



## Public Universities in South West Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria: Problems and Solutions

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**Abstract: Objectives:** This paper examined the challenges faced by public universities in south-west geo-political zone of Nigeria.

**Methods:** Content analysis was adopted for the paper. Both secondary and primary data were used in the paper to support the points raised. The data sourced include national and international dailies, published, and unpublished papers, articles and reference materials.

**Conclusion:** This paper concludes that funding problems, inadequate academic staff, shortage of infrastructural facilities, corruption, Brain-drain, strike actions insecurity, poor motivation, political influence and indigenization of principal officers are problems faced by public universities in the South-West geo-political zone of Nigeria.

**Recommendations:** The federal and state government should increase the funding of public universities in the region for impactful transformation. The state government and the federal government should direct respective universities in the zone to recruit more academic and non-academic staff to improve the quality of education in the zone etc.

**Keywords:** Funding, Infrastructural facilities, Public Universities, Problems, Political influence.

### 1.0. Introduction

The South West is one of the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria representing both a political and geographical region. The South West region is one of the most educational regions in the country. It comprises six states – Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo. Southwest geo-political region is host to many public universities. These public universities were established to provide quality university education for the citizens and residents in the region. Public universities in the region are either owned by the state government or the federal government. The public universities owned by the states government are funded by the state government solely. However, the federal and state universities enjoy some government intervention through her agency (Tertiary Education Trust Fund, TETFUND. TETFUND is a scheme established by the Federal Government of Nigeria in 2011 to disburse, manage, and monitor education tax to government-owned tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The TETFUND scheme was formed as a product of the Education Tax Act of 1993) and provides intervention support in terms of infrastructural facilities development, library materials, training and research publication. The federal universities are owned by the federal government of Nigeria.

Public universities are spread across the zone. For instance, three public universities exist in Ondo State and they include Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba, Ondo State University of Science and Technology Okitipupa and Ondo State University of Medical Sciences. In Ekiti state, there are two

public universities namely; Federal Universities, Federal University, Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Ekiti State University. In Osun state, there are public universities namely Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Osun State University Osogbo and Federal University of Health and Medical Sciences, Ila-Orangun, Osun state. In Ogun state, there are three public universities, Olabisi, Onabanjo University and the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta and Tai-Solarin University of Education. In Oyo state, there are three public universities and they include the university of Ibadan, Ladoke Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH), Ogbomoso and Technical University (Tech-U) Ibadan. In Lagos state, there are five public universities, two federal and three state universities. They include; Lagos State University (LASU) Ojo, Lagos State University of Science and Technology (LASUSTECH) and Lagos State University of Education (LASUED).

The performance of the public universities in the southwest region recently has not been encouraging. For instance, the national universities' Commission 2022 ranking revealed that only three public universities from the region were ranked among the best universities in Nigeria. The University of Ibadan came 1st, Obafemi Awolowo University was 2nd, university of Lagos came 4th and Federal University of Technology Akure was 8th position while other public universities were spread across the positions (Servant-boy, 2022). Public universities in the southwest region are faced with many problems that are affecting their performance. This paper is aimed to discuss some of the problems faced by public universities in the southwest geo-political zone of Nigeria.

## 2.0. Literature Review

### Concept of Public University

Public universities are universities owned by the government. Public universities are universities established to provide post-secondary schools for Nigerians. Public universities are universities established by an act of parliament to serve the interest of the general public. Public universities deal with the provision of teaching, research and community services (Ogunode, 2020). The objectives of the universities in Nigerian Higher education, including professional education have the following aims: the acquisition, development and inculcation of the proper value orientation for the survival of the individual and societies; the development of the intellectual capacities of individuals to understand and appreciate environment; the acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to develop into useful members of the community; the acquisition of an overview of the local and external environments (FRN, 2013).

Public universities in Nigeria are grouped into federal and state-owned universities. The federal universities are owned by the federal government of Nigeria while the state universities are owned by the state government (Ogunode, 2020). Currently, Nigeria has 219 universities. The National Universities Commission lists 49 federal universities; state governments own 59, while there are 111 private universities (Punch, 2022d).

The federal government of Nigeria established the National universities commission to oversee the external administration and supervision of all universities in Nigeria. The administration of public universities in Nigeria takes two dimensions: external administration and internal administration. The external administration is done through the federal ministries and other regulatory agencies in the country. The external administration handles planning, policy formulation, programme accreditation, supervision, funding and quality control of the universities. The internal administration is headed by the school administrators and other principal managers within the universities. The function of internal administration is to ensure the implementation of policies, coordinate, supervise and organize the human and materials resources of the universities to accomplish the objectives of the universities (Ogunode, 2020).

## 3.0. Methodology

The objective of this paper is to examine the problems faced by public universities in the southwest geopolitical zone of Nigeria. To do this, we adopted the use of both secondary and primary data. The secondary data were drawn from print and online resources like; textbooks, journal articles, magazines, discussion programmes, newspapers facsimiles, etc. On the other hand, the primary data

were drawn from the author's observations on public universities in the southwest region and personal experiences. Content Analysis was used to facilitate proper understanding and analysis of data on problems faced by public universities in the southwest geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

#### 4.0. Discussion

##### **Problems Facing Public Universities in South West Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria**

Funding problems, inadequate academic staff, shortage of infrastructural facilities, corruption, Brain-drain, strike actions insecurity, poor motivation, political influence and indigenization of principal officers would be considered as challenges of public universities in the South-West geo-political zone of Nigeria are facing.

##### **Funding Problem**

The major issue in public universities in the southwest geo-political zone of Nigeria is pinned on shortage of funds. One of the most serious problems threatening the development of Public universities in the southwest zone is the dwindling level of public funding in the face of inflation and hence the rising cost of managing the university education system. This shortage of funds affects job performance and the growth of public universities in the southwest geo-political zone. Universities cannot perform optimally without adequate funding. This situation calls for increased funding initiatives from both the government and educational stakeholders so as to sustain the tempo and growth of the university system. The inability of the both state and federal government to objectively accept and implement the 26% funding formula for education recommended by UNESCO impact negatively on the performance and sustainability of university education in the region. The problem of poor funding is more pronounced in state universities than the federal universities. For instance, in Ekiti state university, Prof Olu, the former chairman of ASUU decried alleged underfunding of the state-owned institution saying the situation is "gradually killing the school" Olufayo noted that EKSU's standard has nosedived in the last few years due to poor funding by the state government. The don concluded that, for the university to meet the global standard, it would need about N600m as monthly subvention contrary to the paltry N260m being released to the school by the government. "The university has a wage bill of N455m, so there is little we can do with a paltry sum of N260m monthly subvention from the government. For about six months, the university has always been borrowing to pay a net salary. The consequences of poor funding have been irregular payment of salaries, poor research, poor learning environment, increased health casualties, epileptic power supply and inability to pass accreditation, staff and students' agitations among others (DailyTrust, 2017). Also, the Chairman, JAC-ODSTI, Comrade Tayo Ogungbeni in one of the state universities in Ondo state, submits that the state tertiary institutions had been poorly funded. According to the chairman, some of the challenges being faced by the institutions included monthly subvention, non-implementation of 2009 Federal Government-union agreements, non-payment of outstanding allowances and non-implementation of national minimum wage for members among others. Vanguard (2022) reports that the Non-Academic Staff Union, NASU and the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities, SSANU, of Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti, had to protest the irregular payment of subventions to the school. Their leaders, Comrades Kolapo Olatunde and Olojede Olayinka alleged that no capital vote was released to the school for 10 years. The poor funding of federal universities in the zone is affirmed by (Ogunode, & Audu 2022); Ogunode, Ndubuisi, Jegede (2022); Ogunode, Akin-Ibidiran & Ibidiran (2022); Ogunode, Ugochukwu, & Iroegbu, (2022) and Ogunode & Adanna, (2022), they argue that many federal universities including those in the region are underfunded. The failure of the federal government to implement the UNESCO 26% education recommendation is a major factor. The revelation by Vanguard (2022) reports that in 2022's budget, the Federal Government, FG allocated the sum of N355.47 billion to the 44 federal universities from the total budget of N875.93 billion given to the education sector. According to BudgIT, out of the N355.47 billion allocated to the federal universities, N326.9 billion went for recurrent expenditure comprising N320.7 billion for personnel cost and N6.1 billion for overhead cost. Only N25.5 billion is slated for capital projects in the universities. A review of the performance of the Federal government of Nigeria in terms of education funding of education shows that Nigeria spends below 10 percent of the total government expenditure on education. A study by

Blueprint (2021) indicated that in 2011, education got N393.8 billion or 9.3 percent of the total budget; N468.3 billion or 9.86 percent in 2012; N499.7 billion or 10.1 percent in 2013; N494.7 billion or 10.5 percent in 2014; N484.2 billion or 10.7 percent in 2015; N369.6 billion or 7.9 percent of the total budget in 2016; N550.5 billion in 2017 representing 7.4 percent of the total budget; N605.8 billion in 2018 or 7.04 percent; N620.5 billion or 7.05 percent in 2019 and N671.07 billion or 6.7 percent in 2020 and N742.5 billion or 5.68 percent of the total budget in 2021 (Blueprint 2021). 2022 got the sum of 7% of the total budget. Comparing the above federal allocation to education and what other countries like Ghana and South Africa allocated to the education sector, you will agree that Nigeria is not doing well. World Bank, reports that Ghana allocated 23.81% of its national budget to education in 2015, 22.09% in 2016, 20.1% in 2017 and 18.6% in 2018. For South Africa, it has kept increasing allocations to the education sector from R246 billion or 16.7 % in 2018, R310bn in 2019, R387bn in 2020 and projected that it will hit R416bn by 2023/24 (Vanguard 2022). There are many factors responsible for the poor funding of education in Nigeria. Olowonefa, Ogunode, & Ohibime (2022); Ogunode, Ezema, & Olugbenga, (2022) and Ogunode (2020) identified these factors to include lack of political will to implement UNESCO 26% for education, poor internally generated revenue, corruption and insecurity problems as causes of shortage of funds in the public universities while the effects of shortage funds in the administration of universities include; inadequate infrastructural facilities, inadequate manpower, poor quality of education, strike actions and brain-drain (Ogunode & Oluseun, (2020); Ogunode & Onyekachi, (2021); Ogunode, Abubakar, & Ajape (2021); Ogunode, Akinlade & Abubakar 2021).

### **Inadequate Academic Staff**

Inadequate academic staff is another major problem public universities located in the southwest geo-political zone of Nigeria are faced with. Ola (2019) laments that many state universities in the zone are understaffed. The federal universities in the region are not excluded from the problem of shortage of academic staff (Ogunode, Olugbenga, & Ezema, 2022). At the federal universities in the zone and across the country a report by Punch (2022) citing National Universities Commission that reveals that there are only 100,000 academic staff members attending to 2.1 million students in Nigerian universities. With 217 universities, 48 of which belong to the Federal Government; 59 owned by states; and 99 by private individuals and organizations, the 100,000 academic faculty members are grossly inadequate to provide qualitative education to the undergraduate and postgraduate populations. It must be noted that the lecturers are not evenly distributed across the institutions (Punch, 2022). Findings showed that some universities, which depend on professors on sabbatical, had lost the accreditation of certain courses, while others were given interim accreditation by the National Universities Commission due to the dearth of professors and enough academics for certain programmes. According to the NUC data, no federal university scored up to 50 percent in the ranking of full professors. This implies that no federal university has the required number of full professors they require. Some of the federal universities ranked in the southwest include Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, 35.80 percent; University of Ibadan, 29.04 percent; Federal University of Technology, Akure, 27.28 percent and Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, 27.25 percent (Punch, 2022b). Inadequate funding, lack of strategic manpower planning, brain-drain, poor motivation, unconducive working environment and corruption have been identified as reasons for the shortage of academic staff in Nigerian higher institutions by Ogunode (2020); Ogunode & Adamu (2021) the effect of the inadequate academic staff include low productivities, poor quality of teaching, over-crowdedness, poor quality of education as the effects of shortage of academic staff in the Nigerian public higher institutions (Ogunode & Okwelogu 2022).

### **Shortage of Infrastructural Facilities**

Public universities in the southwest geo-political zone in Nigeria are faced with the challenges of inadequate infrastructural facilities. For instance, in one of the southwest states, Moses, (2022) observes that students lamented the lack of adequate lecturers and infrastructure, especially lecture rooms as some of the challenges confronting institutions in southwest states. Babatope, (2010) carried out research that examined the problems of facilities in South West Nigerian universities. The findings show that the financial support to the universities was not adequate, the universities were

not provided with adequate facilities while students and staff maintenance culture contributed to the high destruction of the available facilities. Also, Tribute (2021) reports that the National Association of University Students (NAUS), laments the dearth of infrastructure and facilities for enhanced teaching and learning in some public universities in Nigeria. Lawal notes that despite huge sums of funds allocated to education by both Federal and State Governments every year, those funds have not had a physical impact on the sectors in the areas of infrastructure and facilities on the campuses. According to Lawal a report in Tribune (2021), during visits to some of the universities, both Federal and State-owned institutions, students fight to secure venues for lectures and examinations, because of acute shortage of lecture halls, no equipment for practicals, lecturers struggle to get office space, most structures are archaic and dilapidated (Tribune, 2021). Inadequate funding, corruption, increase in population, poor infrastructural planning, poor maintenance culture and uncompleted projects as the causes of the shortage of inadequate infrastructural facilities in Nigerian public universities (Ogunode & Jegede, 2021). Ogunode (2020) also identified the poor academic performance of students, the poor performance of academic staff and non-academic staff and poor quality of education as the effects of inadequate infrastructural facilities in Nigerian public universities.

### **Corruption**

Public universities in southwest geo-political zone of Nigeria are faced with corruption challenges which are affecting the development of the institutions. For example, Onyeji (2017) reports that the anti-graft EFCC prosecuted three top officials of the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, FUNAAB, for their alleged roles in an N800 million scandal. The Vice-Chancellor, Olusola Oyewole, the Pro-Chancellor, Adeseye Ogunlewe, and the Bursar, Moses Ilesanmi, were arraigned in November 2016 on an 18-count charge of financial misappropriation at High Court 6 in Abeokuta, Ogun State. The embattled vice-chancellor was later reported to have refunded N6.5 million to the anti-graft agency, out of the funds mismanaged. Also, the EFCC, arraigned the former Vice Chancellor of the Federal University of Technology, Akure, FUTA, Gregory Daramola, over allegations of fraud to the tune of N24 million. The vice chancellor was arraigned alongside the school's bursar, Ayodeji Oresgun, for offenses of misappropriation of public funds, misuse of office, and obtaining money under false pretense among others. The case of the Obafemi Awolowo University according to Onyeji (2017) is unique as both the former vice chancellor and his predecessor are being investigated for alleged fraud. The EFCC in February invited a former Vice-Chancellor of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Bamitale Omole, over allegations of fraud leveled against him by academic staff of the university. Also, Premium Times on April 20, 2016, reported that the budget monitoring committee of the local chapter of the Academic Staff Union of Universities, ASUU, accused the management of the university under Mr. Omole of mismanaging N3.5 billion intervention fund released to the University for the upgrade of facilities. The Union had accused the management of the institution under Mr. Omole of expending the sum on hostel renovation and construction of new lecture theatres without observing due process and transparency. The funds were part of the N100 billion released by the Federal Government in 2013 to universities in response to agitations by ASUU for the upgrade of facilities at the tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The effects of corruption on the public university administration in Nigeria include reduction of funds for administrative functions, shortage of infrastructural facilities, shortage of academic staff, poor quality of education, resources wastage, increase in administrative cost, hampering the development of public universities and resulting to the poor image of public universities in international communities (Ogunode, Josiah & Ajape (2021); Ogunode, & Ohunene, & Olatunde-Aiyedun, Tope Gloria (2022).

### **Brain-drain**

Brain drain has also been identified as a major problem public universities in the southwest region are faced with. Many lecturers are leaving both the state and federal universities in the region to outside the country for a better placement. Ola (2017) submits that much academic staff is leaving the region due to poor welfare packages. Ogunode (2020) observed that many lecturers and researchers are leaving public universities in Nigeria for other parts of African countries and Europe for better job offers and conducive working environments. Ogunode (2020); Ogunode, Jegede &

Musa, (2021); Ogunode & Ahaotu (2020); Ogunode & Atobauka, (2021) point out that the causes of brain drain in Nigerian higher institutions including but not limited to; poor salary, unconducive working environment, poor staff development, inadequate infrastructural facilities, strike actions, insecurity and inadequate funding while the identified effects of brain-drain on the higher institutions administration to includes; poor quality education, high student-teacher ratio, shortages of academic staff, poor research development and poor programme development.

### **Strike Actions**

Public universities located in the southwest geo-political region of Nigeria are also having problems with strike actions. The state public universities are more affected by the issue of strikes due to poor implementation of agreements and poor funding. The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that Olusegun Agagu University of Science and Technology (OAUSTECH), Okitipupa, Ondo State Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU), Non-Academic Staff Union (NASU) and National Association of Academic Technologists (NAAT), embarked on an indefinite strike over unpaid salaries and other issues. The JAC of OAUSTECH arising from an important congress on April 6, 2021 resolved to commence a total, comprehensive and indefinite strike. "This is a result of the inability of the management of the university to meet the demands of the unions on the payment of salaries from November 2020 till date. Also, Punch (2019) reports that workers of six Oyo State-owned tertiary institutions on Tuesday staged a peaceful protest in Ibadan over their 18 months' salary arrears owed by the state government. NAN recalls that all trade unions in the institutions had on Monday, January 14, resumed their suspended industrial action after the expiration of a seven-day ultimatum. Mr. Afeez Adeniyi, the spokesman of the six trade unions, said that the protest was to demand the payment of their members' salary arrears of between three and 18 months. In addition, Channel Tv (2018) reports that the academic members of staff of three tertiary Institutions in Osun State have declared the immediate commencement of indefinite strike action. The strike action according to them is over 18 months of outstanding salaries and other entitlements owed by the Osun state government. The three institutions involved are Osun State Polytechnic in Iree, Osun State College of Technology in Esa-Oke and Osun State College of Education in Ila Orangun. The spokesperson for the Academic Staff Unions of Polytechnics (ASUP) in all the institutions, Jacob Adegbite, after a congress held at Iree Campus on Friday told journalists that the action is imperative in order to register their grievances to the state government. Ogunode (2020) submits that Nigerian public universities are known for continuous strike actions by different union groups. Ogunode & Ndayebom, (2022); Josiah, & Ogunode (2022) and Ogunode (2020) identified reasons for the strike actions in the public universities to include; underfunding of the public universities, inadequate infrastructural facilities, poor implementation of agreements reached with union groups and poor working condition. Ogunode, Ugochukwu, & Jegede (2022); Abu & Ogunode (2021) and Ogunode, Yirolkun, & Akeredolu, (2019) identified the effects of strike actions in the Nigerian higher institution to include; unstable academic programmes, reduction in quality of education, responsible foreign education, capital flight, learning of foreign culture, brain-drain, social vices among students and resources/educational wastage.

### **Insecurity Problem**

The insecurity problem is a major problem affecting the public universities in the southwest region. Some of the common insecurities challenges in the region include kidnapping and cult-related activities. These forms of insecurities are mostly found in the higher institutions' environment. Many public universities located in the southwest geo-political zone have had their share of attacks by bandits and criminal elements. For instance, a cultic group named Black axe at the university of Lagos killed a student (Naijagist undated). Punch (2020e) reports that Obafemi Awolowo University Five was the name given to the five students of the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, who were killed during a series of shootings and murders which took place on the school campus in Saturday, July 10, 1999, by Black Axe Confraternity branch at the university, in collaboration with some of their colleagues from other schools. Also, Pulse (2019) reports that Prof. Gideon Okedayo, a lecturer in the Department of Mathematical Science at the Ondo State University of Science and Technology, was kidnapped and murdered, by another lecturer has been kidnapped in

Oyo state (Pulse, 2019). Pen pushing (2022) reports that the Students Union Government (SUG) of Ladoke Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH), Ogbomosho, have raised alarm over the alleged kidnap of one of their colleagues, Abiola Opadele, a final year student of the institution. Ogunode (2020) opined that insecurity is another problem facing the administration of public universities in Nigeria. Nigeria is facing an insecurity challenge and this is affecting the entire educational institutions in the country (Ogunode, & Ukozor 2022; Ogunode, Zhenseh, & Olatunde-Aiyedun, 2022).

### **Poor Motivation of staff**

Public universities' staff in the southwest region is faced with the problem of poor motivation. The problem of poor motivation of both academic and non-academic staff is more pronounced in state-owned public universities. The chairman, of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti chapter, Prof. Olufayo Olu, as reported by Daily Trust (2017) has lamented that hunger, occasioned by non-payment of salaries, is killing members of staff of the institution. According to the don, four members of the university community died in the last two months due to the inability to raise money for their health challenges as the institution is owing them six months' salary arrears. Olu lamented that the staff had been placed on half salary in the last month, but threatened a showdown with the university management if their gross salaries arrears of April, May and June, 2017 are not paid before the Christmas celebration. The ASUU leader further submits that efforts taken by the institution to articulate all the problems confronting the university and inform Governor Ayodele Fayose about them and to make him see reasons for the increase in subvention and taking of the issues of welfare seriously had fallen on deaf ears. "As I speak with you, we have not received Earned Academic Allowance for six years. The management just paid some of us from 2011 to 2014 by borrowing a sum of N200m from the bank. I don't know how others will get theirs with this paucity of funds (Daily Trust, 2017). Also, in Ondo state, Punch (2022) reports that the workers of the tertiary institutions in Ondo State have cried out over the alleged insensitivity of the state government to their welfare. The workers under the auspices of the Joint Action Committee of the Ondo State-owned Tertiary Institutions said they could no longer cope with the hardship they were going through due to the failure of the state governor to improve their welfare as expected. The JAC-ODSTI comprises the National Association of Academic Technologies, the Non-Academic Staff Union, the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities, and the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Polytechnics from the four tertiary institutions owned by the government – the Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, the Olusegun Agagu University of Science and Technology, Okitipupa, the University of Medical Sciences, Ondo and the Rufus Giwa Polytechnic, Owo. The Chairman, JAC-ODSTI, Comrade Tayo Ogungbeni, said the state tertiary institutions in the state had been poorly funded. According to the chairman, some of the challenges being faced by the institutions included monthly subvention, non-implementation of 2009 Federal Government -union agreements, non-payment of outstanding earned allowances and non-implementation of national minimum wage for members among others.

### **Political Influence**

Public universities in Nigeria especially those located in south west region of the country are faced with the problem of political influence. Political influence is manifested in both the federal and state universities in the regions. Ogunode & Musa, (2022) concludes that political influence is manifested in the administration of public tertiary institutions in the following ways: employment/recruitment of staff, the appointment of school administrators (VCs, Bursar, and Registrar), planning and establishment of public universities, location of universities, appointment of council members, expansion of National Universities Commission powers and admission of students into the various public universities. Majorities of the state governor politically influenced the location of state universities to their community or local government while federal ministers also politically influenced siting of federal universities to their community or local government. For example, Vanguard (2010) report that the issue of playing politics with the education of the people of the state took a new dimension during the three and half regime of the ousted governor, Engr Segun Oni, who ended up creating more enemies for himself than friends. But some opinion leaders in the state have

accused the former governor of mishandling the issue because of personal interest. They accused Oni of not putting the general interest of the people of the state first before his personal interest by establishing two additional universities in the state when actually the finances of the state are comatose. The two institutions are University of Education, Ikere Ekiti, TUNEDIK, established after a failed bid to relocate the 30 year-old College of Education, Ikere Ekiti to his home town, Ifaki Ekiti and the University of Science and Technology, USTI, sited through executive fiat in his town, Ifaki Ekiti, a distance of about 10 to 12 kilometres to Ado Ekiti, under the guise that there was no single higher institution in the North Senatorial District of the state. In term of appointment of principal officers, the state government and federal actors also influences the appointment of principal officers in the public universities in the region. Punch (2021f) observes that in the South-West, it is now a Herculean task for a non-Yoruba to emerge as VC in a public university, a non-Igbo has no chance of emerging VC of one in the South-East, just as only a northerner can aspire to be a VC in any public higher institution in the North. The situation has worsened to the extent that in some cases, only indigenes of the town where the institution is sited can be VC. Between 1976 and 1977, after his tenure as the VC at the University of Ilorin, Oladipo Akinkugbe, was chased out of ABU. There have been protests against the appointment of VCs who are non-indigenes of the areas where the universities are located. The archaic model of VC appointment robs the university community of the best brains and allows yes-men to become VCs. Universities by nature are to operate in a fully autonomous system. University autonomy is a principle upon which the university system normally operates and through which operational stability and actualization of goals of the university education are achieved. When autonomy is enthroned in the right perspective, it then facilitates academic freedom and accountability (NOUN, 2012). Ogunode & Musa, (2022) identified corruption, overconcentration of public universities, poor leadership, uneven development of public universities, and poor ranking of public universities as effects of political influence on the administration of Nigerian public universities.

### **Indigenization of Principal Officers of public universities**

Indigenization of Principal Officers by the host community, states and regions are a very big problem in public universities in Nigeria, especially in the southwest region are faced with the problem. The indigene of the host public universities in the region wants to be appointed in almost all the principal offices in the public universities in the zone. Indigenization of Principal Officers of public universities by the host community, state and region is a trending problem most public universities in Nigeria are facing. Indigenes of host communities, states and regions want to be appointed as principal officers whether qualified or not because they are the host community. For instance, Daily post (2020) reports that Indigenes of Ibadan, the Oyo State capital, on Sunday kicked against what they termed as marginalization in the appointment of the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ibadan. The indigenes called on President Muhammadu Buhari and other stakeholders in the country to ensure that the next Vice-Chancellor of the institution who is due to succeed the incumbent Vice-Chancellor on December 1st, 2020 comes from Ibadan. DAILY POST gathered that the University of Ibadan which was established in 1948 has not produced an Ibadan indigene as its Vice-Chancellor since its inception 72 years ago. But, the Central Council of Ibadan Indigenes (CCII), the umbrella body of Ibadan indigenes while addressing a press conference on Sunday, said that it was unfortunate that the indigenes of the ancient city who are qualified for the position of Vice-Chancellor have been marginalized since the inception of the university. Also, the indigenes of Ile-Ife, Osun State have demanded the slot of the Vice Chancellor of the public federal university located in the community named Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife. The President of Ife Development Board (IDB), Comrade Lawrence Awowoyin, spoke on the issue and called on the Federal Government to look into the unfair move by the university against Ile-Ife and its neighbouring communities (All news 2022).

#### **4.1. Conclusion and Recommendations**

This paper examined the problems facing public universities in the southwest geo-political zone of Nigeria. The paper concluded that include; funding problem, inadequate academic staff, shortage of infrastructural facilities, corruption, Brain-drain, strike actions, insecurity and poor motivation and



political influence and indigenization of principal officers would be considered challenges to public universities in the South-West geo-political zone of Nigeria are facing.

Based on these challenges, the paper recommended the following;

1. The federal and state government should increase the funding of public universities in the region for the transformation of the region;
2. The state government and the federal government should direct respective universities in the zone to recruit more academic and non-academic staff to improve the quality of the education in the zone;
3. The state and federal government should provide adequate infrastructural facilities to all the public universities in the region;
4. The government should direct all its anti-corruption agencies to monitor all the funds released for the development of facilities in all public universities in the zone to prevent the diversion of funds in the universities.
5. The federal and staff government should increase the salaries of lecturers and implement the various allowance for them to prevent brain drain in the system in the region;
6. The federal and state government should ensure agreements reached with different union groups in the public universities in the region are implemented to avoid strike actions in the public universities;
7. The federal and state government should address all issues responsible for insecurities in the region. More security personnel should be employed and deployed to all public universities in the zone for effective security coverage.
8. The federal and state government should grant autonomy to all the public universities in the country including those in the southwest region. This will help to reduce the political influence in the management of public universities in the country and region.
9. The federal and state government should ensure that the best person who possesses the required academic, administrative, and leadership capabilities to emerge as the Vice-Chancellor. The government should that every Nigerian who has met the criteria laid down, by the governing council of the University whether he or she is from South/South or southeast or North Central or North East or North West is eminently eligible to vie for the position in any part of the region.

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