



Critical Investigation on the Impact of Economic and Post Pandemic Challenges on the Execution of TETFund Interventions in Tertiary Institutions in Southeast Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

The study critically investigated the impact of economically and post pandemic challenges on the execution of TETFund interventions in Tertiary Institutions in southeast, Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study. The study made use of descriptive survey design. The population of the study was 6,185 members of teaching and non-teaching staff in public tertiary institutions in southeast Nigeria. The sample of the study consisted of 575 members of teaching and non-teaching staff. The study adopted stratified random, simple random and proportionate random sampling techniques, choosing 10% of the staff members from each of the tertiary institutions. The instrument for data collection were structured questionnaire developed by the researcher and titled "Impact of economic and post pandemic challenge in the execution of Tertiary Education Trust Funds (TETFund) interventions in Tertiary Institutions (IEPPTIT) with 20 item statements duly validated by research experts. The data collected were analysed by descriptive statistics. The findings of the study showed that economic and post pandemic era had a lot of impact and challenges in the execution of TETFund interventions such as delay in the completion of staff development, major infrastructural projects, embargo on foreign scholarship, and so on. Recommendations were made in line with the findings.

Key words: Economic Challenges, Post Pandemic, TETFund Interventions, Tertiary Institutions

Introduction

The Nigerian tertiary education is a section of the educational system that is responsible for training and producing the required manpower that is vital for national transformation and economic development. Tertiary institutions are major platforms that educate the people, rejuvenate research, and provide community services and engagement to stimulate economic and cultural well-being of the society (Eze, 2011). It is the frontier of education and main index of national development and transformation where skills, knowledge and information are acquired as the vehicle for productivity, wealth creation, prosperity, healthy living, and competitiveness, communication expansion, scientific and technological advancement. The above enormous responsibilities bestowed on tertiary institutions could not be realized because public tertiary institutions in Nigeria have been bedeviled by poor funding, which became a critical challenge to the promotion of a good tertiary education standard, maintenance of physical infrastructure, training of lecturers and funding of research in the country among others. It is in reaction to the malaise of funding on the tertiary institutions that led to the establishment of TETFund interventions to promote growth and advancement of tertiary education in Nigeria. Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) is an institution established by the government to help in meeting up with the challenges facing the tertiary education with respect to teaching and learning. TETFund interventions is the sum of money allotted to different public tertiary institutions in Nigeria in order to help them meet up with the challenges facing them in areas of teaching and learning. Their main focus is on infrastructural development, scholarship or staff development, institutions research, conferences, etc. These interventions are deliberate actions towards preparing Nigerians for global competitiveness with the end goal of building a knowledge economy and increasing the country's global presence.

Accessing and execution of TETFund intervention by different tertiary institutions brought a great relieve to both the management and staff of tertiary institutions in southeast especially in infrastructural and human capital development until economically challenging and post pandemic era shook the world thus affecting institutions resources where the allocated funds being released by TETFund were not enough to execute any infrastructural project let alone been enough for those on scholarship, conferences, institutions research. Also this economic challenge led to daily increase in the price of things, increase in the school fees of different respective educational institutions, perennial decrease in the value of Naira, over pressure on foreign exchange rate. All these were the resultant effect of post pandemic era which sunk the global economy into the deepest recession in decades and has continued to

take an unprecedented toll on the economy. In an effort to contain and prevent the spread of the disease, governments across the globe imposed restrictions on movement, border closure and partial lock down; these also worsen the global economy including that of Nigeria.

Recently, the government is demanding for the deduction of 40% from tertiary institutions IGR. All these are means targeted on addressing the economically challenging situation as opined by Khanoba, F (2023). According to the government, the policy is in line with a finance circular with reference number FMFBNP/OTHERS/IGR/CRF/12/2021 and dated December 20, 2021 as cited in Khanoba, F (2023). In addition, having an effective articulation of the specific value of achieving equity in tertiary education during this time of economic and financial crisis, particularly in competition with other sectors for the reduced resources remain available, is imperative.

The experience is becoming more difficult in the execution of TETFund interventions by different tertiary institutions where the funds allocated to them could not meet up with the current trends of economic failure, devaluation of Naira and excessive load on Dollars hence there is an urgent need for upward review of TETFund interventions to tertiary institutions in order to bridge the gap created by post pandemic and economically challenging situation. This will be possible if the government could look into reviewing the tax being remitted into TETFund account. It is against this background therefore that the researcher critically investigated the economic and post pandemic challenges facing the tertiary institutions in the southeast, Nigeria in the execution of TETFund interventions.

Statement of the Problem

Education has been a big winner in recent years with substantial expansion in tertiary education access during the last several decades. Recent events in the area of Covid-19 which led to serious economic challenges put gains in a precarious state as the world economic crisis spurred reductions in resources, growing unemployment, and increasing poverty. Nigeria is battling galloping inflation, according to the [records](#) from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). The local currency has also plunged against the greenback, resulting in a high Naira to US dollar exchange rate which, in turn, leads to a steady rise in the cost of goods, including high cost of building materials and the negative effect the educational sectors in terms of decreased students enrolments, poor staff welfare, poor funding/subvention from the government, and so on. The current economic challenges and escalating costs confronting tertiary institutions, call for urgent government intervention on the upward review of TETFund intervention in order not to jeopardized the intention for the establishment of tertiary institutions and its expectations especially with regard to infrastructures, academic staff training and development, research and teaching materials. These will help to caution the effects of post pandemic which has redirected the era of physical learning to visual/ online learning. The funds by TETFund interventions to tertiary institutions are not enough in meeting up with these challenges facing the tertiary institutions especially in the execution of projects and TETFund scholarship, conferences and researches. This has become a herculean task considering the current economic situation.

When an economic crisis impacts the education sector negatively, the overall development of a nation worsens leading to illiteracy, unemployment, poverty, restlessness among youth, etc. Despite the efforts by the government, funding remains a critical challenge as expectations from TETFund continue to grow. The demand for more facilities, equipment, structures, training, and many others, tend to increase as more public tertiary institutions are established by both the state and federal governments. This research work addressed two contending issues: effects and the impacts of economic challenges and post pandemic in the execution of TETFund interventions. This will help to checkmate the above challenges facing tertiary institutions vis-à-vis TETFund interventions in order to prevent the threat it will pose to teaching and learning in tertiary institutions in southeast, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is on critically investigating the economic and post pandemic challenges facing the tertiary institutions in the southeast, Nigeria in the execution of TETFund interventions. Specifically, the study was designed to investigate the

1. The nature of economic and post pandemic challenges on the execution of TETFund interventions
2. Impact of economic and post pandemic challenges on the execution of TETFund intervention
3. The prospects on the execution of TETFund interventions.

Scope of the Study

The geographical scope of the study was limited to only public tertiary institutions in southeast, Nigeria while the content scope focused on tertiary institutions, economic, post pandemic and TETFund interventions as it pertains to the execution of TETFund interventions in the tertiary institutions in the south east, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the nature of economic and post pandemic challenges on the execution of TETFund interventions in Tertiary institutions in southeast Nigeria?
2. To what extent does an economic and post pandemic challenge affect the execution of TETFund interventions in Tertiary institutions in southeast, Nigeria?
3. What is the prospect need to curb these challenges facing the tertiary institutions in the execution of TETFund interventions in tertiary institutions in southeast Nigeria?

METHOD

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. According to Anikweze and Danladi (2021), descriptive survey are planned to gain more information about a particular characteristics within a particular field of study. The rational for the researcher's choice of this design was because data gathered from a representative of the staffs would be used to find out the impact of economic and post pandemic challenges in the execution of TETFund interventions in tertiary institutions in south-east, Nigeria. The study was carried out in south-east, Nigeria. South east is one of the six geo-political zones in Nigeria. It comprises of five states: Anambra, Imo, Enugu, Abia and Ebonyi States. The people in these states are mainly traders, public servants, entrepreneurs and artisans. They mostly speak Igbo and English. There are a total of 30 public tertiary institutions in the southeast Nigeria which comprises both federal and state colleges of education, polytechnics and universities.

The population of this study consists of 6,185 teaching and non-teaching members of staff from all the public tertiary institutions in South east Nigeria.

A sample of 575 staffs as respondents was used for the study. The study adopted stratified random, simple random and proportionate random sampling techniques, choosing 10% of the staff members from each of the tertiary institutions. Firstly, stratified random sampling was used to select five tertiary institutions from the five states in southeast, Nigeria through lucky dip method. Secondly, simple random sampling technique was used to select 115 members of staff each from the selected 5 tertiary institutions.

The instrument for data collection were structured questionnaire developed by the researcher and titled "Impact of Economic and post pandemic challenge in the execution of Tertiary Education Trust Funds (TETFund) interventions in Tertiary Institutions (IEPPTIT) with 20 item statements. It was rated on a four point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SA) to elicit information from the respondents. The instruments were administered to the same sample size used for the study.

The questionnaire was face validated by three experts. Two from Educational Management and one in the Measurement and Evaluation, all from the Department of Educational Foundations, Delta State University, Abraka. The topic, the scope, purpose of the study, and research questions were presented to the validators as a guide. These validators ascertained the clarity and relevance of items to the research work. The validators made some helpful suggestions and recommendations that were corrected to make the instrument fit for the study.

The instrument was administered to the respondents by the researcher and five research assistants. These research assistants were briefed on how to be friendly with the respondents, to have smiling face when administering the questionnaires to the respondents and to have patience with the respondents. They also guided the respondents and follow them up to ensure high return rate. The questionnaires were administered and collected on the spot. The data collected were analysed by descriptive statistics.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Research Question 1: What are the nature of economic and post pandemic challenges on the execution of TETFund interventions in tertiary institutions in southeast Nigeria?

Table 4.1: Mean ratings on the extent of the nature of economic and post pandemic challenges on the execution of TETFund interventions in tertiary institutions in southeast, Nigeria

S/n	Item statement	N	Mean (X)	SD	Decision
1	It leads to brain drainage among the staff	558	3.46	.68	accepted
2	Reduction in the rate of attendance of academic conferences	558	3.37	.75	accepted
3	Reduction in the purchase of library books, chemicals and basic laboratory equipment.	558	3.32	.78	accepted

4	Embargo on foreign scholarship	558	3.25	.84	accepted
5	Embargo on foreign study fellowships	558	3.43	.67	accepted
6	Reduction in research grants	558	2.36	.89	rejected
7	Delay in the completion of projects	558	3.44	.65	accepted
8	Delay in the completion of staff scholarship and training	558	3.49	.61	accepted
Total mean			26.12	5.87	
Average mean			3.27	.73	accepted

Analysis in table 4.1 shows the mean ratings of staff on the impact of economic and post pandemic challenges in the execution of TETFund interventions in tertiary institution in southeast Nigeria. The findings showed that the staff agreed to all the items that economic and post pandemic had a lot of impact on the execution of TETFund interventions in Tertiary institutions in southeast Nigeria. However, the response of Item 12 with mean rating of 2.36 was rejected showing that reduction in research grants is not among the impact of economic and post pandemic on the execution of TETFund interventions in Tertiary institutions in southeast Nigeria. Again, from the average mean of 3.27, the staff agreed on that economic and post pandemic had a lot of impact on the execution of TETFund interventions in Tertiary institutions in southeast Nigeria. The study therefore concluded that economic and post pandemic challenges had a lot of impact in the execution of TETFund interventions in Tertiary institutions in southeast Nigeria.

Research Question 2: To what extent does an economic and post pandemic challenge affect the execution of TETFund interventions in tertiary institutions in southeast, Nigeria?

Table 4.2: Mean ratings on the extent economic and post pandemic challenges affect the execution of TETFund interventions in tertiary institutions in southeast, Nigeria

S/n	Item statement	N	Mean (X)	SD	Decision
9	It affects the purchase the purchase of materials and equipment for effective education delivery	558	2.53	.95	accepted
10	Purchase of books, subscription for journals needed library for effective education delivery has been affected	558	3.27	.73	accepted
11	A drop in the regular servicing and maintenance of the institutions building, laboratories equipment	558	3.35	.75	accepted
12	A delay in the renovation of dilapidated buildings and the construction of new ones	558	3.41	.73	accepted
13	Increase in the students school fees in Tertiary institutions	558	3.21	.77	accepted
14	Delay in the release of TETFund Interventions	558	3.37	.74	accepted
Total mean			19.14	4.67	
Average mean			3.19	0.77	accepted

Analysis in table 4.2 shows the mean ratings of staff on the effects of economic and post pandemic challenges in the execution of TETFund interventions in Tertiary institution in southeast Nigeria. The findings showed that the staff agreed to items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 with the mean rating of 2.53, 3.27, 3.35, 3.41, 3.21, and 3.37 respectively that economic and post pandemic had a lot of effects on the execution of TETFund interventions in tertiary institutions in southeast Nigeria.

Again from the average mean of 3.19, it was deduced that the staff agreed that economic and post pandemic challenges had great effects on the execution of TETFund interventions in tertiary institutions in southeast Nigeria. The study therefore concludes that economic and post pandemic challenges have effects on the execution of TETFund interventions in tertiary institutions in southeast Nigeria.

Research Question 3: What are the prospects to curb these challenges facing the tertiary institutions in the execution of TETFund interventions in tertiary institutions in southeast Nigeria?

Table 4.3: Mean ratings on the prospects to curb the economic and post pandemic challenges impact on the execution of TETFund interventions in Tertiary institutions in southeast Nigeria

S/n	Item statement	N	Mean (X)	SD	Decision
15	Upward review of 2% Tax remittance to TETFund account	558	3.41	.68	accepted
16	Increase in the allocation of TETFund interventions to Tertiary institutions	558	3.48	.52	accepted
17	Securing loan from private organizations (banks, mortgage, etc) to meet up with emergencies in our learning institutions which they can reimburse later in the future.	558	3.22	.85	accepted
18	The services of national and international staff training organizations can be employed to assist in the training of personnel in our institutions both within and outside the country.	558	3.46	.69	accepted
19	The private sector can also assist in the area of project development in these institutions which will meet with international standard and enhance learning.	558	3.34	.71	accepted
20	The private sector can also render philanthropic services either in cash or in kind to the agency to facilitate the activities of the agency in their host institutions of learning in order to ensure proper coordination.	558	3.45	.69	accepted
Total mean			20.36	4.14	
Average mean			3.39	.69	accepted

Analysis in table 4.3 shows the mean ratings of staff on the prospects to curb the economic and post pandemic challenges on the execution of TETFund interventions in tertiary institutions in southeast Nigeria. The findings showed that the staff agreed to all the items on the prospects to curb the economically and post pandemic challenges on the execution of TETFund interventions in tertiary institutions in southeast Nigeria. Again, from the average mean of 3.39, the staff agreed on the prospects to curb the economic and post pandemic challenges on the execution of TETFund interventions in Tertiary institutions in southeast Nigeria. The study therefore concluded that the above named prospects on the table will help to curb the effects of economic and post pandemic challenges had in the execution of TETFund interventions in tertiary institutions in southeast Nigeria.

Summary of the Findings

From the analysis, the following findings were made:

1. The study indicated the nature of economic and post pandemic challenges in the execution of TETFund interventions in tertiary institutions in southeast Nigeria.
2. The study showed that economic and post pandemic challenges have a lot of effect in the execution of TETFund interventions in the tertiary institutions in southeast Nigeria.
3. The study inferred the prospects to curb the effects of the economic and post pandemic challenges in the execution of TETFund interventions in tertiary institutions in southeast Nigeria.

Discussion of Results

Research question 1 dealt on the nature of economic and post pandemic challenges in the execution of TETFund intervention in tertiary institutions in southeast Nigeria. Based on the findings, it was observed that economy and post pandemic has a lot of impact in the execution of TETFund which led to brain drain among the staff, reduction in the rate of attendance to academic conferences, reduction in the purchase of library books, chemicals and basic laboratory equipment, embargo on foreign scholarship, embargo on foreign study fellowships, reduction in research grants, delay in the completion of projects, delay in the completion of studies. The findings is in line with Rufai (2012) that the by-effects of dwindling finances in the Nigerian university system are explicated in many adaptive mechanisms such as: (i) Curtailing of laboratory/practical classes. (ii) Limited number of field trips. (iii) Reduction in the rate of attendance of academic conferences. (iv) Reduction in the purchase of library books, chemicals and basic laboratory equipment. (v) Embargo on new employment (vi) Embargo on study fellowships and (vii) Reduction in research grants. Asobie (1996) maintained that the inadequate funding of universities and other tertiary institution has had adverse effects on teaching and research and the universities have been forced to embark on income generating projects in order to source for funds.

Research question 2 sought to find out the effects of economic and post pandemic challenges in the execution of TETFund intervention in tertiary institutions in southeast Nigeria. Based on the findings, it was observed that current economic and post pandemic state have effects in the execution of TETFund interventions in the purchase of materials and equipment for effective education delivery; purchase of books, subscription for journals needed in the library for effective education delivery has been affected as well. A drop in the regular servicing and maintenance of the institutions building, laboratories equipment, delay in the renovation of dilapidated buildings and the construction of new ones, increase in the students school fees in tertiary institutions, delay in the release of TETFund Interventions are the negative effects discovered.

This is in agreement with Adikwu (2008) who report that lack of funds stands out as the number one problem in the teaching and learning of core subjects. In another view Leghara and Mbah (2010) reported that due to global economic crisis, the high prices of teaching equipment and materials make them out of reach to most schools in view of the high rate of foreign exchange brought about by unfavourable economic situations. They went further to opine that there is a drop in government allocation which is due to economic crisis and post pandemic challenges and it has affected the release of grants, payment of allowances to teachers, purchase of books, subscription for journals needed for effective education curriculum delivery, staff training through workshops, conferences and seminar as well as the rate of renovation of dilapidated buildings.

Research question 3 sought on the prospects needed to curb the effects of economic and post pandemic challenges in the execution of TETFund intervention in tertiary institutions in southeast Nigeria such as upward review of 2% Tax remittance to TETFund account, increase in the allocation of TETFund interventions to tertiary institutions, securing loan from private organizations (banks, mortgage, etc) to meet up with emergencies in our learning institutions which they can reimburse later in the future, the services of national and international staff training organizations can be employed to assist in the training of personnel in our institutions both within and outside the country, the private sector can also assist in the area of project development in these institutions which will meet with international standard and enhance learning, the private sector can also render philanthropic services either in cash or in kind to the agency to facilitate the activities of the agency in their host institutions of learning in order to ensure proper coordination. This finding supports Osaigbovo and Ikediashi (2022) whose findings revealed among others that the role of the private sector in enhancing the activities of the TETFund in our university system cannot be over-emphasized. Hence, TETFund will benefit from private sector participation in one or more of the following ways: securing loan from private organizations to meet up with emergencies in our learning institutions which they can reimburse later in the future from banks, mortgage firms and other financial institutions, the services of national and international staff training organizations can be employed to assist in the training of personnel in our institutions both within and outside the country, etc. They also emphasized that they should be an upward review of the 2% to 5% deductible tax revenue from the profits of all companies incorporated in Nigeria, to accommodate the increasing demand list of intervention areas that are regularly awaiting the fund's attention.

Conclusion

This research considered the impact of economic and post pandemic challenges in the execution of TETFund interventions in tertiary institutions in southeast Nigeria. Education which is the foundation of development of every nation ought not to be treated casually by its stakeholders. The findings vividly showed that the current economic and post pandemic challenges have negatively affected the activities in tertiary institutions especially in the

execution of TETFund interventions. As such the quality of tertiary education depends largely on the effort of the stakeholder in addressing the issues of teaching and learning in tertiary institutions. TETFund has been able to make significant positive impact towards improving the educational development in Nigerian tertiary institutions. The fund's establishment was certainly one of the most positive developments in the Nigerian educational system, for it has the potential of alleviating the chronic underfunding of the sector.

Recommendations

From the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. TETFund as an intervention agency should be encouraged through prompt tax collection and budget allocations and cooperation from Federal Inland Revenue Services (FIRS) for an efficient service that can induce wonderful outcome from ETF efforts.
2. There is need for a transformation within the Nigerian educational system, so that the challenges of chronic under-funding can be addressed.
3. There is need for diversification of Nigeria revenue sources through improvement in solid minerals, agriculture and tourism sectors to boost the economy and reduce the over burden on the foreign exchange
4. Concerted efforts and good attempts should be made by education stake holders to maximize their allocated resources by the government.
5. Government should provide the necessary funds to reduce the effects of the economic and post pandemic challenges on educational development
6. Ensure adequate provision of equipment and infrastructures for effective teaching and learning.

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