matter.

By the provisions of the Pension Reform Act of 2004 (as amended) which established a 15% Contributory Pension Fund, the individual employee is expected to contribute 7.5% of his/her total consolidated salary while 7.5% is to be contributed by the Federal Government of Nigeria on behalf of each employee.

The following extract from a communication by Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, dated 17th December 2012, in her capacity as the Coordinating Minister of the Economy and Honourable Minister of Finance is worthy of mention here:

Government considered it most necessary to deduct at source the 7.5% being the staff contribution to the scheme from the MDAs Personnel emolument allocations. This is to ensure timely remittance to the National pension Commission for onward transmission to the appropriate staff pension managers. The amount so deducted at source should only appear on the Employee’s monthly pay slips as a proof/receipt of his/her contribution and to show that he/she does not receive less than the Government approved salary. Consequently, MDAs are not expected to make any further deduction or withhold any fund towards the employee’s pension contribution.

The reflection or showing the amount of the staff contribution to the scheme in their pay slips does not in any way constitute double deduction as is being speculated in some MDAs.

The above position of the Federal Government was further reiterated in a letter to the Deputy National President of SSANU, dated 24th September 2018 signed by Ben Akabueze, Director-General of the Budget Office of the Federation while responding to a request for

clarification on the proper implementation of the contributory Pension scheme in the Nigerian Universities.

Government deducts at source the 7.5% being the staff contribution to the scheme from the University's personnel emolument allocations. This is to ensure timely remittance to the National Pension Commission for onward transmission to the appropriate staff pension managers. The amount so deducted at source should only appear on the Employee's monthly pay slips as a proof/receipt of his/her contribution and to show that he/she does not receive less than the government approved salary.

The University of Ibadan does not make any further pension deduction beyond what the Federal Government had deducted at source and transmitted to the Pension Fund Administrator of each member of staff. The reflection or showing the amount of the staff contribution to the scheme in our pay slips does not in any way constitute double deduction as is being erroneously interpreted by a cross section of our members of staff.

Part of the problem at the University of Ibadan in respect of the pension deduction had to do with the fact that what was reflected on the pay slip of each member of staff was less than the amount credited to his/her account with the Pension Fund Administrator. The issue of the inappropriate reflection of the employee's pension reflection of 7.5% of basic, transport and housing as against 7.5% of consolidated salary was raised by a team from the Presidential Initiative for Continuous Audit (PICA) that visited the University of Ibadan in November 2016.

The above clarification notwithstanding, the Council of the University at its meeting of March 2020 had to set up an Ad-Hoc Committee, with an external member of Council as the Chairman/Convener to have another look at the matter. All the four Staff Unions were to be represented on this Committee. A report was to be sent to Council for further consideration. The Committee will soon publish its mode of operation such that any member of staff who has any additional or contrary information can make such available for discussion.

The point must also be made that there has been a lack of uniformity in the implementation and application of the various circulars issued by the Federal Government in the various universities. While some universities reflect 7.5% of the consolidated salary as the Employee's Contribution, some reflect 3.5%, some 2.5% while some do not reflect at all! It would imply that for the last category, the Federal Government was solely responsible for the entire 15% pension contribution. This could not possibly have been the intent of the contributory pension scheme as envisaged by the Pension reform Act of 2004 (as amended). This has contributed to rising tension between Management and Staff Unions on many University Campuses, including the University of Ibadan.

With the enrolment of some staff of the University on the IPPIS, as from February 2020 the ghost of this matter may have been laid to rest, at least for now. There are only four salary scales in the University namely CONUASS, CONTISS, CONMESS and CONHESS for different categories of staff in the Nigerian Federal Government-owned Universities. Each member of staff can confirm his/her gross earnings and the applicable employee contributory pension by referencing the appropriate salary scale, salary level and step. Staff of the University were informed on many occasions that there has not been any pension deduction in the University at any time, not to talk of "illegal" pension deduction. Unfortunately, all the plea by management for understanding fell on deaf ears.

The heat generated by the claim of 'illegal' pension deduction by members of staff is better imagined. It was as if the Pension Reform Act was introduced by the current administration in the University whereas the effective date of implementation pre-dated my

assumption of office by at least 11 years. On Wednesday, 26 February, 2020, an attempt was made to assault the Vice-Chancellor and some other Principal Officers within the precincts of the Dean's Office, Faculty of Science, where they had gone to attend a Senate meeting, as the usual venue for meeting of Senate was under lock and key by the striking members of SSANU and NASU. The main access road to the Office of the Dean of Science was blocked with a bus belonging to NASU. The car that brought the Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellors (Administration and Academic) was unable to leave and the three of us were rescued by one of the Deans, with the assistance of other academic staff members, who came for the Senate meeting. The following day, the Inaugural Lecture by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) a Professor of Philosophy on behalf of the Faculty of Arts was nearly disrupted. On account of the very tense atmosphere on the Campus that day the Vice-Chancellor was advised by the internal confidential security report not to attend the programme. He eventually braved it and attended, albeit nearly after five minutes into the well-attended event.

In spite of the challenges

In spite of the funding challenges alluded to above, the University of Ibadan has continued to make giant strides in various aspects including academics, curriculum upgrade, research, ICT infrastructural development, staff welfare, and governance. Some of these are reflected in the improved rating on the Times Higher Education World University Ranking. Our students, Faculty and alumni/alumnae continue to shine and win laurels at national and continental levels. I do not fail to celebrate them on my personal facebook page as part of a deliberate effort to brand our great university.

We have established four new Faculties namely the Faculty of Renewable Natural Resources, Faculty of Environmental Design and Management, Faculty of Economics and Management Sciences, and Faculty of Multi-Disciplinary Studies. An Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases was established in the College of Medicine.

Nineteen additional academic departments have been established. These include Department of Architecture, Department of Estate Management, Department of Quantity Surveying, Department of Accounting, Department of Banking and Finance, Department of Marketing and Consumer Studies, Department of Nuclear Medicine (reputed to be perhaps the first of its type in any Nigerian University), Department of Immunology, Department of Biomedical Engineering, Department of Automotive Engineering, Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology; Department of Wood Products Engineering, Department of Soil Resources Management and Department of Crop Sciences and Horticulture (from the former Department of Agronomy), Department of Human Kinetics, Department of Health Education from the old Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education; Department of Early Childhood and Educational Foundations; Department of Arts and Social Sciences Education; and Department of Science and Education (from the defunct Department of Teacher Education); Department of Veterinary Surgery and Radiology; Department of Theriogenology from the former Department of Veterinary Surgery and Reproduction; Department of Veterinary Microbiology; Department of Veterinary Parasitology and Entomology from splitting of the former Department of Veterinary Microbiology and Parasitology; Department of Veterinary Physiology and

Biochemistry; Department of Veterinary Pharmacology and Toxicology from splitting of the former Department of Veterinary Physiology, Pharmacology and Biochemistry.

The Postgraduate School has been upgraded to a Postgraduate College. We were perhaps the first University in Nigeria to establish the position of Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research, Innovation and Strategic Partnerships). The administration embarked on a comprehensive review of the Regulations and Guidelines of Promotions for Academic Staff: 2017 Promotions Exercise. Moreover, we devolved and decentralized powers to Faculties to conclude all Part I Promotion cases up to the Senior Lectureship Grade at that level. Approved cases are then forwarded to the University Appointments and Promotions Committee for Academic Staff for Noting, with effect from the 2017 Promotion exercise. This singular measure has greatly complemented other proactive measures we have taken over the last four and a half years to reduce the volume of paper work considered by the Committee with a salutary effect in a significant reduction in the processing of promotion matters. This has boosted the morale of our overworked and underpaid Faculty. Our commitment to staff welfare has been attested to by several individuals outside the University of Ibadan. Samples include the following electronic mail from one of our external assessors from Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife wrote as follows:

ROTIMI ADAGUNODO eadagun@yahoo.com

To: Vcextass vcextass@ui.edu.ng

Fri, 08 May, 2020 12:08

Dear Sir,

Thank you very much for your mail Sir. It is highly encouraging, commendable and worthy of note that despite the prevailing pandemic and lockdown circumstances that the whole world is going through the Management of the University of Ibadan still remembers to make their External Assessors happy.

Please find attached the required details as presented in the sample template.

Thank you once more and I pray the University will continue to deliver quality intellectual services to humanity for many years to come.

Please continue to stay safe.

Kindly accept the assurance of my highest regards.

Thanks.

Professor E. Rotimi Adagunodo (OAU)

Promotion of members of the non-academic staff is attended to promptly. Indeed the 2019 promotion exercise for this category of staff had been concluded before Christmas of that year.

Infrastructural development is also supported from our allocations from the Tertiary Education Trust Fund and Needs Assessment of the Federal Ministry of Education, We have received generous donations from philanthropists notably the Chief Nathaniel Idowu Foundation, Asiwaju Bode Amao Foundation, Alhaji Aliko Dangote Foundation, Odole Oodua Sir Adebuntu Kensington Foundation, Pastor Mrs Folu Adeboye, General Theophilus Y. Danjuma Foundation, Aret Adams Foundation, Flour Mills Nigeria PLC, the Central Bank of Nigeria, among many others. The University of Ibadan Alumni Association Worldwide, Ibadan College of Medicine

Alumni Association, The Association of Ibadan University Geologists and other UI Alumni bodies have been very supportive of the University. There are now many new student hostels to provide decent and affordable accommodation for our students, especially the girls, under a Public-Private-Partnership initiative.

Discussion and Conclusion

It has been shown in this paper that there has been a vicious cycle of instability of the academic calendar of the Nigerian public university system over the last 27 years. The staff unions would agitate for improved condition of service, university autonomy, revitalization of the university system among other reasons. The second stage that typically follows is a breakdown of negotiation, followed by an industrial action which often lasts many weeks or months in extreme cases. Then an agreement is reached and the strike suspended. Then there is a default in fulfilling some aspects of the agreement. This then sets the stage for another round of agitation (Figure 8). Albert (2015) has discussed this phenomenon in great details.

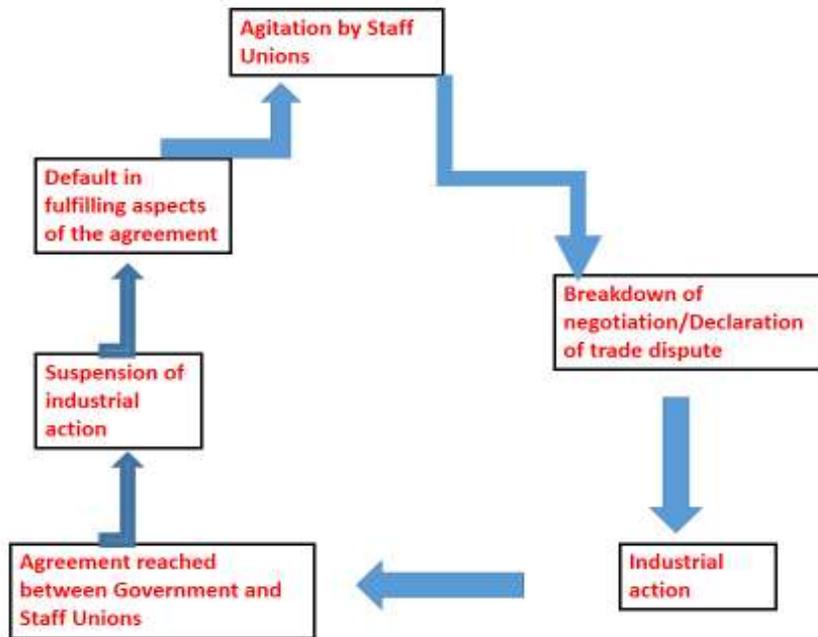


Figure 8: Vicious cycle of strike by staff unions

As at the end of the civil war in 1970, there were only two universities owned by the Federal Government namely the University of Ibadan (established in 1948) and the University of Lagos which was established in 1962. The two universities were then reasonably well funded. It is widely appreciated that funding is major challenge faced by public universities in Nigeria and the origin of the problem has been traced to the mid-1970s when the Federal Government took over the then regional Universities at Nsukka (established in 1960), Ile-Ife and Zaria (both established in 1962) and Benin-City (Established in 1970) and created seven new Federal

Universities, thus bringing the number of Federal Universities then to 13 (Figure 9). Many more Federal Universities have since been established in different parts of the country.

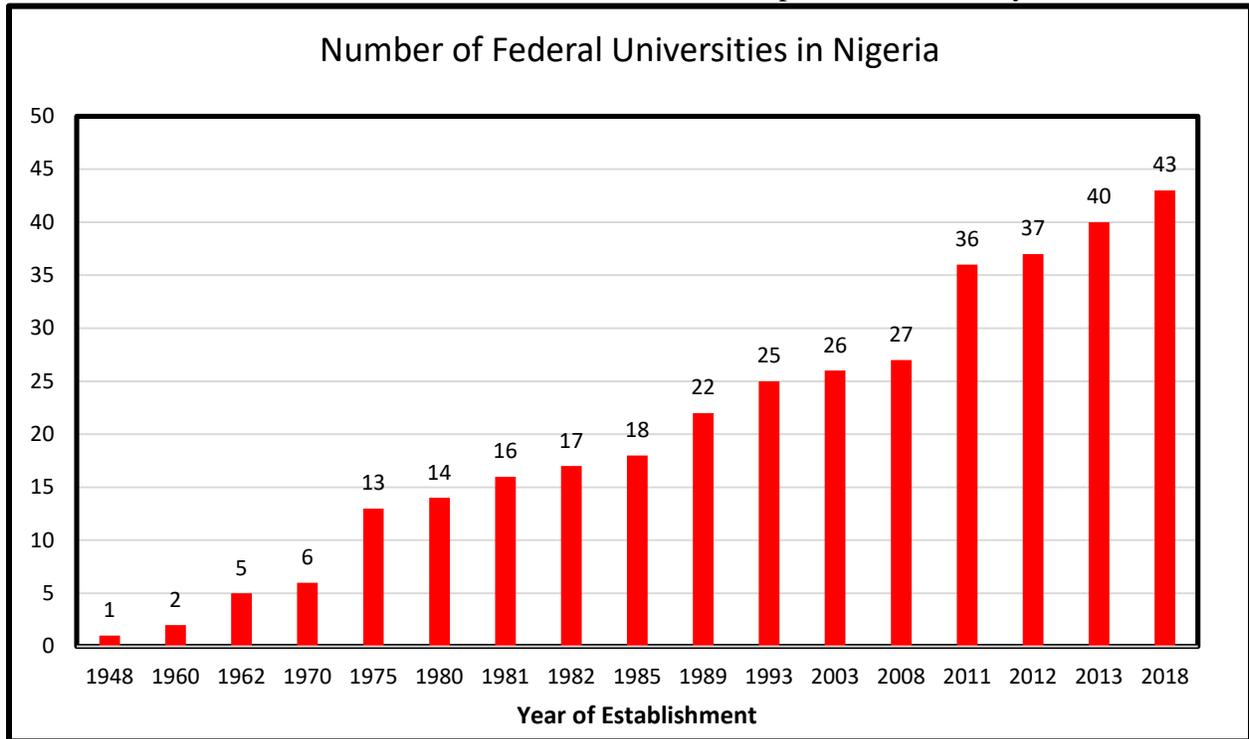


Figure 9: Establishment of Federal Universities in Nigeria, 1948-2020 (Source: <https://www.nuc.edu.ng>; Retrieved 30th May 2020)

There are now 43 Federal Universities in the country and the funding challenge may remain with us for a long time to come. Nonetheless as leaders of these institutions we have to continue to explore all possible sources of additional funding from the federal budget, user charges, endowment revenues, research grants, innovations, patents and intellectual property.

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