

Analysis of Reasons for Abscondment of Sponsored Academic Staff

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Abstract

This paper examined reasons why sponsored academic staff of Nigerian Tertiary institutions absconded after the completion of their studies abroad. Using secondary data collected from both printed and online publications, the paper identified the following reasons: weak sponsorship agreement, poor salaries, inadequate modern infrastructural facilities, poor working environment, insecurity, poor access to research grant and poor economic outlook as reasons why sponsored academic staff of Nigerian tertiary institutions absconded after the completion of their studies abroad. To address this problems, the paper advance the following policies options. Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) should direct tertiary institutions to review sponsorship agreement to include the following options. Sponsor tertiary institutions shall be responsible to collect certificate of sponsored academic after graduation. Training institutions whether local or foreign shall be informed to send the certificate of the students to the institutions where the academic came from. Academic who want to stay back after completion of study shall refund 100% of the fund used for the training.

Keywords- Academic staff, Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Tertiary institutions.

INTRODUCTION

Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) is a body set up by the Federal Government of Nigeria ostensibly to arrest the rot and deterioration in the educational infrastructure occasioned by long period of neglect and very poor resource allocation. Tertiary Education Trust Fund Former Education Trust Fund (ETF) was established as an Intervention Agency by Education Tax Act No. 7 of 1993 (and subsequently amended in 1998). This law empowered the then ETF to intervene at all levels of education (Primary, Secondary and Tertiary) in public institutions. In 2011, Education

Trust Fund, ETF was renamed TETFund by the ETF Act No. 16 and refocused to intervene in only public tertiary institutions (Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education) for maximum impact. Tertiary Education Trust Fund Act, 2011 imposes a two percent (2%) Education Tax on the profit of all registered companies operating in Nigeria.

Tertiary Education Trust Fund is charged with the responsibility to manage, disburse and monitor the education tax to public tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Tertiary Education Trust Fund administers the tax imposed by the act and disburses the amount to tertiary educational institutions at Federal and State levels. Specifically, TETFund's cardinal objective is to provide the badly needed funds to support tertiary education, provide scholarship and grants for staff to enhance the productivity and quality of higher education. TETFund interventions are anchored on the following areas: Normal Intervention; Library Intervention; Research grant; Academic Staff Training & Development; Publication of Journal; Manuscript Development; and Conference Attendance. Ogunode, (2023) observed that Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) objectives include to deliver appropriate and adequate intervention programmes with due regard to the sensitivities of beneficiaries and stakeholders. To promote cutting-edge technologies, ideas and organizational skills in education, and ensure that projects are forward-looking as well as responding to present needs.

One of the cardinal programme of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) is to provide scholarship to tertiary institutions scholars for Masters and PhD for local and abroad. Report showed Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) have successfully sponsored over 37,000 scholars for both foreign and local PhDs, Masters, Bench Work, and Postdoctoral programs in various institutions within and outside Nigeria." Also, another report disclosed About 35,000 scholars have benefited from the scholarship since the introduction of the TETFund Scholarship for Academic Staff Intervention was introduced in 2008, Punch reported on 17 July 2022. According to the latest (2021) TETFund annual report that was released in March 2023, 664 Masters students and 1,183 PhD students benefited. The report does not provide a breakdown of local and foreign placements. The 2020report indicated that the TETFund sponsored 539 scholars abroad and 2,027 locally.

Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) scholarship programme is aimed to improve quality of tertiary education. Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) international scholarship programme is aims to expose academic staff at public higher institutions to other intellectual standards and cultures within and outside the Nigerian system. TETFund, has been intervening in the training of academic staff in Nigerian universities by sponsoring lecturers for further studies abroad and in local institutions. Mallam (2013) observed that the role of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (Tetfund) cannot be over-emphasized in addressing the aforementioned problems. The tertiary education trust fund was originally established as Educational Trust Fund (ETF) by Act No.7 of 1993 as amended by Act No 40 of 1998 now repealed and replaced with the Tertiary education trust fund (Tetfund). It is an intervention agency set to provide supplementary support to all levels of public tertiary institutions with the main objective of using funding alongside project management for the rehabilitation, restoration and consolidation of tertiary education in Nigeria (Mallam, 2013). Educational Trust Fund (ETF) was established to inject funds into selected tertiary institutions to achieve a major turnaround through programme upgrades and improvement in the

teaching and learning environment. Ogunode (2023) noted that the mandate of the Fund as provided in Section 5(1) (a) to (g) of the Act No. 7 is to administer and disburse the amount in the Fund to Federal, State, and Local Government Educational Institutions, including primary and secondary schools, for any other matter ancillary thereto, but specifically to the following: Work centres and prototype development; Staff development and conference attendance; Library systems at the different levels of education; Research equipment procurement and maintenance; Higher Education Book Development Fund

Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) as an institutions of federal government of Nigeria is faced with many problems that is militated against its scholarship programme. Educeleb (2019); Amazing Time (2021); Blueprint (2022) and Ogunode, Kasimu & Sambo (2023) reported that Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) has observed the growing cases of abscondment among academic staff of various Nigerian universities sponsored for training abroad. TETFund's Director, Academic Staff Training and Development (AST&D), Muhammed Sulaiman, submitted some of the lecturers sponsored to foreign countries by TETFund for further, never returned to the country to serve their bond as they abscond. According to him, the foreign training programme was being abused and is slowly becoming a major problem affecting the education system. According to him, —Some lecturers will be given the approval to study outside the country and would proceed to their studies but at the end of the day will not come back to the country to serve their bond or to continue their jobs as lecturers, these are some of the problems.

Recently, Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) Boss, Echono observed that Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) as an agency of federal government responsible for implementation of scholarship programs is facing problem of abscondment of sponsored academic staff from Nigerian tertiary institutions. Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) noted that the growing cases of scholars' abscondment, scholars not returning to serve their bonds at their home institutions upon completion of their programs is a very big problem. In fact, the challenge of scholars absconding has undermined and complicated TETFund's scholarship for Academic Staff (TSAS) program (Thecable (2023). Based on this, this paper aimed to discuss reasons for abscondment of sponsored academic staff of Nigerian Tertiary Education.

Concept of Tertiary Education

Tertiary education according to Ogunode, Edinoh, & Nwafor, (2023) is an education designed for post-secondary education. Tertiary education is a social agent of progress and development in the society and aids technological advancement. Tertiary education is designed to help in the development of nations by providing the high as well as the middle level manpower needed for the social, economic and political advancement through the programme of teaching, learning, research and community services. This places tertiary education at the apex in the ranking of educational institutions and is designed to accommodate knowledge acquisition and production. Tertiary education are institutions of higher learning that provide facilities for teaching and research and are authorized to grant academic degrees such as bachelor. (FRN, 2013) defined tertiary education as the education given after Post Basic Education in institutions such as Universities and Inter-University Centers such as the Nigeria French Language Village, Nigeria Arabic Language Village, National Institute of Nigerian Languages, institutions such as Innovation Enterprise Institutions (IEIs), and Colleges of Education, Monotechnics, Polytechnics, and other specialized

institutions such as Colleges of Agriculture, Schools of Health and Technology and the National Teachers' Institutes (NTI).

The goals of Tertiary Education shall be to: contribute to national development through high level manpower training; provide accessible and affordable quality learning opportunities in formal and informal education in response to the needs and interests of all Nigerians; provide high quality career counseling and lifelong learning programmes that prepare students with the knowledge and skills for self-reliance and the world of work; reduce skill shortages through the production of skilled manpower relevant to the needs of the labour market; promote and encourage scholarship, entrepreneurship and community service; forge and cement national unity; and promote national and international understanding and interaction (FRN, 2013). According to Ogunode (2021) tertiary education includes Monotechnics, polytechnics, colleges of education, and universities. The objectives of tertiary institution education include: to provide teaching services, providing research services for the development of the country, producing manpower for the country, and aid the delivery of community services.

The tertiary institution system is structured and designed to function with human resources and material resources. The human resources include the teaching staff/academic staff or the Non-teaching/ non-academic staff. The academic staff provides the teaching, research, and other academic services in the tertiary institution while the non-teaching staff provides non-teaching but essential services that complement the academic staff services in the tertiary institution (Ogunode, 2020).

Concept of Academic Staff

Academic staff are the teaching staff in the higher institutions. Academic staff are the implementer of the school curriculum and lecture presenter. Academic staff are the teachers and deliver of instruction in the higher institutions. Academic staff are the knowledge and character builder imparter in the higher institution. The academic staff are the engine room of the higher institutions. They are the pillar and foundation of the higher institutions. The academic staff determines the quality of the higher institutions as well as proper solutions to Nation Economic and social problems e.g. Boko haram and food security, COVID 19 and the economy. The functions of the academic staff include to lecture, to prepare the lecture note, to prepare the lesson note, source for instruction materials, gives assignment to students, to assess the students through continuous assessment and examination, set exams questions, marks the answer sheet, supervise students research work especially projects, theses and dissertation and prepares the students grade points.

The academic staff conducts different levels of research, presents their findings and contribute to the development of knowledge in the higher institutions. The professional qualities of the academic staff include; commitment to academic research, commitment to high quality teaching and fostering a positive learning environment for students, commitment to continuous professional development and commitment to public communication. The professional skills of academic staff also include; excellent interpersonal, oral and written communication skills; ability to conduct high quality research which is reflected in the authorship of high quality; publications, or other research outputs, in the areas of computer science; ability to manage time and work to strict deadlines and ability to teach and to supervise academic work by undergraduates, masters and doctoral students.

The main duties and responsibilities of academic staff in the higher institutions include: a. To teach at undergraduate and graduate level in areas allocated by the Head of Department and

reviewed from time to time by the Head of Department; b. To carry out research and produce publications, or other research outputs, in line with personal objectives agreed in the Staff review process; c. To obtain research funding support; d. To engage with the broader scholarly and professional communities; e. To supervise or assist with supervision of undergraduate, taught graduate (Masters) or research graduate (MPhil/PhD) students; f. To contribute to the development, planning and implementation of a high quality curriculum. g. To assist in the development of learning materials, preparing schemes of work and maintaining records to monitor student progress, achievement and attendance (Ogunode, Jegede & Abubakar, 2020)

Academic job is not as juicy as said or held. It is a professional occupation done in the schools, colleges, polytechnics and universities whose job description hinges either on teaching or research or the combination of the two depending on the terms of the employment. It is a wider profession that involves teaching, research, administrative tasks and even extracurricular activities such as community services unlike other professions (Ezenkiri Mamman, Ezeani, & Francis, 2021; The University of Edinburgh, 2016; Collins, 2020).

Lecturers whom Glossary of Statistics Term (2003); Collins (2020) and Ezenkiri Mamman, Ezeani, & Francis, (2021), described academic staff as those members of staff in schools; colleges, polytechnics or universities who teach, using all advanced designs or methods of teaching and instruction, work five days, eight hours a day or only forty hours a week and enjoy the privilege of 30-minute lunch break includes in the working hours and even 17 students per 1 teacher as of 2014/2015 academic session.

Globally, academic staff are provided with opportunities to further their studies and obtain the required qualifications for teaching in tertiary institutions which is Masters and PhD. Different tertiary institutions have different policies and programme for their academic staff that need to upgrade qualifications. In Nigeria, many tertiary institutions retain their first class graduate and they are sent out for further studies for Master programme and PhD. Many tertiary institutions also employed master holders and after some years ask them to further their studies. Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) was established to handle scholarship programme and sponsor academic staff of Nigerian tertiary institutions for local and foreign studies.

Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) and Academic Staff Training in Nigeria.

Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) has impacted positively human resources development in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Many academic and non-academic staff have benefited from TETFund training sponsorship (Ogunode, 2023). Chigozie (2017) defined human resources development as part of human resources management that specifically deals with training and development of the employees. Human resources development is the process of increasing the capacity of the human resource through development. It is thus the process of adding value to individuals, teams or an organization as a human system. It could also be referred to as a systematic and planned approach through which the efficiency of employees is improved. The future goals and objectives are set by the entire organization and are well-planned at individual and organizational levels. Human resources development is a continuous process for the development of all types of skills of employees such as technical, managerial, behavioural, and conceptual. It includes training an individual after he/she is first hired, providing opportunities to learn new skills, distributing resources that are beneficial for the employee's tasks, and any other developmental activities

(United Nations, 2009). United Nations (2009) viewed human resource development as empowering people by fostering the contributory capacities that they can bring to the improvement of their quality of life and that of their families, communities, enterprises and societies. Human development includes all forms of training received for job improvement and increment in productivity. Human resources development include in-service training, workshop, conference, symposium and special training on the job.

There are many studies on TETFund trainin programme in Nigeria. For instance, in a study by Eze, (2014) and Udu, & Nkwede, (2014) and Isiaka, Nasiru, & Olushola (2020), they discovered that due to Tetfund interventions, many lecturers have been sponsored to local and international seminars and conferences in addition to Tetfund sponsored oversea training and retraining of academic staff. Ofojebe, & Chukwuma, (2015) and Isiaka, Nasiru, & Olushola (2020) observed that most universities accessed Tetfund funding for training, seminars and workshops and that overseas training, seminars and workshops benefit in no small way for the advancement of academic staff as well as aiding them for promotions and elevations in the Universities. Okojie, (2000) noted that Tetfund provides funds to all federal and stateowned tertiary institutions in areas such as training, conferences and staff development. Isiaka, Nasiru, & Olushola, (2020) carried out a study and concluded that capacity building of the academic staff of Lagos State University was the major focus of the Tetfund intervention.

PRNigeria (2021) reported that in 2021, the former Executive Secretary of TETFund, Professor Suleiman Bogoro, disclosed that Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) has sponsored a total of sponsored close to 30,000 lecturers for masters and PhD programmes in both local and foreign institutions in the last ten years. Bogoro added that the Fund had also sponsored about 30,000 lecturers for master's and PhD programmes in both local and foreign institutions. He further noted that in a bid to boost human capacity in the beneficiary institutions, over 68,000 academic and non-academic staff of public tertiary institutions had been sponsored by the Fund to attend local and foreign conferences. He stressed that the Fund equally supported over 71,263 lecturers under its Teachers' Supervision Programme among achievements.

Reasons for Abscondment of Sponsored Academic Staff of Nigerian Tertiary Education

There are many reasons for abscondment of sponsored academic staff of Nigerian Tertiary Education. Some the reasons include; weak sponsorship agreement, poor salaries, inadequate modern of infrastructure facilities, poor working environment, insecurity, poor access to research grant and poor economics status

Weak sponsorship agreement

The weak sponsorship agreement process put in place by respective institutions in Nigeria is one of the major causes of poor return home of many sponsored academic staff of Nigerian tertiary institutions. The regulations and laws is very flexible and weak to prevent academics that have completed their studies to come back to Nigeria. The inability of the regulations and laws to make it compulsory for the sponsored academics to back to Nigeria is responsible for many academic absconding after their studies.

Poor Salaries

The salaries of lecturers working in Nigerian universities are very poor. Tis may be one of the reasons why most of them don't come back to Nigeria after their studies. Ogunode (2020) submitted

that Nigerian lecturers are poorly motivated financially and this is affecting their performance. Oludayo (2021) submitted that Assistant lecturer's monthly salary ranges from (N118,277 - N137,334); Lecturer II with a doctorate degree (N129,724 – N153,563); Lecturer I with at least three years post-PhD experience on the job (N160,809 – N203,778); Senior Lecturer with at least six years' experience on the job (N222,229 – 314,159); Associate Professor (with at least nine years' experience on the job: N277,179 – N350,169) and a full Professor with 12 and more years' experience on the job (N332,833 – 416,743). Oludayo opined that Nigerian lecturers get these after tax and other deductions. Before deductions, a newly appointed full Professor has N437,499 and after deductions he is paid N332,833 monthly. A Professor "at the bar", is one who has spent 10 years as a professor and that is when he/she can earn consolidated pay of N555,351 and following deductions their net pay comes down to N416,743 monthly! In a comparison, Oludayo (2021) observed that in Ugandan public varsities, Assistant Lecturer earns \$1,631; Senior lecturer, \$2,432; Associate Professor, \$3,891 and Professor, \$4,054 per month, respectively. In University of South Africa, a Junior Lecturer earns N10,453,326 – N17,427,663; Lecturer, N12,547,744 – N20,910,248; Senior Lecturer, N16,272,983 – N27,891,819; Associate Professor, N20,224,232 – N32,564,902) and Professor, N22,325,844 –

N37,209,741 per annum.

Inadequate Modern of Infrastructure Facilities

Another factor discouraging sponsored Nigerian academics to return back to Nigeria and share their new acquired knowledge and contribute to the development of their institutions is the problem of inadequate infrastructure facilities at their respective institutions. Infrastructure facilities has the capacity to attract academic staff and to retain them. Ogunode (2020) observed that infrastructural facilities refer to facilities aiding delivery of academic and non-academic services in educational institutions. Infrastructural facilities include; libraries, laboratories, halls, offices, administrative blocks, hostels, roads facilities, water, electricity, internet etc. The availability of the infrastructural facilities in adequate quantities will support effective teaching, researching and on the contrary, the inadequacies will prevent effective teaching, researching. Many tertiary institutions in Nigeria do not have adequate lecture halls, laboratories and offices for both academic staff and non-academic staff. Ogunode & Abubakar (2020) and Ogunode, Jegede & Abubakar (2021) argued that many academic and non-academic staff do not have offices and para-venture if they have one is been shared by five to six lecturers. Nwakpa (2015), in his study found that research infrastructure in tertiary institutions in Nigeria is grossly inadequate and generally out of date otherwise obsolete, work-shops, librarians and laboratories are ill-equipped and obsolete educational equipment and facilities are research-stressors among academic staff of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Though Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TET Fund) is trying in the area of intervention to fix these facilities but more investment are still needed. Gbenga Adewale, a professor of mathematics at the University of Ibadan, noted that many times, when our colleagues travel abroad, they are exposed to world-class facilities and, when they return, the zeal to work here is no longer there because the facilities are not available. They become redundant and their new knowledge is wasted," Adewale noted. If we had world-class facilities here and the teaching environment is appealing, I think they would be eager to return home," he said. Also, Omolade Akinsanya, a professor of educational management at the Tai Solarin University of Education located in Ogun State, said the government must invest heavily in Nigerian public tertiary education infrastructure to prevent scholars from seeking greener pastures abroad (university worldnews,2022).

Poor Working Environment

Poor working environment is another factors contributing to abscondment of sponsored academic staff of Nigerian Tertiary institutions. Facilities and equipment include electric supply, internet services, office accommodation, office seats and tables, instructional tools, convenient room, water supply and many others. When these facilities or equipment are in short supply, the situation becomes a stressor to the teaching staff in the tertiary institutions. Incessant power failure does not support meaningful research activities in higher institutions of learning especially in Nigeria (Nwakpa, 2015). Ezenkiri Mamman, Ezeani, & Francis, (2021) and Egu, Ogbonna, Obike and Obiuto (2014), who worked on managing stress among lecturers in polytechnics of Southeast, Nigeria, revealed among others that poor teaching and laboratory tools are real stressors among teaching-staff in the university, hence lack of teaching facilities recorded mean of 3.10, poorly equipped laboratory/technical workshop had mean of 2.90, overstretched class enrolment had mean of 2.90 and the need to meet-up with departmental deadline pooled mean of 3.50, while poor office accommodation generated a mean of 3.50. Stuffy lecture rooms with poor seating arrangement for students scored the mean of 3.40. The poor working environment as contributed to the problem of abscondment of sponsored academic staff

Poor Motivation

Nigerian academic staff are poorly motivated. Their salaries are not paid on time; various benefits allowances are not implemented. Ezenkiri Mamman, Ezeani, & Francis, (2021) and Blaskova and Blasko (2014), disclaimed all those privileges and claims people linked with the academic job that academic staff seemed to be enjoying by asserting that the motivation of academic staff is not as strong and smooth as it may seem at first glance. Also, a testimony is given in a report which states that “now I am inside the university system teaching, I can see clearly how exploitive it is unlike when I was not part of the system” (Academic Anonymous Universities, 2018). Tarver (2007), in his study, found that the youngest and smartest people are moving away from being lecturers due to the under-payment considered as a stressor among them. Ezenkiri Mamman, Ezeani, & Francis, (2021) and Mojeed (2020), reported the declaration of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) president whose members are currently on strike due to the Federal Government new policy on salaries and wages. The ASUU president stated that the crisis was not yet over and that the members should be prepared for continued opposition to the deployment of the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) for the payment of their wages. In the context of this paper, IPPIS is a stressor to the ASUU members. Akinfolarin and Gabriel (2014), in Adekunle Ajasin University, Ondo State, Nigeria, the finding revealed that 60.00% of the respondents agreed that there was a lack of provision of regular payment of salary and other remuneration by the head. The finding of a study by Blaskova and Blasko (2014), on the motivation process of university teachers, revealed a low level of motivation among teachers in all manner of treatments. Adewale stressed that the poor standard of living and remuneration in Nigeria could have led to scholars bolting after completing their studies.

Poor Research Grant

Poor accessibility to research grant in Nigerian tertiary institutions is discouraging many sponsored academic staff to come back to Nigeria. Conducting research is one of the major functions of academic staff. Ogunode, Jegede, Adah, Audu, Ajape (2021) believes that research is one of the criteria used for promotion of academic staff. Research grant is a source of income to academic staff. Research is an aspect of the academic job that supposes to attract unsolicited sponsorships. Accessibility to research grant by academic staff is a source of income to many of them. Ogunode & Ade (2023) concluded many lecturers see accessibility to research grant as avenue to get more money to augment the poor salaries they are earning. Archibong *et al.* (2010),

discovered that occupational stress sources among university academic staff include sourcing for research grants. Also, Nwakpa (2015) found out that inadequate funding of research projects and difficulty in accessing the research grants are major miseries (stressors) among academicians in Nigeria. Researches go with motivation. Nwakpa, (2015) maintained that the academic staff viewed research as a whole as one of their major stressors hence such single exercise takes a lot of their resources to be completed and upon these rigorous exercises, this region of the world neither care nor regard the research findings for the national development. This nonchalant and dispassionate attitude towards research brings the morale of academic staff of tertiary institutions down and such is a stressor to them. Adewale as reported by university world (2022) observed that in Nigeria, researchers' work does not get any recognition from the government, even when the research is timely and important. Many times, when our researchers do work here and present their findings, the government seems not to be interested, and this discourages many scholars. But overseas, scholars' work often gets recognition because they value research over there. Hence, the motivation to return to Nigeria after a scholar has travelled overseas may not be there. A scholar may ask themselves: 'If I return to Nigeria, of what use will it be?' " he said. Nigeria is currently one of the countries with the lowest research funding in the world, contributing less than 1% of its GDP to research. Most research activities in Nigeria are sponsored locally by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund). A number of international and philanthropic organisations, like the MacArthur Foundation, also support scientists by sponsoring research and through endowment funds, foreign aid allocations, fellowships and donations.

Insecurity Problem

Insecurity in Nigeria is another factors responsible for abscondment of sponsored academic staff of Nigerian Tertiary institutions. The incessant Boko Haram bombings, civil war and killing by Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria also contributes to the causes of academic abscondment among Nigerian sponsored academic staff after their studies in the country. In effect, most Nigerians live in fear; fear of death, **fear of losing properties etc.** Not only does this pursue the dwellers of these communities but it also prevents investors (Chukwuemeka 2023). Ogunode (2020) observed that many students, lecturers and administrators have been killed while others kidnapped. The various attacks on the universities have resulted to school closure leading to unstable academic programme. *Ajayi (2023) described* Nigeria as a country besieged with several issues such as insecurity, a crumbling economy with high inflation, weak human capital development, and dreadful governance. Insecurity is prevalent across the country, with every region vulnerable to the wave of violence. From the herdsmen on rampage in the country, majorly in the northern parts, to the unrest in south-eastern Nigeria, where whispers of secession have created tensions, Nigeria is in an unhealthy position security-wise. Kidnappings make daily news; bandit attacks on villages are commonplace; and highways have become breeding grounds for bloodshed. According to SBM Intelligence, a socioeconomic research firm, in 2021, more than 10,000 lives were lost in Nigeria due to actions of herdsmen, bandits, Boko Haram, and gang clashes. *Ajayi (2023) concluded that* the lack of belief that the country offers a chance to achieve one's goals and live a good life is at the centre of the mass emigration

Poor Economic Outlook

The poor economic status of Nigeria as contributed to reasons why sponsored academics are absconding. Victor (2022) noted that Africa's biggest economy is witnessing a massive distortion, with economic analysts worried that the ugly trends continue without much effort from the government. As a result, economic indicators seem very disturbing, especially inflation, unemployment, debt, subsidy payment and poverty rate. Rising inflation has raised the cost of

living and pushed many into poverties. About 133 million Nigerians (63% of the population), are poor, as measured in multiple dimensions. Because over half of Nigeria's inflation is driven by rising food prices, many poor individuals and families face hunger. Persistent increase in unemployment is fueling insecurity, youth restiveness, low output and slow economic growth and a reduction in the standard of living of Nigerians. Underemployment is also very high at 22.8 per cent, while youth underemployment is 21.0 per cent. Nigeria's debt profile has continued to rise since 2015. According to available statistics, it has increased from N12.5 trillion in 2015 to N42 trillion in 2022 (Victor, 2022). The poor economic outlook in Nigeria is among the factors responsible for mass emigration from Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper discussed reasons why sponsored academic staff of Nigerian Tertiary institutions absconded after the completion of their studies abroad. The paper concluded weak sponsorship agreement, poor salaries, inadequate modern infrastructure facilities, poor working environment, insecurity, poor access to research grant and poor economics status are reasons why sponsored academic staff of Nigerian tertiary institutions absconded after the completion of their studies abroad. To address this problems, the paper advance the following policies options.

Review Sponsorship Agreement: Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) should direct tertiary institutions to review sponsorship agreement to include the following options. Sponsor tertiary institutions shall be responsible to collect certificate of sponsored academic after graduation. Training institutions whether local or foreign shall be informed to send the certificate of the students to the institutions where the academic came from. Academic who want to stay back after completion of study shall refund 100% of the fund used for the training.

[Increment of Salaries and Allowances of academic staff: Government should review and increase the salaries of tertiary institutions staff. Salaries of academic staff should be on a global best practices.](#)

[Provision of Conducive Teaching and Learning Environment.](#) Good working environment attracts more workers. In fact, one of the things most academic from Nigeria considers before accepting any employment is the environment of their offices and working condition.

Funding of Tertiary Institutions: Adequate funding of the educational sector is also a tentative solution to brain drain in Nigeria. This includes increase and timely payment of the salaries of lecturers. Accordingly, adequate fund should be provided to tertiary institutions by the government.

Adequate Funding of Research and Provision of Grants: Adequate funding of research programme and provision of grants for academic staff will help to stop academic abscondment among Nigerian sponsored academic staff. Provision of grants at the local level is very important, especially in a university because it ensures development at the local level. There will be quicker economic and technological development.

Ensure Security of lives and Properties: The government need to address all issues responsible for all forms of insecurities across the country.

Fix the Economic: [Government should diversify the economy by expanding agricultural sector, manufacturing sector and provide quality infrastructure facilities.](#)

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