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Accounting Educators' Perception of the Implementation of Treasury Single Account Policy and Sustainable Financing of Universities in Rivers and Bayelsa States

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Abstract

The study investigated accounting educators' perception of the implementation of Treasury Single Account and the policy implications to sustainable financing of Universities. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design with a population of 31 respondents in two federal universities in Rivers State and Bayelsa State. The entire 31accounting educators in the two universities have been sampled to address the three research questions and three hypotheses. A structured research instrument titled: 'Treasury Single Account and Sustainable Financing of Universities Questionnaire" (TSASFUQ) was designed for the collection of quantitative data. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while the hypotheses have been tested using Z-test at 0.05 significant level. Based on the analysis, the findings revealed that implementation of Treasury Single Account has not significantly contributed to research grants, financing of capital projects and academic staff development in universities. The empirical evidence further suggests that the implementation of treasury single account policy does not in any way improved significantly the financing of Universities. Thus, Nigerian government should reconsider the policy to address the underfunding of universities and dedicate a special account with Central Bank of Nigeria to specifically provide adequate and sustainable finance for research and development, capital projects and academic administration in Universities.

Keywords: Accounting Educators, Treasury Single Account, University, Research Grant, Sustainable financing

Introduction

Universities are centre for knowledge generation and socio-economic development. They commercialise scientific and technological knowledge to private individuals, investors and governments. Universities in Nigeria while performing their traditional and contemporary roles create knowledge through research and disseminate knowledge through teaching to inculcate proper values and intellectual capability of the students to understand and appreciate their local and the external environment. Academic research in the university is the act of inquiry and the search for new ideas, and modalities (Adesoji, & Chike, 2013). The development of human capital through education and training can only be facilitated through funds generated internally and federal government statutory allocations. success of any system of education requires proper planning framework, efficient administration and adequate financing. Before now, several government agencies in Nigeria were self-sufficient collecting money on behalf of the federal government and they had the freedom to expend part of it since they only remit a certain amounts of the declared revenue to the Federation accounts (Alagbu, 2013). It is from this revenue remitted that the government finance research development, staff development and capital projects. The over-



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reliance on government finance without a commensurate remittance to the government purse, couple with other factors have so far resulted in financial misappropriations and corruption in many government agencies. The government introduce the treasury single account policy and directed the Central Bank of Nigeria to create a Consolidated Revenue Account where all government revenues, incomes and inflows are collected into one single account (CBN, 2015). Treasury Single Account (TSA) is a consolidated banking or the collection of government revenue generated. Azih (2013) describes Treasury Single Account as a unified structure of government bank accounts that enables consolidation and optimum utilization of government cash resources. In other words, TSA is a bank account or set of linked bank accounts through which government transactions, its receipts and payments and other financial obligations are carried out to get a consolidated view of its cash position at the end of each working day (Anderson, 2015). The treasury single account aimed at monitoring financial transaction within the government agencies in order to eliminate fraud, embezzlement and misappropriation of monies. The use of any fund generated internally or allocated to any government ministries must be approved by the federal government through due process and the universities are not exempted (Ezekwesili,2017). This means that for any expenditure to be incurred in the university, the federal government must approve such transactions.

Since the implementation of treasury account policy, activities in the federal universities have faced setbacks as a result of delay in finance approval (Keller, 2012). From onset, universities achieve their goals through the financing of research development, capital project expenditure and academic staff development with less bureaucratic bottlenecks in finance approval (Ekubiat & Ime 2016). However, the introduction of TSA policies has brought about a setback toward carrying out these statutory obligations of the universities. Achieving sustainable financing of universities can be a challenging and complex process. In recent times, Academic Staff Union of Universities protested against the inclusion of tertiary institutions in the TSA policy. ASUU repeatedly expressed their displeasure and appeal to the federal government to exclude Nigerian universities from TSA. According to the Academic staff union of Universities (ASUU), if the federal government succeed in their policy to incorporate the universities into the TSA policy, the university system may fail as a result of inadequate financing resulting from delay in approval of research grants, capital project finance, and academic staff development among others. Despite the critical position of ASUU, government agencies are of the opinion that the inclusion and implementation of TSA policy among Nigerian universities will bring about financial sanity, transparency, effective and efficient utilization of university finances and improved administration. This research is designed to determine how the implementation of treasury single account policy has contributed to sustainable financing of universities.

Treasury Single Account (TSA) is a unified and consolidated account domiciled with the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). The policy is designed to enforce fiscal discipline and transparent management of the nation's finances (Kanu, 2016). According to Yusuf (2016) TSA is a unified structure of government bank accounts enabling consolidation and optimal utilization of government cash resources. It is a bank account or a set of linked bank accounts through which the government transacts all its receipts and payments and gets a consolidated view of its cash position in a particular day, month or year.

In the past decades, universities have been one of the most important sectors of the government, the cornerstone of socio-economic development of the society and the nation at



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large (Udoma, 2015). Managing the university involves adequate financing, and generating revenue in tertiary institution is one of the basic aims of university management. However, managing the revenue generated is of more importance to the welfare of the students, staff and the society at large. Management is the ability to utilise the limited available resources to satisfy human wants. Kanu (2016) define financial management as the policies, modalities and methodical measures put in place by the management of an organisation to ensure proper use of finance. According to Jegede (2015), proper financial management is a requisite measure for a rapid growth and development of an organisation. The implementation of TSA policy serves as a measure to achieve proper organisational management. Akiri and Ugborugbo (2019) posited that the implementation of treasury single account is targeted toward blocking the financial leakages, thereby enhancing financial management transparency among organisations. Yusuf (2016) posited that for an organisation to manage its finances properly, the internal control measures must be put in place. The TSA policy is presumed to be a measure to check management activities of government owned institutions such as universities. In the view of Adesoji and Chikem (2013) proper organisational management facilitates capital expansion and increases productivity.

The goal of every nation lies in the quality of its education through adequate financing. Finance is the medium through which government empower educational institutions by making fund available to perform their tripartite roles of teaching, academic research and community services for human capital development. In Nigeria like any other part of the world, research activities among lecturers are financed through grants. Research grants are the sum of money given to researchers for all expenses incurred in finding solution to real -life problems. Financing of capital project is also an important element in the universities. Capital projects are those projects that help maintain or improve the university. They are often referred to as infrastructures. It may include funding the building of classrooms, expansion, renovations and replacement of existing facilities. The need to finance staff development is critical. Staff development involves the acquisition of modern, useful and productive skills among staff. Financing of staff development requires the quick release of fund for staff to acquire more productive skills that can aid the achievement of the university goals.

Investment in higher education revolves around capital and recurrent expenditure which are considered cogent to academic survival of higher institutions and for global competition. Adeniyi (2018) rightly noted that continuing cost of governance is ascribed to increasing higher educational bills of many countries particularly developing countries. According to Bamiro (2012) the major elements that require financing in the Nigerian universities include staff and recurrent expenditure, research development, capital expenditure, among others. Ekundayo (2018) argues that the Nigerian government in the past and even now has not been able to meet the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recommendation of 26% of the total budget allocation to education.

Table 1: Federal government budgetary allocation to Education in Nigeria 2009-2019





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S/N	Year	Amount in billions (N)	% of total Budget
1	2009	221.19	6.54
2	2010	249.08	6.40
3	2011	306.3	8
4	2012	426.53	10.0
5	2013	426.53	8.70
6	2014	493	10.6
7	2015	392.2	9.5
8	2016	369.6	6.10
9	2017	550	7.38
10	2018	605	7.04
_11	2019	620.5	7.05

Source: CBN Statistical Bulletin (2019)

From the statistical evidence, it is quite obvious that the educational sector in Nigeria is underfinanced in contrast to stipulated requirements of UNESCO and in section 10, subsection 55 (a) of the NPE. Since independence, the UNESCO benchmark for budgetary allocation to education has remained unachievable in Nigeria. This is a challenge. The financing mechanism in education has gone worse in comparison with other countries around the world; Nigeria remained a county with the lowest financed educational system. The budgetary allocation to education in Nigeria is very low compared to many countries in Africa. For instance, in 2012, whereas the percentages of budgetary allocation in Ghana, Cote D' Ivoire, Uganda and Morocco were 31, 30, 27 and 26.4 respectively, that for Nigeria was 8.4.

Table 2: Allocation to education as % of GNP in Selected Countries in Africa as at 2012

S/N	Country	% of	Budget	Rank
	·	Allocated		
1	Ghana	31.0		1 st
2	Cote d Iviore	30.0		2 nd
3	Uganda	27.0		3 rd
4	Morocco	26.4		4 th
5	South Africa	25.8		5 th
6	Swaziland	24.6		6 th
7	Kenya	23.0		7^{th}
8	Botswana	19.0		8 th
9	Tunisia	17.0		9 th
10	Lesotho	17.0		10 th
11	Burkina Faso	16.8		11 th
12	Colombia	15.6		12 th
13	Nigeria	8.4		13 th

World Bank (2012). World Bank Selected Countries Annual Budgetary Allocation to Education in Africa, Washington D.C, USA.

As further noted by Hartnett, (2015) the government hardly recognize education as an area of investment. This is evidenced by the World bank annual budgetary allocation table presented above. It is unfortunate that out of the countries selected, Nigerian educational system is the least financed. As a result of the lean budgetary allocation for education in Nigeria, infrastructural facilities in some universities and other allied higher



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institutions of education have been grossly inadequate while those available infrastructure are grossly dysfunctional and in state of disrepair (Ikpesu 2018). Olu, Omiyale and Adebola (2015) attributed this financial squeeze not just to the social and economic depression of the country but also to the country's desire to be integrated into the modern knowledge-based economy with an increased enrolment without adequate planning.

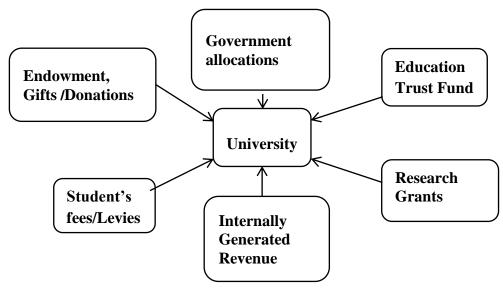


Fig 1: Major source of finance to Nigerian Universities
Adopted from Bamiro. O.A, (2012): Sustainable Financing of Higher Education in Nigeria.

Emo (2014) opined that the financing nature of universities in Nigeria is very poor coupled with the spinning level of corruption among public office holders which can be reduced with the implementation of treasury single account. Eme and Chukwurah (2015) posited that the effect of inadequate financing could result to poor performance of the universities in the area of research, capital project development, among others. According to Nwangwu (2015), the little finance allocated to the educational sector has been mismanaged as a result of inadequate scrutiny. Thus, the introduction of Treasury Single Account can bring about financial discipline in the management of funds to academic research, staff welfare, and recurrent expenditures, among others. Treasury Single Account is one of the several policies adopted by the Federal Republic of Nigeria to check the problem of corrupt practices, misappropriation and to entrenched accountability in fiscal operations in the public sector.

The introduction of Treasury Single Account intended to block the loopholes that shorten the available resources in order to carter for the university needs. Government has always acknowledged that the provision of quality education, particularly universities, is a huge investment to manpower development and a pre-requisite to economic development. To this end, government over the years has been allocating substantial amounts of money for the financing of the education sector. This is why the government (federal and state) is regarded as the major financier of higher education in Nigeria. This research is designed to determine how the implementation of treasury single account policy has contributed to sustainable financing of universities.



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Statement of the Problem

Nigerian universities are currently faced with unpleasant situations arising from underfunding of critical infrastructure and general conditions of service. Qualitative education could hardly be possible, if public universities are underfunded and students are forced out of university community as a result of strike due to underfunding of universities. Both academics, policy makers, employers and professional bodies have continually criticised the government failure to fund critical infrastructure, equip laboratories for research and training in Nigerian universities. This unpleasant situation has resulted to migration of academics abroad. Amidst these problems, the Treasury Single Account (TSA) was introduced by the federal government to mitigate against the ravaging effects of corruption in Nigerian Universities and other sectors in Nigeria. TSA is strongly believed to be a strategic and tactical measure initiated by government to restrain fraudulent practices, clamp down on corruption in order to improve governance at all levels. Empirical evidence on the effect of TSA on government owned institutions such as universities have remained scanty, inconclusive and inconsistent since its implementation. But most importantly, this research is designed to bridge this gap in literature by investigating accounting educators' perception of the implementation of TSA and how the policy has contributed to sustainable financing of universities.

Purpose of the Study

The study investigated the accounting educators' perception of the implementation of TSA and sustainable financing of universities. Specifically, the objectives of the study include

- 1. The extent to which implementation of Treasury Single Account has contributed to research grants in universities
- 2. The extent to which implementation of Treasury Single Account has facilitated sustainable financing of capital projects to universities.
- 3. The extent to which implementation of Treasury Single Account has improved financing of academic staff development in universities.

Research Questions

- (1) To what extent has the implementation of Treasury Single Account contributed to sustainable research grants in Universities?
- (2) To what extent has the implementation of Treasury Single Account facilitated sustainable financing of capital projects to Universities?
- (3) To what extent has the implementation of Treasury Single Account improved financing of academic staff development in Universities?

Null Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of accounting educators in University of Port Harcourt and Federal University Otueke on the extent the implementation of Treasury Single Account has contributed to sustainable research grants in Universities

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of accounting educators in University of Port Harcourt and Federal University Otueke on the extent the implementation of TSA facilitates sustainable financing of capital projects in Universities

Ho₃: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of accounting educators in University of Port Harcourt and Federal University Otueke on extent to which the implementation of TSA improved sustainable financing of Academic staff development.



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Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design and the population consists of 31 accounting educators from University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State and Federal University Otueke, Bayelsa State respectively. The respondents are academic lecturers and policy analysts who teach and conduct research on fiscal and monetary policies of government in the universities. The entire population was adopted as sampled respondents while the instrument constructed for collection of primary data titled "Treasury Single Account and Sustainable Financing of Universities' Questionnaire (TSASFUQ) has been designed in a four-point rating scale response options, Very High Extent (VHE-4), High Extent (HE-3), Moderate Extent (ME-2) and Low Extent (LE-1). The content of the instrument was validated by experts in measurement and evaluation in Rivers State university in order to guarantee the quality and fitness of the questionnaire prior to administration to the respondents. The reliability of the instrument was determined through test-re-test method. The questionnaire was administered to accounting educators in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka to obtain a set of scores, after two weeks' interval it was readministered to same respondents to which two sets of scores was obtained. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was used to correlate the two sets of scores to test for reliability of the instrument. A coefficient of 0.86 was obtained which indicates high level of reliability. A total of thirty- one (31) copies of the questionnaire was administered to respondents. The data was collected to answer the research questions raised to guide the study by using the mean statistics and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested with Z-test at 0.05 level of significance. A mean of 2.50 and above was considered high extent and any mean less than 2.50 were considered low Extent. Using alpha level of 0.05 (confidence interval of 95%), when the significance value is > 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, if otherwise, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Result: Research Question 1: To what extent does the implementation of Treasury Single Account has contributed to sustainable research grants from Government to Universities?

Table 3: Mean Responses of the extent implementation of TSA contributed to sustainable research grants in Universities

S/N	Item Statement	VHE	HE	ME	LE	\overline{X}	SD
1	Universities cannot access finance to acquire e-library facilities to sharpen research skills of staff and students	56	20	16	4	3.09	0.27
2	It is difficult to access fund for research	64	15	14	4	3.10	0.21
3	TSA makes difficult to finance acquisition of teaching and research equipment	76	21	6	2	3.4	0.21
4	The policy administrative bureaucratic bottlenecks in universities discourage research financing.	64	21	12	2	3.20	0.23



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The result from Table 3, showed that the implementation of TSA has not actually stalled financing of e-library, impose difficulty to accessible fund for research and financing the acquisition of teaching and research equipment and administrative bottlenecks which make TSA policy inappropriate and unfavourable practice to address the underfunding of the Federal Government-owned Universities.

Research Question 2: To what extent does the implementation of TSA facilitate sustainable financing of capital projects to Universities

Table 4: Mean Ratings of the implementation of TSA for sustainable financing of capital

projects in Universities

S/N	Item Statement	VHE	HE	ME	LE	\overline{X}	SD
1	TSA has not generated more finance for the provision of water supply in universities	76	18	10	1	3.38	0.27
2	TSA implementation has not make finance accessible to universities to construct more hostels	68	15	8	5	3.09	0.21
3	TSA hinders universities from easy access of finance for the construction of staff quarters	76	21	6	2	3.38	0.21
4	TSA hinder universities from available finance for the construction of administrative offices	72	18	8	3	3.26	0.23

Result from Table 4, indicated that the mean results are above the decision rule which explicitly suggests that the implementation of the policy has not actually improved financing of provision of water supply, hostel facility and construction of staff quarters in public universities. Also, the respondents to high extent affirmed that Treasury Single Account policy makes access to available finance difficult for the construction of administrative offices.

Research Question 3: To what extent does the implementation of Treasury Single Account improve sustainable financing of academic staff development in Universities?

Table 5: Mean Ratings of the extent implementation of Treasury Single Account Improved the financing of Academic staff development in Universities.

S/N	Item Statement	VHE	HE	ME	LE	∑fx	\overline{X}	SD
1	TSA improves the funding of lecturers scholarship scheme.	60	18	12	4	94	3.03	0.2
2	TSA does not improve allocation to universities for lecturers study abroad	64	18	8	5	95	3.06	0.24



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3	TSA does not provide finance for							
	lecturers to organize workshop	76	21	6	2	105	3.39	0.32
	/seminars.							
4	Implementation of TSA does not give							
	universities a better ground to finance	68	18	10	3	99	3.19	0.30
	and attend conferences							

The result from Table 5, showed that the mean results are above the decision rule which infers that the TSA policy to a high extent has not improved scholarship scheme for lecturers, organize symposiums/seminars, and finance lecturers study abroad. The respondents to high extent also affirmed that the Treasury Single Account policy stall universities from financing conferences and attend conferences abroad.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of accounting educators in University of Port Harcourt and Federal University Otueke on extent to which the implementation of TSA has contributed to sustainable research grants in Universities

Table 6: z- test of Mean ratings of respondents in UNIPORT and FUO on the extent to which the implementation of TSA has contributed to sustainable research grants in Universities

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	Z-cal	Z-crit	α	Remarks
UNIPORT	17	3.0	0.19					
				29	1.85	1.96	0.05	Accepted
FUO	14	3.2	0.25					-

From the table above, it would be deduced that the critical value of 1.96 is greater than the calculated value of 1.85. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted which suggests that there was no significant difference of the mean responses of TSA policy contribution to research grants in federal universities.

Null Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of accounting educators in University of Port Harcourt and Federal University Otueke on extent to which the implementation of TSA has facilitated sustainable financing of capital projects in Universities

Table 7: Z-test of Mean ratings of Accounting Educators in University of Port Harcourt and Federal University Otucke on extent to which the implementation of TSA improves financing of capital projects in Universities.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	Z-cal	Z-crit	α	Remarks
UNIPORT	17	3.0	0.19					
				29	1.17	1.96	0.05	accepted
FUO	14	3.2	0.25					_

The Table 7 showed, the computed z-value of 1.17 at 0.05 level of significance with 29 degree of freedom was lower than the critical value of 1.96 and the null hypothesis has been accepted. This suggests that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of



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accounting educators of University of Port Harcourt and Federal University Otueke on extent to which TSA has facilitated sustainable financing of capital projects in Universities

Ho3: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of accounting educators in University of Port Harcourt and Federal University Otueke on extent to which the implementation of TSA improved sustainable financing of staff development.

Table 8: Z- test Analysis of Responses of accounting educators in University of Port Harcourt and Federal University Otueke on extent to which TSA improved sustainable financing of staff development.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	Z-calc	Z-crit	ά	Remarks
UNIPORT	17	3.0	0.19					
				29	1.91	1.96	0.05	Accepted
FUO	14	3.2	0.25					•

The table shows a z-calculated value of 3.75 against a critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and the null hypothesis was rejected. This suggests that there is significant difference in the mean ratings of accounting educators in University of Port Harcourt and Federal University Otueke on extent to which TSA implementation improved sustainable financing of staff development.

Discussion of Findings

The empirical evidence revealed the extent implementation of TSA has contributed to sustainable university financing. Based on the analysis, the findings revealed that implementation of Treasury Single Account has not significantly contributed to research grants, financing of capital projects and academic staff development in universities. The empirical evidence further suggests that the implementation of treasury single account policy does not in any way improve significantly the financing of Universities. This finding thus have shown that the policy apparently has restricted universities capacity to finance elibrary facility, acquisition of teaching and research equipment for applying new cuttingedge technology to discover and create new knowledge and skills for national socioeconomic development. The implementation of the treasury single account has been found to be critically inappropriate and unfavourable to university research and development as a result of unnecessary administrative bureaucracy. The hypotheses tested shows no visible variance in opinion of the two independent groups suggesting that the implementation of TSA have no minimal contribution to sustainable research grants, academic staff development and provision of capital projects due to administrative bureaucratic bottlenecks face by universities in accessing finance. Thus, the statistical evidence is weak to suggest that the TSA policy has increasingly supported research productivity of academics and contribute an insignificant proportion to lecturers' scholarship scheme to study locally or abroad, financing workshops, conferences and attending conferences the core traditional developmental practices of academics within the universities.

The findings agreed with the views of Hartnett (2015) who decried government unseemly attitude to recognize education as an area of investment. The World Bank (2012) annual budgetary allocation of some African countries showed the statistical evidence of Nigerian education funding, the lowest amongst Ghana, Cote d Iviore, Uganda and South Africa. As a result of the lean budgetary allocation for education especially universities in Nigeria, infrastructural facilities in universities and other allied higher institutions of education have been grossly inadequate while those available are dysfunctional.



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The findings have been supported by Danladi, (2015) who lamented the financial constraints created by TSA implementation, Eme and Chukwurah (2015) attributed low funding to poor performance especially research, capital project development, financing the provision of water supply, hostel facility, construction of staff quarters and administrative offices for teaching and non-teaching staff. Also, Okwe, Chijioke, Temilulowa & David (2015) has equally decried the inability of universities to fulfil their goal of capital projects owing to problems of inadequate financing. Allocation of resources is inadequate and the implementation of TSA will not salvage the educational system from inadequate management of human capital development funds (Nwangwu, 2015). This empirical position however is contrary to Jegede (2015) and Kanu (2016) who opined that TSA policy help improved the availability of fund for capital project execution in tertiary institutions in Nigeria and provide the medium to salvage the university staff from the looming poor performances that resulted from self-development.

Conclusion

This study has explored information from the implementation of TSA and sustainable financing of universities in Nigeria. Based on the findings, the study concludes that the implementation of TSA has contributed insignificantly to sustainable financing of research, capital project and staff development in Nigerian universities. The TSA policy although is Federal Government measure to block leakages and prevent corruption has created more administrative bottlenecks to cash-flow in universities. This has abruptly reduced the level of research activities, acquisition of e-library, teaching and research equipment, scholarship scheme for staff development. Financing conferences and capital project development critical to human capital development plays dominant role in socioeconomic transformation. Therefore, the current TSA policy is but unfavourable to the Nigerian universities and should be reviewed for better implementation.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been proposed for improving the funding of Universities

- 1 The policy should be reconsidered to address the underfunding of universities and dedicate a special account with Central Bank of Nigeria to specifically provide adequate and sustainable finance for capital projects and academic administration in universities.
- 2 Federal Government should apportion certain percentage of finance for university to fund and facilitate research and development activities to contribute to the socioeconomic trajectories in Nigeria.
- The Federal Government should create an account in the central bank of Nigeria tofinance conferences, workshops and study abroad scholarship for academics.

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