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TERTIARY EDUCATION TRUST FUND INTERVENTION AND ACEDEMIC STAFF RESEARCH OUTPUT IN IBRAHIM BADAMASI BABANGIDA UNIVERSITY LAPAI, NIGER STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT
This study assessed the impact of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) intervention on academic staff research output in Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida (IBB) University, LAPAI. The study is qualitative in nature and the data was gathered from secondary sources such as; articles from reputable journals, books, online articles, official reports on TETFund intervention among others. The study is anchored on the Public Goods Theory and its findings established that TETFUND has a positive impact on academic staff research output in IBB University, Lapai. The study recommends that researchers in tertiary institutions in Nigeria should engage in collaborative research projects with colleagues in developed countries to enable them share information, ideas and equipment as well as enlightenment campaigns on how to access TETFund research grant.

Keywords: TETFund, interventions, tertiary institutions, Research and Research Output

INTRODUCTION

The imperativeness of Research in sustainable development worldwide can never be overemphasized. The critical position of research in sustainable development is a significant reason for collaboration between researchers of different countries (FONA, 2009). Bachiorri (2016) is of the view that achieving sustainable development in the world requires knowledge through good research. The research function of academia remains a prime source of knowledge (Kearney, 2008). Research has many benefits as it is critical to sustainable development in education (Lemon, Lambrechts, Fleming, & Lee, 2016). Research in tertiary institutions is essential for many reasons: to enhance the institution's image and reputation and contribute to the knowledge base (Mafenya, 2014). Research remains a critical function of the tertiary institution globally (Nwakpa, 2015). Research is undoubtedly considered significant academic tasks; it is viewed as a vital area of the academic system of career advancement (Turk & Ledić, 2016). Despite this, countries worldwide are confronted with increased demand to grow their research and knowledge production (Kearney, 2008).

Africa as a continent has many developmental challenges ranging from policy design to implementation, monitoring and assessment of the outcomes in relation to resources invested and service delivery in the field of tertiary education. There is an increasing degeneration of Government investment in several African public Universities and research is critical for understanding and designing appropriate policies and legislations for responding to the existing challenges. Teaching, research and community service characterizes the main statutory functions of Nigerian tertiary institutions. While much emphasis is given to teaching, not much effort is committed to research. Donwa (2006) described Nigerian tertiary institutions as teaching centres due to their focus on knowledge dissemination and insignificant contribution to knowledge creation through research. This is as a result of the fact that research in tertiary institutions in Nigeria has not been given the requisite priority it deserves, as a result of poor funding of the education sector. This is further enunciated by Okujagu (1998) who points out that research is not well funded so as to have the impact it should. Funding of universities generally and research in particular is inadequate. This condition accounts for part of the reasons why University lecturers are unable to access research funding. As a result, giant strides have not been recorded from research efforts of the Universities. Thus, the bulk of University research in Nigeria is driven by the demand for publication toward career advancement (Egwunyenga, 2008).

Furthermore, research has probably not been receiving the needed attention this is evident in the report by Saint, Harnett and Strassner (2003) that Nigeria's low research output is probably a reflection of the low priority accorded research and development by government decision-makers and that Nigeria's Federal University System spends only 1.3% of its budget on research. This indicates that research funding in Nigerian Universities is directly linked with government allocation to education and the priority accorded it in policy. Donwa (2006) also is of the view that the average annual allocation to federal universities for recurrent expenditure is 0.4% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 5% of this allocation, is to be used for research. This report indicates that research funding by government is less than 1% GDP and this is grossly inadequate for meaningful research. As such, the amount of research funding by government is a function of the total funding for recurrent expenditure in the Universities. Adesomoju (2008) identifies government and the organized private sectors as the two sources main of research funding in Universities. According to him, funding from the private sector include consultancy, commissioned research and intellectual property (IP). Similarly, Donwa (2006) is equally of the view that University research in Nigeria gets its funds mainly from the government without industry support and in few cases funds have been obtained from foreign agencies. These foreign supports are not enjoyed by all Universities and where they are obtained, it is not a regular annual event.

Bako (2005) in his study observed that the bulk of University research has been self-funded by graduate students, staff-in-training and academic staff and over 80% has been from salaries and parents. Akpochafo (2009) supported this when he posits that currently, research in the Universities is funded by graduate students, staff-in-training and academic staff who are poorly paid. Research funding is capital intensive. The role of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) cannot be over emphasized in addressing the challenges of poor funding associated with academic staff research in Nigerian tertiary institution. The tertiary education trust fund was originally established as Educational Trust Fund (ETF) by act No.7 of 1993 as amended by act No 40 of 1998 now repealed and replaced with the Tertiary education trust fund (TETFund). It is an intervention agency set to provide supplementary support to all level of public tertiary institutions with the main objective of using funding alongside project management for the rehabilitation, restoration and consolidation of tertiary education in Nigeria (Mallam, 2013). The main source of income available to the fund is the 2% education tax paid from the assessable profit of companies registered in Nigeria. The Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) assesses and collects the tax on behalf of the government (Nwagu, 2010). Education is regarded as the sine quo-non for societal development.

Tertiary education trust fund was established at a time when the education sector had been neglected for many years by successive governments, resulting in extensive dilapidation of institutional facilities, physical structures, academic teaching and research facilities (Eze, 2014). TETFund ensures that funds generated from education tax are utilized to improve the quality of education in Nigeria (Sani, 2023). As part of the responsibilities of TETFund, it provides fund for academic staff to embark on in service training and development by sponsoring their further training in variety of academic disciplines nationally and internationally. TETFund provides funds to all federal and state-owned tertiary institutions on areas such as research, training, conferences, and staff development; for example, on the area of research, TETFund provides ₦20m (US$63,391.60) for each university as annual intervention for research (Okojie, 2000). The question is how many academic staff members benefit from this TETFund interventions. Academic staff in tertiary institutions in Nigeria are motivated and interested in pursuing research when they receive research grants. With this in mind, the study sought to investigate the extent to which TETFund has contributed in enhancing academic staff research output in the Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai.

METHODOLOGY

This paper is qualitative in nature and utilizes secondary sources to explore the impact of TETFund in enhancing academic staff research output in Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai. Specifically, the paper used articles from reputable journals, books, online articles, official reports on TETFund intervention in research project among others.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study utilizes the Public Goods Theory as a theoretical paradigm. The Public Goods Theory was postulated by Paul Samuelson (1954) and its main assumptions are:

a. A good once produced for same consumers can be consumed by additional consumers at no additional cost.
b. There is non-excludability, which means that it is difficult to keep people from consuming the goods, once it has been produced.

According to Samuelson, goods with these characteristics will be under-produced in the private sector, or may not be produced at all as a result, economic efficiency requires that the government forces people to contribute to the production of public goods, and allow all citizens to consume them. A public good is a good produced by government and generally made available for the benefit of its citizens. Education is as example of a public good, hence, the public goods theory provides justification for large public expenditure in education. This is based on the assumption that it is only the government that can effectively provide education services appropriately to the citizens given the varied externalities associated with it. Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai is a public enterprise, owned and controlled by the government for the public interest/purpose; hence, demands accountability from the University authorities. Evidently, the injection of TETFund interventions into this University ensures that goods (Education) with public goods characteristics are efficiently and effectively provided. By so doing, education as public good is made available and affordable to the greater majority a situation that foster government as well as its stakeholders' interest/benefits.

CONCEPTUAL DISCOURSE

The Concept of Research

Research according to Bako (2005) is a systematic search and investigation for increasing the sum of knowledge; and research and development (R&D) as the search and application of this knowledge for the development of new and improved products, services and industrial processes of capital development. Research is a process that creates new knowledge, generates new insights into knowledge, and advances knowledge (Ibidapobe, 2010).

Nature of Research

Research in the universities is definitely more established and more active than in the non-university sector and, quite often, borders on basic research, especially in the conventional universities (Yusuf, 2012). The universities of technology and agriculture, are supposed to be more concerned with applied research and technology adaptation, but is presently limited due to acute shortage of specialized research facilities and inadequacy of qualified research personnel that could enable them fulfill this expectation. Research in the universities may take the form of:

a. Individual research: This is initiated and conducted by an individual researcher or a team of researchers who may seek funding from the University Board of Research or from alternative funding agencies, including international organisations, NGOs and the private sector.
b. Institutional research: This is initiated and supervised by the institution or a unit of the institution (faculty, department etc) and usually involves a team of researchers. Funding is internal, except where assistance is obtained from external sources.
c. Commissioned or contractual research: This is carried out at the instance of an external body, which may be government or a government organ, the private sector, NGOs etc, which also funds the research. The sponsor has right of ownership of the research results.
d. Collaborative research: This is a joint research effort with common objectives or goals and involving the sharing of ideas, methodologies, facilities etc between individual researchers or research teams, from same or different institutions, organisations, countries or regions of the world.
e. Student research: This is an undergraduate or postgraduate research project undertaken by a student, supervised by the student's department, and the results of which are reported in student's thesis or dissertation. Student research is usually jointly funded between the student himself (or his sponsor) and his department.

Research output in Nigeria

Statistics on the research capacity of Nigerian universities are limited, making it difficult to assess the research capacity of universities. However, data on research output such as productivity or publication count and citation count (Hertzel, 2003) is more readily available. Ochai and Nedosa (cited in Okafor and Dike, 2010) note that in universities the world over, recognition and advancement of academic staff rest largely on the quantity and quality of their research outputs. Research output has also become the main factor or criterion for ranking "world class universities" (Chiemeke et al., 2009). Okafor (2011) defines research output as the quantity of research in terms of publication output and supervision of students that an academic is able to carry out within a defined period. In other words, research output is a quantitative and measurable means by which academics contribute new knowledge to the existing body of knowledge (Yusuf, 2012). Going by this definition of research output, academics of Nigerian universities during the 1960s to the mid 1980s (described as the "research boom" period) who had volumes of journal and textbook publications to their credit were certainly research productive. During this period, Nigerians became more widely known for their research, the products of which they strived to showcase on the international intellectual scene (Nduka and Falayojo, 1985). This research occurred in all the branches of science and in all fields of human endeavour - but involved mainly the first generation universities. During this period also, it was unanimously agreed by the World Bank, the NUC, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and industries that employ graduates, that in terms of quantity of research of tertiary institutions, Nigeria was the best and leading in sub-Saharan Africa (Karani, cited in Bako, 2005). Nigeria's advancement of knowledge through research then was phenomenal and mainly in the fields of human medicine, agriculture, veterinary science, metallurgy etc (Nduka and Falayojo, 1985). There were also technological inventions recorded notably the famous mechanised yam pounder (Obafemi Awolowo University) and a number of agricultural mechanisation equipment (IAR, Ahmadu Bello University and IITA, University of Ibadan) (Koleoso, 1989). Systematic decline of research in Nigerian universities is believed to have started from the late 1980s (Bako, 2005). For instance, Nigeria's total number of scientific publications in 1981 was 1062, but this number dropped to 711 by 1995 (Saint et al., 2003). In contrast, scientific publications (1995) were 3,413 for South Africa, 14,883 for India and 5,440 for Brazil. By 1996, the quantity and quality of research had declined to an all-time low (Okebukola and Solowu, 2001). Oyewole (2009) Okafor (2011) who attempted a comparative analysis of research output of six federal universities in southern Nigeria (University of Benin, University of Ibadan, University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nnamdi Azikwe University, University of Nigeria, Nsukka and University of Uyo) in the period 1997-2006 based on both local and international publications found that the highest research output of 12.17 publications per head was recorded at the University of Benin and the lowest of 8.13 at the University of Uyo over the ten-year period. In the state government owned universities which are grossly under-provided because of poor funding and poor support, the situation is definitely much worse. However, with regard to Nigeria's newly established and upcoming private universities, not much is known about their contributions to research.

TETFUND and Research Funding in Nigeria (IBB University, Lapai)

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) was established by an Act of the National Assembly in June 2011. The Act replaced the Education Tax Fund Act Cap, which was encapsulated in Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004 and Education Tax Fund (Amendment) Act No 17, 2003. The TETFUND was set up to administer and disburse education tax collections to Public tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria defined under the Act as universities, polytechnics and colleges of education (TETFUND, 2017). It is an intervention agency set up to provide auxiliary support to public tertiary institutions and the mandate of the Fund as enshrined in section 6 of the TETFUND Act are: "to provide funding for the provision and maintenance of the following: (a) Essential physical infrastructure for teaching and learning; (b) Instructional material and equipment; (c) Research and publication; (d) Academic Staff Training and Development; and (e) Any other need which, in the opinion of the Board of Trustees, is critical and essential for the improvement of quality and maintenance of standards in the higher educational institutions" (TETFUND, 2017). TETFUND derives its funding from 2% education tax paid from the assessable profit of companies registered in Nigeria. The Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) assesses and collects the tax on behalf of the Agency. The enabling Act establishing the Fund prescribes the distribution of the funds in the ratio

2:1:1 respectively to Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education (COEs), (TETFUND, 2017).

It is imperative to note that Nigerian Universities are bedeviled with inadequate funding which has adverse effects on research and teaching based on the quality of research which has been adjudged to be of low standard, when matched to their counterparts in other parts of the world (Ekundayo and Ajayi, 2009). UNESCO declared that for effective funding of education, 26% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of each country in the world must be allocated to education. The case of Nigeria over the years portends a non-compliance with this standard. This tends to be responsible for series of industrial actions embarked upon by the Academic Staff Union of Universalities (ASUU). There is decay in human and material resources in Nigerian Universities due to poor funding (Eze 2014). TETFund embarked on human capacity building for academic staff in Nigerian Universities to impact positively on their capacities and improve on the asset of the system. Poor funding, lack of infrastructure, poor capacity building and inadequate researches are capital intensive. As a result, the Universities could not provide adequately the needed fund based on their budgets and subventions that are often limited. TETFund intervention on human capacity building has improved the performance of academic staff in Nigeria. It is evidenced that effective teaching provided students with skillful ways to explore ideas, acquire new knowledge, synthesize information, and solve problems (Akinnaso, 2012; Onwuchekwa, 2012; Hossein, Fatollah & Tohid, 2014). Academic staff strength stands at 27,934 which is translated to students/academic staff ratio of 40:1 globally (Bamiro, 2012). The above figures show that there is poor staffing in the Universities, particularly the State Universities. The academic staff has continued to decline, due to the fact that the new universities have been poaching staff mainly from the 1st and 2nd generation Universities; while the rate of production of doctor of philosophy (Ph.D) graduates with interest in academic profession has been rather low (Bamiro, 2012). Thus, TETFund allocate fund for academic staff training and development for Nigerian Universities both locally and internationally to encourage effective teaching and competency in the country. A total of 814, junior academics have benefited from its intervention in postgraduate programmes distributed as follows: Ph.D Abroad – 307; Ph.D Local – 351; Master's Degree Abroad – 127; and Master's Degree Local – 29 and conference sponsorship which stand at 2,946 (TETFund, 2018). Available records from TETFund (2018) revealed that training and development cost N11,430,000,000.00 for the Universities in the South East Geo-Political Zone, Nigeria. The intervention effort was targeted at greater performance of academic staff in Public Universities in Nigerian, to meet global standard. Training sponsored by the (TETFund) within and outside Nigeria from 2008 to date is faced with inadequate utilization of fund allocated as result of information gaps and institutional shortcoming. Consequently, Nigeria ranked 120 out of 142 countries on the Global Innovation Index, which measured countries' innovation capabilities and how they drove economic growth and prosperity. Similarly, Nigeria was placed 140th in human capital and research; 14th under knowledge and technology and 74th under creative output (Aluko, 2012). Research attainment is determined by the number of published articles in ranked journals and conference proceedings of repute (Oloruntoba & Ajayi, 2006). At present majority of the beneficiary institutions have allocations from the previous years for academic staff unutilized and unaccessed (Baffa, 2017). It is believed that the staff qualifications, research environment, funding, and time available to staff could predict significantly the research output by the university staff. There is evidence of poor output, webmetric ranking, and exchange of ideas among the peers around the globe is doubtful because of institutional shortcomings (Baffa, 2017). There is contending issue within the Universities that bothers on information gap and not meeting up with the TETFund required guideline.

The TETFund's intervention in research was designed to stimulate the culture of serious research in Nigerian Tertiary institutions. This is with a view to enable scholars and researchers generate results that should be turned into marketable inventions. The TETFund research awards are of two types namely, National Research Fund (NRF) and Institution Based Research (IBR) with different modalities for selection and awards. The National Research Fund Committee of TETFund administers the NRF which has a funding limit of fifty million naira (N50,000,000.00) while the IBR which has a funding limit of two million Naira (N2,000,000.00) maximum per project is handled by the respective Institutions including IBB University, Lapai.

Table 1.1 TETFund IBR Intervention to IBB University, Lapai from 2014 to 2023

YEAR	TOTAL ALLOCATION	AMOUNT ACCESSED/RELEASED	NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES
2014	N37,000,000.00	N13,991,400.00	7
2015	N43,008,600.00	N27,997,000.00	14
2016	N50,011,600.00	N36,000,000.00	18
2017	N39,011,600.00	N31,446,666.00	24
2019	N28,143,600.00	N14,372,389.00	12
2021	N26,569,048.80	N15,941,429.28	19
2022	N47,891,788.60	N28,735,073.16	25
2023	N71,650,028.80	N42,990,017.28	41

Source: TETFund desk office IBB University, Lapai (2023).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study revealed that funding of universities generally and research in particular is inadequate. This is part of the reasons why University lecturers are unable to access research funding. The study also revealed that the bulk of University research has been self-funded by graduate students, staff-in-training and academic staff and over 80% has been from salaries and parents.

The study equally revealed that TETFund is the highest funding body that academic staff members have received research grants from and that the TETFund research grants was introduced to encourage academics undertake cutting edge research relevant to critical sectors of the National economy.

Table 1.1 revealed that from 2014 to 2023, more academic staff in IBB University, Lapai have gained access to the IBR even though the figures are still few especially when compared to the entire population of academic staff in IBB University, Lapai.

The study therefore recommended that researchers in tertiary institutions in Nigeria should engage in collaborative research projects with colleagues in developed countries to enable them share information, ideas and equipment as well as enlightenment campaigns on how to access TETFund research grant as well as the reduction of bureaucratic processes involved in accessing funds by beneficiary institutions.

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