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TERTIARY EDUCATION TRUST FUND INTERVENTION PROJECTS AND RESOURCE UTILIZATION IN UNIVERSITIES: PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETF) intervention projects and resource utilization in universities in South Western State of Nigeria. The paper relates to funding and utilization of physical resources in universities in aspects of educational planning and administration. The study was a descriptive design of the correlation type. Purposive sampling technique was used to select six out of 14 beneficiary universities in the States. Instruments used to collect data were "TETF Intervention Projects Checklist" (TETFIPC), "Educational Facilities Checklists" (EFC) and "Resources Utilization Checklists" (RUC). The research questions raised were answered using percentage and utilization rates, while Pearson product-moment correlation statistic was used to test the hypotheses formulated to guide the study at 0.05 level of significance. Findings of the study indicated that building construction had the highest TETF allocation (64.5%), while staff development opportunities had the least (1.1%) in the sampled universities. Significant and positive relationship existed between time and space utilization rates and student academic performance in the universities ($r(1,800) = 0.63$ and $r(1,800) = 0.59$, $p \leq 0.05$ respectively). Based on these findings, it was recommended that TETF should provide more funds to Nigerian universities as well as periodic evaluation of completed TETF projects and utilization to ensure that TETF funds are properly used for the approved projects. Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETF) should improve on the provision of educational facilities to universities for staff and students' use through increase in education tax from 2% to 4%. For better funding, for collaboration is needed with the World Bank and other funding agencies as being practiced in other countries such as Norway, Spain, and United Kingdom.

Keywords: Tertiary Education, Trust Fund, Intervention Projects, Resource Utilization, Planning & Administration, Universities

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INTRODUCTION

The introduction of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETF) in the Nigerian educational system signified the dynamic effort of government to improve the poor funding of education in the country. The establishment of the Fund resulted from the Longe Commission which recommended imposition of a two per cent Higher Education Tax on the profits declared by the companies incorporated in Nigeria (Jaji, 2006). The Federal Government of Nigeria accepted the recommendation with an amendment that the tax collected should be utilized for improving all levels of the nation's education; (primary, secondary and the tertiary).

The dialogue between the Federal Government and Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in the aftermath of ASUU 1991-1992 industrial action resulted in the promulgation of the Education Tax Decree No.7 of 1993 (Jaji, 2006). Moreover, the Tertiary Education Trust Fund came into being at a time when the education sector had suffered many years of neglect by successive governments, which resulted in large-scale decay of institutional facilities, physical structures, academic, teaching and research equipment (Ihuoma, 2008). In addition, teachers' morale had been dampened and genuine interest in teaching and learning had been eroded by poor conditions in the nation's educational system.

This therefore posed a lot of challenges in fund management to resolve the diverse problems facing the sector; TETF is seen by the education sector as the alternative source of funding for running the educational system (Adeniran, 2006). Jaji (2006) postulated that the real challenges of TETF include: the ability to boost stakeholder confidence in the fund by maintaining a high standard of transparency as well as efficient and effective operation; managing the available funds to meet stakeholder needs; ensuring judicious use of the scarce resources available; and making sufficient impact in the intervention sector to encourage the tax payers to continue supporting the program. Other challenges include the ability to influence decisions to enhance teacher morale to rekindle interest in teaching and learning in Nigeria; and to sufficiently sensitize and collaborate effectively with the Federal Inland Revenue Service to ensure and build maximum revenue base from tax collected.

Aghenta (1993) postulated that other areas that have received attention in the education sector include educational statistics, teacher's demand and supply, school building and maintenance, book supply, as well as evaluation of learning outcomes. The objectives of qualitative education are physically expressed through construction, internal arrangement, utilization and management of school resources. This is the main reason for providing and effectively utilizing school infrastructure necessary for effective teaching and learning.

BACKGROUND

Concept of Resources Utilization

Resources are the assets necessary for attaining educational objectives and effective teaching and learning processes at the school level. Teaching and learning do not take place in a vacuum but rather in a structured environment. Educational resources include human and non-human (material, physical and financial) resources (Abdul Kareem, 2011). Human resources are the students and staff; material resources refer to the instructional materials while physical resources include the classrooms, lecture theatres, administrative block, libraries,



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laboratories, workshops, assembly halls, toilets and other structures. According to Adeogun and Osifila (2008), financial resources are the monetary inputs available for and expended on the education system. Therefore, resources are crucial factors in student academic achievement in schools, colleges and universities. Ijaiya (2004) opined that education without quality is a destroyer and a betrayal of trust.

Ihuoma (2008) elucidated that facilities management is an integral part of the overall school management. Actualization of the educational goals and objectives requires the provision and maximum utilization of essential resources. School facilities contribute the major components of both direct and indirect action elements in the learning environment. Nwogwu (2000) stated that the quality of education that children receive bears direct relevance to the availability or lack of physical facilities and overall atmosphere in which learning takes place, while Hallack (1990) emphasized that the availability, relevance and adequacy of educational resource items contribute to academic achievement, and that unattractive school buildings, crowded classrooms, non-availability of playing ground and surroundings bereft of aesthetic beauty contribute to poor student academic performance.

Knezevich cited in NCER (2003) emphasized that physical needs are met by providing safe structure, adequate sanitary facilities, and a balanced visual environment while emotional needs are met by creating pleasant surroundings, a friendly atmosphere, and an inspiring environment. The educational system has undergone tremendous changes in its philosophy, broadened goals and objectives, new approaches to service delivery and architectural design. Other changes include quantum leap in school enrolment, multiplicity of curricula programmes and extra-curricular activities, introduction of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and expanded academic support services such as guidance services to students, teachers and community, and integration of the school and community. The resultant effect of all these changes is the need for creative and innovative steps in school facilities management.

Ihuoma (2008) emphasized that both teachers and students need flexible modern facilities for academic and social activities. Effective resources utilization is crucial for achieving goals and objectives at every level of education. Thus, it is imperative to investigate the relationship between physical resource utilization and institutional goal achievement, especially through students' academic performance. This study therefore set out to address this problem focusing on Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETF) intervention projects and their utilization in sampled universities in South Western geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Funding of education in Nigerian universities, according to Nnoli (2006), has been experiencing inadequacies in government budgetary allocation. This development has adversely affected growth of the education sector, particularly the university system (Durosaro, 2012). The facilities in most Nigerian universities today are deplorable. School enrolments are expanding fast; but the supply of equipment and facilities cannot meet up with the expansion. In fact, there are insufficient funds to procure new equipment and facilities despite some of the existing ones becoming overstretched and obsolete. Hence, existing facilities need to be properly utilized.

Cognizant of inadequate funding of education, the Federal Government established the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETF) to ameliorate the problem of funding in Nigerian educational institutions, with particular reference to tertiary institutions. The TETF is an important stakeholder in the nation's educational system. The Fund has been assisting tremendously in improving the educational resources in tertiary institutions of learning. This study examined the efforts of TETF in complementing the efforts of the universities in Nigeria in the area of facilities provision. Specifically, this study was focused on the following:



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- (1) Areas of TETF intervention in universities in South-Western Nigeria.
- (2) Resource utilization rates in terms of time, space and global utilization rates in universities in South-West Nigeria, towards students' academic performance.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The major purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship among Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETF) intervention projects, and resource utilization in South-Western Nigerian universities. The specific objectives of this study, therefore, were to:

- (1) examine the areas of TETF intervention projects in universities of South Western Nigerian;
- (2) establish the relationship between TETF intervention projects and resource utilization in the universities toward student academic performance;
- (3) measure the rates of resource utilization in terms of time and space utilization rates in the universities.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- RQ 1 What are the areas of intervention and the amounts expended on TETF intervention projects in South-Western Nigerian universities?
- RQ 2 What are the utilization rates of TETF available physical resources in South Western Nigerian universities?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

- Ho₁:** There is no significant relationship between time utilization rate of physical facilities and students' academic performance in South-Western Nigerian universities.
- Ho₂:** There is no significant relationship between space utilization rate of physical facilities and students' academic performance in South-Western Nigerian universities,

METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted in this study was descriptive research of correlation type. It was used to determine the relationship between TETF intervention projects and resource utilization in the universities.

The study examined TETF intervention projects and resource utilization in universities in South Western Nigeria. The investigation was carried out in six institutions that constituted the sample out of the population of 14 universities (representing 43%). The six universities were selected using purposive sampling technique.

Three instruments were used for data collection. These were "TETF Intervention Projects Checklist" (TETFIPC), "Educational Facilities Checklist" (EFC) and "Resources Utilization Checklist" (RUC). The instruments were validated by three experts in Educational Management in the University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. Copies of the instruments were personally administered by the researchers in the sampled universities.



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Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the collected data. Descriptive statistics used were percentages, means and standard deviation, while Pearson product-moment correlation statistic was used to test the three hypotheses at .05 level of significance.

RESULTS

RQ 1: What are the areas of intervention and the amounts expended on TETF intervention projects in south western Nigerian universities between 2002 and 2006?

Table 1

Areas of TETF Intervention and the Amounts expended (in USD) on TETF areas of intervention between 2002 and 2006 (at the current rate of 160 Naira per US Dollar)

Areas of Intervention	Total Amount Expended	Total No of Projects Executed/No of Beneficiaries	% Allocation
Provision of Buildings	7,038,876.43	50	64.5
Transportation Facilities	219,289.06	5	2.0
Staff Training And Development Opportunities	119,688.13	20	1.1
Laboratory Equipment	3,255,561.68	240	29.9
Renovation of Buildings	276,716.25	30	2.5
Total	10,910,131.55	325	100

Results in Table 1 indicate that building construction allocation constituted the highest bulk of the TETF intervention in the selected universities (64.5%). This is followed by laboratory equipment (29.9%), while staff training and development opportunities had the least allocation of 1.1%.



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RQ2: What are the utilization rates of TETF educational facilities in south-western Nigerian universities?

Table 2

TETF educational facilities utilization rates in South-Western Nigerian universities

Physical Facilities	Space Wise Utilization			Time Wise Utilization			Global utilization
	ENS	ANS	SUR %	ANH	TNH	TUR %	GUR%
Lecture theatre	750	1,200	160	80	65	123.7	197.9
Lecturers' offices	1	1	100	8	11	72.7	72.7
Laboratory	50	150	300	65	70	92.9	287.7
Students' hostels	720	765	106.3	13	13	100	106.3
Workshop (computer RM)	900	600	66.7	12	12	100	66.7
Total			733.0			489.3	731.3
Average Rates			146.6			97.9	146.3

Keys:

ENS	–	Expected Number of Students
ANS	–	Actual Number of Students
SUR	–	Space Utilization Rates
ANH	–	Actual Number of Hours
TNH	–	Theoretical Number of Hours
TUR	–	Time Utilization Rate
GUR	–	Global Utilization Rates

Table 2 shows that science laboratory is the most over-utilized of all the TET Fund educational facilities provided in the institutions with global utilization rate of 287.7%, followed by lecture theatres, students' hostels, lecturers' offices and workshops (197.9%, 106.3%, 72.7% and 66.7%, respectively). This indicates that generally, most facilities provided by TETF to South-Western Nigerian universities were over-utilized as they were above 100% utilization rate except workshops and lecturers' offices.



Nevertheless, the reasons behind the over-utilization of resources provided by TETF can be connected to the fact that TETF intervention is the major provider of physical facilities in public educational institutions in Nigeria rather than serving as a complement in the provision of such facilities due to inadequate funds to run the institutions in recent years. As expressed by Sani (2007), school facilities in Nigerian schools are over utilized probably due to the yearly teeming student population generated by social pressures on the school system in a dwindling economy.

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between time utilization rate of physical facilities and students' academic performance in South-Western Nigerian universities.

Table 3

Time utilization rate of physical facilities and students' academic performance

Variable	N	X	SD	Calculated r-value	Critical r-value	Decision
Time utilization rate of physical facilities	1,800	33.32	36.44	.63	.195	Ho Rejected
Students' academic performance	1,800	18.46	16.37			

The results show that $r(1,800) = 0.63$, $p, \leq 0.05$. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. That is, there is a statistically significant and positive relationship between time utilization rate and students' academic performance in south-western Nigerian universities. In fact, the TETF assistance to South-Western universities had aided in effective goal achievement by the institutions. There is no gainsaying the fact that optimum utilization of resources can lead to improvement in students' academic performance. Adeboyeje (1998) and Oke (2005) elucidated that proper management and effective use of resource facilities could lead to enhanced student academic performance in school.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between space utilization rate of physical facilities and students' academic performance in South-Western Nigerian universities.

The results of data analysis to test the hypothesis are as shown in Table 4



Table 4

Space utilization rate of physical facilities and students' academic performance in South-Western Nigerian universities

Variable	N	X	SD	Calculated r-value	Critical r-value	Decision
Space utilization rate of physical facilities	1,800	33.32	36.44			
				.59	.195	Ho Rejected
Students' academic Performance	1,800	19.46	17.63			

The results show that $r(1,800) = 0.59$, $p \leq 0.05$. Thus, the hypothesis, which states that there is no significant relationship between space utilization rate and students' academic performance, is rejected. The results show that there is a moderate and positive significant relationship between space utilization rate and students' academic performance in south-western Nigerian universities. Since effective utilization of space could lead to improvement in students' academic performance (Oke, 2005), the gross overutilization of space in universities in South Western geo-political zone of Nigeria contributed to poor academic performance of students in the institutions.

Table 2 shows that the available physical facilities in South-Western Nigerian universities were generally over-utilized with space utilization rate of 146.6%. This means that the number of students actually using the resources far exceeded the intended official number of students for whom the facilities were originally designed and provided. This might result in unhealthy overcrowding of users of the available buildings, furniture and school infrastructure. The over congestion would make it extremely difficult for the available resources to satisfy the students' physiological needs, hence affecting their level of concentration on learning activities, which would in turn affect their academic performance.

Overutilization of school plants has been demonstrated by Corcoran, Walker and White (1998), in their study of overcrowded schools in New York City, to result in significantly lower scores in both Mathematics and Reading examinations. They also found that overcrowding negatively affected classroom activities and instructional techniques. In addition, overcrowding also affected students' concentration on lessons and made it difficult for teachers to engage in innovative teaching methods that would improve student learning. At the secondary level, Ibitoye (2003) affirmed that availability of educational facilities in the school enhanced high success rate in student academic work. No matter what level of education, effective utilization of school facilities such as lecture rooms, laboratory, libraries, staff rooms, and laboratory equipment can influence student academic performance.

CONCLUSION

This study established that ETF intervention projects and resource utilization are related to the academic goal achievement of universities in South-Western Nigeria. The study further indicated that TETF's areas of intervention such as provision of buildings, provision of laboratory equipment and educational facilities are over-utilized by the lecturers and students,



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Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETF) in Nigeria has been doing a good job in providing facilities in the sampled universities; but there is need to ensure optimal utilization of such facilities to enhance goal achievement in the institutions. It is hoped that this would motivate the TETF authorities to increase their fund allocation to provide the much-needed educational facilities in the institutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Having established the positive influence of TETF intervention projects on academic goal achievement in the universities, we would like to make the following recommendations:

- For effective planning and administration of university programmes, adequate funds are needed to procure necessary facilities for effective teaching-learning process. The TETF needs to provide more funds to universities, especially for improving physical facilities. Extra funds could be realized by increasing the education tax from the current 2% to 4%.
- For optimal benefits from TETF contributions to tertiary institutions, especially universities in Nigeria, periodic evaluation of completed TETF projects is required as well as fund utilization to ensure that allocations are properly used for approved projects.
- The TETF should improve on the provision of educational facilities to universities for staff and students' use. This could be done if the Federal Government of Nigeria would increase the deduction of education tax from 2% to 4% and collaborate with the World Bank and other funding agencies as being practiced in other countries of the world such as Norway, Spain, and United Kingdom.
- The university administration should discourage over-utilization of TETF projects because teaching-learning process could only be effective when classrooms are not congested. The internally generated revenues should be increased to complement TETF's efforts in providing educational facilities for institutions.
- The universities should continue to utilize available resources effectively so that they can have access to more funding sources.
- Education Trust Fund should demonstrate uniformity in the quality of construction of buildings through effective supervision in order to ensure longer lasting utilization.



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