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EFFECTS OF TERTIARY EDUCATION TRUST FUND INTERVENTION POLICY ON ACADEMIC STAFF DEVELOPMENT OF POLYTECHNICS NASARAWA STATE, NORTH CENTRAL NIGERIA

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Abstract

The research topic entitled "Effects of Tetfund Intervention Policy on Academic Staff Development of Polytechnics in Nasarawa State" focuses on assessing the effects of Tetfund interventions on the professional growth and development of academic staff in three Polytechnics within Nasarawa State. It aims to analyse how Tetfund initiatives have influenced the training, skills enhancement and overall academic capacity of staff members in Polytechnic institutions in the State. The methods used to gather data are from documents of the interventions obtained from the Polytechnics in the State whichsatisfied the data demands of this conceptual research. The study delves into the effectiveness of Tetfund policies in promoting educational research, staff training and development within the Polytechnic of Nasarawa State. It also highlighted some of the challenges associated in accessing the interventions which to some extent create hurdles for academic staff development. Some recommendations were offered for the easy access to the interventions for academic staff developmentin Nasarawa State and other States in the Federation.

Keywords: Tetfund, Training, Staff Development, Research and Intervention Policy

Introduction

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (Tetfund) is an intervention agency established by the Federal Government of Nigeria to address the myriad of problems affecting the quality of higher education, particularly in the area of funding. Tetfund was established as an intervention agency under the Tetfund ACT-Tertiary Education Trust Fund (Establishment ACT, 2011). Established originally as Education Trust Fund (ETF) in 1993 by the Act No. 7 as amended by Act 40 then repealed and replaced with the Tertiary Education Trust Fund Act of 2011 (Tetfund, 2022). The Fund is authorized to collect 3% Education Tax from companies, which is then disbursed to tertiary institutions for various purposes, including instructional materials and equipment, research and publication, academicstaff training and development and any other need deemed critical and essential for the improvement of quality and maintenance of standards.

The background of the study on the effects of Tetfund intervention policy on academic staff development of Polytechnics in Nasarawa State is situated within this broader context of Tetfund's mandate and activities. The study seeks to investigate the impact of Tetfund interventions on academic staff development in Polytechnics in Nasarawa State, which are tertiary institutions that offer vocational and technical education. This focus on academic staff development is particularly relevant, as it is a critical component of the overall quality of tertiary education. The study will examine various aspects of Tetfund's interventions in this area, such as provision of funding for academic staff training and development, the impact of such interventions on the quality of teaching and learning, and the challenges and opportunities associated with Tetfund's interventions in this area. The study's findings will contribute to the ongoing discourse on the role of intervention agencies like Tetfund in enhancing the quality and standard of tertiary education in Nigeria.

Moreover, Tetfund allocations and disbursements process to beneficiary institutions is guided by Tetfund ACT, which mandates disbursements to the various tiers of education using specific ratio: University 2, Polytechnics 1 and Colleges of Education 1. Tetfund intervention policy has had a significant impact on academic staff development in tertiary institutions, particularly in the areas of research and publication, academic staff training and development, and institutional-based research. The Fund's interventions have contributed to the revitalization of research activities in tertiary institutions, equipping and procurement of latest textbooks in various fields, and the improvement of academic staff capacity building for better performance. The Fund's interventions have also impacted positively on the infrastructural and human development in tertiary institutions, contributing to sustainable development in Nigerian education sector.

The Polytechnics were established with the aim of producing middle and higher level manpower thatis producing graduates or diplomats with requisite technical and entrepreneurial skills for the Nigerian labour market. This unique role of the Polytechnics makes them vital and critical to the industrial development of the country and by extension, to the overall growth of its economy (Ladan and Yusuf,2011). The Polytechnics are therefore important in the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills to the youths and the overall industrial development of the country which will positively leads to economic growth. Nasarawa State is one of the few States in the North Central geopolitical zone in Nigeria who has three Polytechnics which are Federal Polytechnic, Nasarawa, Nasarawa State Polytechnic, Lafia and Bilyaminu Usman Polytechnic, Akwanga.

The aim of the study is to analyse how Tetfund interventions have influenced the training, skills enhancement and overall academic capacity of staff members in three Polytechnics in Nasarawa State.

Literature Review

Different scholars on human capital development conduct some related studies. The related literature has differing views on the concept of human capital development, the knowledge of the human capital organization, and rationalizations concerning labour contributions and other production factors that could bring about the stimulating environment for achieving the targets in any industrial setting. Therefore, human capital development concerns all kinds of labour, coaching, training, internship, and human capital management investments. Human capital development presupposes investments, activities, and processes that produce vocational and technical education knowledge, skills, health, or values embodied in people. It implies building an appropriate balance and sizeable human resource base and providing an enabling environment for all individuals to fully engage and contribute to the organizational or national goals (Mathew, 2018). Any effort to increase human knowledge, enhance skills, productivity, and stimulate individuals' resourcefulness is an effort towards human capital development.

According to Cox and Mahony (2013), human capital development as a process of increasing human knowledge by improving vocational and technical education skills to enhance trainees' productivity and stimulate their resourcefulness should be systematic, sustainable, and strategic. According to Chijoke and Amadi (2019), the process should be organized to the extent that there should be a plan for which previous activities will support upcoming activities while facilitating set goals. The process should be sustainable since the product (human capital) must make desired and enduring impact on the organization or society. The process should be strategic to the extent that there are well defined goals and targets whose attainments are time bound. It should be dynamic, responsive, and result oriented, continually evolving, and proactive when addressing emerging challenges. Adenike et al (2017) defined Human capital development to mean enhances the skills, knowledge, productivity, andinventiveness of people through a process of human capital formation broadly conceived.

Thus, human capital development is a people-centred strategy and not goods centred or production- centred system of action. In Amadi and Alotote (2019) works, human capital development can be seen to mean developing skills, knowledge, productivity, and inventiveness of human capital formation. It is a people-centred strategy of development recognized as an agent of national development in all countries. Human capital development refers to acquiring and increasing the number of persons with the skill, education, and experience critical for a country's economic and political development. Thus, human capital development is associated with man's investment and development as a creative and productive resource. Schultz (1960) in Jhingan (2013) categorized human resources into six: (i) Heath facilities and services: - this involves all expenditure that affects the life expectancy, strength, and stamina, and vigour and vitality of the people, (ii) On the job training which includes old type apprenticeship organized by firms, (iii) formally organized education at elementary, secondary school and higher level, (iv) study programs for adults that are not in agriculture, (v) it involves migration of individual and families to adjust changing job opportunity (factor mobility), (vi) Finally, transfer or importation of technical assistance, expertise and consultants. Human capital development can be defined as the genetic product of learning, which translates into unique talents, capacities, and technological know-how in a nation's labour force for national economic expansion. The working definition for this research will be in line with Usman and Olure-Bank (2019), Harbinson (2015), Eggoh et al (2015), and Andabai and Eza (2015) that human capital development is the process of acquiring knowledge, increasing good health, training to increase capability and creativity to develop the ability of the labour force which will reflect on the production of an economy. Human capital development adds values to human beings in a nation to have a qualified, knowledgeable, and healthy workforce that can give solutions to national economic challenges regularly. Hence, human capital development is generally viewed from expenditure on education, health, and school enrolment.

Conceptual Framework

In an attempt to create conceptual framework for this study, the following has been captured in the subsequent paragraphs.

Staff Development

Staff development, is one of the primary responsibilities of Human Resource Department in any organisation. The human resources of an organisations are regarded as the most active and indispensable factor in the process of attaining its goals, therefore, decision and policy makers, are required to pay more attention to their development so that their full potentials in their work can be realised (Okon et al, 2021). They are the most important among the four factors of production in organisations such that their knowledge, skills and abilities facilitate productivity, resourcefulness and the general well-being of organisations or societies. The more an organisation has knowledgeable, skilled and resourceful individuals, the higher the value of the human resource of that organisation. The value of the human resource is a function of quantity, quality as well as the environment in whichit is deployed for production, but high number of human resources is not synonymous with a high value. Consequently, substantial inputs and efforts are required to elevate that potential to active human resource that meets desired objectives. Among the inputs is a sound education or staff development programme.

Tetfund Academic Training and Development

Academic training and development sponsored by the Tetfund. It is a normal intervention under the Academic Based Intervention Areas of the fund, geared towards upgrading the quality of teaching staff in Nigeria's Public Tertiary Educational Institutions (Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education) through the award of scholarship for Masters and Doctorate Degrees within and outside the country. It also includes Bench-work sponsorship for those pursuing science based Ph.D. programs in Nigerian Universities to carry out research work in foreign institutions with advanced facilities. Prior to the introduction of this intervention only 40% of academic staff in Nigeria'sTertiary Institutions had Ph.D. which is the minimum requirement to be a lecturer in a tertiary institution particularly the Universities. But as at 2019, this percentage has risen to nearly 70% due to this intervention (Bogoro, 2019).

The intervention policy has recorded significant impact on the academic staff development. Therefore, the academic staff training and development for the Polytechnics as at March, 2019 stood at: 728 foreign

Ph.Ds, 1150 foreign Masters, 57 Bench Works. 1,992 local Ph..D. and 3,062 local Masters Degrees. Therefore, there were a total of 6,989 scholars attending various programme of study, being sponsored by TETFund in different universities across the globe (Bogoro, 2019).

In the area of Conference Attendance by the academic staff, Tetfund through the Conference Attendance (CA) intervention programme, started in 2010, gives Academic and Non Academic Staff of Public Tertiary Educational Institutions opportunity to have first hand international and local experiences and exposures in their various areas of endeavour as well as interact with their peers across the globe. The Conference attendance for Polytechnic sponsored by Tetfund as at March, 2019 stood at: 4,282 foreign conferences and 9,964 local conferences. Cumulatively, 14,246 have attended conference (Bogoro, 2019).

The challenges and barriers that hinder the effective implementation of the Tetfund intervention policy on academic staff development as cited by Bogoro, (2019) include the following:

i. The constraints of the Fund’s enabling law which limits her from exploring other possibilities of expanding its sources of revenue to education tax collections and investments in safe securities;

ii. Inconsistencies in Education Tax payments by companies have translated to low EDT collections. Available data in 2018 confirms that about 2,286,812 companies are registered in Nigeria but only 104,624 Companies have been paying EDT since inception of the Fund;

iii. Interference by some State Governments in the deployment of funds for projects has been a major problem;

iv. Low capacity utilization of disbursements by some of the beneficiary institutions;

v. Nigeria’s dependence on oil and gas as its main source of revenue is a great challenge to the Fund; as any drop in price impacts negatively on the Education Tax collections.

vi. The frequency of establishing tertiary public institutions by Government at all levels puts enormous pressure on the Fund in the face of dwindling and competitive available resources;

vii. There is preponderance for the political establishment of many Universities by State Governments only to abandon them to their fate or make them rely most exclusively on TETFund.

viii. The lack of harmonization of modalities for granting tax holidays to companies by relevant arms of government has been a major cause for concern;

ix. Misinterpretation of TETFund guidelines on its interventions by beneficiaries, overtly and covertly; and

x. The perception of the general public that intervention funds are to be misapplied.

xi. The Interference of State Governments in the Procurement Processes of TETFund allocations to State tertiary institutions is worrisome and has slowed down project projection.

Tertiary Education Fund

Tertiary Education Fund can be depicted as the accumulation and dispensing of funds for educational purposes. It has additionally been viewed as the financial acts of tertiary institutions as far as taxation, spending, acquiring and loaning and it includes the methods of expenditure associated with the staffing, equipment and servicing, maintenance of higher institutions (Schultz, 1963). The funding of education as a part of public finance grasps all parts of subsidizing of education including the wellsprings of financing and how the cash reserved for education is spent particularly for the purchaseof goods and the administrations of men and materials. The financing of education is thus, an important aspect of Education Economics. The significance of effective financing of education cannot be over-emphasized.

According to Ozigi (1977), no organization could carry out its mandate effectively without substantialfinancial resources at its use. Funds are required to pay employees, maintain the equipment and keep the services going. Academic staff development: Identifying key areas of staff development including training, research support and infrastructure enhancement. Consequently, in contrasting the situation before and after Tetfund interventions, before the conceptualization of the Tetfund intervention policy on academic staff development in polytechnics, the state of polytechnics varied widely some had robust staff development while others struggled due to limited funding and resources.

However, after the implementation of Tetfund's intervention policy, there was generally an improvement in the academic staff development of Polytechnics in Nasarawa State and other States in the country at large. Tetfund provide funding for training programmes such as workshops, conferences, and research activities which helped enhanced the skills and qualifications of academic staff, ultimately improving the quality of education and research in the Polytechnics who are an important part of the technological development in Nigeria.

Empirical Review

A number of studies have been conducted to examine the effects of Tetfund intervention on human capital development in higher institutions of learning. But the empirical evidence suggested by this considerable body of literature provides mixed and inconsistent results. For example, Abdullahi, (2021) investigated the impacts of Tetfund intervention on quality and relevance of research development in tertiary institutions in North Central Nigeria for a period of 2015-2019 using Chi- Square and found that Tetfund intervention does not have significant impacts on quality and relevanceto State owned tertiary institutions in North Central Nigeria. In addition, Abdulaziz, Olokooba & Iyekolo (2020) examined the Impact of Tetfund on academic staff capacity building in Lagos State University employing Chi-Square and found that Tetfund intervention improves quality of staff in Lagos State University, Ojo. Similarly, Orji (2019) examined the effects of manpower development efforts of the Tetfund on productivity and performance of academic staff members of Colleges of Education in Nigeria using Chi-Square. The study revealed that staff development programmes of Tetfund influences productivity and performance of academic staff in Colleges of Nigeria.

More so, Ezeali (2017) investigated the relationship between tertiary education trust fund and development of tertiary institutions in Nigeria from 2009 – 2017. The study employed ordinary least squares and found that tertiary education trust fund depicted positive and significant relationship with staff training. However, Tertiary trust fund positively correlated with project development, research and journal publications and library development but did not have significant relationship. Furthermore, Ezeali (2017) investigated the impacts of Tetfund intervention on human resources development in government owned tertiary institutions in South Eastern Nigeria for a period of 2011- 2016 employing Chi-Square. The results revealed that Tetfund intervention on training and development impact positively on skills and development of the staff and conferences/workshops has a significant impact on research and academic growth in tertiary institutions.

More so, 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 with data was sourced from documentary papers while contributions of scholars in the field were reviewed. It 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. In addition, Ogbuabor and Malaolu (2013) conducted a research on the effect of training and manpower development on institutional performances in Nigeria.

Similarly, Kayode, Kajang and Anyio (2013) studied human resource development and educational standards in Nigeria. The study was aimed at examining the effects of low standard of education on itshuman 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 fundingto reverse the trend while corruption and indiscipline should be tackled headlong in the educational sector.

Furthermore, 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. In summary, based on the empirical studies reviewed, most of the studies were conducted in other parts of the country such as North Central, South East and South West. More so, none of the studiesfocused on Polytechnics. Therefore, this study is conducted to fill in the gap by focusing on one of the few States in Northern Nigeria who had three Polytechnics.

Theoretical Framework

The intervention policy on academic staff development of Polytechnics in Nasarawa State can be understood through various theoretical frameworks. One of such theories is the Human Capital Theory, which emphasizes investing in education and training to enhance the skills and knowledge of staff, thereby increasing productivity and economic growth. Additionally, Resource-Based View Theory suggests that developing the skills and capabilities of academic staff can lead to competitive advantage for the Polytechnics by leveraging human resources effectively. These theories underpin the importance of investing in staff training and development to improve educational outcomes and institutional performance of polytechnics in Nasarawa State.

Data Analysis of the Effects of TETFund Intervention on Academic Development in Polytechnics of Nasarawa State

The Tetfund interventions have positive impacts on academic staff development in the three Polytechnics in Nasarawa State as can be seen from table 1 below:

Table 1: Distribution of TETFund Beneficiaries 2015-2025

S/No.	Name of Institution	Staff Development	ConferenceAttendance	Manuscript &Research Publication
1	Federal Polytechnic, Nasarawa	76	169	94
2	Nasarawa State Polytechnic, Lafia	37	50	30
3	Bilyaminu Usman Polytechnic, Akwanga	13	11	05
4	Total	126	250	129

Source: Academic Planning and Research Development of the Three Polytechnics, 2025.

From the table 1 it can be observed that a total of one hundred and twenty six (126) academic staffs benefitted from staff development programs to study Masters and Doctoral degrees in foreign and local universities in Nigeria. Federal Polytechnic, Nasarawa has the highest number of staff who had undergone or pursued higher degrees with a total of 76 staffs. The acquisition of the higher degrees enables some of the academic staff to fulfil promotion requirements to advance beyond Lecturer 1 based on the Polytechnic scheme of service for academic staff. This in turn has assisted the Polytechnics in fulfilling accreditation requirements for some programs existing and introduced in line with the guidelines of the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE). Academic staff that had the higher degrees performs their function as academic staffs better than those with only first degrees as they teach their course units better and supervise students' research projects better also. Some of the staff who had acquired doctoral degrees or Ph.D. had even cross over to join other Universities in the State such as the Federal University, Lafia and Nasarawa State University Keffi all in Nasarawa State.

In terms of conference attendance intervention, a total two hundred and fifty (250) national and international conferences were attended by the academic staffs of the three tertiary institutions in Nasarawa State. The Polytechnic with the highest number of attendees is the Federal Polytechnic, Nasarawa with one hundred and sixty nine (169). Attendance to national conferences of the area of specialization of a staff enable the staff to present his or her research findings, interact withhis/her peers thereby forming collaborations for future researches. Attendances to international conferences are very important as they put Nigeria in the world academic map enabling academics topresent their researches in front of an international or global audience. For example, two academic staffs from Federal Polytechnic, Nasarawa attended and presented papers at the Annual World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty held at Washington D.C. from 3rd to 5th April 2015. Other countries frequently visited for international conferences include India, Kenya, Malaysia, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates. Traveling to these countries opened the eyes of the academics to the current trends in education and development in the world which should be emulated in Nigeria. Manuscript development and research publication are other areas of intervention and from the table 1it can be seen that a total of one hundred and twenty nine (129) books and researches were published by the three Polytechnics in the State. The highest publication comes from the Federal Polytechnic, Nasarawa with a total of ninety four (94) publications. One of the manuscriptspublished as a book in 2024 was titled "A Guide to Auditing and Assurance Services for TertiaryInstitutions in Nigeria". In terms of researches, the intervention is referred to as Institutional Based Researches (IBR) which are researches within the institutions usually focusing on research problems within a particular State. One of the IBR from the Polytechnics in the State was titled "Evaluation of Land Use/Land Cover and Importance value Index of Tree Species in Baturiya Wetland National Park, Nasarawa State". This research serves as a reference material in the field of forestry and biodiversity conservation in Nigeria and indeed other developing countries especially as one of the conditions of accessing the full sponsorship funds is to publish the research in an international online journal.

Challenges Associated With Tetfund Interventions

Despite the positive impacts of the Tetfund interventions the following challenges have been observed and experienced by the Polytechnics in Nasarawa State and indeed others in other States of the federation. The challenges are outlines below:

i. Stringent conditions are associated with accessing some interventions such as the staff development for higher studies. The intervention witnessed a major hitch in 2015 following the selection of some institutions from some countries while disregarding other countries which created serious challengesto the affected academic staffs.

ii. Delay in accessing some interventions due to lack of timely processing of applications from the Polytechnics. For examples the processing of application for study fellowships can take as long as 3-5months which made some academic staff to contemplate withdrawal from the studies due to their inability to pay the registration fees for Ph. D. which have recently been increased by the Universities.

iii. Delay in inspection of consignment by the Tetfund staff which delays the release of published journal and books. These delays do not allow the published journals to be used by the contributors for their promotions on time or to be released to the general public on time.

iv. Tetfund policy of funding only one Polytechnic from a given State in a particular year has created serious lapses in the interventions. For example in a given year only one out of the three Polytechnics in Nasarawa State will receive the intervention allocation while the other two will have to wait for their turn in the coming year or years.

v. Suspension of staff development concerning foreign sponsorship for further studies due to the devaluation of the national currency. This suspension has restricted access to university education outside Nigeria except for the universities with memorandum of understanding with the Tetfund.

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the findings of the study, it is obvious that tetfund intervention policy on Academic Staff Development programmes, especially to Polytechnics in Nasarawa State remain commendable. This is because, academic staff training and development is found to be essential in promoting staff productivity and performance. It is however unfortunate, that despite tetfund intervention, most academic staff brain drained Polytechnic sector for University. The willingness and commitment by the academic staff to participate in staff training and development programmes are reported to be affected by delay in disbursement of funds. Never the less, the study concludes that Tetfund interventions have positive effect on academic staff development in the Polytechnics of Nasarawa State.

On the basis of the findings, the study recommends the following:

i. There should be early and timely disbursement of funds for study fellowship to the academic staffsof the Polytechnics by the Tetfund. This is important so that the academic staff start their studies without hitches as experience by those whose applications are not treated or approved on time.

ii. In order to retain Ph.D. holders who benefited from Tetfund sponsorship, a post-Doctoral program should be extended to all academic staff of the Polytechnics.

iii. Tetfund should device a means of sharing its annual intervention to all the Polytechnics in a State rather than the situation of allocating the funds to one institution in a particular year while the other(s) wait for the turn the next year or years.

iv. Tetfund should employ more staffs that will be assigned to be conducting consignment inspection for published books and academic research journal. The periodic and timely inspection is very important to avoid unnecessary delays arising from the delays of inspection as is presently the case.

v. Tetfund should restore foreign studies for academic staff which has been suspended last year due tothe falling value of the national currency the naira. This is important as the foreign studies are faster than the local studies that are often affected by Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strike and problems with thesis supervisors.

vi. Tetfund should be allocating more funds for the purpose of improving quality of researches and publications in the Polytechnic sector. This will ensure that more funds are made available to the Polytechnic Academic Planning, Research Development Department.

vii. Tetfund should increase the amount of money disbursed to academic staff for study fellowship due to the present inflationary trends in the country. A situation where academic staffs on local studies ina Nigerian university is given N4.5 million is not enough for the study considering the length of timeit takes to acquire MSc. or Ph. D. in Nigeria.

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