National Social Investment Programme and Youth Unemployment in Kogi State, Nigeria

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Abstract
The aim of the study is to examine the impacts and the challenges of the NSIP, particularly the N-Power program on Youth unemployment in Kogi State, Nigeria. For the purpose of the study four objectives, research question, and four hypotheses were formulated for the study. For the purpose of the study, survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of study is the sum total of the figures given above which is equal to 11000. The sample size needed for a population of 11,000 with a margin of error of 5% using the Taro Yamane formula is approximately 386. Two instrument was adopted for the study. Questionnaire and interview, the researcher would conduct surveys using structured questionnaires and interviews to collect data directly from the target population, such as N-Power beneficiaries and officials National Social Investment Programme. Descriptive statistics of percentage, frequency count, mean, standard deviation while ANOVA inferential statistics was used for the test of hypotheses. Based on the analysis the findings reveals that there is a significant relationship between the N-Power Programme and the income level of Youths in Kogi State, the N-Power Programme has a significant impact on the skills acquisition and development and of participating Youths in Kogi State and the N-Power Programme has a significant effect on the employability of participating Youths Kogi State. The study concluded that the N-Power Programme has a multifaceted and significant positive impact on the Socio-Economic outcomes of participating youths in Kogi State. The finding that there is a significant relationship between the N-Power Programme and the income level of youths in Kogi State suggests that participation in the program is associated with increased income opportunities for beneficiaries. Based on the finding, the study recommends that targeted support for vulnerable and marginalized youth populations within Kogi State. This may include customized training programs, mentorship initiatives, and additional resources to ensure equitable access and participation and to maximize the impact of the N-Power Programme, it is essential to strengthen collaboration with relevant stakeholders, including government agencies, private sector employers, educational institutions, and community organizations. This can help ensure alignment with local needs and enhance opportunities for collaboration and resource-sharing among others.

Keyword: Challenges, NSIP, power program, youth unemployment

INTRODUCTION

Youth unemployment is a global problem that affects both developed and developing countries. In the United States, for instance, the youth unemployment rate was 9.6% in 2020, compared to the overall unemployment rate of 6.0% (Bureau of Labour Statistics, 2021). Similarly, the European

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Union (EU) reports a youth unemployment rate of 17.2% in January 2021, compared to the overall unemployment rate of 7.3% (Eurostat, 2021). In Sub-Saharan Africa, the youth unemployment rate was estimated to be 16% in 2020, with some countries recording rates as high as 30% or more (World Bank, 2020). Several countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have struggled with high levels of unemployment in recent years. For instance, South Africa has one of the highest unemployment rates in the region, with an official unemployment rate of 34.4% in the fourth quarter of 2020 (Bureau of Labour Statistics, 2021). In Nigeria, the unemployment rate was 33.3% in the fourth quarter of 2020, and the youth unemployment rate was even higher at 42.5% (NBS, 2021).

Other countries in the region have lower unemployment rates but still face significant challenges. In Kenya, for example, the unemployment rate was 5.2% in 2019, but youth unemployment rates were much higher, with an estimated 39.1% of young people aged 1534 not employed or in education or training (Bureau of Labour Statistics). More specifically, unemployment has been a major challenge in Nigeria, particularly among the youth population. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the unemployment rate in Nigeria stood at 33.3% in the fourth quarter of 2020, with youth unemployment at 42.5%. This is an alarming figure considering that Nigeria has a relatively young population, with more than 60% of its population under the age of 25 (World Bank, 2021).

The unemployment situation in Nigeria is not a recent phenomenon, as the country has been grappling with high levels of unemployment for several decades. Various factors such as a slow growing economy, inadequate investment in education and skills development, and a lack of sufficient job creation initiatives have contributed to the persistent unemployment problem in the country (OlaDavid, 2021). Furthermore, the informal nature of the Nigerian economy has made it difficult for young people to access decent jobs with good working conditions and benefits. In addition, the lack of government policies and programs aimed at promoting youth employment has also contributed to the high rate of youth unemployment in Nigeria (Ogwumike, 2018). In addressing the issue of youth unemployment in Nigeria, there is a need for comprehensive and coordinated policies and programs that focus on promoting job creation, improving access to education and vocational training, and creating an enabling environment for entrepreneurship and innovation (Ogwumike, 2018). The government and private sector should work together to create an ecosystem that supports the growth of small and medium enterprises, which can provide jobs for young people and contribute to the development of the economy.

Consequentially, the high rate of unemployment has been linked to the rise of social vices in the country. Social vices refer to negative behaviors or activities that are considered harmful to individuals and society as a whole. One way in which unemployment contributes to social vices in Nigeria is through the creation of idle and frustrated youths. Unemployed youths are more likely to engage in social vices such as cultism, drug abuse, armed robbery, and prostitution (Adeleke & Oladipo, 2014). These vices not only harm individuals but also negatively impact the development and progress of the society as a whole.

Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by examining the effectiveness of NSIP interventions, particularly, the N-Power programme in reducing youth unemployment in Kogi State. The study investigated the availability and accessibility of NSIP interventions to the youth population, the quality and relevance of the interventions, and the overall impact of the interventions on youth employment in the state. Additionally, the study explored the factors that contribute to youth unemployment in Kogi State, such as a lack of skills and training, insufficient job opportunities, and limited access to capital and resources.

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Statement of Problem

Kogi State, located in North Central Nigeria, has a population of over 4.5 million people, with a significant percentage of the population being youths (NBS 2022). Reports from the National Bureau of Statistics reveals that youth unemployment in Kogi State stood at 35.4% in 2015 (before the launch of the NSIP) which was significantly higher than the national average of 23.9%, this figure was prevalent as a result of high and growing population, mismatch between skills and job demand, lack of job opportunities among others. However, latest available data on youth unemployment in Kogi State from the NBS for the fourth quarter of 2022 shows that youth unemployment rate in Kogi State decreased from 35.4% to 29.7%. This represents a meagre 5.7% decrease. Moreover, the consequences of youth unemployment is still alarming in the state as various forms of social vices such as internet fraud, thuggery, kidnaping, prostitution, armed robbery etc. have become the order of the day.

Regardless of the implementation of the NSIP in Kogi State, youth unemployment remains a significant problem. The question whether or not the NSIP and N-Power programmes has mitigated the problem of youth unemployment in Kogi State is still debatable. It is important to note that these statistics only reflect the percentage of unemployed youth actively seeking employment and do not include those who have given up on finding work or those who are underemployed (working part-time or in jobs below their skill level). The COVID19 pandemic has had a significant impact on employment in Nigeria, and the youth have been disproportionately affected. Many businesses have closed, and those that remain open have reduced their workforce or switched to remote work, making it difficult for young people to enter the job market. The Nigerian government has launched several initiatives to address youth unemployment, including the Youth Entrepreneurship Support (YES) Programme, the N-Power programme, and the National Young Farmers' Scheme. However, the impact of these programmes on reducing youth unemployment rates is yet to be fully realized.

Despite the implementation of the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) in Kogi State, Nigeria, youth unemployment remains a major challenge. While the NSIP is designed to provide skills training, employment opportunities, and financial assistance to vulnerable populations, including unemployed youths, it is unclear whether the program has been effective in addressing the problem of youth unemployment in Kogi State. Some scholars have argued that the NSIP has not been adequately implemented in Kogi State, leading to limited impact on reducing youth unemployment (Akpotor & Ighomereho, 2019; Ayoola & Fasina, 2020). Others have suggested that the programs design may not be suitable for addressing the unique needs and challenges faced by unemployed youths in Kogi State (Adesiji & Adetunji, 2019). Furthermore, there is a lack of empirical evidence on the impact of the NSIP on youth Unemployment in Kogi State. While some studies have examined the program's effectiveness at the national level (Ajayi & Oke, 2019; Oghojafor & Ekpoh, 2020), few have focused specifically on Kogi State. It is therefore against this backdrop, this study was conducted to determine the effectiveness of the NSIP in reducing youth unemployment in Kogi State, and to identify challenges or limitations in the programs implementation that may be hindering its impact.

Research Question

    i.   To what extent has the N-Power Programme enhanced the income level of participating youths in Kogi State?
    ii. How has the N-Power Programme impacted the skills acquisition and development of beneficiaries in Kogi State?

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iii.   To what extent has the N-Power programme contributed to the employability of participating youths in Kogi State?

iv.   What are the main challenges that affect the success or failure of the N-Power Programme in addressing Youth Unemployment in Kogi State?

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine the impacts and the challenges of the NSIP, particularly the N-Power Program on Youth unemployment in Kogi State, Nigeria. Specific Objectives include;

i.   To assess the effectiveness of the N-Power Programme in enhancing the income level of participating youths in Kogi State.

ii.   To analyze the impact of the N-Power Programme on the skills acquisition and development of participating youths in Kogi State.

iii.   To examine how the N-Power programme has impacted the employability of participating Youths in Kogi State.

iv.   To identify the factors that affects the success or failure of the N-Power Programme in addressing Youth Unemployment in Kogi State.

Research Hypotheses

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between the N-Power Programme and the income level of Youths in Kogi State.

Ho_2: The N-Power Programme has no impact on the skills development and employability of participating youths in Kogi State.

Ho_3: The N-Power programme has not contributed to the employability of participating youths in Kogi State.

Ho_4: There is no significant relationship between the challenges faced by the N-Power Programme and its success in addressing youth unemployment in Kogi State.

Methodology

Descriptive survey design was adopted. The survey method is a widely used research design in social science research that involves collecting data through questionnaires or interviews to understand and describe the attitudes, beliefs, opinions, or behaviors of a population. This method allows researchers to gather data on a large scale and can be used for descriptive, exploratory, or explanatory research. The population of study for this research includes N-Power beneficiaries from the selected local government area in the three senatorial districts, namely: Dekina, Lokoja and Adavi respectively. Dekina LGA, representing the Kogi east senatorial region has a total number of 4000 beneficiaries (comprising batches B&C), Lokoja representing Kogi West has 3500 and Adavi representing Kogi Central has 3000 (N-power register, NSIP database, Lokoja 2023). Therefore, the sample size needed for a population of 11,000 with a margin of error of 5% using the Taro Yamane formula is approximately 386 Questionnaire was the major instrument of data collection in this research work, the questionnaire is an instrument under the quantitative method of data collection. The questionnaire used for this study consists of five sections with three questions each. The questionnaire consists of open-ended questions, multiple choice questions and five point likert scale. Qualitative data generated from interview sessions transcribed from recorded tapes into written form. Afterwards, the researcher thoroughly studies the transcribed documents and field notes in order to understand the

patterns and direction of the responses. Responses, including nonverbal expressions was analyzed and reported in narrative form along with quantitative presentation.

Data Analysis

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between the N-Power Programme and the income level of Youths in Kogi State.

Table 4.3.1 Hypotheses One

ANOVA
N-Power Programme and the Income Level of Youth

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	626.261	4	156.565	200.297	.000
Within Groups	289.216	370	.782		
Total	915.477	374			

The degrees of freedom for the between groups and within groups are indicated. The degrees of freedom for between groups is 4, and within groups is 370. This is the sum of squares divided by the corresponding degrees of freedom. It represents the average variability within each group or between groups. Mean square values are 156.565 for between groups and 0.782 for within groups. The F-value is the ratio of the mean square between groups to the mean square within groups. It tests whether the differences between group means are statistically significant. Here, the F-value is 200.297. This value (also known as p-value) indicates the probability of obtaining the observed F-ratio (or larger) if the null hypothesis (Ho1) is true. A significance value less than the chosen alpha level (typically 0.05) suggests that the differences between group means are statistically significant.

The significance value (Sig.) of .000 is less than 0.05, indicating that there is a statistically significant relationship between the N-Power Programme and the income level of youths in Kogi State. Therefore, the study rejects the null hypothesis (Ho1) that there is no significant relationship between the N-Power Programme and the income level of youths in Kogi State. Instead, the study accepts the alternative hypothesis (Ha1) that there is a significant relationship between the N-Power Programme and the income level of youths in Kogi State. In other words, the N-Power Programme has a statistically significant effect on the income level of youths in Kogi State, as indicated by the ANOVA results.

Ho_2: The N-Power Programme has no impact on the skills development and employability of participating youths in Kogi State

Table 4.3.2 Hypotheses Three

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	61.566	4	15.392	10.470	.000
Within Groups	543.911	370	1.470		
Total	605.477	374			

The degrees of freedom for the between groups and within groups are indicated. The degrees of freedom for between groups is 4, and within groups is 370. This is the sum of squares divided by the

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corresponding degrees of freedom. It represents the average variability within each group or between groups. Mean square values are 15.392 for between groups and 1.470 for within groups. The F-value is the ratio of the mean square between groups to the mean square within groups. It tests whether the differences between group means are statistically significant. Here, the F-value is 10.470. This value (also known as p-value) indicates the probability of obtaining the observed F-ratio (or larger) if the null hypothesis (Ho3) is true. A significance value less than the chosen alpha level (typically 0.05) suggests that the differences between group means are statistically significant.

The significance value (Sig.) of .000 is less than 0.05, indicating that there is a statistically significant relationship between the N-Power Programme has impact on the skills development and employability of participating youths in Kogi State. Therefore, the study rejects the null hypothesis (Ho2) that the N-Power Programme has no impact on the skills development and employability of participating youths in Kogi State. Instead, the study accepts the alternative hypothesis (Ha3) that there is a significant effect of the N-Power Programme has impact on the skills development and employability of participating youths in Kogi State. In other words, the ANOVA results suggest that the N-Power Programme has impact on the skills development and employability of participating youths in Kogi State

Ho$_3$: The N-Power programme has not contributed to the employability of participating youths in Kogi State

Table 4.3.3 Hypotheses Three

ANOVA
N-Power Programme and the Income Level of Youth

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	626.261	4	156.565	200.297	.000
Within Groups	289.216	370	.782		
Total	915.477	374			

The degrees of freedom for the between groups and within groups are indicated. The degrees of freedom for between groups is 4, and within groups is 370. This is the sum of squares divided by the corresponding degrees of freedom. It represents the average variability within each group or between groups. Mean square values are 156.565 for between groups and 0.782 for within groups. The F-value is the ratio of the mean square between groups to the mean square within groups. It tests whether the differences between group means are statistically significant. Here, the F-value is 200.297. This value (also known as p-value) indicates the probability of obtaining the observed F-ratio (or larger) if the null hypothesis (Ho1) is true. A significance value less than the chosen alpha level (typically 0.05) suggests that the differences between group means are statistically significant.

The significance value (Sig.) of .000 is less than 0.05, indicating that there is a statistically significant contribution between the N-Power Programme and the employability of youth in Kogi State. Therefore, the study rejects the null hypothesis (Ho1) that N-Power programme has not contributed to the employability of participating youths in Kogi State. Instead, the study accepts the alternative hypothesis (Ha1) that the N-Power programme has contributed to the employability of participating youths in Kogi State. In other words, the N-Power Programme has a statistically significant effect on the income level of youths in Kogi State, as indicated by the ANOVA results.

Ho$_4$: There is no significant relationship between the challenges faced by the N-Power Programme and its success in addressing youth unemployment in Kogi State.

Table 4.3.4 Hypotheses Four

ANOVA
N-Power and skills development and employability of participating youth

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	121.618	4	30.405	22.073	.000
Within Groups	509.651	370	1.377		
Total	631.269	374			

The degrees of freedom for the between groups and within groups are indicated. The degrees of freedom for between groups is 4, and within groups is 370. This is the sum of squares divided by the corresponding degrees of freedom. It represents the average variability within each group or between groups. Mean square values are 30.405 for between groups and 1.377 for within groups. The F-value is the ratio of the mean square between groups to the mean square within groups. It tests whether the differences between group means are statistically significant. Here, the F-value is 22.073. This value (also known as p-value) indicates the probability of obtaining the observed F-ratio (or larger) if the null hypothesis (Ho2) is true. A significance value less than the chosen alpha level (typically 0.05) suggests that the differences between group means are statistically significant.

The significance value (Sig.) of .000 is less than 0.05, indicating that there is significant relationship between the challenges faced by the N-Power Programme and its success in addressing youth unemployment in Kogi State. Therefore, the study rejects the null hypothesis (Ho4) that there is no significant relationship between the challenges faced by the N-Power Programme and its success in addressing youth unemployment in Kogi State. Instead, the study accepts the alternative hypothesis (Ha2) that there is significant relationship between the challenges faced by the N-Power Programme and its success in addressing youth unemployment in Kogi State. In other words, the ANOVA results indicate that there is significant relationship between the challenges faced by the N-Power Programme and its success in addressing youth unemployment in Kogi State.

4.5 Findings

The following findings are made in the study:
i.   There is a significant relationship between the N-Power Programme and the income level of Youths in Kogi State.
ii. The N-Power Programme has a significant impact on the skills acquisition and development and of participating Youths in Kogi State.
iii. The N-Power programme has contributed to the employability of participating youths in Kogi State.
iv. There is significant relationship between the challenges faced by the N-Power Programme and its success in addressing youth unemployment in Kogi State

Conclusion

Based on the findings above, it concluded that the N-Power Programme has a multifaceted and significant positive impact on the Socio-Economic outcomes of participating youths in Kogi State. The finding that there is a significant relationship between the N-Power Programme and the income

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level of youths in Kogi State suggests that participation in the program is associated with increased income opportunities for beneficiaries. This indicates that the program is effective in enhancing the economic wellbeing of participants by providing them with avenues for income generation and financial stability.

Recommendations

Based on the significant positive impact observed, it is recommended to continue and expand the N-Power Programme in Kogi State. However, there is a need for continuous evaluation and improvement of the program to address any existing gaps and enhance its effectiveness further.

i.   Consideration should be given to providing targeted support for vulnerable and marginalized youth populations within Kogi State. This may include customized training programs, mentorship initiatives, and additional resources to ensure equitable access and participation.
ii. To maximize the impact of the N-Power Programme, it is essential to strengthen collaboration with relevant stakeholders, including government agencies, private sector employers, educational institutions, and community organizations. This can help ensure alignment with local needs and enhance opportunities for collaboration and resource-sharing.
iii. Implementing a robust monitoring and evaluation framework is crucial for assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of the N-Power Programme over time. Regular monitoring of key performance indicators and impact assessments can provide valuable insights for program refinement and decision-making.
iv. Exploring opportunities for integrating the N-Power Programme with other Socio-Economic development initiatives in Kogi State can help create synergies and maximize the overall impact on youth empowerment, poverty reduction, and sustainable development.

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