

Assessing The Adequacy of Federal Government's Budgetary Allocations on the Provision of Office Accommodation to Academic Staff in Nigeria's North-Central Zone Federal Universities

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to assess the adequacy of federal government's budgetary allocations on the provision of office accommodation to academic staff in federal public universities in North-Central Zone of Nigeria. Apart from extracting relevant Documents relating to budgetary allocations from the sampled universities, a descriptive research design was employed and data was collected from university Vice-Chancellors, bursary staff, lecturers and students from the five sampled federal universities. While all the 5 Vice-Chancellors were considered, a sample of 101 out of 254 bursary staff was sampled. In addition, 437 lecturers out of 2,912 were also sampled, 50 students were purposively sampled. The research instruments employed for data collection were questionnaires for bursary staff and lecturers, interview guide for university Vice-Chancellors, and Focus Group Discussion Guide for university students. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to analyze the data. The findings from the field and documents showed that universities budgetary allocations for the provision of academic staff offices were only 8.9 percent of their capital allocations in 2014. In addition, a simple regression model showed that budgetary allocations to universities influence the provisions of academic staff offices. Furthermore, it was discovered that 72.1 percent of academic staff shared offices with negative effect on their performance and productivity in their official duties. The study recommended among others that an effective reward system should be developed so that efficient managers will have more funds to build more offices for their academic staff, in addition, budgetary allocations to universities should be increased by government so that universities will have more allocations to construct academic staff offices.

Keywords: Government's Budgetary Allocations, Office Accommodation.

1. INTRODUCTION

The role of university education as an instrument for promoting the socio-economic, political and cultural development of any nation cannot be over-emphasized. A nation's human resources determine its growth and development. The provision of the needed manpower to accelerate growth and development of the economy has been reported as a core business of university education globally. Thus, universities should have developmental priorities in their budgetary allocations (Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2008).

According to Akindojutimi, Adewale & Omotayo (2010) on effect of federal government interventions in Nigeria's universities revealed that, since all federal universities in Nigeria depend on the government for at least 90 percent of their funds, the economic downturn of the 1980's took its toll on the university funding. The effect was so bad that the basic needs for infrastructure, staff recruitment, teaching and research became inadequate and affected the overall development of public universities in Nigeria. This also made public universities in Nigeria to source for funding from alternative sources outside government budgetary allocations. Poor funding also made some universities' management to mis-apply their funds to their various activities without due regard to budget submissions which seemed to have affected the provision of office accommodation to university lecturers (Adefila, 2005).

Furthermore, the Nigerian Government through the Tertiary Trust Fund (TETFund) and the National Universities Commission (NUC) disburses millions of naira for infrastructural and human capital development of universities annually. This is because funding of universities has been identified as a strategy for manpower development of the society (Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2008). However, these funds seem to be inadequate in running federal universities in Nigeria (National Universities Commission, 2013). Hinchiffe (2002) disclosed that in 2002, budgetary allocations to the education sector by the Nigerian federal government showed that 35 percent was allocated to primary education, 29 percent to secondary education, while tertiary education (comprising of universities, polytechnics and colleges of education) received only 36 percent.

Most studies about funding of public universities have not only been concrete enough in addressing allocations for infrastructural and human capital development, they lack appropriate recommendations to solve the problem of adequacy of budgetary allocations to universities. There is therefore a need for a study to address the adequacy of specific allocations to office accommodation of academic staff in Nigerian public universities.

Objective of the study:

The objective of this study was to establish the adequacy of federal government's budgetary allocations to universities and its influence on the provision of office accommodation to academic staff in federal universities in North-Central zone of Nigeria.

Research question:

To achieve this objective, the study was guided by the following research question:

1. To what extent does adequacy of federal government budgetary allocations to universities influence provision of lecturers' offices in federal universities in North-Central zone of Nigeria?

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Budgetary allocations and academic staff offices in universities:

Budgetary allocations according to Olaniyi and Adam (2003) are made to enhance a suitable improvement in human welfare or quality of life such as education, health, agriculture and transport services. Accordingly, budgetary allocations are made to the university system in Nigeria by government through the education sector annually.

McMaster University in Canada spent 42 percent of its budget on capital expenditure in 2013. This high capital expenditure led to an improvement in the provision of the university's infrastructure in the area of academic staff offices in 2013. This improvement in infrastructure was of immense benefit to both staff and students as they were provided with a conducive environment to teach and learn (McMaster University, 2013).

University of California in the United States of America spent 30 percent of its budget on capital expenditure in 2013. Out of the funds allocated for capital expenditure in university of California, 35 percent was for new construction of staff offices, implying that the university erected new structures in 2013 (University of California, 2013). This implies that the staff were allocated offices to enhance their output at work. This shows that the sampled universities effectively utilized their capital expenditure which is in line with this study in the areas of infrastructural development.

Owour (2012) posited that as a result of poor budgetary allocations to many Kenyan public universities, a sizeable number of lecturers do not have offices, with negative consequence on their output. Similarly, Underfunding of universities in developing economies especially West African countries has become a reoccurring problem often resulting in calamitous

effect on dilapidated and inadequate buildings. These buildings are used for among others academic staff offices (Bongila, 2006), these have a negative effect on staff productivity. Poor budgetary allocations to public universities in Africa affect the provision of academic staff offices in most African universities.

In a study on financial management in tertiary institutions, Gathuthi (2008) revealed that African universities are inadequately funded. That poor funding of African universities has led to poor and inadequate physical facilities which has affected the provision of academic staff offices in most African universities. Since most academic staff share small offices, their productivity is affected. This has also impacted negatively on the quality of university education Africa. These studies though carried out in Africa, did not bring out empirical data of how much was spent on building academic staff offices.

In Nigeria, Anijaobi-Idem and Archibong (2012) conducted a study on Adjustments of Challenges of New Academic Staff in Nigerian Universities using University of Calabar as a case study. The study adopted the survey research design with a sample of 50 academic staff. The data were analyzed using percentages. The results showed systemic deficiencies on the part of the university administration in terms of absence of planned orientation/ training program for new academic staff and lack of adequate and conducive office accommodation for new academic staff, which has negative effect on their productivity. The study concentrated only on new academic staff in the university.

Oyaziwo, Philip & Justina (2012) reported that as a result of poor funding, about 15-30 percent of the infrastructure, equipment and books in Nigerian universities are non-functional, obsolete or dilapidated. Furthermore, that staff offices of most universities in Nigeria are still far from a state that will promote optimal teaching and research. The implication of this is that dilapidated staff offices affect the productivity of lecturers. This report, apart from generalizing universities, sampled both teaching and support staff offices.

Research design:

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design which ensures that data are gathered from relatively large number of issues. John and James (2003) confirmed that descriptive survey entails gathering data and inferring from a study of sample group carefully selected from the total population. This study assessed the adequacy of federal government's budgetary allocations on the provision of academic staff office accommodation in North-Central zone of Nigeria. This design was used by Ogbogu (2011) to examine the modes of funding Nigerian universities and its implications on performance. This is similar to this present study in the area of budgetary allocations to federal universities and how they are developed in the area of infrastructural development.

Target Population:

The target population of this study comprised of all the Vice-Chancellors, academic staff, bursary staff and students of federal universities in North-Central zone of Nigeria. The target population of the study was therefore made up of all the 7 Vice-chancellors in the federal universities, 254 bursary staff and 2,912 lecturers of these universities. Kombo and Tromp (2006) observed that population refers to entire group of persons or elements that have at least one thing in common.

This study also comprised of documents related to budgetary allocations as they influence provisions of academic staff offices of federal universities in North Central Nigeria. The budgetary allocations of the sampled universities were evaluated on the basis of each of the items listed above, with a view of analyzing and making conclusions.

Sample size and sampling techniques:

A total of 5 federal universities were selected using a simple random sampling strategy out of 7 in the North-Central zone of Nigeria, implying that 71.4 percent of the study population were sampled for this study. The study employed the purposive sampling technique. Kasomo (2006) posited that purposive sampling allows the researcher to select respondents who would give relevant information pertaining to the phenomenon under study, ensure proper presentation of targeted population, and intensify study of selected items besides increasing accuracy of results.

The sample size for Vice-Chancellors and Bursary staff was 100 percent and 39.8 percent respectively. The researchers purposively sampled 15 percent of lecturers for the study. Therefore, a sample of 593 participants constituted the sample for this study. This comprised 5 vice chancellors, 437 Lecturers, 50 students and 101 bursary staff from the universities. In this study, the researcher selected 10 students for the FGD from each of the universities. The sample therefore comprised of 50 students from the 5 sampled universities.

Research instruments:

The research used a mixed methods approach. Mixed methods approach as the name suggests is where quantitative and qualitative methodologies are combined in carrying out a study to accomplish the research goals, which require diverse information from diverse stakeholders (Greene, Benjamin, & Goodyear, 2001).

The research instruments that were employed in this study included interview guide for university Vice-Chancellors, questionnaires for bursary staff and academic staff, focus group discussion for students, observation schedule and documents containing figures on budgetary allocations to universities.

3. RESULTS

Research Question: To what extent does the adequacy of federal government budgetary allocations to universities influence provision of lecturers' offices in federal universities in North-Central zone of Nigeria?

Relevant data relating to universities budgetary allocations for capital allocations and academic staff offices were extracted from the sampled universities documents. The data is as presented in Figure 1.

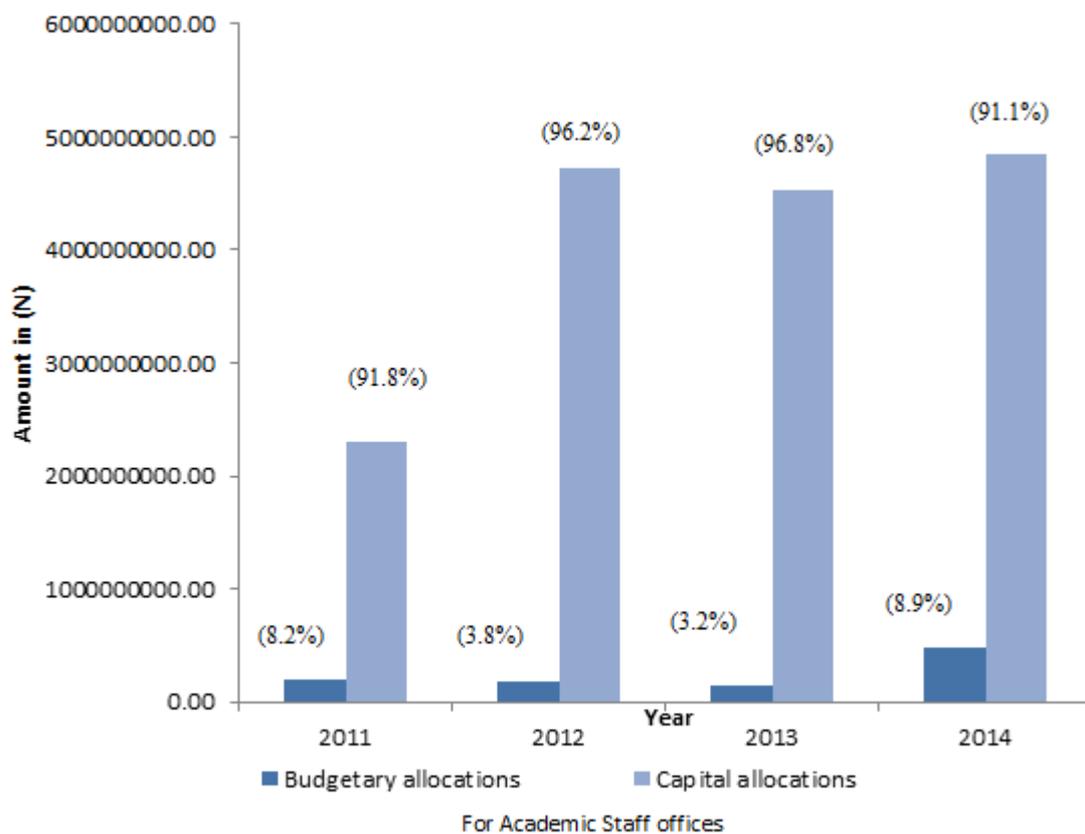


Fig 1. Universities capital budgetary allocations and allocations for academic staff offices (2011-2014)

Source: University documents from the five sampled universities

Note: Capital allocations include TETFund interventions to the sampled universities Budgetary allocations for academic staff offices includes TETFund interventions 1Ksh = ₦3

The data in Figure 1 shows that in 2012, budgetary allocations for the provision of academic staff offices were ₦184,393,853.65 representing 3.8 percent of capital allocations. This is inadequate in spite of TETFund interventions to universities. This was corroborated by university Vice-Chancellors and bursary staff who disclosed that budgetary allocations for academic staff offices were inadequate, with university Vice-Chancellors disclosing that an average of 28 percent of academic staff do not have offices. This means that universities budgetary allocations for the provision of academic staff offices are inadequate. This corroborates what Nwachukwu and Okoli (2015) asserted that gross

underfunding of universities among others has led to poor working environment caused by decadent infrastructure evidenced by the absence or inadequacy of academic staff offices.

The responses of bursary staff were entered into a linear regression with provision of office accommodation to academic staff as the dependent variable and budgetary allocations as the independent variable. Table 1 provides a summary on the model that emerged from the linear regression.

Table 1 Linear Regression Model Summary for adequacy of budgetary allocations on provision of office accommodation to academic staff

Regression statistics	
Model	1
R	.504 ^a
R Square	.254
Adjusted R Square	.247
Std. Error of the estimate	3.49954
Durbin Watson	2.065

As shown in Table 1, the simple correlation between provision of office accommodation to academic staff and budgetary allocations to university staff in federal universities represented by R has a value of .504. Furthermore, the value of R^2 is .254, indicating that budgetary allocations to universities could account for 25 percent of provision of office accommodation to academic staff in federal universities. This implies that the extent of adequacy of budgetary allocations to universities will predictably affect the provision of lecturers' offices in North-Central federal universities.

The findings further show that there could be other factors that explain the provision of lecturers' offices in federal universities in North-Central zone of Nigeria. Budgetary allocations to federal universities in North-Central Nigeria was the only variable entered that brought up 25 percent proportion of causality with the remaining 75 percent to be explained by other variables that might have an influence also. In addition, the Durbin-Watson test gave a value of 2.065, which is closer to 2 than it is to 0 and 4 signifying that there is no autocorrelation in the residual of the regressor.

The data collected from university lecturers also aided in furnishing a response for the research question. A simple frequency count of the percentage of respondents viewpoints were captured in a tabular form as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of percentage of respondents' views on influence of budgetary allocations on provision of academic offices

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
There are adequate academic staff offices	29.4	35.6	2.1	19.3	13.6
Academic staff offices are adequately furnished	30.2	36.0	2.1	17.9	13.8
Academic staff offices are spacious	27.8	31.9	2.8	22.9	14.6
Each lecturer occupies an entire office alone	36.5	35.6	2.5	13.4	11.9

N=437

Table 2 indicates that there is a high degree of disagreement with the set of statements measuring whether budgetary allocations to universities are adequate for the provision of academic offices or not. For instance, of the 437 lecturers who responded to this questionnaire, 65 percent disagreed that there are adequate academic staff offices in universities. Five University Vice-Chancellors agreed with this assertion by stating that inadequacy of academic staff offices is as a result of poor budgetary allocations to universities. This affects the performance of academic staff negatively. This collaborates with what was observed by the researcher in the universities where only an average of 71 percent of lecturers have offices.

66.2 percent of the lecturers disagreed that academic staff offices are adequately furnished. It was evident that 37.5 percent agreed that academic staff offices are spacious. As to whether each lecturer occupies an entire office alone, the lecturers presented a 72.1 percent depth of disagreement. On the whole, the direction for all the indicators for adequacy of

budgetary allocations tilted towards disagreement as against agreement thus indicating that budgetary allocations for the provision of academic staff offices in universities are not adequate.

The university Vice-Chancellors further disclosed that the reason for the inadequacy is as a result of shortfall in the implementation of the budget, and that as a result of the shortfall, an average of 71 percent of academic staff have offices. It is significant that university Vice-Chancellors also reported that academic staff offices were inadequate. They further reported that available academic staff offices were inadequate, and that many academic staff shared offices. This they attributed to inadequacy of government budgetary allocations to universities.

University students were asked in a focus group discussion on what they think of their lecturers' office accommodation and their furnishings. Most of them reported that their lecturers' offices were not befitting for them. This is how one university student puts it:

"Apart from the fact that most of our lecturers share offices, the furniture is dilapidated and the office space can hardly contain more than two students at a time. This makes it difficult for proper mentoring".

This comment, together with other comments from the university students and Vice-Chancellors suggest that budgetary allocations to universities are not adequate for the provision of academic staff offices in universities. They however disclosed that not all lecturers are paired in offices, as according to the students and Vice-Chancellors, few lecturers particularly Professors, occupy single offices.

4. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The thrust of the research question is to assess the adequacy of budgetary allocations on the provision of lecturers' offices in federal universities in North-Central zone of Nigeria. The key data issues under adequacy of budgetary allocations on the provision of lecturers' offices include the fact that budgetary allocations have a positive relationship with lecturers' offices. This means that, if budgetary allocations are increased for the provision of lecturers' offices, more lecturers' offices will be built and vice-versa. This finding concurs with Ochuba (2001) who confirmed that with more funding for the provision of lecturers' offices, more academic staff offices will be constructed in universities.

This study established that as a result of inadequate government budgetary allocations, there are inadequate academic staff offices in universities. Only few academic staff occupy single offices, as may lecturers share offices with other colleagues. In some cases, you have as many as five lecturers occupying a small office space. The findings of this study point to what Okunamiri, Okoli & Okunamiri (2008) reported that due to underfunding, office accommodation for university lecturers is not adequate as lecturers are packed three or four in a small office accommodation. Okunamiri et al further reported that when a lecturer is not provided with a good office accommodation, he/she is not satisfied with the job and thus cannot perform well as an academic staff. Similarly, poor funding of universities has led to poor and inadequate physical facilities, this has affected the provision of academic staff offices in most universities. Since most academic staff share small offices, their productivity is affected. This has also impacted negatively on the quality of university education. Poor budgetary allocations to public universities affect the provision of academic staff offices in universities (Gathuthi, 2008).

The next issue from these data relates to the fact that academic staff offices are not adequately furnished. This is because from the observations of the offices made, it was observed that most of the academic staff offices lack basic facilities like chairs to accommodate visitors. Besides, some of the offices have dilapidated tables and chairs. Also, some do not have cupboards and bookshelves thereby making lecturers to keep students scripts and thesis on the bare floor. This concurs with Bongila, (2006) who disclosed that underfunding of universities has become a reoccurring problem often resulting in calamitous effect on dilapidated and inadequate buildings. These buildings which lack basic furniture are used for among others academic staff offices.

Moreover, the researcher also observed that in most of the universities visited, lecturers' offices had insufficient space, were not well ventilated, had poor lightening and were generally inadequate for the lecturers. This is in line with Kakwagh (2013) who in a study on declining quality of intellectual output in Nigeria's tertiary institutions of learning, disclosed that as a result of inadequate budgetary allocations to universities, lecturers offices are unsuitable and unattractive, making many lecturers keep away from office.

5. SUMMARY OF KEY RESEARCH FINDING

The key research finding of this study is that budgetary allocations to universities were not adequate for the provision of office accommodation to academic staff as only 25 percent of budgetary allocations were for the provision of academic staff offices. As a result of this inadequacy, 29 percent of lecturers do not have offices with negative effect on their performance and productivity.

6. CONCLUSION

On the basis of the findings of the study, it was established that budgetary allocations for the provision of academic staff offices in universities were inadequate. This was in tandem with the universities documents which showed that in 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014, percentage of capital allocations for the provision of academic staff offices were 8.99 percent, 3.90 percent, 3.30 percent and 9.79 percent respectively. This was corroborated by university Vice-Chancellors and bursary staff who disclosed that budgetary allocations for academic staff offices were inadequate, with university Vice-Chancellors disclosing that an average of 39 percent of academic staff do not have offices. This shows that universities budgetary allocations for the provision of academic staff offices are inadequate.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

- i. Effective reward and punishment systems should be instituted whereby university managers who expend funds in line with approved parameters are duly rewarded and those who default are properly sanctioned.
- ii. As far as possible, there is the need for an increase in budgetary allocations by government to support infrastructural development in the area of academic staff offices in federal universities. This is because from the universities Vice-Chancellors responses on adequacy of budgetary allocations to universities, it was clear that the funds currently allocated by the government are not sufficient for developing universities academic staff offices.

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