

## Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) and Manpower Development in Akwa Ibom State University, Nigeria (2012-2024)

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### Abstract

Inadequate manpower is a prominent constraint plaguing Nigerian tertiary education and militating against its global competitiveness. This study examined the relationship between the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) and manpower development of academic staff in Akwa Ibom State University (AKSU) between 2012 and 2024. The survey research method was adopted, while the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was employed for data analysis. The public goods theory served as the theoretical guide. Findings revealed a significant relationship between TETFund and academic staff development, including conference attendance. The research recommended, amongst others, that TETFund should implement an upward review of the prevailing amount for the training of academic staff, AKSU should provide a guaranteed financial allocation annually for manpower development of academic staff and that the National Universities Commission should impose a minimum percentage of conference attendance which beneficiary institutions must approve for their academic staff.

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### **Background to the Study**

The readiness of an organization to expose its workforce to regular training and retraining is a compelling necessity for effective service delivery and the realization of organizational goals. Indeed, building the capacity of an employee is akin to sharpening the equipment of an artisan. Staff development enhances honing of skills necessary for innovativeness, creativity and responsiveness to contemporary career demands. In Nigeria, the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) is an agency mandated to sponsor academic staff in all public universities, polytechnics and colleges of education to undergo master and doctoral degree programmes. Staff development refers to the provision of facilities that will enable members of staff to develop themselves professionally or academically to function more efficiently in the discharge of their duties within the university system. Staff development is made available to deserving academic and non-teaching staff members on individual merit for self-development through retraining, advancement of studies, research and skills improvement. The essence of staff development is to maintain a strong base of staff that is self-motivated, highly creative, efficient, foresighted and adaptable to changes and innovations (Akwa Ibom University Conditions of Service, 2018).

Before the establishment of TETFund in 2011, the Nigerian Government had created some agencies to address some constraints in the education sector. The Education Trust Fund was established for this purpose as well as other policies like the National Policy on Education (2014), the National Universities Commission (NUC) policies on staff development programmes, recruitment, infrastructure and lecturers-students ratio (Alemu, 2018); Ananyi & Onyekwere, 2024).

Tertiary education refers to post-secondary education in tertiary institutions. The emphasis of such education includes the development of appropriate high-level manpower, intellectual capability of individuals and acquisition of skills (Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN), 2004). The National Policy on Education expressly states that the goals of tertiary education are to contribute to national development through high-level manpower training, reduce skill shortages through lifelong education, which constitutes the foundation of the educational policy and the production of relevant skilled workers, amongst others. As one of the public universities in Nigeria, Akwa Ibom State University has been one of the beneficiaries of TETFund-sponsored manpower development programmes, specifically on staff development and academic conference attendance.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Over the years, paucity of manpower has been one of the major constraints bedeviling tertiary education in Nigeria. The resultant consequences on teaching, learning and other aspects of the tertiary education system are alarming, with a massive exodus of university lecturers (brain drain) to foreign universities with better conditions of service. The shortage of manpower further brings about an outrageous lecturer-student ratio in Nigerian public universities. Another downside of tertiary education in Nigeria is

underfunding, which results in decayed infrastructural facilities, declining working conditions, and inadequate academic staff, among others.

Following the abysmal and declining welfare of academic staff in the nation's public universities, it has become difficult and uninspiring for academic staff to aspire for higher degrees and conference attendance at their own expense. It was against this backdrop that the Federal Government of Nigeria established the TETFund in 2011 to upgrade staff development, and sponsor eligible academic staff for Master and Doctorate programmes and conferences locally and internationally, although the foreign component of TETFund staff development has recently been suspended

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of the study is to examine the impact of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) on the manpower development of academic staff in Akwa Ibom State University between 2012 and 2024.

The specific objectives of the study are to:

- i. Ascertain the extent to which the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) has contributed to academic staff development in Akwa Ibom State University.
- ii. Determine the impact of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) on conference attendance of academic staff in Akwa Ibom State University.

### **Research Questions**

- i. To what extent has the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) contributed to academic staff development in Akwa Ibom State University?
- ii. Does the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) perform any significant role in the conference attendance of academic staff in Akwa Ibom State University?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated:

- i. There is no significant relationship between the contribution of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund and academic staff development in Akwa Ibom State University.
- ii. The Tertiary Education Trust Fund does not significantly intervene in the conference attendance of academic staff at Akwa Ibom State University.

### **Conceptual review**

#### **The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund)**

TETFund was set up in 2011 in response to the advocacy by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) to the infrastructural deficit, paucity of manpower and brain drain occasioned by inadequate funding in the nation's public universities. The Fund was mandated to utilize the education tax for government-owned tertiary institutions. It was also meant to provide general support to all levels of universities, polytechnics and colleges of education. The emergence of TETFund heralded the era of the rehabilitation,

restoration and consolidation of tertiary education in Nigeria, to replace the erstwhile Education Tax Fund (ETF) (TETFund Act, 2011; Olatunji, 2018).

The history of TETFund is intertwined with the Education Tax Act of 1993, which introduced a new dimension of funding tertiary education in Nigeria (Adekunle, 2020). The TETFund Act, 2011, demanded that companies allocate 2 per cent of their assessable profits in Nigeria, which the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) collects in the ratio of 2:1:1 to a fund dedicated to tertiary education. This new era of financial support tremendously strengthens the education sector and serves as a giant step towards investment in human capital development. It focuses on sustaining a workable mechanism for the support of tertiary institutions (Okafor, 2020). Later, the tax was reviewed to 2.5 per cent by the Finance Act of 2021 and further increased to 3 per cent by the Finance Act of 2023, effective September 2023.

The emergence of the TETFund altered the landscape of tertiary education in Nigeria. The Fund's intervention cuts across the development of infrastructure, support for research activities and capacity building, and exemplifies a concerted effort to align Nigerian tertiary education with global best practices. This transformation depicts a collective aspiration to reposition Nigeria's academic institutions as centres of competitiveness, innovation and excellence in the international arena (Ogunbameru, 2018); Adeyemi, 2018).

The Fund was created for the provision and maintenance of:

- a) Essential physical infrastructure for teaching and learning
- b) Materials and support for teaching and learning
- c) Research activities and publications
- d) Training and capacity building of academic staff
- e) Any other matter which the Board of Trustees considers necessary for the development of tertiary institutions (TETFund Act, 2011; Ibrahim, 2016).

### **TETFund Interventions on Manpower Development of Academic Staff**

**Academic Staff Training and Development:** Staff training and development indicate a fundamental approach to achieving organizational goals and corporate goals. Training is important because it helps them to acquire the necessary skills, capabilities and personal capacity to contribute more adequately to organizational and national development. Regardless of how advanced in science and technology an organization is, the training and development of its human resources are what can enhance productivity rather than its physical assets alone. The required facilities to achieve success may be available, but a lack of trained manpower stalls performance. The contribution of human capital in the development of any organization cannot be overemphasized because it is human resources rather than other factors of production that contribute to the ultimate basis of organisational and national wealth (Harbison & Myers, 2013).

The training of academic staff represents an initiative that provides the opportunity for academic staff to pursue higher degrees in Nigeria and abroad. It is only recently, specifically on November 25, 2024, that TETFund issued a notification indicating the suspension of the foreign component of the Fund's scholarship for academic staff (TSAS) intervention. According to the Fund, the justification for the suspension is based on “the current excessive cost of training in foreign institutions coupled with the high rate of absconsion of scholars” after their studies. Academic staff training is essential for enhancing teaching, research, and service delivery in higher education institutions. It is a systematic effort to enhance the teaching, research, and service skills of faculty members. Academic staff training and development usually involve a long and sometimes uncertain period of education and preparation that individuals undergo in order to pursue careers in academia. It entails obtaining a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) and includes a combination of coursework, research and supervision by a research committee. The Fund has also approved post-doctoral fellowship programmes for Ph.D degree holders among academic staff who have completed their doctorate programmes within a period not exceeding five years. The essence of the post-doctorate programmes is the acquisition of additional research experience with the objective of honing their research skills as well as preparing them for leadership in their respective academic fields.

Training is a way of impartation on the organization workforce to perform their current jobs and helping them acquire the skills they need to be effective performers by assuming new responsibilities and adapting to changing conditions. Training and development include classroom instructions, on-the-job training, apprenticeship, off-the-job training, various work experiences and formal education (Jones et al., 2000). An employee is largely productive when there are deliberate efforts to expose the workforce to regular training. As an ongoing process, staff development is the improvement of staff morale, creation of a sense of belonging, enhancement of job satisfaction and employee motivation, as well as fostering of enhanced performance (Amin, et al., 2020).

The Academic Staff Training & Development (AST&D) of TETFund became a full department in the year 2013. The AST&D department has three main academic content-based interventions, namely:

- a. TETFund Scholarship for Academic Staff (TETFSAS) Programme introduced in 2018.
- b. Conference Attendance (CA) Programme introduced in 2010
- c. Teaching Practice (TP) Programme introduced in 2012

There are a total of 214 public (State and Federal) tertiary institutions in the country that benefit from the Department's intervention programmes. Between 2011 and 2022, TETFund approved over 10,632 sponsorships to lecturers for Ph.D programmes within Nigeria and 9,072 for lecturers undergoing Master's programmes. For the foreign component of TETFund sponsorship, the Fund also sent over 4,485 lecturers abroad for Ph.D programmes and over 3,192 Master's degree candidates abroad within the same period. For the teaching supervision programme in federal and state colleges of



education, 71,263 lecturers enjoyed sponsorship, making a total of 98,644 academic staff across public tertiary institutions in the country to attend foreign conferences (Echono, 2022).

According to Ikpetan (2025), TETFund has sponsored over 18,766 lecturers for Ph.D and over 14,159 others for Master's degrees between 2011 and 2024. For the foreign component, over 5,172 other lecturers secured sponsorship to foreign institutions for Ph.D and 3,541 for Master's degrees within the period under consideration. Further, an estimated 18,309 academic staff were sponsored to foreign conferences, 4,516 non-academic staff benefited from the same sponsorship, 251,946 lecturers were sponsored for local conferences, and 45,005 non-academic staff benefited from the same sponsorship. The cumulative number of academic staff in public tertiary institutions who benefited from TETFund sponsorship in the last 13 years stood at 94,963.

### **Conference Attendance**

Conference attendance is another intervention line of the TETFund. The Fund sponsors academic staff from public tertiary institutions to attend local and international conferences aimed at upgrading their research skills and bringing them on par with their counterparts globally. Generally, a conference refers to a meeting for deliberation, usually utilised by organisations. The conference assumes different forms, namely, academic conferences, business conferences, professional conferences, trade conferences, and news conferences, amongst others. In the view of Ozuchukwu et al. (2016); Afshan et al. (2012), conferences are deployed to tackle a single or a set of problems. This may involve sessions of various types, such as lectures, panel discussions, workshops, etc. Conference attendance provides an avenue for academic staff to advance their professionalisation by providing opportunities to learn about new tools and trends and to brainstorm with colleagues. It allows such participants to have first-hand international and local experience and exposure in their various fields as well as interact with peers across the globe. In Akwa Ibom State University, 96 academic staff attended foreign conferences and 251 local conferences totaling 347 between 2012 and 2024.

### **Manpower Development**

Manpower refers to the workforce or persons that collaborate at the workplace to execute an activity in fulfilment of the objective(s) of such an organization. In other words, manpower entails the human beings involved in providing goods or rendering services. Manpower is a significant requirement in the development of any organization or nation. It refers to human capital rendered by physical and or mental efforts of people rather than machines (Olanrewaju & Folarin, 2013; Olaniyin & Ojo, 2008). In the view of Ivancevich & Matherson (2002), the role of every manager in an organization involves the improvement of the capacity of the employee towards effective service delivery. The essence of training includes assisting the employees to adapt to an ever-changing environment and technological innovation, bridging the gap between existing, expected performance and actual performance. Training is inevitable as it is required for instructing new employees, updating the knowledge base of the existing workforce and

developing relevant skills and effective training programmes. An organization that accords premium to manpower development and other forms of capacity building reduces the occurrence of grievances thereby guaranteeing job retention (Atairet & Ndaeyo, 2022). In organizations, manpower has been identified as the most important factor required for the maximization of objectives and increased productivity. The availability of skilled and trained manpower is needed to boost employees' morale at the workplace. Admittedly, manpower development and employee welfare have a strong positive relationship. Investment in staff training and development programmes for staff contributes to their overall well-being by enhancing their skills, career progression opportunities and job satisfaction ultimately leading to increased motivation. A poorly trained workforce constitutes a limitation to the overall well-being of the employees (Tom & Ndaeyo, 2024). Manpower development is a continuing process that strives to advance an organization's utilization of its human resources. To realize the optimum capacity of the personnel in an organization, they should be regularly trained in their lines of duty. It entails the improvement of skills and endowments of the labour force to engender sustained economic growth (Kurama & Idris, 2019).

As one of the premium functions of human resource development in a rapidly evolving global economic environment, training and development entails formal programmes designed to develop skills and abilities, while development connotes the preparation for future assignments while ensuring an improvement in the capacity to perform at a current task. Training and development sustain the process of obtaining and increasing the numerical strength of persons who possess the required endowments which are germane to the socio-economic and political development of the nation. The role of manpower development cannot be overemphasised as society undergoes technological changes, innovations and scientific improvements (Folayan, 2010).

Training and development programmes dwell on improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the human resource component of an organization. Different organizations including tertiary institutions require material, financial and human resource components for optimal performance. It is the human resource component that oversees the development of other components (Chemutai, 2020). Training programme develops the workforce for optimum utilization of their human resources in favour of gaining competitive advantage and the organizations for the development of the university system (Paul & Audu, 2019). Manpower development is the enhancement of human resources through formal education and training. Mole (2005) views human resources development as concerned with the provision of learning and development opportunities, the creation of training intervention options, implementing and evaluation of training programmes. Manpower development is to ensure that the organization has the quality workforce needed to achieve the goals of improved performance. Therefore, manpower development is defined as the process of elaborating, planning, training and assessment of training programmes on the workforce to enhance their performance in the organization.

Nwogwugwu & Nwogwugwu (2020) noted the importance of capacity building to include the following:

- i. To assist in reducing over-dependence on external experts as sources of impartation, and solutions to community issues.
- ii. Foster a sense of ownership and empowerment.
- iii. Boost the productivity of employees
- iv. Help reduce turnover
- v. Strengthens employee confidence, skills, knowledge and resources.

In our current dispensation, nations crave skills among employees. The existence of a skill-based economy relies on the competence of the available workforce as innovations, currency of knowledge and application of ideas are considered essential. The main idea underlying human resource development focuses on the need to keep employees abreast of current innovations and versatile so that they can perform their roles optimally and resourcefully in this age of accelerated socio-economic, political, scientific and technological innovations in a globalised world (Kurama & Idris, 2019).

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical guide adopted for this study is the public goods theory propounded by Paul Samuelson in 1954, as cited in Kpee (2019). This theoretical perspective reveals a holistic platform which unveils the complexities and dynamics of public goods, especially within the domain of education as a societal value with inherent features of non-excludability and non-rivalry settings.

The public goods theory hinges on two major assumptions. The first is that goods once produced or services rendered for the same consumers can be utilised by more consumers without incurring additional cost. Second, the assumption is based on the notion of non-excludability as embedded in the public goods theory, which indicates that it is difficult to restrain people from consuming the goods or enjoying the services once they have been produced. In the view of Samuelson, goods or services with these features will experience under-production in the private sector or total non-production. In consonance with established norms, economic efficiency demands that public institutions should compel citizens to contribute to the production of public goods and services. Thereafter, all citizens should be allowed to benefit from them because public goods benefit the entire citizens. The allusion to the public nature inherent in the theory stems from the public purpose, public ownership and public control associated with the administration of TETFund in discharging its mandate of providing sponsorship to academic staff in Nigerian public tertiary institutions. For this study, the relevance of the public goods theory could be appreciated from the perspective that education is regarded as a public good because it is provided by the public authorities to everyone who chooses to embrace the opportunity. In this context, the TETFund is a public institution providing scholarships and sponsorships for academic staff to acquire higher degrees and attend conferences. This theoretical perspective justifies enormous public expenditure in education. This position is premised on the assumption that it is only the government that



has the wherewithal to adequately cater for education adequately considering the various associated external factors.

Akwa Ibom State University, being a public institution for the public interest, benefits from TETFund-sponsored academic staff development programmes and conferences. By so doing, education as a public good is made available and affordable to the public through the current 3 per cent assessable profits collected from companies by the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS).

## Methodology

### The Research Design

The research design adopted for this work is a qualitative and survey method. This research design was chosen because of the fact that a given sample was considered to be a representative of the entire population studied by collecting, collating and analyzing relevant data on the problem under consideration.

### Population of the Study

The population of this study comprised the beneficiaries of TETFund Intervention from 2012 to 2024 in Akwa Ibom State University (AKSU), Nigeria. The academic staff strength is 450.

**Table 1:** Population of Academic Staff of Akwa Ibom State University (AKSU)

Categories	Population	Percentage (%)
PhD	178	39.6
Master	242	53.8
Others	30	6.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** AKSU-Staff Directory (2024)

### Sample Size Determination

Taro Yamane's formula was used to determine the sample size. The formula was used because the sample size is definite and known. The sample size is given as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where;

n = desired sample size

N = Total population

I = constant

e = Accepted margin of error

In this study,

$$N = 450$$

$$e = 5\% \text{ or } 0.05$$

To determine the sample size,

$$n = \frac{450}{1+450(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{450}{1+450(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{450}{1+1.125}$$

$$n = \frac{450}{2.125}$$

$$n = 211.8$$

$$n = 212 \text{ Approximately}$$

The number of questionnaires administered was 212.

### **Methods of Data Collection**

A collection of questionnaires, a focus group discussion guide and an interview were the major tools used in collecting data.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

Simple statistical tools like frequency and percentage distributions were employed. Efforts were made to interpret the subjects' opinions and views. The simple percentage (%) method of data analysis was used for analyzing the research questions. The Pearson's Product-Moment correlation coefficient statistical tool was deployed for the study. The results were subjected to analysis through the use of the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS Ver.20.0, 2011).

## Data Analyses

### Data Presentation

**Table 2:** Beneficiaries of TETFund AST&D Intervention (AKSU) 2012-2024

YEAR	LOCATION		SEX		PROGRAMME TYPE			TOTAL
	FO	LO	M	F	MASTER	PhD	OTHERS	
2024	3	-	3	-	-	2	P.doc-1	3
2023	1	4	4	1	-	5	-	5
2022	4	6	7	3	2	8	-	10
2021	4	2	4	2	-	5	BW-1	6
2020	2	4	4	2	-	5	BW-1	6
2019	-	5	5	-	-	5	-	5
2018	5	8	11	2	-	13	-	13
2017	-	8	7	1	1	7	-	8
2016	5	11	14	2	4	12	-	16
2015	8	10	12	6	7	11	-	18
2014	9	-	8	1	6	3	-	9
2012	7	-	5	2	4	3	-	7
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>106</b>
<b>G/TOTAL</b>	<b>48+58=106</b>		<b>84+22=106</b>		<b>24+79+3=106</b>			

**Source:** AKSU-TETFund Committee (2024)

Table 2 shows beneficiaries of the TETFund Academic Staff Training & Development intervention in Akwa Ibom State University (AKSU), 2012-2024. The table shows a higher rate of PhD - 78 (74%) beneficiaries than those of Master's, which is 24 (22.6%) within the period under study. Notable also was a higher rate of male beneficiaries, 84 (79%), higher than that of females, 22 (21%). The number of staff members benefiting from foreign and local training and development was 48 (45%) and 58 (55%), respectively. The highest record of beneficiaries was recorded in 2015, numbering 18 (17%), closely followed by beneficiaries in 2016, numbering 16 (15%) and 13 (12%) beneficiaries in 2018.

**Table 3:** Beneficiaries of TETFund Conference Attendance (AKSU) 2012-2024

Serial No	1-15	16-	35-	61-	87-	92-	119-	245-	Total	
<b>Range</b>		<b>34</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>347</b>		
<b>Year of</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020-2024</b>	
<b>Conference</b>										
<b>Type:</b>										
<b>Foreign</b>	8	15	24	18	3	1	8	19	No	96
<b>Local</b>	7	4	2	8	2	26	118	84	Conference	251
									Attendance	
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>103</b>		<b>347</b>

**Source:** AKSU-TETFund Committee (2024)

Table 3 shows the record of beneficiaries of TETFund conference attendance in Akwa Ibom State University (AKSU), 2012-2024. The table indicates that the local conference

attendance was higher, 251 (72%), than the foreign 96 (28%) component. Notable from the table was the high rate of attendance in 2018, numbering 126 (36.3%), which was followed by that of 2019, numbering 103 (29.7%). From the table, there was no conference or workshop between 2020 and 2024.

### Analysis of Research Questions

The analysis of data obtained from the questionnaire was consistent with the research questions and the hypotheses, and the same is presented in the tables below. 20 was used as the mean value to determine the mean for the items in the different sections. So, any item in the instrument which had a mean equal to or higher than 2.0 was regarded as 'agreed' while items with less than 2.0 was regarded as 'disagreed.'

**Table 4:** Mean Values on TETFund Intervention and Academic Staff Training Development Programmes **N = 200**

S/N	Items	fx	x	Decision
1	Funds are disbursed by TETFund to AKSU for academic staff training and development on annual basis.	200	1.0	Disagree
2	TETFund contribution towards staff acquisition of higher degrees are effective.	400	2.0	Agree
3	TETFund sensitizes academic staff on the available opportunities for further studies and modalities for accessing the funds.	600	3.0	Agree
4	TETFund intervention for academic staff has improved manpower development in AKSU.	400	2.0	Agree
5	TETFund intervention programmes have significantly solved the problem of low access to funds for further studies.	600	3.0	Agree
6	The selection process of beneficiaries for TETFund academic staff development in AKSU is based on merit.	200	1.0	Disagree
7	The foreign component of TETFund sponsorship is accessible to academic staff.	200	1.0	Disagree
8	The requirements and procedures for accessing TETFund sponsorship is flexible.	200	1.0	Disagree
9	Academic staff have benefited from other forms of financial assistance for further studies from their institutions.	200	1.0	Disagree

**Source:** Field Survey, 2024

The results in Table 4 show the analysis of responses on the Fund's impact on the manpower development of academic staff (Master's and PhD sponsorship). It was observed that respondents with a mean response of 1.0 disagreed that AKSU got annual allocations from TETFund for this intervention. Thus, respondents agreed that TETFund has assisted academic staff in the acquisition of higher degrees, as Akwa Ibom State University does not sponsor staff or augment such sponsorship from revenue derived from any other source. This was revealed in responses to item nine. Responses to item five, with a mean average of 3.0, agreed that the Fund helped enormously in addressing

the challenge of inadequate funding as it concerns staff acquisition of higher degrees. This has significantly enhanced staff development in Akwa Ibom State University, as revealed by the response to item four, with a positive mean response of 2.0.

With regard to the internal administration of AKSU, it was observed that respondents in item three agreed that there was proper information dissemination about TETFund Academic Staff Training and Development intervention programmes, as well as modalities for accessing such funding. This corroborates their agreement that Management of Akwa Ibom State University encourages and approves staff applications for TETFund sponsorship. Thus, the process of choosing the beneficiaries constitutes a great problem, as respondents, on item six, disagreed on the objectivity and fairness of the process. Responses to item seven disagreed that the foreign component of TETFund sponsorship is accessible to academic staff. Responses to item eight noted constraints encountered by staff in accessing funds. It was revealed that the documentation process required by TETFund and other conditions is rather cumbersome. The respondents further asserted that prospective applicants are expected to produce current admission letters, complete and submit bond forms and submit their degree certificates to the beneficiary institution as an undertaking of their preparedness to return after studies abroad. This poses difficulties due to unforeseen circumstances, such as strikes, which delay staff from obtaining required admission letters. The responses to the issues raised are that the Fund has assisted lecturers to acquire higher degrees, which aimed at capacity building. In any case, studies have shown that academic staff training and development intervention programmes are aimed at supporting scholars to acquire higher degrees. This is essential for improvement in the quality of teaching and learning in tertiary institutions. However, challenges and bottlenecks hindering the full utilization of funds should be addressed for optimal benefits.



**Table 5:** Mean Values on TETFund Intervention and Conference/Workshop Attendance  
N = 200

S/N	Items	fx	x	Decision
1	Sufficient funds are made available by TETFund to AKSU for conference attendance on an annual basis.	200	1.0	Disagree
2	TETFund disburses funds towards conference attendance by academic staff.	600	3.0	Agree
3	TETFund create significant awareness among staff on sponsorship for Conference attendance as well as modalities for accessing the funds.	400	2.0	Agree
4	TETFund intervention on conferences has led to manpower development in AKSU.	600	3.0	Agree
5	TETFund intervention programmes have significantly solved the challenge of funding for further studies.	400	2.0	Agree
6	TETFund sponsorship of conference attendance has significantly improved the quality of tertiary education in AKSU	600	3.0	Agree
7	TETFund allocation for conference attendance for academic staff in AKSU is considered adequate.	600	3.0	Agree
8	The requirements and procedure for accessing TETFund funds for conference are not cumbersome.	200	1.0	Disagree
9	Academic staff benefit from other sources of sponsorship By AKSU for conferences.	200	1.0	Disagree
10	The selection process of beneficiaries for Conferences attendance is objective.	200	1.0	Disagree

**Source:** Field Survey, 2024

Results in Table 5 show TETFund's contribution towards staff conference attendance. The respondents, on item ten, disagreed that sufficient funds are provided by TETFund for conference attendance. Nevertheless, the respondents on items eleven, thirteen, fifteen and sixteen commended TETFund for the intervention as this has enabled academic staff to attend conferences. Respondents to items twelve and nineteen, respectively, agreed on adequate dissemination of information on the opportunities for TETFund intervention programmes. Respondents further asserted that though the University Management encourages and approves staff benefiting from TETFund interventions, some unfair practices were sometimes involved, making the selection process questionable.

The responses to item seventeen indicate that the modalities for accessing the fund from TETFund were cumbersome, thus making some lecturers unable to access the funds. Several complaints came from academic staff who stated that TETFund turns down some of their applications as they regard such conferences as being organized by unrecognized organizations. Another constraint is on the late arrival of abstract acceptance letters. The criteria for assessing TETFund funding have made the process quite difficult. Interactions with some officials of TETFund indicated that some of the processes were designed to forestall cases where beneficiaries of these funds divert them to other purposes without

attending the conference which the fund was approved. On the whole, the responses to the issues raised here are to the effect that TETFund has contributed enormously towards the attendance of conferences by academic staff. In the area of funding, concerted efforts should be made by benefiting institutions to access these funds for optimum benefit and increased manpower development. Therefore, conference attendance by academic staff is central to manpower development as it avails them the opportunity to develop relevant skills and interact with their counterparts from various fields across the world.

**Table 6:** Problems affecting the Efficient Performance of TETFund in Institutions

S/N	Items	No of Respondent	Percentage (%)
1	Institutional requirements like submission of original degree certificates discourage some academic staff from applying for the TETFund-sponsored staff development programme	84	42.0
2	Minimal support from other sources to complement the efforts of TETFund	26	13.0
3	TETFund scholarship is insufficient for academic programmes, conferences and research.	4	2.0
4	Insufficient information about TETFund interventions.	12	6.0
5	Some unfair practices exist in the selection of beneficiaries of TETFund-sponsored conferences	28	14.0
6	Delay in the release of approved funds	16	8.0
7	Bureaucratic procedures involved in accessing funds	20	10.0
8	Nonchalant attitude of staff to TETFund interventions	10	5.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Field Survey, 2024

The result in Table 6 reveals that the introduction of additional conditions by beneficiary institutions has militated against the effectiveness of TETFund. This scenario has resulted in poor accessibility of TETFund funding interventions annually, as it is being allocated on a rotational basis, which was confirmed by 84 (42%) respondents. The issue of certain unfair practices in the selection of beneficiaries, 28 (14.0%), has denied some eligible academic staff the opportunity of benefiting from TETFund interventions. A significant number, 20 (10%), shows that the rigid procedures and cumbersome processes involved

in accessing these interventions constituted an extra constraint to the performance of TETFund. The table shows that 26 (13%) respondents identified that much pressure has been imposed on TETFund to fulfill its mandate on manpower development, as most state governments tend to neglect the funding of state-owned tertiary institutions. Further interactions also revealed that the management of Akwa Ibom State University does not consider complementing the efforts of TETFund in the manpower development of academic staff. Other problems identified are the insufficient dissemination of information about TETFund interventions amongst staff and compelling prospective beneficiaries to sign bond forms and submit original copies of their degree certificates, which are requirements that are alien to the Fund. An insignificant number, 4 (2.0%), believed that funding is insufficient for the completion of master's and doctorate programmes, as well as conference attendance.

### Test of Hypotheses

This section focuses on the testing of hypotheses associated with the research objectives. The hypotheses were based on a 5% level of significance. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was used in testing the hypotheses. The results of the returned questionnaire were reflected on Microsoft Excel and then transferred to the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) for analysis and interpretation. Data used for the test were elicited from the responses to various questions in the questionnaire items that relate to the various hypotheses.

### Hypothesis One

- Ho:** There is no significant relationship between the contribution of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) and academic staff development in Akwa Ibom State University.
- H1:** There is a significant relationship between the contribution of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) and academic staff development in Akwa Ibom State University.

**Table 7:** Relationship between TETFund and Academic Staff Development in Akwa Ibom State University

Variables	TETFund	Academic Staff	Development
TETFund	Pearson Correlation	1	.164
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.025
	N	200	200
.183	Pearson Correlation	1	
Academic Staff			
Development	Sig. (2-tailed)	.025	
	N	200	200

Results in Table 7 above reveal the relationship between TETFund and academic staff development in Akwa Ibom State University. The correlation coefficient (r) value of .164 revealed a significant relationship between TETFund and academic staff development in Akwa Ibom State University. Further, the table indicates a p-value of .025, which was less than the alpha value of .05. This shows that there was a significant relationship between TETFund and academic staff development in Akwa Ibom State University. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis indicating a significant relationship between the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) and academic staff development in Akwa Ibom State University was accepted.

### Hypothesis Two

**Ho:** Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) does not significantly intervene in the conference's attendance of Academic Staff in Akwa Ibom State University.

**H1:** Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) significantly intervenes in the conferences attendance of Academic Staff in Akwa Ibom State University.

**Table 8:** Relationship between TETFund and Conference Attendance in Akwa Ibom State University

Variables	TETFund	Academic Staff	Development
TETFund	Pearson Correlation	1	.173
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.020
	N	200	200
	Pearson Correlation		
.195	1		
Academic Staff			
Development	Sig. (2-tailed)	.020	
	N	200	200

In Table 8, the correlation coefficient (r) value of .173 obtained indicates a significant relationship between TETFund and conference attendance of academic staff in Akwa Ibom State University. The table also revealed a p-value of .020, which was less than the alpha value of .05, indicating there was a statistically significant relationship between TETFund and conference attendance by academic staff in Akwa Ibom State University. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

### Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

#### Summary of the Findings

In view of the findings of this study, some conclusions could be drawn regarding the role of TETFund on manpower development in Akwa Ibom State University between 2012 and 2024. With regard to the study, the majority of respondents expressed strong agreement on the effectiveness of TETFund in the promotion of Staff development and Conference attendance in Akwa Ibom State University. The findings are as follows:

- i. The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) has a significant relationship with academic staff development in Akwa Ibom State University. (P value =  $0.025 < 0.05$ ,  $r = 0.164$ ). The finding is supported by the study by Amin et al. (2020), which identified that the productivity of an employee, especially in the educational sector, is mainly dependent on the level of training acquired. It is expected that staff development, which is an ongoing process, culminates in improvement of staff morale, reduction in staff turnover, creates a sense of belonging, enhances job satisfaction and employee motivation, as well as fosters greater productivity and efficiency.
- ii. TETFund) has a significant relationship with conference attendance by staff of Akwa Ibom State University (P value =  $0.020 < 0.05$ ,  $r = 0.173$ ). The finding of the study is supported by studies by Asoya & Chukwu (2023), which asserted that various interventions have been accessed by employees in the respective beneficiary institutions, which have made an impact in capacity building.

### **Conclusion**

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) plays a significant role in the development of manpower through academic staff training and development, and sponsorship of staff to workshops and conferences in Akwa Ibom State University. TETFund has been active in the allocation of intervention funds to the various public higher institutions in the country. The universities, polytechnics and colleges of education and other public tertiary institutions are beneficiaries of TETFund intervention. Manpower development is a major factor for improved service delivery, staff efficiency, and overall job performance of the workforce in organizations. Nevertheless, additional funding is needed, especially for state-owned institutions, which seem to be neglected by their proprietors, making such institutions rely solely on TETFund for their development. This laxity has encouraged state governments to establish more institutions without consideration for adequate funding. Challenges such as poor awareness of TETFund's interventions by staff, biased selection policy and cumbersome documentation processes involved in assessing interventions are impediments to the actualisation of TETFund's objectives.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the foregoing findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are proffered:

1. The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) should undertake an upward review of the prevailing rate of sponsorship for academic staff undergoing staff development programmes.
2. The Akwa Ibom State University should provide a guaranteed annual allocation to augment TETFund's sponsorship for the manpower development of its academic Staff.
3. The National Universities Commission (NUC), in liaison with TETFund and the various benefitting institutions, should impose the minimum percentage of conference attendance that academic staff must fulfil annually.
4. The Tertiary Education Trust Fund should liaise with the National Assembly and



other stakeholders in the tertiary education sub-sector for legislation binding state governments to provide a certain percentage of their annual budgets to manpower development in their state-owned tertiary institutions.

5. The National Universities Commission (NUC) should collaborate with universities to institute a programme for regular conference attendance by academic staff at least once a year.

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