

N- Power Health Programmes and Youths Empowerment in Southern Cross River State, Nigeria

Sunday Simeon Adaka, Ph.D

Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences
Federal University Lafia, Nasarawa State, Nigeria

doi: <https://doi.org/10.37745/ij sar.15/vol10n21926>

Published September 24 2024

Citation: Adaka S.S. (2024) N- Power Health Programmes and Youths Empowerment in Southern Cross River State, Nigeria, *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology Research*, Vol.10, No.2 pp.19-26

ABSTRACT: *This study investigated the N-Power health programmes on Youths Empowerment in Southern Cross River State, Nigeria. One research questions and one hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study, while stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used in selecting 485 respondents. A 9 – item questionnaire titled: N-power Health Programmes on Youth Empowerment Questionnaire (NPHPYEQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated and the reliability estimate, using Cronbach alpha statistics, was .68. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for the research questions, while the z-test statistic was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The result showed that N-power health and N-power Health programmes has significantly promoted Youths empowerment in Southern Cross River State to a great extent. Based on the findings of the study recommendations were made among others that more sensitization programmes should be conducted to expose individuals on the scope of N-power Health Programmes.*

Keywords: N-power, health, Programmes, Youths, Empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

One of the major reasons developed nations invest substantial financial resources in human capital development, especially among the youths, is that the youth have sufficient energy, creative drives, and desire to change their world. The youth are conceived as people between 15 and 24 years old (United Nations as cited in UNESCO, 2021). Thus, it could be conceived as a transition period from being dependent to a period in which the individual is independent. Although the definition of youth varies from scholar to scholar and country to country, In Nigeria, a youth is seen as one under the age of 15 to 29 years (Nigeria National Youth Policy, 2019). Interestingly, the global

youth population in 2019 was estimated at 2,000,000,000 billion, while the Sub-saharan African youth population was 211,000,000 million (United Nations, 2019). In Nigeria, Odey and Sambe (2019) reported that the estimated youth population between 18 and 35 is 52.8 per cent. Despite this number, it was reported that the youth unemployment rate was around 53.40 per cent in 2020, while the figure continued to shoot up as of January 2021 (National Bureau Statistics, NBS, 2020). To cushion the adverse effect of youth unemployment in the country, previous governments, both military and civilian, had adopted policy measures by introducing several youth empowerment programmes. Some of these programmes are Movement for Youth Actualization International (MYAI), Lagos Digital Village (LDV), United Nations of Youth Network Nigeria (UNYNN), Youth for Technology Foundation (YTF), Youth Entrepreneur Support Programme (YES-P), Graduate Internship Scheme (GIS). Others are Youth Initiative for Sustainable Agriculture in Nigeria (YISA), Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P), Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YEIN), Youth Empowering People (YEP), Young Entrepreneurs of Nigeria (YEN), Youth Empowerment and Development Initiative (YEDI) (Odey & Sambe, 2019) and recently, the Nigeria Power (N-Power) Programme established in 2016 by the previous government.

The N-power programme is one of the National Social Investment Programmes designed to address the problem of youth empowerment and improve social development (Dauda et al., 2019). The programme has become a household name and platform where most Nigerians can access skills acquisition and development. Hence, the federal government designed a job creation and empowerment initiative of the Social Investment Programme to drastically reduce youth unemployment in Nigeria (Akujuru & Enyioko, 2019). The programme's scope spans providing young graduates and non-graduates within the age brackets of 18-35 years with the skills, tools and livelihood to enable them to advance from empowerment to entrepreneurship and innovation. The wide coverage of the programme for graduates and non-graduates especially in the inculcation of various skills to youth within the specified age brackets conceived in the country is believed to accommodate all categories of youth, thereby reducing the prevalent unemployment rate. Consequently, the N-power programme is structured in six categories: N-Teach, N-Health, N-Build, N-creative, N-Agro, and N-Tech. However, while N-Teach and N-Health are designed for graduates believed to have completed their mandatory National Youth Service Corps Programmes, N-power Build, N-power Agro, N-power Creative, and N-power Tech are for both graduates and non-graduates (Osunde, 2014).

Empowerment is the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes (Owuna, 2015). It is a measure designed to increase the degree of autonomy and self-determination in people and communities to enable them to represent their interests in a responsible and self-determined way, acting on their authority. Empowerment is classified in various forms, such as economic, political, and social. Of these empowerments, economic is more relevant to the study, hence its adoption. Economic

empowerment increases economic opportunities, access to, and advantages of better jobs. Youth economic empowerment ensures that youths key into a business climate that supports the initiation and sustainability of business. Youth economic empowerment refers to the ability of youths to enjoy their rights to control and benefit from resources, assets, income and their own time, as well as the ability to manage risk and improve their economic status and well-being (UNESCO, 2015). Suffice it to say that empowering youths engenders a financial sector in the nation's economy that provides access to financial services tailored to the needs of the people, particularly youths.

Consequently, youth empowerment refers to creating an environment for youth where they can make decisions for their benefit and that of society. It is a bold and sustainable action to advance youth's opportunities, rights, and participation in decision-making activities. These activities, Emejuru (2017) added, involve practical training that helps the youth survive and contribute optimally to their growth and development of society. It involves restructuring the attitude and belief patterns of the youth while equipping them with skills for positive changes in their lives and those of others. It is not surprising that youth empowerment is conceived as the act of engaging and creating values so that young males and females can contribute to the economic, social and cultural advancement of their families and their nations as well as their fulfilment (Ebelechukwu et al., 2021). From the views of the above authors, youth empowerment is contextually seen as the process and act of providing youth with relevant skills and competencies required to be self-reliant. By participating in the various N-power programme, it is believed that the high unemployment of most youth will be reduced.

However, despite the attractive objectives of N-power programme, there is an indication that poverty is both palpable and pervasive among most youth in Southern Cross River State following the high rate of unemployment and inadequate life skills that are predominant in the state. Clearly, many Nigerian youths are poor and angry with the system (Oboqua, Bessong and Bessong, 2017). This ugly situation among youth has raised questions about whether the objectives of establishing the N-power programme have been met.

N-power programme aims to address youth unemployment by providing work skills development and improving public services in Nigeria, particularly in Southern Cross River State. However, their contributions on daily living and youth hardships in Southern Cross River has yet to be discovered. Hence, there is a need for the study. The researcher is concerned that despite government efforts to alleviate poverty by establishing various poverty alleviation programmes, such as the N-power programme to improve youths living conditions, the rate of poverty among them has remained unabated. The problem of this study, therefore, is to ascertain the extent to which N-power programme have promoted youths empowerment in Cross River State.

The N-Power Health category deploys volunteers to help improve and provide preventive healthcare in communities to vulnerable members of society, including pregnant women and

children. By increasing access to basic healthcare services in underserved communities, the N-Power Health category serves the double purpose of increasing the overall well-being of millions of citizens and supporting the development of healthcare infrastructure with community-based solutions (Akujuru & Enyioko, 2019). Access to healthcare facilities promotes the local population's social, health and economic well-being, especially women and children. Thus, the presence of good healthcare facilities is believed to encourage its accessibility by rural dwellers at any time, thereby empowering the economy (Oboqua, 2016). In addition to this category, N-power build offers an opportunity to acquire the skills required to be self-employed.

HIV is the acronym for Human Immune-deficiency Virus. This particular virus is active only in human body. The virus affects human body by destroying the immune system to such an extent that it can no longer effectively protect the body against other infections (Ushie, 2019). AIDs is an acronym that refers to Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. HIV is the germ which causes AIDs and belongs to groups of virus called retroviruses Geraled, (2015).

Therefore, the viruses are contracted through sexual intercourse with an infected person. Oboqua, Bessong and Bessong, (2017), confirmed that women organization also bring health officer to treat the infected persons and offer health talk free of charge. In some cases, where they cannot provide the services due to financial constraints, they organizations liaise with other non-governmental organizations that render services based on consensus, such services include voluntary confidential counseling and testing.

Similarly, Erim (2014), asserted that N-power programme are often important gate keepers in disseminating health messages and influencing positive behaviour change within communities and that mainly youth organizations at the global country level have a long history of engagement in HIV/AIDs prevention outreach, capacity building, advocacy and service delivery. According to Erim (2014) stated that approximately 40 million people in Nigeria are living with HIV/AIDs, 20 million of people have already died from it and those youth organizations and other community Based organizations have a common tradition of responding to the plight of those affected by HIV/AIDs as well as other diseases.

The alarming mirage rate of HIV/AIDs infection in the last century survey, gave women organizations a greater challenge, to carry out enlightenment programmes, aimed at reducing and even preventing the prevalence (Adermoye, 2014). These activities are targeted at women, men, youth and children. Women organizations involvement in HIV/AIDs prevention is predicated on the fact that:

- Women and children are more affected by the pandemic, being so vulnerable due to poverty and their physiology.

- The tradition of marrying many wives, lead to spread of HIV/AIDs within polygamous homes with a multiple effected by caring for victims of the pandemic both within their immediate household and families (Adermoye 2014)

Health is wealth. Health is a completed physical, mental and social well being and not merely the absence of infinity. With the presence of health care facilities, the children, youths and adults in particular rural areas will be prevented from disease such as malaria, diarrhea, cough, measles, HIV/AIDs and tuberculosis (TB). Access to health care facilities promotes the social, health and economic well-being of the local population, with particular reference to women and children. It also offers hygiene, nutrition and agricultural techniques to the local families. The presence of good health facilities will promote the rural dwellers access the facilities at any time and the people will be empowered to work for money and enhance their livelihood. The study is, however, limited to N-power Health, Programmes. The choice of these categories is premised on their widespread across a greater percentage of youth in the study area than the others. Hence, the need to ascertain the extent they have promoted empowerment of youths in the Southern Cross River State.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which the N-power programme has promoted youth empowerment in Cross River State. Specifically, the study sought to determine the extent to which the:

1. N-power health has promoted youth empowerment in Cross River State
2. N-power Agro has promoted youth empowerment in Cross River State

RESEARCH QUESTION

The following research questions guided the study

1. To what extent does N-power health programmes promoted youth empowerment?

HYPOTHESES

H₀1 there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of youths from southern senatorial district on the extent to which N-power health has promoted youth empowerment.

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study-sample for the study 485 respondents randomly drawn from Southern senatorial districts in the study area. the instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled N-Power Health programme on Youths Empowerment Questionnaire (NPHPYEQ) designed by the researcher. The instrument had two sections A and B.

Section A had respondents' demographic information while section B was a 9 item questionnaire in the form of modified four-point rating scale of Very Great Extent (VGE), Great Extent (GE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE). The instrument was validated by three experts, two experts from the Department of Sociology and one from the Department of Measurement and Evaluation, all from Federal University Lafia. The reliability estimate was done using Cronbach Alpha Statistics, was .68. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation for the research questions, while the z-test statistic was used to test the null hypotheses at .05 level of significance. The criterion mean was 2.50. This implies that mean responses of 2.50 and above showed that the respondents agreed, while mean responses below 2.50 showed that the respondents disagreed.

RESULTS

Research Question One: To what extent has N-power health promoted youth empowerment in Southern Cross River State?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of respondents on the extent to which N-power health has promoted youth empowerment in Southern Cross River n = 485

S/N	Group Item Statement	Male = 256			Female = 229			Overall		
		Mean	SD	Dec	Mean	SD	Dec	Mean	SD	Dec
1	Access information regarding HIV/AIDs	3.2	0.21	GE	3.0	0.17	GE	2.9	1.12	GE
2	Access information regarding HIV/AIDs counseling and testing	3.3	0.11	GE	3.2	0.04	GE	3.5	1.04	GE
3	Attend regular talk on pregnancy	2.5	0.01	GE	2.5	0.51	GE	3.2	1.11	GE
4	Access information regarding seminar/awareness programmes for HIV/AIDs	3.2	0.09	GE	2.6	0.11	GE	3.4	1.33	GE
5	Access information regarding HIV/AIDs drugs	2.4	0.09	GE	3.1	0.12	GE	3.3	0.40	GE
6	Access information regarding free nets to combat malaria and tuberculosis TB by government	2.5	0.11	GE	2.7	0.01	GE	3.4	0.33	GE
7	Access information regarding regular health talk for pregnant women	2.9	0.33	GE	2.8	0.09	GE	2.6	0.45	GE
8	Access information regarding regular talk on hygiene	3.2	0.50	GE	2.7	0.15	GE	2.8	0.24	GE
9	Access information regarding health talk for nursing mothers	2.6	0.21	GE	3.1	0.11	GE	3.8	0.09	GE
Cluster mean		2.8	0.18	GE	2.8	0.14	GE	3.2	0.67	GE

From table 1, the grand mean for respondent male was 2.8 with standard deviation of 0.18 while the grand mean for respondent female was 2.8 with standard deviation of 0.14. The overall grand mean was 3.2 with standard deviation of 0.17. The result indicates that the both respondents rated the extent to which N-power health has greatly promoted youth empowerment in Southern Cross River State.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference between in the mean ratings of respondents on the extent to which N-power health programme promoted youth empowerment.

Table 2: Z-test analysis for hypothesis 1

Group	n	\bar{x}	SD	Df	z-calculated	z-critical	Decision
Male	256	2.8	0.18	483	0.55	1.96	Ns
Female	229	2.8	0.14				

From table 2, z-calculated (0.55) is less than z-critical (1.96). Hence, at .05 significant level and 483 degree of freedom, the mean scores of the respondents do not differ significantly. Therefore, hypothesis one is not rejected as stated that the mean scores of male and female on the extent to which N-power health programmes has promoted on youth empowerment in Southern Cross River State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings from research question one show that to a great extent, N-power health has promoted youth empowerment in Cross River State. Participants noted that their exposure to the category offer them the opportunity to acquire health-related skills capable of making them healthy. It is not surprising that the finding is in tandem with Oboqua and Ubah (2020) who reported improved healthy living condition among rural women participated in renewal education programme. Although, there was divergent views between youth from southern and those of central in the hypothesis following its rejection, it is believed that health tips capable of guiding to good decisions relating in their health are acquired. This positive attitude agrees with the view of Jennings (2018) that N-power programme are important gate keepers in disseminating health messages. While establishing a direct relationship between the programme and youth empowerment, the study of Akujuru and Enyioko (2019) held a contrary view on the existence of significant relationship between N-power programme and poverty alleviation in Rivers State. The presence of this discrepancies suggests the need for further studies that may involve the use of experimental or quasi experimental designs which is beyond the scope of the present study. The study also show that the result of hypothesis showed that there was no significant difference between the mean scores of the respondents on the extent to which N-power Health Programmes has promoted youth empowerment in the study area.

CONCLUSION

In view of the findings of this study, it was concluded that to a great extent N-power health and has a significantly promoted youths empowerment in Southern Cross River State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made

1. More sensitization programmes should be conducted to expose individuals on the scope of N-power health.
2. Government should ensure timely release of fund for the procurement of modern health equipment for the improved healthcare delivery.

References

- Adermoye, M. (2014). *Preventing HI V/AIDS: Non formal education series*. Lagos: Macmillan Nigeria Publishers
- Akujuru, C.A. & Enyioko, N.C. (2019). The impact of N-POWER PROGRAMME on poverty alleviation in Nigeria: *A study of Rivers State Global Journal of Political Science and Administration* 7(3), 29-50.
- Dauda, A., Adeyeye, M.M., Yakubu, M.M., Oni, O.O & Umar, H. (2019). The impact of N-POWER PROGRAMME on youth enterprise in Minna Metropolis. *Nigeria Journal of Business Administration* 17(182).
- Ebelechukwu, R.O., Nwokike, C.E & Nwafor, E.A. (2021). The challenges of youth empowerment programmes in Nigeria: *An Appraisal of N-power Scheme-International of Academic Management Science Research*, 5(7), 8-13.
- Emejuru, S. (2017). *The concept of youth empowerment*. <https://www.edclues-wordpress.com/2016/02/03/theconceptofyouth-empowerment>
- Erim, C.M. (2014). Activities of faith-based Christian organisations and empowerment of female members in the Southern senatorial district of Cross River State, Nigeria. *Unpublish Ph.D thesis of University of Calabar*.
- Nigeria National Youth Policy (2019). Enhancing youth development and participation in the context of sustainable development. <https://www.evanigeria.org/nationalyouth-policy>
- Oboqua, E. D., Bessong, C. D. & Bessong, N. O. (2017). Attainment of millennium development goals in provision of access to improved maternal health care services in Cross River State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Continuing Education and Development Studies* 4(1) 53-61
- Odey, S. A. & Sambe, N. (2019). Assessment of the contribution of N-POWER PROGRAMME to youth empowerment in Cross River State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology Research* 5(4), 1-13
- Osunde, C. (2014). Entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship in developing countries: The Nigeria experience. *The Standard International Journals on Industrial, Financial and Business Management*.
- Owuna, B.N. (2013). Community-based organisations in the area of agricultural skills acquisition on empowerment of rural women in Southern senatorial district of Cross River State, Nigeria.
- UNESCO (2015). *Mobile phone literacy: Empowerment in women's hands: A cross-case analysis of mine experience*. Paris: UNESCO.
- UNESCO (2021). *By youth, with youth, for youth*. <https://www.end.UNESCO.org>.