



Empirical study on Tertiary Education Trust Fund interventions and staff development in Federal University Dutsinma, Nigeria

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Abstract

The paper assessed the effect of TETFund interventions on staff development in Federal University Dutsinma, Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to examine the extent to which TETFund scholarship has promoted staff development, and extent to which TETFund conference attendance sponsorship has enhanced staff development. The study used survey research design in which questionnaires were distributed to the academic staff in the selected University. The data collected from the respondents were analysed using multiple regression analysis with the help of Statistical Package for Social Science. The Findings of the study revealed that TETFund scholarship and conference attendance sponsorship have positive significant effect on staff development, but to a low extent. Thus, the study recommended among others that the bureaucratic delays being experienced in accessing funds allocated for staff development should be minimised so as to provide easy access for staff.

Keywords: Conference attendance, Human Capital Theory, Scholarship, TETFund intervention, Training.

1. Introduction

Human element is behind the success of any organisation be it public or private. No matter how formally well an organisation is structured, it cannot work by itself. It requires the presence of human element to make it work and succeed. Therefore, the importance of human resources in an organisation cannot be over-emphasised. In University, academic staffs are one of the most important human elements that contribute largely towards the realisation of University goals. This is because of their responsibilities of imparting knowledge on students and conducting research. As a result of that, University administrators and Governments need to emphasise on staff development programmes such as staff training, conference attendance, seminars, workshops, mentoring and the rest that promote staff development in particular and

institutional development at large. These programmes help staff to acquire advanced degrees for present and future responsibilities, improve their knowledge and skills, enhance their ability and capacity to perform their duties, and their chances for advancement and promotion. Additional training is recognised as an approach for improving efficiency and performance of academic staff in tertiary institutions (FME, 2014).

Staff development is defined as the process of updating knowledge and skills of staff to improve their job performance (Yusuf & Idris, 2021). They further argued that staff development programs, such as advanced studies, conferences, skill training, and seminars, to name a few, can be used to update the knowledge and abilities of professors at Universities.



In Nigeria, over the years there have been a problem of inadequate funding for both infrastructural and staff development in educational institutions. This necessitated the Federal Government and Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) after series of strikes to reach an agreement that paved the way for the formation of an intervention agency in education sector, called Education Tax Fund (ETF) in 1993. The Act no.7 of 1993 that established ETF was subsequently amended in 1998 and 2004 and renamed as Education Trust Fund. The then Act No.7 empowered the agency to intervene in educational institutions generally (i.e. primary, secondary and tertiary institutions). The Act was promulgated as a solution developed within the country to address the issue of funding, for rehabilitating of rotting infrastructure, restoring the lost glory of education and confidence in the system, and also for building the capacity of teachers and academic staffs (TETFund document, 2018).

Moreover, in 2011 the then ETF was changed to Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) by Act No.16 and also refocused to intervene only in public higher institutions (i.e. Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education) for highest impact and provision of supplementary assistance to the beneficiary institutions (TETFund guidelines, 2023). The major source of revenue for the agency is 2% education tax paid from accessible profits of all registered companies in Nigeria. The mandate of the Fund as provided in section 7(1)(a) of the Act is to utilise the 2% education tax through project management and funding in support of the provision or maintenance of essential physical infrastructure and equipment, instructional materials and equipment, research and publication, academic staff training and development, and any other need in the opinion of the Board of Trustees is critical and necessary for the enhancement and upholding of the standards in tertiary

institutions. Therefore, the scholarship and conference attendance are one of the intervention lines designed by TETFund in order to achieve its mandate.

Since its inception in 2011, the Fund has been making effort towards improving staff development in public tertiary institutions. From 2011 to 2021 TETFund disbursed about 2.5 trillion naira to Universities and other tertiary institutions for staff and infrastructural development (Imam, 2021). However, poor funding for staff development in particular is still challenging public Universities and other tertiary institutions. The main problem of higher education in Nigeria is insufficient funding (Monday & Debora, 2021). This hinders staff development and undermines the education sector in general. Therefore, it is against this backdrop, the study provides answers to these research questions; what are the effects of TETFund scholarship on staff development in Federal University Dutsinma (FUDMA)? How does the TETFund conference attendance sponsorship improve staff development in FUDMA? While the objectives of the study were to examine the extent to which TETFund scholarship has improved staff development, and the extent to which TETFund conference attendance sponsorship has promoted staff development.

The other sections of the paper consist literature review and theoretical framework, hypotheses development, methodology, data presentation and analysis, hypotheses testing, major findings, and conclusion and recommendations.

2. Review of Related Literature and Theoretical framework

Concept of Staff Development

Different scholars have defined the concept of staff development across the globe. Activities aimed at developing, maintaining, or expanding employee skill sets are often referred to as staff



development. Yusuf and Idris (2021) defined staff development as the process of updating knowledge and skills of staff to improve their job performance. They further argued that staff development programs, such as advanced studies, conferences, skill training, and seminars, to name a few, can be used to update the knowledge and abilities of professors at universities. Winston and Creamer (2017) defined staff development as the formal or informal, within or outside campus activities and programmes that assist workers to learn about their roles, develop the essential skills and competencies needed to realize organisational and divisional goals and purposes, grow personally and competently to position themselves for progress within the institution or beyond the University grounds. In my view, this definition is all-inclusive as it talked about what will help staffs to develop, the purpose of staff development and its benefits to staff and the organisation in general.

According to Elnaga and Imran (2013), staff development is a series of initiatives aiming at improving, maintaining, or preserving employees' skill sets. However, this definition is limited as it only emphasised on the activities that can enhance and update skills and abilities of staff. It failed to describe the strategies for achieving human development.

Concept of Scholarship

According to Peterson (2008) defines scholarship as an award of monetary assistance to students to enable them further their schooling. The award is given based on different criteria, which usually reflect the principles and purposes of the donor or founder of the award. He added that in nations like the United States of America, scholarship money is a significant part of financial aid for students and is not subject to repayment. Some scholarships come with "bond" conditions, as Teng (2014) noted. The awardees may be required to work for a specific employer for a set period or in

rural or distant locations; alternatively, they likely be required to reimburse the amount of support they got from the award. For those willing to work in rural and isolated places, this is especially true for nursing and education scholarships. In the case of TETFund scholarship the awardees are bonded to work in the beneficiary institutions for equal or twice of the period spent on study leave, on successful completion of the masters or doctoral degree programmes.

Eligibility for TETFund Scholarship

According to the TETFund Guidelines (2023), candidates for TETFund scholarships must meet the following requirements:

- i. Must be a confirmed full-time Nigerian academic staff member who is employed by and nominated by an eligible recipient institution.
- ii. Must have been granted admission to a full-time programme at a University that meets the required standards.
- iii. Should not be simultaneously pursuing a second higher degree.
- iv. Be bonded by the University.
- v. A candidate for a PhD scholarship who has already obtained a master's scholarship from the Fund must have completed the master's degree bond period before submitting an application for doctoral study funding.
- vi. Must not be receiving any other scholarships; and
- vii. A public hospital, not a health centre, must be used as the source of the medical fitness documentation.

Concept of Conference

A conference is a gathering of academics that get together on a college campus to debate and present on a certain theme or subject. Conferences are regularly organized by associations and organizations for their regular meetings and act as platforms for discussion. These occasions typically follow the conventional



presentation style, which includes written presentations followed by question-and-answer periods. There are many different types of conferences, including professional conferences, news conferences, peace conferences, academic conferences, business conferences, conference calls, settlement conferences, trade conferences, and many more (Ozochukwu, Orogbu & Igbodo, 2016). The objective of conferences is typically to bring together people with similar backgrounds or interests in order for them to get to know one another and learn about and discuss issues, ideas, and work that are relevant to their shared interests (Nassari, 2013).

Eligibility for TETFund Conference Attendance Sponsorship

According to the TETFund Guidelines (2023), a person must fulfil specific requirements for him or her to be eligible for TETFund conference attendance sponsorship;

- i. Must be a confirmed full-time employee of a beneficiary institution who is a Nigerian national
- ii. To participate actively in and attend a conference sponsored by institutions of learning, educated societies (i.e. regional, national, or international), and/or accepted professional bodies, an application ought to be submitted.
- iii. They have to get a paper accepted for presentation at the conference they plan to go to.
- iv. Before being eligible for additional sponsorship to attend another conference under TETFund sponsorship, a benefiting member who has previously been sponsored by the Fund to present a paper at any conference must provide proof of attendance and paper presentation (such as a certificate of attendance or conference proceedings).

- v. The staff member must show proof of having published at least one article in a 1st quartile journal or two articles in 2nd quartile journals before being eligible for sponsorship to attend another international conference if they were previously sponsored by the Fund to attend and present a paper at one.
- vi. Once every two years, employees in beneficiary institutions are entitled for financial support to attend international conferences and present papers there.
- vii. Subject to the current standards mentioned in this guideline, the top-ranking officers of recipient institutions may be advised to be present at local or worldwide conferences once every three years.
- viii. It is essential to include the attendees' current job title and pay range on applications for conference attendance.

Based on the foregoing discussions, the study formulated the following null hypotheses;

H₀₁: TETFund scholarship has no significant effect on staff development in FUDMA Katsina state.

H₀₂: TETFund conference attendance sponsorship has no significant effect on staff development in FUDMA Katsina state.

2.2 Empirical Review

Dada, Micheal and Bello, (2022) conducted study on TETFund, Physical Infrastructure and Staff Development: Empirical Evidence from Lagos State. The research investigated the effects of TETFund interventions on infrastructure and staff development. Qualitative approach was adopted. The result revealed that TETFund has no significant influence on infrastructural and staff development and the productivity is low. It was recommended that government should be proactive enough in terms of funding of



physical infrastructure and staff development, and suggestion was made for further research to be conducted to bridge the gap in knowledge and scope. In Lagos State University (LASU), Nigeria, Isiaka, Nasiru, and Olushola (2020) looked into the impact of Tertiary Education Trust Fund intervention on academic staff capacity building. The TETFund programmes on staff capacity development were explored in the study. It was quantitative method. The research showed that TETFund intervention had a significant impact on the infrastructure needed for teaching and learning to be effective, with a strong emphasis on the capacity building of academic staff. It was suggested that tertiary education institutions should launch economic operations to increase their IGR and that bureaucratic delays frequently connected with obtaining funds that have been granted should be minimized or eliminated. Effiom, et-al (2020) carried out a research on the effect of TETFund intervention programmes on staff research, and conference attendance for Staff development in Public Universities of Cross River State, Nigeria. The study sought to assess TETFund interventions on research and conference attendance for Staff development. Quantitative approach was adopted and the sample size of the population was 228. It was discovered that the extent to which TETFund facilitates staff research, publications and conference attendance for staff development in public Universities in Cross River- Nigeria, is low. The study therefore suggested that the Federal Government, through the TETFund, increase the annual allocation for academic content-based interventions in our public universities in order to train a sizable number of staff for maximum productivity.

Eneasator, Ken and Orji (2019) carried out study on the Effect of Manpower development Efforts of the TETFund on Productivity and Performance of Academic Staff Members of Colleges of Education in

Nigeria. The study assessed the effect of manpower development efforts on productivity and performance of academic staff. Quantitative approach was adopted. It was revealed That TETFund staff development programmes influence Productivity and Performance of Academic Staff Members of COE, but staffs do not make maximum use of staff development programmes available. The findings also revealed that the extent to which TETFund facilitates staff research, publications and conference attendance for staff development in public universities in Cross River- Nigeria, is low. The study recommended among others that selection of staff for training should be based on merit, and there should be appropriate and timely release of funds for staff training and development. Jumare, Ibrahim and Sabonsara (2019) conducted research on the impact of TETFund interventions on Staff Training and Development of Institutions in North-Western Nigeria. The study examined the impact of scholarship and conference attendance on staff development in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Quantitative approach was used and the findings revealed that TETFund interventions have led to the acquisition of higher degrees and improvement of skills in the tertiary institutions of North-western Nigeria. It was recommended that Federal Government through TETFund should increase the annual allocation on academic content-based interventions such as staff training and conference attendance.

2.3 Theoretical framework

The study used Human Capital Theory (HCT) developed by Theodore Schultz (1961) and Gary Becker (1964). The theory explains the importance of investment in education. The major elements of the theory are education and training. The theory asserts that by emphasizing education and training, employees can become more productive and competent. It explains the TETFund staff development programmes as an investment in education that benefits



the staff, Universities and the society at large. The Fund gives scholarships to academic staff to enable them acquire higher degrees, to expose them to other intellectual traditions and increase their teaching capacity. Staffs are also sponsored to attend local and international conferences so as to improve their professional development. Thus, these programmes anchored by TETFund are considered as investments in education that improve staff development in Universities and other tertiary institutions. The theory covers the variables under study, so it could best guide the work to explain the concepts relating to TETFund Interventions and staff development in Federal University Dutsinma, Katsina State.

3. Methodology

This quantitative study used descriptive survey research design to examine the effect of TETFund interventions on staff development in Federal University Dutsinma, Katsina State, Nigeria (2012-2022). The total population of the study was 1000 academic staff (Establishment Department, 2023). The study arrived at the 278 sample size of the study using Research Advisors (2006) sample size table. Primary and secondary sources of data were used. The primary data was collected using questionnaires administered on a sample of

278 academic staff in the selected University. Out of 278 questionnaires distributed, 230 copies were successfully completed and returned which formed the basis of analysis. The study used Cronbach’s Alpha in measuring the reliability of the questionnaire instrument. The results showed a Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.895 which is considered as a good reliability. The secondary data was generated from the records on TETFund interventions in the University. In data analysis, multiple regression analysis was used with help of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23. Multiple regression analysis was chosen, because the study assessed the effect of two independent variables (i.e. scholarship and conference attendance) on one dependent variable (i.e. staff development).

4. Results and Discussion

Under this, the data collected from the respondents, were presented, analysed, and hypotheses were tested. The study distributed 278 questionnaires to academic staff in FUDMA, but 230 questionnaires representing 83% were successfully completed and returned. Thus, the 230 questionnaires formed the basis of analysis in this study.

Table 1

Multiple Tables on the Effect of TETFund Scholarship on Staff Development in FUDMA

Table with 8 columns: S/N, Variables, SA, A, UN, DS, SD, Total. It contains 4 rows of data regarding TETFund staff training and scholarship nomination.



5	Lecturers can easily access to TETFund scholarship	20(16.7)	61(26.5%)	56(24.3%)	53(23.0%)	40(17.4%)	230(100)
Total		256	450	193	143	108	1150

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 1 above presents the views of the respondents in which 195(84.8%) representing the majority agreed that TETFund staff training has exposed the lecturers to other intellectual traditions within and outside Nigeria, 16(7.0%) were undecided, while 19 respondents representing 8.3% of the total respondents disagreed with the statement. It also shows that 189(82.2%) representing the majority have agreed that TETFund staff training intervention has improved staff performance, 19(8.3%) were not certain, while 22(9.5%) disagreed with the statement. Moreover, the table shows that 114(49.6%) representing the majority have agreed that the nomination of lecturers for TETFund scholarship in FUDMA is based on merit, 56(24.3%) were uncertain, while 60(26.1%) disagreed. Similarly, records from TETFund desk officer in FUDMA indicate that TETFund sponsored 230

lecturers for higher degree programmes at home and abroad from 2012 to 2022.

The table 1 above also indicates the views of the respondents whereby the majority of them, 127(55.2%) agreed that TETFund provides sufficient funds for staff training, 46(20.0%) were not certain, while 57(24.8%) disagreed with the statement. Finally, the table shows that 93(40.4%) respondents representing the majority disagreed that Lecturers have easy access to TETFund staff training intervention, 56(24.3%) were undecided, while 81(35.2%) respondents have agreed with the statement.

Table 2

Multiple Tables on the Effect of TETFund Conference Attendance Sponsorship and Staff Development

S/N	Variables	SA	A	UN	DS	SD	Total
1	TETFund has enabled you to attend local conferences.	50(21.7%)	68(29.6%)	31(13.5%)	55(23.9%)	26(11.3%)	230(100)
2	TETFund has supported your international conferences	25(10.9)	64(27.8%)	47(20.4%)	57(24.8%)	37(16.1)	230(100)
3	Conference attendance has increased Lecturers' experience and exposure	53(23.0%)	144(62.6%)	20(8.7%)	7(3.0%)	6(2.6%)	230(100)
4	TETFund provides staff with sufficient funds for conference attendance	36(15.7%)	88(38.3%)	61(26.5%)	39(17.0%)	6(2.6%)	230(100)
5	Staff can easily access TETFund intervention on conference.	16(7, 0%)	41(17.8%)	57(24.8%)	77(33.5%)	39(17.0%)	230(100)
Total		180	405	216	178	114	1093

Source: Field Survey, 2023



Table 2 above indicates the respondents' views in which 118(51.3%) representing the majority, agreed that TETFund intervention has enabled them to attend local conferences, 31(13.5%) were undecided, while 81 respondents representing 35.2% of the total respondents disagreed with the statement, which means they have not benefited from the local conference attendance sponsorship. It also shows that 94(40.9%) representing the majority disagreed that TETFund intervention has supported their international conferences, 47(20.4%) were not certain, while 89(38.7%) agreed with the statement. However, records from Directorate of Research and Development office revealed that about 386 staff benefited from the intervention. Moreover, the table shows that 197(85.6%) representing the majority have agreed that

TETFund conference attendance has increased the experience and exposure Lecturers in public presentation, 20(8.7%) were uncertain, while 13(5.6%) disagreed with the statement.

The table 2 above also indicates the respondents' views in which the majority of the respondents 124(54.0%) agreed that TETFund provides staff with sufficient funds for conference attendance within and outside Nigeria, 61(26.5%) were not certain, while 45(19.6%) disagreed with the statement. Finally, the table shows that 116(50.5%) respondents representing the majority disagreed that academic staff in this University easily access TETFund intervention on conference attendance, 57(24.8%) were undecided, while 57(24.8%) respondents agreed with the statement.

Table 3
ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	18.226	2	9.113	36.289	.000 ^b
	Residual	57.005	227	.251		
	Total	75.231	229			

a. Dependent Variable: Staff Development

b. Predictors: (Constant), TETFund Conference, TETFund Scholarship

Source: SPSS output, 2023

Table 3 above shows the results from the multiple regression analysis which tests the effects of the independent variables on staff development in FUDMA, Katsina state.

The F-statistics (36.289) which measures the adequacy and fitness of the model used in the study with a p-value of 0.000^b which is significant at 5% shows that the model is fit for the data.

Table 4
Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.492 ^a	.242	.236	.50112	1.736

a. Predictors: (Constant), TETFund Conference, TETFund Scholarship

b. Dependent Variable: Staff Development

Table 4 above indicates the multiple regression analysis summaries. The empirical findings show that R, the multiple

correlation coefficient, stood at 0.492. This means that the correlation is moderate. R², the multiple coefficients of determination of

the variables stood at 0.242 indicating that about 24.2% of the total variation in staff development in FUDMA, Katsina state is explained by variations in the ‘independent variables’ used in this study. Thus, the remaining 76.8% of the variation in the staff development can be explained by other

variables not captured in this study. The adjusted R² being 0.24 also indicates that the independent variables captured in this study will still explain 24% of the variations in dependent variable even if other variables were added to the study.

Table 5
Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	2.940	.159		18.446	.000		
TETFund scholarship	.157	.048	.225	3.275	.001	.710	1.409
TETFund conference	.231	.048	.333	4.861	.000	.710	1.409

a. Dependent Variable: Staff Development

Table 5 above indicates the result of the respective variables on performance. Upon the meeting of the conditions of regression analysis, multiple regression analysis is considered appropriate in testing the research hypotheses.

Test of Hypothesis I

H₀₁: TETFund scholarship has no significant effect on staff development in FUDMA, Katsina state.

The coefficient of “TETFund scholarship” indicates a positive value of 0.157. This impliedly means an increase in TETFund scholarship would also lead to an increase in Staff Development in FUDMA, Katsina State. Nevertheless, the significance of this can be judged from the t statistics and its significance. The t statistics of “TETFund scholarship” stood at 3.275 with a p-value of 0.001 which is less than 0.05, indicating that the relationship depicted in the model is significant at 95% confidence level. This impliedly means that the study does not have enough statistical evidence to accept the null hypothesis. Therefore, the study rejected the null hypothesis H₀₁, which states that TETFund scholarship has no significant effect on staff development in FUDMA, Katsina state, but accepts its alternate hypothesis which states that TETFund scholarship has significant effect

on staff development in FUDMA, Katsina state.

Test of Hypothesis II

H₀₂: TETFund conference attendance sponsorship has no significant effect on staff development in FUDMA, Katsina state.

The coefficient of “TETFund conference attendance sponsorship” indicates a positive value of 0.231. This impliedly means that an increase in TETFund conference attendance sponsorship would also lead to an increase in Staff Development in FUDMA, Katsina State. Nevertheless, the significance of this can be judged from the t statistics and its significance. The t statistics of “TETFund scholarship” stood at 4.861 with a p-value of 0.000 which is less than 0.05, indicating that the relationship depicted in the model is significant at 95% confidence level. This implies that the study does not have enough statistical evidence to accept the null hypothesis. Thus, the study rejected the null hypothesis H₀₂, which states that TETFund conference attendance sponsorship has no significant effect on staff development in FUDMA, Katsina state, but accepts its alternate hypothesis which states that TETFund conference attendance sponsorship has significant effect on staff development in FUDMA, Katsina state.



Summary of Major Findings

The discussion of the result and test of hypotheses revealed some significant findings on the effect of TETFund interventions on staff development in Federal University Dutsinma. It was found that TETFund scholarship and conference attendance have significant effects on staff development as indicated in the table 5 above. This corroborated the findings of the studies conducted by (Isiaka et-al, 2020; Eneasator, Ken & Orji, 2019; Jumare, Ibrahim & Sabonsara, 2019). However, the result was not in line with the findings of the study conducted by Dada, Micheal and Bello (2022) which revealed that TETFund has no significant influence on staff development.

It was revealed that the extent, to which TETFund scholarship and conference attendance facilitate staff development, is very low as the R^2 , the multiple coefficients of determination of the variables stood at 0.242 indicating that about 24.2% of the total variation in staff development. The findings were in line with the results of study conducted by Effiom, et-al (2020). It was also discovered that Staff in the selected University face some difficulties in accessing TETFund intervention on staff training and conference attendance. This might have been resulted from the large number of applicants for TETFund sponsorship.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study assessed the effect of TETFund interventions on staff development in Federal University Dutsinma, Katsina state, Nigeria. TETFund scholarship and conference attendance sponsorship were the intervention lines that the study used as the independent variables to examine their effects on staff development. The hypotheses tested showed a positive significant relationship between the TETFund interventions and staff development. Based on the findings and the hypotheses tested, the study concluded that

TETFund interventions promote staff development in FUDMA, but to a low extent. In view of the findings and conclusion reached also, the study made the following recommendations;

- i. TETFund agency should upward review its allocation for staff development so as to benefit more staff in the Universities and other public tertiary institutions in Nigeria.
- ii. The bureaucratic delays being inexperienced in accessing funds allocated for staff development should be minimised so as to provide easy access for staff in the beneficiary institutions.

Limitation of the Study and Suggestions for further Study

The findings of the study are therefore limited to the University under study. The study also is limited to quantitative data collected through questionnaire, complimenting with qualitative data using an interview technique could have made the results of the study better. Thus, the study suggests that future study should use mixed method approach and include other intervention lines such as institution-based research, national research fund, academic journal publication, academic manuscript development, post-doctoral fellowship and bench work that could also have effect on staff development in public Universities and other tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

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