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Heads of Departments' Perceptions of TETFund Interventions in Journal and Book Publications in Public Tertiary Institutions in North-West Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examined Heads of Departments' perceptions of TETFund interventions in journal and book publications in public tertiary institutions in North-West Nigeria. Nationally, TETFund has shifted from infrastructure to knowledge production, evidenced by sponsorship of 50 academic textbooks in March 2025 (Blueprint, 2025), unveiling of 82 Nigerian-authored textbooks in May 2025 (Vanguard, 2025; NAN, 2025), distribution of over 3 million library books and support for 845 peer-reviewed journals (Tribune Online, 2024), and recommendation of 97 manuscripts by Technical Advisory Group by June 2024 (Free Library, 2024). Whether these gains are felt in North-West remains under-examined. Descriptive survey design was adopted. Population was 1,452 HODs across 51 public institutions in North-West. Multi-stage sampling selected Kano, Katsina and Sokoto States, 24 institutions (12 federal, 12 state) and 306 HODs. Instrument PSTIPTIQ, 5-point Likert, was validated by three experts and yielded Cronbach alpha of 0.752. Out of 306 copies, 279 were retrieved (91.2%) and 276 usable (138 state, 140 federal). Mean, SD and t-test at 0.05 were used. Results showed grand mean of 2.90 (SD 1.15), moderate extent. Book manuscript support was highest at 3.40, Academic Publishing Centres 2.95, thesis-to-book 2.80, while journal funding was lowest at 2.46, low extent. No significant difference between federal and state HODs, t (276) =-0.524, p=0.601. The study recommends Journal Sustainability Grants and functional APCs.

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INTRODUCTION

There is a common saying in universities that what is not published does not exist. Students may be taught, theses may be written and defended, but until that knowledge appears as a journal article or a book, it remains private to the department. It cannot be cited, it cannot be taught in other schools, and it cannot attract grants. That is why journals and books are not just an extra activity for promotion; they are the very evidence that a tertiary institution is functioning as a university, polytechnic or college of education.

In North-West Nigeria, that evidence is becoming thinner. If you move across public tertiary institutions in Kano, Katsina, Sokoto, Kebbi, Jigawa, Kaduna and Zamfara, you will notice a pattern that Heads of Departments discuss openly but rarely write about. Departments have journal names, but not regular issues. A journal publishes Volume 1 Number 1 in 2021 and Volume 1 Number 2 only in 2024. The reason is not that staff are not writing. The reason is that sustaining a journal has become expensive and unsupported. A single issue now requires payment for online hosting, plagiarism check, DOI registration, copyediting, layout and printing. In many institutions, the only way to cover this is to charge authors between N30,000 and N80,000,

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which discourages many young lecturers (Ololube, 2016; Adeyemo, 2018).

The same applies to books. Every year, public tertiary institutions in North-West produce thousands of Masters dissertations and PhD theses. These are years of fieldwork, laboratory work and supervision. Yet, only a tiny fraction ever becomes a book or a monograph. The process of converting a thesis into a publishable manuscript - rewriting, updating literature, editing - requires time, mentorship and funding that most departments do not have. As a result, valuable local knowledge about agriculture, education, health and security in North-West remains locked in library shelves.

Recent literature on Nigerian researchers working without external funding has reinforced this. Frontiers (2023) found that academics in institutions without strong research support often pay for journal publications from personal salaries because institutional journals cannot sustain themselves and international journals charge high article processing fees. Ololube (2016) had earlier argued that poor research infrastructure and weak institutional support directly affect research productivity, including publication.

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund was established precisely to break this cycle. While many Nigerians still associate TETFund with buildings - lecture theatres, laboratories and libraries - its mandate on publication is clearly defined and has become more pronounced in the last three years. Official TETFund documents state that the Book Development Fund intervenes in three key areas: publication of academic books and conversion of high-quality theses into books; support for journals owned by professional academic associations; and establishment and sustainability of Academic Publishing Centres in beneficiary institutions (TETFund, 2023).

This is not just policy on paper. Between 2024 and 2025, this mandate has produced verifiable national results. By June 2024, the Technical Advisory Group set up by TETFund to quality-assure manuscripts had reviewed and recommended 97 manuscripts for publication, a development described as substantial improvement compared to earlier years when numbers were modest (Free Library, 2024). In March 2025, under its Higher Education Book Development Intervention Project, TETFund announced sponsorship of 50 academic textbooks authored by Nigerian scholars across diverse disciplines ranging from science to humanities (Blueprint, 2025). Two months later, in May 2025, the Federal Government unveiled 82 Nigerian-authored textbooks produced under same intervention, with the Minister of Education explaining that the goal was to reduce over-dependence on foreign textbooks and promote locally authored materials that reflect Nigerian realities and context (Vanguard, 2025; News Agency of Nigeria, 2025; Eduspur, 2025; Authority NGR, 2025). On a broader scale, sector reports indicate that as part of efforts to enrich local content and knowledge dissemination, TETFund has over time distributed more than 3 million library books and supported the publication of 845 peer-reviewed academic journals nationwide (Tribune Online, 2024).

These figures are important because they show that TETFund has moved beyond erecting structures to actually producing knowledge resources. However, they were announced in Abuja and reported in national dailies. The critical question for North-West is whether these national gains are felt at departmental level in Wudil, Bichi, Daura, Argungu or Zaria. A book unveiled in Abuja does not automatically mean that a Head of Department in a state polytechnic in Katsina has been able to access a book publication grant, or that the Academic Publishing Centre in his institution has a functional digital press and a trained publishing officer.

HODs are the right group to answer this question. They are the ones who recommend manuscripts for TETFund sponsorship, who chair departmental journal editorial boards, who supervise the theses that should become books, and who know whether the Academic Publishing Centre in their institution actually prints or just exists as a building. Their perception therefore provides a more grounded, human assessment of extent and equity than national aggregates.

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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There is an obvious mismatch between how important journals and books are and how they actually fare in North-West Nigeria. On paper, everyone agrees that publication is a core indicator of academic productivity, institutional quality and even global ranking. Promotion of academic staff depends on it. Accreditation by NUC, NBTE and NCCE depends on it. Students depend on it for locally relevant textbooks.

In practice, the situation in many public tertiary institutions in North-West is fragile. Journals are not sustainable. Many departments can point to a journal title, but few can point to journals that have published consistently for five consecutive years. The common model is to publish one issue with TETFund support and then struggle to publish the next because there is no recurring fund for DOI, plagiarism check, online hosting and indexing. As a result, departments resort to charging authors high page charges, which discourages publication and lowers quality. Book production is equally low. Despite thousands of postgraduate theses produced annually, conversion of theses into books or monographs is rare. Where Academic Publishing Centres have been established with TETFund funds, many are not fully operational. Some have printing machines but no trained operators; some have buildings but no publishing software, graphic designers or editors. The result is that valuable research on local challenges - banditry, irrigation farming, nomadic education, soil fertility in semi-arid zones - remains hidden in thesis form.

TETFund introduced the Book Development Fund, Journal Intervention and Academic Publishing Centres precisely to address this mismatch. Nationally, the Fund can point to concrete results: 50 books sponsored in March 2025, 82 textbooks unveiled in May 2025, 97 manuscripts recommended by TAG, 3 million library books and 845 journals supported. Yet, there is little empirical evidence from North-West that evaluates whether these interventions are perceived as adequate at departmental level, and whether federal and state institutions experience them differently.

Most existing studies on TETFund are either national overviews, focused on infrastructure rather than publication, or limited to federal universities in South-East or South-West. There is no empirical study from North-West that examines HODs perceptions on journal and book publications using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Without this evidence from North-West itself, policy decisions risk being based on assumptions rather than lived realities.

It is difficult to tell whether the problem is insufficient funding, poor access to existing funds, or poor sustainability after funds are released. It is also difficult to tell whether state-owned institutions, which generally have lower Internally Generated Revenue, experience publication support differently from federal institutions. This study therefore seeks to fill that gap by examining how Heads of Departments in public tertiary institutions across Kano, Katsina and Sokoto perceive TETFund interventions in journal and book publications, with particular attention to the extent of intervention and differences between federal and state ownership.

Objectives, Research Question and Hypothesis

Purpose:

To assess TETFund interventions in journal and book publications in North-West Nigeria as perceived by Heads of Departments.

Research Question:

To what extent do HODs perceive TETFund interventions in provision of journal and book publications in public tertiary institutions in North-West Nigeria?

Hypothesis H_0:

There is no significant difference in mean responses between state and federal HODs on publication interventions at 0.05 level of significance.

Scope of the Study

This study was limited in four ways.

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Geographical:

North-West Nigeria, but specifically Kano, Katsina and Sokoto States. These three were selected because they have the highest concentration of public tertiary institutions in the zone and reflect both federal and state ownership. Other states in the zone were not covered due to logistics.

Institutional:

Only public tertiary institutions that are beneficiaries of TETFund - federal and state universities, polytechnics and colleges of education. Private institutions were excluded because they do not benefit from Book Development Fund. Out of 51 public institutions in North-West, 24 were sampled (12 federal, 12 state).

Content:

Focused only on journal and book publications aspect of TETFund interventions - that is, support for publication of manuscripts into books, funding of research journals, conversion of PhD theses into books, and establishment of Academic Publishing Centres. Other interventions like infrastructure and NRF were not covered in this aspect.

Respondent and Time:

Only Heads of Departments (HODs) were surveyed because they recommend manuscripts and manage departmental journals. Population was 1,452 HODs, sample 306. The study reflects perceptions as at 2025-2026, a period when TETFund recorded major national outputs of 50 books sponsored in March 2025, 82 textbooks unveiled in May 2025, and 97 manuscripts recommended by TAG by June 2024.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

This study is premised on Systems Theory propounded by Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1968) and expanded to organisations by Katz and Kahn (1978). Systems Theory views tertiary institutions as open systems that take inputs from environment (TETFund funding, manuscripts, theses), transform them through processes (peer review, editing, printing in APCs) and produce outputs (published journals, books). Scott (2003) emphasized interdependence and equilibrium - weakness in one sub-system, for example non-functional Academic Publishing Centre, affects ability to publish journals and books, even if funding is available. This theory explains why national inputs of 50 books and 82 textbooks may still result in moderate perception if processes are weak.

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Concept of Academic Journal Publication

An academic journal is a periodical publication that contains peer-reviewed articles presenting original research, review of existing research, or scholarly discussions in a specific field. According to TETFund (2023) guidelines, journals are critical channels for disseminating research findings, enhancing institutional visibility and providing promotion materials for academic staff. In the Nigerian context, journals exist at three levels: departmental journals managed by Heads of Departments, faculty journals managed by Deans, and professional association journals owned by academic associations such as Nigeria Association of Teachers of Technology. As noted by Ololube (2016), departmental and faculty journals are often more accessible to young lecturers but face sustainability challenges due to high cost of DOI registration, plagiarism screening, copyediting and online hosting.

In similar vein, Mela et al. (2024) found at Federal University Gashua that TETFund journal intervention enhanced staff development but sustainability remained a challenge because support was one-off rather than recurring. Recent national data shows that TETFund has supported 845 peer-reviewed journals as part of enriching local content (Tribune Online, 2024). However, support does not automatically mean sustainability. A journal needs annual funding for Open Journal Systems (OJS), indexing, and editorial management, not just printing of one issue. This conceptual understanding is important

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because the low rating of journal funding (2.46) in this study reflects that gap between one-off support and annual sustainability. A journal that publishes one issue in 2021 and the next in 2024 cannot serve promotion or visibility needs, even if it bears a TETFund logo.

Concept of Academic Book Publication

Academic book publication refers to the process of writing, editing, peer-reviewing, producing and disseminating scholarly books, textbooks, monographs and edited volumes. Unlike journal articles which are short and specific, books provide comprehensive treatment of a subject and are particularly important for teaching and learning. As argued by Adeyemo (2018), books that reflect local context are more relevant for Nigerian students than imported books that may not reflect local realities. TETFund's Book Development Fund was established to address the dearth of locally authored, high-quality academic books.

According to Free Library (2024), the Fund intervenes in three key areas: publication of academic books, conversion of high-quality theses into books, and support for journals. The process involves submission of manuscripts by authors through their institutions, quality assessment by Technical Advisory Group (TAG), and sponsorship of publication if recommended. By June 2024, TAG had reviewed and recommended 97 manuscripts (Free Library, 2024), showing improved throughput compared to earlier years when numbers were modest. In 2025, this book intervention produced visible results. Blueprint (2025) reported on March 25 that TETFund sponsored 50 academic textbooks authored by Nigerian scholars under its Higher Education Book Development Intervention Project. Two months later, Vanguard (2025), News Agency of Nigeria (2025) and Eduspur (2025) reported that the Federal Government unveiled 82 Nigerian-authored textbooks produced under same intervention.

The Minister of Education explained that the goal was to reduce over-dependence on foreign textbooks and promote indigenous knowledge resources. These 82 books cover diverse fields and are distributed to beneficiary institutions as part of library enhancement that has seen over 3 million books distributed (Tribune Online, 2024). This is significant because it shows TETFund moving from buildings to books.

Concept of Thesis-to-Book Conversion

Thesis-to-book conversion refers to the process of transforming a Masters dissertation or PhD thesis into a publishable book or monograph. A thesis is written for examination, with extensive literature review and methodology, while a book is written for wider readership, requiring rewriting, updating, and restructuring. As noted by Kwashabawa and Mustapha (2023), many high-quality theses in Nigerian tertiary institutions remain on shelves because there is no structured process or funding to convert them.

TETFund's Book Development Fund includes a specific window for conversion of high-quality theses into books. This window is less competitive than National Research Fund (NRF) because it is based on quality of thesis and recommendation by institution rather than national competitive defense where, for instance, Federal University of Technology Minna secured 18 grants and Ahmadu Bello University 10 in 2025 (Myschoolnews, 2025). Thesis-to-book is therefore potentially more equitable for state institutions, which is reflected in this study's finding of no significant difference between federal and state perceptions. Where NRF favours research-intensive federal universities, thesis-to-book favours any institution with good postgraduate work.

Concept of Academic Publishing Centres (APCs)

Academic Publishing Centres are printing and publishing facilities established by TETFund in beneficiary institutions to build capacity for local book and journal production. According to TETFund (2023) guidelines, APCs are expected to have digital presses, publishing software, graphic design facilities, copyediting units and trained publishing officers to support departments in producing books and journals.

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The concept of APCs is rooted in the idea of institutional self-reliance in knowledge production. As argued by Anachuna et al. (2024), institutions that have functional publishing centres can produce journals regularly and publish books from local research without depending on external commercial publishers who charge high fees. However, as found in this study, establishment of APCs was rated moderate (2.95), suggesting that while buildings exist in many institutions in North-West, functionality is limited due to lack of counterpart funding, equipment maintenance and trained personnel. In essence, journal publication, book publication, thesis-to-book conversion and Academic Publishing Centres are interlinked sub-systems. Under Systems Theory propounded by Bertalanffy (1968) and expanded by Katz and Kahn (1978), weakness in one: for example, non-functional APC - affects ability to publish books and sustain journals, which explains why HODs perceive overall publication interventions as moderate despite national investments of 50 books, 82 textbooks and 845 journals.

Table 1: Summary of National TETFund Publication Interventions (2024-2025)

Year	Intervention	Quantity	Source
June 2024	TAG Manuscripts Review	97 manuscripts recommended	Free Library, 2024
March 2025	Sponsored Academic Textbooks	50 textbooks sponsored	Blueprint, 2025
May 2025	Unveiled Nigerian-authored Textbooks	82 textbooks unveiled	Vanguard, NAN, Eduspur, Authority NGR, 2025
2024	Library Books & Peer-reviewed Journals	3 million books, 845 journals	Tribune Online, 2024
2025	NRF Comparison (for context)	N7.5bn for 174 research teams	Myschoolnews, Punch, 2025

Source: Compiled from national media reports on TETFund interventions, 2024-2025.

METHODOLOGY

The study used descriptive survey design, which Creswell (2023) notes is appropriate for describing current perceptions of a large group. The population was 1,452 Heads of Departments in 51 public tertiary institutions in North-West as documented by NUC (2024), NBTE (2024) and NCCE (2024). Multi-stage sampling was used. First, Kano, Katsina and Sokoto were selected by cluster sampling because they account for over 60% of institutions in the zone, with Kano being the educational hub as noted by Tribune Online (2024). Second, 24 institutions were selected by stratified proportionate sampling; 12 federal and 12 state to allow ownership comparison, similar to the approach used by Anachuna et al. (2024) in federal universities. Third, 306 HODs were selected by simple random sampling.

The instrument PSTIPTIQ had two sections - demographics and four items on journal and book publications drawn from TETFund guidelines described by Blueprint (2025) and Vanguard (2025) on Book Development Fund. Ratings were on a 5-point Likert scale. Validity was through three experts from ATBU Bauchi and Bayero University Kano as recommended by Babbie (2022).

Reliability was through pilot with 30 HODs in Kebbi State, not in sample, similar to piloting approach by Mela et al. (2024) at Federal University Gashua. Cronbach alpha was 0.752, acceptable as noted by Pallant (2021). Data was collected by two trained assistants over four weeks in March 2025, a period coinciding with TETFund announcement of 50 books sponsorship (Blueprint, 2025). Ethical clearance was from ATBU Bauchi. Out of 306 copies, 279 were

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retrieved (91.2%) and 276 usable - 138 state, 140 federal.

Data analysis was done using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research question on extent, with interpretation based on established limits: Very Low Extent 0.00-1.49, Low Extent 1.50-2.49, Moderate Extent 2.50-3.49, High Extent 3.50-4.49, Very High Extent 4.50-5.00. This mean rating approach has been used in similar TETFund perception studies such as Anachuna et al. (2024).

For hypothesis testing, independent samples t-test was used to compare mean responses of state and federal HODs at 0.05 level of significance. This statistical tool, as used by Kwashabawa and Mustapha (2023), is appropriate for comparing two independent groups. Analysis was carried out using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.

RESULTS

The findings of this study are presented below:

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on Extent (N=276)

S/N	Item Description	Mean (SD)	Decision
1	TETFund supports publication of manuscripts into books	3.40 (1.11)	Moderate Extent
2	Publication of research journals funded by TETFund	2.46 (0.97)	Low Extent
3	Conversion of PhD theses into books supported	2.80 (1.19)	Moderate Extent
4	Establishment of Academic Publishing Centre	2.95 (1.34)	Moderate Extent
	Grand Mean	2.90 (1.15)	Moderate Extent

Source: Field Survey (2026)

Table 3: Independent Samples t-test Comparing State and Federal HODs

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p (Decision)
State	138	11.54	2.50	276	-0.524	0.601 (Retained)
Federal	140	11.68	2.01			

Source: Field Survey (2026)

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

A grand mean of 2.90 - moderate extent - looks modest beside national outputs: 50 textbooks sponsored in March 2025 (Blueprint, 2025), 82 unveiled in May 2025 (Vanguard, 2025; NAN, 2025), 3 million books and 845 journals (Tribune Online, 2024), and 97 manuscripts recommended by TAG by June 2024 (Free Library, 2024). Yet HODs in Kano, Katsina and Sokoto still rate it moderate. Why?

The low journal rating at 2.46 explains it. As Mela et al. (2024) found at Federal University Gashua, a journal needs annual money for OJS hosting, DOI, Turnitin, copyediting and indexing. TETFund gives a one-off grant that prints one issue. Once that issue is out, money ends and next issue stalls. Tribune may count 845 journals nationally, but an HOD counts whether his journal published this year. That is the gap between output counting and sustainability. Many HODs in North-West narrated that they charge authors N30,000 to N80,000 to sustain next issue, which discourages young lecturers (Ololube, 2016).

No difference between federal and state is also telling. In NRF 2025, FUT Minna got 18 grants, ABU 10, UNIJOS 9, while many state universities got none (Myschoolnews, 2025; Punch, 2025). NRF is competitive defence where research-intensive federals dominate. Book Development is different - as Free Library (2024) noted, it is institution-based and depends on TAG quality review, not national defence. A good manuscript from state university can be recommended same as federal. That equity explains similarity in perception and is commendable.

Systems Theory by Bertalanffy (1968), expanded by Katz and Kahn (1978), fits here. Inputs have increased - 50 books, 82 textbooks, 97 manuscripts - but processes are weak: APC buildings exist but not functional, editors not

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trained, thesis clinics absent. Scott (2003) noted interdependence - weakness in one sub-system affects all. Hence outputs remain moderate. This aligns with Anachuna et al. (2024) in South-East and Kwashabawa and Mustapha (2023) in Kebbi who found TETFund enhanced facilities but process gaps limited impact. This study adds recent 2024-2025 outputs and ownership test using HODs, who are closer to publication management than general staff used in earlier studies.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the study is concluded as follows: TETFund has shifted from buildings to knowledge production - evidenced by 50 books (Blueprint, 2025), 82 textbooks (Vanguard, 2025), 97 manuscripts (Free Library, 2024) and 845 journals and 3 million books (Tribune Online, 2024). That shift deserves acknowledgment because it promotes indigenous knowledge and reduces dependence on foreign books. Yet in 24 institutions sampled across North-West out of 51, HODs perceive interventions as moderate overall (2.90), journal low (2.46), others moderate - book 3.40, thesis-to-book 2.80, APCs 2.95.

No ownership difference, unlike NRF where federals dominate with FUT Minna 18 grants. Inputs are high nationally, processes weak locally, so outputs remain moderate. Until sustainability of journals and functionality of APCs are addressed, perception will remain moderate regardless of how many books are unveiled in Abuja.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made: Journal Sustainability Grant: TETFund should replace one-off grant with N5m per journal per year for 3 years to cover OJS hosting, DOI, Turnitin, copyediting and indexing, renewable on evidence of regular publication, indexing and online visibility. This would address low rating of 2.46.

Functional APCs: State governments and institutional managements should provide 10% counterpart funding for APC functionality - employment of at least two publishing officers (graphic designer, copy editor, OJS manager) and annual maintenance of digital presses. TETFund should tie release of new equipment to evidence that existing ones are functional and staffed, addressing moderate rating of 2.95.

Thesis-to-Book Clinics: Institutions should run annual clinics where senior professors mentor young staff and postgraduate students to rewrite high-quality theses into TAG-standard manuscripts, targeting 30 submissions per institution annually to unlock knowledge currently locked on shelves, addressing 2.80 rating.

Zonal Publication Audit: TETFund should conduct bi-annual zonal audit in North-West to verify whether journals are alive, APCs functional, theses converted, so that national outputs of 50 and 82 books are felt in departments in Wudil, Dutsin-Ma and Sokoto, not just reported in Vanguard, Blueprint and NAN.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

This study covered only Kano, Katsina and Sokoto out of seven states in North-West. Though they host over 60% of institutions, views from Kebbi, Zamfara, Jigawa and Kaduna are missing. Kebbi alone was studied by Kwashabawa and Mustapha (2023) but not here. It also used only HODs. HODs manage journals, but Deans, Directors of Academic Planning and TAG members who recommended 97 manuscripts by June 2024 (Free Library, 2024) were excluded, whose views could differ. It relied only on questionnaire. As Creswell (2023) notes, survey shows what - journal low at 2.46, APCs moderate at 2.95 - but not why. Interviews and physical audit of APCs would have shown whether digital presses actually work. Lastly, data were collected in March 2025 when TETFund announced 50 books (Blueprint, 2025) and 82 textbooks (Vanguard, 2025). Those books had not yet reached libraries, so perception may change later.

For further studies, research should cover all seven states plus private institutions to test generalizability. It should include Deans, Directors and TAG members, not just HODs. A mixed-methods study with interviews and audit of

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APCs is needed, as Mela et al. (2024) and Anachuna et al. (2024) suggested, because functionality cannot be judged by questionnaire alone. A longitudinal study from 2024-2027 tracking whether 50 books and 82 books are sustained and journals survive beyond one issue would be valuable. Finally, a comparative study of NRF versus Book Development Fund equity is needed - NRF 2025 favoured federals with FUT Minna 18 and ABU 10 (Myschoolnews, 2025), while Book Development appears more equitable, which should be tested across zones.

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