

TERTIARY EDUCATION TRUST FUND INTERVENTION IN ACADEMIC STAFF TRAINING IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract: *The study investigated the impact of TETFund intervention in academic staff training and development on academic staff performance in South East Public Universities. The study adopted Ex-post facto research design. The study used annual time series data obtained from secondary sources. Data for the study was obtained from secondary sources from the Education Support Service, TETFund Abuja. Data analysis was done using R² software with the aid of models which were estimated by the ordinary least square method. The statistical result of the study indicated that there is significant impact of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) intervention in academic staff training and development on effective teaching in South East Public Universities at ($P < 0.01$). Secondly, the study revealed that Tertiary Education Tax Fund (TETFund) intervention in human capacity building has positive impact on the competence of academic staff of the beneficiary's universities. The study concludes that academic staffs are likely to acquire more knowledge and skills and the capacity to face teaching and research competitively. Implication of the finding indicated that when staffs are not exposed to the staff training and development, it will affect performance and may jeopardize professional skills, innovation and knowledge in the universities. The study recommended that TETFund and Universities are encouraged to provide adequate state of art facilities that will propel creativity and innovation in modern teaching and research skills of the beneficiaries.*

Background to the Study

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) was established by an Act of the National Assembly in June 2011. The Act replaced the Education Tax Fund Act Cap, which was encapsulated in E4 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004 and Education Tax Fund (Amendment) Act No 17, 2003. The TETFund was set up to administer and disburse education tax collections to Public tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria defined under the Act as universities, polytechnics and colleges of education (TETFUND, 2017). It is an intervention agency set up to provide auxiliary support to public tertiary institutions and the mandate of the Fund as encapsulated in section 6 of the TETFund Act are: “to provide funding for the provision and maintenance of the following: (a) Essential physical infrastructure for teaching and learning; (b) Instructional material and equipment; (c) Research and publication; (d) Academic Staff Training and Development; and (e) Any other need which, in the opinion of the Board of Trustees, is critical and essential for the improvement of quality and maintenance of standards in the higher educational institutions” (TETFUND, 2017). TETFund derives its funding from 2% education tax paid

from the assessable profit of companies registered in Nigeria. The Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) assesses and collects the tax on behalf of the Agency. The enabling Act establishing the Fund prescribes the distribution of the funds in the ratio 2:1:1 respectively to Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education (COEs), (TETFund, 2017).

It is worthy to note that Nigerian Universities are faced with inadequate funding which has adverse effects on research and teaching based on the quality of research which has been adjudged to be of low standard, when matched to their counterparts in other parts of the world (Ekundayo and Ajayi, 2009). UNESCO declared that for effective funding of education, 26% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of each country in the world must be allocated to education. The case of Nigeria over the years portends a non-compliance with this standard. This tends to be responsible for series of industrial actions embarked upon by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). There is decay in human and material resources in Nigerian Universities due to poor funding (Eze 2014). TETFund embarked on human capacity building for academic staff in Nigerian Universities to impact positively on their capacities and improve on the asset of the system. Poor funding, lack of infrastructure, poor capacity building and inadequate researches are capital intensive. As a result, the Universities could not provide adequately the needed fund based on their budgets and subventions that are often limited. TETFund intervention on human capacity building has improved the performance of academic staff especially in South East, Nigeria. It is evidenced that effective teaching provided students with skillful ways to explore ideas, acquire new knowledge, synthesize information, and solve problems (Akinnaso, 2012; Onwuchekwa, 2012; Hossein, Fatollah & Tohid, 2014).

Academic staff strength stand at 27,934 which is translated to students/academic staff ratio of 40:1 globally (Bamiro, 2012). The above figures show that there is poor staffing in the Universities, particularly the State Universities. The academic staff has continued to decline, due to the fact that the new universities have been poaching staff mainly from the 1st and 2nd generation Universities; while the rate of production of doctor of philosophy (Ph.D) graduates with interest in academic profession has been rather low (Bamiro, 2012). Thus, TETFund allocate fund for academic staff training and development for Nigerian Universities both locally and internationally to encourage effective teaching and competency in the country. A total of 814, junior academics have benefited from its intervention in postgraduate programmes distributed as follows: Ph.D Abroad – 307; Ph.D Local – 351; Master's Degree Abroad – 127; and Master's Degree Local – 29 and conference sponsorship which stand at 2,946 (TETFund, 2018). Available records from TETFund (2018) revealed that training and development cost N11,430,000,000.00 for the Universities in the South East Geo-Political Zone, Nigeria. The intervention effort was targeted at greater performance of academic staff in Public Universities in South East, Nigerian, to meet global standard. Training sponsored by the (TETFund) within and outside Nigeria from 2008 to date is faced with inadequate utilization of fund allocated as result of information gaps and institutional shortcoming.

Consequently, Nigeria ranked 120 out of 142 countries on the Global Innovation Index, which measured countries' innovation capabilities and how they drove economic growth and prosperity. Similarly, Nigeria was placed 140th in human capital and research; 14th under knowledge and technology and 74th under creative output (Aluko, 2012). Research attainment is determined by the number of published articles in ranked journals and conference proceedings of repute (Oloruntoba & Ajayi, 2006). At present majority of

the beneficiary institutions have allocations from the previous years for academic staff unutilized and unaccessed (Baffa, 2017). It is believed that the staff qualifications, research environment, funding, and time available to staff could predict significantly the research output by the university staff. Moreover, some graduates that are turned out from these universities can hardly demonstrate competence or communicate effectively and meaningfully (Hamisu, & Musa, 2015). They cannot defend their qualifications or degrees.

Competency required from the academic staff of South East Nigerian Universities in a rapidly changing world seems to be inadequate. There is evidence of poor output, webmetric ranking, and exchange of ideas among the peers around the globe is doubtful because of institutional shortcomings (Baffa, 2017). There is contending issue within the Universities in South East that bothers on information gap and not meeting up with the TETFund required guideline. In spite of TETFUND intervention in human capacity on the performance of academic staff in South East Public Universities, opinions have remained divided on the quality of the output of the academic staff who have benefited from the programme. The study is motivated to address the observed problem by TETFUND intervention in Academic Staff Training and Development on Academic Staff Performance in South East Public Universities, as result of poor funding and institutional shortcomings.

Statement of the Problem

Human capacity building of academic staff of Public Universities is one of the ways employed by government, through TETFund to expose staff of its institutions to long or short term trainings with a view to improving their professional skills and enhancing their performance ability in their work places. In Nigeria, these trainings which are handled by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) come in the form of sponsorship to local or foreign academic studies for various postgraduate programmes.

Whereas TETFund has been on this business since coming into existence in 2008, it is however, popularly believed that the quality of academic staff, their poor performance, content delivery, teaching, research output and institutional shortcomings (Onwuchekwa, 2016; Chukwuma & Japo, 2015; Eze, 2014) are glaring indications that all is not well with the nation's Public Universities system. The failure of the nation's educational system to deliver on its set objectives, which greater blames are on the poor status of its teaching staff, attributable to decay of instructional materials and equipment, paucity of research and publications, inadequate qualified academic staff in the Universities which pose negative impact on performance. It appears that the poor state of art facilities for teaching, research and learning in the Public Universities in South East Geo-Political Zone, Nigeria is attributable to inadequate attention to motivation and overloaded teaching and administration schedules which leave little time for research. Academic staff without adequate knowledge and skills required through training may jeopardize performance in the system. There is observable inadequate intervention utilization which is associated with information gaps and institutional shortcoming which has negative impact on academic staff research collaboration skills and innovation.

Objectives of the study

The broad objective of the study is to determine the impact of TETFund intervention in academic staff training and development on academic staff performance in South East Public Universities: The specific objectives therefore include:

- 1) To determine the extent to which TETFund intervention in academic staff training and development has impacted on effective teaching in South East Public Universities
- 2) To examine the extent to which variation of the cost of TETFund intervention in academic staff training and development has impacted on competence in South East Public Universities.
- 3) To establish the extent to which TETFund intervention balance from academic staff training and development impacted on the beneficiaries in South East Public Universities

Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted *ex post facto* research design. The study used annual time series data obtained from secondary sources. The choice of secondary data therefore eliminates the risk of delay or non-response from the universities which is the usual phenomenon with interviews and surveys. Given the type of data involved, the study specified and estimated a regression model using ordinary least squares (OLS) method.

Studied Universities

The study covered University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN) Nnamdi Azikiwe University, (NAU), Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki (EBSU) and Enugu State University of Science & Technology (ESUT). Abia State University (ABSU), Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu Alike Ikwo (AEFUNAI), Federal University of Technology (FUTO), Imo State University (IMSU) and Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike (MOUA), 2008-2018.

Sources of Data

All data were sourced from Education Service Unit of TETFund and data collected were subjected to descriptive statistics analysis. The Generalized Linear Models (GLM) analysis was performed to understand the impact, variation of both training funding across universities in South East Nigeria from 2008 to 2018. Moreover, relationships among variables were investigated using the Spearman correlation matrix. To understand the impact of training on academic staff effectiveness and competences, we performed multiple regressions using the number of academic staff, cumulative payment and balance.

Model Specification

$$1) Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 CP + \beta_2 BA + \varepsilon \quad (1)$$

Where Y_i = Number of Academic staff, β_0 = regression slope, CP = Cumulative payment for training, BA = Balance.

Afterwards, the paired t-test was performed to check whether the number of beneficiaries from the training was statistically different from the total number of staff across all universities.

Method of Data Analysis

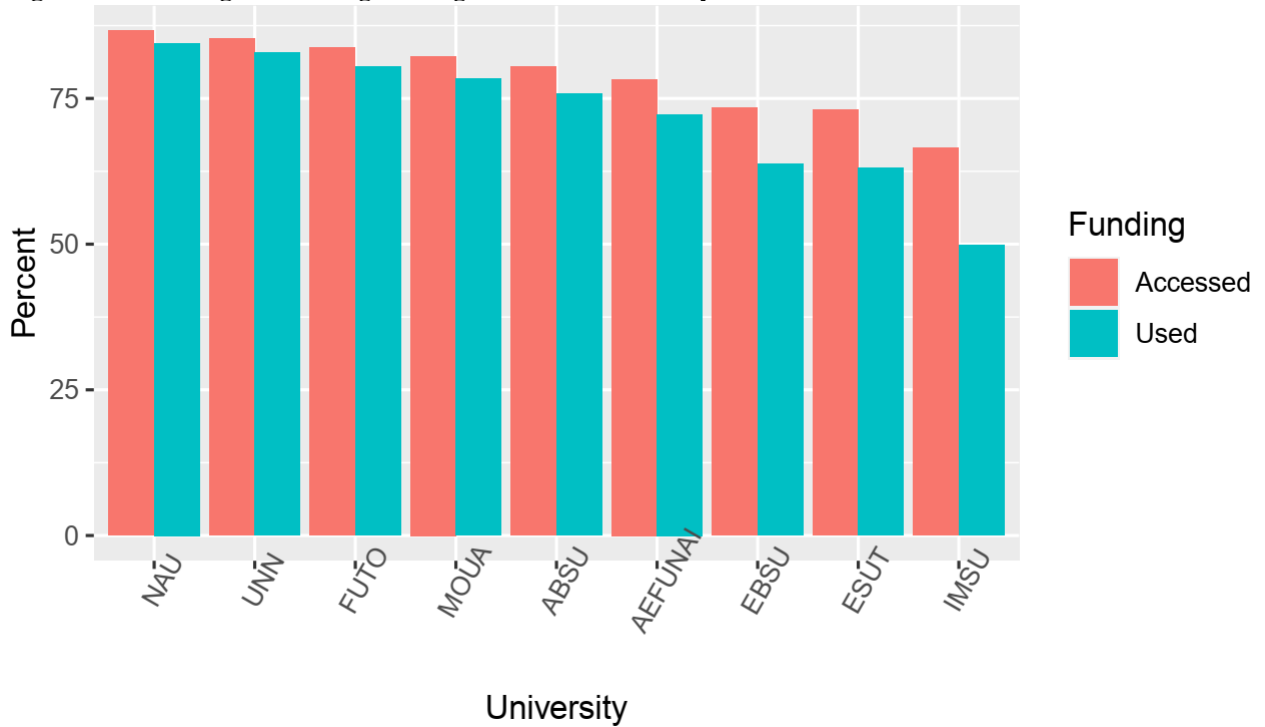
The regression models of the study expressed using the R software version 3.6 .3 (R Core Team, 2019). This software was employed to test hypotheses formulated in this study. The R software was used because of its wide variety of statistical and graphical techniques.

Table 1: Variation of training funding on academic staff across universities from 2008-2018

University	Allocation (N)	Cumulative Payment (N)	Balance (N)	No of academic staff
ABSU	1180000000	949917738.94	230082261.06	707e
AEFUNAI	810000000	634207006.15	175792993.85	539f
EBSU	1180000000	865921384.24	314078615.76	891d
ESUT	1180000000	862086257.50	317913742.50	970d
FUTO	1180000000	987429309.65	192570690.35	1877b
IMSU	1180000000	785739507.10	394260492.90	738e
MOUA	1180000000	970830975.78	209169024.22	997d
NAU	1180000000	1021673093.20	158326906.80	2064a
UNN	1180000000	1006928619.45	173071380.55	1260c
Minimum	810000000	634207006.15	158326906.80	539
Maximum	1180000000	1021673093.20	394260492.90	1877
Mean	1138889000	898303765.78	240585123.11	1115.89
CV (%)	10.83	14.06	34.12	47.29
z-value	1.17ns	1.78ns	-0.54ns	25.97***
LSD	1064973841.00	992359299	758465900	114.41

Table 1.1 presents results of the generalized linear model analysis on staff training. Statistically, the results revealed that there is no significant difference among universities regarding funding allocation, cumulative payments, and balance. However, the number of academic staff is significantly different across universities.

Figure 1: Percentage of training funding accessed and used by South East Universities



The proportion of funding accessed for staff training by universities varies between 66.59% and 86.58%. The highest value was obtained by the NAU while the lowest value was obtained with IMSU (Figure 1). Moreover, the proportion of funding used for staff training varies from 49.82% to 84.50% of the total funding accessed. NAU and UNN revealed the highest proportion of funding utilization while the lowest value was recorded at IMSU. Furthermore, the average cost per academic staff varies from 4906534.69 (N) to 11268341.10 (N) (Table 1.2).

Table 2 TETFund Intervention in Academic Staff Training and Development in South East Public Universities from 2008 - 2018

University	Payment used (N)	Total number of beneficiaries	Average cost (N)
ABSU	719835477.88	74	9727506.46
AEFUNAI	458414012.30	82	5590414.78
EBSU	551842768.48	86	6416776.38
ESUT	544172515.00	90	6046361.28
FUTO	794858619.30	162	4906534.69
IMSU	391479014.20	78	5018961.72
MOUA	761661951.56	97	7852185.07
NAU	863346186.40	89	9700518.95
UNN	833857238.90	74	11268341.10

Discussion of findings

Table 1.1 presents results of the generalized linear model analysis on staff training. Statistically, the results revealed that there is no significant difference among universities regarding funding allocation, cumulative payments, and balance. However, the number of academic staff is significantly different across universities. Furthermore, it is equally revealed that The Spearman correlation analysis revealed that the number of academic staff is high correlated with academic training (Table 1.3). The multiple regression analysis showed the cumulative payment and available balance for staffs training have high impact on effective teaching across South East Universities in Geo-Political Zone (Table I.4). The overall finding of the study shows that there is impact of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) intervention in academic staff training and development on effective teaching in South East Public Universities. Similarly, the result of the test of the hypotheses revealed that variation of the cost of TETFund intervention and balance from academic staff training and development has impact on competence in South East Public Universities.

Given that the coefficient of TETFund intervention in academic staff training and development on effective teaching at 0.61 (with a p-value of 0.001) which is significant, the study established that there is positive impact of TETFund intervention in Academic Staff training and development on effective teaching in South East Public Universities. Specifically, this study found that accessing the fund from TETFund has a stronger positive impact on staff training and development in the Institutions in South East Nigeria with the percentage level from different Universities have increased staff strength in irrespective of the balance unutilized. The present finding is in line with the Zabbey & Leyira (2019) that depicted positive and significant relationship between staff training which forms the theoretical backbone of the present study.

Kulkarni, (2013) corroborated the above findings that the Indian, Pakistani and Bangladesh's suggests that job training has significant effect on organizational performance. In line with the present study, Chukwuma & Japo (2015) corroborated the findings of the study that Academic Staff Development and output in State Universities in South-South Nigeria shows significant relationship that exists between staff development and the performance of academic staff in terms of research, teaching and community service. Notable, variation of the cost of TETFund intervention and balance from academic staff training and development has a negative impact on competence in South East Public Universities because of the limited beneficiaries. Similarly, Samuel (2013) revealed that funding as an external factor is a necessary condition for achieving qualitative university education in developing economies. The findings of the present study aligned with Samuel, (2013) that funding variation observed from the TETFund intervention and balance from academic staff training and development has negative impact on competence in South East Public Universities as a result of institutional gaps or bureaucratic tendencies. Godwin (2017) is in total support with the position of this present findings that emphatically the researcher asserted that variation of the cost of TETFund intervention and balance from academic staff training and development have been playing bottleneck role rather than supportive in the funding of academic staff programmes.

Fatima & Yusuf, (2017) study supported the present findings that participation in academic staff training and development has enhanced academic staff ability to develop students' critical thinking, knowledge of new research developments in their areas of

specializations. Corroborating, Happiness & Michael (2014) strongly affirmed that there is positive relationship between training/development and organizational effectiveness which is the objective of the present study. Mohammed, Zainab Mu‘awiyya (2018) established that there is a positive and significant effect of training and development on employee’s productivity. Hassaina, Igunnu, & Emmanuel (2015) in their study equally indicated that higher education programmes have several positive effects on the job performance of lecturers in the Federal Polytechnics which is not different from the findings of the present study conducted in South East Public Universities. It is inferred that Worlu (2017) corroborated the findings of the present research that training & development and employee performance positively influence on the job satisfaction, and that there is a significant relationship between training & development, employee performance, and job satisfaction.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers conclude that Tetfund human capacity building of academic staff has contributed significantly in teaching, learning and research performance in Public Universities, South East Geo-Political Zone. It is ideal that professional development and competency is the gain of the beneficiaries in public universities in South East, Nigeria when it is adequately carried out. It is believed that academic staff that acquire adequate knowledge and skills are more steadfast to face daily tasks effectively. This is as a result of the increasing need and demand for specialized services in different fields within the academic institutions.

Recommendations

- 1) TETFund intervention in academic staff training and development should be encouraged to continue and increase the intervention to enable more academics utilize the available opportunities.
- 2) TETFund intervention should be proactive in supervision of the benefitting institutions to remove unnecessary hitches observed, in order to attain the objectives of the training and improve the competency of the academics.
- 3) TETFund and Universities are encouraged to provide adequate state of art facilities that will propel creativity and innovation in modern teaching and research skills of the beneficiaries.

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Appendixes

Table 3: Spearman correlation matrix among variables for academic staff training

	Allocation	Cum_Payment	Balance	NAS	NoB
Allocation	1				
Cum_Payment	0.55**	1			
Balance	0.27*	-0.65***	1		
NAS	0.55**	0.87***	-0.50**	1	
NoB	0.14	0.18	-0.02	0.51**	1

Table 4: Results of multiple regression analysis of number of academic staffs on cumulative payment and funding balance

Model: $NAS = 4.72 + 2.79E^{-09}Cumulative\ Payment - 1.15E^{-09}Balance$

Model R² = 0.61; Adjusted R² = 0.48		
Independent variables	Variables coefficients	z-value
Constant	4.72	33.8***
Cumulative Payment	2.79E ⁻⁰⁹	23.0***
Balance	-1.15E ⁻⁰⁹	-6.60***

NAS = number of academic staff, ***p<0.001



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