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ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF N- POWER PROGRAMME ON BENEFICIARIES IN IGABI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract: N-power is a youth empowerment scheme implemented by the Federal Government of Nigeria to address the challenges of unemployment and to alleviate poverty among youths. The study was conducted to assess the effectiveness and the challenges of N-Power programme on the beneficiaries. Two stage sampling technique was used. Four districts were selected purposively at the first stage. At the second stage, 80 n-Power beneficiaries were selected randomly at 20 per district. Data was collected with questionnaire and interview and presented with percentages, mean and frequency distribution while Chi-square was used to analysed the data.

The results showed that majority of the N- Power beneficiaries are male (58.75%), age between 27-35 years (52.50%), married (52.50%) with the household size of 2 to 5 members (65.00%) and are educated with tertiary education (67.50%).

The Chi-square result showed that X^2 statistics (30) was greater than X^2 critical (16.64) at 0.01 percent probability level, indicating that the N- Power programme was effective in improving the living conditions of the beneficiaries. N-teach, N-tech, and N-agro are the N-Power scheme available to the beneficiaries. The challenges of N-Power programme to the beneficiaries are job insecurity, delay in payments of allowance, poor monitoring, insufficient information about the programme, distance to working places and bribery and corruption.

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The study recommended proper monitoring of the programme, adequate information about the programme to the public and prompt payment of the monthly stipends to the beneficiaries.

Key words: *Assessment, beneficiaries, N-Power, programme, youth, empowerment.*

INTRODUCTION

N-Power programme was created to help young Nigerians acquire and develop life-long skills to become active players in the domestic and global markets. It was a programme of the Federal Government of Nigeria under president Mohammadu Buhari led administration. The programme was targeted at graduates, skilled, unskilled and out-of-school youths between the ages of 18 – 35 years [8]. The programme was designed to drastically reduce Youth unemployment under the Social Investment Programme for job creation and empowerment initiatives. The focus is to provide young graduates and non-graduates with skills, tools and livelihood to enable them advance from unemployment to employment, entrepreneurship and innovation. Applications for enrolment on the programme are done online to create a level playing field for everyone and to determine which applicants' details would enable selection and direct payment through the bank accounts and Bank Verification Number (BVN) submitted. The linked programmes under N-Power will certify that each participant will learn and practice most of what is necessary to find or create work (Federal Government of Nigeria) [5].

The programme was implemented by the Federal Government of Nigeria in order to address the challenges of unemployment and to alleviate poverty among youth [9]. N-power is linked to the Federal Government's policies in the economic, employment and social development arenas. It is a government policy that is geared towards addressing social problems in education, health, agriculture, poverty and even unemployment at all levels of government i.e., Federal, State and Local Governments [9]. By introducing N-Power, the Federal Government provides a platform 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.

The stipend was ₦30, 000.00 a month per beneficiary. The beneficiaries of first and second batches of the programme were about 400,000 peoples and had been concluded in all states of the federation [1]. The third batch of the programme targeted 500,000 beneficiaries all over the nation [1]. It was at the point of conclusion of the third batch this study was undertaken to assess the effectiveness of the programme on the beneficiaries in Igabi Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

The objectives of the study are to examine the demographic characteristics of the respondents, identify the types of N-Power programmes of the respondents, determine the effectiveness of N-power programme among the respondents and identify the challenges faced by the beneficiaries of the programmes.

The hypothesis of the study stated in null form that the N-power programme is not effective in improving the living conditions of the beneficiaries in the study area.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was carried out in Igabi Local Government Area (ILGA) of Kaduna state. The Local Government was created out of Zaria Local Government in 1989 with its headquarters at Turunku, located in the northern part of the state with latitude of 10° 47' N and longitude 7° 47' E. The Local Government has thirteen districts namely: Jaji, Rigasa, Maraban Jos, Riga Chikun, Panshanu, Gwaraji, Zangoaya, Afaka, Igabi, SabonBirini, Turunku, Kerawa and Kwarau with a projected population of 581,500 as at 2016 from the 2006 national population census [7]. Igabi LG is bounded to the north by Giwa and Zaria local government areas, to the east by Soba and Kauru local government areas, to the south by Kajuru, Kaduna North, Kaduna South and Chikun local government area, and to the west Chikun and Birnin Gwari local government areas. The climate ranges from Sahel to Sudan savannah with average rainfall of 1025mm/annum, falling between May to October which last for about 4 - 5 months a year.

Two stage sampling technique was used for the study. The first stage involved purposive selection of four districts out of thirteen (13) districts in Igabi Local Government. The districts were selected based on high concentration of N- power beneficiaries. The selected districts are Afaka, Turunku, Rigachikun, and Maraban Jos. Ten (10) N-power beneficiaries were randomly selected from each district making a total of eighty (80) respondents used as sample size for the study.

Data were collected with the aid of well-structured questionnaires. The questionnaires were prepared in line with the objectives of the study and administered to the respondents by personal interview. The data collected were presented with descriptive statistics such as mean, frequency distribution, percentages and tables. The effectiveness of N-power programme on the beneficiaries was analysed and tested with Chi-square analyses.

Chi-Square (X^2) mathematical model is given as:

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(Fo - Fe)^2}{Fe}$$

Where:

X^2 = Chi-square,

$\sum$ = Summation sign,

Fo = Observed frequencies in each cell,

Fe = Expected frequencies in each cell

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Characteristics of the N-Power Beneficiaries

The distribution of demographic characteristics on Table 1 showed that majority (58.75%) of the N-Power beneficiaries are male and 41.25% are female. This indicated that male benefitted more in the programme than female. Though female's beneficiaries have a fair representation. 52.50% has the highest age range of 27-35 years, followed by 38.75% with 18-26 years while 8.75% of the beneficiaries are above 35 years old.

This reveals that there was a clear violation of selection because 8.75% of the beneficiaries are above the age of 35 years contrary to the age (18 – 35 years) designed for the programme. The marital status of the beneficiaries revealed that 52.50% are married and 47.50% are single. The N-Power allowance of ₦30, 000 will provide financial support to both the married and the single beneficiaries. In term of household size, 65.00% of the beneficiaries has smaller family size of 2-5 members, the smaller family size could be as a result of the age brackets designed for the programme. 27.50% and 7.50% has household size between 6-9 and 10-13 members respectively. The educational status indicated that all categories of educational level benefitted from the programme, 67.50% of the beneficiaries have tertiary education, 18.75% has secondary education and 13.75% has Islamic education.

Table 1. Demographic distribution of the N-Power beneficiaries

Socio-Economic variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	47	58.75
Female	33	41.25
Age		
18-26	31	38.75
27-35	42	52.50
Above 35	7	8.75
Marital status		
Single	38	47.50
Married	42	52.50
Household size		
2-5	52	65.00
6-9	22	27.50
10-13	6	7.50
Educational qualification		
Tertiary education	54	67.50
Secondary education	15	18.75
Islamic education	11	13.75

Source: Field survey, 2019.

Types on N –Power Programme of the respondents

The types of N- Power programme of the respondents on Table 2 showed that 68.75% of the respondents are engaged in N- Teach, which constituted the largest percentage. This showed that the majority of the beneficiaries of N- Power in the study area are Teachers.

18.75% are involved in N-agro, these represents those involved in agricultural activities while the remaining 12.50% are involved in N- health, representing those involved in health care related activities. [10] in their study on contribution of N-Power programme to youth empowerment in Cross River State, Nigeria stated that the beneficiaries of N-Power programme were mostly composed of N-Teach strand of the programme, followed by N-Health strand, N-Agro and Voluntary Assets and Income Declaration Scheme (VAIDS) strands respectively.

Table 2. Distributions of the respondents according to the types of N –Power

Types of N –power	Frequency	Percentage%
N-teach	55	68.75
N-health	10	12.50
N-agro	15	18.75
Total	80	100

Source: Field survey, 2019.

Effectiveness of N-power programme among the Beneficiaries

Effectiveness is the extent to which the respondents have benefitted immensely from the N-Power Programme. The effectiveness of the programme was measured in term of the living conditions whether the N-Power Programme has improved the living conditions of the beneficiaries or not. Table 3 showed the distribution of the respondents according to the effectiveness of N-Power Programme. From the table, a larger percentage of the respondents (53.75%) claimed the N-Power programme was effective, 27.50% maintained that the programme was most effective while 12.50% and 6.25% alleged that the programme was not effective and less effective respectively. This agreed with the findings of [10] which opined that N-Power Programme contributed to empowerment of youth through poverty reduction, proficiency skills in ICT, financial empowerment, on the job experience and investment in small scale businesses. [6] stated that N-Power scheme has to a very large extent empowered the youths in Anyigba in skills acquisition, financial status, self-reliance and productivity. According to [3], the N-Power programme has had great impacts on the socio-economic livelihoods of the beneficiaries including but not limited to ease of access to basic and daily needs, providing for families, ability to enrol for further studies, etc.

Table 3. Distribution of the effectiveness of the N-power programme to the respondents

Effective	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Most Effective	22	27.50
Effective	43	53.75
Less Effective	5	6.25
Not effective	10	12.50
Total	80	100

Source: Field survey, 2019.

Chi-Square Analysis on the Effectiveness of N-Power Programme

The Chi square test of significance of the effectiveness of N-Power Programme on Table 4 showed that the calculated Chi- square value of 30 (X^2 statistics) was greater than the tabulated value of 16.64 (X^2 critical) at 0.01 percent probability level. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0) which states that the N-power programme is not effective in improving the living conditions of the beneficiaries in the study area is hereby rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_A) accepted. This showed that N-Power programmes are effective in the study area. This corroborates the findings of [2] which stated that significant relationship exists between N-Power programmes and poverty alleviation as well as empowerment of the youths in Rivers State.

Table 4. Chi-Square Analysis on the Effectiveness of N-Power Programme

Effectiveness of N-power	Rank	f_o	$R + f_o$	Total	f_e	$f_e - f_o$	$(f_o - f_e)^2$	$(f_o - f_e)^2 / f_e$	Tabulated value@ 1%
Most effective	1	22	23	45	40	18	324	8.0	
Effective	2	43	45	88	72.22	29.22	853.81	12.0	
Less effective	3	5	8	13	11.56	6.56	43.03	4.0	
Not effective	4	10	14	24	21.33	11.33	128.37	6.0	
Total		80	90					30	16.64

Decision rule: If f -calculated is greater than f -tabulated, H_o is rejected and H_A is accepted

Challenges of N-Power Programmes to the Beneficiaries

The challenges faced by the beneficiaries of N-Power programmes as presented on Table 5 showed that there is job insecurity (25.69%) in the programme, the beneficiaries are expected to quit the job after the expiration of the programme. 19.37% and 2.77% complained of delay in payment of and unpaid allowances, and that the stipends are not paid as at when due or not paid at all, this could be due to wrong bank verification number (BVN) which accounted for 1.98%. The percentage of the beneficiaries that affirmed insufficient information and poor monitoring of the programme stood at 13.44% and 12.65% respectively. Some (11.07%) expressed unhappiness about the distance to their working places, 7.51% stated that the programme was characterized with bribery and corruption while 5.53% complained of no teacher training to most of the N-Teach beneficiaries. The results agreed with the findings of [10], [3], [4], and [2] who have embarked on similar study.

Table 5. Challenges posed by N-Power programmes to the beneficiaries

Challenges	Frequency*	Percentage
Delay in payments of allowance	49	19.37
Unpaid allowances	7	2.77
Wrong bank verification number (BVN),	5	1.98
Distance to working places	28	11.07
No training for most of N-Teach	14	5.53
Job insecurity	65	25.69
Bribery and corruption	19	7.51
Poor monitoring	32	12.65
Insufficient information	34	13.44
Total	253	100

Source: Field survey, 2019. *Multiple responses

CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that majority of the N-Power beneficiaries are male, age between 27-35 years, married with the household size of 2-5 members and are educated with tertiary education. The programme was effective as it has improved the living conditions of the beneficiaries through financial empowerment, poverty reduction, and self-reliance by investing in small scale businesses. It can also be concluded that N-teach, N-tech, and N-agro are the N-Power scheme available to the beneficiaries.

The challenges of N-Power programme to the beneficiaries are job insecurity, delay in payments of allowance, poor monitoring, insufficient information about the programme, distance to working places and bribery and corruption. Other includes no training for most of N-Teach, unpaid allowances and wrong bank verification number.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommended proper monitoring of the programme, adequate information about the programme to the public and timely payment of the monthly stipends to beneficiaries of the programme by Federal government, the unpaid allowances should be sorted out quickly and paid accordingly, the beneficiaries should be posted closer to the place of residence.

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**PROCENA EFIKASNOSTI PROGRAMA N-POWER KOD KORISNIKA
U PODRUČJU LOKALNE SAMOUPRAVE IGABI
DRŽAVE KADUNA, NIGERIJA**

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Abstrakt: N-power je program-šema za osnaživanje mladih koju sprovodi Savezna vlada države Nigerije kako bi se suočila sa izazovima nezaposlenosti i ublažila siromaštvo među mladima.

Studija je sprovedena da se proceni efikasnost i izazovi programa N-Power na korisnike. Korišćena je dvostepena tehnika uzorkovanja. Četiri okruga su namerno odabrana u prvoj fazi istraživanja. U drugoj fazi istraživanja, 80 N-Power korisnika programa je odabrano nasumično sa 20 učesnika po okrugu. Podaci su prikupljeni upotrebom upitnika i intervju a i predstavljeni sa %, srednjim vrednostima i distribucijom učestalosti, dok je X^2 (hi-kvadrat) korišćen za statističku analizu podataka.

Rezultati su pokazali da su većina korisnika N-Power muškarci (58,75%), starosti između 27-35 godina (52,50%), oženjeni (52,50%) sa veličinom domaćinstva od 2 do 5 članova (65,00%), da su obrazovani sa visokim školskim obrazovanjem (67,50%).

Rezultat X^2 je pokazao da je vrednost X^2 (30) bila veća od kritične vrednosti X^2 (16,64) na nivou verovatnoće od 0,01 %.

Ovo ukazuje da je program N-Power bio efikasan u poboljšanju životnih uslova korisnika. N-teach, N-tech i N-agro su šeme programa N-Power, dostupne korisnicima u sprovođenju ovog istraživanja.

Izazovi N-Power programa za korisnike su nesigurnost posla, kašnjenje u isplatama naknada, loše praćenje, nedovoljna informisanost o programu, udaljenost do radnih mesta i mito i korupcija.

Studija je preporučila pravilno praćenje programa, adekvatno informisanje javnosti o programu i blagovremenu isplatu mesečnih stipendija korisnicima.

Ključne reči: Procena, korisnici, N-Power, program, mladi, osnaživanje.

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