

ASSESSING THE STATUS OF YOUTH EMPOWERMENT IN NIGERIA

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

Several variables have been identified with regards to the problem of youth empowerment in Nigeria. However, not many studies have attempted to evaluate and explore the possible relationship between the identified variables some of which are Rapid population growth, Corruption, Lack of employable skills and experience among youths, Rural to urban migration and Inaccurate public policies relating to employment. This study this seeks to assess the situation and to fill the gap in literature by assessing the effectiveness a prominent youth empowerment program in Nigeria- N-power, which was established for the purpose of job creation and empowerment for Nigerian youth, looking at how the program has addressed the different variables mentioned.

In this paper, I will first discuss in detail the background to the study during which I will highlight what is known about youth empowerment generally and the situation in Nigeria. Secondly, by elaborating on the situation in Nigeria, I will expand on the problem of unemployment and youth empowerment in Nigeria in the section Statement of the problem. After this I will discuss the concept of youth, unemployment, and youth empowerment in Nigeria in the section Literature Review. Finally, the article will bring to perspective the status of empowerment programs that have been implemented in Nigeria, particularly the N-Power Programme implemented by the Nigerian government towards youth empowerment. The conclusion and recommendations are then captured in section conclusion and Recommendations where I will present and evaluate three potential solutions that policy makers may use to overcome the crisis.

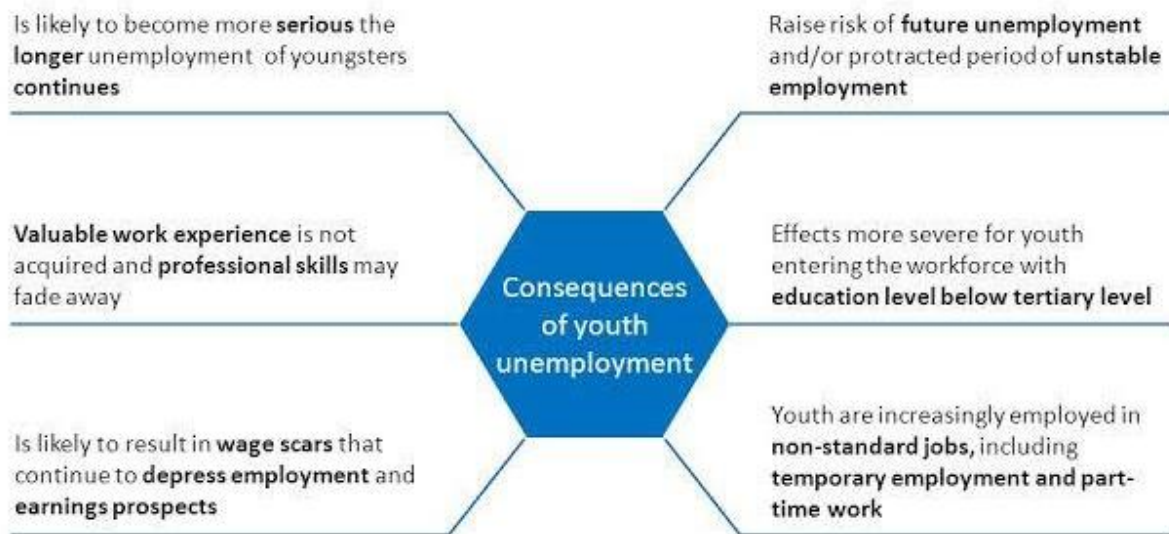
1.2 Background to the Study

In every community or nation, youth (defined as those aged 18-29) make up most of the working population and hold the potential to make significant contributions to the growth and overall development of the society through their capabilities. The reason for this is that when the actively working population of a country is bigger than the number of dependents in such country, such a country can boast of reaping a “demographic dividend” – an economic boom in which households are better able to save and invest and economies are more productive. As a result, adolescents constitute a social resource that, if effectively engaged and mobilized in the job of development of a nation, can drive a country to greater and impressive economic position in the world community (Olajide & Akojenu, 2017)

1.2.1 The Need for Youth Investment in Nigeria

Despite the nation's large number, projected to be around 215 million people (Worldometer, 2022), as well as its prospects, Nigeria has failed to develop and invest in human capital, particularly the youth. Unemployment continues to be a serious challenge afflicting the country's entire population in recent years, with the youth bearing the brunt of the burden. As per the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the unemployment figure stands at 23.1 percent, with about 13.2 million young people unemployed. In 2018, it was recorded that the rate of unemployment among the youth stood at its highest of 29.7%. As a result, most teenagers do not have the resources to meet their fundamental needs, be economically beneficial, and self-sufficient. Thus, in order to make ends meet, they often turn to crime and other criminal enterprises. Dangerous activities such as cybercrime, rape, aggravated robbery, substance abuse, trafficking and smuggling, hijacking and kidnapping, insurrection, and other criminal deeds are all common among youth in the country.

This indicates the level of challenges that unemployment among youth in Nigeria, poses (Okoye et al., 2014). Unemployment among Nigeria's youth is a critical issue that has the potential to impede the country's long-term economic growth.



1.2.2 Factors Leading to Youth Unemployment

As mentioned above, many social problems are associated with youth unemployment. In this section, I will highlight specific factors that have led to this crisis. As the case study progresses, I will evaluate the relative influence of each of these factors.

There exist many factors that have been linked with the issue of youth unemployment in Nigeria. In Nigeria, there exist many interventions implemented by the government in order to create opportunities for employment for its youth to ultimately ameliorate the problem of unemployment in the country. However, all these efforts by the government have been futile because of the unsustainability of the initiatives/programs. These factors include but are not limited to:

- Rapid population growth
- Corruption

- Lack of employable skills and experience among youths
- Rural to urban migration
- Inaccurate public policies relating to employment
- Lack of entrepreneurial skill
- Supply of skilled youth is higher than demand
- Lack of social infrastructures make rural life unattractive
- Poor Macroeconomic and business environment
- Low economic growth rate and recession
- Concentration of social amenities in the urban centers

1.2.3 Potential Policy Solutions

In this section, I will present and evaluate three potential solutions that policy makers may use to overcome crisis at the center of this paper:

- 1.) Education and Training
- 2.) Employment subsidies
- 3.) Equality and rights

The extent of innovation of a nation's people, particularly its youths, go a long way in determining the level of growth and development to be experienced in such a country (Olajide & Akojenu, 2017). This is in line with the training standards as well as the anticipated advancement of entrepreneurship in that country. When youths in a community are fully employed and the per capita income of the country continues to rise, growth and development can be fostered. Systematic government initiatives targeted at a viable entrepreneurship program should boost the

creation of jobs and self-reliance among the youth. It is pointless to claim that entrepreneurialism is the solution to developing-country unemployment (Olajide & Akojenu, 2017).

In recent times, there have been approaches by the government of Nigeria to target its youths, and this they have achieved through various partnering bodies such as the World Bank, several NGOs as well as philanthropists in the private sector who have all been actively contributing and committing huge number of resources to enhance training and empowerment in many different entrepreneurship (Central Bank of Nigeria [CBN], 2012).

To assist in the empowerment of youths and to create new markets in the economy, the Nigerian government has previously established and endorsed agencies such as the "Entrepreneurship Development Centres (EDCs)", they have launched what is known as the "Microfinance Policy", the "Regulatory and Supervisory Framework for Nigeria", and the actively implemented National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) sensitization, "Venture Prize Competition", as well as the NYSC Entrepreneurship Training Programme. All of these were established between the years 2006 and 2008, together with other initiatives (CBN, 2012). To also ensure the empowerment of its youth, the Nigerian government has also initiated and implemented projects like the "Subsidized Reinvestment and Empowerment Program (SURE-P)", "Graduate Internship Scheme (GIS)", "Africa Youth Empowerment Nigeria (AYEN)", "Youth Entrepreneur Support Program (YES-P)", and "N-Power Empowerment Program". Several NGOs and philanthropists in the private sector too have given financially to support these projects. Other examples are the "Youth Empowerment and Development Initiative (YEDI)", the "Diamond-Crest for Youth Education Foundation", "The Tony Elumelu Foundation for Entrepreneurship in Africa", the "New Era Foundation", and "LEAP Africa". All of this was carried out with the objective of increasing job creation, reducing the rate of poverty, and to increase income production for both citizens and the

government at large, so promote the diversification of the country's economy and reducing increased reliance on government and oil revenue, ultimately resulting in the growth and development of the nation's economy. Furthermore, governments, non-governmental organizations, and private donors have undertaken several initiatives in recent years to promote entrepreneurship through the provision of funds for start-up as loans and training, along with other things. Nonetheless, upon completing the entrepreneurship program, the start-up money required to really start the business are quite limited. The loans come with interest, making it harder for Nigerian teenagers to repay and break even. Some low-interest loans have very strict restrictions that make them unattainable for the ordinary Nigerian youth. They are given to wealthy and well-established businesspeople, individuals well known to them.

Despite all the programs mentioned earlier created to increase employment among youth, ultimately bringing about economic diversification, growth, and development, Nigeria as a country still faces enormous challenges impeding the creation of adequate job opportunities for its unemployed youths.

Earlier research including Okoli and Okoli (2013), Olajide and Akojenu (2017), Yusuf (2017), Egbefo and Abe (2017), Ogbondah and Nwogu (2017), Abasilim et al. (2017), Mukhtar et al. (2018), Ogamba (2019), Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2019), Tagwai (2020), and others have attempted to assess youth entrepreneurship or entrepreneurship development differently without looking at youth empowerment and entrepreneurship development together especially In the case of Nigeria. Not one of these studies have attempted to investigate the implications diversifying the economy as a result of youth empowerment and entrepreneurship development.

Since gaining political autonomy in 1960, the Nigerian system has witnessed fundamental restructuring, leading to structural alterations that have not yielded substantial long-term economic growth and development, ensuring appropriate employment opportunities for the country's youth. Recent findings indicate that the country's economy developed significantly in the 1970s, which culminated in inefficient public sector spending, causing disruption of employment variables and distorting revenue sources for policy formation. This occurrence together with several crises, led to the 1986 implementation of what is known as the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) and economic reforms. The main goal of this reform is to completely restructure Nigeria's economy while the population continues to grow

Unfortunately, the reforms failed to produce meaningful benefits, resulting in a worrisome growth in unemployment among the youth and its associated socioeconomic consequences in past few years. Unemployment is a major developmental issue experienced by developing nations, leaving none behind, including Nigeria (Patterson et al, 2006). The impact of unemployment is reported to have been felt more by youths. Nigerian youths migrate to Lagos with the aim of getting good jobs because it is generally believed that Lagos state has more job opportunities than the other states. As a result of this surge, the state's unemployment rate has skyrocketed. This is not to suggest that unemployment is non-existent or even minimal in other states, as several research on unemployment in Nigeria have observed, including Alanana (2003), Echebiri (2005), Awogbenle and Iwuamadi (2010), and Okafor (2010).

It has been revealed that the rate of youth unemployment globally has hit an all-time high and is projected to continue to rise. In 2002-2003, the youth population in Sub-Saharan Africa was projected to be 138 million, with about 21% of this number unemployed (ILO, 2004). It's also been disclosed that there is a geographic dimension to the unemployment among youths in Africa, as it

is significantly greater in urban regions compared to rural areas, and many different factors have indeed been proposed to be responsible for the increased youth unemployment in Africa, the far more prominent of which are poor economic growth, limited economic activity, and underinvestment. These issues all lead to limited job creation, and Nigeria's small labor market can't absorb the associated multitude of job seekers due to continued (in some cases, accelerated) increase in the population.

Governments and policymakers in many developing nations, such as Nigeria, continue to encounter difficulties at a higher rate to deal effectively with the problem of youth unemployment. The absence of sufficient support for job creation in development plans, the ever-expanding educational advancement, and the urgent willingness of adolescents to obtain University education regardless of course and course contents are all factors contributing to the increased percentage of unemployment. Consequently, a lot of talents learned at university seem to be obsolete and ineffective (Okafor, 2010).

In 2008, the Nigerian federal government admitted that more than 80% of the country's youth are unemployed, with 10% underemployed. Bolaji Abdullahi, Nigeria's Minister of Youth Development, estimated in 2011 that 42.2 % of the country's youth are unemployed. Depo Oyedokun, the Chair of the House Committee on Youth and Social Development, highlighted that 23 million of the country's over 40 million unemployed adolescents are unemployed and hence vulnerable to crime, necessitating the need to explain what can be done to improve the condition. Since most university graduates do not have employable skills, the pace is quickening.

This condition poses serious threats to people's lives in Nigeria, necessitating the education of individuals who can operate properly in the human community. According to the National Universities Commission (NUC) (2004), the widespread unemployment of Nigerian university

graduates in Nigeria is due to a mismatch between labor market needs and the graduates' lack of critical marketable skills (Diejonah and Orimolade, 1991). Because of the distribution of the country's population based on age, several skill gaps obstruct the growth of youths and the country's overall growth. This is because Nigeria's population is primarily made up of young people.

As a result, youth development and empowerment are identified as critical periods in life for developing human capital that enables the youths of a nation to escape poverty and live improved and more meaningful lives. Youth-developed human capital is therefore a crucial predictor of long-term growth in which a country may commit to and rely on. As a result, ensuring that kids are adequately equipped for their future is critical to the decrease and expansion of poverty. The reason for this is that a huge number of young Nigerians face gloomy job opportunities.

1.3 Statement of Problem

Considering the preceding statement, unemployment has posed a challenge to the world's achievement of overall economic progress, but particularly in developing countries.

The severity of unemployment has been identified as being youthful, which represents the economy's productive powers, making strong economic growth basically a phantom in Nigeria during the provided time frame (CBN, 2004).

In the 1960s and early 1970s, Nigeria, Malaysia, Indonesia, and other countries had similar income per capita GDP growth rates and an underdeveloped political structure, but today's Asian tigers have escaped poverty and underdevelopment due to the way their countries were managed, leaving Nigeria behind.

Economic policies in place in Nigeria for a long time, such as the SAP, have failed to tackle the issues of unemployment and contribute to the country's economic progress; contrary, 70 percent of Nigerians live in poverty.

Using Nigeria's unemployment time series data for the period 1975 to 1996, two past events emerged from the country's economic antiquity: first, the year 1974, which overlapped with the "oil boom", secondly, the year 1986, which represented the post-oil boom economic recession stage. Unemployment was still existent throughout the 1980 oil boom, according to popular belief. Over half of Nigeria's population is under 30 years old (National Population Commission, 2001). As a result, it may be said that Nigeria's economy is a youth economy (Oviawe, 2010). Today's youth will, predictably, become tomorrow's parents, leaders, labor force, and armies in a decade. Nigerian youths, on the other hand, are believed to be faced with poverty, unemployment, industrialization, and a lack of capacity and skills to propel the economy ahead. This is since the kids are unemployed and lack the requisite practical skills to keep their bodies and minds intact. Nevertheless, economists were concerned as to whether the cost of decreasing unemployment through government programs is worth it, or if the rate of inflation authorized will be beneficial to the economy.

1.4 Research Question

1. What is the impact of employment program on Nigerian youths?
2. What are the current setbacks affecting youth empowerment and development in Nigeria?
3. What are the preferable solutions to the challenges faced by Nigeria's youth empowerment program?
4. What are the intentions and initiatives taken by the government towards sustaining youth empowerment in Nigeria?

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

2.0 Concept of Youth

The phrase "youth" refers to the period of a person's life when he or she is young, particularly the age between childhood and adulthood in the early stages of life, growth, and maturation. A youth is a phase of transition which is neither childhood nor maturity, but instead falls somewhere in the middle. Youth is a synonym for the professionally focused adolescent as well as the popular phrases teen and teenage (Florence & Ekpungu, 2015). As described by Jega (2012), youth are a unique population of individuals who have incredible stamina and a strong desire to achieve a specific goal or objective. There is no globally accepted way to define youth; various countries interpret the term "youth" in respect to their goals, situations, and realities on the ground, based on history, current socio-economic, and political challenges that must be handled (Florence & Ekpungu, 2015).

Different factors and indicators are used to define youth in different countries based on this. Individuals between the ages of 15 and 24 are considered youth by the United Nations. In Uganda, youth are defined as those aged 12 to 30. The "National Youth Development Policy" (2009) in Nigeria regards all young people between the ages of 18 and 35 as youth. This group of people is regarded as the most unpredictable and yet the most susceptible sector of the population in terms of socioeconomics, emotions, and a lot of other factors. Youth have various features that set them apart from previous generations. Desperation for reform, fanaticism, extremism, revolts, enthusiasm, hard work, pride, and passion are among these traits, according to Florence and Ekpungu (2015).

Youths describe people in their teens and twenties, as defined by the definitions stated above. This means people between the ages of 18 and early 30s. If teenagers' imaginations are oriented in the proper direction, they might be considered as a major source and booster of national growth.

2.0.1 Youth Development

When thinking about youth development, it's important to remember that the phrase "youth development" is comprised of two fundamental words: youth and development. As a result, both words must be understood separately.

A youth might be compared to the youthfulness and vigor of a young individual (Wordweb Dictionary, 2010). Alternatively, development is indeed a state wherein things are getting better. It also implies to evolve progressively, passing through a set of phases on the way to achieving some form of condition of growth, enhancement, or completion, or revealing the individual's actual identity. 2010 (Wordweb Dictionary). Youths, in general, are among the most valuable assets that any country may possess, and they must thus be fostered and empowered. They are not only rightly considered as potential leaders, but they are also the biggest real and potential investment in a nation's development (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). They are a good indicator of a nation's reproductive capacity and self-sustainability. Their energy, appropriate behavior, and social duties are all positively associated with their country's progress (Zonal Youth Summits, 2000). "As a result, the current Nigerian government, having given considerable thought to the importance of youth in socio - economic and political development, has determined that it is most attractively essential to launch the "National Youth Development Policy" in order to maintain a meaningful emphasis, well communicated and clearly aimed attempts to tap the vitality and industriousness of youth and utilizing them for the nation's vitality, advancement, and development in this decade at

least. This dedication to youth development has been bolstered by resolutions from several international institutions, which emphasize the importance of addressing youths' problems and empowering them (Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment, 1998).

The first and only way to secure a country's long - term prosperity and development is to engage its youth. As a result, a growing number of individuals should be taught as rapidly as possible to run agricultural, industrial, government, and regional development programs. To confront a fast - paced technological world, these youth should be developed cognitively, morally, socially, also with required skills.

The system will be purposefully structured to concern itself with the development of good human capital essential for national development, thus the teaching of informed people who can operate successfully in society for the benefit of themselves and society will demand special attention (Ocho, 2005). Nigerian youngsters would find happiness and be fulfilled as employees or employers of labor through properly planned and implemented entrepreneurial education. Instead of abandoning their country in search of a better life, they will let their qualities be exploited to further national and global interests (Oviawe 2010).

The availability of appropriate capabilities to youths to assist them in overcoming unemployment and living a more successful life must take priority in the Nigerian grand scheme. Scholars have proposed certain strategies that could help Nigerian youths avoid becoming unemployed. These include sporting schools and groups that educate youngsters how to swim, and other sports, as well as computer training institutes and clubs that focus on training individuals programming language as well as other digital skills. Foreign languages such as French, Spanish, and Chinese are taught in language schools. Establishment of short-term work departments that will make temporary employees available to small businesses.

2.1 Concept of Empowerment

The term "empowerment" is often used to denote a variety of results and to reflect a vast scope of notions. As opined by Malhorta et al (2002), the phrase is used quite frequently to promote specific policies and management measures than just to analyze them. As a result of its broad use, there are numerous interpretations of the word, which means various things to various authors and organizations.

The word is thought to have originated from the term "power." which means authority. This refers to a person's aptitude or capacity to influence a situation. Empowerment must be conceptualized within the framework of disempowerment, according to Kabeer (2001), and so describes the processes whereby those who have been deprived the power to make decisions obtain that ability. Only people who have been disempowered, according to Kabeer, can be empowered.

Empowerment, according to Narayan (2005), describes the extension of one's ability to influence one's life via preference and actions. It entails having command over resources and making decisions. Poor people's assets and skills to engage in, bargain with, impact, govern, and hold responsible entities that impact their life are expanded through empowerment. Empowerment is a term that refers to people who are helpless. The poor require power and a diverse variety of assets and competencies in order to improve their well-being, safety, and self-confidence in order to bargain with others who are more influential (Petosky, Van Stelle, & De Jong, 1998).

Based on the preceding concepts, empowerment can be regarded as a means that bestows authority on people who are inherently disempowered, allowing them to live the lifestyle of their dreams by increasing their resources and talents. It entails assisting disempowered people in acquiring the skills, information, and assets they need to live a decent life. The objective of societal

empowerment is to assure everybody's well-being in order to improve prosperity and welfare everybody in that community.

2.2 Unemployment

Because different nations create definitions that suit their goals, the term "unemployment" lacks a universally accepted definition. To calculate unemployment, all countries utilize the International Labour Organization (ILO) definition or a version of it. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), unemployment happens when adults between the ages of 15 and 64 have deliberately sought employment in the previous five weeks and have been unsuccessful. This implies that only those who are eager and ready to work but are unable to do so are classified as unemployed.

According to Andrea, Piero, and Eliana (2004), the unemployed are individuals who were unemployed and readily accessible to begin working during the same timeframe, and who had actively sought employment at some point over the previous four weeks. Unemployment is defined by the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2018) as a percentage of people in the working population who were actively seeking work but were unable to find work for a minimum of 20 hours during the time frame to the total active working population.

From the foregoing definitions, it can be stated that unemployment refers to a condition in which individuals aged between 15 and 64 who are ready to work are unable to gain employment within the time period under consideration. The unemployment rate is a percentage that is obtained by dividing the number of jobless people by the total number of people in the labor force.

2.3 Efforts at Curbing Youth Unemployment

Over time, the Nigerian government's stance on skill acquisition and job creation has remained a main subject. Several regimes' measures to foster self-dependence and self-reliance in the development of profitable self-employment have indeed been significant from 1986. Beginning with the cultivation of occupational skills, it is claimed that the educational system that has been in operation since independence has prioritized academic achievement over acquisition of skill, which can equip a person for a much more productive and satisfying way of life. It is thought that acquiring skill sets would be more beneficial to the country's development. As a result, in 1977, a new national educational policy was issued, which included practical training in the educational curriculum.

On March 26, 1986, the Federal Government established the Chukwuma Committee in response to the lack of effectiveness of vocational courses on the school curriculum in addressing youth unemployment, which had reached alarming proportions (Omoruyi and Osunde, 2004). The Committee's recommendation resulted in the establishment of the "National Directorate of Employment" in November 1986, which was tasked with fostering skill acquisition, as well as facilitating the initiative and creativity, self-reliance, and independence. Many centers have been developed, and vocational skills training is now gaining more emphasis.

The implementation of the "National Directorate of Employment" (NDE), which was founded on November 22, 1986, with the primary goal of immediately and effectively tackling unemployment by formulating and executing innovative programs aimed at providing skills training through guidance and management technical support, was among the most important steps taken by the government to fix the issue of unemployment in Nigeria. "NDE's goals were spread throughout several programs, including "Agricultural Development", "Youth Employment and Vocational

Skills Development", "Special Public Works", and "Small Scale Industries and Graduate Employment".

The agricultural program's goal is to provide work in the agricultural sector for graduates, non-graduates, and school leavers, with a focus on self-employment in agricultural production and marketing. A group of agricultural experts at the directorate's Department of agriculture oversees the program. However, the efficiency of the NDE agricultural programs has been hampered by problems like as insufficient budget and late distribution of monies from the national treasury, among others (Chinedum, 2006).

2.4 Youth Empowerment Programs

Youth empowerment, according to Jimba (2006), entails a variety of ways in which youths can be aided in lifestyle modifications. He argued that youth empowerment entails instilling in young people the passion of turning ideas into creativity. Youth empowerment may also be defined as introducing youths to techniques or learning that helps them become productive, which includes a multitude of approaches in which youth can be exposed to various trades that may help them engage in long-term salaried and self-employment (Idoko, 2014).

Youth empowerment, according to Ezeani (2012), is an attitudinal, structural, and sociocultural process in which young people obtain the capability, authority, and initiative to make judgements and effect transformation in their very own and other people's daily lives. Creating and sustaining enabling conditions for young people to act according to their own desires and on their own grounds, instead of at the instruction of others, is what youth empowerment entails. Economic and social foundations, political will, sufficient allocation of resources, supportive legislative and administrative structures, a stable environment of inclusivity, tranquility, and democratic values,

and availability of information, and skills, as well as a favorable value system are all examples of enabling environment (Undiyaundeye & Out, 2015).

Based on the preceding criteria, youth empowerment can be defined as any action or program aimed at providing youngsters with information, skills, resources, and other assets in order to allow them to lead a life that they wish to a great extent. It also entails fostering a conducive environment for young people to realize their full potential.

2.5 Theoretical Literature Review

This research is based on the empowerment thesis. Zimmerman was the first to propose this theory (1995). Zimmerman expanded on the concept and popularized it (2000). According to the theory, empowerment and entrepreneurship development are heavily reliant on a series of actions that encourage people/youths to engage in entrepreneurial activities, enhance their quality assurance of decision making, and create realities for youths to improve their learning, practice, and skills (Zimmerman, 1995). The theory goes on to say that encouraging teenagers to participate in pro-social, useful, and community-based events that they create and manage allows them to develop key skills, abilities, and confidence that will help them become more successful, healthy, and self-sufficient (Reischl et al., 2011).

The theory of empowerment serves as the study's theoretical foundation because it has significant implications. This is because, according to the theory, developing and implementing entrepreneurship development programs would facilitate youth development and increase their business acumen, assets, and motivation to fully implement the knowledge and skills acquired towards becoming positive agents of change in their societies and country in general (Ledford & Lucas, 2013). This will encourage Nigerian youngsters to generate more resources via their

economic ventures and, as a result, participate in community development services, resulting in the Nigerian economy's rapid growth and development.

2.6 Empirical Literature Review

In Akwa Ibom State, Ukpong and George (2012) explored the correlation between socioeconomic development and youth empowerment. Using survey data from 5000 "socioeconomic development and job creation questionnaires" and the Pearson product moment correlation, it was discovered that international investors and modernization have failed to provide decent employment to most Akwa Ibom State's youths, while credit facilities create jobs for the unemployed. It was suggested that government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) carry out youth empowerment programs, and that workshops on entrepreneurial growth be held frequently for them.

Using an analytical literature review method without data, Aja and Adali (2013) attempted to investigate how youth empowerment may be achieved through entrepreneurship education in Nigerian institutions. The study discovered that while educational degree is not required to be an entrepreneur, they do have a wide range of personal characteristics and are prepared to take risks in order to earn. The report recommends that entrepreneurship education be addressed at tertiary levels and implemented at all levels of education to help Nigerian youngsters attain their intended objective of self-reliance.

Using a no-data and empirical literature review method, Okoli and Okoli (2013) investigated how Nigerian adolescents may be empowered by strengthening their entrepreneurial skills. The study discovered that teenagers cannot be prepared for every event; but, providing them with the tools and assistance they need to deal with the problems they face is a valuable gift. The study concluded

that value reorientation should be used to prevent teenagers from pursuing the "get-rich-quick" syndrome.

Using Nigerian experience, Ayoade and Agwu (2016) investigated how employment could be generated through entrepreneurial development. Many government intervention initiatives failed to generate the anticipated outcomes due to obstacles such as corrupt practices, bureaucratic bottlenecks relating to contradictions in government policies, political unrest, and a lack of business skill among many jobless people. A e study recommended that governments at all levels work together to promote entrepreneurship by creating an enabling environment and infrastructure, introducing relevant entrepreneurial educational programs in all institutions of learning, developing entrepreneurial skills, and making sensible start-up loans without interest obtainable by youths.

Using a no-data and empirical literature review method, Okoye et al. (2014) investigated how entrepreneurship has contributed to reduce youth unemployment in Nigeria. The study discovered that government policy measures have had an impact on the "transformation question" caused by an increase in corruption, insufficient and unproductive infrastructure, and gross mismanagement. The study concluded that countries with a high rate of entrepreneurship have a lot of job creation, creativity, and diversification; as a result, governments should aim to create an accommodating and safe place for adolescents to find work in order to achieve long-term economic growth and development.

Bogoro (2015) attempted to investigate how the urgent demand for economic development in the face of depleting oil supplies may be met by enhancing skills acquisition and wealth generation. The absence of infrastructural facilities, insufficient working capital, low educational standards, and a lack of suitable training were among the primary reasons militating against entrepreneurship

development in Nigeria, according to the empirical literature review technique. The study concluded and there is a need for invention, risk-taking, breaking down obstacles to entrepreneurship growth, and disclosing new business opportunities to address long-standing entrepreneurship development issues.

In their study of entrepreneurial education and sustained youth empowerment in Nigeria, Ogbondah and Nwogu (2017) used an empirical historical viewpoint. In Nigeria, it was discovered that youth empowerment is not sustainable, and entrepreneurial education is also lacking. The report proposed, among other things, that school curricula be modified to make adolescent empowerment attainable and sustainable.

Ndubuisi-Okolo et al. (2015) used secondary data and Robert's (1991) human capital theory to quantitatively evaluate how entrepreneurial education can aid in national development and the barriers to its accomplishment. As a result of unemployment, the survey discovered that young people leave their country for greener pastures abroad. The study proposed that entrepreneurial education be introduced into secondary school, college of education, polytechnics, and university curricula, among other things.

In Akwa Ibom State, Ekong and Ekong (2016) were interested in how to address the unemployment problem through skill acquisition. The research employed descriptive analysis to find a positive correlation between skill development and unemployment decrease in Akwa Ibom State, using survey data and yearly time-series data from 1987 to 2012. The study concluded that more National Directorate of Employment (NDE) training facilities should be established in all the State's Local Government Areas.

Mtenga (2013) studied how enabling adolescents with entrepreneurial skills training might lead to economic growth and development using survey data from 145 trained teenagers in Makangarawe.

The study discovered that the majority of Makangarawe youth lack entrepreneurial culture and abilities, and thus spend the bulk of their time wandering and engaging in indiscriminate behaviors, using descriptive statistics and pair-wise ranking correlation. The study suggested, among other things, that a program aimed at building capacity be implemented to assist youngsters in reorienting their values and increasing their knowledge of entrepreneurship development for self-employment.

CHAPTER THREE

A Case of N-Power Program

N-Power is a program designed to aid job creation and empowerment. It is operated and managed by Nigeria's Federal Government's National Social Investment Program. Nigerians aged between 18 and 35 are deemed eligible to participate in the initiative. It is a two-year voluntary program with a stipend. University graduates are expected to perform their principal duties in selected government establishments within their local communities, according to the program's criteria. All N-Power recipients were given computers with relevant details for what they are expected to do as well as material for their ongoing training and growth (N-Power Information Guide, 2017). The program's goals are to: interact with and explicitly enhance the welfare of young unemployed Nigerians; create a strong scheme for the transition of employment prospects, enterprising, and practical expertise; establish an environment of remedies for failing government services and diversification policies; and enhance Nigeria's skilled workforce.

3.1 Key Areas of N-Power

Volunteers are required to give teaching, instructional, and advising solutions in four (4) important areas, as prescribed by the N-Power Information Guide (2017). The 4 key areas include:

3.1.1 N-Power Teach

This group of recipients is intended to contribute to the improvement of basic education in Nigeria. Volunteers from N-Power Teach are placed as teaching staff in Nigerian elementary schools that look to be overburdened and understaffed. They will not be required to be permanent substitutes for present teachers, but rather to serve as support teachers in schools around the country, supporting with teaching, school administration, and other responsibilities. They must also aid in creating basic education to youngsters in minority populations wherever possible (N-Power

Information Guide, 2017). The N-Power Teach curriculum also includes N-Power Teach (STEM). Young graduates with abilities and an enthusiasm for computer programming and related fields are obliged to help execute the Federal Government's STEM Program for primary and secondary schools around the country via the program (N-Power Information guide, 2017).

3.1.2 N-Power Health

N-Power Health recipients are obligated to help improve and promote primary healthcare services in their neighborhoods to disadvantaged populations, including pregnant women and children, as well as families and people, under this pillar of the program. This section is for people who are studying medical and health related courses at the diploma and degree levels (N-Power Information Guide, 2017).

3.1.3 N-Power Agro

Recipients of the N-Power Agro program are expected to provide advice to farmers all around the country. They would be responsible for disseminating the knowledge that the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has accumulated in the domain of extension services. They must also collect information on Nigeria's agricultural assets. This section is for students who have completed agricultural-related courses (N-Power Information Guide, 2017).

3.2 Employment situation and the Creation of N-Power

The Nigerian economy has rebounded admirably and is expanding again following the 2016 economic downturn, but unemployment remains an issue which the government has yet to resolve. According to the World Bank (2019), just 450,000 Nigerian graduates entered the labor market in 2018, out of a total of 5 million. In its number for 2019, the Nigerian economic update (2019) stated that unemployment was at 23%. The National Bureau of Statistics (2019) confirms this

number in its 2019 report, stating that the rate of unemployment for the 2019 3rd quarter was 23.1%. According to the research, of the 20.9 million unemployed Nigerians in the 2018 3rd quarter, 11.1 million remained underemployed. This result corroborated earlier data suggesting the country's jobless rate is at an all-time high. From January to September of 2019, up to 18 bankers lost their jobs on average in the country (Andrew, 2019). The country's development has been hampered by the high rate of unemployment.

In response to the continued rise in unemployment and poverty, the federal government launched the N-power initiative within the National Social Investment Scheme (N-Sip), with the explicit goal of youth empowerment and job development in Nigeria (N-power information guide, 2017). The program was created to assist Nigerian youth in developing and acquiring practical skills that will allow them to have a positive influence in their communities and become creative contributors both in international and domestic markets (N-power information guide, 2017).

As seen in the N-power appraisal report published by the NBS in 2018, 200,000 youths participated in the n-power scheme in 2017, significantly lowering youth unemployment from 23.6% to 16.6%, and another 300, 000 participated in 2018, lowering unemployment from 32.45% to 29.75% (National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). Further than the N-power advantages, there is also the N-build and N-tech within the N-SIP program to enhance their capabilities, according to Akujuru & Enyoko (2019). Additionally, the assessment report of all the 500,000 N-power recipients implies that youths from Bekwara Local Councils are essential pieces of the pool of recipients, and thus criminality and other social vices among Bekwara youths should indeed be kept under control or considerably decreased.

3.3 Contribution of N-Power on Socio-economic Development of Youth in Nigeria

Not many studies have investigated the N-Power program's role to empower youth in Nigeria. Abin (2018) investigated the influence of the N-Power Program on recipients' socioeconomic lives in Nasarawa's Akwanga City. The study found that it improved the recipients' socioeconomic life by making significant contributions to their fiscal, material, and social health. Recipients expressed tremendous happiness with the initiative, according to the report. Since empowerment comprises the capacity to make choices and gain mastery over one's life, the initiative might be said to have influenced youth empowerment. This is so because financial freedom appears to give individuals a lot of power and control over their life in Nigeria.

3.4 Challenges of N-Power Programme in Ensuring Youth Empowerment in Nigeria

There are only a few studies that have established the difficulties faced by the N-Power initiative in making sure that youth are empowered in Nigeria. According to research undertaken by Abin (2018), a few of the program's issues are underpaid and delayed stipend payments to volunteers. Another issue raised was indeed the program's excessive concentration. This would have the potential to stifle contact among recipients and program administrators, as well as the ability to improve the plan by better understanding recipients' needs. According to Okoro and Bassey (2018), the initiative did not offer volunteer teachers the teacher training prior to enrolling them in the NTeach segment. This implies that the program did not give those volunteers permission to pursue a career as a teacher before enrolling them.

CHAPTER FOUR

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

These policy recommendations are given on the premise of findings by studies that assessed the impact of the N-Power program on empowerment and job creation:

Education, technical programs, skill building, and professional experience are all necessary to improve young folk's employability. Employability is determined by several variables, including a framework of core competencies, education opportunities, skills training, encouragement, capacity and assistance to make use of the opportunities for lifelong learning, and acknowledgement of skills learned. It is essential for employees to find reasonably good work and manage transition, as well as for businesses to implement innovative methods and penetrate new markets. The need to enhance capacity building in areas of the economy with strong employment generation prospects for younger generations, as well as to increase educational possibilities at all grades to guarantee that graduates have the skills and competences that employers seek.

Sufficient gainful employment can aid young folks in their movement from school to work. Appropriate institutional structures and capacities are required to assist youths in entering the labour market. Young people should be entitled to facts, expertise, and facilities that can assist them in navigating the labour market, identifying skills requirements, and pursuing education, retraining, and job opportunities. ICT can help alleviate information gaps in areas including job hunting, skills alignment, and efficiency. Job-friendly policies and market initiatives can assist young folks in gaining useful work experience, encouraging investments and promoting systemic reform.

All policies, projects, and efforts aiming at increasing youth employment must provide equal opportunity for men & women, focusing on disadvantaged groups. International labour rules can

assist in ensuring that young individuals are treated equally. Using tailored labour market initiatives, every attempt must be taken to encourage the integration of underprivileged youth in the labour market. Young employees should have access to formal insurance schemes such as pensions, health insurance, and employment injury insurance. Owing to their high percentage of involvement in the informal sector and self-employment, optional insurance schemes can assist young people significantly.

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