

**QUALITY AND RELEVANCE OF TERTIARY EDUCATION TRUST FUND
INTERVENTION RESEARCHES IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH EAST
NIGERIA (2010-2015)**

AGHA, Nancy Chinwe
Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, Nigeria
nanciagha@gmail.com

and

UDU, Gabriel Obasi Chidozie
Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, Nigeria
drgocudu66@gmail.com

Abstract

The study examined the impact of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) intervention on quality and relevant educational research (2010-2015). The study focused on the impact of TETFund interventions on adequate relevant research development in tertiary institutions in Nigeria with special interest in South East Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study with African political economy model and resource – based model laying theoretical foundation. The total population of the study was seven thousand three hundred and eighty (7380) respondents drawn from five tertiary institutions in the South East of Nigeria. Structured questionnaire was administered to a sample of 481 drawn from the population of the study. 386 valid copies of the questionnaire were used for analysis. The hypothesis used for the study was tested with one –way ANOVA at 0.05 level of significance. The result indicates that TETFund intervention to a high extent has no significant impact on quality and relevant research by employees of state owned universities in south East Nigeria. This was attributed first, to the fact that funds allocated to these institutions overtime were under accessed due to the institutions' inability to meet conditions set by TETFund for continuous access. Secondly, many academics who access research grants use part of them to take care of their personal needs leaving a paltry sum for research. The study recommends that the concerned institutions should work towards meeting the conditions for assessment by eliminating corrupt tendencies, and adequately remunerate academics so that research grants would be used for what there are meant for.

Keyword: TETFund interventions, State owned universities, Adequate relevant research.

1.0 Introduction

The demand for Western education in Nigeria is very high because education is not only an investment in human capital, but also a pre-requisite as well as a correlate for economic development. The belief that education is an engine of growth rests on the quantity and quality of education in any country. A common phenomenon in tertiary institutions in Nigeria is the fact that many academic (teaching) staff are stagnated for a long period of time without promotions or advancement in their work places. This problem is attributable to the fact that many of them are unable to further their academic achievements due to financial constraints. They therefore remain with their entry status for a long time as a result of lack of incentives or motivation to further their academic backgrounds. This does not only affect the staff themselves but also their

products who are the trainees (students) since no new ideas or knowledge is imparted. On the long run, the objective of education cannot be achieved if no new knowledge or ideas can be inculcated into students of tertiary institutions.

There is a general decay in human and material resources in Nigeria tertiary institutions due to poor funding. These have contributed to poor teacher quality, poor academic performances of students; low rating of institutions, poor staff performance, and recruitment of unqualified teachers. Funding of tertiary institutions throughout the world has witnessed dramatic changes in the last decades. These changes are responses to a worldwide phenomenon of rising cost of university education in excess of the corresponding rate of increases of available revenues. In Nigeria, funding shortfalls have been the norm for many years as enrolments have increased more quickly than the government's capacity to maintain its proportional financial support. Because government funding is insufficient to maintain institutional performance in teaching and research, Nigeria universities just like their counterparts elsewhere in the world have to seek to supplement their public funding through other means.

The period between 1960s and 1980s were regarded as the golden age of university education and also its research in Nigeria. Nigerian research in terms of quality and quantity was the best in Sub-Saharan Africa (Okebukola, 2002). Some universities in Nigeria earned global respect and recognition in specific disciplines as a result of excellence in research and publications. For example, University of Ibadan was famous in Medicine, Education, Religious Studies and History; Ahmadu Bello University was known in Engineering, Veterinary Medicine, Agriculture, History, Arts and Radical Social Sciences; University of Lagos was recognized in Business Administration, Law and Social Sciences and University of Nigeria, Nsukka was famous in Languages and Literature (NUC, 2002).

The late 1980s recorded a decline in research productivity in Nigeria universities. Nigeria's number of scientific publications for 1995 was 771, significantly less than its output of 1,062 scientific publications in 1981. Web metrics ranking of universities, which measures web presence and content, did not mention a single Nigerian university until after 1,600 other mentions (Akinaso, 2012). Similarly, Nigeria was placed 140th in human capital and research; 14th under knowledge and technology; and 74th under creative output (Aluko, 2014). The latest ranking of Nigeria universities showed that no state university was within the first ten. Only Lagos State University (15) and Rivers State University of Science and Technology (19) were within the first twenty. A major ranking criterion is quality of research output.

Several reasons have been attributed for the low quality of research output by Nigerian Universities. The problem of under- funding has generated a lot of strife between the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and the Government. Without adequate funding, many educational goals and objectives cannot be achieved. Saint, Harnett and Strassner (2013) report that the Nigeria's low research output is probably a reflection of the low priority accorded research and development by government decision-makers and that Nigeria's Federal University system spends only 1.3% of its budget on research. Okebukola (2002) summarized the factors that contributed to decline in research as follows: lack of research skills in modern methods; lack of equipment for carrying out state-of-the-art research; overloaded teaching and administration schedules which leave little time for research and difficulty in accessing research funds.

Worried about inadequate fund to conduct research and other problems confronting the education sector such as deteriorating educational infrastructure and the falling standard of education, Government established the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) by an act of the National Assembly in June 2011. This act replaced the Education Tax Fund (ETF) Act Cap.

E4 laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004 and Education Tax Fund (Amendment) Act No 17, 2003. The fund was set up to administer and disburse to the Federal and State tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria. The main source of income available to the fund is the 2% tax paid from the profit making companies registered in Nigeria. In the distribution of the fund, 41 per cent goes to the Universities, 30 per cent to the Polytechnics while 29 per cent goes to Colleges of Education (TETFund, 2013). TETFund interventions in this study are anchored on normal interventions research grant, academic staff development and publication of research reports.

In addition, the Federal Government has instituted the National Research Fund to enable lecturers conduct research in a better and conducive environment. One of the objectives for establishing the Tertiary Education Trust Fund is to fund research in higher institutions to which university is included. In spite of the interventions of TETFund in the area of research and academic growth, many tertiary institutions are unable to meet the conditions for accessing funds allocated to them. As a result, many academic staff misses the opportunities to access free funds for research development. A recent disclosure from TETFund (2017) reveals that the sum of N75,206,387.13 has been released as research grant to 15 public tertiary institutions across the country to support 135 research proposals.

According to Abdullahi Baffa, Executive Secretary of TETFund, the disbursement, made in July, was under the Institution Based Research (IBR) – an aspect of mandate of the agency supporting academic staff with quality research proposal. But out of 152 universities in the country, comprising of 40 federal universities, 44 state universities and 68 private universities, only four universities were among the beneficiaries of the research grant, which awards a maximum of N2million to academic staff with research proposal.

The report further revealed that Enugu State University of Science and Technology; Ladoké Akintola University, Oyo State; Abubakar Tafawa University, Bauchi; and Federal University, Oye-Ekiti were the universities with 31 research proposals that got N25,004,523.88 of the N75million. Federal Polytechnic Mubi, Adamawa State and Institute of Management and Technology, Enugu were also the only polytechnics on the list of beneficiaries with 22 research proposals, taking N10,429,824.00 of the total grant, while 9 colleges of education with 82 research proposals took N39,732,039.00. Among the Colleges of Education were: Kaduna State College of Education, GidanWaya; Federal College of Education, Osiele, Ogun State; Federal College (Technical) Potiskum; Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo State and Federal College of Education, Katsina. Others were FCT College of Education, Zuba; College of Education, Gindiri I Plateau State; College of Education, Ikwo, Ebonyi State and Federal College of Education, Okene, Kogi State.

TETFund had complained that 90 percent of lecturers' research proposals were very poor and un-fundable. Several other reasons have been adduced for not accessing the fund for research. Dayo (2014) reports that incomplete documentations on the part of the institutions applying for the fund is one of the reasons for not accessing these funds. According to Eno-Abasi (2015) many institutions complained that the process of accessing the fund is cumbersome. In addition, he states that TETFund cannot take all the blames as the managers of the institutions are also to be blamed for not publicizing the call for proposals. Another hindrance is the in-house politics at the level of submission at the institution level. This is because it is the responsibility of the institutions to forward the selected proposals to TETFund for further consideration and approval. Delay in the documentation of the proposal hinders access. Therefore, it is pertinent

that the lecturers and the managers of the institutions collaborate for successful completion of the proposals and access the fund earmarked for them.

The study specifically aimed to examine the impact of TETFund interventions on quality and relevance of research in state owned tertiary institutions in Nigeria. To achieve this, it is hypothesized that the extent of quality and relevance of TETFund interventions in state owned universities in South East Nigeria are not significant. The research question to guide the study is: what is the extent of the quality and relevance of TETFund interventions in state owned universities in the South East Nigeria?

2.0 Empirical Review

Agbe (2010) investigated human capital development sustainability in education system. The study utilized a simple survey and it was discovered that there is a link between dynamic education, human capital development and economic growth. The study concluded that dynamic education that could enhance human capital development sustainability should be that type of education that encourages utility, encourages skill acquisition and entrepreneurial development.

Udu and Nkwede (2014) carried out a study on tertiary education trust fund interventions and sustainable development in Nigerian universities: Evidence from Ebonyi State University Abakaliki. The study adopted content analytical approach. Data were sourced from documentary papers while contributions of scholars in the field were reviewed. It was found that TETFUND interventions in Nigeria universities particularly in Ebonyi State University impacted positively on infrastructural development while the implications for sustainable development were also positive.

Bogoro (2015) in his work on Sustainability of Higher Education in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects opined that “foreign training is a necessary element for the creation of a pool of scientific personnel required for sustenance of research and development activities in the Third World and will remain so for the foreseeable future”. These advanced countries have the infrastructure, the human resources and capacity to train personnel to the highest international levels.

Makolu and Ogbuabor (2013) conducted a research on the effect of training and manpower development on institutional performances in Nigeria. The study applied structured questionnaire to a sample size of seventy five drawn by simple random sampling. The analysis of data generated was done through descriptive statistics. The analysis of the study shows that training and manpower development enhances workers job productivity and organizational performances.

Kayode, Kajang and Anyio (2013) studied human Resource Development and educational standard in Nigeria. The study was aimed at examining the effects of low standard of education on its human capital development. The study adopted descriptive approach using secondary data. It was discovered that both the National Policy on Education and Nigerian Constitution emphasized the importance of investing on human capital through education for accelerated economic, political and social development. The results revealed that the rate of under development and poverty among other social ills experienced in Nigeria is a consequence of poor investment in human capital development and the decline in the quality and functional education in the country. The study recommended proper educational planning strategy, monitoring, evaluation, better living environment and adequate funding to reverse the trend while corruption and indiscipline should be tackled headlong in the educational sector.

Ukenna, Ijeoma, Aninwu and Olise (2010) studied the effect of development in human capital effectiveness on organizational performances among small scale business owners with multiple regression analysis and Pearson's Correlation Co-efficient. It was discovered that training and skills development are stronger predictors of human capital effectiveness. The study recommends that for business owners to excel in their business they should continuously develop, train and retain their workers to acquire skills to deliver services which in turn can lead to high performance.

Onah (2003) carried out a study on "staff training and development polices in Nigerian institutions". He constructed a staff training and development programme aimed at the administrative, social, physiological and economic problems of Nigerian universities. The findings reveled that Nigerian universities do not have well-articulated staff training and programmes. It further revealed that staff turnover in Nigerian universities tend to be higher among staff members who have benefitted from the universities human resources training and development programmes. The study recommended that Nigerian universities should devise a corporative training and development policy backed by appropriate law.

In the work of Ogondu and Nwokoye (2013) titled Tertiary Education Trust Fund and Development of Higher Education in Nigeria, they concluded that "TETFund disbursement system of 2:1:1 when critically examined does not take into consideration the peculiar needs of some Universities". They maintained that TETFund has alleviated the Universities problems in the area of infrastructures, instructional materials and equipment and needs to do more in the area of human capital development. There is an annual constant increment in the allocations to Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education. For example, allocation to each University grew from N303m in 2010 to N646m in 2013, likewise allocation to Polytechnics rose from N183m in 2010 to N443m in 2013. The Colleges of Education allocations rose from N157m in 2010 to N390m in 2013.

Chand (2014), reports that "training constitutes a basic concept in human resource development. It is concerned with developing a particular skill to a desired standard by instruction and practice". Whenever funds allocated to institutions are not assessed, such funds are reallocated among all other institutions in the next year. TETFund policies do not stipulate any provisions to help such institutions recover previously missed funds in the next year. Again, there is no provision in the TETFund policies that guides against using sentiments to send academic staff for training by chief executives of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This researcher hopes to fill these information gaps

3.0 Theoretical Framework

The issue of university underfunding in Nigeria is deeply rooted in the social, economic and political structures of the society as exemplified in the African political economy model. The model focuses on how political and economic forces shape the context within which Nigerian public universities carry out their primary functions of teaching and research. It helps to explain the specific political, economic and social matrix of the present environment in Nigeria, whereby economic depression, political instability and cuts in government expenditure, all impact on the university system. The political economy model sees the different structures in the society including the economic, political, social structures and the belief system as interacting and interdependent. Thus the university system which is also a sub-section is subjected to the influence of the super structure which is the economic system (Agha, 2014).

The resource – based model is also adopted for this study as a strategy for sustaining financing of universities. This is because Nigeria public universities are weak in terms of budgeting, determination of operational costs and revenue generation. There is therefore a need to develop a logical framework that seeks to capture the major operations of the institutions and the resource flows to support them. The model creates the opportunity for all units in the university to be financially well structured and transparent.

It enables them strive to achieve and maintain financial balance, while they are constantly aware of the resource implication of their performances and activities and prepare for associated challenges. The model is dynamic for determining over time, the quantum of resources that a university requires within a particular time frame and consciously strategize on the ways to raise such funding so that they become less subject to the vagaries of the fluctuations in the fortunes and resources of its owners and the operating environment (Bamiro and Adedeji, 2010).

3.1 Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey design. The major variables on which information were extracted from the target population through the use of structured questionnaire were TETFund Intervention and quality and relevant research. TETFund interventions in this study are anchored on the following areas: conference attendance, manuscript development, normal interventions research grant, academic staff development and publication of journals. The study was anchored more on the impact of TETFund intervention on quality and relevant research in state owned Nigeria universities. The questionnaire items were specially prepared to elicit responses from respondents on the parameters of the variables studied.

The population of the study was derived from five state owned universities in South East of Nigeria. The total population of the study was therefore 7380 personnel from five state owned universities in South East States in Nigeria namely: Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Igbaram, Anambra state; Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu; Ebonyi State University Abakaliki; Imo State University, Owerri; and Abia State University Uturu.

A sample size of 481 was used for the study. Stratified sampling technique was applied to determine the sample size for each tertiary institution. The major source of data used for the study was primary source. The data collection instrument was a structured questionnaire. 386 copies of the questionnaire were returned and used for analysis. The responses of the items on the questionnaire were structured on a 5 Likert point rating scale. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages and tables were used for the analysis of the research questions while hypotheses were tested using ANOVA.

4.0 Data Presentation and Analysis

Research Question: What is the extent of quality and relevance of TETFund intervention in research in South East Nigeria tertiary institutions?

Table 1: Respondents’ Responses on the Impact of TETFund Interventions on Research Development in Universities in South East, Nigeria

Item	No. of Respondents To a high extent (HE)	Scores of Respondents To a high to a low extent (HE)	No. of Respondents to a low extent (LE)	Scores of Respondents extent (LE)	Total
1	47	161	339	526	386
2	46	63	354	517	386
3	47	167	306	492	386
4	39	138	336	515	386
5	38	132	356	526	386
6	321	1132	84	107	386
7	56	200	334	497	386
8	50	178	364	518	386
Total	644	2271	8444	3698	3088
Mean	81	283.88	306	462.25	386

Source: Field survey 2018

In table 1 the high extent group had a mean score of 283.88 representing 38 percent. This mean of 283.88 is lower than the mean of low extent group with the low extent group having the highest mean of 462.25 representing 62 percent.

Table 2: Result of One –Way Anova Application Analysis of Variance

Source	DF	Adj SS	Adj MS	F-Value	P-Value
Factor 1		27271	127271	1.84	0.197
Error	14	970586	69328		
Total	15	1097857			

Model Summary

S	R-sq	R-sq(adj)	R-sq (pred)
263.301	11.59	5.28	0.00%

Means

Factor	N	Mean	StDev	95% CI
Score HE	8	284	343	(84, 484)
Score LE	8	462.3	144.1	(262.6, 661.9)

Pooled StDev = 263.301

From table 2, the hypothesis test showed that F-critical 4.60 at 14 degrees of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance was greater than F-computed (1.84).The null hypothesis H0 was not rejected. The p-value at 0.197 was greater than the significant level of 0.05(i.e.p>0.05).The null hypothesis was therefore upheld. The co-efficient of determination, R2 (adj) was 5.28 percent. The result showed that the extent to which lecturers’ access TETFund intervention fund was 5.28 percent. Therefore, TETFund intervention fund has no significant impact on educational research in universities in South East, Nigeria.

Table 3: Summary of Academic Staff Development Intervention (2010 to 2015)

S/N	Type of Institution	Foreign Ph.D	Foreign Masters	Foreign Bench work	Local Ph.D	Local Masters	Total
1	Universities	1,126	555	203	852	534	3,270
2	Polytechnics	326	569	16	1,247	1,415	3,050
3	Colleges of Education	181	251	10	1,465	2,135	4,043
	Total	1,633	1,375	229	3,564	4,084	10,363

Source: TETFund 2016

The results also showed that under the conference attendance programme, TETFund sponsored both teaching and non-teaching staff of tertiary institutions to conferences both within and outside Nigeria. Such conferences were designed to provide opportunity for the lecturers to interact with their colleagues worldwide and benefit from such exposure and interaction to the advantage of Nigeria's education system. These findings were consistent with the findings of Vanish (2013). The findings of Vanish were absolutely relevant and supportive of the findings of the study because he studied the relationship between employee training and improved performance in government owned organizations in India.

Table 4: Summary of Report on Conference Attendance: Interventions From 2010 – 2015

S/N	Types of institution	Male local	Female local	Male foreign	Female foreign	Total
1	Universities	2,766	794	2,948	926	7,434
2	Polytechnics	1,982	550	1,111	277	3,920
3	Colleges of Education	3,766	1,468	1,016	389	6,639
	Total	8,514	2,812	5,075	1,592	17,93

Source: TETFund 2016

TABLE 5: Sponsorship of Academic Publications as at January to August 2015

S/N	Institution	Numbers	Amount
1	Universities	68	₦208,858,341.75
2	Polytechnics	43	₦118,057,906.00
3	Colleges of Education	63	₦113,763,85.00

5.0 Discussion of Results

The findings revealed that the extent of the impact of TETFund intervention fund at 5.28 percent had no significant impact on quality and relevance of educational research in universities in South East, Nigeria. This implied that only 5.28 percent of TETFund intervention fund was accessed and utilized by the lecturers in these universities while 94.72 percent fund were not accessed. This agrees with Umeh (2014) who reported that out of the allocation of over N10.052 Billion to Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education for Institution -based Research by the Federal Government and disbursed by TETFund, over ₦7.8 Billion was accessed. Similarly, TETFund (2013) report collaborated with the above when it states that many beneficiaries for research were not able to access the fund allocated to them. Out of the 265.02 billion naira that was disbursed for research, only 0.14% was accessed.

Implication is that Nigerian academics should engage in meaningful research that will lead to development and innovations and research grants should not be mis-applied. It is only when their researches meet the required standard that they can access TETFund intervention funds, while mis-application of research fund can stop or be minimized with enhanced remuneration of academics.

The findings further revealed that a total of 10,363 academic staff in Nigeria benefited from TETFund interventions between 2010 and 2015. Out of this figure, a total of 1,633 representing 16% of the academic staff of the tertiary institutions in Nigeria went for Ph.D programmes outside Nigeria. 1,375 representing 13.3% went for Masters Degree programmes outside the country while a total of 3564 representing 29% did their Ph.D programmes in Nigeria. Further revelations from the results indicate that 4,084 representing 39% were involved in Masters Degree programmes in Nigeria. Out of these numbers, 3270 representing 32% of the beneficiaries came from the universities, 3050 representing 29% from the polytechnics while 4,043 representing 39% are from the colleges of Education.

6.0 Conclusion

A summary of the major findings of the study shows that TETFund intervention does not have significant impact on quality and relevance of state owned tertiary institutions in South East Nigeria. The result provides a strong basis for tertiary institutions to appreciate the need for the encouragement of quality and relevant research among Academic staff. The results revealed that despite the fact that TETFund has immensely improved our tertiary institutions in terms of trained qualified staff since its inception there is still need for improvement in the area of research development. Although an interesting level have been reached in conducting academic research, more effort needs to be made by academic staff of public tertiary institutions in accessing research grants from TETFund.

7.0 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends that there is need to do more in the area of research and academic growth of public tertiary institutions in South East of Nigeria.

There is need for more enlightenment on the part of chief executives of tertiary institutions in Nigeria and TETFund desk officers with regards to procedures of accessing the funds. This is to avoid the challenge of losing funding opportunities which is as a result of inability of institutions to meet the requirements for assessment of yearly allocation due to ignorance about the procedures.

Chief executives of institutions should be advised to stop the discriminations and sentiments in recommending academic staff for trainings, seminars and workshops. Until this area is looked at seriously as a matter of concern, the practice will likely continue and thereby deprive qualified beneficiaries from accessing funds for advancement.

TETFund should cut down on some of the procedures to enable lecturers access the fund in due time.

Finally, TETFund should make provision to allow a tertiary institution to assess missed funds provided for the previous year instead of forfeiting such allocations.

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