



PERCEPTION OF TETFUND MONITORING AND EVALUATION OFFICERS ON PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION IN SOUTH- WESTERN UNIVERSITIES, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study was a survey research type and purposive sampling technique was used to select sixteen TETFund monitoring and evaluation officers and simple random sampling was used to select twenty-two TETFund staff. Two instruments were developed by the researcher and validated by experts they are: Monitoring and Evaluation Inventory (MEI) and Constraints to TETFund Intervention Questionnaire (CTIQ) with the reliability coefficient values of 0.7 and 0.8 respectively. Data were collected by the researcher and analyzed using descriptive statistics. 87% of monitoring officers indicated that number of TETFund staff for monitoring and evaluation exercise is inadequate while 81.3% revealed that communication from desk officers in charge of beneficiary universities is a major barrier to effectiveness of monitoring exercise. Also, 77.2% and 68.1% of respondents respectively agreed that there is problem of project maintenance by the universities and there is poor management of funds by the beneficiaries. Among others, it is recommended that the number of TETFund officers going out for monitoring and evaluation exercise be increased and maintenance culture be emphasized among the beneficiaries.

Key words: TETFund Intervention, Monitoring and Evaluation. South-Western Universities.

Introduction

The term monitoring and evaluation have always been used together as if they are one entity. Though, they are mutually inclusive, supportive and interactive, they are not the same. Abe (2012) asserted that the two terms are distinct set of related organizational activities but identical. However, the two words have been destined to be life partners in any successful programme implementation. Monitoring and Evaluation is a process that helps improve performance and achieve results. Its goal is to improve current and future management of outputs, outcomes and impacts. It is mainly used to assess the performance of projects, institutions and programmes set up by governments, international organization and non- governmental organization (NGOs). It establishes links between the past, present and future actions.

According to Hornby (2010) in Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary (8th edition) defines 'Monitor' as to watch and check something over a period of time in order to see

how it develops, so that one can make any necessary changes. Houghton (2010) in Webster's New World College Dictionary, 4th Edition define monitor as to watch or check on a person or thing. A person or piece of equipment that warns, checks, controls, or keeps a continuous record of something. The Thesaurus words for "monitor" includes watchdog, overseer, check, follow, inspect, etc. In a nutshell, to monitor is to check on how project activities are progressing.

Monitoring is the frequently, observation and recording of happenings taking place in a project or programme. Also, monitoring involves giving feedback about the progress of the project to the beneficiaries of the project and report gathered from the field serve as vital information to be used in making decision for improving project performance. Getther, Martinez, Premand, Rawlings and Vermersh (2011) add that monitoring uses the data collected to inform programme implementation.



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Meanwhile, evaluation means the passing of judgment as to the value of a given entity based on certain criteria (Yoloye, 2008, Onwuakpa 1998 and Agomoh, 2006) define evaluation as the “process of delineating obtained and providing useful information for judging decision alternatives”. A more popular definition is that of Alkin. According to Alkin (1970) evaluation is the process of ascertaining the decision areas of concerns, selecting appropriate information and collecting and analyzing information in order to report a summary of data useful to decision makers in selecting among alternatives.

The credibility or objectivity of monitoring and evaluation reports depends very much on the independence of the evaluators. Evaluation is a means to report to the donor about the activities implemented. It is a means to verify that the donated funds are being well managed and transparently spent. Monitoring is a continuous assessment that aims at providing all stakeholders with early detailed information on the progress or delay of the ongoing assessed activities.

Antecedent to Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund)

In early 1990s, there was the widely recognized decline in educational standard and the deep rot in infrastructural and other facilities at all levels of the Nigerian education system, from primary to secondary and tertiary levels, the nation was confronted by incessant strike by the teaching and non-teaching unit in both tertiary and lower level educational institution nationwide. It was obvious that there was an urgent need for emergency funding to improve educational facilities and infrastructure, restore high morale of teachers, attract and retain qualitative entrants into the profession, encourage professionalism in teaching and improve teacher education curriculum. There was the need to restore the lost glory in the education sector and create enabling environment for conducive teaching and learning and thus ensure the creation of a disciplined, committed, highly motivated, respected and profession teaching force.

To achieve the above, Longe Commission was set up in 1990 to review higher education in Nigeria by the federal military government, they took some far reaching decisions on higher education and advised the federal government accordingly. One of the recommendation of the Longe commission was that all the companies operating in the country should be mandate to pay two percent of their profit as tax to revamp the education sector, as it was considered that government could not alone bear the cost of education.

In response to this recommendation and in an effort to contribute to the revival of the educational system in Nigeria, the Education Trust Fund (formerly the Education Tax Fund) ETF was established by the Acts of parliament no. 7 of January 1993 amended by Act no. 40 of November, 1998. Later ETF was amended by Act no. 16 of 2011 as Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund). The Act impose a 2% education tax on the assessable profit of all registered companies in Nigeria and empowered the Federal Inland Revenue Service FIRS to access and collects the Tax for rehabilitation, restoration and consolidation of education in Nigeria. TETFund then, received the tax from FIRS and disburses to primary, secondary, Tertiary and other educational institution across the federation.

The recent amendment therefore changes the name from Education Trust Fund to Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) made it to be for tertiary institution only. The fund monitors the projects executed with the funds allocated to the beneficiary institutions. The scope of the intervention of the fund covers all areas of educational-related equipment, laboratory facilities, ICT equipment, etc. Also, academic staff development, journal publication research funding conference attendance are part of TETFund intervention.

The Board of Trustees shall administer the tax imposed by the Act and disburse the amount in the fund to federal and state tertiary educational institutions specifically for the provision or maintenance of; Essential physical infrastructure for teaching and learning, Instructional materials and equipment,



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Research and publication and Academic staff training and development

Activities of TETfund Monitoring and Evaluation Department

Monitoring and Evaluation department is one of eleven departments in Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETfund). The department is responsible for coordinating the monitoring of projects. It was created in June 2011 and known as Department of monitoring and impact assessment. It began operations in September 2011. It was subsequently renamed as Monitoring and Evaluation Department due to increased scope of work. Objectives of the Department include; Schedule of inspection visit, coordinating field reports and release of payments due to beneficiaries, Ascertain the level to implementation of the on-going project for which funds had been released, Identify the challenges facing the beneficiary institutions that are unable to complete that projects within the approved cycle limit, ensure that projects are executed in line with the fund's approval and Ensure that project funds are judiciously utilized.

Statement of the problem

Insufficient and deteriorating educational infrastructural facilities are some of the glaring problems confronting Nigerian university education system. One of TETFund objectives is to use funding to improve quality of education in Nigeria through provision of educational facilities and infrastructures. Lack of monitoring and evaluation capacity continue to cause non-sustainable outcome of the project. Research and observation have shown that many projects which are laudable do not bring benefits to the target beneficiaries because of poor monitoring and evaluation of such projects (Oni, 2013). There are lots of uncompleted, poorly constructed or abandoned projects in south-western universities that prompted the need for this study. Many factors could be responsible for this such as undue political interference by Stakeholders in the project, backhand collaboration by stakeholders, lack of monitoring and evaluation capacity among others. This study, therefore,

investigated the perception of TETFund monitoring and evaluation officers' visitation to beneficiary universities with respect to project execution and identified the problems militating against the effectiveness of the TETfund intervention programme in universities in terms of monitoring and evaluation as regard implementation of projects.

Research questions

1. What are the problems militating against the effectiveness of the TETfund intervention programmes in universities in terms of monitoring and Evaluation?
2. What are the problems militating against the effectiveness of the TETfund intervention programmes in universities in terms of implementation?
3. What is the perception of TETfund monitoring and evaluation officers on project execution?

Methodology

This study adopted a survey research design. The target population for this study comprised all TETfund staff and particularly designated officers in charge of monitoring of TETfund projects in the beneficiary universities in Southwest Nigeria. Purposive sampling technique was used to select sixteen TETFund monitoring and evaluation officers with five years' experience and simple random sampling was used to select twenty-two TETFund management staff. Two instruments were developed by the researcher and validated by experts. They are: Monitoring and Evaluation Inventory (MEI) and Constraints to TETFund Intervention Questionnaire (CTIQ). (1) Monitoring and Evaluation Inventory (MEI) has eleven items that covered information on the perception of TETfund staff on monitoring and evaluation exercise while (2) Constraints to TETfund Intervention Questionnaire (CTIQ) instrument has two sections. Section A contains nine items on problems militating against effectiveness of Monitoring and Evaluation exercise while section B contains information on constraints of implementation of TETfund programme.



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The reliability coefficient values obtained were 0.7 and 0.8 respectively. Data were collected by the researcher by visiting TETFund headquarters office in Abuja to collect data for the study. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency count and percentages.

Result

Research Question 1. What are the problems militating against the effectiveness of the TETFund intervention programmes in universities in terms of monitoring and Evaluation?

Table 1: Problem Militating against Effectiveness of Monitoring and Evaluation

S/N	Items	Not a		Constraint	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1.	Adequate of number TETFund staff monitoring officers	2	12.5	14	87.5
2.	Conformity of beneficiary universities to TETFund standard of project execution.	2	12.5	14	87.5
3.	Poor attitude of Desk Officer in charge.	3	18.75	13	81.25
4.	Communication from desk officer in charge of beneficiary university.	3	18.75	13	81.25
5.	Time slated for monitoring and evaluation.	5	31.25	11	68.75
6.	Provision of vehicle for monitoring and evaluation.	5	31.25	11	68.75
7.	Cooperation of desk officers of beneficiary university.	6	37.5	10	62.5
8.	Thoroughness of monitoring and evaluation exercise.	6	37.5	10	62.5
9.	Distance of beneficiary universities	6	37.5	10	62.5

From table 1, above, 87.5% of monitoring officers indicated that number of TETFund staff for monitoring and evaluation exercise is a constraint while 81.25% revealed that communication from desk officers in charge of beneficiary universities is one of the major barriers to effectiveness of monitoring exercise. Again, 68.75% of TETFund monitoring officers responded that time slated for monitoring and evaluation exercise is a constraint, since it is the same monitoring officers that usually go for

monitoring exercise that will still do normal office duty. Similarly, table 1 show that 62.5% of monitoring officers responded that distance of beneficiary universities is also a barrier to effectiveness of monitoring exercise.

Research Question 2. What are the problems militating against the effectiveness of the TETFund intervention programmes in universities in terms of implementation?



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Table 2. Constraints of Implementation of TETFund Programme

S/N	Item	Not Constraint ^a		Constraint		Not Applicable	
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1.	Delay by the beneficiary universities in execution	-	-	22	100	-	-
2.	Inconsistencies within beneficiary institution regarding the appointment of qualified desk officers	-	-	22	100	-	-
3.	Selection of unqualified desk officers for supervision of project	-	-	22	100	-	-
4.	Capacity to tie project to the institutions' strategic plan	1	4.5	21	95.5	-	-
5.	Undue political interference by Stakeholders in the project	1	4.5	21	95.5	-	-
6.	Inability of the beneficiary institution to adopt sound project management principles in their project execution	1	4.5	21	95.5	-	-
7.	Lack of comprehensive and improper implementation of public procurement Act	1	4.5	21	95.5	-	-
8.	Insufficient monitoring duration due to volume of location to visit	1	4.5	19	86.4	2	9.1
9.	Shortage of TETFund staff	2	9.1	20	90.9	-	-
10.	Lack of the capacity by the various beneficiaries to utilize money allocated to them	2	9.1	20	90.9	-	-
11.	Non-conformity with TETFund guidelines on procurement, construction and installation by the beneficiaries	2	9.1	20	90.9	-	-
12.	Stakeholders' misconception of the fund role and the relevant in the education sector	2	9.1	20	90.9	-	-
13.	The inability of beneficiaries to assemble all required supportive document of their project proposal	2	9.1	20	90.9	-	-
14.	Some of the infrastructures by beneficiary universities are sub-standard	2	9.1	18	81.8	2	9.1
15.	Project execution takes a long time before completion	3	13.6	17	77.3	2	9.1
16.	Proper compliance with provision of the public procure	4	18.2	18	81.8	-	-
17.	Regular supervision by beneficiary universities	4	18.2	15	68.2	3	13.6
18.	Backhand collaboration by stakeholders	4	18.2	15	68.2	3	13.6
19.	Project maintenance by the beneficiary universities	5	22.7	17	77.3	-	-
20.	Non-distribution/utilization of procured equipment by the institution.	6	27.3	16	72.7	-	-



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21	Inability to have TETfund offices all over the state	6	27.3	14	63.6	2	9.1
22	Management of funds by the beneficiary universities	7	31.8	15	68.2	-	-
23	Transparency and good accountability in the beneficiary universities	7	31.8	13	59.1	2	9.1
24	Monitoring of TETfund projects by the beneficiary universities	7	31.8	12	54.5	3	13.6
25	Documentation of submission by beneficiaries made to the fund programme	9	40.9	12	54.5	1	4.5

Table 2. shows problems identified by twenty-two staff of TETfund. From table 2. 100% of senior officers from TETfund claimed that there is delay by the beneficiary universities in project execution and there are inconsistencies within beneficiary institutions regarding the appointment of qualified desk officers. Again all the respondents revealed that selection desk officers for supervision of the projects is one of the major constraints militating against the effective implementation of the TETfund project intervention.

Likewise, 21(95.5%) confirmed that capacity to tie project to the institutions' strategic plans is another problem facing effective implementation of TETfund intervention programme. Table 2. also shows that 95.5% of the respondents revealed that under political interference by stakeholders in project delivery processes is a constraint while the same number of respondents revealed that inability of the beneficiary institutions to adopt sound project management principles in their project execution is another challenge.

Again, 21(95.5%) indicated that insufficient monitoring duration due to volume of location of visit is another constraint of TETfund staff.

Table 2 still revealed that 90.9% of TETfund staff confirmed that there is a shortage of fund from TETfund for monitoring project execution and other activities in various universities in southwest and this is likely to affect the progress of the project.

Similarly, 90.9% of TETfund staff also agreed that beneficiaries lack the ability to assemble all required supportive document of their project proposal and stakeholders have a misconception of the role of the fund and its relevance in the education sector. Also from Table 2, 68.2% of TETfund staff claimed that there is backhand collaboration among stakeholders. Furthermore, the table revealed that 77.3% and 68.2% of respondents, who respectively agreed that there is problem of project maintenance by the universities and there is poor management of funds by the beneficiaries. As regards transparency and good accountability on the part of beneficiaries, 65% of TETfund staff indicated that this is another problem

Research Question 3. What is the perception of TETfund monitoring and evaluation officers on project execution?



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Table 3: Perception of TETFund Monitoring and Evaluation Officers on Projects Execution in Beneficiary Universities.

S/N	Items	Agree %	Disagree %	No response %
1	Monitoring and evaluation exercise compel beneficiary universities to update their records	15 (93.7)	–	1 (6.3)
2	Monitoring and evaluation exercise is carried out in the beneficiary universities	15 (93.7)	–	1 (6.3)
3	Progress report of projects execution is sent to TETFund every Month	14 (87.5)	1 (6.3)	1 (6.3)
4	Monitoring and evaluation feedback is sent to each beneficiary university promptly	14 (87.5)	1 (6.3)	1 (6.3)
5	Monitoring and evaluation exercise reveal problems encountered in the process of project execution	14 (87.5)	1 (6.3)	1 (6.3)
6	Monitoring and evaluation officers proffers solution(s) to problem(s) discovered on site	15 (93.7)	–	1 (6.3)
7	Number of monitoring exercise per year does not justify TETFund expenditure on the monitoring and evaluation programme	5 (31.3)	9 (56.3)	2 (12.5)
8	Through monitoring and evaluation exercise, incompetent contractors are identified	15 (93.7)	–	1 (6.3)
9	Recommendations based on monitoring and evaluation do not make any impact on project	2 (12.5)	13 (81.3)	1 (6.3)
10	Presence of monitoring and evaluation officers encourages “window dressing” execution of projects	5 (31.3)	10 (62.3)	1 (6.3)
11	Monitoring and evaluation officers do not compromise on the timeline of project execution	10 (62.5)	4 (25.0)	2 (12.5)

Table 3 reveals the perception of TETFund monitoring and evaluation officers towards beneficiary universities. From the Table 3, 93.7% of the sampled monitoring officers agreed that monitoring and evaluation exercises compelled beneficiary universities to update their records. Likewise, 93.7% agreed that monitoring and evaluation exercises must be carried out in the beneficiary institutions for proper project execution and officers do proffer solution to problems discovered on site.

The table further shows that 87.5% of TETFund monitoring officers agreed that monitoring and evaluation exercise usually reveals the problems encountered in the process of project execution and progress report of project under execution should be sent to TETFund office every month though not for all TETFund project. While monitoring feedback should be sent to each beneficiary university promptly so that necessary correction can be carried out. Furthermore, the table also indicated that 56.3% and 81.3% of sampled

monitoring officers disagreed that the number of monitoring exercise per year does not justify TETFund expenditure on the monitoring and evaluation programme and recommendation based on monitoring and evaluation do not make impact on the project.

Discussion of Findings

From table 1, 87.5% indicated that the number of TETFund staff for monitoring exercise is a constraint. It can be inferred from the table that the reason for not having adequate TETFund staff for monitoring exercise is due to the shortage of TETFund staff. Few selected for monitoring exercise are the same staff performing normal office duties. This shows that quality time cannot be devoted to monitoring exercise and this will definitely have a negative effect on the project execution in the beneficiary universities. This finding agrees with Akinagbe and Olaolu (2016) who asserted that manpower and financial resource are the critical issues that need to be addressed



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in monitoring and evaluation. when the manpower is inadequate, monitoring and evaluation project could be delayed at the time when the person in charge of monitoring and are not competent, both monitoring and evaluation will suffer. It is therefore, important to have sufficient and competent officer for this exercise.

Lack of capacity by the various beneficiaries to utilize the money allocated to them is another major problem militating against implementation of TETFund intervention. Some universities fail to utilize the money allocated to them. There is so much money going to the institutions, but the university priorities are not addressed. Little wonder why Mohmood (2009) exclaimed that fund would not be released to the institution that want to embark on construction of car packs, drainage, toilet and fencing of campus rather than having programmes that require some money to buy equipment for teaching, research and facilities have impact on the students.

This finding agrees with Rufai (2010) who asserted that each university is expected to use the fund allocated to it to improve on existing infrastructures and provide additional facilities that will make teaching and learning conducive for both the students and lecturers.

Monitoring and evaluation have been found to be indispensable in the successful implementation of any programme (Abe, 2012). From the result in table 3 it can be inferred that progress report of project execution should be sent to TETFund office every month. This will enable TETFund to know how things are going on in the beneficiary universities. Problems encountered will also be discovered earlier enough and appropriate solution can be proffered. Furthermore, the result in the table has also shown that it is through monitoring exercise that incompetent contractors are identified and “window dressing” kind of project execution is checked as well as curbed. Akinagbe and Olaolu (2016) findings also corroborated with this study that monitoring and evaluation should be well budgeted for at the planning stage of any project. They further claimed that

most organization often fail to budget for monitoring and evaluation at the conception of the programme and when this is not done, little or no monitoring will be carried out.

Conclusion

Education is bedrock and pre-requisite for national development. Consequently, a neglect of the educational sector translates to significant malfunctioning in the other vital sectors. Therefore, in order to ensure quality education in Nigerian universities in terms of provision of physical infrastructural facilities which is one of the objectives of TETFund, monitoring and evaluation exercise should not be handled with levity.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made in order to improve the activities of TETFund monitoring and evaluation officers in respect to TETFund intervention programme:

1. TETFund should design a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation instrument for the exercise whereby feedback of the exercise can be promptly sent back to beneficiaries for proper adjustment.
2. Beneficiary universities should comply with TETFund standard of project execution.
3. There should be increase in the number of TETFund officers going out for monitoring and evaluation exercise.
4. Backhand collaboration among stakeholder and “window dressing” kind of project should be discouraged.
5. Maintenance culture should be registered in the mind of beneficiaries.

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