

**LECTURERS PERCEPTION ON THE IMPACT OF TETFUND FUNDING
ON TRAINING ON STAFF RETENTION IN
SOUTH EAST UNIVERSITIES.**

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ABSTRACT

This study examined Lecturers perception on the impact of TETFund funding on training on staff retention in public universities in South East Nigeria. The study was guided by two research questions and one null hypothesis tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 336 academic staff from Faculties of Education who have gained TETFund sponsorship in public universities in South East Nigeria. Due to the manageable size of the population there was no sampling. Instrument for data collection were structured questionnaire. The reliability of the instrument was determined through a trial test. Data collected were analyzed using Mean and standard deviation for the research questions while t-test was used to test the null hypothesis. The findings of the study revealed that TETFund funding on training encourages staff retention and improved lecturers ascension in their career path. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommendations that TETFund should establish a monitoring instrument through the individual beneficiary institution, to ensure that sponsored staff are retained in the institutions for a minimum of six years after sponsorship, more lecturers should be sponsored so that they can comfortably perform their duty and contributes to the country's economic and educational advancement.

Keywords: TETFund, Staff Retention, Funding, Training, Public Universities.

INTRODUCTION

Human resource is the lifeblood of any organization. Human resource aims to ensure that there is retention of the skilled, committed and well-motivated workforce. Academic staff are among the human resources in our universities that need to be trained and retained for effective running of our institutions. Training is a process of increasing the knowledge and skill of an employee for doing a particular job. Training of personnel in any organization is regarded as the engine of employees' productivity. Training could be referred to as the teaching, or developing in oneself or others, any skills and knowledge or fitness that relates to specific useful competencies. Hence, Training is defined as a learning process in which trainees get an opportunity to learn the key skills which are required to do the job (Surbhi, 2015). Also, the term training has been defined as prearranged education deliberately planned to enhance knowledge, skill, and attitude that will facilitate employees' accomplishment of tasks (Burke & Hutchins, in Nmadu, et al 2021). Therefore, training increases the employee's ability by motivating them and converting them into well-organized and well-mannered staff, which ultimately affects the performance of the organization. Edet (2022) asserted that training of personnel in any organization is regarded as the engine of employees' productivity because training helps to improve workers' skills, knowledge and abilities.

Training is a learning process that is an indispensable part of human resource development. Since there are tendencies for some employees to lack knowledge, skills, and competencies that could make them fail to accomplish tasks properly and on a timely basis, training becomes an essential element to the employee for the development of the company (Abbas, 2014). Training has implications for productivity, health and safety at work and personal development (Jha, 2016). If employees are properly trained, there is a tendency of less wastage of resources, time and money. For lecturers to be trained effectively there should be fund.

Funding is the act of providing resource to finance a need, program, or project, it is usually in the form of money, but can also take the form of effort or time from an organization. Funding is also seen as money which a government or organization provides for a particular purpose. For any educational system to function and operate effectively, it must be adequately funded. Unfortunately, inadequate funding and improper utilisation of provided funds had contributed more to the decline in the education sector. Education funding comes from different sources. The major one at all levels of government is public revenue from taxation. Education funds are reported to be distributed among primary, secondary and tertiary educational levels in the proportion of 30%, 30% and 40% respectively (Bulurni, 2012). Public funding includes direct government expenditures in the form of subsidies to households such as tax reductions, scholarships, loans and grants. It also includes payment from Education Tax Funds (ETF) mainly for capital expenditure. The underlying rationale for public funding of education is to equip people with the requisite knowledge, skills and capacity to enhance the quality of life and increase productivity and capacity to gain knowledge of new techniques for production to be able to participate evocatively in the development process.

Government recognizes the importance of training and the difficulties encountered by academic staff in self-sponsorship and established the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) charged with the responsibility for imposing, managing and disbursing the Education Tax to public tertiary education institutions in Nigeria and for related matters (TETFund, 2011). To enable TETFund to achieve the above objectives, TETFund Act 2011 imposes a 2% Education Tax on the assessable profit of all registered companies in Nigeria.

The TETFund ensures that the funds generated from the education tax are utilised to improve the quality of education in Nigeria without direct contract awarding by:

- a) providing funding for educational facilities and infrastructural development;
- b) promoting creative and innovative approaches to educational learning and services;
- c) stimulating, supporting and enhancing improvement activities in educational foundation areas like teacher education, teaching practice, library development etc.; and
- d) championing new literacy-enhancing areas such as scientific, information and technology literacy (TETFund, 2015).

Therefore, Nigerian tertiary institutions have witnessed tremendous expansion since establishing the current Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) (Udu&Nkwede 2014, Uzochukwu et al. 2016, Onyeike&Eseyin 2018, Fejoh 2020, Isiaka et al 2020). The intervention of the TETFund as an agency has brought reforms into Nigeria's education sector, such as funding and provision of the essential physical infrastructures, development of library materials and equipment for effective learning (Godwin, 2017; Ogechukwu&Ngozichi, 2020, Onyenek&Ahaneku, 2020). The research grants and on-the-job training intervention provided by Tetfund have granted many academic lecturers the opportunity to study in universities in developed countries that are among the best in the world (Gumbo, 2016), and exposed lecturers to academic research. An essential indicator of a sound education system is the academic staff quality and retention (Gumbo, 2016).

Employee retention is seen as the policies and practices organizations use to avoid precious employees from quitting their jobs. Researchers noted that human resource department plays the dynamic role for retention of employees. Mandhanya (2015) opined that employee retention has become among the most vital factors for the long-term success of organizations that want to remain competitive in their industry. Retention starts with the recruiting of correct individuals and continues with practicing program to keep them engaged and committed to the organization. However, when the institutions have invested in employee training and development, both the institution and the individual can reap great rewards. Not only is training a tool for filling knowledge and skills gaps, but also a mechanism for rewarding employees who are high-potentials, and high-achievers. The subtext of all training - particularly in-house (custom) programs – is always team building (Bersin 2015). These incentives fortify culture and make employees be closer to each other, and help individual team members equate new associates, people with common goals, counsellors, and experts inside the organization.

Training serves as a motivator to academic staff and also encourage them to remain in their existing work place. Government foresaw the importance of training, hence establish TETFund intervention to motivate and inspire academic staff. The big question

is, does TETFund funding on training have any impact on staff retention in public universities in south east Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The present day global education challenges require constant academic staff training and development. Efficiency of human resources in public universities depends on the type of training received by such individual. Training remains a powerful weapon in the fight against half-baked and unproductive staff in our universities.

Nigeria has suffered enough brain drain in her universities due to poor remunerations. poor reward system for workers in Nigeria universities is a major disincentive which leads to loss of best brains to other nations, in their quest to greener pastures. Galloping inflation, poor working conditions and stagnation in one rank as a result of lack of fund for self-development has also resulted to human resources depletion in our universities. Stagnation in one rank by academic staff leads to frustration and subsequent switch to alternative better paying jobs. This scenario coupled with poor budgetary allocations to universities has made it impossible for the individual universities to sponsor academic staff training programmes at their university level. This situation has been identified as a major gap in Nigeria's universities. As a result, Federal government demonstrated its commitment to training and development by encouraging staff of tertiary institutions to engage in training opportunities through TETFund. The question is, is there any impact of this sponsorship on staff retention?

It is on the basis of this paucity of training that the study seeks to examine the lecturers' perception on the impact of TETFund funding on training on staff in public universities in South East Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to examine the lecturers' perception on the impact of TETFund funding on training on staff in public universities in South East Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Examine the impact of sponsored higher degrees' programmes by TETFund on lecturers' retention.
2. Ascertain the impact of TETFund training on lecturers' ascension in their career path.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions.

1. What is the impact of sponsored higher degrees' programmes by TETFund on lecturers' retention?
2. How does TETFund funding on training impacted on lecturers' ascension in their career path?

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the mean responses of staff of universities with master's degree (M.Sc) and staff of universities with doctorate degree (Ph.D.) on the impact of TETFund funding on training on staff retention.

METHOD

The research design adopted for this study was descriptive survey research design. Nworgu, (2015) stated that a survey design is one in which a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analysing data from only a few people or items considered to be representative of the group. The study was conducted in public owned federal and state universities in South East Nigeria. The population of this study comprised all the 336 lecturers of faculty of education from four federal and five state universities in South East Nigeria that have benefitted from TETFund sponsorship.

The sample size was 336. The whole population was used for the study because the population was manageable. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher. The instrument was a modified four-point Likert scale of: Strongly Agree (SA), Agreed (A), Disagree (SD), and Strongly Disagree (SD) with values of 4,3,2, and 1 respectively. The instrument was subjected to face and content validation. The reliability of the instrument was determined through a trial testing. Construct reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha in SPSS software. The overall reliability is 0.74. The researcher employed both self-delivery techniques and help of research assistants in the administration of the questionnaire. Out of 336 questionnaires administered 303 were returned. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (Version 23) Software was employed in the data analysis process.

The data collected were analysed using mean rating and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Any item with the mean rating of 2.50 and above was considered as Strongly Agreed Otherwise Disagreed. Hypotheses were tested using the t-test at 0.05 level of significance. If the calculated p-value is greater than the critical p-value at a significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected otherwise the null hypothesis is accepted.

Research Question One: What is the impact of sponsored higher degrees’ programmes by TETFund on lecturers’ retention?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Rating of the respondents on the impact of sponsored higher degrees’ programmes by TETFund on lecturers’ retention.

N=303					
S/N	ITEM STATEMENTS	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remarks	
1	Investment on lecturers through TETFund funding on staff development makes them stay long in their career.	3.15	0.35	A	
2	Sponsored TETFund training programme for lectures act as a motivator on job satisfaction and retention.	3.24	0.42	A	
3	TETFund sponsored programmes help in capacity building of lecturers, hence encourage their retention on the job.	3.22	0.42	A	
4	Growth opportunities offered by TETFund development programmes help lecturers to attain their peak of professional career, hence encourage retention.	3.19	0.39	A	
5	TETFund sponsored development programmes enable university lecturers to be expert in their job, thereby motivate them to stay long in their career	3.06	0.24	A	
6	Programmes sponsored by TETFund improve university ranking, hence encourage staff retention.	3.07	0.25	A	
7	Investment on lecturers through TETFund sponsorship make them to have a clear understanding in their career path comfortably.	3.08	0.41	A	
8	Sponsored higher degrees by TETFund encourage lecturers retention.	3.51	0.51	SA	
9	Professional growth TETFund training offers to lecturers makes them comfortable at work.	3.01	0.31	A	
10	Lecturers ability to rise to management level after training makes them to stay on the profession.	2.97	0.26	A	
Grand mean		3.15	0.35	A	

The data analysis in Table 1 showed that most of the respondents seem to agree with the view that investment in lecturers through TETFund funding on staff development acts as a motivator for job satisfaction, by making them have a clear understanding and ascend in their career path comfortably, promoting their comfort at work thereby making them stay long in their careers. Also, they believe that TETFund-sponsored programmes help in the capacity building of lecturers, enable university lecturers to be experts in their jobs and help them attain the peak of their professional careers. Furthermore, they see Programmes sponsored by TETFund as a tool that improves university ranking and lecturers' ability to rise to the management level. The grand mean of 3.15 which falls within the range of Agreed is an indication that TETFund Funding on staff Development had impact on staff retention. Also, the relatively small value of the standard deviation (SD=0.35) indicates a high degree of homogeneity of the responses by the respondents, suggesting encouragement of staff retention.

Research Question Two: How does TETFund funding on training impacted on lecturers’ ascension in their career path?

Table 2:Mean and Standard Deviation Rating of the respondents on the impact of TETFund Funding on lecturers’ ascension in their career path.

N=303

S/N	ITEM STATEMENTS	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remarks
11	Lecturers in public universities easily access TETFund sponsorship to further their education.	2.87	0.36	A
12	Lecturers in public universities have improved academically through TETFund sponsorship on journal publications	2.84	0.36	A
13	TETFund sponsorship for textbooks helps university lecturers to improve academically.	2.93	0.33	A
14	Overseas exchange programme afforded through TETFund sponsorship improves lecturers’ academic advancement.	3.53	0.49	SA
15	Lecturers use online media aid properly after undergoing training sponsored by TETFund	3.00	0.44	A
16	TETFund sponsorship for seminars helps to improve lecturers act of editorials.	2.85	0.35	A
17	Regular funding of workshop by TETFund help university lecturers to improve academically	2.97	0.29	A
18	Constant training sponsored by TETFund improves lecturer’s professionalism.	3.58	0.49	SA
19	Funding of conferences regularly by TETFund improves professional achievement of lecturers.	2.98	0.19	A
20	TETFund provision of publication grant increases publication rate of lecturers.	3.29	0.46	A
Grand mean		3.09	0.37	A

Analysis of field data 2023

The data analysis in Table 2 showed that the majority of the respondents appeared to believe that Lecturers in public universities easily access TETFund sponsorship to further their education. Also, they perceived that Lecturers in public universities have improved academically through TETFund sponsorship of journal publications, conferences, seminars, workshops and textbook publications. Furthermore, the analysis shows that a substantial number of the respondents were of the opinion that the Overseas exchange programme afforded through TETFund sponsorship improves lecturers’ academic advancement and professionalism. The grand mean of 3.09 which falls within the range of Agreed is an indication that TETFund Funding on Training and Development Improves Academic Advancement of University Staff. Also, the relatively small value of the standard deviation (SD=0.37) indicates a high degree of homogeneity of the responses by the respondent suggesting improved lecturers’ ascension in their career path as a result of TETFund funding on training.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean responses of staff of universities with master’s degree (M.Sc) and staff of universities with doctorate degree (Ph.D.) on the impact of TETFund funding on training on staff retention.

Table 3:

Summary of T-test analysis on the difference in the mean responses of staff of universities with master’s degree (M.Sc) and staff of universities with doctorate degree (Ph.D.) on the impact of TETFund funding on training on staff retention.

Degree	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	P-value	Decision
M.Sc.	100	3.09	0.12	301	0.482	0.630	Accepted
Ph.D.	203	3.08	0.13				

Table 3 depicted an independent samples t-test which was conducted to examine whether there is a significant difference in the mean responses of staff of universities with master’s degree (M.Sc) and staff of universities with doctorate degree (Ph.D.) on the impact of TETFund funding on development on staff retention for 303 staff (100 M.Sc. staff and 203 Ph.D staff) The data showed that t-value of 0.482 at 301 degree of freedom with a p-value of 0.630 is greater than the criterion value of 0.05 ($0.630 > 0.05$) this means that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of staff with MSc and staff with Ph.D on the impact of TETFund funding on development on staff retention. Hence, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected in relation to this research.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study aimed to determine the degree to which TETFund funding on training impacted on staff retention. According to the study's findings, investing in lecturers through TETFund funding for training motivates them to stay in their careers for a long time by ensuring that they have a clear understanding of and can comfortably advance along their career paths. This bolsters Chen's (2014) argument that training improves organizational performance and organizational strategy, which in turn influences employee retention and human capital growth. The study's results also showed that lecturers can advance to managerial positions and reach the peak of their careers through capacity building, which enhances university rankings. This is in line with Akanbi and Adetunji's (2016) assertion that the main goal of training is to provide individuals with the knowledge necessary to qualify them for a specific work role or to enhance their abilities and effectiveness in the position they already hold.

Based on the corresponding hypothesis, there is no distinction between staff with M.Sc. and staff with Ph.D. on employees' perceptions of the degree to which TETFund funding for training impacted on staff retention. This is consistent with Arubayi 2022's assertion that options for growth, like as sponsored training, must be offered to employees in order to keep them motivated and open up new opportunities.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it was concluded that TETFund funding on training has a measurable impact on staff of public universities on the areas of staff retention and advancement in career path. It was established in this study that TETFund funding on training encourages staff retention and enhance career advancement in public universities and there is no distinction between staff with master's degrees (MSc) and staff with

doctorate degree (Ph.D.) on the degree to which TETFund funding for training encouraged staff retention.

Recommendations

In the view of findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. TETFund should establish a monitoring instrument through the individual beneficiary institutions to ensure that sponsored staff are retained in the institutions for a minimum of 6 years after sponsorship. This is to ensure that every institution benefits adequately from such sponsorship.
2. TETFund should also create more training opportunities so that lecturers can comfortably perform their duty and contributes to the country's economic and educational advancement.

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