

Assessment of the Impacts of N-Power on the Youths' Economic Survival in Ondo State From 2019 To 2023

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the impact of the N-Power Programme on the economic survival of youth beneficiaries in Ondo State, Nigeria, between 2019 and 2023. The study examined the extent to which the programme contributed to youth empowerment, improved beneficiaries' economic well-being, and alleviated poverty, while also identifying the major challenges associated with its implementation. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The study targeted registered N-Power beneficiaries across the three senatorial districts of Ondo State. A multi-stage sampling technique was employed to select respondents from nine local government areas. A total of 400 structured questionnaires were administered, of which 386 were returned, while 380 valid questionnaires were used for analysis. Primary data were collected through questionnaires, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions, while secondary data were obtained from textbooks, journal articles, government publications, and other relevant documents. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and mean scores, whereas qualitative data obtained from interviews and focus group discussions were analysed using thematic content analysis. The findings revealed that the N-Power Programme made a positive contribution to the economic survival of beneficiaries through temporary employment opportunities, income support, and skills acquisition. However, respondents identified irregular payment of stipends, inadequate funding, political interference, limited opportunities for permanent employment, and policy inconsistency as major constraints affecting the programme's effectiveness. The study concludes that although the N-Power Programme has contributed significantly to youth empowerment and poverty reduction in Ondo State, its long-term sustainability depends on improved implementation strategies and stronger institutional support. The study recommends timely payment of stipends, enhanced transparency in beneficiary selection, expansion of entrepreneurship and post-programme support initiatives, and the development of sustainable employment pathways for beneficiaries.

Keywords: N-Power Programme; Youth Empowerment; Economic Survival; Poverty Reduction; Youth Unemployment; Ondo State.

INTRODUCTION

Youth unemployment remains one of the most pressing socio-economic challenges confronting many developing countries, particularly Nigeria. Despite the country's abundant human and natural resources, a significant proportion of young people continue to experience unemployment, underemployment, and limited access to sustainable sources of livelihood. This situation has contributed to increasing poverty, social exclusion, economic insecurity, and various social problems, thereby posing serious challenges to national development. Consequently, governments at different levels have continued to introduce intervention programmes aimed at reducing poverty, promoting youth empowerment, and improving economic participation.

Government intervention has long been recognised as an important policy instrument for promoting economic stability, reducing inequality, and addressing market failures that limit access to employment opportunities. According to Saleh, Radu, Feniser and Borsa (2021), government intervention plays a significant role in influencing economic growth, resource allocation, and social welfare through carefully designed public policies.

Similarly, Arora (2017) argues that:

“government involvement in economic development becomes particularly important during periods of economic instability, when unemployment and poverty threaten sustainable national development. These interventions are intended not only to stimulate economic activities but also to improve the welfare of vulnerable groups, particularly young people.”

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic further worsened the employment situation across many countries, including Nigeria. The pandemic disrupted economic activities, reduced employment opportunities, and exposed many young people to severe financial hardship. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2021) reported that young people were among the groups most affected by the economic consequences of the pandemic due to job losses, reduced incomes, and limited opportunities for skills development. Similarly, Adeleke, Osayomi and Adeoti (2021) observed that sub-national governments in Nigeria faced increasing socio-economic challenges arising from unemployment and declining economic activities, thereby necessitating stronger government intervention programmes.

In response to the growing challenge of youth unemployment and poverty, the Federal Government of Nigeria introduced the N-Power Programme on 8 June 2016 under the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP). The programme was established to provide temporary employment opportunities, facilitate skills acquisition, enhance employability, and improve the economic well-being of unemployed Nigerian youths between the ages of 18 and 35 years (Abdulwaheed et al., 2019; Mohammed, 2023). The programme comprises several components, including N-Power Teach, N-Power Agro, N-Power Health, N-Power Tax, N-Power Build, and N-Power Tech, each designed to equip beneficiaries with practical knowledge and employable skills while providing monthly financial support (Ilias, 2022; Umeorokwu & Ilias, 2022).

Beyond providing temporary employment, the N-Power Programme was conceived as a social investment initiative aimed at reducing poverty, promoting youth empowerment, and stimulating local economic development. According to Onah and Ugwuibe (2022), the programme serves as a strategic poverty reduction intervention by improving beneficiaries' income, enhancing their productive capacity, and encouraging economic self-reliance. Likewise, Nnaeto and Nwambuko (2023) contend that youth empowerment programmes such as N-Power contribute significantly to human capital development by providing opportunities for skills acquisition, entrepreneurship, and improved employability.

Although the N-Power Programme has benefited thousands of Nigerian youths since its inception, concerns have continued to emerge regarding its implementation, sustainability, transparency, adequacy of financial support, and its long-term contribution to reducing youth unemployment and poverty. Several studies have identified challenges such as irregular payment of stipends, political interference, inadequate funding, limited transition to permanent employment, and weak monitoring mechanisms as factors affecting the effectiveness of the programme (Okonkwo, Nwokike & Nwafor, 2021; Odalonu & Adigu, 2023). These concerns underscore the need for empirical assessments of the programme's effectiveness across different states of the federation.

Ondo State has recorded a considerable number of beneficiaries under the N-Power Programme since its implementation. However, empirical evidence on the extent to which the programme has improved the economic survival of youth beneficiaries in the state remains limited. While previous studies have examined the programme from national and regional perspectives, relatively few have specifically assessed its impact on the economic survival of beneficiaries in Ondo State during the 2019–2023 period. This study therefore assesses the impact of the N-Power Programme on the economic survival of youth beneficiaries in Ondo State between 2019 and 2023. Specifically, the study examines the programme's contribution to youth empowerment, evaluates its

influence on beneficiaries' economic well-being, identifies the major implementation challenges, and provides recommendations for improving the effectiveness and sustainability of youth empowerment programmes in Nigeria.

Problem Statement And Justification Of The Study

Youth unemployment remains one of the most persistent socio-economic challenges confronting Nigeria despite numerous government intervention programmes aimed at addressing the problem. The increasing number of unemployed and underemployed young people has contributed to rising poverty, social inequality, economic insecurity, and other social challenges that continue to hinder national development. Although several empowerment initiatives have been introduced by successive governments, many Nigerian youths still face limited access to sustainable employment opportunities and decent sources of livelihood.

The Federal Government introduced the N-Power Programme in 2016 as a major component of the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) to reduce youth unemployment through temporary employment, skills acquisition, and financial support for eligible young Nigerians. While the programme has provided income support and work experience to thousands of beneficiaries, questions remain regarding its effectiveness in promoting long-term economic survival and sustainable empowerment. Existing evidence suggests that beneficiaries continue to experience several implementation challenges, including irregular payment of stipends, inadequate funding, political interference, limited opportunities for transition into permanent employment, weak monitoring mechanisms, and insufficient post-programme support (Okonkwo, Nwokike & Nwafor, 2021; Odalonu & Adigu, 2023).

Although previous studies have examined the implementation and outcomes of the N-Power Programme in different parts of Nigeria, relatively few have specifically evaluated its impact on the economic survival of youth beneficiaries in Ondo State during the period 2019–2023. Consequently, there is insufficient empirical evidence on the extent to which the programme has improved beneficiaries' livelihoods, strengthened their economic resilience, and contributed to poverty reduction within the state.

This study was therefore undertaken to assess the impact of the N-Power Programme on the economic survival of youth beneficiaries in Ondo State between 2019 and 2023. Specifically, the study examined the programme's contribution to youth empowerment, evaluated its influence on beneficiaries' economic well-being, identified the major challenges affecting programme implementation, and generated evidence-based recommendations that can guide policymakers in strengthening future youth empowerment and poverty reduction initiatives in Nigeria.

Objectives Of The Study

General Objective

The general objective of this study was to assess the impact of the N-Power Programme on the economic survival of youth beneficiaries in Ondo State, Nigeria, between 2019 and 2023.

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. examine the contribution of the N-Power Programme to youth empowerment and economic development in Ondo State;
2. assess the influence of the N-Power Programme on the economic survival and well-being of youth beneficiaries in Ondo State;
3. evaluate beneficiaries' perceptions of the effectiveness of the N-Power Programme in improving their socio-economic conditions; and

4. identify the major challenges affecting the implementation and sustainability of the N-Power Programme in Ondo State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Youth Empowerment

Youth empowerment refers to the process of equipping young people with the knowledge, skills, opportunities, and resources required to improve their socio-economic conditions and actively participate in national development. It extends beyond employment creation to include capacity building, entrepreneurship development, access to education, skills acquisition, financial inclusion, and participation in decision-making processes. Empowered youths are better positioned to contribute meaningfully to economic growth, reduce dependency, and improve their overall quality of life.

According to Adedokun, Fatoki and Fasasi (2021), youth empowerment involves creating an enabling environment that provides young people with opportunities to develop sustainable livelihoods and become economically self-reliant. Similarly, Nnaeto and Nwambuko (2023) argue that youth empowerment programmes promote investment in human capital by enhancing employability, entrepreneurship, and productive engagement among young people. Likewise, Nwaobi (2019) observes that empowerment initiatives are designed to strengthen human capital development through vocational training, technical education, and practical skills acquisition, thereby improving employment prospects and reducing poverty.

N-Power Programme as a Youth Empowerment Initiative

The N-Power Programme is one of the Federal Government of Nigeria's flagship social investment initiatives established to address youth unemployment and poverty through temporary employment, skills acquisition, and financial support. Since its introduction in 2016 under the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP), the programme has provided beneficiaries with work experience, monthly stipends, and opportunities to acquire practical and entrepreneurial skills.

Dauda, Adeyeye, Yakubu and Oni (2019) maintain that the programme was introduced primarily to reduce youth unemployment while improving participants' entrepreneurial capacity and economic productivity. Similarly, Ifatimehin, Isyak and Omale (2020) describe the programme as a platform through which unemployed youths acquire practical skills while receiving financial support that enhances their standard of living. According to Felix, Williams and Sunday (2022), participation in the programme improves beneficiaries' confidence, entrepreneurial orientation, and willingness to establish small-scale enterprises. Likewise, Omoligho (2022) argues that the N-Power Programme has positively influenced the socio-economic status of many young Nigerians by improving access to income and productive opportunities.

N-Power Programme, Poverty Reduction and Economic Survival

Government intervention programmes play an important role in reducing poverty and improving economic resilience among vulnerable populations. The N-Power Programme was specifically designed to provide temporary income support while enhancing beneficiaries' employability through skills development. In this regard, poverty reduction and economic survival remain central objectives of the programme.

Onah and Ugwuibe (2022) argue that the programme contributes to poverty reduction by increasing beneficiaries' incomes, improving their productive capacity, and strengthening their ability to participate in economic activities. Similarly, Attah, Omang, Ojong-Ejoh and Botchway (2021) found that the programme has contributed to employment creation and improved the welfare of many participating youths. Odalonu and Adigu (2023) further contend that the introduction of the programme became necessary because of the rising level of unemployment and poverty among Nigerian youths. However, the authors also observed that challenges such as inadequate funding, irregular payment of stipends, political interference, and weak implementation mechanisms have limited the programme's effectiveness in achieving its long-term objectives.

Despite these contributions, Okonkwo, Nwokike and Nwafor (2021) note that the absence of a clear transition pathway from temporary engagement to permanent employment remains one of the programme's major weaknesses. Consequently, many beneficiaries continue to experience economic uncertainty after exiting the scheme, thereby limiting its long-term impact on sustainable economic survival.

Empirical Review

Several empirical studies have examined the effectiveness of the N-Power Programme in promoting youth empowerment and reducing unemployment in Nigeria. Most of these studies conclude that the programme has contributed positively to skills acquisition, income generation, and temporary employment opportunities for beneficiaries. However, they also report persistent implementation challenges, including inadequate funding, inconsistent policy implementation, delayed payment of stipends, limited monitoring and evaluation, and insufficient post-programme support.

Although these studies have provided valuable insights into the implementation and outcomes of the programme, most have focused on national or regional perspectives, with relatively limited empirical attention given to the economic survival of beneficiaries in Ondo State during the 2019–2023 period. Furthermore, previous studies have concentrated largely on programme implementation and employment generation, while comparatively little attention has been devoted to assessing how participation in the programme has influenced the long-term economic survival and well-being of beneficiaries.

This study therefore fills this gap by assessing the impact of the N-Power Programme on the economic survival of youth beneficiaries in Ondo State between 2019 and 2023. In addition to evaluating the programme's contribution to youth empowerment and poverty reduction, the study identifies the implementation challenges affecting its effectiveness and provides evidence-based recommendations for improving future youth empowerment interventions.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was anchored on the **Theory of Poverty**, particularly the **Structural Theory of Poverty**, which explains poverty as a consequence of structural deficiencies within society rather than the personal shortcomings of individuals. The theory argues that poverty results from unequal access to economic opportunities, education, employment, productive resources, and social support systems. Consequently, governments are expected to implement policies and intervention programmes that address these structural barriers and promote inclusive socio-economic development.

The Structural Theory of Poverty has been widely discussed by scholars such as Lewis (1966), Shaffer (2008), Addae-Korankye (2019), Kistruck and Shulist (2021), and Bonga (2024), who argue that poverty is often sustained by institutional, political, and economic factors that limit individuals' opportunities to improve their standard of living. According to these scholars, high unemployment, inadequate access to quality education, limited skills development opportunities, poor economic policies, and unequal distribution of resources contribute significantly to persistent poverty, particularly among young people in developing countries.

The relevance of this theory to the present study lies in its explanation of government intervention as an important mechanism for reducing poverty and improving economic well-being. The N-Power Programme was introduced by the Federal Government of Nigeria as a social investment initiative to address youth unemployment through temporary employment, skills acquisition, entrepreneurship development, and financial support. From the perspective of the Structural Theory of Poverty, such interventions are intended to remove barriers to economic participation by providing vulnerable youths with opportunities to develop their capacities, earn income, and improve their livelihoods.

The theory therefore provides an appropriate framework for examining the extent to which participation in the N-Power Programme has contributed to the economic survival of youth beneficiaries in Ondo State. It also

provides a basis for understanding how programme implementation challenges—including inadequate funding, policy inconsistency, political interference, and limited post-programme opportunities—may reduce the programme's effectiveness in achieving its poverty reduction and youth empowerment objectives.

Accordingly, the Structural Theory of Poverty offers a suitable theoretical lens for assessing the relationship between government intervention, youth empowerment, poverty reduction, and the economic survival of N-Power beneficiaries in Ondo State between 2019 and 2023.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to assess the impact of the N-Power Programme on the economic survival of youth beneficiaries in Ondo State between 2019 and 2023. The descriptive survey design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researchers to obtain information directly from beneficiaries regarding their experiences, perceptions, and assessment of the programme. The design also facilitated the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data for a comprehensive evaluation of the programme's effectiveness.

Study Area

The study will be conducted randomly in selected urban, rural towns and communities in Ondo state of nine (9) local governments out of eighteen (18) local government areas. This will be done to ensure that the locations cut across the three senatorial districts of the states (Central, North and South).

Table 1: Design Outlay for selected study area location

Senatorial District	Local Govt. to be Selected	Number of communities to be Selected		Total Aggregate
Ondo Central	Ondo East	Ilaje	5	15
	Idanre	Alade	5	
	Akure South	Oba Ile	5	
Ondo south	Okitipupa	Okitipupa	5	15
	Odigbo	Ore	5	
	Ilaje	Igbekebo	5	
Ondo North	Ose	Ifon, Imoru, Idoani	5	15
	Akoko South	Akunnu, Isua, Ise, Epinmi	5	
	Owo	Ijebu, Ipele, Ipenmen, Isuada	5	
3	9	45		45

Reasons for the Study Area Location

A total of nine (9) local governments out of 18 local governments are selected for the study. This will ensure that the state is adequately represented. The nine local government and forty-five communities selected are relatively appropriate for this chosen study.

Sample Size

A sample size of 400 respondents was selected for the study. Of the 400 structured questionnaires administered, 386 were successfully retrieved, representing a response rate of 96.5%. After screening for completeness and consistency, six questionnaires were found to be incomplete and were excluded from the analysis. Consequently, 380 valid questionnaires were used for the final analysis.

Sampling Technique

A multi-stage sampling technique was employed for the study. In the first stage, nine (9) Local Government Areas were purposively selected from the three senatorial districts of Ondo State to ensure adequate geographical representation. In the second stage, beneficiaries of the N-Power Programme were identified within the selected Local Government Areas. Finally, respondents were selected through simple random sampling to ensure that every eligible beneficiary had an equal chance of participating in the study.

The selected Local Government Areas included Ondo East, Akure South, Idanre, Okitipupa, Odigbo, Ilaje, Owo, Ose, and Akoko South-West, thereby ensuring representation across Ondo Central, Ondo South, and Ondo North Senatorial Districts.

Instrument for Data Collection

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed in line with the objectives of the study. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions that sought information on respondents' perceptions of the impact of the N-Power Programme on youth empowerment, economic survival, and programme implementation challenges. In addition, qualitative data were obtained through key informant interviews and focus group discussions. Secondary data were sourced from textbooks, peer-reviewed journal articles, government publications, official reports, and other relevant scholarly materials on youth empowerment, poverty reduction, and the N-Power Programme.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

To ensure the validity of the research instrument, the questionnaire was developed based on the objectives of the study and an extensive review of relevant literature on youth empowerment, poverty reduction, and government intervention programmes. The draft questionnaire was subjected to expert review by specialists in Political Science and Public Administration, who assessed its clarity, relevance, and adequacy in addressing the research objectives. Their observations and recommendations were incorporated into the final version of the instrument before its administration.

Method of Data Collection

Data collection was carried out over a six-week period with the assistance of trained research assistants who were familiar with the study locations. Copies of the questionnaire were administered directly to selected N-Power beneficiaries across the sampled Local Government Areas. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, and participation was entirely voluntary. Completed questionnaires were retrieved immediately where possible and through subsequent visits where necessary to maximise the response rate.

Interview and Focus Group Discussion Procedure

To complement the questionnaire survey, twenty (20) key informant interviews were conducted with selected N-Power beneficiaries, programme coordinators, and officials who possessed relevant knowledge of the implementation of the programme in Ondo State. In addition, three Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted across the three senatorial districts, with eight participants in each group, making a total of twenty-four (24) discussants.

The interviews and focus group discussions explored participants' experiences regarding the implementation of the N-Power Programme, its contribution to youth empowerment and economic survival, and the challenges affecting its effectiveness. All discussions were recorded with participants' consent, transcribed, and analysed using thematic content analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns relevant to the objectives of the study.

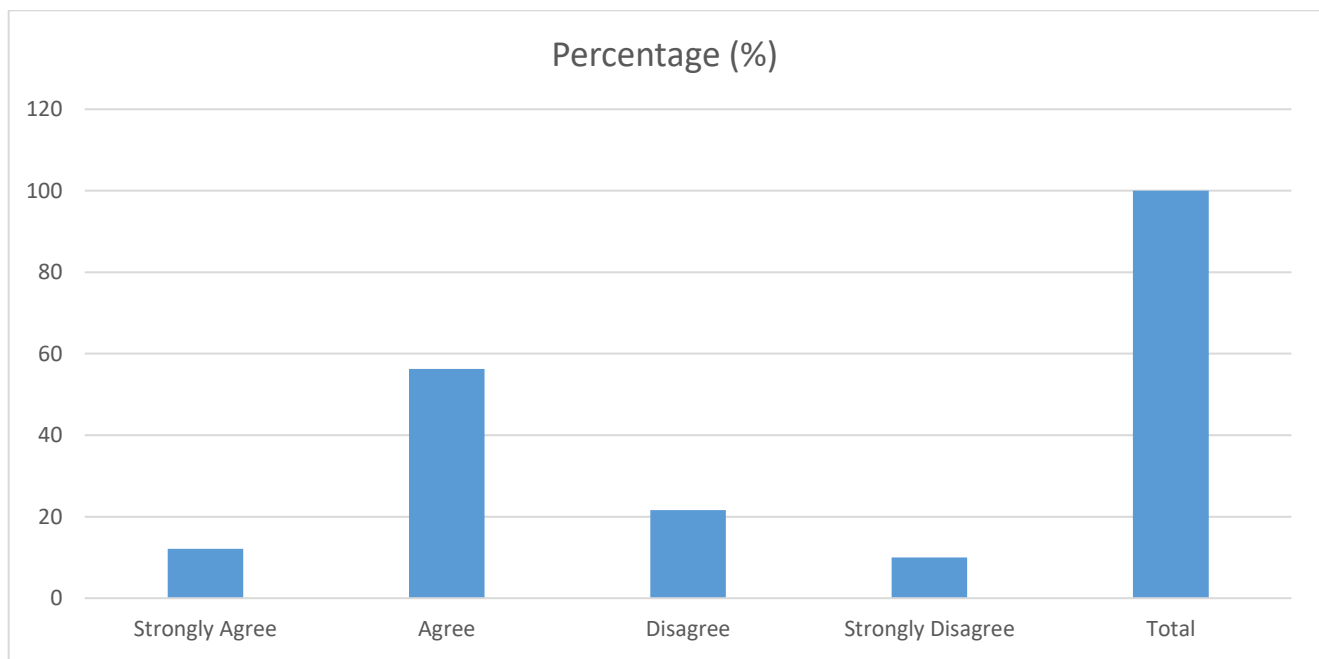
Method of Data Analysis

Quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires were coded and analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and mean scores. The results were presented in tables to facilitate interpretation and discussion. Qualitative data obtained from the interviews and focus group discussions were analysed using thematic content analysis, and the findings were integrated with the quantitative results to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the N-Power Programme on the economic survival of youth beneficiaries in Ondo State.

Table 2: Respondents' Assessment of the Impact of the N-Power Programme on Youth Empowerment and Economic Development in Ondo State

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very Good	42	11.1
Good	248	65.3
Not Good	54	14.2
Very Bad	36	9.5
Total	380	100

Source: Field Survey, 2026



The findings presented in Table 2 indicate that the majority of the respondents perceived the N-Power Programme as having made a positive contribution to youth empowerment and economic development in Ondo State. Specifically, 248 respondents (65.3%) rated the programme as **Good**, while 42 respondents (11.1%) considered its impact **Very Good**. Combined, these responses show that over three-quarters (76.4%) of the respondents acknowledged that the programme positively influenced youth empowerment and economic development.

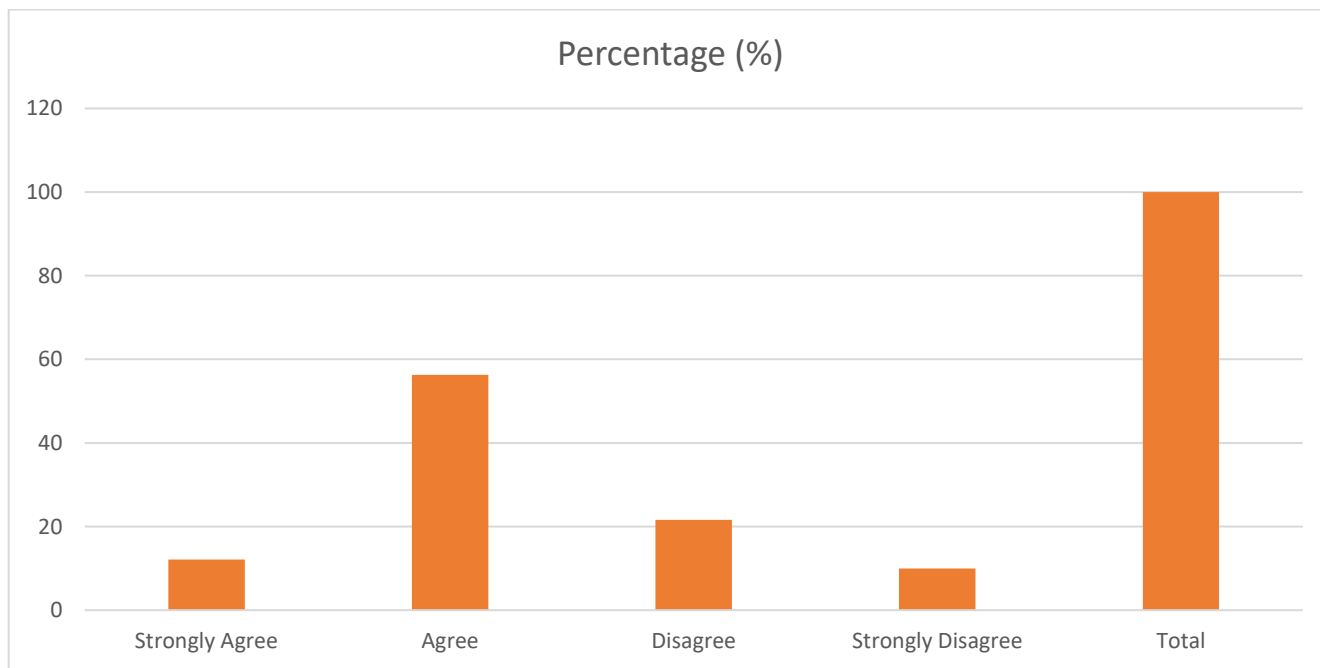
However, 54 respondents (14.2%) rated the programme as **Not Good**, while 36 respondents (9.5%) described its impact as **Very Bad**. These responses suggest that although the programme has achieved notable successes, a proportion of beneficiaries remained dissatisfied with its implementation and overall effectiveness.

The generally positive perception observed in this study supports the findings of Adedokun, Fatoki and Fasasi (2021), who reported that youth empowerment programmes provide opportunities for skill acquisition and improved livelihoods. The findings also agree with Nnaeto and Nwambuko (2023), who argued that government empowerment initiatives contribute to human capital development and enhance beneficiaries' economic participation. Nevertheless, the responses indicating dissatisfaction suggest that improvements in programme implementation, funding, and sustainability are necessary to maximise the long-term impact of the N-Power Programme.

Table 3: Influence of the N-Power Programme on the Economic Survival and Well-being of Youth Beneficiaries

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very Positive	48	12.6
Positive	236	62.1
Not Positive	64	16.8
Negative	32	8.5
Total	380	100

Source: Field Survey, 2026.



The results presented in Table 3 show that the majority of respondents believed that the N-Power Programme had a positive influence on their economic survival and overall well-being. Specifically, 236 respondents (62.1%) indicated that the programme had a **Positive** influence, while 48 respondents (12.6%) rated its influence as **Very Positive**. This implies that approximately three-quarters (74.7%) of the respondents acknowledged that participation in the programme improved their economic conditions through temporary employment, income support, and opportunities for skills acquisition.

Conversely, 64 respondents (16.8%) considered the programme **Not Positive**, while 32 respondents (8.5%) viewed its influence as **Negative**. These responses suggest that although the programme benefited many participants, some beneficiaries considered its impact inadequate due to implementation challenges such as irregular stipend payments, limited employment opportunities after programme completion, and policy inconsistencies.

These findings corroborate the position of Ifatimehin, Isyak and Omale (2020), who observed that the N-Power Programme provides unemployed youths with opportunities to acquire practical skills while improving their financial well-being. Similarly, Felix, Williams and Sunday (2022) found that participation in the programme enhances beneficiaries' confidence, entrepreneurial orientation, and economic productivity. However, the concerns expressed by a minority of respondents also support the findings of Okonkwo, Nwokike and Nwafor (2021), who argued that the absence of a sustainable transition from temporary engagement to permanent employment limits the long-term effectiveness of the programme.

Overall, the findings indicate that the N-Power Programme made a meaningful contribution to the economic survival of youth beneficiaries in Ondo State during the period under review. Nevertheless, strengthening programme implementation, ensuring policy continuity, and creating pathways to sustainable employment would further enhance its long-term impact on youth empowerment and poverty reduction.

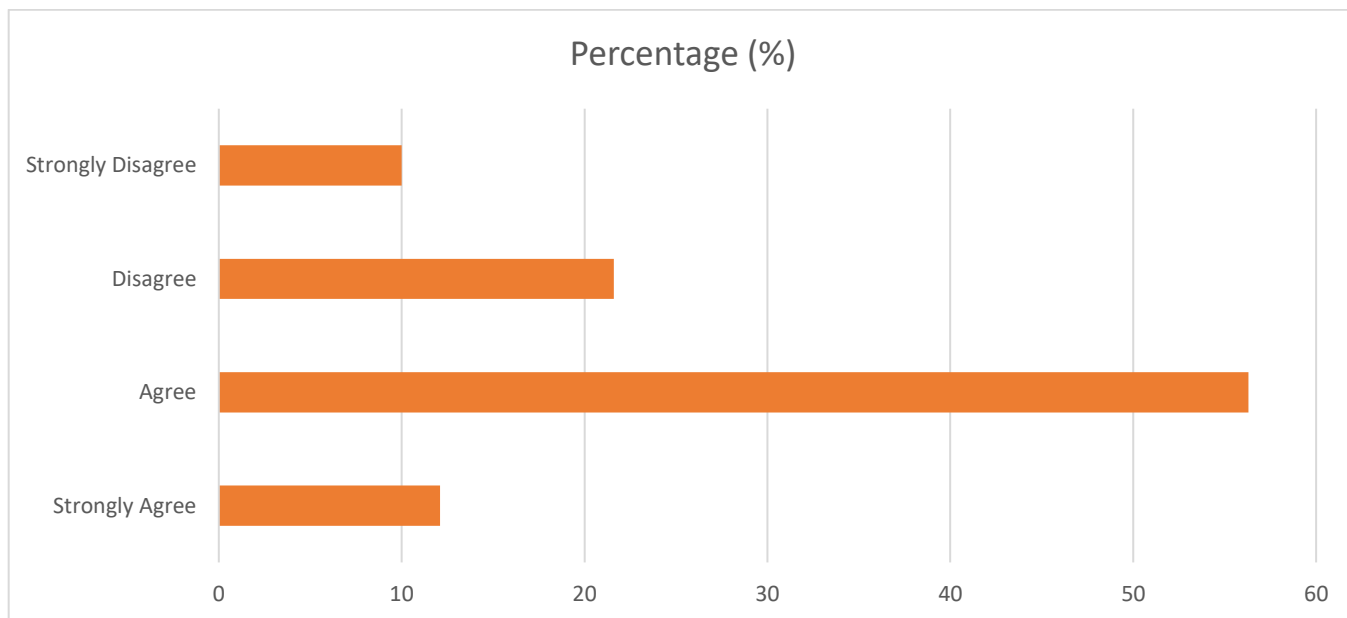


Table 4: Respondents' Perception of the Challenges Affecting the Implementation of the N-Power Programme

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	210	55.3
Agree	112	29.5
Disagree	36	9.5
Strongly Disagree	22	5.8
Total	380	100

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

The results presented in Table 4 indicate that respondents generally agreed that several challenges affected the effective implementation of the N-Power Programme in Ondo State. Specifically, 210 respondents (55.3%) **strongly agreed**, while 112 respondents (29.5%) **agreed** that factors such as political interference, policy inconsistency, irregular payment of stipends, bureaucratic bottlenecks, inadequate funding, and limited post-programme employment opportunities negatively influenced the effectiveness of the programme. Collectively, 322 respondents (84.8%) expressed agreement that these challenges significantly constrained the programme's capacity to achieve its intended objectives.

On the other hand, 36 respondents (9.5%) **disagreed**, while 22 respondents (5.8%) **strongly disagreed**, indicating that a relatively small proportion of beneficiaries considered the implementation process satisfactory or believed that the identified challenges had little effect on programme outcomes.

The findings suggest that although the N-Power Programme has made meaningful contributions to youth empowerment and poverty reduction, weaknesses in programme implementation have reduced its overall effectiveness. Irregular disbursement of stipends, frequent policy changes, inadequate funding, and limited opportunities for permanent employment were perceived as major obstacles to achieving sustainable economic outcomes for beneficiaries.

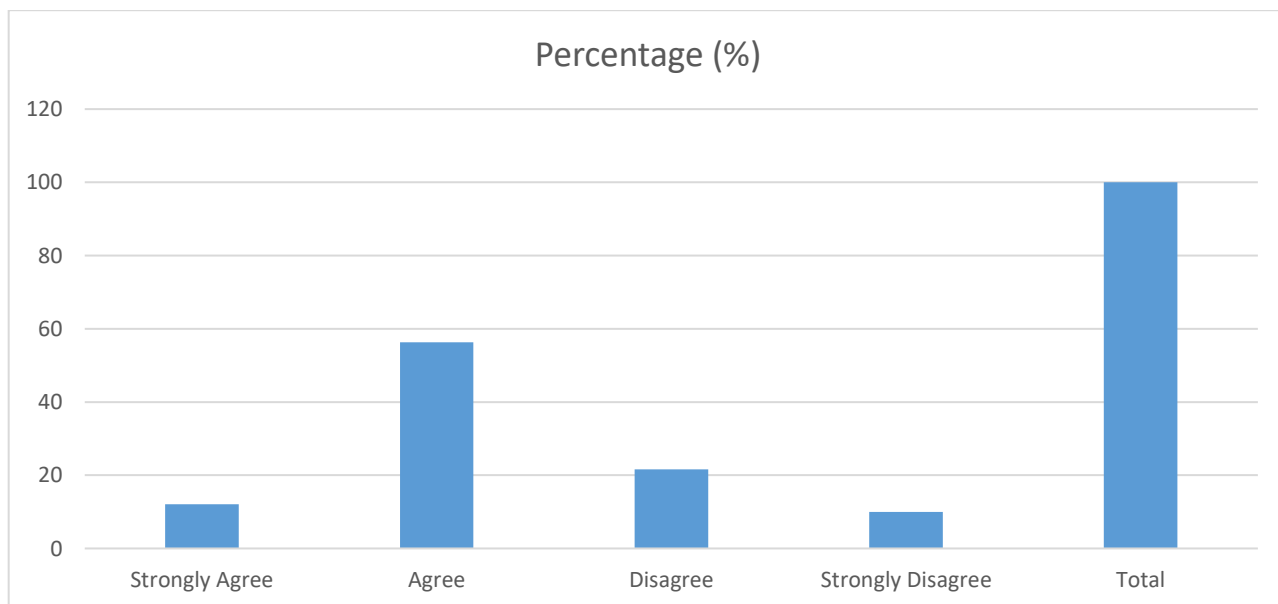
These findings are consistent with the observations of Okonkwo, Nwokike and Nwafor (2021), who identified inadequate planning, weak implementation strategies, and the absence of sustainable exit mechanisms as major challenges confronting the N-Power Programme. Similarly, Odalonu and Adigu (2023) reported that political interference, administrative inefficiencies, and funding constraints have undermined the programme's effectiveness in achieving its youth empowerment and poverty reduction objectives.

The implication of these findings is that the success of government intervention programmes depends not only on their design but also on transparent implementation, adequate funding, effective monitoring, and the establishment of sustainable pathways through which beneficiaries can transition from temporary engagement to long-term employment or entrepreneurship. Addressing these challenges would significantly enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of the N-Power Programme in improving the economic survival of Nigerian youths.

Table 5: Respondents' Confidence in the Achievement of the Objectives of the N-Power Programme (2019–2023)

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Highly Confident	34	8.9
Confident	62	16.3
Not Confident	236	62.1
Undecided	48	12.6
Total	380	100

Source: Field Survey, 2026.



The results presented in Table 5 indicate that the majority of respondents expressed limited confidence in the extent to which the objectives of the N-Power Programme were achieved during the period under review. Specifically, 236 respondents (62.1%) indicated that they were **Not Confident** that the programme fully achieved its objectives, while 48 respondents (12.6%) remained **Undecided**. Together, these responses suggest that a considerable proportion of beneficiaries believed that the programme did not fully realise its intended goals of sustainable youth empowerment, employment creation, and poverty reduction.

Conversely, 62 respondents (16.3%) stated that they were **Confident**, while only 34 respondents (8.9%) were **Highly Confident** that the programme achieved its stated objectives. Although these respondents acknowledged the positive contributions of the programme, they represented a minority of the study population.

The predominance of negative responses suggests that while the N-Power Programme provided temporary employment opportunities, financial support, and skills acquisition for many beneficiaries, these gains were not considered sufficient to guarantee sustainable economic empowerment. Respondents attributed their lack of confidence to challenges such as irregular payment of stipends, policy discontinuity, inadequate monitoring, limited opportunities for transition into permanent employment, and insufficient post-programme support.

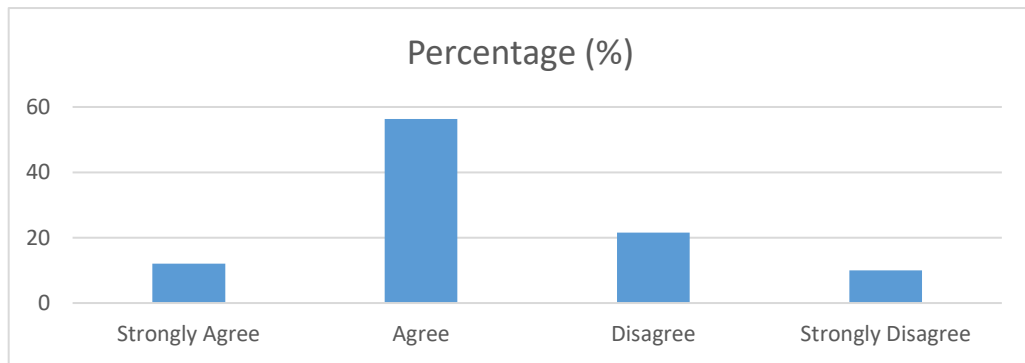
These findings are consistent with the observations of Okonkwo, Nwokike and Nwafor (2021), who argued that although the N-Power Programme has recorded notable achievements in reducing youth unemployment, weaknesses in programme implementation have limited its long-term effectiveness. The findings also support the position of Odalonu and Adigu (2023), who reported that funding constraints, administrative inefficiencies, and political interference have reduced the programme's capacity to achieve its intended poverty reduction and youth empowerment objectives.

The implication of these findings is that government intervention programmes should not be evaluated solely on the basis of the number of beneficiaries enrolled, but also on their capacity to produce sustainable socio-economic outcomes. Strengthening programme implementation, ensuring policy continuity, expanding entrepreneurship support, and creating pathways to permanent employment would significantly improve public confidence in the effectiveness of the N-Power Programme.

Table 6: Respondents' Perception of the Sustainability of the N-Power Programme Beyond the Period Under Review

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	46	12.1
Agree	214	56.3
Disagree	82	21.6
Strongly Disagree	38	10
Total	380	100

Source: Field Survey, 2026.



The findings presented in Table 6 indicate that respondents generally believed that the N-Power Programme could be sustained beyond the period under review if appropriate policy and institutional measures were implemented. A total of 214 respondents (56.3%) **agreed**, while 46 respondents (12.1%) **strongly agreed**, representing a combined 68.4% of respondents who expressed confidence in the sustainability of the programme.

However, 82 respondents (21.6%) **disagreed**, and 38 respondents (10.0%) **strongly disagreed**, indicating that approximately one-third (31.6%) of the respondents were sceptical about the programme's long-term sustainability. Their reservations were largely associated with concerns over policy discontinuity, inadequate funding, changes in government priorities, delays in stipend payments, and the absence of clearly defined long-term employment opportunities for beneficiaries.

The findings suggest that respondents recognised the relevance and potential of the N-Power Programme as a youth empowerment initiative but believed that its sustainability depends on consistent government commitment, adequate funding, transparent implementation, and effective monitoring and evaluation. Sustainable youth empowerment programmes require continuity beyond political administrations and should be supported by policies that promote entrepreneurship, job creation, and skills development.

These findings are consistent with the views of Onah and Ugwuibe (2022), who argued that poverty reduction programmes achieve greater success when supported by sustained government commitment and effective institutional frameworks. Similarly, Nnaeto and Nwambuko (2023) maintained that youth empowerment initiatives should be integrated into broader national development strategies to ensure lasting socio-economic benefits for beneficiaries. The findings also support the position of Odalonu and Adigu (2023), who observed that policy inconsistency and administrative challenges have undermined the long-term effectiveness of youth empowerment programmes in Nigeria.

Overall, the results demonstrate that although respondents considered the N-Power Programme to be a valuable government intervention, its long-term success depends on sustained political will, improved programme administration, and the development of clear post-programme opportunities that enable beneficiaries to transition into permanent employment or successful entrepreneurship.

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The study assessed the impact of the N-Power Programme on the economic survival of youth beneficiaries in Ondo State between 2019 and 2023. Based on the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, the following major findings emerged:

1. The study found that the N-Power Programme made a positive contribution to youth empowerment and economic development in Ondo State. The majority of respondents acknowledged that participation in the programme enhanced their economic opportunities through temporary employment, income support, and skills acquisition.
2. The findings revealed that the programme positively influenced the economic survival and well-being of many beneficiaries. Respondents indicated that the monthly stipends and practical work experience helped improve their ability to meet basic needs, acquire vocational skills, and reduce the effects of unemployment during the period of participation.
3. Despite these positive contributions, the study established that respondents were generally not confident that the N-Power Programme fully achieved its long-term objectives. Many beneficiaries believed that although the programme provided temporary relief, it did not adequately guarantee sustainable employment or long-term economic empowerment after programme completion.
4. The study further revealed that several implementation challenges affected the effectiveness of the programme. These included irregular payment of stipends, policy inconsistency, inadequate funding, political interference, weak monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, bureaucratic bottlenecks, and limited opportunities for beneficiaries to transition into permanent employment or entrepreneurship.

5. Finally, the study found that respondents considered the N-Power Programme to be a valuable government intervention capable of making lasting contributions to youth empowerment and poverty reduction, provided that adequate funding, policy continuity, transparency, and effective implementation mechanisms are sustained.

Expected Contributions

This study makes significant contributions to knowledge, public policy, and practice by providing empirical evidence on the impact of the N-Power Programme on the economic survival of youth beneficiaries in Ondo State between 2019 and 2023.

From an academic perspective, the study enriches the existing literature on youth empowerment, poverty reduction, and government intervention programmes by examining the relationship between participation in the N-Power Programme and the economic well-being of beneficiaries. While previous studies have largely focused on the implementation of the programme at the national level, this study provides state-level evidence that enhances understanding of the programme's effectiveness within the socio-economic context of Ondo State.

The study also contributes to the application of the Structural Theory of Poverty by demonstrating how government intervention programmes can address structural barriers to employment, skills acquisition, and income generation among young people. The findings reinforce the argument that well-designed social investment programmes can improve economic resilience when implemented transparently, adequately funded, and supported by sustainable policy frameworks.

From a policy perspective, the findings provide useful evidence for the Federal Government of Nigeria, the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP), state governments, and other development agencies involved in youth development. The study identifies critical implementation challenges—including irregular payment of stipends, inadequate funding, policy inconsistency, political interference, and limited post-programme employment opportunities—and proposes practical measures for improving programme effectiveness and sustainability.

From a practical perspective, the study highlights the importance of complementing temporary employment initiatives with entrepreneurship development, vocational training, access to finance, mentorship, and structured transition pathways into sustainable employment or self-employment. Implementing these measures would enhance the long-term impact of youth empowerment programmes and contribute more effectively to poverty reduction and national development.

Finally, the study serves as a useful reference for researchers, policymakers, students, and development practitioners interested in public administration, youth empowerment, social protection, labour market interventions, and poverty reduction strategies in Nigeria and other developing countries.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study assessed the impact of the N-Power Programme on the economic survival of youth beneficiaries in Ondo State between 2019 and 2023. The findings revealed that the programme contributed positively to youth empowerment by providing temporary employment, income support, practical work experience, and opportunities for skills acquisition. These interventions improved the economic well-being of many beneficiaries and helped mitigate the immediate effects of unemployment and poverty during the period under review.

Despite these achievements, the study found that the programme has not fully realised its long-term objectives of sustainable youth empowerment and poverty reduction. Respondents identified several implementation challenges, including irregular payment of stipends, inadequate funding, policy inconsistency, political interference, weak monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and limited opportunities for beneficiaries to transition into permanent employment or entrepreneurship. These challenges have reduced the programme's effectiveness in producing lasting socio-economic outcomes.

The study therefore concludes that the N-Power Programme remains a valuable social investment initiative with considerable potential to address youth unemployment and improve the economic survival of young Nigerians. However, achieving sustainable outcomes requires stronger institutional commitment, transparent programme administration, adequate funding, effective monitoring, policy continuity, and the integration of post-programme support mechanisms that enable beneficiaries to secure long-term employment or establish viable enterprises.

Overall, the success of youth empowerment programmes should be assessed not only by the number of beneficiaries enrolled but also by their capacity to generate sustainable livelihoods, reduce poverty, and contribute meaningfully to national socio-economic development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The Federal Government should ensure adequate and timely funding of the N-Power Programme to guarantee regular payment of beneficiaries' stipends and improve the overall efficiency of programme implementation.
2. The programme should be institutionalised through appropriate legislative and policy frameworks to ensure continuity beyond changes in political administration and promote long-term sustainability.
3. Government should strengthen monitoring and evaluation mechanisms by conducting periodic assessments of programme implementation and outcomes. This will facilitate evidence-based decision-making, improve accountability, and enhance service delivery.
4. Beneficiaries should be provided with structured post-programme support through entrepreneurship development initiatives, vocational certification, access to business grants or soft loans, mentorship programmes, and employment placement services to facilitate sustainable economic empowerment.
5. The process of beneficiary selection should remain transparent, merit-based, and free from political interference to ensure that the programme reaches genuinely eligible unemployed youths.
6. Greater collaboration should be encouraged among government agencies, private sector organisations, financial institutions, civil society organisations, and development partners to expand employment opportunities and strengthen youth empowerment initiatives across the country.
7. Future youth empowerment programmes should place greater emphasis on long-term economic sustainability by integrating digital skills development, enterprise incubation, financial literacy, and innovation-driven entrepreneurship into programme design.
8. Further studies should be conducted in other states and geopolitical zones of Nigeria using more advanced statistical techniques and comparative approaches to generate broader evidence on the effectiveness and sustainability of government youth empowerment programmes.

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