

FUNDING PATTERNS AND STAFF CONFLICT IN SOUTH WEST NIGERIA PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

The paper examines the funding pattern of universities as a panacea to conflict recorded in recent time. The establishment of universities all over the world has been a highly capital intensive project. Basically, the interaction between human capital maximization and wealth maximization of the investment in university education calls for a pedagogical commitment to the funding. Navigating through university funding remains a financial challenge to the proprietors. Poor funding or under funding of public universities in recent times has propelled incessant conflict due to the denial of workers need in one way or the other. The researchers view the needs denial of university personnel due to non-availability of fund and how this has altered the existing academic norms. Six public universities were randomly selected from the South West geo-political zone of Nigeria. 600 academic staff and 600 non-academic staff were drawn to test the research hypotheses. The research instrument used is titled Funding of University and Staff Conflict Questionnaire (FUSCQ), validated and found reliable at $r = 0.73$. It was however discovered that there is no significant difference in the funding pattern and staff needs between the federal and state universities which results into frequent strike actions. Recommendations were made based on the funding, that conscious effort should be made to increase budgetary allocations and the welfare of university workers to minimize conflict for optimal productivity expected.

KEYWORDS: Poor funding, underfunding, wealth maximization, human capital maximization, team norm.

Introduction

University education from a global perspective is fundamental to the construction of a knowledge economy and society in all nations (World Bank, 2008). Yet the potential of educational system in developing countries like Nigeria is frequently thwarted by long-standing problems of conflict, policy changes or reform programmes. It is a truism that every human organization, formal or non-formal has conflict potentials. That is to say that conflict is ubiquitous in all human interaction and organizational behaviour, be it social, economic or governmental. This is premised on common observation that each individual in an organization is different from others, and the uniqueness of the individual in an organization is, quite often than not, at variance with the nature of the formal organization. This phenomenon confirms what Ejiogu (1990), Akomolafe (2002), and Ibukun (2004) posit about conflict that, it is an inbuilt aspect of the organizational behavioural system because differences occasioned by the different people in an organization inevitably bring about controversies, disagreement, collisions and discord.

Nigerian universities could be said to be moving towards realizing the set goals in the first two decades of independence as the few universities established in the country then could be said to possess world class stature and produced outstanding scholars in virtually all disciplines. The staff and students had access to comfortable accommodation, while regular supply of electricity, pipe-borne water and proper feeding and clothing were as sure as the sunrise.

The learning condition was congenial, and the University authorities were relating with the staff and students as responsible individuals and indeed as the future leaders of the country. Job opportunities were automatic dividends of university education. Thus, on admission into the university, the successful candidates saw themselves as the privileged few, admitted to develop their potentialities and translate them into concrete legacy for posterity. They saw the university as a better home that produce fulfillment and happiness in work (study) and play because they were relatively satisfied with the university's environmental returns. During the last three and half decades, Nigerian universities have, regrettably metamorphosed from citadels of learning into "centers of violence" (Rotimi, 2005). Ibukun (2004) succinctly expresses that university education in Nigeria is in travail. The system is riddled with crises of various dimensions endemic strikes, autonomy conflict, cultism and volatile unionism among staff and students.

According to 'the Nation' Newspaper, 21st April 2009, the students (both male and female) of the Federal University of Technology, Akure, on Tuesday, 21st April 2009 embarked on a peaceful protest within the university, against the strike by members of non academic staff union (NASU), National Association of Agricultural Technology (NAAT) and Senior Staff Association of Nigeria Universities (SSANU) of the university, over exclusion from the congregation of the university which is made up of Academic Staff and all administrative Staff with degree qualification and above. (This relates to self esteem need of Maslow's need hierarchy theory). The strike resulted in the grounding of essential services such as power and water supply. The student Union Government then gave an hour ultimatum for the crisis to be resolved. The students blocked the gates and obstructed the movement of Vehicles in and out of the campus. Consequently, the students were forcefully sent home by the university authority for a week.

Theories of Human Needs and Motivation

According to Jazsar and Algozzine, (2007), proponents of the motivational theories posit that people in general share a common set of needs that orient and propel them. When needs are not fulfilled there is occurrence of an internal state of tension or discomfort within an individual, but when human needs are met there is the feeling of satisfaction. This approach assumes that the average human being consistently seeks a state of equilibrium as in the case of an hungry man who will naturally long for food so as to that need or reduced the associated tension.

As human behaviour is said to be needs-fulfillment oriented, a glance at the behaviour of people around us would seem to suggest that people are motivated by myriads of needs. The question is: What are these needs that actuate, direct, sustain or even stop man's behaviour? According to Peretomode (1991) and Cole (2002) theories that focus on the human needs, i.e, what factors within the person that influence behaviour are called content theories. Proponents include Maslow, Hertzberg, Alderfer and McClelland. Those theories that are labeled 'Expectancy Theory', "Equity Theory", and Reinforcement theory are basically process Theories. They are so called because they focus on how individual behaviour is actuated, influenced and stopped. Theories that attempt to bring together both content and process theories of motivation are called integrative models of motivation. Exponents of this approach include Lawler and Porter (1967) Hackman and Oldman (1976).

Thus, a university is expected to provide the student with a balanced education that builds his character and intellect for the development of self and society. The education provided to the students by a university ought to be devoid of pretences, deprivation and other conflict potentials that are inimical to the timely realization of its objectives.

Funding Patterns and Conflict in Nigeria Universities

The most notable crisis recently involves Academic Staff Union of University (ASUU), Non-Academic Staff Union (NASU), and the student union government. Each of these unions is nationally organized. Its role is to protect the interest of members. Welfare of its members and condition of service (for staff) are central to their struggle. When the responses of management are slow they resort to industrial action, strikes, withholding result, work to rule, etc.

According to Oladapo (1988), the Federal and State universities were grossly underfunded due to the Structural Adjustment Programmed (SAP) introduced by the Federal Government. The attendant crises were so devastating that as Jega (1994) observes, amidst the proscription of Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) by the Federal Government in 1988 and other abuses, over 1000 academics had to quit the Nigerian universities.

One then assumes that the needs of staff in the State universities are either different from those of their colleagues in the Federal universities or that their needs are relatively satisfied when compared with one another.

However, the budgetary allocation to universities by the federal government shows a skewed pattern from 2005 to 2009.

Table 1: Funding of Federal Universities and Inter-University Centres (2005-2009)

Year	Personnel	Overhead	Direct Teaching & Laboratory	Capital	Teaching & Research Equip.	Total
2005	39,956,156,025	3,401,512,060	1,906,821,801	9,397,660,000	2,026,000,000	56,688,149,886
2006	68,955,116,363	1,685,236,545	1,160,991,018	5,760,105,402	1,320,652,321	78,882,101,649
2007	72,318,179,591	2,320,189,804	2,037,571,566	7,184,637,934	1,806,600,000	85,667,178,895
2008	88,511,080,204	2,167,820,098	1,669,206,119	13,197,505,486	2,204,877,312	107,750,489,219
2009	97,253,750,426	11,772,807,890	8,456,932,525	45,535,907,570	8,472,961,865	441,232,892,459

Source: www.nuc.edu.ng. Culled from The Nation June 21/2010, pp.46-48

Table 2: Percentage of the Funding of Federal Universities and Inter-University Centres (2005-2009)

Year	Personnel	Overhead	Direct Teaching & Laboratory	Capital	Teaching & Research Equip.	Total
2005	70.4%	6%	3.4%	16.6%	3.6%	100%
2006	87.4%	2.1%	1.5%	7.3%	1.7%	100%
2007	84.4%	2.7%	2.4%	8.4%	2.1%	100%
2008	82.1 %	2.1%	1.5%	12.2%	2.1%	100%
2009	86.1%	2.0%	1.5%	8.9%	1.0%	100%

Source: Derived from Table 1

Table 2 reveal the funding pattern of the Federal Government of Nigeria budgetary allocation to her universities, it implies that personnel cost received the largest allocation of 70.4% (2005); 87.4% (2006); 84.4% (2007) 82.1% (2008); and 86.1% (2009). Yet there has been an increasing agitation for the satisfaction of one workers need or the other.

Additional information on university crises according to Aina (2009) reveals that:

- 1966 Prof Saberu Biokaku VC Appointment crisis in UNILAG. It is a student crisis with staff conflict.
- 1976 street demonstration by UNILAG students against Dimka's coup during the coup broadcast.
- 1978 "Alli must go" national students' crisis.
- 1982 "Adadevo must go" crisis in UNILAG.
- 1984 National students demonstration against Buhari's Administration increase in school fees, draconian increase and human rights violation.
- 1986 National students' crisis in solidarity with killing of 4 students in ABU crisis.
- 1992 National students crisis against increases in fuel prices
- 1992 ASUU nationwide crisis
- 1992-1993 June 12th demonstration
- University of Abuja crisis of 2000
- University of Ilorin crisis of 2001 involving 47 lecturers
- 2000 – 2001 Ambrose Alli University crisis
- 2002 – 2008 ASUU National Crisis that culminated into an 188 day strike
- 2005 – 2006 Academic Session – Lagos State University closure for six months
- 2009 May – Sept ASUU National Strike.

Azelama in Aina (2009) identified 15 causes of conflicts in the Nigerian universities. This is further summarized as follows:

- a. Poor welfare on campus and its environment has been a major cause of conflict. It includes inadequate hostel and classroom accommodation leading to congestion, poor feeding, inadequate water supply, inadequate health facility, poor supply of electricity. Most of the student union demands in the universities have reflected these problems. The unions have also identified these problems in resisting increase in school fees.
- b. Poor condition of service has been in the areas of low remuneration, delayed salary, delayed promotion, retrenchment, victimization of staff, poor standard of living, etc. Students suffer fear of unemployment after graduation.
- c. Dictatorial administrative styles of Vice Chancellors is another major cause of conflict. Dictatorship violates industrial peace. It leads to denial of fundamental human rights, justice and the problem of low legitimacy of regime. Dictatorship creates dictatorial governing councils and “management” with effort to subjugate union activities. These generate conflict.
- d. Cultism has provoked inter and intra cult conflicts. It has led to violence in different forms, of conflict in the universities.

Statement of the Problem

The incessant strikes by ASUU, NASU, and SSANU due to non-fulfilment of one need or the other by the management and proprietors of such universities which have disrupted the school calendar and academic excellence are fast paving way for mediocrity and academic backwardness. There is hardly a full academic session that student and staff crises will not result in loss of studies, delayed graduation for students and economic waste for students, parents and the country as a whole. The major purpose of this study was to examine the impact of funding patterns in the management of crisis and to determine the existing relationship between staff needs and conflicts in the public universities in South West Nigeria. This is sequel to the fact that workers factor constitutes the very nucleus of the university existence and human behaviour.

Research Questions

The study therefore is concerned with answering the following questions:

1. Is there any relationship between incidence of conflict and university funding pattern in south west Nigeria universities?
2. Is there any difference in the funding pattern and staff needs between the federal and state universities?

Hypotheses

For the purpose of the study, the following null hypotheses were generated and tested.

1. There is no significant relationship between incidence of conflict and university funding pattern.
2. There is no significant difference in the funding pattern and staff needs between the federal and state universities.

Methodology

Design

Descriptive research design was used with survey methods.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

Nigeria is made up of six geo-political zones namely: North-West, North-East, North-Central, South-South, South-East, and South-West. Thus, a purposive simple random sampling method was adopted. South-West geo-political zone was selected out of which six universities (3 Federal and 3 States) were randomly selected among the eleven public universities. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 600 academic staff and 600 Non academic staff.

Instrumentation

For data gathering, the instrument used was a self constructed questionnaire titled: Funding of University and Staff Conflict Questionnaire (FUSCQ). Before administration, the questionnaire was validated and found reliable at $r = 0.73$. The statistical tool applied were inferential statistics, Pearson product moment correlation coefficient and t-tests were employed to test the hypotheses, the level of significance used on the study was the 0.05 alpha.

Results

1. There is no significant relationship between incidence of conflict and university funding pattern.

In testing this hypothesis, the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used.

Table 3: Relationship between Incidence of Conflict and University Funding Pattern

	Conflict	Funding Pattern
Incidence of Conflict	1.000	.477*
Sig (2. tailed)	.	.045
Sum of Squares and Cross-products	6.158	2.839
Covariance	.362	.167
N	6	6
Funding Pattern	.477	1.000
Sig (2. tailed)	.045	.
Sum of Squares and Cross-products	2.839	5.744
Covariance	.167	.338
N	6	6

* Correlation is Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

From table 3, there is a significant positive relationship between incidence of conflict and funding pattern in South West universities. $r = .477$, $P < .05$. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

2. There is no significant difference in the funding pattern and staff needs between the Federal and State universities.

In testing this hypothesis, a two-tailed t-test was performed.

Table 4: Summary of Difference Between the Needs of Staff in Federal and State Universities in South West Nigeria

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	t cal	t-tab
Federal	600	14.62	1.844			
State	600	14.56	1.952	1199	.601	1.960

NS= Not Significant at 0.05 level

The $t\text{-cal} = .601 < t\text{-tab} 1.96$ at 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the funding pattern and staff needs in Federal and State universities in South West Nigeria is upheld.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study no doubt has come up with relevant findings which are germane to funding pattern and conflict in Nigeria universities. It is established that the incidence of conflicts in universities is not only due to unpleasant climate of relationship existing between and among the individuals in the university but also to the underfunding and incongruous pattern of funding the university and the nature of the university as a formal and professional organization. Therefore, the pattern. The effective resolution to the incidence of conflicts in the Nigerian Universities therefore, is not in the use of such strategies as compromising, coercion, avoidance or simply covering up the conflict but to curtail its emergence through the appropriate funding. It then follows that an integrative model of motivation that considers the university whole forces- the nature of the individual in the university and that of the university be employed. This is in line with Porter and Miles (1974) systemic theory of motivation that three necessary conditions for effective motivation are: the individual characteristics, the job characteristics and, the work situation.

Recommendations

1. It is thus recommended that an integrative model of motivation that considers the university whole forces- the nature of the individual in the university and that of the university be employed.
2. In order to reduce the problem of incessant strikes in the university system which has a negative effect on quality, the Federal and State governments should allow the university autonomy clause to take a stronghold in the policy and day-to-day management of universities in the country.

3. The university leadership should be responsive to the needs of staff because lack of this could hinder their productivity which will invariably affect the interest of the students who want to see that the management caters for the needs occupational needs of the staff.
4. Government should commit more funds to infrastructural development which could ameliorate the conflict resulting from infrastructural decay.
5. The Public Private Partnership (PPP) model should be re-enforced in the universities to assist in the funding of university projects.

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