

Contributions of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (Tetfund) to the Development of University System in Nigeria

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Abstract: The paper examined the contributions of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) to the development of Nigeria university system. The paper used secondary data. The secondary data were collected from both print and online publications. Content analysis was used to analyze the selection of literature for the study. The paper revealed that Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) since inception has positively contributed to the development of universities in Nigeria. Infrastructure facilities development, research development, establishment of career center in the universities and improvement of staff training programme are some of the major contributions of the FUND to the Nigerian university system development. Based on this finding; the paper recommends that the Federal government should increase the budgetary allocation of the FUND. The staff of the agency should be provided with training opportunities both local and foreign. Private institutions and international organizations should support the Funds with technical support to improve its operation.

Keywords: Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND), University Education.



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Introduction

The university is an organized and planned educational institution designed for the production of high level manpower through active teaching, research and community services. University is also a higher learning institution that focus on national development, training and manpower production via teaching and researching (Muhammad, 2022; Ogunode, 2025a). NOUN in Ogunode (2022) noted that the university is the apex of all tertiary institutions. It is expected to make optimum contribution to national development by: Intensifying and diversifying its programmes for the development of high level manpower within the context of the needs of national requirements; making professional course content to reflect our national requirements; making all students, as part of a general programme of all-round improvement in university education, to offer general study courses such as history of ideas, philosophy of knowledge and nationalism.

For the university education to make significant impact on national development, its research has to be relevant to the national development and its results disseminated to both government and

industries. There are three categories of university by ownership in Nigeria. These include federally-owned universities, state-owned universities and private universities. Universities can also be categorized along the courses offered. We have specialist universities that offer particular programmes (NOUN in Ogunode 2022).

The Nigerian university system is faced with a lot of challenges. Shortage of infrastructure facilities (Harmon, 2023), poor research development (Muhammad, 2016; Baro, Bosah, & Obi, 2017) and poor staff training (Baro, Bosah, & Obi, 2017; Chukwuma, Ibrahim, & Eze 2019; Brown, Smith, & Okafor, 2022). To address these problems, the Federal government established the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND). The Education Trust Fund later re-named TETFund was set up under the Education Tax Act No. 7 of 1993 as amended by Act No. 40 of 1998. The law setting up the Fund stipulates that a 2 per cent (now 3 per cent) education tax be imposed on the profits of all registered companies in Nigeria. In the distribution of the funds, 50 per cent goes to the Universities, 25 per cent to the Polytechnics while 25 per cent goes to Colleges of Education (TETFund Act 2011) (Balarabe & Muhammad, 2021; Echono, 2023). The agency since establishment has been coming out with many policies and programme to improve the quality of the university system in Nigeria. It is based on this, this study south to examine the contributions of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) to the development of Nigeria university system.

1.2 Purpose of the study

1) The purpose of this paper is to find out the contributions of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) to the development of Nigeria university system.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Concept of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND)

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) was originally established as an Education Trust Fund (ETF) by Act No. 7 of 1993 as amended by Act No. 40 of 1998 (now repealed and replaced with Tertiary Education Trust Fund Act 2011). It is an intervention agency set up to provide supplementary support to all levels of public tertiary institutions with the main objective of using funding alongside project management for the rehabilitation, restoration and consolidation of Tertiary Education in Nigeria (Tetfund, 2024). The huge support for the education sector is because of the fore-knowledge that access to education can empower people to arrange for their basic human needs (Ayeni, Sani, Idris, & Uzoigwe, 2019 Sunday, 2019; Muhammad, 2021)

The main source of income available to the Fund is the two per cent education tax paid from the assessable profit of companies registered in Nigeria. The Federal Inland Revenue Services (FIRS) assesses and collects the tax on behalf of the Fund. The funds are disbursed for the general improvement of education in federal and state tertiary education specifically for the provision or maintenance of essential physical infrastructure for teaching and learning; Instructional material and equipment; Research and publications and Academic staff training and development and any other need which, in the opinion of the Board of Trustees, is critical and essential for the improvement and maintenance of standards in the higher educational institutions (TETFund, 2024). The reason for the provision of those things needed to ensure that the quality of education is enhanced is because there is an understanding among scholars that governance is the delivery of those facilities that enhance the well-being of the people (Muhammad, 2020; Ayeni & Sani, 2021; Vmtnews 2023; Ifeyinwa & Okemute, 2023).

3.0 Method

The contributions of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) to the development of Nigeria university system is a position paper that adopted a systematic literature review-based method. The method allows to collect and review the related previous literature from various online

sources. With the aid of digital platform, the researcher collected secondary information to generate knowledge on this topic from 2015-2025. The position paper followed qualitative narrative design method. The researcher has visited different online sites to collect the previous literature and analyze the literatures on the contributions of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) to the development of Nigeria university system. The previous findings are critically analyzed and presented in different themes on contributions of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) to the development of Nigeria university system (Adapted from Ogunode, 2025d).

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion

This output of the literatures on the contributions of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) to the development of Nigeria university system presents an in-depth study and result the can infer conclusion on the topic. The study includes; online publication; conference paper, journals sorted from from reputable international journals such as CEON, Elsevier, Hindawi, JSTOR, IEEE, Learn Techlib, SAGE, Nebraska and Springer.

Exclusion

Also, the literature review excludes information from edited books, preprints, monographs, information below 2015 and book chapters (Adapted from Ogunode, 2025d).

4.0 Result and Discussion contributions of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) to the development of Nigeria university system.

Facilities Development

The study revealed that TETFund intervention in government-owned tertiary institutions in Nigeria has positively affected the development of physical infrastructure which transformed to better job performance among academic and non-academic staff (Urdu and Kneed in Tetfund 2024; Tetfund 2021). The study by Udu & Nkwede, in Ogunode (2024) concluded that TETFund has done handsomely well in the following areas; normal Intervention; library; research grant; academic staff training and development; publication of journals; manuscript development; and conference attendance. They further admitted that with TETFund interventions, Ebonyi State University College (EBSUC) has been able to experience a boost in infrastructural development; many academic staff have also received research grants; many have been sponsored to local and international seminars and conferences in addition to TETFund sponsored oversea training and retraining of academic staff as noted earlier. Indeed, TETFund Interventions have had some positive impact on the growth of Ebonyi State University and the implications of these for sustainable development are quite obvious. Also, Echono (2022) revealed that infrastructure has been given special attention because of its decay and collapse across public tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Careful observation will reveal that the Fund between January — October 2022 alone carried out and completed 607 infrastructural projects amounting to N26,722,833,189.97 across beneficiary institutions. These projects include the construction of senate buildings, lecture theatres, classrooms, hostels, offices, library buildings, laboratories, road network, power, fencing and procurement of equipment, amongst many others.

Ogunode (2024) and Idowu, (2020) established a positive relationship between Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) and infrastructure facilities development in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Study by Isiaka, Nasiru, and Olushola, (2020) discovered that Tetfund intervention towards the quality transformation of academic staff at Lagos State University was positive in the sense that Tetfund intervention has contributed majorly to the provision of infrastructure for effective teaching and learning at Lagos State University (LASU). Balarabe and Muhammad (2019), Ogunode, and Agbor, (2024) and Anaehobi, and Agim, (2019) concluded that Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) has positively influenced the development of infrastructure

facilities in the tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This implies that the various interventions of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) in the infrastructure facilities development have assisted in the transformation of Nigerian tertiary institutions. The intervention of the Fund has led to an improved infrastructure facilities development that supports effective implementation of teaching, research, learning and provision of community service.

Research Development

Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) is one major key research funding agencies of the Nigerian government. TETFund came into being at a time when the education sector had suffered many years of neglect by successive governments which resulted in large-scale decay of institutional facilities, physical structure, academic teaching and research equipment (Eze, 2014). TETFund has funded other innovative initiatives targeted at deepening impactful research and uptake of research outcomes according to Echono (2023) with potential for commercialization. In this regard in 2022 the Fund sponsored the TETFund Alliance for Innovative Research (TETFAIR) programme, an initiative designed to pull scientific researchers, innovators and inventors from beneficiary universities through a competitive selection process to accelerate their research, innovations and inventions with the aid of state-of-the-art innovation hub, experts and mentors to enable them to transform their ideas into innovative solutions up to Proof of Concept and Prototypes that can be pitched to investors for commercialization. The successes recorded from the initial TETFAIR programme conducted for participants from universities motivated the Fund to approve the second phase in 2023 to accommodate participants from Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education (Technical).

In its effort to enhance the capacity of our scholars for ground-breaking research to attract international research grants and benefit from other funding windows for research across the globe, Echono (2023) noted that TETFund has sponsored 1,761 academic staff of beneficiary institutions from across the country for the train-the-trainer capacity building programme on Research Proposal Writing and Grant Management held in various countries between 2019 and 2022. This widely applauded programme was stepped down and held locally across the six geopolitical zones between the first and second quarters of 2023 to ensure that more lecturers of beneficiary institutions benefit from it. The Fund according to Ogunode, (2023) allocates funds on an annual basis to support Academic Research Journals and Institution Based Research (IBR) for research projects of not more than N2 million per project. It is noted that about 2,175 projects have been approved for Institution Based Research and 342 Academic Research Journal projects were undertaken between 2011 and 2021. The former executive secretary disclosed that TETFund had been playing a significant role in COVID-19 research in the country and drug development in general.

TETFund is very effective in the area of supporting and funding research and development in higher institutions in Nigeria's North-East region (Mukhtar 2020). Also, Ekofm (2024) quoted the Assistant Director, of Research and Development (R&D) of TETFund, Ismail who maintained that the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) has so far spent over N23 billion on funding research across the country. Ismail disclosed that the agency was fully committed to the establishment of a Science Granting Council in Nigeria. TETFund has continued to financially support research through the National Research Fund. The Fund is working hard to ensure that research outputs are linked to industry to bring about the desired development. Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) has spent over N23 billion on about 912 research projects that have been sponsored. Ogunode, and Emeka, (2023) concluded that Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) has contributed to the development of research programmes in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This implies that to some extent, the intervention of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) in research development is so far felt and is very impactful. The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) intervention in research has led to the publication of papers in local and

international journals and, the sponsoring of institutional-based research in different sectors of the economy.

Staff Training

Echono (2023) ascertained that TETFund has sponsored 1,761 academic staff of beneficiary institutions from across the country for the train-the-trainer capacity building programme on Research Proposal Writing and Grant Management held in various countries between 2019 and 2022. This widely applauded programme was stepped down and held locally across the six geopolitical zones between the first and second quarters of 2023 to ensure that more lecturers of beneficiary institutions benefit from it. Ayeni and Beji, (2018), Muhammad (2022) (2018) noted that the training aspects of the TETFund programme have been successfully implemented for decades. Many tertiary institutions' academic staff and non-academic staff have benefited from this TETFund training programme. The above development has enhanced job security for tertiary institution staff. Thus, scholars have argued that security is a “state of not being financially, emotionally, psychologically and materially threatened”. Wapmuk, and Amini (2018); Vmtnews (2023) and Ogunode (2023) noted that over 37,000 academic and non-academic staff since the inception of the training programme have benefited from the programme and many are still benefiting presently now. Ogunode (2023) posited that the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) has sponsored many academic staff from Nigerian tertiary institutions for both master's and PhD training in Nigerian universities

The study by Ibrahim, (2017) disclosed that the National Research Fund was initiated as a result of the government's recognition of the indispensable role of research in national development. The sum of N3 billion was set aside as a seed grant and domiciled at TETFund. The sum of the N2 billion seed grant was dedicated to the Journal Publication of quality learning materials. So far, over 200 PhD theses have been reviewed and over 75 manuscripts received. In terms of Staff Conference Attendance, TETFund has sponsored over 20,359 academic and non-academic staff to local conferences while 2,869 attended conferences outside the country. The Fund also intervened in 84 academic Journal publications and 22 manuscript development. The study of Kwashabawa, & Mustapha, (2023) found that TETFund contributed to staff improvement through TETFund normal intervention by sponsoring local and international training for academic staff and sponsoring local seminars and conferences or workshops for academic and non-academic staff of Kebbi State higher institutions and TETFund contributed to the improvement of research and publication through normal intervention by sponsoring of journal publications and researches and book publications of higher institutions in Kebbi State. Ogunode, and Akuh, (2024) and Abdulaziz, Olokooba, and Iyekolo (2020) conclude that since the inception of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) in Nigeria, the fund has positively transformed the training and research programmes of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The funds have specifically, trained academic staff in both local and international institutions. The funds have assisted in the development of tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Career Service Centre Development

In order to address the problem of graduate unemployment rate of the Nigerian universities, the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) introduced Career Service Centers in the 2024 disbursement cycle, it was meant to complement other programs in the nation's tertiary education system. Specifically, the Centers were established to provide information for students on trends in the job market, opportunities, and requisite skills as well as linkages with the employment industries including the alumni of the institutions (FUNAAB 2024). Career Services Centre according to Muhammad (2019) and Ogunode (2025) are centres or departments cut out and designed to equip the students and the alumni with up to date skills, knowledge, and opportunities to thrive in labour market. The centres serves as a backbone of students' career empowerment in the university and is to bridge the gap between the demand for, and the supply of Labour in

Nigeria and globally. The objectives for the establishment of a career centre in tertiary institution are as follows: career advice, school application support, resume and cover letter help, job search resources, networking event and professional development workshop (Muhammad, 2021; Fulokoja 2025). Coal city University Career Services Centre (CSC) provides the following: facilitating self-assessment and career exploration of our students in order to enable students to develop a clear career objective; empowering our students to make effective career choices from freshmen through alumni; offering high quality trainings, career counselling and coaching in order to meet our students' individual needs; bringing employers to campus for workshops and on-campus recruitment in order to enhance career related experiences; actively build partnerships with employers to create the best career opportunities for our students (Coal City university centre 2025). The establishment of the Career Service Centres in the Nigerian universities through the directive of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) has supported career development programme in the institutions (Daily trust 2024).

4.1 Findings

The paper disclosed that the contributions of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) to the development of Nigeria university system include; infrastructure facilities development, research development, establishment of career center in the universities and improvement of staff training programme are

4.2 Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper assessed the contributions of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) to the development of Nigeria university system. The paper concluded that Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) since inception has positively contributed to the development of universities in Nigeria. Infrastructure facilities development, research development, establishment of career center in the universities and improvement of staff training programme are some of the major contributions of the FUND to the Nigerian university system development.

Based on this finding; the paper recommends that the Federal government should increase the budgetary allocation of the FUND. The staff of the agency should be provided with training opportunities both local and foreign. Private institutions and international organizations should support the Funds with technical support to improve its operation.

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