

An Application of Multiple Linear Regression Model to the Impact of N-Power Program on Poverty Reduction among Youths in Gassol Local Government Area, Taraba state, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined the impact of N-Power on poverty reduction among the youths in Gassol LGA of Taraba State. The population of the study is 550 out of which 232 respondents were sampled. The study adopted a self-developed questionnaire for data collection. Two hundred and thirty-two (232) copies of questionnaires were administered all were retrieved, making 100% return rate. The study employed inferential statistics (Multiple linear regression analysis) for data analysis. The results were presented in tables and discussed according to the objective. The study revealed a significant effect of N-Power on poverty reduction among youths in Gassol Local Government Area ($p < \alpha$). The study recommended that Federal Government should create more empowerment programmes that will expose youths to entrepreneurial skills and make them self-employed and self-reliance.

Keywords: N-Power Program; Poverty Reduction; Youths; Multiple Linear Regression

1. Introduction

In Nigeria, poverty and empowerment remains one of the biggest social problems today. The incidence of poverty has remained relatively high and still growing at an alarming rate. There has been a renewed and growing concern about increasing poverty and their negative implications on the unemployed youth. Available data from NBS (2018) shows that more than half of Nigerian population is currently living in squalid livelihood and has consistently remained a worrisome phenomenon demanding urgent national attention (Obadan, 2017). To tackle this problem, successive Governments of Nigeria have implemented a range of measures, including NAPEP, SURE-P and currently the N-Power program. More disturbing is the fact that despite the colossal amount of resources committed to those programmes, the poverty situation aggravates, and more and more people fall into the poverty region instead of escaping.

To this end, the N-Power scheme was initiated by the Buhari Administration in order to serve as a strategy for poverty reduction in Nigeria as a whole. Since the inception of the Buhari led administration in 2015 till date, there is lack of independent empirical studies to show the efficacy of the scheme in addressing the issues it sought out to achieve. At most Abin (2018) only investigated the implementation process in his study carried in Akwanga Metropolis of Nasarawa State, Nigeria. More so, there have been serious claims on the part of government about the success of the scheme and media praises has rocked the airwaves, all without substantive investigative evidence backed by research. These claims cannot be substantiated without subjecting them to empirical research/investigation to assess the impact of N-Power on poverty reduction among beneficiaries in Gassol Local Government Area of Taraba State, Nigeria.

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1.1. Research Hypothesis

H0: There is no significant impact of N-Power on poverty reduction among the youths in Gassol Local Government Area of Taraba State.

2. Literature review

2.1. The Concept of N-Power Program

N-Power is a programme that provides a platform where most Nigerians can access skills acquisition and development. At this time however, the initial modular programmes in N-Power are designed for Nigerian citizens between the ages of 18 and 35. One needs to meet the minimum requirements (if any) for the respective programme. Generally, selection is based: On one's expression of a genuine interest in whichever area you decide; passing the relevant tests; willingness to push beyond comfort zone; and ability to show flair to develop all the skills you need to be the best you can be (N-Power Information Guide, 2017).

While there are fixed requirements along the way, we will be relying on you to take ownership of the process and take the lead in shaping your route, by making the most of the training that you will receive. For the purposes of N-Power, Graduate means any post-tertiary qualification including an Ordinary National Diploma (OND) or Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) or as may be specified by the programme ((N-Power Information Guide, 2017).

The key N-Power Programmes include: N-Power Agro, N-Power Tax, N-Power Health, N-Power Teach. The N-Power Volunteer Corps is the post-tertiary engagement initiative for Nigerians between 18 and 35. It is a paid volunteering programme of a 2-year duration. The graduates will undertake their primary tasks in identified public services within their proximate communities. All N-Power Volunteers are entitled to computing devices that will contain information necessary for their specific engagement, as well as information for their continuous training and development. In 2016, the Federal Government engaged 200,000 N-Power Volunteers. In 2017, the Federal Government is enlisting 300,000 more. The June 2017 Application, is only open to the Graduate Category. N- Power volunteers provide teaching, instructional, and advisory solutions in 4 key areas (Bennel, 2017).

Skills and knowledge are the driving forces of economic growth and social development. Despite the current high level of unemployment, harnessing Nigeria's young demography through appropriate skill development efforts provides an opportunity to achieve inclusion and productivity within the country. Large-scale skill development is the main policy thrust of the N-Power Programme. N-Power is also linked to the Federal Government's policies in the economic, empowerment and social development arenas. N-Power addresses the challenge of youth unemployment by providing a structure for large scale and relevant work skills acquisition and development while linking its core and outcomes to fixing inadequate public services and stimulating the larger economy. The modular programmes under N-Power will ensure that each participant will learn and practice most of what is necessary to find or create work. The N-Power Volunteer Corp involves a massive deployment of 500,000 trained graduates who will assist to improve the inadequacies in our public services in education, health and civic education. Some of these graduates will also help in actualizing Nigeria's economic and strategic aspirations of achieving food security and self-sufficiency (Federal Ministry of Youth Development, 2017).

2.2. The Concept of Youth Empowerment in Nigeria

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 to their own fulfillment. PAYE, (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, take action based on that decision and accept responsibility for the consequences of these actions.

Empowering young people means creating and supporting the enabling conditions under which young people can act on their own behalf, and on their own terms, rather than at the directions of others. The enabling conditions according to Azam (2016), fall into four broad categories:

- An economic and social base
- Political will, adequate resource allocation and supportive legal and administrative frameworks

- A stable environment of equality, peace and democracy and
- Access to knowledge, information and skills and a positive value system.

From these foundational issues, Momoh, (2008) insists that we can agree that any transformational agenda for young women and men in Nigeria must of necessity, address these four areas to empower young people to make their much-needed contribution to the peace and development of this country. McGrath, (2009) opines that the quality of a country is not based on the number of men and women in its armed forces nor is it determined by faithfulness to the application of the principles of zoning and or the allocation Formula of political offices, which in Nigeria is actually a euphemism for sharing public funds. No country becomes great by the number of politicians jostling for political offices or the number of times its constitution is amended in a quarter. The greatness of any nation is in the quality of its people in the worth of its governance and in the empowerment of its youths.

Underdevelopment, environmental degradation, devastation by the activities of oil exploration and exploitation of the Niger Delta area, as well as, the exclusion of the people were some factors that pushed many into militancy. The result was a region ignited by violence, destruction, massacres, kidnapping and a drastic reduction in oil production. There was breakdown of law and order, and anarchy threatened to envelop the country. Life was hard enough without the attendant violence and crossfire to which the people were being exposed to (Ukwayi, 2018).

Access to quality education has become an elitist preserve. Yet, our Constitution charges the government to make education at all levels, accessible to the Nigerian citizen. Section 18 states that: "Government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels...; government shall strive to eradicate illiteracy, and to this end, Government shall as and when practicable provide free, compulsory and universal primary education, free secondary education, free university education, and free adult literacy programme." Our tertiary education has been in crisis for decades, bedeviled amongst other things by poor funding to brain drain, low administrative capacity and frequent government-staff industrial disputes that have seen their frequent closures, (Obadan, 2017).

2.3. N-Power and Job Creation

N-Power is a scheme under the National Social Investments Programme of the Nigerian federal government geared towards job creation; alleviate poverty and empowerment initiatives through volunteering services. It is also aimed at imbuing on Nigerian youths the learn-work entrepreneurship culture between the ages of 18-35 (FGN 2018). According to Odey et al (2019), the goals of the programme includes; reducing the rate of unemployment in the country, facilitate the transfer of entrepreneurial, technical skills and employability ability and to bring solution active public service and government diversification policy. The programme is divided into three components viz, n-tech, n-health, and n-agro as well as other subsidiary non-graduate scheme as n-build, n-knowledge and n-teach respectively.

N-Power aspires to provide a platform where most Nigerians can access skills acquisition and development. At this time however, the initial modular programmes in N-Power are designed for Nigerian citizens between the ages of 18 and 35. One needs to meet the minimum requirements (if any) for the respective programme. Generally, selection is based: On one's expression of a genuine interest in whichever area you decide; passing the relevant tests; willingness to push beyond comfort zone; and ability to show a flair to develop all the skills you need to be the best you can be (Aderonmu, 2017). While there are fixed requirements along the way, we will be relying on you to take ownership of the process and take the lead in shaping your route, by making the most of the training that you will receive. For the purposes of N-Power, Graduate means any post-tertiary qualification including an Ordinary National Diploma (OND) or Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) or as may be specified by the programme (Obadan, 2017). The key N-Power Programmes include: N-Power Agro, N-Power Tax, N-Power Build, N-Power Creative, N-Power Health, N-Power Teach, N-Power Tech Hardware and N-Power Tech Software

2.3.1. N- Teach

Beneficiaries under this sub scheme will serve in public schools as auxiliary teachers for a period not less than two years subject to modification by the appropriate authority. The aim is to help the beneficiaries gain relevant work experience and mould the better for further challenges as may be determine by the political and economic climate.

2.3.2. *N-Health*

Volunteers under this group will be deployed to serve as public health assistants in government owned health facilities as well as provide basic health diagnostic services in the area of primary assignment.

2.3.3. *N-Agro*

The youths deployed under this group will serve as researchers and the local farmers in a bit to educate them on contemporary farming techniques and innovation to boost agricultural productivity thereby achieving the objective of food sufficiency.

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N-Power is also linked to the Federal Government's policies in the economic, empowerment and social development arenas. N-Power addresses the challenge of youth unemployment by providing a structure for large scale and relevant work skills acquisition and development while linking its core and outcomes to fixing inadequate public services and stimulating the larger economy. The modular programmes under N-Power will ensure that each participant will learn and practice most of what is necessary to find or create work. The N-Power Volunteer Corp involves a massive deployment of 500,000 trained graduates who will assist to improve the inadequacies in our public services in education, health and civic education. Some of these graduates will also help in actualizing Nigeria's economic and strategic aspirations of achieving food security and self sufficiency (Federal Ministry of Youth Development, 2009).

N-Power is also a platform for diversifying the economy. N-Power is preparing young Nigerians for a knowledge economy where, equipped with world-class skills and certification, they become innovators and movers in the domestic and global markets. Nigeria will have a pool of software developers, hardware service professionals, animators and graphic artists, building services professionals, artisans and others. N-Power also focuses on providing our non-graduates with relevant technical and business skills that enhance their work outlook and livelihood (Federal Ministry of Youth Development, 2009).

2.4. Power Poverty Theory

The power theory of poverty is basically a Marxian theory of exploitative property system through which it determines the allocation of opportunities, income and weight using the apparatus of state power. The concentration of weight in the hands of the few while the majority languishes in poverty is a "Manifestations of the same historical process" (Akeredolu and Ale, 1986). The power theory of poverty situates poverty within the structure of political power in the society. According to the theory, poverty is a necessary concomitant of any situation in which the few possess much political powers to organize the economic system in their own selfish interest. The school viewed that the structure of political powers in society determines the extent and distribution of poverty among the populace. It insists that poverty will remain prevalence as long as there is no effective pressure among the poor to restructure the distribution of political; power in the society in favour of the majority (Alkeredolu and Ale, 1986). The study was further collaborated by ford (2007) where he stated that the link between economic and political power must be broken for progress to be made. The implication of the theory for poverty alleviation is that poverty will continue unless there is a revolutionary consciousness of the subject class, of their organizational capacity to resist exploitation, become self-reliance (economic power) and to overthrow the property system.

Gens (1973) argued that Marxian economists contend that capitalism and political factors based on class division cause poverty. Marxian views consider class and group discrimination as central to poverty and assign a key role to the state in its intervention/regulation of markets. Anti-poverty proposals in this vein include minimum wages and anti-discrimination laws. The study further noted that Marxian economists and other radical theories highlight the

possibility that economic growth alone may be insufficient to lift poor people out of (relative) poverty, because those who belong to certain classes may not reap any of the benefits of overall income growth.

Marx argued that the presence of unemployed workers, which is ultimately caused by the need of capitalists to have surplus labour, artificially lowers wages (by a simple labour supply argument). This was believed to be an inherent dysfunction of the labour market which only the state, when controlled by the working class, can regulate. One of the central element of Marxian theory is that the primary aim of this state regulation should be to enhance the working conditions of labourers and promote higher wages among them (Blank, 2010). The implication and policy message to alleviate poverty according to Marxian poverty theory is that anti-discrimination laws and labour market reforms through assign a key role to the state in its intervention/regulation of markets (eg. In the form of minimum wages) are essential to overcome structural barriers that impede employment and cause poverty (Gans, 1973).

3. Material and methods

This study employed survey research. It was used to ascertain the effect of N-Power program in Gassol LGA of Taraba State. It provided simple summaries about the sample and the measures. Together with simple graphics analysis, they form the basis of virtually every quantitative analysis of data.

3.1. Population of the Study

The records (2019) of the Social Investment Programmes (SIP) Gassol Local Government Area shows that 550 people are the direct beneficiaries of N-Power Social Investment Program (N-SIP) in Gassol Local Government Area.

The multi-stage sampling procedure was employed as follows; **firstly**, Gassol Local Government Area has 12 wards, namely; Gassol, Gunduma, Mutum-biyu ward "A", Mutum-biyu ward "B", Namnai, Sabon-Gida, Sendirde, Shira, Tutare, Wuro-Jam, wuryo and Yerima. **Secondly**, the wards are further stratified into district namely, Gassol district and Mutum-Biyu district with their respective wards. Wards under Gassol district are: Gassol, Sabon-Gida, Sendirde, Wuro-Jam, wuryo and Yerima. While Mutum-Biyu district are: Gunduma, Mutum-biyu ward "A", Mutum-biyu ward "B", Namnai, Shira and Tutare. **Thirdly**, simple random sampling will be employed to select two villages/Areas from each of the twelve wards in the study area. This is done by listing all the villages in each ward and made two consecutive draw from each well-shuffled boxes containing listed names of the villages per ward in order to get 24 villages. Lastly, to avoid biasness, a systematic sampling procedure was employed in selecting the required proportionate sample size of the beneficiaries (SIP) per village.

Yamane (1967) proportionate sampling formula was used for drawing a justifiable sample out of the total population as presented below;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

where;

n = Required sample size

N = Total number of N-SIP Beneficiaries in Gassol Local Government Area

e = Level of significance (5%)

therefore,)²

$$n = \frac{550}{1 + 550 (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{550}{2.375}$$

$$n = 231.57$$

$$n = 232$$

The study employed both descriptive and inferential statistics method in analyzing data. In the descriptive statistics, frequency and percentage was used to analyze the socio-economic characteristic of the respondent, multiple linear

regression model was used to achieve the specific objectives. Multiple linear regressions were adopted in testing the hypotheses formulated. The multiple linear regression analysis models are specified as follow:

$$x_1 = \text{N-Teach (NT)}$$

$$x_2 = \text{N-Agro (NA)}$$

$$x_3 = \text{N-Health (NH)}$$

$$x_4 = \text{N-Tax (NTX)}$$

$$Y = \text{Job Creation (JC)}$$

Where $x_1 - x_4$ = Independent variables

Y = Dependent variable

Therefore, the multiple regression model for objective one is defined as:

$$JC = \beta_0 + \beta_1 NT + \beta_2 NA + \beta_3 NH + \beta_4 NTX + \epsilon$$

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Impact of N-Power program on Poverty Reduction among Youths in Gassol Local Government Area

Table 1 Summary of Simple Linear Regression Analysis on the Impact of N-Power program on Poverty Reduction among Youths in Gassol Local Government Area

Variable	B	S. Error	t-value	P-value	Remark
Constant	-0.172	0.100	-1.715	0.092	SN
N-Teach (NT)	-0.360	0.151	-2.390*	0.020	S
N-Agro (NA)	-0.391	0.082	-4.760**	0.000	NS
N-Health (NH)	0.178	0.104	1.707	0.094	S
N-Tax (NTX)	0.113	0.131	0.863	0.392	S
R ² = 0.935					

Source: Field Survey, 2021; Dependent variable: Poverty Reduction (PR); Independent variables: N-Teach (NT), N-Agro (NA), N-Health (NH) and N-Tax (NTX); S = Significant, NS= Not significant; *= significance at 5%, **= significance at 1%.

Table 1 shows N-Teach (NT) has a negative coefficient that was significantly related to Poverty Reduction (PR) at 5% level. This negative coefficient value means that N-Teach (NT) alleviates poverty in the study area.

N-Agro (NA) has a negative coefficient as expected and significantly related to Poverty Reduction (PR) at 1%. This negative coefficient value implies that N-Agro (NA) reduces poverty in Gassol Local Government Area.

N-Health (NH) has a positive coefficient and was not significantly related to Job Creation (JC). This positive coefficient value indicates that N-health (NH) has no effect on the livelihood of unemployed youths in Gassol Local Government Area of Taraba State.

Similarly, N-Tax (NT) has a positive coefficient and was not significantly related to Job Creation (JC). This positive coefficient value indicates that N-Tax (NT) has no effect on the livelihood of unemployed youths in Gassol Local Government Area of Taraba State.

The R² = 94% indicates that the model is well fitted and suitable for explaining the effect of N-Power program on poverty reduction among the youths in Gassol Local Government Area. Hence, N-Power program has significant effect on poverty reduction in Gassol Local Government Area of Taraba State (P<α).

4.2. Test of Hypothesis

4.2.1. Hypothesis (H0)

There is no significant impact of N-Power on poverty reduction among beneficiaries Gassol Local Government Area.

Table 2 Summary Regression ANOVA on the Impact of N-Power Program on Poverty Reduction among Youths in Gassol Local Government Area

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-value	P-value
Regression	57.151	4	14.288	190.754	0.000
Residual	3.970	53	0.075		
Total	61.121	57			

Source: Field Survey, 2023; Dependent Variable: Poverty Reduction (PR); Predictors: N-Teach (NT), N-Agro (NA), N-Health (NH) and N-Tax (NTX).

Table 2 shows a significant impact of N-Power on poverty reduction among beneficiaries Gassol Local Government Area. This is because the P-value (0.000) of the ANOVA is less than the alpha value ($\alpha = 0.05$). Hence, the null hypothesis which states that There is no significant impact of N-Power on poverty reduction among beneficiaries of Gassol Local Government Area is hereby rejected at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, there is a significant impact of N-Power program on poverty reduction among beneficiaries Gassol Local Government Area.

5. Conclusion

The result of the study revealed a significant impact of N-Power on job creation and poverty reduction among the youths in Gassol Local Government Area of Taraba State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- More female graduates should be captured in the N-power programme. This will make women to benefit like their male counterpart.
- Since N-Power program has significant effect on job creation, Federal Government should retain and sustain N-Power program.

Compliance with ethical standards

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Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

Statement of informed consent

I have wholly explained this research, its purpose, associated risks and benefits to the N-Power Beneficiaries (participants) to enable them make informed decision.

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