

**EFFECT OF N-POWER SCHEME ON YOUTH EMPOWERMENT IN ANYIGBA, DEKINA
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KOGI STATE**

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ABSTRACT

Unemployment is a major problem ravaging Nigeria's population today and youths are worst hit by it. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria's youth unemployment reached an all-time high of 29.7% in 2018 with about 13.2 million youths becoming unemployed. As a result, most youths lack the means to cater for their basic necessities. In the above light, the government at several times have created various youth empowerment schemes to empower youths and improve their living standard. The recent of them is the National Social Investment Program (NSIP) introduced in 2015 which consist of National Cash Transfer Programme (NCTP), Trader Moni, School Feeding Program and N-Power. The N-Power program is specifically geared towards empowering youths by training and engaging them in public organisations. Against this backdrop, the study examines the effect of the N-Power scheme on youth empowerment in Anyigba area of Kogi state, Nigeria. The population of the study was put at 491 which is the total number of N-Power beneficiaries in Anyigba in 2016, from which a sample size of 220 was obtained using Taro Yamane's. Data for the study were sourced primarily via questionnaire and secondarily via web articles, journals, seminar reports, etc. Descriptive and inferential statistics and One-Way ANOVA analysis were used for the data analysis and test of hypothesis. The study found that N-Power scheme has to a very large extent empower the youths in Anyigba in skills acquisition, financial status, self-reliance and productivity among the youth. The study also gave some recommendations among which is that the government should initiate more youth empowerment programs for development, the government should provide mandatory training and workshops in the area of ICT and agriculture to enhance the beneficiaries' technical skills.

Keywords: Skill; Empowerment; Government; Development; Poverty

INTRODUCTION

N-Power aspires to provide a platform where most Nigerians can access skills acquisition and development. N-Power is the employability and enhancement program of the Federal Government of Nigeria, aimed at imbibing the learn-work-entrepreneurship culture in youth between the ages of 18-35. Applications are done online to create a level playing field for everyone and determine which applicants' details would enable selection and direct payment through the bank accounts and BVN submitted. The modular programs under N-Power will ensure that each participant will learn and practice most of what is necessary to find or create work (Federal Government of Nigeria [FGN], 2018).

By introducing N-Power, the Federal Government provides a structure not only for large scale and relevant work skills acquisition and development; but also utilizing a large volunteer workforce to fix some of the problems in public services and stimulating the larger economy. Besides, N-Power is also a tool for diversifying the economy. Particularly, N-Power Agro provides not only the means to apply knowledge and science to our farming practices, but also to gather data for effective planning. With the Non-Graduate category (N-Power Knowledge and N-Power Build), young Nigerians are trained to build a knowledge economy equipped with world-class skills and certification to become relevant in the domestic and global markets. N-Power also focuses on providing our non-graduates with relevant technical and business skills that enhance their work outlook and livelihood (FGN, 2018).

The participant of the scheme cut across youths in the various local government areas in Nigeria. One such local government is Dekina located in the Eastern Part of Kogi State where several youths are empowered. Dekina local government is one of the largest local governments in Nigeria and harbors several youths in the location. The existence of Kogi State University in Anyigba exposes the location to constant youth population growth. The N-Power scheme has empowered a number of these youths. This study will, therefore, assess the Effect of N-Power scheme on Youth Empowerment in Dekina Local Government.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Nigeria has the highest rates of youth unemployment in Sub-Saharan Africa. According to Odeh and Okoye, (2014), rather than record remarkable progress in national socio-economic development due to her enormous wealth, Nigeria retrogressed to become the headquarters of poverty of the world (World Watch, 2018) And it remains the only member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) that is categorized among the world's poorest twenty countries (Gbenyi, 2013). This misery and frustration of the citizenry foisted a state of hopelessness and the majority of the youths have resorted to any means including crime to succeed in life.

To salvage these situations there is the need for the training of educated men and women who can function effectively in their society in which they live in terms of self-

employment and self-reliant which N-Power program is out to provide. Based on this premise, the study examined the N-Power program as a veritable tool for youth empowerment in Anyigba.

Research Questions

The study sought to provide answers to the following questions;

1. How has the N-power scheme affected the income status of youths in Dekina Local Government?
2. What is the effect of the N-power scheme on Youth's self-reliance in Dekina Local Government?

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to assess the effect of the N-power scheme on Youth Empowerment in Dekina Local Government. The specific objectives are to;

1. To identify the impact of the N-Power scheme on the income status of youths in Dekina Local Government.
2. To examine the effect of the N-Power scheme on youth's self-reliance in Dekina Local Government.
3. To assess the role of the N-Power scheme in skills acquisition among the youths in Dekina Local Government.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between the N-Power scheme and the income status of beneficiaries in Dekina Local Government.
2. There is no significant relationship between the N-Power scheme and self-reliance of the beneficiaries in Dekina Local Government.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are no universally accepted definitions of empowerment in the literature. In some of these definitions empowerment is seen as a goal, and in some as a means. The term empowerment has different meanings in different socio-cultural and political contexts and does not translate easily into all languages. An exploration of local terms associated with empowerment around the world always leads to a lively discussion. These terms include self-strength, control, self-power, self-reliance, own choice, the life of dignity by one's values, capable of fighting for one's rights, independence, own decision making, being free, awakening, and capability to mention only a few. These definitions are embedded in local values and belief systems.

Per-Anders (2008) defined empowerment as an increase in the person's control over the determinants of their quality of life, through (necessarily) an increase in either health (e.g., through self-confidence, self-esteem, self-efficacy, autonomy), or knowledge (self-knowledge, consciousness-raising, skills development, competence),

or freedom (negative or positive).

According to the World Bank Report of 1975, empowerment is a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people while disempowered includes the rural poor.

Ekanem (2004) views empowerment as a means to extend the benefits of socioeconomic and political development in the economy to the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas.

Concept of youth empowerment

According to the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE), 2006 – 2015, developed through wide-consultation with key stakeholders in all regions of the Commonwealth, youth empowerment is to empower, engage and create value so that young women and men can contribute to the economic, social and cultural advancement of their families and countries and their fulfillment. Enyioko (2006) also identified the following dimensions of youth empowerment: Young people are empowered when they acknowledge that they have or can create choices in life, are aware of the implications of those choices, make an informed decision freely, act based on that decision and accept responsibility for the consequences of these actions.

N-Power

N-Power is a job creation and empowerment program of the National Social Investment of the Federal Government of Nigeria. N-Power is an integrative program of the National Social Investment Program of the Federal Government of Nigeria that provides a platform where most Nigerians can gain employment, access skills acquisition and development. At this time, however, the initial modular programs in N-Power are designed for Nigerian citizens between the ages of 18 and 35. It is a paid volunteering program for a two-year duration. In the specifications of the program, graduates are required to undertake their primary tasks in identified public services within their proximate communities. All N-Power beneficiaries were entitled to computer devices that contained information necessary for their specific engagement, as well as information for their continuous training and development (N-Power Information Guide, 2017).

The program is divided into the following categories;

- a. Graduate Category: the Graduate category comprise N-Teach where individuals serve as assistant teachers in public primary school which at the end of the day will help them gain work experience and mold them better for the work environment, N-power Health serves as trained public health assistant by professionals to provide basic health diagnostic services in their deployed areas, N-power community are members that had be chosen in this area that would be deployed to serve as instructors in such areas as Adult

educator and civil educators but later merged with N-Teach while N-power Agro volunteers deployed under this program would serve as intermediaries between researchers and farmers to help them with tips for better farming practices to make Nigeria self-sufficient in terms of food. All volunteers under the Graduate category are entitled to computing devices (Olawole 2017).

- b. Non-Graduate Category: the Non-Graduate encompasses N-Power Creative which is meant to engage 5,000 young people to train them and bring out the creativity in them so that they could become exporters of world-class services. They would be trained in either of the following; animation, graphics design, post-production and scriptwriting. The training is 3 months' period (1-month theory, 2-month projects), after which participants would either get internship opportunities home or abroad, get linked for job or market opportunities. N-Power Tech Hardware is aimed at training 10,000 people Nigerians into Communication Information Technology (ICT) industry by training them to be hardware technicians. This would be practically oriented and participants learn to service and manufacturing tech hardware like mobile phones, tablets, computers, and other tech hardware. The program will run for 4 months, 3 months training while the remaining 1 month goes for assessment, graduation, and setup. N-Power Tech Software would be training 10,000 youths Nigerians into software developers for local and international markets. (Olawole 2017).

Qualification needed for the graduate category are as follow:

The N-Power Tech is open to all graduates from tertiary institutions include colleges of education, polytechnics, and equivalents. While N-power Health post qualification is in any of the following courses; Community Health Extension, Nursing, Midwifery, Medical Laboratory Technology, Pharmacy Technology, Medical Records, Health Education, Environmental Health Technology, Microbiology, Biochemistry and Agricultural Science, JCHEW, SCHEW, NABTEB, Ordinary National Diploma, B. Technology, B.Sc., and other allied disciplines. And that of N-Power Agro post-tertiary qualifications are Higher National Diploma, Ordinary National Diploma in Nutrition, Agricultural Sciences, Crop Sciences, Food Science and Technology, and other related disciplines.

Goals of the program are:

- a. To intervene and directly improve the livelihood of a critical mass of young unemployed Nigerians.
- b. To develop a qualitative system for the transfer of employability, entrepreneurial and technical skills.

- c. To create an ecosystem of solutions for ailing public services and government diversification policies.
- d. To develop and enhance Nigeria's knowledge economy.

Key Areas of N-Power

According to the N-Power Information Guide (2017), volunteers are expected to provide teaching, instructional, and advisory solutions in four (4) key areas.

N-Power Teach

This category of beneficiaries is expected to help improve basic education delivery in Nigeria. N-Power Teach Volunteers are deployed as teacher assistants in primary schools that appear to be understaffed in Nigeria. They are not expected to replace the current teachers, but to work as support teachers across the country, assisting with teaching, school management and other functions within the schools. N-Power Health Under this strand of the program, N-Power Health beneficiaries are required to assist in improving and promoting preventive healthcare in their communities to vulnerable members of the society including pregnant women and children and families and individuals. This area is reserved for those who read health and medical-related courses at certificate course and diploma levels (N-Power Information Guide, 2017).

N-Power Agro

N-Power Agro beneficiaries are intended to provide advisory services to farmers across the country. They are expected to disseminate the knowledge that has been amassed by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in the area of extension services. They are also required to gather data about Nigeria's agriculture assets. This area is meant for youth who were educated in agricultural-related courses (N-Power Information Guide, 2017).

The Voluntary Asset and Income Declaration Scheme (VAIDS) seeks to encourage non-compliant and partially compliant taxpayers to voluntarily declare their correct income and assets and pay the appropriate tax due to the government. The N-Power VAIDS volunteers are expected to function as community tax liaison officers and have the following key responsibilities which included tax promotion, document review, record keeping, answering online inquiries, customer management, report writing, amongst others. (N-Power Information guide, 2017).

Empowerment Scheme and income status of Beneficiaries

Income status: this refers to the position of a person or household concerning a low-income line. It is the economic status or net value of a person or household.

There is a great relationship between empowerment schemes and income status of beneficiaries.

According to Ifatimehin, Balami, and Sidi (2016), the Keke Napep scheme has improved

the income status of its beneficiaries in Gombe.

According to Ohize and Adamu (2009), the Youth Empowerment Scheme practiced in Niger State has tremendously contributed to the upliftment of the economic status of the participating youths in Niger state.

Empowerment Scheme and Self-Reliance

Self-reliance: this is the ability to do things and make decisions by yourself, without needing other people to help you. It is been self-sustain and independence of others. There exists a significant impact between empowerment scheme and the self-reliant of beneficiaries.

Self-reliance is the social and economic ability of an individual, household or community to meet basic needs (including protection, food, water, shelter, personal safety, health, and education) in a sustainable manner and with dignity. Self-reliance, as a program approach, refers to developing and strengthening livelihoods of persons of concern (PoC), and reducing their vulnerability and long-term reliance on humanitarian or external assistance. Livelihood programming should assist refugees in becoming self-reliant.

Empowerment Scheme and Skills Acquisition

Skills acquisition has been described by many as the recipe for eradicating extreme poverty and hunger by creating avenues for employment, thereby creating an avenue for jobs and wealth creation while instilling self- sufficiency and reliance (Isaac, 2011).

Empirical Studies

Enyioko, Chintuwa, Akujuru, Abovu, (July 2019) examined the impact of N-Power programs on poverty alleviation in Nigeria: A study of Rivers State. A survey design was used in the study to generate data. A sample of 400 respondent youths was studied. After going through them 381 copies (i.e. 95.25% response rate) were found useful for the data analysis. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze data in this study. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was used to test the hypotheses. The study found that the major N-Power programs used towards Poverty alleviation in Rivers State included: N-Power Teach, N-Power Build, N-Power Creative, N-Power Agro, N-Power Tech Software N-Power Tax, N-Power Health, and N-Power Tech Hardware. The study revealed that N-Power Programs' beneficiaries were mainly university and polytechnic graduates. The study found that the major factors that affected the implementation of N-Power programs included: Insufficient information, non-payment of stipend to participants as at when due, bribery, and corruption, wrong bank verification number (BVN), overbearing hands of politicians in the program, etc

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study will review the following theory, system theory and efficiency theory.

Systems theory

It is an approach that sees an organization or society as a dynamic open system or as an entity consisting of a set of elements in interaction with one another which maintains itself in a state of relatively stable equilibrium by experiencing a dynamic and constant interchange of energy and information with its environment (Makinde, 2011). Systems theory views social organizations as a complex set of dynamically intertwined and interconnected elements. Every system includes inputs, processes, outputs, feedback and the environment in which it operates and with which it continuously interacts.

In relating this theory to this study, it views government as a system with input coming from the masses in the form of demands for empowerment scheme for self-reliant and increases in income status as well as job creation by the government for the overall benefit of the youth. The government serves as the processing unit which takes inputs in form of demands from the people for employment and empowerment scheme, processes them and sent out outputs which are the N-Power scheme geared towards job creation, skill acquisition scheme and poverty reduction among the youth. The theory shows how the government reacts to people's plight in terms of the provision of the necessities of life. The theory highlights hoe demands of the peoples as presented to government, government actions on the said demands and the output is the program that will enhance the well-being of the peoples.

METHODOLOGY

The survey research design was employed. The justification for adopting the survey design was its ability to allow the researchers to investigate problems and acquire first-hand information, by a means of eliciting a response from a large number of respondents allowing him to generalize is findings.

Population of the study

The population of this study consists of the N-power scheme beneficiaries residing in Anyigba, Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State. This includes all males and females from 18 to 35 years of age who are beneficiary of the N-Power Scheme in Anyigba 2016. In N-Agro there are 102 beneficiaries, N- Health has 100 beneficiaries while N-Teach has 289 beneficiaries.

Sampling Techniques

The random sampling technique will be adopted in the selection of samples for the study. This study, therefore, determined its sample size through the Taro Yemane's sample size technique.

Commented [T1]: therefore, what is the total population of your study?

Table 1: Population of Study

Category	Population
N-Agro	102
N-Health	100
N-Teach	289
Total	491

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

Sample Size

The study adopts stratified sampling technique by drawing the population into strata such as N-Agro, N-Health, and N-Teach. The study then adopted a simple random sampling technique to select the sample.

The sample size determination using the Taro Yamane’s formula is given as: $n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$

$$n = \frac{491}{1 + 491} (0.05)^2$$

$$n = \frac{491}{1 + 491} (0.0025)^2$$

$$n = \frac{491}{1 + 1.228}$$

$$n = \frac{491}{2.228}$$

$$n = 220.$$

Table 2: Sample frame table.

Categories	Population	Sample
N-Agro	102	46
N-Health	100	45
N-Teach	289	129
Total	491	220

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher adopted both the primary and secondary methods of data collection. The questionnaire was the main instrument for data collection. It was structured based on the objectives of the study while the secondary sources include a journal, magazines, newspaper web articles, etc.

The data was edited to ensure its completeness, accuracy, uniformity, and consistency. The data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. A non-parametric method, One-way ANOVA was also used for the analysis.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Table 3: Sex of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	85	54.8	54.8	54.8
Female	70	45.2	45.2	100.0
Total	155	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 3 above shows that 85 respondents representing 54.8% are male, while 70 respondents representing 45.2% are female. This shows that the level of male beneficiaries is more than that of the female.

Table 4: Marital Status of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Married	64	41.3	41.3	41.3
Single	91	58.7	58.7	100.0
Total	155	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

From the table 4 majority of the respondents are single (n=91) representing 58.7% of the total respondents.

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

Table 5 above shows that 46 respondents representing 29.7% are ND/NCE holders, 75 respondents representing 48.4% are First Degree holders and 21 respondents representing 13.5% are Post Graduate, while 13 respondents representing 8.4% are others. This shows that most of the beneficiaries are First Degree holder.

Table 5: Educational Qualification of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
ND/NCE	46	29.7	29.7	29.7
First Degree	75	48.4	48.4	78.1
Post Graduate	21	13.5	13.5	91.6
Others	13	8.4	8.4	100.0
Total	155	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

Table 6: Department of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
N-Teach	78	50.3	50.3	50.3
N-Agro	41	26.5	26.5	76.8
N-Health	36	23.2	23.2	100.0
Total	155	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

From table 6 above 78 respondents representing 50.3% are from N-Teach, while 41 respondents representing 26.5% are from N-Agro and 36 respondents representing 23.3% are from N-Health. This shows that N-Teach has the highest rate of beneficiaries from N-Agro and N-Health has the least.

Table 7: N-Power scheme and income of beneficiaries

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agreed	69	44.5	44.5	44.5
Agreed	54	34.8	34.8	79.4
Undecided	22	14.2	14.2	93.5
Disagreed	6	3.9	3.9	97.4
Strongly Disagreed	4	2.6	2.6	100.0
Total	155	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

From table 7 above 69 respondents representing 44.5% strongly agreed, 54 respondents representing 34.8% agreed, 22 respondents representing 14.2% are undecided and 6 respondents representing 3.9% disagreed while 4 respondents representing 2.6% strongly disagreed. This means the N-Power scheme has increased the income of beneficiaries in Anyigba.

Table 8: Income Before and After

	Frequency		Percent		Valid Percent		Cumulative percent	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
1000-10000	103	7	66.5	4.5	66.5	4.5	66.5	4.5
11000-20000	37	54	23.9	34.8	23.9	34.8	90.3	39.4
21000-30000	15	61	9.7	39.4	9.7	39.4	100.0	78.7
31000-40000	0	24	0	15.5	0	15.5		94.2
41000-50000	0	9	0	5.8	0	5.8		100.0
Total	155	155	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0		

Table 8 above shows income levels of respondents before and after enrollment into the N-power scheme. The table shows that 103 respondents representing 66.5% earn between ₦1000- ₦10000 before the program, 37 respondents representing 23.9% earn between ₦11000- ₦20000 before the program and 15 respondents representing 9.7% earn between ₦21000- ₦30000 before the program. While 7 respondents representing 4.5% earn within ₦1000- ₦10000, after enrolling for the program, 54 respondents representing 34.8% earn within ₦11000- ₦20000 after enrollment, 61 respondents representing 39.4% now earn within ₦21000- ₦30000 after enrollment while 24 respondents representing 15.5% earn within ₦31000- ₦40000 and 9 respondents representing 5.8% earn within ₦41000- ₦50000. This implies that the program N-Power has indeed increased the financial status of beneficiaries in Anyigba.

TEST OF HYPOTHESES

In this part of the research, an in-depth test was carried out on the two hypotheses for the research work. One-way ANOVA instrument will be used in carrying out the test. The rule will be if the critical value which is represented by “F” is greater than the table value which is represented by “Sig”.

Test of Hypothesis One.

There is no significant relationship between the N-Power scheme and the income status of beneficiaries in Dekina Local Government.

Table 9: ANOVA (Hypothesis one)

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	7.520	4	1.880	2.965	.022
Within Groups	95.099	150	.634		
Total	102.619	154			

Source: SPSS, 2019.

From the table 9 above the critical value, 2.965 is greater than 0.022. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between the N-Power scheme and the income status of beneficiaries in Dekina Local Government and accepts the alternate hypothesis.

Test of Hypothesis Two.

There is no significant relationship between the N-Power scheme and self-reliance of the beneficiaries in Dekina Local Government.

Table 10: ANOVA (Hypothesis Two)

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5.298	4	1.325	2.041	.091
Within Groups	97.321	150	.649		
Total	102.619	154			

Source: SPSS, 2019.

Table 10 above shows that critical value representing 2.041 is greater than table value representing 0.091, so we reject the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between the N-Power scheme and self-reliance of the beneficiaries in Dekina Local Government and accepts the alternate hypothesis.

Findings.

From the analysis and presentation above the researcher found out that N-Power scheme has a positive effect on empowering the youths in Anyigba in different areas such as skills acquisition, work experience, financial status, self-reliance, and independent entrepreneur, etc. The researcher also finds out that the 2016 beneficiaries of the program will be turned into community police after their two years in the program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the findings of this study the following recommendations have been made:

1. Government should encourage the strengthening of the capability for unemployed rural and urban dwellers. Since unemployed people constitute an increasing portion of the rural dwellers, economic policies should aim at enhancing their youth empowerment and poverty alleviation in Dekina local government, Anyigba Kogi State.
2. There should be an increase in opportunities for continued participation of both urban and rural unemployed persons in productive work. Efforts should be made to encourage unemployed persons to engage in self-empowerment, which would not only enable them to do things at their own pace but would also encourage them to be more innovative.
3. The authorities concerned should promote rural development through N-Power programmes. Integrated rural development is seen as the key for alleviating poverty of the rural dwellers who constitute the greater chunk of the population
4. Government at all levels should reactivate moribund industries and enterprises and expand the horizon of N-Power programmes in that direction.
5. Finance is the life wire of every successful organization. Therefore, government should ensure adequate provision of funds for income generating projects through the N-Power programmes.

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