

THE EXTENT OF TERTIARY EDUCATION TRUST FUND ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH EAST, NIGERIA

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Abstract: The study is aimed at ascertaining the extent to which Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TET Fund) Intervention affect Sustainable Development of Tertiary Educational Institutions in South East, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were to: (i) determine the extent to which TET Fund intervention improved seating capacity of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria, (ii) ascertain the extent to which TET Fund intervention contributed to staff competence of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria, (iii) examine the extent TET Fund intervention affected global visibility of staff of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria. In line with the specific objectives, the study was guided by five research questions and hypotheses. 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 analyzed 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 TET Fund intervention contributed positively and significantly to increased seating capacity ($t^*=20.719$, $p=0.000<0.05$), staff competence ($t^*=9.964$, $p=0.001<0.05$), global visibility ($t^*=19.475$, $p=0.000<0.05$), in tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria. Implication of the findings is that TET Fund intervention played substantial role in the development of sustainable tertiary educational institutions in Southeastern Nigeria. Conclusion was drawn that TET Fund intervention is a noteworthy promoter of sustainable development in tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria. However, it was recommended that the Tertiary educational institutions should work towards strengthening their relationship with TET Fund 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: TET Fund, Sustainable Development. Seating Capacity, Staff Competence.

INTRODUCTION

Any country that wants to advance needs to invest in education, which is considered one of the most effective means of fostering the development of the human capital and capabilities. Education provides individuals with the necessary guidance for their attitude and behavior (Lawanson & Umar, 2020). Education is a full-fledged, all-encompassing process that helps people thrive and develop quickly in the environment. There is only one tool that is crucial for managing issues in the future and bringing about changes in every society, and that tool is education (Asiyai & Okoro, 2019). Education can be viewed as a process, a product, and a discipline (Ayo, 2017). Education is a series of actions that involves passing down societal beliefs, values, and customs from one generation to the next. It is commonly acknowledged that education, particularly higher education, is a key tool for fostering socio-economic, political, and cultural growth. According to Nduagu & Saidu (2021), higher education is the greatest degree of education available for the development of human capital everywhere in the globe. In order to address the demand for generating workers who can serve in a variety of capacities and impact Nigeria's socioeconomic and political growth, higher educational institutions were established. 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 (Suleiman, Ishola, Abubakar & Aliyu, 2020).

Decree No. 7 of January 1, 1993, which acknowledged the drop in educational standards and severe deterioration in infrastructure and human capital development in tertiary institutions in Nigeria, was a necessary attempt to fill these staffing and infrastructure deficiencies (Eneasator, Azubuike, & Orji, 2019). At the tertiary level of education, it was clear that emergency funding was required immediately in order to upgrade educational infrastructure and facilities, boost lecturers' morale, recruit and retain quality newcomers to the field, promote professionalism in teaching, and ensure sustainable education. The Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), which was implemented in the 1980s, caused problems in the educational system, making it difficult for Nigeria to pay adequate attention to education. These crises led to the creation of the Education Trust Fund. In light of these conclusions, the Federal Government and the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) held a debate in 1993 (Lawanson & Umar, 2020). The argument then was that the government must work with the private sector to help it fund education effectively because the government cannot support education alone owing to the significant cost repercussions. Thus, the idea of enacting a public tax led to the creation of the Education Trust Fund.

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TET FUND) was established by an Act of the National Assembly in June 2011, according to Oraka, Ogbodo, and Ezejiolor (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 TET FUND (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).

The TET FUND is now clearly present in the government-owned tertiary institutions in South East Nigeria. However, 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 TET FUND 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 TET FUND'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 TET FUND 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 Organization. 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 TET Fund 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 TET Fund's support for long-term academic growth. Be that as it may, few prerequisites must be met before TET Fund could

intervene because fund intervention is not an open invitation. According to TET Fund sources, 90% of the lecturer's research proposals were extremely poor and unfindable (TET Fund, 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 TET Fund 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 examines the extent to which Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TET Fund) affect sustainable development of Tertiary Educational Institutions in South East, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study was to ascertain the extent which Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TET Fund) intervention contributed to Sustainable Development of Tertiary Educational Institutions in South East, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were to:

- i. determine the extent to which TET Fund intervention improved seating capacity of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria.
- ii. ascertain the extent to which TET Fund intervention contributed to staff competence in tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria.
- iii. examine the extent to which TET Fund intervention affect global visibility of staff 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 TET Fund intervention improved the seating capacity of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria?
- ii. To what extent does TET Fund intervention contribute to staff competence in tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria?
- iii. To what extent does TET Fund intervention affect the global visibility of staff of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria?

Statement of Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated for the study:

- i. TET Fund intervention has no significant effect on seating capacity of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria.
- ii. TET Fund intervention has no significant effect on staff competence of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria.
- iii. TET Fund intervention has no significant effect on the global visibility of staff of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria.

Scope of the Study

The content was delimited to the extent of Tertiary Education Trust Fund on Sustainable development of Tertiary 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, Nnamdi Azikiwe 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.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

TET Fund

The collection and distribution of cash for educational purposes might be characterized as the Tertiary Education Fund. It has also been considered as the financial actions of tertiary institutions in terms of taxation, spending, acquiring, and borrowing, and it encompasses the ways in which higher institutions' expenses are paid for their staffing, equipment, and upkeep (Ajayi, 2018). The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TET Fund) is an intervention organization within the Education Trust Fund that works with tertiary institutions to support staff development, provide infrastructure, and enhance educational quality (Nduagu & Saidu, 2021).

Amin, Babita, Olowookere, and Abioye (2020), infer that the TET Fund 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, TET Fund 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 (TET FUND).

TET Fund intervention on physical infrastructural development

The infrastructure of a nation, city, or other locale is the grouping of structures and mechanisms that offers the facilities and services necessary for the operation of its economy, households, and companies. Infrastructure includes both public and private physical structures such as roads, trains, bridges, tunnels, water supply, sewage systems, electrical grids, and telephones. General definitions of infrastructure include "the physical components of interconnected systems providing commodities and services essential to enable, sustain, or enhance societal living conditions" and "the maintenance of the physical environment." According to Fulmer (2009), infrastructure includes all of the basic services and facilities required for a city, country, or region's economy to run smoothly. It can be characterized as the physical elements of interconnected systems, goods, and services that are necessary to enable, sustain, or improve societal living conditions. Examples of such technical structure include roads, bridges, tunnels, water supply, sewers, electrical grids, telecommunications, and so forth.

TET Fund intervention on academic staff training and development

Yemmy in Amadi (2013), noted that academic staff training and development, also known as professional development, is a procedure used to improve the teachers' knowledge, abilities, and attitudes. According to

Amadi, this involves a duty to produce, transmit, evaluate, and preserve knowledge through lifelong learning. Amadi went on to argue that a development program must include cultivating and maintaining the scholarly ideals of inquiry and honesty in order to cultivate these characteristics through indoctrination. Professional development, according to Guskey (2000), is defined as the procedures and activities that aim to improve educators' professional knowledge, competence, and attitudes so that they can then enhance students' learning. To Guskey and Huberman in Othman and Dahari (2011), excellent professional growth is thought to be absolutely essential for advancing education. Professional development includes three key elements. First of all, it is a deliberate procedure built around a distinct purpose and predetermined objectives. It must start with a precise declaration of an important purpose and measurable goals. Second, it is a constant process due to education's dynamic nature and the ongoing increase of knowledge.

TET Fund sponsorship of academic staff research and publication

Research is defined by Bako in Yusuf (2012) as the methodical search and investigation for enhancing the body of knowledge and research development is the search and application of this knowledge for the creation of new and improved goods, services, and industrial processes for capital development. In other terms, research is the process of generating new information, new understandings of information, or new ways to access information. Ezeali (2017) claims that research publishing is yet another indicator of quality control inside the university system that aids in upholding minimal academic standards. Research publication entails the development of fresh knowledge and the inventive and creative use of prevailing knowledge to produce new thoughts, approaches, and comprehensions for educational results.

Sustainable Development of Education

Development denotes a shift or expansion in the way of life of a population. Additionally, it might refer to modifications to or upgrades to a population, community, or society's physical infrastructure (Itari, 1995). However, other academics define development as the capacity of the populace to deal with issues through their own wisdom, knowledge, experience, and resources with a goal to eradicating hunger, pestilence, and poverty. There are actually as many definitions and presumptions about development as there are academics worldwide. Sometimes, policies that are intended to hinder human progress are referred to as development efforts (Onunwa, 2007).

Economic growth was referred to as a post-World War II phenomena while discussing development. Development in this context meant the capacity of society to produce a significant and sustained increase in the production of all profitable economic activities. It referred to a country's ability to produce and maintain a rise in its gross domestic product on a yearly basis. The main focus was on how society could produce more in concrete ways. No equivalent focus was placed on how justice is to be attained in the distribution of what has been generated, as noted by Onunwa (2007). The source of the technology and labor used in production was not taken into account.

Sustainability, according to Itari and Ugbe (2018), is the capacity to maintain something over an extended period of time without causing harm to or depleting it. Many academics and researchers have developed a solid knowledge of the idea of sustainability in recent years. Three factors make up sustainability: preservation of the environment, preservation of economic life, and observance of particular social norms about human growth. The term "sustainability" has multiple definitions and is used in different settings, such as an ecological phrase, a technical term in forestry, as well as a new definition that refers to the advancement of humanity and of human society. Di Giulio (2006).

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.

Seating Capacity

According to the available physical space and any legal restrictions, the seating capacity of a facility refers to the maximum number of persons who can be seated there. The term "seating capacity" can be used to describe anything, from a car with two seats to a stadium with hundreds of thousands of seats. The Indianapolis Motor Speedway, the largest athletic arena in the world, includes permanent seating for more than 235,000 people and infield seating that increases capacity to over 400,000. Carrying capacity refers to a species' typical population size in a particular habitat. The environment can regulate a species' population size by providing enough food, shelter, water, and mates. It refers to a species' average population size or density.

Staff Competence

The term "competence" refers to a variety of abilities that can be categorized as knowledge, attitude, and performance-enhancing abilities. It is crucial to the pursuit of greatness by educators. Competence is a broad concept that encompasses people's or organizations' abilities or capabilities (Mulder, 2001). Accordingly, competence may be personal, as in the case of a teacher, or non-personal, as in the case of a team (general competence needed in an organization). One rational component that satisfies the performance target for a desired state could be considered to be competence. It is a behavioral offshoot necessary to accomplish the goal demanded in the anticipated circumstances. According to Boyatis (2007), "competence is an underlying trait of the individual that is tangentially related to superior performance in a job" (change in one variable induces a change in another). So, given that, what constitutes teacher competence?

Global Visibility

The ability to make broad decisions based on knowledge of all the facts, not just some of them, is known as having a global view or vision of a situation, in which all of its various components are taken into account. The degree to which published work is well-received by the academic or scientific community determines visibility, or "impact," in turn. The inadequate visibility of Nigerian scholars is the cause of the low ranking of Nigerian universities by Webometrics and other internationally recognized ranking agencies (Ati, 2017). For instance, Ati (2017) explains that low web visibility and the inactivity of academics and researchers prevent them from making substantial contributions to the field of knowledge. Most of the time, the institutional foundation for productive activity is inadequate, and the majority of research knowledge stays within the university's gates (Ati, 2017). In recent years, academic staff have expressed an interest in using online platforms to assess their scholarly effect and a desire to utilize these platforms for the distribution of research (Tripathy et al., 2017). For instance, the National Universities Commission (NUC) in Nigeria sent a memo to all universities in Nigeria in September 2021 encouraging all academic staff to sign up in databases like Google Scholar, Scopus, and ORCID in order to increase their visibility and draw university ranks and recognition on a national and international scale.

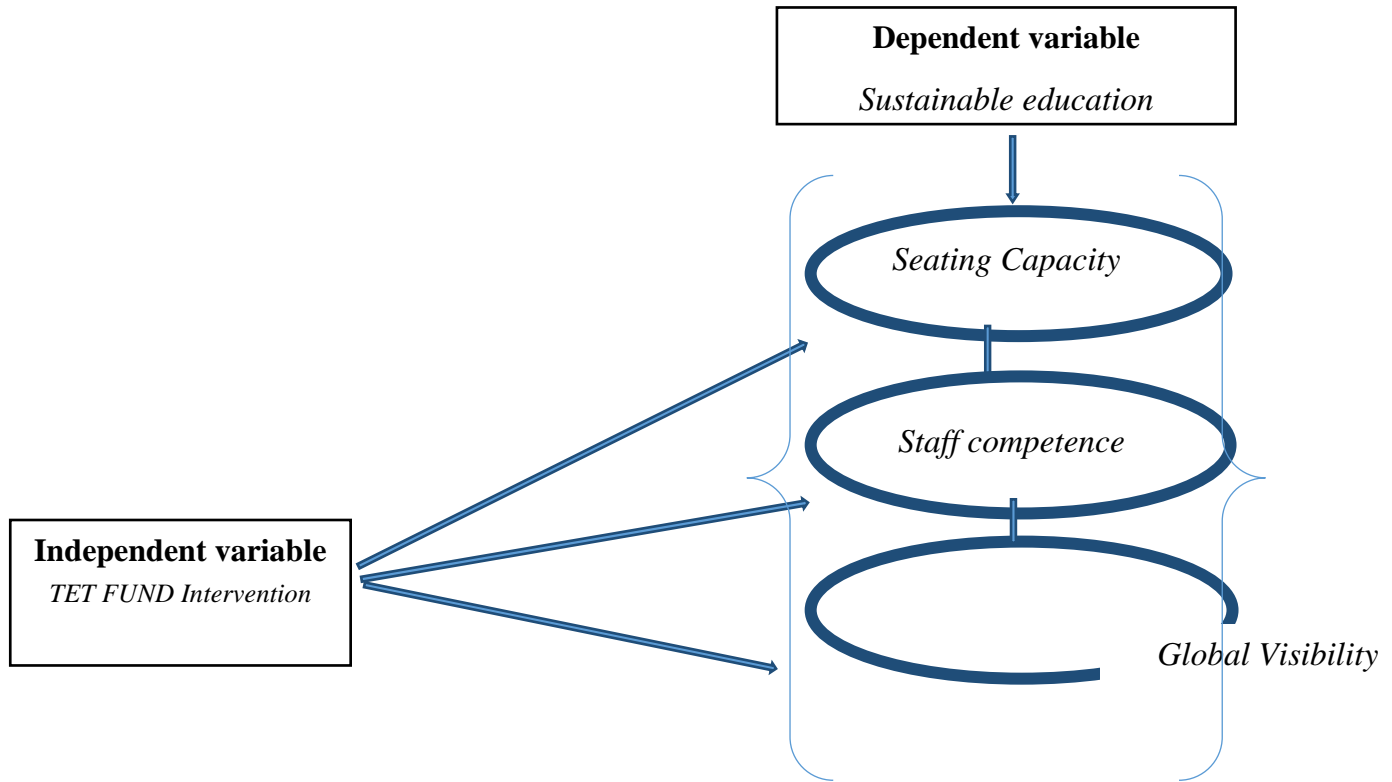


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework of TET FUND and Sustainable Development of Tertiary Educational Institutions

Source: Author’s Conceptualization, 2022.

Theoretical Framework

Resource Dependency Theory

In order to understand how dependent public tertiary institutions are on government funding for high-quality education, the study used the Resource Dependency Theory (also known as RDT) as a theoretical framework. In their 1978 book "The External Control of Organizations: A Resource Dependence Perspective," Pfeffer and Salanick introduced RDT for the first time. This theory's main justification is that resources are necessary for organizations to function, and that these resources ultimately come from the environment in which such organizations operate. The idea further asserts that there are other organizations present in the environment, and as a result, many of the resources required by one organization are held by other organizations. Additionally, because resources are the foundation of power, even legally autonomous organizations can rely on one another, and power and resource dependency are mutually exclusive (Hillman, Withers, & Collins, 2009).

There is no question that tertiary institutions are types of organizations that rely on resources, and these resources come from the environment of the organization. It follows that public tertiary institutions in Nigeria depend on the government and other sources for significant amounts of funding, and that TET Fund obtains these funds from the 2.5 percent contributions made by businesses in Nigeria. The RDT makes the important claim that there are additional organizations in the larger environment, and these organizations compete for the same resources. Because various public tertiary institutions, such as universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education, compete for TET Fund resources or funding, the point is pertinent. Organizations in charge of

resources have influence over the environment. Frequently, the powers are represented through budgets and resource allocations (Mudambi & Pedersen, 2007).

Other academics have used the RDT to research public higher education institutions. The RDT has been criticized for being too limited in its understanding of power as it relates to managing objective resources by Nienhuser (2008). The main principles of resource dependency theory are generally accepted and concurred upon among researchers, despite the few criticisms. The RDT gave us a framework for analyzing how much public tertiary institutions in South East Nigeria depend on TET Fund for funding and how TET Fund affects that funding.

Empirical Review

In order to increase the quality of tertiary education in Abia State, Nigeria, Nduagu and Saidu (2021) evaluated the impact of TET Fund interventions on staff and infrastructural development. The findings of a pilot study that was carried out specifically for this purpose, obtained a reliability coefficient of 0.86. Analysis of Variance was used to test the hypothesis, using SPSS (version 23.0). The results indicated that TET Fund intervention had a positive significant impact on staff and infrastructure development, which improved the standard of tertiary education in Abia State, but more could be done.

The impact of the Tertiary Education Tax Fund (TET FUND) on management in Nigerian tertiary education was assessed by Oraka, Ogbodo, and Ezejiofor in 2021. A survey and a time series study approach were employed. Data from the National Bureau of Statistics were collected using financial ratios, and regression analysis and SPSS statistical software version 20.0 were used to test them. According to the data, the allocation of ETF funds to Nigerian tertiary institutions has little to do with those institutions' enrolment rates.

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund policy implementation for universities improvement in the South-East of Nigeria was evaluated by Anorue and Ikediugwu in 2021. To address the research questions, data were analyzed using Mean and Standard Deviation, and ANOVA was used to test the hypotheses. The results demonstrated a considerable disparity in the respondents' mean ratings and that the Tertiary Education Trust Fund had not significantly carried out its policy of supplying the South-East of Nigeria's universities with the necessary physical facilities for teaching and learning. Additionally, the findings revealed that there were no appreciable changes in the mean ratings of respondents' evaluations of the outcome, and that TET Fund had only partially carried out its policy about the distribution of educational equipment and resources for teaching and learning.

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TET Fund) and the growth of tertiary education in Nigeria were the subjects of Wenibowei and Warrant's (2021) investigation. The descriptive approach was used to analyze the results. The data for the study was acquired from secondary sources. The findings of the study suggested, the tertiary education subsector needs to be developed to have the essential developmental impact in Nigeria. This is the reason why the development of this sector is important to the overall advancement of developing nations.

Ibas and Uzoigwe (2020) evaluated Tertiary Education Trust Fund assistance and quality assurance among public Universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. Survey research design was utilized for the investigation. The acquired data were examined using straightforward linear regression. Results showed that quality assurance in staff training, project development, and research/journal publishing among academic staff in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria, was strongly predicted by TET Fund intervention allocations and TET Fund research grants.

In Lagos State University in Nigeria, Abdulaziz, Olokooba, and Iyekolo (2020) investigated the Tertiary Education Trust Fund intervention on academic staff capacity building. The study used a descriptive survey

research design. Data were gathered using the "Tet fund Intervention on Academic Staff Capacity Building Questionnaire." The study's conclusions showed that the main financial intervention for the qualitative change of the teaching staff at Lagos State University is the development of infrastructure for efficient teaching and learning. The study's findings also demonstrated that Lagos State University's finance intervention for academic staff capacity building was a top priority. It was advised that the fund remove the degree of bureaucratic impediments frequently connected with receiving approved money based on the study's findings.

Aprebo & Wey Amaewhule (2018) focused on Accessing and utilizing TET fund facilities for infrastructural development by Universities in Rivers and Bayelsa States. The population of the study consisted of all the twenty-five (25) directors of academic planning, directors of physical planning, all DVC academic, desk officers and directors of work in the universities concerned. The statistical method that was employed in analyzing the research questions is the mean, and standard deviation. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The result showed that TET fund facilities are not easily accessed by universities in Rivers and Bayelsa states. The funds provided by TET fund are utilized for infrastructural development.

According to Abdullahi (2021), the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TET Fund) intervention had an effect on high-quality and pertinent educational research (2015-2019). The study used a descriptive survey research design, with the theoretical groundwork provided by resource-based and African political economy models. Eight thousand, seven hundred and eleven (8711) respondents in total were gathered from five tertiary institutions in North Central Nigeria for this study. An organized questionnaire was given to 650 people who made up the study's sample. The questionnaire's 612 genuine copies were used for analysis. One-way ANOVA was used to assess the study's hypotheses. The outcome shows that, to a large extent, TET Fund assistance has no discernible impact on the caliber and relevance of research conducted by workers at state-owned colleges of education in North Central Nigeria. This was first attributed to the fact that monies provided to these institutions throughout time were not fully accessed since the institutions couldn't satisfy TET Fund's requirements for ongoing access. Secondly, many organizations and employees that utilize research funding spend a portion of the funds to meet their own needs, leaving a pitiful amount for actual research.

A study on TET FUND Grants: Examining the Impact of TET FUND Funding on the Scholastic Skills of Scholars was conducted by Asogwa and Ezugwu in 2021. The study included 72 members of the academic staff from two institutions of higher learning. Data were gathered using a self-created tool intended to measure the impact of Tet fund support on lecturers' motivation and dedication to research and teaching. Teaching and research were statistically strongly predicted by Tet fund financing, according to the results of the basic regression analysis that was done. According to the study's findings, Tet fund funding is essential for academic research in Nigeria. It is advised that higher education institutions support their academic staff's full use of the grant.

In their 2017 study, "Funding as a Tool for Revitalizing University Education for Social, Political, and Economic Engineering in Nigeria," Umar, A., Umar, B., and Luba, The paper examined a number of topics using content analysis, including a description of the Nigerian higher education system, funding higher education in Nigeria, finance and utilization issues in Nigerian tertiary institutions, the significance of adequate funding for Nigerian universities, and Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TET Fund). This research comes to the conclusion that insufficient funding has plagued administration of higher education in general and university education in specific.

In tertiary institutions in South East, Nigeria, Agha and Udu (2016) looked at the effectiveness and relevance of trust fund intervention research in university education (2010-2015). Results showed that state-owned university staff in the south-east of Nigeria were conducting relevant and high-quality research without being significantly impacted by TET Fund involvement. This was first attributed to the fact that monies provided to these institutions throughout time were not fully accessed since the institutions couldn't satisfy TET Fund's requirements for ongoing projects. Secondly, many academics who received research funding exploited a portion of them to meet their personal expenses, leaving them with a pitiful amount to spend on actual research.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive survey methodology. A survey design according to Nworgu (2006), is one in which several people or things are investigated by compiling and analyzing information from just a few things or people who are considered to be representative of the entire group.

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. The Igbo-speaking Nigerians who are primarily republicans predominately populate this area. The people's primary sources of living are business and industry. There are five states in the South East: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo States. Anambra, Abia, and Enugu, three of the five South East States were examined. 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. Nnamdi Azikiwe 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 participants in the study included both academic and non-academic staff of selected tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria. The target population 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 from a finite population of the representatives of the respondents for the study.

Sampling Technique

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, TET Fund committee members, and academic and non-academic staff from the seven tertiary institutions in the chosen states.

Method of Data Collection

Oral interviews, focus groups, and questionnaire were employed as data collection tools. According to Ikeagwu (1998), a questionnaire is the best tool for collecting data that is out of the researcher's or observer's physical grasp. It is a device designed to pierce the mind's surface and gather information.

Validity of the Instrument

The researcher’s supervisors, two measurement and evaluation specialists from the Faculty of Education at Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), validated the questionnaire created for the study in order to assess its contents. The validity of the Instrument's face and content were examined.

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. To analyze the generated data, descriptive statistical methods were used. 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. In computing the t-statistic, observed/calculated sample mean, theoretical population mean, sample standard deviation, and sample size are used.

Data Analysis

Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question One: To what extent has TET Fund intervention improved the seating capacity of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria?

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis of the respondents’ responses showing the extent to which TET Fund intervention contributes to improving the seating capacity of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria

S/N		VGE (%)	GE (%)	NE (%)	LE (%)	VLE (%)	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	TET FUND intervention contributes to provision of quality furnitures (e.g., chairs/desks) for conducive learning.	272 (31.0%)	447 (50.9%)	-	66 (6.9%)	93 (0.3%)	878	3532	4.02	.899
2	TET FUND intervention helps in building modern lecture halls for international competition.	169 (19.2%)	550 (62.6%)	-	126 (14.4%)	33 (3.8%)	878	3396	3.86	.887
3	TET FUND intervention contributes to building and renovating classroom blocks and staff offices for effective teaching and learning.	175 (19.9%)	610 (69.5%)	-	27 (3.1%)	66 (7.5%)	878	3528	4.01	.729

4	TET FUND grants/intervention aids in building new school hostels and in renovating old ones for students' comfort.	346 (39.4%)	406 (46.2%)	-	60 (6.8%)	66 (7.5%)	878	3666	4.17	.856
5	TET FUND intervention encourages building and equipping school libraries and laboratories for enhanced theory and practical classes.	209 (23.8%)	548 (62.4%)	-	60 (6.8%)	61 (6.9%)	878	3539	4.03	.764
GRAND MEAN									4.02	.827

Source: Field Survey Result 2023 computed using SPSS Version 23.0

Based on the descriptive result (Table 1), it was shown (*Grand mean = 4.02 > 3.00*) that TET FUND intervention contributes positively to improving the seating capacity of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria. However, based on the rating formula, the combined opinion of the respondents affirmed that the seating capacity of tertiary educational institutions within the Southeastern region has improved to a great extent as a result of TET FUND intervention. This is because, the Grand mean of 4.02 is within the theoretical rating category of 3.50-4.49.

Research Question Two: To what extent does TET FUND intervention contribute to Staff Competence in Tertiary Educational Institutions in South East, Nigeria?

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis of the respondents' responses showing the extent to which TET FUND intervention contributes to Staff Competence in Tertiary Educational Institutions in South East, Nigeria

S/N	Items	VGE (%)	GE (%)	NE (%)	LE (%)	VLE (%)	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	TET FUND intervention enhances staff communication in their service delivery.	230 (26.2%)	341 (38.8%)	19 (2.2%)	281 (32.0%)	7 (0.8%)	878	3140	3.57	1.207
2	TET FUND intervention promotes decision-making ability of staff in tertiary educational institutions.	203 (23.1%)	588 (67.0%)	19 (2.2%)	61 (6.9%)	7 (0.8%)	878	3553	4.04	.775
3	TET FUND intervention encourages development of leadership skills among staff of tertiary education institutions.	190 (21.6%)	627 (71.4%)	-	61 (6.9%)	-	878	3580	4.07	.699
4	TET FUND intervention promotes teamwork among staff of tertiary education institutions.	169 (19.2%)	648 (73.8%)	-	61 (6.9%)	-	878	3559	4.05	.684
5	TET FUND intervention enhances strategic planning among staff of tertiary education institutions.	197 (22.4%)	592 (67.4%)	-	89 (10.1%)	-	878	3531	4.02	.794
GRAND MEAN							878	3473	3.95	.832

Source: Field Survey Result 2023 computed using SPSS Version 23.0

The descriptive as presented in table 2 shows the survey responses of TET Fund intervention in relation to staff competence in Tertiary Education Institutions in South East, Nigeria. The result specifically revealed the extent to which TET Fund intervention contributes to staff competence in tertiary Institutions in South East, Nigeria. Based on the calculated (Grand mean) and theoretical acceptance mean ratings, $3.95 > 3.0$, it shows that TET

Fund intervention has to a great extent, contributed to enhanced staff competence in tertiary institutions within the Southeastern region of the country.

Research Question Three: To what extent does TET Fund intervention affect the Global Visibility of Staff of Tertiary Educational Institutions in South East, Nigeria?

Table 4.3: Descriptive Analysis of the respondents’ responses showing the extent to which TET Fund intervention affect the Global Visibility of Staff of Tertiary Educational Institutions in South East, Nigeria

S/N	Items	VGE (%)	GE (%)	NE (%)	LE (%)	VLE (%)	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	TET FUND intervention contributes positively to scholarly research conduct in educational tertiary institutions.	148 (16.9%)	601 (66.5%)	3 (0.3%)	89 (10.1%)	37 (4.2%)	3383	3.85	.944
2	TET FUND intervention increases effectiveness in academic research in tertiary educational institutions.	88 (10.0%)	635 (73.3%)	46 (5.2%)	61 (6.9%)	48 (5.5%)	3288	3.74	.927
3	TET FUND intervention encourages efficiency in academic research writing and publications.	141 (16.1%)	571 (65.0%)	2 (0.2%)	148 (16.9%)	16 (1.8%)	3355	3.82	.903
4	TET FUND intervention contributes positively to widening of knowledge in staff areas of specialization.	147 (16.7%)	580 (66.1%)	2 (0.2%)	131 (14.9%)	18 (2.1%)	3413	3.88	.850
5	TET FUND intervention contributes to building excellent professional growth among staff at tertiary educational institutions.	236 (26.9%)	519 (59.1%)	27 (3.1%)	84 (10.7%)	2 (0.2%)	3527	4.01	.865
GRAND MEAN							3393	3.86	.898

Source: Field Survey Result 2023 computed using SPSS Version 23.0

Test of Hypotheses

Test of Hypothesis One

The research hypothesis one sought to ascertain the extent to which TET Fund intervention contributed to improved seating capacity of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria. The average response data series in table 4 was used in testing the hypothesis. The hypothesis is stated in null (Ho) and alternate (H1) forms as follows:

Ho: TET Fund intervention has no significant effect on the seating capacity of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria.

H1: TET Fund intervention has significant effect on the seating capacity of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria.

Level of Significance (α) = 0.05

Table 5: One-sample t-test for Hypothesis One; Test value (Population mean) = 3.0

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
MEAN RESPONSES	20.719	4	.000	1.018	.8816	1.1544

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

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

Interpretation of Result/Conclusion: The t-test result (table 4.15) with test statistic value ($t^* = 20.719$) and associated probability value (p-value = 0.000) which is within (i.e., less than) 0.05 indicates that TET FUND

intervention has significant positive effect on the seating capacity of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria. As a matter of fact, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternate is accepted.

Test of Hypothesis Two

The hypothesis two is focused as ascertaining whether TET Fund intervention has significant effect or otherwise on staff competence of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria. The average response data series in table 4.10 was used in testing the hypothesis. The null (Ho) and alternate (H1) forms of the hypothesis are stated below as follows:

Ho: TET Fund intervention has no significant effect on staff competence of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria.

H1: TET Fund intervention has significant effect on staff competence of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria.

Level of Significance (α) = 0.05

Table 6: One-sample t-test for Hypothesis Two; Test value (Population mean) = 3.0

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
MEAN RESPONSES	9.964	4	.001	.95000	.6853	1.2147

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

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

Interpretation of Result/Conclusion: With t-statistic value of 9.964 and associated probability value of $0.001 < 0.05$, there is enough statistical evidence that TET Fund intervention has significant positive effect on staff competence of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria. In other words, TET Fund intervention contributed positively and substantially in transforming staff competence in tertiary educational institutions in Southeastern Nigeria. The null hypothesis of no significant effect is therefore rejected at 5% level of significance.

Test of Hypothesis Three

The target of hypothesis three is to ascertain the extent to which TET Fund intervention contributed to global visibility of staff of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria. The continuous data series of average responses of sub-question items in table 4.11 was used in testing the hypothesis. The null and alternate hypotheses are therefore stated below as follows:

Ho: TET Fund intervention has no significant effect on global visibility of staff of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria.

H1: TET Fund intervention has significant effect on global visibility of staff of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria.

Level of Significance (α) = 0.05

Table 7: One-Sample Test (with a test value of 3.0) for Hypothesis Three

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
MEAN RESPONSES	19.475	4	.000	.86000	.7374	.9826

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: Based on the result in table 7, the t-statistic value is 19.475 while the probability value (p-value) is 0.000 which is within 5% significance level. The result ($t^* = 19.475$, $p=0.000<0.05$) indicates that TET Fund intervention has significant effect on global visibility of staff of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria. In other words, TET Fund intervention has been a great elevator to global visibility of staff of tertiary educational institutions within the Southeastern region of Nigeria. On this ground, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternate hypothesis is upheld at 95% confidence.

Discussion of Findings

From Hypothesis One: *TET Fund intervention has no significant effect on the seating capacity of Tertiary Educational Institutions of South East, Nigeria*

With the grand mean of 4.02, t-statistic value of 20.719 and associated probability value of $0.000<0.05$, it shows that TET Fund intervention on physical infrastructural development exhibited a significant positive effect on seating capacity in tertiary educational institutions in South-East, Nigeria. This result submits that TET Fund intervention in building new lecture halls, renovating classrooms, building modern students hostels and administrative blocks helped to increase the number of students in the institution. However, consistent with apriori expectation, this discovery is in support of the work of Nduagu and Saidu (2021) who evaluated the impact of TET Fund interventions on staff and infrastructural development in Abia State. Nduagu and Saidu found that TET Fund intervention had a positive significant impact on staff and infrastructural development, which improved the standard of tertiary education in Abia State.

Also, based on interview responses, it was ascertained that institutions like Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu State College of Education Technical, University of Nigeria, Nsukka are major beneficiaries of TET Fund interventions in the renovation of classroom blocks. TET Fund sponsored projects such as School of Science Education and School of Technical Education at the Enugu State College of Education (Technical); Tet fund also sponsored the Faculty of Law at the Enugu Campus of the University of Nigeria, they also erected the Mass Communication building at the Enugu State University of Science and Technology; furthermore, the Faculty of Engineering as well as Engineering Workshop, Department of Psychology in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka were built by TET FUND. TET FUND also built the School of General Studies and Postgraduate Hostel of the Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike in Abia State. All these give credence to the increase of seating capacity of tertiary educational institutions in the South East, Nigeria. It is worthy of note that Rehabilitation of Hostels by TET FUND helped to expand the seating capacity of institutions and that Rehabilitation of Capacity Lecture Theatres improved the seating capacity of the academic institutions. From the findings, it is a clear indication that TET FUND intervention on physical infrastructural development has contributed to increased seating capacity of tertiary institutions in South East, Nigeria. All the items in table 4.8 were affirmed by the respondents and those interviewed in the study:

From Hypothesis Two: *TET FUND intervention has no significant effect on staff competence of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria.*

Findings from this hypothesis depicted that TET FUND intervention on academic staff training and development contributed positively and significantly to staff competence in tertiary educational institutions in

South East, Nigeria ($mean=3.95>3.00$, $t-stat.=9.964$, $p=0.001<0.05$). This finding is a strong indication that TET FUND intervention is doing well in ensuring that staff of the institutions are delivering quality services. This finding obeys the work of Zabbey and Leyira (2019) who looked into the connection between the growth of higher institutions and the tertiary education trust fund. Their study proved that association between the tertiary trust fund and staff development was good and important. Also, our finding aligns with the work of Nagbe and Micah (2019) which examined the relationship between the growth of tertiary institutions in Nigeria from 2009 to 2017 and the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TET FUND). In that study, it was found that the association between the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TET FUND) and staff development was good and important.

From Hypothesis Three: *TET FUND intervention has no significant effect on the global visibility of staff of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria*

Based on our result, with grand mean = 3.86, t-statistic = 19.475 and p-value = 0.000<0.05, TET FUND intervention through sponsorship of scholarly research conduct and journal publications exerted a positive and significant effect on the global visibility of staff of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria. The implication is that TET FUND is in the forefront of sponsoring Research such as Institutional Base Research for Tertiary institutions. They also sponsor individual researches with a maximum of N2million; with regards to Textbooks, Journal and Manuscripts the amount is determined on the volume of work.

Particularly, the findings exposed that TET FUND intervention through sponsorship of academic journals and other publications is a huge contribution to the global visibility of staff in tertiary institutions. It is also well established that TET FUND intervention in sponsored research work of the staff of public tertiary educational institutions helped to improve the ranking of the institutions. Many South East Tertiary institutions have been under the shadow of South west tertiary institutions in Nigeria, today they are better ranked. Recently, the University of Nigeria and Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka were ranked among the ten (10) best sought-after universities in Nigeria. TET FUND intervention in sponsored book publications by staff helped researchers to contribute meaningfully to the world of knowledge. It is affirmed that TET FUND intervention on sponsored Journals publication by staff helped to improve the rating of their scholarly impact, with this intervention, the rating capacity of the academic institutions become much better and easier. We can see that TET FUND sponsored research helped to improve the visibility of the academic institutions. There is no doubt that TET FUND intervention in Manuscript Development/ project research helped the staff to register in databases such a Google Scholar, Scopus and ORCID and increase their visibility.

Summary of Findings

The following were the major findings from the study:

- i) TET FUND intervention on physical infrastructural development had a significant positive effect on seating capacity in tertiary educational institutions in South-East, Nigeria ($mean = 4.02>3.00$, $t-stat. = 20.719$, $p-value = 0.000<0.05$).
- ii) TET FUND intervention on academic staff training and development contributed positively and significantly to staff competence in tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria ($mean = 3.95>3.00$, $t-stat. = 9.964$, $p-value = 0.001<0.05$).
- iii) TET FUND intervention through sponsorship of scholarly research conduct and journal publications exerted a positive and noteworthy (significant) effect on the global visibility of staff of tertiary

educational institutions in South East, Nigeria (mean = 3.86>3.00, t-stat. = 19.475, p-value = 0.000<0.05).

Conclusion

The study concluded that TET FUND intervention contributed positively and significantly to increased seating capacity, staff competence, and global visibility. As a result, it was drawn that TET FUND 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) Based on our findings that TET FUND intervention on physical infrastructural development had a significant positive effect on seating capacity in tertiary educational institutions in South-East, Nigeria, this study recommended that Management of the tertiary educational institutions should work towards establishing a stronger relationship with the TET FUND so as to provide more funds for the tertiary educational institutions to build/acquire more infrastructural facilities for enhanced sustainable development of the institutions. Specifically, there should be provisions for more desks/chairs for conducive learning, provision of modern lecture halls and classrooms, more student hostels and well-equipped libraries and laboratories.
- ii) Since TET FUND intervention on academic staff training and development contributed positively and significantly to staff competence in tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria, the study recommended that the TET FUND's Management Board should work towards simplifying the procedures for assessing funds by these Institutions so that the staff competence will continue to improve while the aim of establishing TET FUND as an intervention agency by the Federal Government would be fully achieved.
- iii) Outcome of this study submits that TET FUND intervention through sponsorship of scholarly research conduct and journal publications exerted a positive and noteworthy (significant) effect on the global visibility of staff of tertiary educational institutions in South East, Nigeria; hence, it is recommended that TET FUND Board of Trustees should step up in providing funds for the sponsorship of collaborative researches and publications of book manuscripts written by both staff and students, as this would go a long way in encouraging the students as well as the staff in academic growth.

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