

EFFECT OF TERTIARY EDUCATION TRUST FUND (TETFUND) ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF TERTIARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH EAST, NIGERIA

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Abstract: The study examined the effect of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) on sustainable development of Tertiary Educational Institutions in South East, Nigeria. The study specifically established the extent TETFund intervention influenced academic attainment of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria and determine the extent TETFund intervention affected graduate employability of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria. The study adopted the descriptive survey design while the quantitative data used in the study was sourced primarily from a well-structured questionnaire. Study population was 19,200 academic and non-academic staff of the target tertiary educational institutions in the area. *Freud and Williams (1986) formula for sample size determination was employed to arrive at a sample size of 899.* Data collected for the study were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequency tables, percentages, mean and standard deviations) while the research hypotheses were tested using one-sample student's t-test. Findings revealed that academic attainment ($t^*=32.716$, $p=0.000<0.05$) and graduate employability ($t^*=13.910$, $p=0.000<0.05$) in tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria. Implication of the findings is that TETFund intervention played substantial role in the development of sustainable tertiary educational institutions in Southeastern Nigeria. Conclusion was drawn that TETFund intervention is a noteworthy promoter of sustainable development in tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria. The study recommended that the Tertiary educational institutions should work towards strengthening their relationship with TETFund so that they make more funds available for building/acquiring more infrastructural facilities like desks/chairs, provision of modern lecture halls and classrooms, building modern student hostels, providing modern ICT facilities, equipping the libraries and laboratories, etc.

Keywords: TETFund, Sustainable Development, academic attainment, graduate employability.

INTRODUCTION

A vital part of achieving national and sustainable human development is higher education. Higher education institutions are a source of fresh ideas and knowledge. They contribute to innovation, boost a country's output, and give qualified workers and reliable credentials. This necessitates sustainable education. Higher education has a significant impact on how a country's economy grows (Eravwoke&Ukavwe,

2019). Aberu & Lawal (2022) argue that the overall objective of Nigerian higher education is to produce a group of Nigerians who are highly trained and who will be well-prepared for the workforce, sustainable national development, and global competitiveness in terms of expertise. It makes sense that there is such a strong demand for popular education in Nigeria; given that education is not only an investment in human capital but also a requirement and a correlate for economic growth. But the reality of tertiary education in Nigeria has not yet lived up to the expectations of the aforementioned goals and objectives because of a variety of issues, including inadequate infrastructure, inadequate funding, inadequate staffing, inadequate record-keeping, and socio-political interferences (Nagbe & Micah, 2019). As evidenced by the Colleges of Education, Polytechnics, Monotechnics, and Universities, tertiary education in Nigeria has not been relishing the anticipated point of prominence it merited with respect to funding. The institution frequently receives the short end of the stick regarding the statutory share of funds by the government agencies (Lawanson & Umar, 2020). As a result, when resources (both human and non-human) are not easily available, educational activities are hampered. Inadequate finance for tertiary education in Nigeria has been a problem. This might be inferred from the strike by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and other organisations connected to tertiary education in Nigeria that lasted for eight months in 2022. The tertiary institutions need funds for training and retraining of lecturers, to acquire current state-of-the-art facilities such as lecture halls, offices, laboratories, furniture, library equipment, vehicles, and other amenities that can empower students to realise the aims and objectives of tertiary education that is sustainable (Udoh, 2018).

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) was established by an Act of the National Assembly in June 2011, according to Oraka, Ogbodo, and Ezejiofor (2017). The Education Tax Fund Act Cap. E4 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004 and the Education Tax Fund (Amendment) Act No. 17 of 2003 were both repealed by the new law. The Fund was established, according to Guidelines on Assessing TETFUND (2014), to manage and distribute education tax receipts to the Federal and State Tertiary Educational Institutions in Nigeria. The 2.5% education tax that is deducted from the assessable profit of businesses registered in Nigeria is the Fund's primary source of funding. The Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) is in charge of collecting the levies. On the other hand, the Education Tax Fund (ETF) was created by the Education Tax Act No. 7 of 1993 and revised by Act No. 40 of (22nd Dec.) 1998. According to the Act, all incorporated bodies must pay tax at a rate of 2.5% on their assessable profits. Every Nigerian company with a registered office must pay the tax. These assessable profits of a corporation must be determined in accordance with the Petroleum Profits Tax Act or the company's Income Tax Act, as applicable. The widely acknowledged deterioration in educational standards and the severe decay of the infrastructure and other amenities at all levels of the Nigerian educational system were what led to the promulgation of this Education Tax Act (Nduagu & Saidu, 2021).

It is unclear whether the initiative's goals and objectives are being met. Visitors to the tertiary institutions in South East Nigeria may notice buildings with TETFund names, such as Annual Intervention, Special Impact, or NEEDS Assessments, among others. The intervention includes funding for educational facility construction and renovation, encouraging a creative and innovative approach to learning, providing higher education books and funding for libraries, and providing learning resources. It also includes funding for lecturers for postgraduate studies. The signs of low-quality education are still quite clear in Nigeria, despite the enormous efforts being made to guarantee it. The degree of academic excellence, level of staff competence and professional growth, and quality assurance in tertiary institutions in South East Nigeria seem to raise questions about the long-term

viability of the education system. The crux of the matter is that TETFund's involvement in the nation's public tertiary institutions based on international assessment, there is a discrepancy between the results expected and the actual outcomes.

Statement of the Problem

The importance of higher education in a developing nation like Nigeria cannot be over-emphasized and this is because the success of the educational sector is crucial to the general growth and development of the country. Inculcating accepted societal standards, inventing techniques and processes, and supplying the trained labour necessary for the nation to survive are all tasks that the educational sector plays a critical role in. However, the nation frequently lacks the fundamental resources required to deliver quality services through the educational system, which is reflected in the quality of instruction, the level of staff competence and professional development, the degree of academic excellence, and the quality assurance of the Nigerian educational system. The funding of tertiary education in Nigeria has become steadily problematic despite the intervention of TETFund in Nigerian government's owned Higher Education Institutions and the fact that this level of education is essential for the creation of human capital and societal advancement. The enormous policy challenge of combining the need to improve educational quality with the rising societal demand for more space in admission is one that tertiary education in Nigeria must come to terms with and meanwhile the Nigerian government has not been able to satisfy the 26% budgetary provision for education financing criterion set by the United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation. Education requires a lot of capital; therefore, the standard will keep declining if the government only gives lip service to providing enough support for this important sector, particularly at the tertiary educational level. As long as the federal government and Academic Staff Union of Nigerian Universities are engaged in a struggle for supremacy about the conditions of service in academic institutions, the intervention of TETFund in tertiary institutions toward the sustainability of education may be threatened. The perennial industrial disputes will cause the physical infrastructure to deteriorate, staff training programmes to be suspended, sponsorship of academic staff research projects to cease, the academic library to be poorly utilized, and the procurement, workshop, and laboratory renovation projects to be delayed, all of which could have enabled the sustainable development of education in South East Nigeria.

Many academic institutions in South East Nigeria are still unable to fully take advantage of TETFund's support for long-term academic growth. Be that as it may, few prerequisites must be met before TETFund could intervene because fund intervention is not an open invitation. According to TETFund sources, 90% of the lecturer's research proposals were extremely poor and unfundable (TETFund, 2017). Incomplete documentation on the side of the institutions applying for the fund is one of the other explanations cited why the fund for staff and infrastructure development in higher institutions has not been accessed. Many institutions claimed that it is difficult to access the fund. Many tertiary institutions in South East, Nigeria have missed out on the chance to attract intervention projects that have a direct impact on physical infrastructural development, staff training programmes, sponsorship of academic staff research works, provision of academic libraries, and procurement/workshop and laboratory renovation for sustainable education development in South East, Nigeria. The internal politics at the submission level at the institution is another barrier to getting agency interventions. These hurdles and more have to be cross checked before TETFund can review and approve the ideas that have been chosen before sending them back to the institution. Thus, access is hampered by delays in proposal

documentation. It is against the foregoing that this work examined the effect of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) on sustainable development of Tertiary Educational Institutions in South East, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The major objective of the study was to examine the effect of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) intervention on Sustainable Development of Tertiary Educational Institutions in South East, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were to:

- ❖ Establish the extent to which TETFund intervention influenced academic attainment of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria.
- ❖ Determine the extent to which TETFund intervention affect graduate employability of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised which guided the study.

- i. To what extent has TETFund intervention influenced academic attainment of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria?
- ii. To what extent does TETFund intervention affect graduate employability of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria?

Statement of Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated for the study:

- TETFund intervention has no significant effect on academic attainment of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria.
- TETFund intervention has no significant effect on graduate employability of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria.

Scope of the Study

The study focused on effect of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) intervention on Sustainable Development of Tertiary Educational Institutions in South East, Nigeria. The South East region has five states namely: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo States. Three of the five South Eastern states of Anambra, Abia and Enugu were studied. The study covered both state and federal educational institutions in South East Nigeria, namely: Federal Polytechnic Oko, Anambra State, NnamdiAzikiwe University Awka, Anambra State; Abia State University, Uturu; Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike; Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) Enugu, the University of Nigeria Nsukka, Enugu State and Enugu State College of Education Technical (ESCET), Enugu. The preference of these educational institutions was based on the remarkable presence of TETFund interventions in these institutions. The study also covered TETFund contributions to physical infrastructure and equipment, academic staff training and development, academic research and ICT support and how it affects sustainable development of education proxied by academic attainment and graduate employability in tertiary Institutions in South East, Nigeria.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

TETFund

Amin, Babita, Olowookere, and Abioye (2020), infer that the TETFund is a significant source of financial support for the country's various institutions, particularly when it comes to the beginning, end, or rehabilitation of capital projects undertaken by institutions at the Federal, State, and Local Government levels. The Fund has

supported or funded most of the recent capital improvements at our tertiary institutions. It is important to remember that the ETF fund was initially utilized to assist initiatives at all educational levels, with the primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions receiving a share of 2:3:5, respectively. Through a significant change in policy, TETFund is now only to fund public tertiary schools. This change is motivated by the Federal government's resolve to reforming the higher education system. The Fund is now known as the Tertiary Education Trust Fund as a result (TETFUND).

Literally, funds refer to a sum of money set aside for an organization's project implementation. Funding describes the process of making this designated money available to support plans and programs. Funds are typically put aside to help public tertiary institutions carry out the majority of their programs, whether they are short-term or long-term, as this is one of the TETFund's main focus. This is done to make sure that TETFund is present in nearly all of the public tertiary institutions in the nation. The distribution of intervention funding to Nigeria's various public higher education institutions has been handled by TETFund - the Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of education, and other levels of education are included in this.

Although the organization also oversees funding for various lower levels of education in the nation, their primary job has been in the field of allocating and overseeing funds among tertiary schools in the nation (Ogunde, 2011). The TETFund is a federal government interventionist program to address poor infrastructure in our tertiary institutions (Nairaland, 2013). This has been the agency's primary responsibility ever since it was founded in 2011, and it continues to be so today. Several government organizations, including the Federal Inland Revenue Services (FIRS) and the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), release money to the TETFUND as a conduit for distributing it to the nation's different tertiary institutions. However, only Nigerian public tertiary educational institutions typically have access to TETFund funds.

Tertiary Education in Nigeria

Tertiary education includes higher education and further education. It refers to the third tier of the educational system. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014) regards tertiary education as the education given after secondary education in universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, monotechnics, including those institutions offering correspondence courses. Higher education institutions, according to Babalola (2011) are universities, polytechnics, monotechnics and colleges of education. Higher education includes all types of studies at the post-secondary level such as:

- Universities
- Colleges/Institutes of Education
- Colleges/Institutes of Science and Technology which includes polytechnics and monotechnics.

These institutions have diversified curricula to meet the institution's demands and aspirations in order to cater for national interest and development. Higher institutions of learning occupy a crucial position in every society. They are expected to play critical role in promoting sustainable economic, social and cultural development. They are the major drivers of economic competitiveness in an increasingly knowledge-driven economy. The thrust of higher education therefore is to produce knowledge; this is why all universities the world over are referred to as citadels of learning.

The role of tertiary education in today's world is immense, complex and vital with a wide range of challenges and possibilities. Tertiary education institutions have a long history of engagement with the world outside as they are able to link to the local and global world in diversified ways which enables them influence change

processes in various societies. There is a great demand for higher education and the reason for this among others is the awareness of its vital importance for economic and socio-cultural development of a nation.

In Nigeria, education is administered by the federal, state, and local governments. The Federal Ministry of Education is in charge of overall policy formation and quality control in Nigeria's education system, which is divided into three tiers: that is, basic education, post basic senior secondary education, and postsecondary tertiary education. The National University Commission (NUC), is the government umbrella organisation that oversees the administration of tertiary education in Nigeria (Bello & Johnson, 2011).). Therefore, tertiary education encompasses all forms of formal postsecondary education, including public and private universities, colleges, technical training institutes, and vocational schools. Tertiary education's goals include the development of relevant high-level manpower, the development of individuals' intellectual prowess, and the acquisition of technical and interpersonal skills. Tertiary educational institutions pursue these goals through a variety of programmes such as certificate, diploma, undergraduate, and postgraduate courses, as well as teaching, research, knowledge generation, and dissemination (Oyebade& Dike, 2013).

University education, in particular, contributes to the production of high-level manpower in a variety of professional occupations as dictated by national development requirements. The goals of university education also focus on the inculcation of community spirit in the students through projects and action research. There is a great demand for tertiary education due to, among other things, the awareness of its vital importance for the economic and socio-cultural development of a nation. Tertiary education benefits society as a whole, not just the individual. It plays an important role in promoting growth, alleviating poverty, and increasing shared prosperity. A highly-skilled workforce with longtime access to a solid tertiary education is a necessary precondition for any society's innovation and growth. Graduates of tertiary education are more concerned about the environment, have healthier habits, and participate in civic activities at a higher level. Furthermore, increased tax revenues from higher earnings, healthier children, and smaller family sizes all contribute to stronger nations (Terlumun, &Wombu, 2019). In short, tertiary education institutions prepare individuals not only for adequate and relevant job skills, but also for active participation in their communities and societies (Arnhold, 2021).

The establishment of Yaba Higher College in 1947, which marked the turning point for higher education in Nigeria, marked the beginning of the tertiary education system in Nigeria. The purpose of the Higher College was to provide "associates" who could relieve colonial masters of most duties (Olujuwon, 2002). In order to fulfill the international standards for producing labor that will serve in a variety of capacities and significantly advance Nigeria's political and economic situation, institutes of higher learning were founded. The Federal Government of Nigeria passed a law enabling the establishment of conventional and special universities, polytechnics, monotechnics, and schools of training in various parts of the nation by the Federal, state governments, private associations, and individuals in order to start advanced education in order to develop high level relevant skills, independence, and national improvement (Abdulkareem, Fasasi&Akinubi, 2011).

Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education, Institutes of Technology, and other specialized foundations are all part of Nigeria's postsecondary institutions and operate under the auspices of their parent organizations. Additionally, the establishments can be divided into federal and state government institutions. Additionally, tertiary institutions are divided between private institutions that are claimed by people, religious organizations, and other private groupings, as well as public institutions that are owned by the federal and state governments

(Abdulkareem, Fasasi&Akinubi, 2011). In 1948, there was single university in Nigeria; today, there are forty (40) federal universities, forty-four (44) state universities, sixty-eight (68) private universities, eighty-one (81) polytechnic institutions, twenty-seven (27) monotechnic institutions, more than sixty (60) colleges of education, thirty-six (36) colleges of agriculture, fifty (50) colleges of health technology, one hundred and thirty-two (132) technical colleges, and innovative research institutions. According to the National Universities Commission, there are currently 49 State Universities, 40 Federal Polytechnics, and 49 State Polytechnics, as well as Colleges of Education (219). 2 August 2022 (NUC).

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund)

The Education Tax Decree No. 7 of 1993 created the TETFund initially as the Education Trust Fund (ETF). Decree No. 7 was revoked and Decree No. 40 of 1998 was substituted; the Tertiary Education Trust Fund Act of 2011 has since taken its place (FGN, 2011). And in accordance with the Act, the fund's major goals are to restore, revitalize, and consolidate Tertiary education in Nigeria using a 2.5% yearly education tax on the assessable income of all Nigerian-registered enterprises. As a result, the establishment's operating budget is supported by federal government subsidies from time to time and tax on the profits of legally operating businesses in the nation. The enabling law also stipulates that the fund will be run by a Board of Trustees chosen by the country's President, as well as an Executive-Secretary chosen by the President who will be in charge of running the Secretariat of the Fund on a daily basis (Adavbiele, Justina & Ajegbelen 2016). According to Professor Suleiman Elias Bogoro, the former Executive Secretary of the Fund, the reason for the creation of the Fund was due to the deteriorating infrastructure and structure of the nation's education sector, which was demonstrated by the inadequate training, staffing, and resources, rapid personnel turnover, unrest in the form of student riots and university staff strikes actions combined with declining educational standards, the rise in low-income individuals' illiteracy, and the decline in educational standards (Bogoro, 2019). In order to address concerns like infrastructure degradation in the tertiary education sector and to improve staff training in order to raise the educational level in the nation, the Fund was established.

According to Wapmuk and Amini (2021), the establishment of the Education Tax Fund (ETF) as an interventionist agency was one of the major moves the Nigerian government took to solve the financial issues in the education sector. The widespread acknowledgement of the decrease in educational quality and the severe decay of the infrastructure and other amenities at all levels of the Nigerian educational system was what led to the adoption of the Education Tax Act (Ugwuanyi, 2014). But the ETF was created by the Education Tax Act No. 7 of 1993, which was later revised by Act No. 40 of (22 December) 1998. According to the Act, all incorporated bodies' assessable profits were subject to a 2.5 percent tax. All businesses registered in Nigeria are subject to the tax, which is to be gathered by the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) and distributed in a 2:1:1 ratio amongst universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education (25 percent: 12.5 percent: 12.5 percent). The payout was altered by the 1998 amendment to 50% for tertiary education, 30% for primary education, and 20% for all other education (Secondary education). However, the present method for allocating money is 50% to universities, 25% to polytechnics, and 25% to colleges of education. Even though the ETF significantly improved the educational sector in Nigeria through intervention projects and improving teaching and learning circumstances, substantial financing shortfalls continued to be a problem in the country's public tertiary institutions, according to Ugwuanyi (2014). This was partially due to the fact that primary, secondary,

and tertiary institutions shared the funds created by ETFs. The funds were ineffective at resolving issues in the public tertiary institutions because they were split among the three levels of education in the nation.

By an act of the National Assembly passed in June 2011, the government established the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund). The Education Tax Act No. 7 of 1993, the Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, and the Education Tax Fund Act No. 40 of 1998 were all repealed by the Act. Therefore, the federal and state-level imposition, administration, and distribution of the tax to Nigerian public tertiary institutions are under the purview of the TETFund. The 2.5 percent education tax collected on the assessable profit of businesses registered in Nigeria is the Fund's primary source of funding. The Federal Inland Revenue Service is in charge of collecting the levies (FIRS). The law also gives the TETFund the authority to oversee how its beneficiaries are carrying out their projects in order to guarantee that the rules and regulations regarding how the money are used are being followed.

The purpose of TETFund is to "administrate and disburse the money in the Fund to Federal and State tertiary educational institutions," as stated in Section 7(1)(a) to (e) of the TETFund ACT, 2011. As of February 2017, TETFund intervention in Nigeria's tertiary education sector includes 54 government polytechnics, 55 colleges of education, and 74 government universities, of which 40 are operated by the federal government and 34 by various state governments (Lawal, 2017). The upshot of the foregoing is that there is a commensurately rising demand for money from TETFund as the number of public tertiary institutions increases. As more postsecondary schools are being founded at the state and federal levels, the resources are also unevenly distributed across the institutions. The TETFund's specific goals are:

1. To provide funding for educational facilities and infrastructural development;
2. To encourage creative and innovative approaches to educational learning and teaching and even services; and
3. To stimulate, support, and improve activities in areas that are fundamental to education, such as teacher preparation, instructional strategies, library development, etc.
4. To promote new literacy-enhancing initiatives such as scientific and technological literacy
5. To administer the education tax in a way that is most advantageous to Nigerians.

These goals direct the TETFund's efforts to ensure that public tertiary education in the nation is adequately resourced and to enhance educational standards to international standards. The 2.5 percent tax collected from assessable profit enterprises registered in Nigeria is the fund's primary source of income. The Federal Inland Revenue Services is in charge of collecting the levies (FIRS). A Board of Trustees constituted pursuant to Section 4 of the new Act is responsible for managing the fund. Universities (2), Polytechnics (1), and Colleges of Education receive funds in a 2:1:1 ratio (1). The Board of Trustees is in charge of administering and distributing the Fund's funds to Federal and State tertiary educational institutions, per Section 7(1) of the TETFund Act of 2011. The money given to public tertiary institutions is to be used for the following things:

- i. Provision or maintenance of essential physical infrastructure for teaching and learning;
- ii. Educational supplies and equipment;
- iii. Research and publication;
- iv. Training and development of academic staff; and v. Any other need that, in the Board of Trustees' opinion, is crucial and necessary for raising standards in higher education.

By switching from ETF to TETFund, the Nigerian government has over the years attempted to address the issue of underfunding faced by public tertiary institutions, according to this historical review. Despite the government's efforts, funding continues to be a major obstacle as TETFund expectations rise. More public tertiary institutions are being established by both the state and the federal governments, which tends to increase the demand for additional facilities, tools, buildings, training, and other things. The need for more tertiary institutions is frequently justified by the fact that student demand for admission is on the rise, a situation that is also driven by the expansion of Nigeria's population. This is a significant obstacle that TETFund, an intervention organization, must overcome in order to guarantee the achievement of high-quality education in Nigeria in the twenty-first century. The fund is managed by an eleven (11) member Board of Trustees, made up of representatives from the Federal Ministries of Education, Finance, and Inland Revenue as well as the six geopolitical zones of the nation. AlhajiKashim Ibrahim Iman, who was appointed on May 19, 2020, is the current chairman of the board. Architect Sonny Echono, who was appointed on March 4, 2022, with a five-year term, is the current executive secretary. He replaced Prof. Elias Bagoro, whose term expired on March 18, 2022.

Mandate of the Fund

The Fund's primary responsibility is to oversee the efficient use of the 2.5% revenue collected through taxes on the assessable profits of all Nigerian registered companies. The funds raised are to be used for: I the provision and upkeep of necessary physical infrastructure and equipment; ii) instructional materials and equipment; iii) research and publications; iv) the training and development of academic staff; and v) any other need deemed by the Board of Trustees to be vital and necessary for the maintenance and improvement of standards in higher education institutions (FGN, 2011).

The beneficiaries of the fund are specified in the Act establishing it. Beneficiaries are therefore public tertiary institutions that are either owned by the Federal Government of Nigeria or a State Government. These include Federal and State Colleges of Education, Federal and State Polytechnic Institutions, and Federal and State Universities. There are currently 238 public postsecondary institutions in Nigeria, including 43 federal universities, 48 state-owned universities, 28 federal polytechnics, 48 state polytechnics, 22 federal colleges of education, and 49 state colleges of education. According to the Act establishing the agency's provisions, all 238 tertiary institutions are eligible to receive the cash. However, in order for an institution to receive funding from the fund, it must adhere to the norms set forth by the Board of Trustees of the Fund (Bogoro, 2019).

Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) Policy as an Intervention Agency

Under the provisions of the Education Tax Act No. 7 of 1993, the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) was established as an intervention agency. The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (Establishment, Etc) Act of 2011 replaces the Education Tax Act of 1993 and Education Tax Fund Act No. 40 of 1998 laws of the Federation of Nigeria and establishes the Tertiary Education Trust Fund, which is tasked with the responsibility of supervising, disbursing, and keeping track of the education tax for government-owned tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

The TETFUND Programme which commenced in 2011 has injected into the Tertiary Institutions the following sums of money from 2011 to 2022 as indicated in the Table below.

Table 2.1: Tertiary Education Funding – ETF Allocations (2011-2022)

Year	UNIVERSITIES (#)	POLYTECHNICS (#)	COLLEGES OF EDUCATION (#)
2011	395,000,000.00	240,000,000.00	190,000,000.00
2012	595,000,000.00	337,000,000.00	319,000,000.00
2013	646,000,000.00	443,000,000.00	390,000,000.00
2014	912,000,000.00	661,000,000.00	581,000,000.00
2015	337,000,000.00	250,000,000.00	227,000,000.00
2016	1,009,410,000.00	691,632,000.00	679,067,000.00
2017	539,150,000.00	375,800,000.00	356,700,000.00
2018	539,150,000.00	417,628,900.00	393,308,300.00
2019	690,600,000.00	486,000,000.00	461,900,000.00
2020	788,831,346.00	575,510,208.00	534,292,444.00
2021	706,861,720.67	498,439,410.10	498,439,401.10
2022	642,848,138.03	396,780,086.27	447,758,804.00

Source: TETFund Office (2022).

Every single enlisted organization in Nigeria must pay a 2.5% education tax on their assessable profit under the TETFund Act of 2011 in order for the program to fulfill its objectives. The Act appoints the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) to assess and collect Education Tax. The fund administers the tax imposed by the Act and distributes the money to institutions of higher learning at the federal and state levels. Additionally, it examines the projects carried out using the money distributed to the recipients (TETFund Act, 2011).

According to section 7 (1) (a) to (e) of the TETFund Act of 2011, the agency's goal is to manage and disburse money from the fund to Federal and State tertiary educational institutions, particularly for the provision and maintenance of the following: 1) Key physical infrastructure for teaching and learning; 2) Instructional material and equipment; 3) Research and publication; 4) Academic and Non-teaching Staff Training and Development; 5) Any other need (TETFund Act, 2011).

The aforementioned should make it clear that the main goal of the TETFund is to raise additional funds to support higher education in Nigeria, to award scholarships and grants to deserving faculty and students, and to otherwise strengthen and refocus the financial resources of tertiary institutions on raising the standard and productivity of tertiary education in Nigeria.

Sustainable Development of Education

According to Oladeji (2014), sustainable development is the kind of growth that meets current demands without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The development of human capital can help in a variety of ways, including the social, economic, political, and environmental aspects of sustainable development.

Through education, the federal government seeks to create a workforce that will serve in a variety of roles and favorably impact the socioeconomic and political development of the country. In particular, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN), 2004 states that the government wants to focus the tertiary education on high level appropriate personnel, training, self-reliance, national utility, and global awareness.

In the views of Fejoh&Adesanwo (2020), it is now imperative to focus on sustainable development in order to improve public awareness, motivate both individuals and organizations to create and put into practice creative ideas. Education gives people the knowledge, abilities, and mental acuity necessary for a country's development. According to Boyi (2013), sustainable development first gained attention in 1987 when the World Commission on Environment and Development published a report for the United Nations titled "Our Common Future." Accordingly, sustainable development focuses on the development of both the current and future generations.

A sustainable development is one that "meets the requirements of the present without compromising the ability of the future generation to satisfy their own needs," according to the Bruntland Report. According to Ahenkan and Osei-Kojo (2014), who cite the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2001), sustainable development is the road toward maximizing human well-being for the current generation without compromising the well-being of future generations. These criteria imply that sustainable development is anchored in the goal of the well-being and welfare of the people and takes into account the demands of both the present and future generations (Ahenkan&Oseikojo, 2014).

Therefore, sustainable development focuses on establishing and maintaining the conditions necessary for both present-day humans and those who will follow them to live happily on this planet. As a result, according to Sims & Falkenberg (2013), a multi-pronged approach to the concept of a sustainable society was adopted from the outset. This approach went beyond concerns for the destruction of the national environment to include the concern for meeting the essential needs of all people and ensuring that those needs are met in a sustainable way while taking into account the needs of future generations. Therefore, in order to achieve sustainable development goals, it will be necessary to safeguard the natural resources that will be used for future growth. For many proponents of sustainable development, intrinsically appreciating nature and human life has also become a crucial component of progress (Bakar, 2005). The World Commission on Environment and Development of the United Nations stated in 1987 that development is sustainable if it "meets the requirements of the present without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to fulfill their own needs," as cited by Ilechukwu et al. (2014). Alternative terms for sustainable development include "equitable and balanced" development (Suobbotina, 2004).

Academic Attainment

Academic attainment is a metric used to compare student progress over time. The term "gain score" refers to the result of deducting this year's test score from last year's test score. More sophisticated statistical models that take into account differences in student academic and demographic characteristics are also used to measure growth. In order to provide high level labor for a country's socioeconomic development, higher education is essential. In order to achieve this, it becomes necessary to manage this sector effectively by providing adequate funding. According to Odunle (2001), education is widely acknowledged as a key tool for fostering socioeconomic, political, and cultural development in Nigeria. How Nigerian higher education should work toward these goals was laid forth in the National Policy on Education. The National Policy on Education (2013) states that university education shall contribute to national development by: intensifying and diversifying its programs for the development of high level manpower within the context of the nation's needs; making professional course contents reflect our national requirements; making all students part of a general program or all-round improvement in university education to offer general study contents such as history.

Graduate Employability

Graduate employability refers to a student's capacity to secure a job after graduation. More specifically, it refers to how well students can use their knowledge and abilities to get employment. There doesn't seem to be a common definition for employability, despite the fact that it has become a familiar term in the perspective of higher education. However, the predominant strategy used in universities to increase graduate employability is largely predicated on the notion that employability is seen as having the skills and capacities to find, keep, and obtain new employment when necessary (Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry & Business Council of Australia, 2002; Cox & King, 2006; Hillage & Pollard, 1998; Moreland, 2006; Tran, 2016; UK Commission for Employment and Skills, 2009; Yorke, 2006, 2010). For instance, according to Yorke (2006), employability is a set of accomplishments — skills, understandings, and personal traits — that increase graduates' chances of finding employment and succeeding in their chosen professions. Employability is defined as being fit or appropriate for graduate-level employment. It cannot guarantee that you will get a job. Employability may upsurge graduates' probabilities of landing graduate-level jobs, but it does not guarantee it because finding the right employment depends greatly on the labor market's context (Clarke, 2007) as well as personal circumstances and characteristics (McQuaid, 2006).

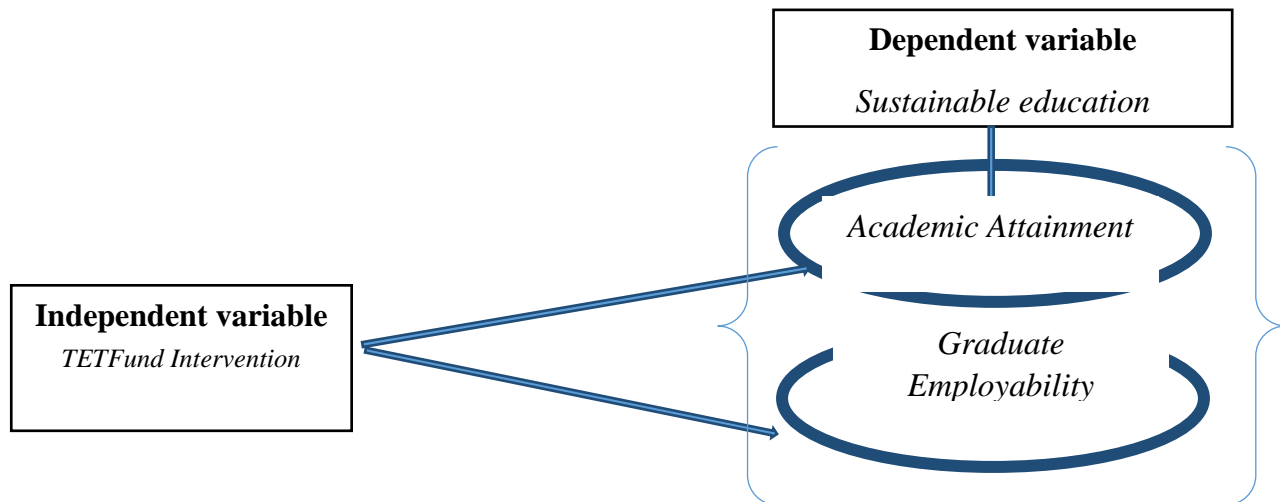


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework of TETFUND and Sustainable Development of Tertiary Educational Institutions

Source: Author's Conceptualization, 2022.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Public Goods Theory

Developed by Paul Samuelson in 1954, the public goods theory is based on two main tenets: 1. A public good is any good produced for one group of consumers which can be consumed by another group of consumers at no additional cost; and 2. A public good is non-excludable, meaning that it is challenging to prevent people from consuming it after it has been produced.

In the private sector, Samuelson predicts that these goods will either be produced insufficiently or not at all. According to conventional wisdom, economic efficiency dictates that the government must compel people to produce public goods while allowing all citizens to partake in their consumption. Public goods are products

created by the government and typically made accessible to its residents. The public goods analysis is made clearer by Narain's (1986) definition of public. According to Narain, "publicness" consists of three elements: public purpose, public ownership, and public control.

For the purposes of this study, education is a public good and, as such, should be available to all users. Based on the premise that only the government can effectively provide education services to the citizens in a way that is appropriate given the variety of externalities associated with it, the public goods theory justifies significant public expenditure in education. Governments in Nigeria demand accountability from tertiary institutions administrations because tertiary institutions are public enterprises that are primarily owned and controlled by the government for the benefit of the public. Evidently, the implementation of TETFund projects in tertiary institutions ensures the efficient and effective provision of goods (education) with characteristics of public goods. By doing this, education as a "public good" is made accessible and affordable by the vast majority, fostering the interests and benefits of both the government and its stakeholders.

Empirical Review

The impact of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (Tetfund) on English instruction and learning in Nigeria's Federal Colleges of Education was evaluated by Onoja (2022). For this study, a survey research design was used. In order to give teachers, the necessary assistance in the form of funds and grants as a special intervention to actualize the English teaching objectives with the current wave of learner-centered, participatory, and practical approaches to pedagogy, the study found that Tetfund has positioned English teaching and learning in the most advantageous position possible. Ineffective teaching strategies are used in a society where English teachers are quickly turning into poor role models for the actual classroom environment. More so, the unique language laboratory interventions that would have served as the foundation for real-world language teaching and learning are either neglected or not maintained.

In Nigeria, the relationship between education and sustainable development was investigated by Aberu and Lawal in 2022. The study used time series data from the CBN Statistical Bulletin from 1992 to 2021 and used an ex-post-facto research design. The ARDL model was used to evaluate the data in order to ascertain the short- and long-term links between education and sustainable development. At a 5% threshold of significance, conclusions were formed. According to the predicted long-run ARDL model, sustainable development in Nigeria is negatively and significantly impacted by schooling. Population and sustainable development were positively and significantly correlated. As a result, the study's conclusion that education has a considerable but limited impact on sustainable development is supported by the association between education and sustainable development that has been established.

Survey on Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) Intervention in University Libraries in North West Nigeria: 2014–2018 was carried out by Gadanga, Umeji, and Chukwuji in 2021. For the investigation, a descriptive survey design was chosen. 14 university librarians from traditional universities in North West Nigeria made up the population. In order to identify the 10 university librarians who took part in the study. A questionnaire served as the data gathering tool. Simple percentages were used to analyze the data, which was then displayed in tables and infographics. The study's main conclusions were that there were more unclaimed funds than accessed funds, with a total of N1, 642,000,000 awarded to the nine universities included in the study for the intervention year of 2014–2018. Additionally, it was discovered that the libraries under study are in better shape now than they were prior to the intervention.

A study on Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) Interventions and Capacity Building Programmes for Librarians in University in South East, Nigeria was conducted by Nwogwugwu and Nwogwugwu in 2020. A descriptive survey research design was used for the investigation. 180 respondents were chosen at random from 10 public university libraries in South East, Nigeria for the study's population, and complete enumeration was used. Chi-square was used to test the hypotheses. The results demonstrated that TETFund intervention played a key influence in librarian capacity building and that capacity building has greatly helped librarians in South-East Nigerian public universities discharge their jobs.

In their study published in 2019, Anaehobi and Agim concentrated on the role that the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) intervention played in the growth of university libraries in South-East Nigeria. The study used a descriptive research design. Questionnaires were utilized as the data collection tool. Ten university librarians from South-East Nigerian public universities made up the population. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the Richard Kuderson 21 and validated by specialists, with a coefficient value of 0.86. Frequency and percentage analyses were performed on the data collected. The results showed that through TETFund intervention, university libraries in South-East Nigeria were able to acquire information resources like new encyclopedias and other reference sources, staff in the libraries benefited from TETFund sponsored staff development programs, the Fund contributed to the physical infrastructure in the libraries, and library staff in the region conducted research and published books and journals.

Anas (2019) worked on an evaluation of the TETFUND grant's impact on promoting library services in academic libraries in Nigeria. (A Case Study of Tertiary Institutions in the States of Sokoto and Zamfara) The study was conducted using a survey design. 140 employees of various ranks from 9 different academic libraries in the states received the vetted tool. According to the study, grants-in-aid have been an important source of funding for academic libraries, but neither librarians nor libraries were fully utilizing this opportunity for collection development, infrastructure improvements, or staff training.

Yusuf and Alao (2022) looked into the Adoption of Information and Communication Technology: a Strategy for Promoting Lecturers' Effectiveness in Nigerian Universities. To this end, the concept of information and communication technology with relevant theories and models were examined. Concept of lecturers' effectiveness, usefulness of ICT and their challenges were critically examined. The challenges include inadequate power supply and poor funding. The study concludes that the importance of ICT in Nigerian universities cannot be underestimated, hence the need for integration of ICT for effectiveness of lecturers' job.

Oyefar, Adejoh, Adisa, Khadeeja, Abdulsalam&Alabi (2021) examined the ICT Utilisation and Associated barriers in Teaching among Middle-level Academics in Nigerian Universities. The article seeks to understand the barriers to information and communications technology (ICT) utilisation among middle-level academics in Nigerian universities. It makes use of a cross-sectional survey and key informant interviews to interrogate the problem. A total of 1,325 middle-level lecturers drawn from 12 South-western Nigerian universities took part in the study. Because of the nature and character of the Nigerian state and the historical contexts of its higher education, the political economy approach was adopted along with ICT utilisation resistance theory to explain barriers to ICT utilisation in Nigerian universities. The article found that there was a significant relationship between the availability, utilisation and quality of teaching in Nigerian universities. Specifically, it found that in universities where lecturers had tablets they were 1.5 times more likely to deliver quality teaching. It also found

that in universities where lecturers used multimedia projectors, students were 2.7 times more likely to receive quality teaching. On the barriers to ICT utilisation, the article found that lack of funding, lack of strong institutional policy and support infrastructure such as broadband internet connectivity and constant electricity supply are among the major constraints to ICT-based higher education.

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND), Infrastructural Development, and Sustainable Development of Nigerian Higher Institutions were all examined by Sadiq in (2020). The study's objective is to assess how well Tertiary Education Trust Funds (TETFUND) can operate in order to develop tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The ability of the TETFUND to provide the necessary physical infrastructure for teaching and learning, institutional materials and equipment, research and publication, and academic staff training and development is assessed critically using trend analysis of TETFUND disbursement to public tertiary institutions from 2011 to 2019. However, it is found that although TETFUND has consistently decreased its education financing, governments (particularly federal and state governments) continue to be the best sources of funding for education. Poor funding from the government at different levels has been a problem for tertiary institutions in Nigeria, which has led to a shortage of both people and material resources. The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) is an intervention organization created with the main goal of employing money in conjunction with project management for the rehabilitation, restoration, and consolidation of tertiary education in Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive survey methodology. The survey design is chosen because it is economical and the variables of study cannot be interfered with the data collected. As a result, this design is thought to be appropriate for this study because it tends to use a questionnaire on sustainable development of tertiary institutions in South East, Nigeria, to determine the extent of Tertiary Education Trust Fund interventions.

Sources of Data

The two main sources of data gathering for the study were primary and secondary sources.

Area of the Study

South East Nigeria was the location of the study. Both state and federal tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria were covered by the study, including: Federal Polytechnic, Oko, Anambra State. Abia State University in Uturu, Michael Okpara University, Umudike, Abia State. NnamdiAzikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State; Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) Enugu; University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and Enugu State College of Education (Technical), Enugu.

Population of the Study

The population of the study was **19,200**.

Sample Size Determination

The researcher chose a sample size using *Freud and Williams (1986), statistical sampling formula* to obtain a sample size of **899**

Sampling Technique

The study's sample was selected using a stratified random sampling procedure. Due to the imbalance in the number of states and federal tertiary educational institutions, proportionate representation of the sample was used for the study. Federal and state tertiary institutions were separated into several categories as a result. Utilizing a stratified random sample technique, seven tertiary educational institutions were chosen for the study

and 899 people made up the study's sample size. The researcher selected the following for the study: Director of Works, HODs, Deans of Faculties, Lecturers, TETFund committee members, and academic and non-academic staff from the seven tertiary institutions in the chosen states.

Method of Data Collection

A structured questionnaire with a total of 31 question items covering 6 biodata questions and 25 question items for the research questions formed the major instrument for the data collection. Broad categorization of the questionnaire was into: Section A and Section B. While section "B" of the questionnaire focuses on TETFund Interventions, section "A" of the questionnaire contained the respondents' biographical information. Based on the sample size as determined in 3.5 above, a total of 899 copies of the questionnaire were distributed across the TETFund Committees, the School Authorities, such as Deans and Heads of Departments of various Departments in the schools, and other academic and non-academic staff of the schools. The respondents were asked to check the boxes [] next to the appropriate responses. The survey was formatted using a five-point Likert scale. Descriptive statistical tools were used to properly analyse the data that were gathered.

Validity of the Instrument

The validity of the Instrument's face and content were examined. Additionally, triangulation was used to validate the study. Triangulation, according to Golafshanni (2003), is frequently a test for enhancing the validity and reliability of findings or their evaluation. Validity is established if all of the approaches yield the same results and this was established in the case of the study.

Reliability of the Instrument

A pilot experiment was carried out to evaluate the accuracy of the data collection tools. On participants in the pertinent population, the pilot study was conducted. Prior to carrying out the full scale research project, the researcher performed a pre-test of the instruments at the Institute of Management and Technology (IMT), Enugu and Enugu State Polytechnic, Iwollo to assess the instruments' feasibility, time, cost, and statistical variability in an effort to assist the researcher in predicting an appropriate sampling size and improving the study design. Using 20 respondents from each of the chosen schools, a pilot research was conducted; a non-sampled population was used for a period of two weeks. The questionnaire that was used had a reliability coefficient of 0.74. This demonstrated the instrument's dependability.

Methods of Data Analyses

Data collected for the study were presented with descriptive statistics using tables, frequencies and percentages, mean, standard deviations and charts. Inferential statistical technique such as independent sample t-test was used to test the research hypotheses. The one-sample t-test is one of the t-variations usually applied to detect whether the sample mean differs significantly from the population mean.

Data Analysis

Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question One: To what extent has TETFund intervention influenced Academic Attainment of Tertiary Education Institutions in South East, Nigeria?

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis of the respondents' responses showing the extent to which TETFund intervention affect academic attainment of tertiary educational institutions of South East, Nigeria.

S/N	Items	VGE (%)	GE (%)	NE (%)	LE (%)	VLE (%)	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	TETFund intervention contributes to quality service delivery in tertiary institutions.	257 (29.3%)	493 (56.2%)	-	94 (10.7%)	34 (3.9%)	3479	3.96	1.034
2	TETFund intervention provides ICT facilities for increased staff skills and efficiency in service delivery.	197 (22.4%)	619 (70.5%)	-	61 (6.9%)	1 (0.1%)	3584	4.08	.712
3	TETFund intervention promotes staff competence for enhanced students' performance.	202 (23.0%)	642 (73.1%)	-	23 (3.8%)	1 (0.1%)	3645	4.15	.607
4	TETFund provision of functional digital library and laboratories contribute positively to increased academic competitiveness both locally and internationally.	169 (19.2%)	647 (73.7%)	-	28 (3.2%)	34 (3.9%)	3523	4.01	.818
5	TETFund intervention through grants and provision of modern office equipment increases staff level of commitment in their job tasks.	202 (23.0%)	586 (66.7%)	1 (0.1%)	56 (6.4%)	33 (3.8%)	3566	4.06	.728
GRAND MEAN							3559	4.05	.780

Source: Field Survey Result 2023 computed using SPSS Version 23.0

From the descriptive analysis of the respondents' views regarding the level of effect of TETFund intervention on the academic attainment of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria (table 1), it was shown (based on the weighted mean statistics of 4.05 which is within the range of 3.50-4.49) that TETFund intervention has greatly promoted academic attainment of tertiary educational institutions in Southeastern region of the country.

Research Question Two: To what extent does TETFund intervention affect Graduate Employability of Tertiary Educational Institutions in South East, Nigeria?

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis of the respondents' responses showing the extent to which TETFund intervention affectgraduate employability of tertiary educational institutions of South East, Nigeria

S/N	Items	VGE (%)	GE (%)	NE (%)	LE (%)	VLE (%)	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	TETFund intervention enhances graduates' ability to use modern ICT facilities.	116 (13.2%)	645 (73.5%)	-	116 (13.2%)	1 (0.1%)	3393	3.86	.808
2	TETFund intervention increases graduate expertise in areas of academic specialization.	209 (23.8%)	526 (59.9%)	26 (3.0%)	55 (6.3%)	62 (7.1%)	3399	3.87	1.067
3	TETFund intervention provides the graduate with technical skills needed for employment.	257 (29.3%)	504 (57.6%)	26 (3.0%)	-	-	3563	4.05	.858
4	TETFund intervention prepares the graduate for global competitiveness.	257 (29.3%)	587 (66.9%)	-	-	34 (3.9%)	3667	4.17	.782
5	TETFund intervention makes graduate to be more confident in their course of study.	295 (33.6%)	548 (52.4%)	-	1 (0.1%)	34 (3.9%)	3701	4.22	.798
	GRAND MEAN						3545	4.03	.863

Source: Field Survey Result 2023 computed using SPSS Version 23.0

Table 2 presents the survey result, showing the extent to which TETFund intervention affect graduate employability of tertiary educational institutions of South East, Nigeria. The descriptive result (with *Grand mean* = $4.03 > 3.00$, *Standard deviation* = $0.863 < 1.591$) shows that TETFund intervention in tertiary educational institutions in Southeastern Nigeria contributes to 'a great extent' in enhancing graduate employability within the region.

Test of Hypotheses

Test of Hypothesis One

Hypothesis Two was intended to ascertaining the extent to which TETFund has affected academic attainment of tertiary educational institutions of South East, Nigeria. Strata mean responses in table 1 was used in testing the hypothesis. The null and alternate forms of the hypothesis is as presented below:

Ho: TETFund intervention has no significant effect on academic attainment of tertiary educational institutions of South East, Nigeria.

H1: TETFund intervention has significant effect on academic attainment of tertiary educational institutions of South East, Nigeria.

Level of Significance (α) = 0.05

Table 2: One-sample t-test for Hypothesis Four in comparison with test value of 3.0

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
MEAN RESPONSES	32.716	4	.000	1.05200	.9627	1.1413

Source: Field Survey 2023 and SPSS (Version 23.0) computation

Decision Rule: Reject H_0 if p-value is less than or equal to 0.05; otherwise, do not reject (i.e., otherwise, accept H_0).

Interpretation of Result/Conclusion: Result of the one-sample t-test as presented in table 2 indicates that TETFund intervention has significant positive effect on academic attainment of tertiary educational institutions of South East, Nigeria (Grand mean = 4.06, t-stat. = 32.716, $p=0.000<0.05$). This discovery subscribed that TETFund intervention in providing ICT facilities, digital library and laboratories, and providing modern office equipment and grants to the lecturers promotes academic attainment of the institutions. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected at 5% (i.e., 0.05) level of significance.

Test of Hypothesis Two

Hypothesis five is aimed at determining the extent to which TETFund intervention has contributed to graduate employability of tertiary educational institutions in South-East, Nigeria. Descriptive strata mean results in table 4.14 was used in testing the hypothesis; meanwhile, the null (H_0) and alternate (H_1) forms of the testing hypothesis is as presented below:

H_0 : TETFund intervention has no significant effect on graduate employability of tertiary educational institutions of South East, Nigeria.

H_1 : TETFund intervention has significant effect on graduate employability of tertiary educational institutions of South East, Nigeria.

Level of Significance (α) = 0.05

Table 2: One-Sample Test (with a test value of 3.0) for Hypothesis Two

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
MEAN RESPONSES	13.910	4	.000	1.03400	.8276	1.2404

Source: Field Survey 2023 and SPSS (Version 23.0) computation

Decision Rule: Reject H_0 if p-value is less than or equal to 0.05; otherwise, do not reject (i.e., otherwise, accept H_0).

Interpretation of Result/Conclusion: In line with the decision rule as stated above, the one sample t-test result in table 2 shows that TETFund intervention has significant positive effect on graduate employability of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria (mean = 4.22, t-stat. = 13.910, $p=0.000<0.05$). In other words,

TETFund intervention aids graduate employability of tertiary educational institutions within the South-East region. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternate hypothesis is upheld at 95% confidence.

Discussion of Findings

From Hypothesis One: *TETFund intervention has no significant effect on academic attainment of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria.*

The grand mean = 4.06, t-statistic = 32.716, $p=0.000<0.05$ confirmed that TETFund intervention through provision of ICT facilities, digital library and laboratories, and provision of modern office equipment and grants to the lecturers exerted significant positive effect on academic attainment of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria. This finding is in tandem with the findings of Gadanga et al. (2021) who focused on Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) Intervention in University Libraries in North West, Nigeria and found that a total of N1,642,000,000.00 was awarded to the nine universities included in the study for the intervention year of 2014–2018. Additionally, it was discovered that the libraries under study are in better shape than they were prior to the intervention.

Moreover, our discovery affirmed to the findings of Nwogwugwu and Nwogwugwu (2020) who demonstrated that TETFund intervention played a key influence in librarian capacity building and that capacity building has greatly helped librarians in South-East Nigerian public tertiary institutions to discharge their duties effectively. Also, in the work of Anaehobi and Agim (2019), it was affirmed that through TETFund intervention, university libraries in South-East Nigeria were able to acquire information resources like new encyclopedias and other reference sources, staff in the libraries benefited from TETFund sponsored staff development programs, the Fund contributed to the physical infrastructure in the libraries, and library staff in the region conducted research and published books and journals.

From Hypothesis Two: *TETFund intervention has not significant effect on graduate employability of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria.*

In line with the a priori expectation, TETFund intervention through exposure to technical skills, provision of ICT and teaching aids and sponsorship of various programmes exerted significant positive effect on graduate employability of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria (mean = 4.22, t-stat. = 13.910, $p=0.000<0.05$). This is another milestone achieved by TETFund intervention as the ICT support greatly improved graduate employability of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria. For instance, in Enugu State University of Science and Technology, TETFund sponsored Website remodeling and instituted e-learning Platform to ensure that there is no breakdown of learning at all seasons. This is the fall out effect of Covid-19 in the year 2020 when there was a total shutdown of academic activities. TETFund also trained the ICT staff on how to operate the Platform. In Enugu Campus of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, TETFund furnished the ICT e-test Centre with over 150 (one hundred and fifty) Table Top Computers to ensure e-learning for the students. Also, in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike in Abia State, TETFund erected a similar Centre for the students. All these efforts are to expose the students with skills for employment upon graduation.

From the study, it was affirmed that TETFund intervention in provision of digitalization/automation equipment help to improve student competence needed for employment opportunity. The respondents accepted that Internet connectivity with bandwidth payment provided by TETFund offers the students technical skills needed for employment. It is well established that TETFund provision of computer systems and other ICT equipment

improved the digital skills of the tertiary education graduates. The respondents agreed that Student acquisition of better ICT skills and knowledge through Tetfund intervention increase their chances of employment upon graduation and that TETFund active role in sponsoring students in ICT program foster the enablement for students to create employment for themselves.

Our finding is supported of the work of Oyefar et al. (2021) who examined the ICT utilisation and associated barriers in teaching among middle-level academics in Nigerian universities. The article sought to understand the barriers to information and communications technology (ICT) utilisation among middle-level academics in Nigerian universities. The article found that there is a significant relationship between the availability of ICT, utilisation and quality of teaching in Nigerian universities. Specifically, it found that in universities where lecturers had tablets, they were 1.5 times more likely to deliver quality teaching. It also found that in universities where lecturers used multimedia projectors, students were 2.7 times more likely to receive quality teaching. On the barriers to ICT utilisation, the article found that lack of funding, lack of strong institutional policy and support infrastructure such as broadband internet connectivity and constant electricity supply were among the major constraints to ICT in higher education.

Summary of Findings

The following were the major findings from the study:

- ❖ TETFund intervention through provision of digital library and laboratories, and provision of modern office equipment and grants to the lecturers exerted significant positive effect on academic attainment of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria (mean = 4.06, t-stat. = 32.716, $p=0.000<0.05$).
- ❖ TETFund intervention through exposure to technical skills, provision of ICT and teaching aids and sponsorship of various programmes exerted significant positive effect on graduate employability of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria (mean = 4.22, t-stat. = 13.910, $p=0.000<0.05$).

Conclusion

Education has remained one of the pivotal tools for national growth and development. It requires adequate funding at all times and levels so as to constantly achieve the deserved excellence. This study empirically investigated the extent to which Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) affect sustainable development of Tertiary Educational Institutions in South East, Nigeria. The study used primary sourced data from sampled tertiary educational institutions within the Southeastern region. The study concluded that TETFund intervention contributed positively and significantly to increased academic attainment and graduate employability in tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria. As a result, conclusion was drawn that TETFund intervention is a noteworthy promoter of sustainable development in tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- i) Since TETFund intervention exerted significant positive effect on academic attainment of tertiary educational institutions of South East, Nigeria, the study advised that Management of the tertiary institutions should maintain cordial relationship with TETFund and ensure that they (TETFund) release more funds for academic sponsorship (staff training), and for providing modern office equipment aimed at ensuring quality service delivery.

ii) Based on our discovery that TETFund intervention through exposure to technical skills, provision of ICT and teaching aids and sponsorship of various programmes exerted significant positive effect on graduate employability of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria, this study recommended that the tertiary institutions Management Authority/Board should maintain collaborative relationship with the TETFund to provide for more learning resources. This will help to expose the students in areas of learning and research and as well, prepare them for employment upon graduation and to compete globally with other students in the globalized world.

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