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**NIGERIAN ONLINE JOURNAL OF  
EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES AND  
TECHNOLOGY**

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**INFLUENCE OF MARCIA'S MORATORIUM AND FORECLOSURE EGO IDENTITY  
STATUSES ON READING ATTITUDE OF STUDENTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN  
TANGAZA AND NEIGHBOURING AREAS IN SOKOTO STATE, NIGERIA**

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**To cite this article:**

Muhammad, S., Rahman, U.A., & Hassan, M.A. (2024). Influence of Marcia's moratorium and foreclosure ego identity statuses on reading attitude of students in secondary schools in Tangaza and neighbouring areas in Sokoto State, Nigeria. *Nigerian Online Journal of Educational Sciences and Technology (NOJEST)*, 5 (2), 18-33

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**INFLUENCE OF MARCIA'S MORATORIUM AND FORECLOSURE EGO IDENTITY STATUSES ON READING ATTITUDE OF STUDENTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN TANGAZA AND NEIGHBOURING AREAS IN SOKOTO STATE, NIGERIA**

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Article Info

*Article History*

Received:  
January 01, 2024

Accepted:  
February 5, 2024

**Keywords**

Moratorium, Foreclosure,  
Reading Attitude, Adolescent,  
Ego identity, Marcia's Model,  
Erikson's Stage Theory

**Abstract**

*The paper studied how identity statuses of moratorium and foreclosure influenced the reading attitude of adolescent students in secondary schools in Tangaza and neighbouring areas. Correlational descriptive research design was used for the study. Six research questions and two hypotheses were formulated. A total of six sub-hypotheses were tested on Microsoft Excel software and [www.statskingdom.com](http://www.statskingdom.com). The eleven senior secondary schools located in Tangaza, Silame, and Binji local governments formed the population of the survey. A three--stage sampling technique was used, consisting of stratified, purposive, and simple random sampling techniques. The sample for the study was 164 generated from three randomly selected schools; Instruments used in the research were the 16-item Ego Identity Scale (Short) (Greg, 2008) and the Reading Attitude Questionnaire adapted by Akhmetovaa, Imambayevab, and Csapo (2022). Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the hypotheses. Results showed there was no significant relationship between moratorium and foreclosure ego identity statuses and reading attitude of the samples. The study recommended among others that parents, guardians and teachers should consistently guide and encourage adolescents to explore various options in different aspects of life and be committed to such according to their goals and aspirations as they develop into adults; students however should be encouraged by their teachers and parents to develop positive reading attitude as that is part of what lead to identity achievement.*

## **Introduction**

Ego identity is, according to Erikson's model, expected to be achieved by every individual during the adolescence phase. Ego identity is not the name or ancestral background of the individual; and it means much more than their occupation. Ego identity is the individual's total commitment to some specific goals, lifestyle, occupation, religious and political doctrines, social relationship, and other important psychosocial alternatives in life. At a certain age or stage in life, everyone settles down with a particular identity status irrespective of the positivity or negativity of the form of that identity he or she may have achieved. Cherry (2022) writes that ego identity involves the experiences, relationships, beliefs, values, and memories that make up a person's subjective sense of self, which helps create a continuous self-image that remains constant even as new aspects of the self are developed or strengthened over time. This is almost the general view expressed by psychosocial analysts such as Erikson and Marcia.

As highlighted briefly above, in psychosocial analysis, a person's ego identity is what distinguishes them from others in society. It is normally out of ego identity, constructs such as self-esteem and self-concept are extracted. A person's identity is the totality of their experiences, goals, orientations, and values making them unique from others. Yilmaz (2022) defines identity as a person's sense of self, established by their unique characteristics, affiliations, and social roles. Normally, on the identity of an individual, such attributes and potentials as skills, occupation, marital lifestyle, sexual orientation, religious or political affiliation, and life's goals are found. Upreti (2017) sees identity as the conception, qualities, beliefs, and expressions that make a person or group.

An individual is said to be identity-achieved when he or she has a specific identity after he or she must have explored themselves and their environment to arrive at those social roles, norms and values, beliefs, goals, and interests which make them unique in their environment. People who are classified as identity achieved have already experienced a period of questioning, and have made occupational, ideological, and interpersonal commitments, and have struggled with experiences of uncertainty and have identified meaningful goals and values (Newman & Newman, 2020). Marcia (as cited in Sugimura, Gmelin, Van der Gaag, & Kunnen, 2021)

explains that exploration refers to an individual's active engagement in searching for and investigating meaningful alternatives in important life areas.

Identity crisis at times is confused with role confusion. The two concepts are different but highly related. Identity crisis occurs when a person is in a state of self re-evaluation, whereby he or she questions their basic understanding of who they are in terms of their abilities, responsibilities, relationships, values, beliefs, and so forth. During identity crisis, the individual experiences dissatisfaction and regrets about self, anxiety about life, shifts in relationships, lack of confidence, and so on (Lukin, n.d.). Schmeck, Schlüter-Müller, Foelsch, and Doering (2013) opine that identity crisis is the intensive analysis and inward exploration of a person's sense of self.

According to Marcia, attainment of an ideal status in life is known as *identity achievement*, which encompasses knowing and having satisfaction about the paths being taken in life. Students with *achieved identities* would have a sense of trust (self-confidence) in their capabilities, potentials, and judgments, and would display commitments to their studies or career paths and would be able to establish genuine/positive relationships with lecturers, fellows, and other people in their academic environment. Newman and Newman (2020) assert that people who are classified as identity-achieved have already experienced a period of questioning (moratorium), and have made occupational, ideological, and interpersonal commitments, and have struggled with experiences of uncertainty and have identified meaningful goals and values.

There are numerous benefits behind shaping and forming an identity. And features of identity achievement include the following: commitment to certain specific values, goals, beliefs, interests, responsibilities, and so forth; self-confidence; sense of independence; and fidelity (Wellbeing Center, n.d.; Newman, & Newman 2020; Parvez, 2022).

Identity diffusion is the psychosocial state of being unsure of who one is and where one fits in society. Individuals experiencing identity diffusion lack commitments to certain specific goals, interests, norms and values, roles, and beliefs in their lives. Role confused people do not have direction and focus in life. Cherry (2022) exemplifies that those with identity diffusion drift from one job or relationship to another, feel disappointed and confused about their roles in life.

There are several problems affecting individuals with identity diffusion: lack of self-direction, disorganized life, low self-esteem, lack of involvement in learning activities, lack of interpersonal relationships, exploring gender identity or sexual orientation, changes in relationships and friend groups, feeling stuck or not knowing where to go, low self-confidence, etc (Kasinath, 2013; practical psychology, 2022).

In Marcia's theory, there exist between the two opposite extremes of identity achievement and identity diffusion what the theory refers to as *identity foreclosure* and *identity moratorium*. Foreclosure is a state or period during which the adolescent individual has committed themselves to some lifestyle, occupation, norms and values, and so forth according to the convictions of their parents, family, or those he or she is close to. Foreclosure is a state of identity marked by complete commitment without exploration of alternatives in life. Meeus, Schoot, Keijsers, and Branje (2011) write that Foreclosure means that the adolescent has made a commitment without exploration. However, Marcia (as cited in Hampton, 2020) defines that identity moratorium is a status in human development involving a search for identity. An adolescent in moratorium state continues to explore alternatives available and has not made any commitment to some values, goals, occupation, and so forth.

Attitude towards reading is the individual's feeling about reading (Partin & Gillespie as cited in Jumawan, n.d.). Subadrino (2019) defines reading attitude as an individual's feeling about reading, and behaviour such as selecting and reading books. Reading attitude is the predisposition one has towards reading all written texts that improve intellectual skills. Smith (as cited in Nonte, Hartwich & Willems, 2018) defines reading attitude as a state of mind, accompanied by feelings and emotions making reading more or less probable. Mathewson (as cited in Fan, 2019) defines reading attitude as evaluation of content and purpose, feelings about engaging in a particular kind of reading, and action readiness for initiating or sustaining reading activity.

The predisposition of an individual regarding reading is viewed from two perspectives. It is either that attitude is positive or negative (Smith as cited in Nonte, Hartwich & Willems, 2018). Positive reading attitude is the consistent desire or passion to read texts that improve one's knowledge or experience. However, negative attitude to reading is the poor disposition about

reading to develop one's skills. Individuals having positive reading attitude tend to be willing to read, enjoy reading, become proficient, and become lifelong readers; and on the other hand, those with poor attitudes toward reading may only read when they must read, tend to avoid reading, and may even refuse to read altogether (Joseph, 2022).

A person's attitude toward reading could leave significant cognitive, social, academic, and moral effects upon them. Moreover, reading attitude is often studied based on three levels: low, moderate, and high, with the assumption that it cannot be totally lacking in individuals fortunate enough to be able to read.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Through observations, the researchers found that many students in secondary schools in Tangaza and environs experience the psychosocial situation whereby they struggle with low self-confidence, low self-esteem; have trouble answering questions about their lives, show absolute dissatisfaction with their academic programmes, regret their social relationships, economic careers, and political or religious affiliations, which altogether cause them feelings of anxiety, agitation, and depression over the way life is to them. Some of the students indicated they had had no independent explorations of different alternatives (occupations, relationships, doctrines, etc) to embrace in life, which corresponded with their personal interests and capabilities.

Some of them, based on inferences from their statements or responses, had wished to become full-time musicians or footballers, Moslems, medical doctors, or independent business operators, but ended up hard pressed into certain roles described by my James Marcia as foreclosure. And many of them showed signs of poor or nonexistent commitment to certain alternatives, described by Marcia as identity diffusion. Some however showed signs of commitment described as identity achievement. The researchers, therefore, developed interest in embarking on a survey to study how reading attitude empirically correlates with identity statuses, particularly foreclosure and moratorium in relation to the secondary school students of Tangaza and its neighbouring areas.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The study specifically sought to work on the following objectives in relation to adolescent students in Tangaza and neighbouring areas:

1. To find out the states of ego identity of adolescent students.
2. To find whether both males and females had foreclosure and moratorium statuses.
3. To examine how identity foreclosure and identity moratorium correlated with the adolescent students' reading attitude.

### **Research Questions**

The following set of questions guided the survey with respect to the subjects of the study:

1. Are there students in a state of moratorium identity?
2. Are both sexes among the students found in moratorium state of ego identity?
3. Are there students in a state of foreclosure identity?
4. Are both sexes among the students found in foreclosure state of ego identity?
5. Is there significant relationship between moratorium identity and reading attitude?
6. Is there significant relationship between foreclosure identity and reading attitude?

### **Hypotheses**

The following are the null hypotheses tested after data collection during the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between moratorium identity and reading attitude?
2. There is no significant relationship between foreclosure identity and reading attitude

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study is based on Erickson's theory of psychosocial development (the 5th stage) (1956), which presents the concepts of identity and role confusion. The study is also based on Marcia's model of identity, which explains four statuses of identity, which are identity achievement, identity moratorium, identity foreclosure, and identity diffusion. Marcia's model is an extension to that of Erikson. Marcia explained Erikson's role confusion term as identity diffusion.

In the follow-up theory by Marcia (1966), provided is the explanation of four identity statuses with regard to the level of exploration of and commitment to alternatives the adolescent person comes across at different times in life. Identity diffusion indicates that the adolescent has no commitment at all to a specific developmental task. Foreclosure shows that the adolescent is committed to some identity although without exploration of different available alternatives such as in career development, religious doctrine, social relationship, and so forth. Moratorium means that the adolescent individual is in a state of serious exploration but yet to make any

commitment. While the status of identity achievement means that the adolescent has both exploration and commitment regarding life's alternatives.

The Mathewson's model of reading attitude also guided the study. According to Mathewson's model (1994), attitudes and feelings have a direct influence on intention to read.

### Methodology

Correlational descriptive survey design was used for the study. A total of six sub-hypotheses were tested using Pearson statistics on Microsoft Excel software and [www.statskingdom.com](http://www.statskingdom.com). The eleven senior secondary schools located in Tangaza, Silame, and Binji local governments formed the population of the survey. A three-stage sampling technique was used, consisting of stratified, purposive, and simple random sampling techniques. The schools were first categorized based on gender; then, three from among the eleven schools were selected purposively; and finally questionnaires were administered to respondents based on random selection. The sample for the study was 164 generated from three purposively selected schools; two male schools and one female school. Instruments used were the 16-item Ego Identity Scale (Greg, 2008) and the Reading Attitude Questionnaire (RAQ) adapted by Akhmetovaa, Imambayevab, and Csapo (2022).

### Results

Table 1 EGO IDENTITY AND READING ATTITUDE

EGO IDENTITY STATUS			READING ATTITUDE			
MORATORIUM	FORECLOSURE	TOTAL	LOW	AVERAGE	HIGH	TOTAL
50	44	94	44	29	21	94

Table 1 shows that out of the total number of questionnaires distributed and retrieved (164), 50 and 44 adolescents were in moratorium and foreclosure identity conditions respectively. Moreover, 44, 29, and 21 scored low, average, and high respectively on reading attitude scale in relation to the two identity statuses.

Table 2 EGO IDENTITY AND READING ATTITUDE

IDENTITY STATUS	READING ATTITUDE			
	LOW	AVERAGE	HIGH	TOTAL
MORATORIUM	21	19	10	50
FORECLOSURE	23	10	11	44
TOTAL	44	29	21	94



Table 2 shows in detail how the samples were spread across low, average and high scores on reading attitude in relation to moratorium and foreclosure statuses. It is revealed that out of 50 respondents that were in moratorium state, 21, 19, and 10 scored low, average, and high on reading attitude respectively. And out of 44 respondents that were in foreclosure state, 23, 10, and 11 scored low, average, high on reading attitude respectively.

During the survey, 164 questionnaires were distributed, and all were successfully retrieved. On the Ego Identity Scale (Greg, 2008), every respondent had scores for moratorium, foreclosure, diffusion, and achievement; and the highest score of the four represented the status of the respondent. This particular survey focused only on moratorium and foreclosure statuses, and correlated each with the low, average, and high statuses of the respondents' reading attitude as depicted by the reading attitude scale used.

### **Research Questions**

Question 1: Are there students in a state of moratorium identity?

Answer: Fifty adolescent students were found to be in moratorium identity state.

Question 2: Are both sexes among the students found in moratorium state of ego identity?

Answer: Both sexes of the adolescent students were found to be in moratorium identity state.

Question 3: Are there students in a state of foreclosure identity?

Answer: Forty four adolescent students were found to be in moratorium identity state.

Question 4: Are both sexes among the students found in foreclosure state of ego identity?

Answer: Both sexes of the adolescent students were found to be in foreclosure identity state.

Question 5: Is there significant relationship between moratorium identity and reading attitude?

Answer: There is no significant relationship between moratorium identity and reading attitude.

Question 6: Is there significant relationship between foreclosure identity and reading attitude?

Answer: There is no significant relationship between foreclosure identity and reading attitude.

Question 7: Is there significant difference between students with foreclosure and moratorium identity statuses in relation to their levels of reading attitude?

Answer: There is no significant difference between students with foreclosure and those with moratorium in relation to their levels of reading attitude.

### Testing of Hypotheses

**H<sub>0</sub> 1:** There is no significant relationship between moratorium and low reading attitude.

Table 3: **MORATORIUM IDENTITY AND LOW READING ATTITUDE**

<b>X &amp; Y</b>	<b>n</b>	$\bar{x}$	<b>s</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>t</b>	$\alpha$	<b>Remark</b>
Moratorium	21	15.67	1.671						
				19	<b>-0.213</b>	<b>0.354</b>	-0.950	0.05	H <sub>0</sub> Retained
Low Reading Attitude	21	19.00	3.879						

Table 3 indicates that there is a non-significant negative relationship between moratorium identity and low reading attitude. This is clear because the p-value (.35) is > the alpha applied by the survey (.05). The negative sign to the r coefficient indicates how negative the two variables were during the analysis.

**H<sub>0</sub> 2:** There is no significant relationship between moratorium and average reading attitude.

Table 4: **MORATORIUM IDENTITY AND AVERAGE READING ATTITUDE**

<b>X &amp; Y</b>	<b>n</b>	$\bar{x}$	<b>s</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>T</b>	$\alpha$	<b>Remark</b>
Moratorium	19	15.26	1.617						
				17	<b>-0.087</b>	<b>0.724</b>	-0.359	0.05	H <sub>0</sub> Retained
Aver. Reading Attitude	19	36.21	2.647						

Table 4 depicts that there is a non-significant negative relationship between moratorium identity and average reading attitude. This is clear because the p-value (.72) is > the alpha applied by the survey (.05). The negative sign to the r coefficient indicates how negative the two variables were during the analysis.

**H<sub>0</sub> 3:** There is no significant relationship between moratorium and high reading attitude.

Table 5: **MORATORIUM IDENTITY AND HIGH READING ATTITUDE**

<b>X &amp; Y</b>	<b>n</b>	$\bar{x}$	<b>s</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>t</b>	$\alpha$	<b>Remark</b>
Moratorium	10	15.90	1.921						
				8	<b>-0.104</b>	<b>0.774</b>	-0.296	0.05	H <sub>0</sub> Retained
High Reading Attitude	10	49.4	4.294						

Table 5 shows that there is a non-significant negative relationship between moratorium identity and high reading attitude. This is because the p-value (.77) is > the alpha applied by the survey (.05). The negative sign to the r coefficient indicates how negative the two variables were during the analysis.

**H<sub>0</sub> 4:** There is no significant relationship between foreclosure and low reading attitude.

Table 6: **FORECLOSURE IDENTITY AND LOW READING ATTITUDE**

<b>X &amp; Y</b>	<b>n</b>	$\bar{x}$	<b>s</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>t</b>	$\alpha$	<b>Remark</b>
Foreclosure	23	15.22	1.69						
				21	<b>-0.182</b>	<b>0.405</b>	-0.849	0.05	H <sub>0</sub> Retained
Low R/Attitude	23	19.78	3.93						

Table 6 depicts that there is a non-significant negative relationship between foreclosure identity and low reading attitude. This is clear because the p-value (.41) is > the alpha applied by the survey (.05). The negative sign to the r coefficient indicates how negative the two variables were during the analysis.

**H<sub>0</sub> 5:** There is no significant relationship between foreclosure and average reading attitude.

Table 7: **FORECLOSURE IDENTITY AND AVERAGE READING ATTITUDE**

<b>X &amp; Y</b>	<b>n</b>	$\bar{x}$	<b>s</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>t</b>	$\alpha$	<b>Remark</b>
Foreclosure	10	16.40	1.28						
				8	<b>-0.133</b>	<b>0.714</b>	-0.379	0.05	H <sub>0</sub> Retained
Aver. Reading Attitude	10	35.50	2.94						

Table 7 reveals that there is a non-significant negative relationship between foreclosure identity and average reading attitude. This is clear because the p-value (.71) is > the alpha used by the survey (.05). The negative sign to the r coefficient indicates how negative the two variables were during the analysis.

**H<sub>0</sub> 6:** There is no significant relationship between foreclosure and high reading attitude.

Table 8: **FORECLOSURE IDENTITY AND HIGH READING ATTITUDE**

<b>X &amp; Y</b>	<b>n</b>	$\bar{x}$	<b>s</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>t</b>	$\alpha$	<b>Remark</b>
Foreclosure	11	14.64	1.82						
				9	<b>0.122</b>	<b>0.721</b>	0.369	0.05	H <sub>0</sub> Retained
High Reading Attitude	11	48.18	4.39						

Table 8 reveals that there is a non-significant negative relationship between foreclosure identity and high reading attitude. This is because the p-value (.72) is > the alpha used by the survey (.05). The negative sign to the r coefficient indicates how negative the two variables were during the analysis.

**H<sub>0</sub> 7:** There is no significant difference between students having foreclosure and those with moratorium in relation to their levels of reading attitude.

Table 9: **MORATORIUM AND FORECLOSURE IDENTITY STATUSES IN RELATION TO LEVELS OF READING ATTITUDE**

<b>X &amp; Y</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>df</b>	<b><math>\chi^2</math></b>	<b><i>p</i></b>	<b><math>\alpha</math></b>	<b>Remark</b>
Moratorium & Foreclosure	94	2	2.56	0.28	0.05	H <sub>0</sub> Retained

Table 9 reveals a non-significant difference between students having moratorium and those with foreclosure in terms of their levels of reading attitudes. The Chi Square statistic is 2.56 while the p-value is 0.28 at 0.05, which is the study's level of significance.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The survey was obviously conducted to examine the influence of moratorium and foreclosure identity statuses on the reading attitudes of adolescent students in Tangaza and environs. The researchers had the firm conviction that every subject would have an identity, for no adolescent or adult psychologically exists devoid of feelings, decisions, beliefs, and hopes. Even indecision to follow a particular path in life is considered an identity status. It was thought that moratorium and foreclosure statuses of identity among the samples would have some positive significant correlation with their reading attitudes. Results, however, have indicated the opposite. All the hypotheses tested have been retained.

Signs of positive or negative correlations existed in the results, but not significant at all because the probability values ran greater than the level of significance in all the statistics. Such results signify that the moratorium and foreclosure statuses of the adolescent students in Tangaza and neighbouring areas had no significant impact or influence on their attitudes towards reading. And that males in both moratorium and foreclosure states among the students did not differ much (significantly) from their female counterparts in terms of reading attitude. It is believed that some other factors may explain the diversity of the students' levels of reading attitude.

Variables such as self-concept, self-confidence, and self-esteem, which are behavioural implications of ego identity, have in several surveys been correlated with reading attitude or related variables such as study habit, academic achievement, or reading comprehension; and different significant statistical correlations were found. A correlation survey by Courtenay-

Brown (1992) conducted with a sample of randomly selected second grade 30 boys and 30 girls in Newfoundland revealed a significant positive relationship between self-concept and reading attitude. A study by Surip (2016) with a sample of 183 single-parented students of Public Junior High Schools in District of Ilir Barat I Palembang, South Sumatera indicated a significant positive correlation between self-concept and reading attitude.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings revealed by the data obtained and statistical tests run, it is hereby concluded that Marcia's identity statuses of moratorium and foreclosure in secondary school students of Tangaza and adjoining areas did not have a significant influence on the reading attitude of the students at the time of the survey. There was also no significant difference between students in moratorium and those in foreclosure in terms of their different levels of reading attitude. Despite that these results represent the state of the entire population with regard to the variables studied, different data and results could be found with a different sample in the same location within a different time space. It is presumed therefore that some other factors may have been the reason for the students' different levels of reading attitude.

### **Recommendations**

Although the statistical results of the survey do not indicate significant positive or negative correlations in all the hypotheses, the following suggestions are provided because many of the samples were found to be in moratorium and foreclosure states; and the samples had different levels of reading attitude.

1. Parents, relatives, teachers, and other concerned people in Tangaza and elsewhere should allow and encourage adolescents to explore different life's alternatives and get committed to what suit their potentialities and aspirations. Adolescents should not be locked away from the world and merely have certain lifestyles or doctrines imposed on them.
2. Parents, guardians and other stakeholders concerned with guidance should not however entirely allow adolescents to completely control their decisions about highly important aspects of their lives such as religion, career choice, etc. Adolescents should be well-guided.

3. Schools should employ measures that encourage students to develop high or positive reading attitude irrespective of gender difference.
4. Teachers and parents should ensure that adolescents are committed to their studies. Learning tasks should be consistent.
5. A broader survey on the same variables with a wider sample within the same region should be conducted.

### **Acknowledgements**

The study was sponsored by TETFUND through the Institution-Based Research intervention (2023) under the supervision of Federal College of Education, Gidan Madi, Sokoto State. The researchers therefore express their profound gratitude to the Managements of TETFUND and FCE Gidan Madi for all the support received. Our immense gratitude also goes to the TETFUND Contact Officer of our College in person of Dr. Abdulrahman Matawalle.

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