

# **The Gains and the Pains of Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information Systems (IPPIS) Policy Implementation in Nigeria**

By

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## **Abstract**

The study examined the gains and pains of the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) Policy implementation in Nigeria. The paper was a qualitative descriptive one. The study found that IPPIS has mitigated problems associated with salary payments to public servants. However, the feat came with some pains and burdens for both public servants and IPPIS implementers. The study recommends, among others, that the IPPIS should decentralise its activities, gain greater autonomy to operate effectively, and undergo remodification and redesign to accommodate greater organisational flexibility and peculiarity.

## **Keywords**

IPPIS, Public Policy, Policy, Implementation, Nigeria

## **Introduction**

In Nigeria, the issue of public service salaries has been at the forefront right from the early stages of Nigerian nationhood. While the mode of payment evolved, the minimum wage was a subject of unending debate between labour and the government in Nigeria. At an earlier stage, payments are made by cash, cheque, bank overdraft, and later by bank transfer after the bank's reconciliation. Unlike in America and Europe, salary payments in Nigeria are usually monthly, and this is a widespread practice in the public service. As a federal state, the issue of minimum wages and the method of payment implementation has generated many crises between states and the federal government. Most of the time, the states refused to pay the newly implemented minimum wage, citing economic constraints, leaving state employees pauperised.

Since the return of civil rule in 1999, many reforms have been carried out in the Nigerian public service, revolutionising salary administration. The recent salary administration reform introduced an electronic payment system to replace the cumbersome, obsolete process that has characterised salary payments. It was on this basis that the federal government introduced the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) to efficiently and effectively meet the needs of public servants in Nigeria and to block leakages and corruption in public

service through the payroll system. However, the introduction and implementation of IPPIS faced slight resistance from a few segments of the federal government's Ministries, Departments, and Agencies.

The introduction of IPPIS in 2006 and the subsequent implementation in 2007, with core objectives: to pay federal government employees on time and accurately, to have a centralised payroll system that meets the needs of federal government employees and helps the government to plan and manage payroll budget by ensuring proper control of personnel cost, have been riddled with lots of inconsistencies.

The need to develop and inspire the human resources sector in an era of dwindling oil prices in the international market has become absolutely important, as the country cannot cope with the attendant effects of low morale among federal employees resulting from irregular salary payments, which can demotivate workers from achieving optimal performance. The paper discusses conceptual clarifications, the theoretical framework, the objectives and achievements of IPPIS, the reasons for MDAs' resistance, the IPPIS enrollees, and the gains and pains of IPPIS.

## **Conceptual Clarifications**

The study conceptualises relevant concepts.

### **Concept of IPPIS**

Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) Enakirerhi & Temile (2017: 4) see IPPIS as an IT-enabled facility being put in place to establish a reliable and comprehensive database for the public service, facilitate workforce planning, eliminate record and payroll fraud, facilitate easy storage, update and retrieval of personnel records for administrative and pension processes and staff remuneration payment with minimal wastages and leakages. According to them, since the inception of the project, IPPIS has saved the Federal Government of Nigeria billions of Naira by eliminating thousands of ghost workers through personnel verification and salary payment processes. While Enakirerhi and Temile conceptualised IPPIS from IT-enabled facility which has assisted the government in saving billions of Farajimakin and Anichebe (2019: p. 19) view IPPIS as intervention scheme and reform when they observed that, Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System (IPPIS): is a world Bank-Assisted project under the Economic Reform and Government Project (ERGP) which was aimed at establishing a reliable and comprehensive database for the public service, facilitate staffing planning, assist in providing information for decision making, eliminate double dipping and credentials falsification, facilitate easy storage, update and retrieval of personnel record for administrative and pension process, and to facilitate staff remuneration payment. According to them, the IPPIS programme enables MDAs to identify ghost workers and achieve public probity in governance (Farajimakin & Anichebe, 2019).

According to the Office of the Accountant General of the Federal Government (2008), IPPIS is a child of the Federal Government Reform Programme, which was conceptualised at the Bureau of Public Service Reform (BPSR) for the centralised payment of all civil servants employed by the Federal Government. The IPPIS project started in April 2007 with the enrolment of the seven pilot Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs). The government financed it through a World Bank facility of about USD 4.9 million. The government finally transferred it to the Office of the Accountant General of the Federation (OAGF) in 2008. In other words, the IPPIS was introduced to centralise the payment of all civil servants employed by the Federal Government, but after 13 years, some agencies and departments have not registered.

The Federal Government in October 2006, conceived the Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System (IPPIS) to provide a reliable and comprehensive database for the public service to address ghost worker also to facilitate human resource planning, eliminate manual record and payroll fraud also to facilitate easy storage, update and retrieve personnel records for administrative and pension processes, and facilitate convenient staff salary administration payment with minimal waste and leakage (Public Service Institute of Nigeria, 2011). This implies that IPPIS was conceived with a broad-based objective that has not been fully achieved.

Department of IPPIS while describing mode of its operations asserts that, the Integrated Payroll Personnel and Information System (IPPIS) is a department within the office of the Accountant-General of the federation which is responsible for payment of salaries and wages directly to government employee's bank account with appropriate deductions and remittances of <sup>third</sup> party payments such as: Federal Inland Revenue Service, State Boards of Internal Revenue, National Health Insurance Scheme, Pension Fund Administrative, Cooperative Societies, National Housing Fund, Bank Loans and Associations Dues (Office of Accountant General of the Federation, IPPIS Department Publication, 2012).

According to Effiong et al. (2017:26), IPPIS was conceived to reduce or eliminate corruption and data storage in the payroll system. According to them, in a bid to reduce corruption, the Nigerian government in October 2006, conceived the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) to provide a reliable and efficient database for the public service to eliminate record and payroll frauds, facilitate easy storage, facilitate workforce planning, update and retrieve personnel records for administrative and pension processes and facilitate convenient staff remuneration payment with minimal wastes and leakages.

IPPIS is a paradigm shift from an analogue process to an IT-driven digital way of paying public servants. It is a multi-tasking software designed to ease human resources challenges in the federal civil service.

### **Public Policy**

Broadly speaking, public policy can be seen as a statement of intentions. When viewed from this perspective, public policy is regarded as an embodiment of official pronouncements on what governments would want to do or have done on behalf of the citizenry. It consists of a series of guidelines for actions to improve the welfare of the citizenry, prepared by the government or its designated agent (Dlakwa, 2008). Supporting this direction, Ikelegbe (2006) conceptualises it as the integrated courses of action and programmes the government has set, and the framework or guide it has designed to direct actions and practices in a specific problem area. In comparison, Anderson (1984) aligned with this assertion when he conceived public policy as a purposive course of action followed by a political actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or a matter of common concern.

Cochran (2015) believes that policy comprises political decisions to implement programs that achieve societal goals. Public policy comprises a plan of action or programme and a statement of objectives, in other words, a map and a destination. Amdii (2010) supported this stance, observing that public policy can be seen as a paradigm or framework that guides government decisions and provides direction to promote development and growth.

In his own contribution, the proposed course of action is the one the government intends to implement in respect of a given problem or situation confronting it. Public policy is a process of decision-making. This informed the position of Amdii (2010: p. 11), who also observed that

public policy can be seen as a choice among available alternatives, taking into account cost-benefit analysis. Towing the same line of thinking, Dye (1995) considers it as anything that the government chooses to do or not to do.

Nevertheless, no matter who initiates a public policy, it must be acted upon by the government before it can appropriately be labelled public policy (Dlakwa, 2008). Policies are commonly described as action plans, positions, and/or guidelines that influence decisions through processes, preferences, and choices. Policies (decisions made) usually aim to implement a programme of reform or change, but retaining the status quo is also a policy (Howlett & Ramesh, 2003).

Policies do not operate in isolation; some tertiary institutions explicitly establish requirements to ensure alignment across all institution-specific texts (Freeman, 2013), for example, Constitutions, Government Acts, and other laws. Policies can be adopted by individuals, groups/parties, private enterprises, but most often by the government; those adopted by the government are public policies. Public policy is the decision-making process of government that is authoritatively binding to solve societal problems. It is not just a political pronouncement, but it is also legally backed plans and programmes of government.

### **IPPIS Policy Implementations in Nigeria**

The Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) is a payroll policy introduced in 2006 in Nigeria. Farajimakin and Anichebe (2017) reported that IPPIS is a policy in the implementation stage in their work, "Effect of Integrated Personal Payroll Information System on Employee Welfare: Evidence from Federal Ministries in Nigeria." Also, the study by Enakirerhi and Temile supports that IPPIS is in the implementation stage in their study, which explores the Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System (IPPIS) in Nigeria by looking critically at the challenges of implementation of IPPIS, the benefits to be derived when IPPIS is fully implemented, and what the future holds.

There was a series of workshops for stakeholders to discuss the benefits of the IPPIS policy by the then Minister of Finance, Mr Olusegun Aganga, before the eventual flag off of the Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System. One such workshop was the IPPIS Phase II workshop held at the Sheraton Hotel in Abuja. Suppose implementation involves the commitment of funds, the establishment of structures and methods, the hiring of personnel, the administering or executing of activities, and the securing of policy goods, services, and other intended outcomes, as claimed by Ikelegbe (1996). A considerable amount of money was allocated by the Bureau of Public Service Reforms (BPSR) for the policy take-off during El Rufai's tenure as chairman. A \$4.9 million contract, sponsored by the World Bank, was signed with the Nigerian-based System Specs Consortium in October 2006 to provide a more coherent Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System (IPPIS). An Office, domiciled in the Office of the Accountant General of the Federation, has been created for IPPIS, with a sizeable number of employees, to oversee the smooth implementation of the policy.

### **Empirical Literature**

Scholars have extensively written about the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) since its brief implementation in Nigeria. For instance, Farajimakin & Anichebe (2017) conducted a study titled "The effect of an Integrated Personal Payroll Information System on Employee Welfare: Evidence from Federal Ministries in Nigeria." A descriptive research design and a survey were used, with data collected via a questionnaire. Binary logistic regression analysis was employed. The study found that the implementation of

IPPIS had a weak positive relationship with employee welfare, but this relationship was statistically significant.

In another study by Farajimakin & Anichebe (2017) on the Integrated Payroll System and Government Recurrent Expenditure in Nigeria. The study used both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Data were collected through primary and secondary sources. Secondary data were collected from the annual reports of the Bayelsa State Government, Nigeria, and survey data were obtained from 30 respondents using a researcher-designed questionnaire validated by experts and found to have a reliability coefficient of 0.90. Descriptive and ordinary least squares regression statistical techniques were used to analyze the data using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. The study found a strong, positive relationship between the integrated payroll system and personnel and overhead costs.

In the study of Leyira & Temple (2018) on IPPIS and the Ghost Workers Syndrome in Nigeria's Public Sector. The study adopted a historical research method, and its findings were that the implementation and deployment of the Integrated Personnel and Payroll Management System (IPPIS) have, to a great extent, reduced the incentive, capacity, and opportunities of fraudulent individuals to perpetrate payroll fraud at all levels.

While the study by Agboola (2018) on the effectiveness of an Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System in Addressing Ghost Worker Syndrome in the Nigerian Public Sector was a survey research study. The study utilised primary and secondary sources of data to elicit the opinions of public servants in the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS). The study revealed that there were still challenges with IPPIS in uploading employees' monthly salaries. The study concluded that, if properly implemented and managed, the IPPIS scheme will go a long way toward eradicating ghost workers in the Nigerian public service.

The study by Mela (2019) on The Implementation of the IPPIS Policy in Nigerian Universities by the Federal Government: Benefits and Challenges. The study was a qualitative research type. The study revealed that the university system did not reject IPPIS but argued that it did not adequately capture the University's flexibility and peculiarities.

In their own study, Kaoje et al. (2020) focused on the Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System (IPPIS) and Transparency in Government Payroll Administration in the Nigerian Civil Service: A Unique Approach. The study used a descriptive cross-sectional survey design. The study found a significant, moderate, positive relationship between IPPIS, Transparency, and Accountability.

Enakirerhi & Temile (2017) study on IPPIS in Nigeria: Challenges, Benefits and Prospects. The study was a theoretical one that relied on federal government pronouncements, opinions, stakeholder presentations to international bodies, and articles and newspaper publications to reach its conclusion. The study found that accurate and reliable personnel, the reduction or elimination of corrupt and sharp practices, and the facilitation of modern scientific budgeting and forecasting were significant benefits of IPPIS. These benefits, according to the study, were, however, threatened by skills transfer problems, poor supporting infrastructure, technological barriers to inter-MDAs transfer, stakeholder resistance, and a lack of will for accelerated implementation.

Idris, Adaja, and Audu (2015) studied the Integrated Personnel Payroll and Information System (IPPIS) as a panacea for Ghost Workers Syndrome in the Nigerian Public Service. The

study elicited data from both primary and secondary sources. The data were analysed using simple percentages, frequency tables, mean scores, and Spearman's rank-order correlation technique. The study found that ghost worker syndrome was rampant in the public service and that the Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System (IPPIS), if properly adopted, would ensure a virile economy through enhanced productivity.

Effiong et al. (2017) study, which examined the Effects of the Treasury Single Account (TSA), Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS), and Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) on Fraud Management in the Public Sector in Nigeria. The study used a descriptive research design, with a questionnaire administered to respondents randomly selected from the Ministries under study. The linear regression model was employed to establish relationships among variables, and the study found that IPPIS and IFMIS have positive and significant relationships with fraud and fraud management, and that they jointly impact the performance of Entities.

### **Literature Gap**

Knowledge is lacking regarding the impact of IPPIS policy implementation on public service salary administration in Nigeria. Previous studies focused on how the Integrated Personnel Payroll and Information System has been implemented to detect ghost workers and payroll fraud, and to save the government treasury money. Works by Idris, Adaja, and Audu (2015), Agboola (2018), Leyira and Temple (2018), and Effiong (2017) supported this conclusion. Works by Enakirerhi & Temile (2017) established the effectiveness and challenges of IPPIS implementation in Nigeria, while works by Effiong focused on the relationships between IPPIS, TSA, and IFMIS. The study by Kaoje et al. (2020) established a relationship between IPPIS, and the study by Farajimakin & Anichebe (2017) established relationships between IPPIS, personnel cost, and overhead cost, and also demonstrated a weak relationship between IPPIS and employee welfare. None of the Scholars in recent studies, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, has measured the impact of IPPIS policy implementation to x-ray the gains and pains on public service in Nigeria, a gap this study intends to fill.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study adopts Mixed-Scanning and Decision-Making Theories as the theoretical framework.

### **Mixed-Scanning Model**

The Mixed-Scanning incorporated the ideas of both the rational and incremental models in public policy-making and analysis. Etzioni (1967) was the person who advanced the mixed scanning model to policy-making. He considered the model to be superior to both the rational comprehensive and incremental models. In fact, like the incrementalist, he rejected rationalistic models as practically unrealistic and normatively undesirable. He did not see incrementalism as an alternative to rationalism. He argued that, normatively, the incremental approach, which presumes that public choices arise from the interplay of partisanship, is deficient to the extent that not all community interests are represented in the decision-making process.

Basically, mixed-scanning seeks to avoid the problem of the rationalistic and incremental model: Its Purpose is to permit the simultaneous utilisation of the rational, comprehensive, and incremental models in different situations. While incrementalism will be adequate in some cases, in others a rational, comprehensive approach will be needed. Therefore, descriptively, mixed scanning can incorporate both incremental and fundamental policy decisions when they

occur. Mixed scanning recognises the limited human capacity to secure purely rational decisions (Olaniyi, 2001).

In exploring mixed scanning, it is essential to distinguish between fundamental and incremental decisions. Fundamental decisions are made by exploring the main alternatives the actor sees in light of the conception of his goals, but unlike rationalism would indicate, details and specifications are omitted so that an overview is feasible. Incremental decisions are made but within the contexts set by fundamental decisions (and fundamental reviews) (Aregbesola, 2019).

Thus, each of the two elements in mixed-scanning helps reduce the effects of the other's particular shortcomings: incrementalism reduces the unrealistic aspects of rationalism by limiting the details required in fundamental decisions, and contextualising rationalism helps overcome the conservative slant of incrementalism by exploring longer-run alternatives. Together, empirical tests and comparative studies of decision-makers would show that these elements make for a third approach that is at once more realistic and more effective than its components. The application of the Mixed Scanning model of decision-making as an analytical framework became necessary because it incorporates assumptions from both the rational and incremental models, leading to a results-oriented approach.

The Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) was a process of detailed, rationalistic examination of all Ministries, Departments, and Agencies of government. The examination revealed sharp practices in the MDAs' payroll systems. Hence, the need for a mechanism to checkmate payroll fraud and ghost worker syndrome became necessary in 2006 when it was introduced. Political actors, both at the state and federal levels, engaged in critical thinking and arrived at a centrally controlled, digitalised payroll system that made fraud impossible and ensured the seamless payment of salaries to public servants. Apart from reducing payroll fraud, the IPPIS has been immensely beneficial to the federal government, helping it save billions of Naira that hitherto were embezzled by a few corrupt elements in the public service.

According to the mixed scanning model, emphasis is placed on specific details to inform decision-making that is affordable, cost-effective, and time-saving. IPPIS was piloted in 2007 with seven federal ministries, which were considered specific ministries. The review of these ministries over time showed a significant level of successful implementation of IPPIS, leading to a decision to extend it to all federal government MDAs.

The study situates the IPPIS policy within the decision-making of political actors, arising from a series of bargaining and trade-offs. The compelling evidences of payroll malpractices from Olusegun Aganga (former Minister of Power), El Rufai (former Minister of FCT) and Ngozi Okonjo Eweala (former Minister of Finance) were enough to convince the federal government to launch a payroll system that will eliminate ghost workers and payroll fraud as well mitigate the problems associated with salary and arrears payment of public servants in federal government service.

In other words, IPPIS was a product of a mixed scanning decision-making process, which ranged from a specific-to-general upward review of performance over time to outright adoption by all government MDAs. The model, to some extent, was suitable for explaining IPPIS policy as a byproduct of compromise and lobbying to savage the public service salary administration. However, it failed to account for the effects of such a decision on implementers and the broader political environment, thereby hindering the effective implementation of the payroll policy. Lastly, it erroneously failed to link decision-making with organisational reform that can propel development.

## Decision-Making Theory

An analysis bringing the decision-making process into the focus of political analysis was developed by Richard Snyder and his colleagues after World War II. Snyder made a distinction between the static analysis so far adopted in the study of politics by the structural-functionalists and the systems theorists, and claimed that the decision-making analysis, based as it was on process analysis, was capable of dealing with dynamic situations. A static analysis could yield information on the nature of change between two points in time and on the conditions under which it occurred, but not on the reason for the change or how it unfolded (Varma, 2001).

In the field of decision-making, Herbert Alexander Simon's *Administrative Behaviour* made a pioneering contribution. According to Simon (1957), decision-making is the most significant activity of administration. He argued that decision-making should be carefully studied, since decisions precede action. Simon criticised the traditionalists (scholars in the classical school of thought and said that their principle is proverbs. He also criticised the emphasis on the formal organisational structure of authority and the allocation of functions. He prescribed an empirical approach in administration to replace the so-called armchair speculation.

Decision-making models aim to simplify the real-world decision-making process by examining how individuals and groups make decisions, what guides or informs such decision-making, what information the decision maker seeks, and what influence the decision has (Ikelegbe, 1996). Decision-making theory can be categorised into the rational (comprehensive), satisfactory, incremental, and mixed scanning models. Among decision-making theories, the study finds the mixed-scanning model most suitable for explaining the introduction of IPPIS.

## Data and Methods

Secondary sources of data are data that have been processed and documented by earlier scholars. They are second-hand information available for consumption. In other words, the study's data source was secondary. The data were obtained from journals, textbooks, the internet, and government publications from the Head of Service of the Federation, the Office of the Accountant-General of the Federation (OAGF), the IPP, and the IPP's IS office in Abuja. Data collected were contextually and descriptively analysed to draw informed conclusions about IPPIS. **The Objectives of IPPIS**

The objectives of the programme, amongst others, are:

- i. To facilitate human resource planning by providing information for decision-making.
- ii. To provide a platform for accurate budgeting of annual recurrent expenditure on staff emoluments;
- iii. To monitor monthly payment of staff emoluments against the FGN's annual Budget to ensure minimal wastage and leakage;
- iv. To facilitate easy storage, updating, and retrieval of personnel records for administrative and pension processing;
- v. To ensure database integrity such that data once entered cannot be manipulated by unauthorised users;
- vi. To eliminate payroll fraud such as multiple payment of emoluments to a single employee or payment of a monthly salary to a non-existent employee;
- vii. To ascertain actual personnel emoluments of the Federal Government employee, etc. (Office of Accountant General of the Federation, 2020).

Table 1 shows the enrolment status of public servants as of July 2020. In all, 701 MDAs have been enrolled with 1,121,031 public servants on the IPPIS platform.

Table 2 shows 9 Departments and Agencies of government that are not yet on the IPPIS platform. Of these nine, three are petroleum-related agencies and institutes, and two are security-related agencies. About 1.2 million Public Servants are expected to be captured on IPPIS, excluding the Security Agencies/Para-Military Organizations and other self-funding Agencies/Companies of the Federal Government.

Table 1. Public servants' enrolment status on IPPIS as of July 2020.

S/N	Items	MDAs	Staff Count
1	MDAs	558	389,758
2	Rtd. Heads of Service and Permanent Secretaries	1	266
3	Nigeria Police	43	292,653
4	Nigeria Army	1	120,368
5	Nigeria Navy	1	23,685
6	Nigeria Air Force	1	21,653
8	Nigeria Immigration Service	1	24,434
9	Nigeria Correctional Service	1	30,478
10	NSCDC	1	55,396
11	Universities,		
12	Universities Research Institutions	435	106,280
13	National Open University of Nigeria	1	4065
14	Federal Polytechnics	23	28,894
15	Federal Colleges of Education	21	23,100
	TOTAL	701	1,121,031

Source: Office of the Accountant General of the Federation OAGF, 2020.

Table 2. MDAs not on IPPIS as of July, 2020.

S/N	MDAs
1	Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR)
2	Petroleum Product Pricing Regulatory Agency (PPPRA)
3	Nigeria Nuclear Regulatory Authority, Abuja
4	Accident Investigation Bureau Abuja (AIB)
5	Petroleum Training Institute, Efurun, Delta State
6	National Intelligence Agency (NIA)

7	Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA)
8	Department of State Services (DSS)
9	West African Examination Council (WAEC).
Total	9 MDAs

Source: Office of the Accountant General of the Federation OAGF, 2020.

### Reasons for ASUU and Other MDAs' Resistance

The Academic Staff Union of Universities and other MDAs have shown displeasure over the plan to migrate them to IPPIS. According to the ASUU, enforcing IPPIS is an infringement on universities' right to autonomy. During a discussion with the Senate on the rejection, ASUU President, Professor Biodun Ogunyemi, stated in the ASUU Bulletin September (2019) that enforcement is not permitted under the law. "The introduction of IPPIS is not backed by law. The Union's position is that there are extant legal provisions and negotiated agreements arising from the nature and peculiarities of Nigerian universities that render IPPIS unnecessary and inapplicable to universities.

As an entity, a Nigerian university is backed by an Act that gives it the freedom to run itself, and the introduction of a central payroll system infringes on this right. The IPPIS software is not robust enough to accommodate lecturers' peculiarities (ASUU Bulletin, September, 2019). Outside universities, the Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN) embarked on an industrial action earlier in November 2020 over disagreements with the federal government on IPPIS. In the series of resolutions ASUU published to its members, and the press in November 2019, ASUU highlighted reasons why its Union refused to enrol on IPPIS, including:

1. IPPIS violates university autonomy as enshrined in section 2AA of the University (Miscellaneous) provisions Amendment Act 2003, which states that the powers of Council shall be exercised as in the law and statutes of each University, and to that extent, establishment circulars that are inconsistent with the laws and statutes of the University shall not apply to the universities.
2. The peculiar nature of the appointment of the university academics.
3. It will also violate the 2009 Agreement, which was negotiated, agreed, and signed by ASUU and FGN;
4. The IPPIS template is designed to phase out staff aged 60 or older, which contradicts the new policy allowing professors to retire at 70.
5. IPPIS does not recognise payments for promotion arrears or rent allowances, as they are now consolidated in our salaries.
6. IPPIS does not capture the technicalities and peculiarities associated with the flexibility and mobility of academics in the university system.
7. The IPPIS template adopts a tax payment system known as ptax2, which is inimical to our members on consolidated salary (ASUU, 27 November 2019, Resolutions).
8. Apart from ASUU, NNPC subsidiaries also opposed the plan to enroll in IPPIS. The affected agencies include the Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR), Petroleum Products Pricing Regulatory Agency (PPPRA), Petroleum Equalization Fund (PEF), Petroleum Trust Development Fund (PTDF), the Nigerian Content Development Monitoring Board (NCDMB), Nigerian Nuclear Regulatory Agency (NNRA), and Petroleum Training Institute (PTI). They accused the OAGF of insisting on enrolling their members on the IPPIS platform without taking into account the peculiarities of the oil and gas industry regarding the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) and the

approved pay structure between the unions and the federal government through the Salaries, Wages and Income Commission. Besides, they said the OAGF's insistence on the enrolment of the affected agencies on IPPIS did not take into account that they were already enrolled in the revived Government Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS).

### **Assessing Achievements of IPPIS in Nigeria**

In evaluating the study assumption (1) that the implementation of IPPIS policy in Nigeria has resulted in lots of achievements and gains to the public servants and the nation at large, the achievements of IPPIS policy in Nigeria, as well as the gains that the implementation of the policy has brought about, were used to validate the assumption.

The quality of government payroll administration has vastly improved, and an increasing number of MDAs are moving away from manual payroll administration. The MDAs have the necessary information for planning their personnel costs. IPPIS has reduced corruption by virtually eliminating ghost-worker syndrome where it has been applied, thereby reducing the cost of governance. From its launch in 2007 to December 2014, the scheme saved the government ₦185 billion (about US\$1 billion), representing the difference between the funds the government would have released to MDAs based on their estimated nominal roll submissions and the amount actually paid through the IPPIS platform.

A breakdown of this shows that ₦416 million was saved in its first month of operation and ₦12 billion at the end of its three-year pilot phase. The scheme now covers 359 MDAs, has successfully enrolled 237,917 members of staff, and has identified and removed 60,450 ghost workers. Furthermore, it reduced the red tape associated with manual payroll administration (Office of the Accountant-General of the Federation, OAGF, 2020). Within 13 years of IPPIS implementation, the payroll policy has achieved remarkable milestones.

#### **Achievements of IPPIS Are:**

1. Improved prompt and regular payment of salaries of MDAs;
2. Facilitation of prompt deductions and remittances to the accounts of all third-party stakeholders, e.g., PFAs, NHIS, etc.
3. Over N361 billion savings in personnel cost recorded between 2017 and 2019;
4. The financial/personnel variance trend is easily accessible.
5. It makes personnel planning/budgeting easy since IPPIS is also a personnel management tool.
6. Enforcement of compliance with due process in employment.
7. Big data from IPPIS across various organisations is being transformed into a rich source of information that can inform decisions on government operations.
8. Many of the Departments and Agencies having realised that personnel cost was no longer coming to them for direct disbursement, embarked on recruitment to utilise their approved staffing/personnel budget; Between September, 2011 and 2020, so many Nigerians have been employed in the MDAs thereby reducing unemployment rate in the country; and MDAs are getting used to the application and many are currently managing their payroll at their respective offices without recourse to IPPIS Secretariat (Office of Accountant General of the Federation, OAGF, 2020).

#### **Gains of IPPIS to the Country**

1. Elimination of unauthorised personnel workforce (ghost workers) from the Government payroll;
2. Easy retrieval of personnel information of all public servants under the scheme;

3. Reduction in personnel records' falsification record of service (including age, length of service, etc.)
4. Salary/monthly emoluments are paid to all public servants on the same day, no matter the location within the country, without delay.
5. Actual personnel cost paid monthly/annually is easily accessible, with reason(s) for fluctuation easily given.
6. The scheme programmed automatic stoppage of payment to personnel due for retirement as a result of length of service, age and tenure, thus reducing wastage or unauthorised payment;
7. All third-party payments (cooperative deductions, taxes, NHF, and Union dues, etc.) are deducted from the employee's salary and paid directly and promptly to the beneficiary's account on behalf of the payee, with a payment schedule made available to the beneficiaries.
8. Unapplied/unutilised funds are easily monitored.
9. Planning/budgeting for personnel training can now be done easily, as IPPIS is also a personnel management tool.
10. Saving to the government as a result of personnel cost over-budgeting (Office of Accountant General of the Federation, OAGF, 2020).

From the above achievement and gains, it crystal clear that IPPIS implementation has resulted in massive saving into federal covers, prompt and accurate salary payment, generate data or personnel and overhead budgeting, halted ghost workers etc. it is logical to infer that the implementation of IPPIS policy in Nigeria has resulted into lots of achievement and gains to the public servants and the nation at large.

### **Challenges and Pains of IPPIS**

To evaluate the second assumption, the implementation of the IPPIS policy in Nigeria has created challenges that adversely affect public servants and the government. The challenges and pains associated with the implementation of IPPIS, as highlighted below, help validate the assumption.

1. Deliberate Institutional resistance by many MDAs in joining IPPIS in the face of a set deadline for enrolment. Stiff resistance from the unions in the Tertiary Institutions, especially ASUU in the Universities, and resort to incessant media blackmail of IPPIS for self-seeking objectives.
2. Inadequate Infrastructure: Poor internet connectivity to the Primary Data Centre (PDC) by MDAs on IPPIS and inadequate computer hardware for IPPIS Role Players. This inhibits efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery.
3. The IPPIS application has not been fully utilised. Of the seven software modules, only the payroll module is in appreciable use. The Human Resource modules, which are meant to manage staff recruitment, posting, promotion, training, discipline, and disengagement, are yet to be fully deployed for use by the MDAs Service-Wide. The current vendor has not delivered everything contracted and paid for, and the initiative's project management has been weak. 4) Most of the IPPIS Staff in the MDAs have not been exposed to Oracle training, and some of the few who received the training have been deployed to other MDAs (Office of Accountant General of the Federation, OAGF, 2020).
4. Lack of Synergy between MDAs Desk Officers and OAGF: The findings revealed that the lack of effective synergy between the two major partners was a significant setback for IPPIS implementation. The WhatsApp platform created for IPPIS Desk Officer by Office of the Accountant General of the Federation for the Purpose of interacting about

the challenges bedevilling the IPPIS implementation has not been active. It is ridiculous that members of the platform have never once met to discuss these challenges, and there was no official meeting to interface with the officials of the Office of the Accountant General of the Federation.

5. Delayed Response to complaints and over-centralisation: Public servants who are victims of underpayment, overpayment, or complete salary omission experience significant difficulty getting their cases addressed. Some are working outside Abuja after a series of unattended complaints from their MDAs' Desk Officers, resulting in additional travel to OAGF in Abuja and an additional financial burden. Oftentimes, they were referred back to their MDAs' Desk Officers in Abuja without a solution, while others had the problem fixed in Abuja. Nevertheless, the stress and timeline for addressing the complaint put such victims in a more precarious position, with many unmet needs that might demotivate workers.
6. Lack of Technological Transfer: Most often, there are two-way technical hitches experienced by OAGF officials, who claim the consultants did not provide them with the complete technical know-how to properly operate the platform. At the same time, the MDAs' Desk Officers, on their own part, alleged that the OAGF had not given them sufficient access to the platform or technical know-how. The exact location of the IPPIS server is kept secret.
7. Sharp Practices by IPPIS Handlers: The IPPIS project has also been marred by scandals. Police inspectors and rank-and-file under the Akwa Ibom State Police Command, and some personnel of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps, have called on the authorities to investigate inconsistencies in the payment of their salaries. They questioned the operation of the IPPIS, alleging fraud. The police officers involved have been underpaid their regular salaries every month since 2018, when police salaries and allowances were moved from the Mechanized Salary Section (MSS) to the IPPIS (Nduka, 2019). In his own testimony, the former Chairman of Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences
8. Commission (ICPC), Ekpo Nta alleged that "by outsmarting the Federal Government Integrated Personnel Payroll Information System (IPPIS), some public servants allegedly collected salaries from four different federal ministries. Some unidentified software developers have unhindered access to the IPPIS database and usually set up new users and change live data from time to time.
9. IPPIS and Corruption: Issuing payment slips without salary payment is another corrupt practice in the IPPIS office. Once the payment slip is issued, the money is gone, and nothing can be done. Even after writing a complaint letter, months passed before the affected workers received any response. It was also alleged that there are cabals in the finance section of the IPPIS that embezzle funds meant for workers in the federal civil service but issue pay slips to show that salaries are paid (Sahara Reporters, 27 July 2019).

It is evident from the aforementioned challenges that IPPIS has created additional challenges while trying to solve others. In other words, IPPIS implementation has created challenges that have adversely affected public servants and the government.

### **Conclusion**

Since its full implementation in Nigeria, IPPIS has recorded many achievements in public service salary payments, identified ghost workers, and checkmated payroll fraud, saving billions of Naira for the federal government through this modern innovation. Despite these lofty gains, the IPPIS policy implementation faced challenges that hindered its smooth

implementation in Nigeria. Such includes: underpayment or complete omission of public servants' salaries and entitlements, lack of technological transfer, lack of synergy among stakeholders, sharp practice, resistance by MDAs to enrol, and corruption. These challenges impact the well-being of public servants and that of the nation.

### Recommendations

Based on this striking conclusion, the authors strongly believe that if the challenges identified by the study are addressed promptly, the IPPIS will be a significant reform capable of reinvigorating the public service payroll system in Nigeria. Therefore, the study recommends that:

1. Since IPPIS has generated significant funds for the government, the federal government should separate the IPPIS office from the Office of the Accountant-General of the Federation to enable greater autonomy, optimal functioning, and greater decentralisation.
2. All loopholes must be blocked to discontinue all forms of sharp practices and corruption currently embedded in the payment platform. This can be achieved by periodic review of the platform to identify leakages and subsequently block such economic sabotage.
3. There is a need to foster greater synergy among stakeholders to enhance speedy problem-solving. This can be achieved by assigning specific roles to specific offices, with a more harmonised coordination that allows for the decentralisation or delegation of roles; i.e., public servants need not always travel to Abuja for their complaints to be addressed.
4. The IPPIS consultants/engineers should redesign or remodify the software to accommodate more organisational flexibility and peculiarity. By doing this, those federal workers who have hitherto resisted the payment platform can be convinced that the software can be modified to suit their differences.

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