

The Problems of Management Information System (MIS) in the South-West Nigerian Universities

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Abstract: This study investigated the problems encountered in the use of Management Information System (MIS) in the South-West Nigerian Universities. The study used the descriptive research design of the survey type. Data were collected from a sample of 600 subjects consisting of 400 academic staff holding administrative positions and 200 senior administrative staff heading units using stratified random sampling techniques. Data collected were analysed using frequency counts, percentages, means, standard deviation and t-test statistics. The hypothesis formulated was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed four predominant problems of MIS which include: Poor communication network; inadequate funding of the MIS units; inadequate MIS facilities and inadequate literacy in computer by the key university officers. The result of the hypothesis tested showed significant difference in the problems of MIS between the Federal and State universities in favour of the Federal universities. It was recommended that substantial amount of money be allocated by government to MIS units in the universities on yearly basis; more network services should be made operational in all the universities and all the universities should be linked to internet. State universities should be more funded to make them compete favourably with Federal universities in terms of availability and utilisation of MIS facilities.

Key words: MIS, academic, MIS facilities, communication network

INTRODUCTION

There is an increasing demand on modern educational institutions for good results in terms of the functionality of the type of education being given. The societal demand is becoming very pronounced in the higher educational institutions that are relevant to national manpower development. The emphasis on higher education especially the universities are in consonance with their evolution.

In Nigeria, the origin of higher education dated back to 1932, when Yaba Higher College was established. The establishment of University College, Ibadan in 1948 was based on the recommendation of the Asquith and Elliot Commissions on higher education which was the final metamorphic stage of Yaba Higher College (Olajuwon, 2002).

Due to the complexity of the society and more manpower demand, seven more universities were established between 1970 and 1980. gradually, the university education was growing wide and has grown wide enough that we now have 80 universities in Nigeria;

31 federal, 24 state and 25 private universities. The tremendous increase in the number of the universities established has equally led to tremendous increase in the enrolment of students and very high increase in the number of staff. This in turn has brought complexity to the management of university institutions (Omirin, 2006).

According to Murdick and Ross (1975), Management Information System (MIS) constitutes an integral component of any organisation as the means for connecting the managed operating systems in an organisation. More so, because of the concise accurate and timely information, the MIS is purported to provide, it had come to be regarded as a facilitating system for making decisions on management functions of planning, organising, directing and controlling (Donald, 1983). MIS is neither a new invention nor a novel development but as a concept, it is recently gaining popularity in the field of management of social organisations as a tool for enhancing organisational effectiveness, in other words, management by information. It is on this note that some authors like Burch *et al.* (1979) saw information as a major corporate

resource and predicted that management from the late 80s would not survive without information system support.

Ekwere (1990) identified major problems facing the modern manager to be the volume of information coming to or crossing his desk. The education system therefore would require executives who can process and utilise information to meet the system objectives. The basic rationale for this opinion is that education in most countries including Nigeria, is ascribed so much importance as a vehicle for effective overall national development.

Ironically, to many people, MIS activities means computerisation but MIS exists with or without the computer. Computer is a gadget, an off-shoot of modern technological invention in MIS for achieving faster information processing. However, Ekwere (1990) saw good information processing to be depending on the presence of good MIS.

There have been problems in the processing of results and the issuance of statement of results/certificates in our universities. There are also inadequate data on students and personnel in the universities. Also there are problems of poor record keeping system and the likes in the universities. All the problems seem to be the products of ineffectiveness of MIS utilisation. It therefore becomes necessary to find out the problems militating against the effectiveness of MIS in the universities. The State universities also seem to encounter more problems than the Federal universities on MIS. It is against his background that this study becomes necessary.

Purpose of the study: The purpose of this study was to find out the problems militating against the effectiveness of MIS in the universities. The study examined whether the Federal and State universities significantly differed in terms of the problems of MIS.

Problems of Management Information System (MIS): Many of the studies carried out with positive contributions of MIS to organisation management have equally identified some bottlenecks in its design and utilisation. This identification is useful as a precautionary measure in ensuring effectiveness of MIS operations. A study by Gathie (1974) dwelt on the procedures of MIS administration in higher education using 44 institutions known to have developed MIS. He discovered the following problems of MIS: Financial constraints, personnel acquisition and development and personnel resistance towards MIS development.

Nwankwo (1985) opined that there is abundant evidence that existing MIS often using advanced technology computer equipment have had little success in providing management with the information it needs. His reasons include: Lack of management involvement with the design of the MIS; narrow and/or inadequate emphasis of the computer system; undue concentration on low level data processing applications particularly in the accounting area, lack of management knowledge of computers; poor applications by information experts of management true information requirement and of organisation's problems; and lack of top management support.

Likewise Ekwere (1990), Fabunmi (2003) and Adebayo (2007) identified some factors as rendering MIS projects ineffective. These include: Inadequate planning or hasty development; inadequate user involvement; political constraints; poor coordination between technical and user personnel and incapability of the MIS to extend the functional area of the organisation.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study used the descriptive research of the survey type. The population for the study was all the public universities in the South West Nigerian universities. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 4 universities: 2 State and 2 Federal universities. Simple random sampling procedure was used to select 600 subjects consisting of 400 academic position and 200 senior administrative staff heading units. An instrument tagged Management Information System and Decision Making Questionnaire (MISDQ) was used to collect relevant data from the subjects. The reliability coefficient of the MISDQ was 0.9243 and the data collected were analysed using frequency counts, percentages, means and standard deviation and t-test statistics. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 is on the problems the universities encountered in the use of MIS.

Figure 1 reveals 4 predominant problems the universities encounter in the use of MIS facilities. These problems include: Poor communication network (82.5%), inadequate funding of the MIS units (81.2%), inadequate MIS facilities in the universities (77.5%), inadequate literacy in computer by the key university officers (76.7%) as shown in items 7, 3, 4 and 10. Other problem areas include item 2: Poor support from the university staff

Table 1: MIS problems in the universities

S/N	Item	Agree		Disagree		Rank
		N	(%)	N	(%)	
1	Poor support from the government	376	68.5	173	31.5	8
2	Poor support from the university staff	406	74.0	143	26.7	5
3	Inadequate funding of the MIS units	452	81.2	103	18.8	2
4	Inadequate MIS facilities in the universities	515	77.2	123	22.4	3
5	Inadequate space for expansion of MIS units	374	68.2	175	31.9	10
6	Inadequate qualified personnel in the MIS units	399	72.7	154	27.3	6
7	Poor communication network	452	82.4	97	17.7	1
8	Inadequate security for stored information	376	68.5	173	31.5	9
9	Lack of customised software (i.e., computer programmes specially prepared for the use of university)	388	70.6	161	29.3	7
10	Inadequate literacy in computer by the key university officers	421	76.7	126	23.3	4
	Mean	406	74.0	143	26.0	

Table 2: MIS problems in the universities

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-tab
Federal Universities	271	19.45	5.41	547	4.10	1.96
State Universities	278	21.29	5.11			

p<0.05

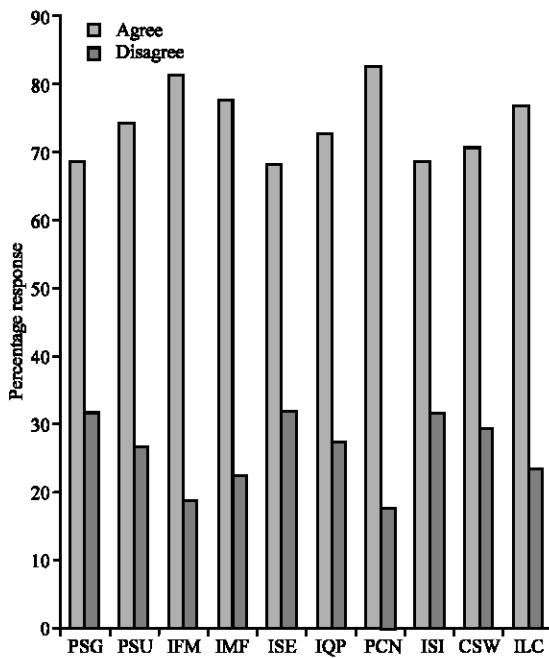


Fig. 1: MIS problem in the universities, PSG: Poor Support from overnment, PSU: Poor Support from University Staff, IFM: Inadequate Funding of MIS, IMF: Inadequate MIS Facilities, ISE: Inadequate Space for Expansion, IQP: Inadequate Qualified MIS Personnel, PCN: Poor Communication Network, ISI: Inadequate Security for Information, CSW: Inadequate Customised Software, ILC: Inadequate Officer Literacy

(74.0%); poor support from the government (68.5%), i.e., item 1; item 6: Inadequate qualified personnel in the MIS

unit (72.7%) and item 9: Lack of customised software (i.e., computer programmes especially for the use of the university, 70.6%).

Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the problems of MIS between the Federal and the State Universities.

Table 2 shows the problems of MIS in the federal and state universities. The result obtained from the analysis shows that the value of t-cal which is (4.10) is greater than the t-table (1.96). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected at 0.05 level of significance. This means that there is significant difference in the problems of MIS between the Federal and State universities.

The mean scores of 19.45 for Federal universities and 21.29 for State universities revealed that the state universities have more problems than the federal universities in terms of problems besetting the utilisation of MIS in the universities.

The problems of MIS were more in the state universities than the federal universities. This might not be unconnected with the fact that federal universities are better funded than the state universities. This finding agrees with the observations of Nick and Robert (2004) about the disparity between schools owned by the federal government and those owned and controlled by the state and private bodies. They observed that the federal universities are better funded and more autonomous than the state universities.

The study revealed that there were various problems facing MIS. The first most-predominant problem was poor communication network. Specifically, poor network facilities can render the generalised information valueless if it becomes difficult to make the information available to

other locations where needed. Other predominant problems such as: inadequate funding of the units; inadequate MIS facilities and inadequate literacy in computer education could be associated with lack of specific budgets to support MIS project and general inadequate funding. The National Universities Commission (NUC) recognised the fact budgetary recurrent grant allocation by government to the federal universities has been inadequate in the face of depreciated value of Naira and inflation and therefore released special grant to each of the federal universities between 1990 and 1992. Since then, several huge amount of money had been released to the federal universities from time to time to take care of necessary facilities especially in the area of MIS (Adeniyi, 1995). This type of opportunity has not been stretched to the state universities and so may result in having financial problem that may not allow them equip the MIS unit of the universities adequately and not being able to train staff to be well-educated in MIS. Moreover, the problem of poor communication network that is more prominent may not be unconnected with inadequate fund for them to be able to link up with other universities for networking.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that MIS in the South-West Nigerian Universities are facing some problems. Prominent among these problems are: poor communication network; inadequate funding of MIS units; inadequate literacy in computer by the key university officers. Moreover, State universities encounter more problems on MIS than Federal universities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is therefore, recommended that substantial amount of money should be allocated by government to MIS units in the universities on year basis. The universities on their own part should give MIS a substantial budgetary vote from the yearly budget, just like any other department in the universities.

Moreover, network services should be made operational in all the universities. This will allow communication between one unit and several others so that so that the data generated in one location can be

made available to several other locations within the university system. More MIS facilities should be provided for the universities to ensure adequate utilisation of MIS in carrying out the day-to-day activities that will enhance adequate and accurate production in the universities. Regular workshop and seminars should be organised for the key university officers so as to be adequately literate in computer operation. State universities should be more funded to enable them compete favourably with Federal universities in terms of availability and utilisation of MIS facilities.

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