

Unemployment in Nigeria: Can Need for Power Improve the Scourge?

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37134/ibej.vol13.sp.4.2020>

Cite this paper (APA): Owenvbiugie, R. O., & Egbri, J. N. (2020). Unemployment in Nigeria: Can need for power improve the scourge?. *International Business Education Journal*, 13, 43-50. <https://doi.org/10.37134/ibej.vol13.sp.4.2020>

Abstract

The study described a Nigerian Government program called the Need for Power (N-Power) in reducing the unemployment rate. Questionnaires were distributed to 115 respondents sampled using an accidental sampling technique, and a descriptive analysis was conducted to determine the influence of N-Power in generating employment opportunities. The reliability of 0.81 was obtained with the use of the Cronbach alpha formula. From the result, N-Power Volunteer Corps, N-Power Builds, N-Power Creative, and N-Power Knowledge generated employment to a high extent. It was also concluded that males' employment opportunities generated by N-Power did not significantly differ from females'. Consequently, this study recommended that the Government listen to the beneficiaries' complaints to declare their actual income voluntarily, increase the monthly stipend of N10,000 per month to encourage more youths to participate in the program, and link training to job and labour market opportunities.

Keywords:

N-Power Volunteer Corps; N-Power Builds; N-Power Creative; N-Power Knowledge, unemployment, government intervention

INTRODUCTION

Nigerian Government has made frantic efforts in eradicating poverty by reducing unemployment in Nigeria. One of the pains of human lives seems to be caused by poverty and unemployment. It appears that the first quarter of 2019 witnessed a tremendous increase in the unemployment rate in Nigeria. Previous studies suggested creating better coordination between education institutions and employers (Mohammed Ahmed Waham & Fitra Lestari, 2019), providing entrepreneurship education (Mahajar *et al.*, 2012), and working experiences for graduates (Othman *et al.*, 2016) to solve unemployment issue. However, the Government of Nigeria embarked on several plans to reduce poverty to a minimal level. These plans include food accelerated program, the Operation Feed the Nation, the Green Revolution, the War Against Indiscipline, the Peoples' Bank, the Family Support, SURE-P, and latest, the Needs for Power (N-Power). In the 1960s, poverty eradication efforts were the concern of Government, thus the Government geared towards eradicating it through economic, technological, and intellectual development. In the 1970s, the National Accelerated Food Production program and the Nigerian Agricultural and Cooperative Bank introduced fundings for agricultural programs. Towards the end of the 70s, Operation Feed the Nation was launched by the Government. The aim was to make provision for food supply.

In 1979, the Nigerian Government initiated the Green Revolution, which emphasized massive food production. In 1983, Muhammadu Buhari introduced War Against Indiscipline. The program introduced was seen by some experts as creating an enabling environment for people to gain access to job opportunities. In 1985, General Banbagida introduced Peoples' Bank to provide short-term loans for farmers and entrepreneurs to kick start and expand their businesses. The Directorate of Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFFRI) also commenced the construction of rural roads and other basic amenities.

Additionally, he introduced the National Directorate of Employment to combat mass unemployment. Meanwhile, in 1993, the Family Support and Economic Advancement Programme came into being to assist in poultry production, garri-making, and animal husbandry. Moreover, in 2001, Olusegun Obasanjo introduced the National Poverty Eradication Programme. Under the scheme, a partnership with the private sector was established to empower youth for skill acquisition and participate in farming. During Jonathan's administration, the Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P) was introduced. The Government of Nigeria decided to save part of its earnings from the removal of fuel subsidy to address some areas that needed development in the country. However, with the appointment of President Muhammadu Buhari in 2015, the Government introduced N-Power. The purpose of the program was to train youths through public/private partnerships for skill development.

N-Power Information Guides (2017) stressed that the sole aim of the N-Power program was to help to reduce the unemployment rate and to promote Nigeria's moribund economy. Towards the third quarter of 2016, the Government had engaged 300,000 youths to assist in teaching in primary schools, primary healthcare, and agriculture. The N-Power comprises of six areas in graduate and non-graduate programs. The graduate program consists of N-Power Volunteer Corps, N-Power Knowledge, and N-Power Build, which involves vocational training and apprenticeship. On the other hand, the non-graduate program includes N-Power Creative, N-Power Tech Hardware, N-Power Tech Software, and N-Power Teach. The N-Power Volunteer Corps is a program designed for Nigerians youths. The youths are paid stipends during their training for 2 years within their immediate communities. N-Power Knowledge program is intended to train youths for skills development. On the other hand, N-Power Build is a vocational training that engages the youths to learn various skill jobs such as technicians and artisans. The trainees earn a monthly stipend of ten thousand Naira (N10000) for twelve months' duration. Abah (2017) claimed that as of 2017, the N-Power program had empowered 174,160 youths nation-wide.

N-Power Creative program is a strategy aimed at putting the Nigerian industry to be competitive globally. The participants are expected to be trained in animation, graphic design, post-production, and scriptwriting. The training program is expected to train and develop 5,000 youths across Nigerian cities. Olawoyin (2018) stated that the Nigerian unemployment rate jumped from 16.2% in 2016 to 36.5% in 2018. Macrotrends (2020) opined that the unemployment rate in Nigeria has continued to soar. It stated that in 2016 it was 7.06%, whereas, in 2017, it was 8.39%. In 2018, the unemployment rate was 8.24%, while in 2019, it was 8.10%. The unemployment rate in Nigeria is expected to grow to 33.5% in 2020. This statement was supported by Olaoluwa (2019), who stated that the unemployment rate in Nigeria would hit 33.5%. In the same vein, Trading Economies (2020) said that Nigeria's unemployment rate was 20343.60 thousand people in 2018, while it was 20927.60 people in 2019. This increasing unemployment rate probably made the Government think of many intervention strategies like N-Power, TraderMoni, etc. Today, the unemployment rate seems to

be rising. In further support, Ochigbo (2019), quoting Industrial Training Fund that the unemployment rate rose to as high as 20.9 million in 2018. Therefore, it is necessary to describe the extent of N-Power program in helping to reduce the unemployment rate in Nigeria.

A great deal of research work appears to be dominated by initiatives tackling the unemployment rate in Nigeria. However, there seems to be little research in the literature which studied N-Power influence on employment generation among youths in Nigeria. To improve the unemployment rate in Nigeria, the Government at various times, rolls out new strategies to address the menace. It appears that all efforts seem to have failed. If this unemployment rate remains unabated, the country may plunge into a crisis coming from the youths. Can N-power come to the rescue? This question demands the researcher to perform an investigation.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to identify the extent of N-Power in employment generation among youths in Edo State. The specific objectives are to describe the perceptions of N-Power beneficiaries about (1) N-Power Volunteer Corps, (2) N-Power Build, (3) N-Power Creative, and (4) N-Power Knowledge in relation with employment generation in Edo State.

METHODS

This study employed a descriptive survey of 115 youths in Edo State. They were sampled by using the accidental sampling technique from the population that was made up of male and female N-Power beneficiaries. According to Uzoagulu (2011), accidental sampling comprises of the respondents that can be conveniently reached. Researchers used the questionnaire as a tool for data collection—the questionnaire consisting of two subdivisions. Part 'A' was respondents' biographical information, while Part 'B' had 53-item statements measuring the various constructs identified in the four research questions. This study hypothesized that males do not differ from females N-Power beneficiaries in employment generation in Edo State.

For the reliability, the researcher administered the instrument on a sample of 20 respondents distinct from the population. A Cronbach alpha was used to determine the reliability, which yielded 0.81. The tool used to gather data for this study was a questionnaire titled N-power Employment Generation Questionnaire (NEGQ). The instrument utilized a 4-Point Rating Scale of Very High, High, Low, and Very Low. The researchers recruited eight research assistants to administer the questionnaires. Two weeks were spent to collect and analyze the data. The value of 2.50 was the mean criterion. Therefore, a calculated value greater than 2.50 was defined as high extent, while below 2.50 was considered low extent. Regarding the t-test, the decision for the hypothesis was based on a probability alpha value of 0.05.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the responses about N-Power Volunteer Corps in generating employment in Edo State. The mean ratings obtained for items 1-12 were higher than 2.50, hence was interpreted as high extent. The mean ratings for items 5, 9, and 12 were less than 2.50, indicating that respondents rated these items as low. The grand mean of 2.92 indicated that all the items were rated a high extent. The result implies that the N-Power Volunteer Corps beneficiaries perceived that this program greatly influences employment generation in Edo State. The findings in Table 1 showed that the N-Power Volunteer Corps generated employment to youths to a high extent. This finding is in consistence with Bennel (2017), who

found that N-Power influenced employment generation to a great extent. The finding is also in agreement with Ndabakuoba (2020), who opined that volunteering work is an essential tool for making people engaged in doing various works, thus reducing unemployment. The researcher further emphasized the tremendous contribution of volunteer corps in reducing unemployment across the globe as they engage up to 8,000 people yearly. The finding supports Chiemezie (2020) who stressed that N-Power Volunteer Corps had engaged the services of 100,000 youths in agro-agriculture, health, teaching, and tax, thereby reducing unemployment.

Table 1. Descriptive results of N-Power Volunteer Corps

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	
	Remark			
1.	N-power influence of Nigerians between 18 and 35 years in getting job	3.57	0.79	HE
2.	Undertaking primary tasks in identified public works in their local communities	2.76	0.90	HE
3.	Computing devices necessary for your specific engagement	3.47	0.79	HE
4.	Providing information for continuous training and development	3.65	0.49	HE
5.	Providing teaching for youths	2.06	1.14	LE
6.	Providing instructional materials for teaching	3.29	0.77	HE
7.	Providing advisory solutions N-Power Agro	3.29	0.77	HE
8.	Providing advisory solutions N-Power Health	2.78	0.47	HE
9.	Providing advisory solutions N-Power Teach	2.03	0.86	LE
10.	Providing advisory solutions N-Power Tax	3.96	0.30	HE
11.	Encouraging non-compliant to voluntarily declare their actual income.	3.11	0.81	HE
12.	Encouraging youths to voluntarily declare their actual income	1.08	0.40	LE
	Grand Mean	2.92	0.71	HE

Table 2 shows the responses of N-Power Build in generating employment in Edo State. The mean ratings obtained for items 13-25 (except for item 18) were considered high extent because all of the values were greater than 2.50. The grand mean of 3.26 indicated that on the overall, all items were rated a high extent. The result implies that the beneficiaries perceived N-Power Build as highly influencing the employment generation in Edo State. The findings in Table 2 showed that N-Power Builds generated employment to youths to a high extent. This finding agrees with a study conducted by Ogbette, Bernard-Oyoyo and Okoh, (2019), who claimed that N-Power Build trained and engaged 75,000 youths as technicians, and artisans. The finding is also in parallel with Chiemezie (2020), who opined that N-Build had employed 75,000 Nigerians in skill acquisition in the construction industry, furniture making, and other allied services.

Table 2. Descriptive results of N-Power Build

S/N	Statements	Mean	SD	
Remark				
13.	Dedicating to the training of unemployment Nigerian Youth	3.65	0.49	HE
14.	Engaging in the certification of unemployed youths	3.96	0.30	HE
15.	Building a highly competent and skilled workforce of artisans, technicians, and service professionals	3.77	0.51	HE
16.	Equipping trainees with life-long skills	3.29	0.77	HE
17.	Providing qualified trainees with tool kits as an exit package cost.	3.12	1.11	HE
18.	Providing monthly stipend of N10,000 for 12 months paid Directly to their BVN validated account	2.06	1.14	LE
19.	Training youths on fundamentals of the automobile in the repairs of and diagnosis of modern vehicles using trouble shooting, workshop safety, OBD scanners, wheel alignment, and balancing, panel beating and spraying, vulcanizing	3.47	0.51	HE
20.	Imbibing youths with basic knowledge of operating/repair of modern agri/heavy-duty engine vehicles, agri/heavy duty engine diagnostic tools/equipment	3.37	0.89	HE
21.	Training in the cutting and installation of building materials during the construction	3.28	0.96	HE
22.	Training youth to specialize in electrical wiring of buildings, and maintenance	3.10	1.00	HE
23.	Training beneficiaries to lay blocks or bricks, plastering, tiling and finishing work in the building	3.07	0.96	HE
24.	Training beneficiaries to specialize in plumbing, heating, drainage, firefighting, and plant piping.	3.11	1.00	HE
25.	Training beneficiaries in technical, vocational in catering, and cooking, baking and confectionary making, mixology and waiters and bartenders	3.10	0.99	HE
Grand Mean		3.26	0.82	HE

Table 3 shows the responses of N-Power Creative in generating employment in Edo State. All items for N-Power Creative (item 26-44) received high ratings from the respondents. The grand mean of 3.02 indicated that all the variables were rated high extent in the overall. The result implies that N-Power Creative greatly influences employment generation in Edo State. The findings in Table 3 showed that N-Power Creative generated employment for youths to a high extent. This finding is in line with a study conducted by Ogbette, Bernard-Oyoyo, and Okoh, (2019), who claimed that the N-Power has trained and developed 5,000 young people for talents. The finding corroborates with Chiemezie (2020), who stressed that N-Power Creative has employed over 5,000 young Nigerians with creative talents in animation, graphic design, and scriptwriting.

Table 3. Descriptive results of N-Power Creative

S/N	Statements	Mean	SD	
	Remark			
26.	Training beneficiaries as local and international internship	3.27	0.95	HE
27.	Training beneficiaries to be linked to job and market opportunities	2.97	0.98	HE
28.	Training beneficiaries to receive computing devices	2.83	0.91	HE
29.	Knowledge last as a state in their manual	2.99	1.08	HE
30.	Training beneficiaries in problem-solving skills	2.93	0.90	HE
31.	Training beneficiaries in detail-oriented skills	2.75	1.04	HE
32.	Training beneficiaries in analytical skill	2.79	1.07	HE
33.	Train beneficiaries in building construction project manager	2.78	1.05	HE
34.	Training beneficiaries as animator	2.84	1.02	HE
35.	Training beneficiaries as scriptwriter	3.16	1.12	HE
36.	Training beneficiaries as illustrator	2.78	1.03	HE
37.	Training beneficiaries as graphic designer	3.65	1.02	HE
38.	Training beneficiaries as sound editor	3.71	0.96	HE
39.	Training beneficiaries as film editor	3.71	0.96	HE
40.	Training beneficiaries as visual effects artist	3.59	0.88	HE
41.	Training beneficiaries as game designer	3.50	0.89	HE
42.	Training beneficiaries as desktop publisher	3.57	0.92	HE
43.	Training beneficiaries as digital medial publisher	3.53	0.94	HE
44.	Training beneficiaries as educational/training content Production	3.23	0.99	HE
	Grand Mean	3.02	0.82	HE

Table 4 shows the responses of N-Power Knowledge in generating employment in Edo State. The mean ratings of items 45-53 were rated a high extent. The grand mean of 3.32 indicated that all the variables were rated a high extent. The result implies that N-Power Knowledge greatly influences employment generation in Edo State. This finding agrees with Obadan (2019), who stated that N-Power Knowledge generated 25,000 non-graduates jobs. The study is also in alignment with Nwaobi (2019), who stated that N-Power Knowledge had trained Nigeria youths to build a society with desirable skills to make them important both at home and the international community.

Table 4. Descriptive results of N-Power Knowledge

S/N	Statements	Mean	SD	Remark
45.	Training over 12000 beneficiaries	3.59	0.88	HE
46.	Training beneficiaries as freelancers	3.50	0.89	HE
47.	Train beneficiaries as employees	3.57	0.92	HE
48.	Training beneficiaries as entrepreneurs	3.53	0.94	HE
49.	Training beneficiaries as software coding/programmer	3.23	0.99	HE
50.	Training beneficiaries as creative animation	3.10	0.93	HE
51.	Training beneficiaries as graphics	3.12	0.98	HE
52.	Training beneficiaries as hardware repair	3.13	1.01	HE
53.	Train beneficiaries as hardware maintenance	3.07	1.00	HE
	Grand Mean	3.32	0.95	HE

Table 5 revealed that the t-value indicated 1.12, and the p-value showed 0.27. The mean ratings of male and female N-Power beneficiaries indicated 25.55 and 24.55, respectively. The standard deviation of male respondents showed to be 6.05, while for female respondents, the standard deviation was 5.78. The degree of freedom was 1.50. On this note, male beneficiaries do not differ from female beneficiaries on N-Power employment generation. This finding disagrees with a study conducted by Akujuru and Enyioko (2019) that discovered employment generation for males was more than for females in N-Power.

Table 5: t-test of Male and Female N-Power Beneficiaries

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t-val	p-val.	Dec
Employment Generation	Male	70	25.55	6.05	1.50	1.12	.27	NS
	Female	80	24.55	5.78				

NS: Not Significant

CONCLUSION

This study described the perceptions of N-Power beneficiaries about (1) N-Power Volunteer Corps, (2) N-Power Build, (3) N-Power Creative, and (4) N-Power Knowledge in relation with employment generation in Edo State. In conclusion, N-Power Volunteer Corps, N-Power Builds, N-Power Creative, and N-Power Knowledge generated employment to the youths of Edo State. Moreover, no significant difference was found in terms of male and female employment generation. The Nigerian Government should pay more attention to beneficiaries' complaints about the voluntary declaration of their actual income. Furthermore, the monthly stipend of N10,000 per month should be increased to encourage more youths to participate in the programme. On a different note, the Government should also link training to job and labour market opportunities while training the beneficiaries to be professional teachers by sending them to higher institutions of learning.

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