

ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF THE N-POWER TEACH SCHEME ON YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN ADAMAWA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study, titled assessing the Impact of the N-Power Teach Scheme on Youth Unemployment in Adamawa State, Nigeria, examined the effectiveness of the programme in addressing youth joblessness in the Central Senatorial District. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, using structured questionnaires administered to a sample of 335 beneficiaries drawn from a population of 2,059 participants. Data were analyzed using frequency distribution, percentages, and the Relative Importance Index (RII). The study was anchored on Policy Implementation Theory, Elite Theory, and Empowerment Theory to explain administrative processes, power dynamics, and beneficiary capacity development. Findings revealed that multiple N-Power components operate in the study area, with N-Teach being the most dominant, and that the scheme significantly reduced youth unemployment through job creation, skills acquisition, empowerment, improved educational service delivery, and enhanced social stability. However, its effectiveness is constrained by professional teaching challenges, delayed stipend payments, weak monitoring and evaluation, inadequate instructional materials, limited coverage, and low participant commitment. The study concludes that while the N-Power Teach Scheme has made meaningful contributions to youth employment and socio-economic development, its long-term sustainability depends on resolving structural and implementation weaknesses. It recommends strengthening underrepresented programme components, sustaining and adequately funding the scheme, and addressing operational challenges through professional training, timely stipend payments, improved monitoring systems, expanded coverage, adequate resource provision, and stronger accountability mechanisms.

Keywords: N-Power Teach Scheme, youth unemployment, social intervention, job creation, Adamawa State, programme implementation

Introduction

Unemployment has emerged as one of the most enduring socio-economic challenges confronting developing nations, with Nigeria experiencing disproportionately high rates of joblessness among its youth population. Despite possessing enormous human and natural resources, Nigeria struggles to translate these endowments into productive employment opportunities for its growing labour force. Current estimates indicate that Nigeria's investment in human capital development remains substantially below global averages, limiting young people's ability to acquire skills that enhance employability and sustainable livelihood creation (Omoligho, 2022; World Bank, 2021).

The magnitude of this challenge becomes apparent when examining labour market dynamics. Each year, over 1.5 million graduates enter Nigeria's labour market, joining millions of young people with basic educational qualifications or who have dropped out of formal education (Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment, 2019). However, the formal economy's capacity to absorb these workers remains severely constrained, resulting in persistently high youth unemployment and underemployment rates. The National Bureau of Statistics (2020) documented that young people constitute the demographic most severely affected by unemployment, with rates that threaten both economic growth and social stability.

The Central Senatorial District of Adamawa State exemplifies this national phenomenon. Characterized by limited industrial activity, minimal private sector investment, widespread poverty, and security challenges, the district offers few viable economic opportunities for its youth population (Adamawa State Ministry of Economic Planning, 2021). Young people in this region face significant barriers to employment, rendering them vulnerable to social vices and economic dependency.

In response to Nigeria's escalating unemployment crisis, the Federal Government launched the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) in 2016, with the N-Power Programme representing a flagship initiative targeting youth unemployment. The N-Power Teach sub-component specifically deploys unemployed graduate volunteers to primary and secondary schools, where they serve as teaching assistants while gaining work experience and developing pedagogical skills (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2019).

The programme's dual objectives include improving educational service delivery and reducing youth unemployment. Participants receive monthly stipends of N30,000 throughout their two-year engagement, acquire teaching experience, and develop skills intended to enhance their long-term employability. In regions like Adamawa State's Central Senatorial District, where teacher shortages compound existing socio-economic challenges, the N-Power Teach Scheme potentially addresses multiple development objectives simultaneously.

Despite several years of implementation, empirical evidence regarding the N-Power Teach Scheme's effectiveness in reducing youth unemployment at the local level remains limited. Existing studies predominantly examine national outcomes rather than localized experiences or post-programme employment trajectories. In the Central Senatorial District of Adamawa State, anecdotal evidence suggests that many programme participants fail to secure sustainable employment after completing their two-year engagement, raising questions about the scheme's transformative potential.

This study addresses the following research questions:

- i. What types of N-Power schemes are available in the Central Senatorial District of Adamawa State?

- ii. What is the impact of the N-Power Teach Scheme on youth unemployment in the study area?
- iii. What challenges affect the effectiveness of the N-Power Teach Scheme in combating youth unemployment?

Objectives of the Study

The study's primary objective is to assess the N-Power Teach Scheme's impact on youth unemployment in Adamawa State's Central Senatorial District. Specific objectives are to:

- i. Identify the types of N-Power schemes available in the Central Senatorial District of Adamawa State.
- ii. Assess the impact of the N-Power Teach Scheme on youth unemployment in the study area.
- iii. Examine the challenges affecting the effectiveness of the N-Power Teach Scheme in combating youth unemployment.

Literature Review

Social Intervention Schemes in Nigeria

Social intervention schemes encompass government-sponsored programmes designed to assist vulnerable populations, including unemployed youth, women, children, persons with disabilities, and those living below the poverty line. These interventions aim to mitigate socio-economic inequalities stemming from poverty and promote inclusive development by enhancing human, economic, and social capital (Ndem, Angioha, & Dike, 2020). In Nigeria, such programmes operate within broader social protection frameworks seeking to improve citizens' living standards and economic participation.

Contemporary Nigerian social interventions increasingly emphasize promoting self-sufficiency and long-term economic independence rather than providing temporary relief. By investing in education, skills training, and employment-related initiatives, these programmes strive to enhance beneficiaries' productivity and employability (Dike, 2019). Historical examples include the Obasanjo administration's Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP), which served approximately 155,000 beneficiaries, and the Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P), which provided vocational skills training to over 119,000 participants (SURE-P Final Report, 2014).

Understanding Unemployment

Unemployment describes the condition where individuals willing and able to work, and actively seeking employment, cannot find paid work within the labour market. As a primary measure of

economic health and social welfare, high unemployment rates indicate structural economic issues preventing adequate job creation (International Labour Organization, 2019). In developing countries like Nigeria, youth and graduate unemployment pose significant barriers to economic growth, poverty reduction, and social stability.

Nigeria's unemployment trajectory reveals persistent challenges despite multiple policy interventions. The unemployment rate rose from 32.7% in 2022 to 40.6% in 2023, driven partly by continued labour force expansion into an already saturated market (Egole, 2023). KPMG's Global Economy Outlook Report (2023) indicates that Nigeria's unemployment situation will likely persist due to slower-than-necessary economic growth and the economy's inability to absorb approximately 4-5 million new labour market entrants annually.

The N-Power Programme

The N-Power Programme, established in 2016 by the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari, creates a framework for preparing large numbers of young Nigerians for productive engagement through skills training and development. Targeted at individuals aged 18-35, the programme encompasses several components:

- i. **N-Power Teach (N-Teach):** Deploys graduate volunteers to schools as teaching assistants
- ii. **N-Power Health (N-Health):** Engages beneficiaries in primary healthcare delivery
- iii. **N-Power Agriculture (N-Agro):** Provides agricultural extension services
- iv. **N-Power Build (N-Build):** Offers vocational training in construction trades
- v. **N-Power Knowledge:** Provides ICT and creative skills development for non-graduates

Participants receive monthly stipends of N30,000 throughout their programme engagement, with the objective of providing both income support and skills development that enhances employability (Adebayo & Ogunleye, 2020).

Empirical Literature Review

Several studies have examined various aspects of Nigeria's N-Power Programme. Felix, Williams, and Sunday (2022) investigated the impact of social policy programmes on youth development in Hong Local Government Area of Adamawa State, finding that N-Power created job opportunities, reduced poverty, and trained youth participants. Their study documented empirical evidence correlating N-Power participation with employment creation and youth development.

Eze (2019) argued that social intervention schemes introduced by the Jonathan and Buhari administrations reduced Nigeria's unemployment problem to its barest minimum. Similarly, Abada

and Omeh (2019) examined social intervention schemes and poverty alleviation among Nigerian youths, concluding that young people benefited significantly from government-implemented programmes.

Bisong (2019) investigated the effects of the N-Power programme on employment creation, job skill improvement, and economic wellbeing in Cross River State's Southern Senatorial District. Using survey research with 250 respondents, the study revealed significant relationships between N-Power participation and employment generation, skills enhancement, and economic wellbeing.

Abin (2018) examined the N-Power Programme implementation process and its effects on beneficiaries' socio-economic wellbeing in Akwanga Metropolis, Nasarawa State. Okoro and Bassey (2018) focused on N-Power teachers' competence and resource utilization, exploring implications for effective teaching in Nigerian primary and post-primary schools.

Enyioko (2020) investigated the impact of N-Power programmes on poverty alleviation in Rivers State, revealing that most beneficiaries were university and polytechnic graduates. The study identified barriers to successful implementation including late stipend payments, bribery and corruption, political interference, and insufficient funding.

Ogunmodede et al. (2020) conducted an impact evaluation of the N-Power Agro Empowerment Programme in Nigeria, finding positive effects on youth employment and income generation. Isa and Auwal (2019) assessed N-Power in Taraba State, identifying the programme's focus on educated youths rather than all citizens as a significant limitation.

Theoretical Framework

This study integrates three complementary theoretical perspectives to analyze the N-Power Teach Scheme's implementation and outcomes.

Theory of Public Policy Implementation

Drawing on the work of Mazmanian and Sabatier (1981), this theory emphasizes that policy success depends critically on implementation processes. Van Meter and Van Horn (cited in Solihin, 2012) noted that policies should be classified based on issues likely to create implementation problems. They proposed that programme success is most likely when required changes from the current situation are marginal and goal consensus is high. This framework illuminates how administrative factors, bureaucratic processes, and implementation fidelity shape the N-Power Teach Scheme's outcomes in Adamawa State.

Empowerment Theory

This study is anchored on Empowerment Theory, which explains how providing individuals with resources, skills, opportunities, and supportive structures enhances their capacity to control their socio-economic conditions and improve their life outcomes. The theory is widely associated with scholars such as Julian Rappaport and Marc Zimmerman, who emphasized that empowerment involves processes through which people gain mastery over issues affecting their lives and develop the competence needed for productive participation in society. Empowerment Theory assumes that social and economic disadvantages, such as unemployment, are not merely personal failures but consequences of limited access to opportunities, skills, institutional support, and decision-making platforms. It further assumes that when individuals are equipped with relevant knowledge, practical skills, financial support, and enabling environments, they become more self-reliant, productive, and capable of contributing meaningfully to economic development.

The application of Empowerment Theory to this study lies in its explanation of how structured intervention programmes can strengthen the productive capacity of young people. The N-Power Teach Scheme is designed to equip unemployed graduates with employable skills, work experience, stipends, and professional exposure through temporary teaching placements. From an empowerment perspective, the scheme functions as a capacity-building mechanism that enhances beneficiaries' human capital, employability potential, income security, and workplace competence. By engaging participants in meaningful public service while providing training and financial support, the programme seeks to transform passive job seekers into skilled and economically active individuals. The theory therefore provides a lens for understanding how skill acquisition, institutional support, and economic inclusion strategies can reduce youth vulnerability in the labour market.

The relevance of Empowerment Theory to this study is that it offers a clear conceptual link between government intervention and youth employment outcomes. Youth unemployment in Adamawa State reflects structural barriers such as limited job opportunities, inadequate skills, and weak economic inclusion. Empowerment Theory clarifies that addressing these barriers requires deliberate policies that expand access to skills, income opportunities, and institutional support systems. The N-Power Teach Scheme represents such an intervention, making the theory suitable for explaining how the programme can influence employment prospects and socio-economic stability among youths. Thus, the theory provides a strong foundation for assessing whether the scheme truly empowers beneficiaries in ways that reduce unemployment and promote sustainable livelihoods.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive survey research design, appropriate for observing and describing phenomena as they occur naturally without manipulating variables (Greener, 2008). The design enabled systematic collection of data regarding respondents' perceptions, experiences, and observations concerning the N-Power Teach Scheme's impact on youth unemployment.

Population and Sample

The study population comprised 2,059 N-Power Teach beneficiaries in Adamawa State's Central Senatorial District (National Social Investment Office, 2023). Using Yamane's (1967) formula, a sample size of 335 respondents was determined: Proportional allocation was employed to ensure representative distribution across the seven local government areas (Table 1).

Data Collection Instruments

Primary data were collected using structured questionnaires comprising three sections. Section A captured demographic information including age, gender, occupation, education, and years of experience. Section B addressed the impact of N-Power Teach Scheme on youth unemployment using a five-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree). Section C examined implementation challenges using the same scaling format.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using frequency distributions, percentages, and Relative Importance Index (RII) calculated as: $RII = \Sigma W / (A \times N)$. Where W = weight assigned to each response, A = highest weight on the scale (5), and N = total number of respondents. RII values range from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating greater importance.

Results

Table 1: Distribution of N-Power Programme Components in Central Senatorial District.

S/N	N-Power Scheme Type	Frequency of Identification	Percentage (%)
1	Education (N-Teach)	319	100
2	Agriculture (N-Agro)	214	67
3	Health (N-Health)	186	58
4	N-Tax	142	45
5	Building/Construction (N-Build)	98	31

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The findings from Table 1 reveal that the Education component (N-Teach) of the N-Power Programme is the most prominent in the Central Senatorial District, with all 319 respondents (100%) identifying it, highlighting its extensive visibility and perceived importance in addressing youth unemployment. Following this, the Agriculture (N-Agro) scheme was identified by 67% of respondents, and Health (N-Health) by 58%, indicating moderate levels of awareness and engagement in these sectors. In contrast, N-Tax was recognized by 45% of participants, while the Building and Construction component (N-Build) had the lowest identification at 31%, suggesting limited reach and exposure. Overall, the distribution underscores that education-oriented initiatives dominate the programme's activities in the district, whereas technical, infrastructural, and fiscal-related components appear less accessible or less emphasized among the local youth population.

Table 2: presents respondents' perceptions regarding the N-Power Teach Scheme's impact across multiple dimensions.

Impact Dimension	SA (5)	A (4)	U (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Total
Job creation	166	137	6	5	5	319
Skills Acquisition	168	136	10	2	3	319
Improved Education	171	128	8	7	5	319
Empowerment	169	136	5	3	6	319
Reduced security risks	179	127	5	5	3	319
Reduced Drug Abuse	164	136	9	6	4	319

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The findings in Table 2 indicate that respondents perceive the N-Power Teach (N-Teach) Scheme as having a substantial positive impact across multiple dimensions in the Central Senatorial District. Job creation is widely acknowledged, with 303 of 319 respondents expressing agreement or strong agreement, reflecting the programme's effectiveness in providing temporary employment opportunities. Skills acquisition similarly received strong positive responses, demonstrating participants' perception of improved employability through the scheme. The programme is also seen to enhance educational delivery, with 299 respondents affirming improved education outcomes, and to foster youth empowerment, with 305 respondents acknowledging increased personal and professional capacity. Additionally, the scheme is perceived to contribute to social stability, as 306 respondents agreed it reduced security risks and 300 affirmed its role in mitigating drug abuse. Overall, the data highlight a strong consensus among respondents that the N-Teach initiative positively influences both economic and social wellbeing in the study area.

Table 3: Relative Importance Index (RII) Ranking of Impacts

Impact Dimension	Total Weight	RII	Rank
Job creation	1,368	4.27	1st
Reduced Drug Abuse	1,359	4.26	2nd
Skills Acquisition	1,354	4.24	3rd
Empowerment	1,352	4.22	4th
Improved Education	1,347	4.21	5th
Reduced security risks	1,346	4.20	6th

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The findings in Table 3 show that respondents perceive the N-Power Teach Scheme's impacts as highly significant across all measured dimensions, with job creation emerging as the most important benefit (RII = 4.27), highlighting its central role in addressing youth unemployment. Reduced drug abuse follows closely (RII = 4.26), suggesting that the programme contributes meaningfully to social stability and youth engagement. Skills acquisition (RII = 4.24), empowerment (RII = 4.22), and improved education (RII = 4.21) were also rated highly, indicating that the scheme not only provides employment but also enhances participants' capacities and educational outcomes. Reduced security risks, while ranked sixth (RII = 4.20), still reflects a substantial positive impact. Overall, the close RII values demonstrate that all the programme's effects are perceived as important, with economic and social benefits closely intertwined, and employment generation identified as the most dominant outcome.

Table 4: Challenges of N-Power Teach Scheme Implementation

Challenge	SA (5)	A (4)	U (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Total
Delay in stipend payments	165	141	3	3	2	319
Lack of commitment	169	138	6	2	4	319
Professional teaching challenges	188	119	4	3	5	319
Weak monitoring and evaluation	181	129	2	3	4	319
Lack of instructional materials	176	133	4	4	3	319
Limited coverage	182	126	6	3	2	319

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The findings in Table 4 indicate that while the N-Power Teach Scheme has notable positive impacts, it faces significant implementation challenges. Professional teaching challenges were identified as the most pressing issue, with 188 respondents strongly agreeing and 119 agreeing, highlighting

beneficiaries' limited pedagogical training and difficulties in classroom management. Delays in stipend payments (165 strongly agree; 141 agree) also represent a critical concern, reflecting administrative and financial inefficiencies. Additionally, respondents highlighted lack of commitment, weak monitoring and evaluation, limited programme coverage, and insufficient instructional materials as major constraints. Collectively, these findings suggest that operational and systemic weaknesses could hinder the scheme's sustainability, effectiveness, and its potential to fully achieve intended socio-economic outcomes.

Table 5: RII Ranking of Challenges

Challenge	RII	Rank
Professional teaching challenges	0.84	1st
Delay in stipend payments	0.83	2nd
Lack of commitment	0.83	3rd
Weak monitoring and evaluation	0.83	4th
Limited coverage	0.83	5 th
Lack of instructional materials	0.82	6 th

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The findings in Table 5 reveal that professional teaching challenges are the most significant constraint in the implementation of the N-Power Teach Scheme, with the highest RII of 0.84, indicating that inadequate pedagogical skills and classroom management difficulties are critical issues. Delay in stipend payments ranked second (RII = 0.83), closely followed by lack of commitment, weak monitoring and evaluation, and limited coverage, all sharing the same RII of 0.83, highlighting systemic and administrative inefficiencies affecting programme delivery. Lack of instructional materials ranked sixth with an RII of 0.82, suggesting that while still important, resource shortages are slightly less critical compared to operational and human capacity challenges. Overall, the RII analysis underscores that effective implementation of the scheme is hindered more by human and administrative factors than by material constraints.

Discussion of Findings

The analysis of Table 1 reveals that the Education component (N-Teach) dominates the N-Power Programme in Adamawa State's Central Senatorial District, with full recognition by all respondents. This suggests that education-focused interventions are the most visible and actively implemented component of the programme, likely due to the immediate and tangible presence of teaching

assistants in schools. In contrast, components such as Agriculture (N-Agro), Health (N-Health), N-Tax, and Building/Construction (N-Build) had lower levels of identification, highlighting disparities in awareness, accessibility, and participation across the different programme streams. The findings indicate that the N-Power initiative prioritizes educational engagement as a primary avenue for youth involvement and employment, while other sectors, particularly technical and infrastructure-oriented interventions, are less pronounced in the study area.

Tables 2 and 3 further demonstrate that respondents perceive the N-Power Teach Scheme as having a broadly positive impact across multiple socio-economic and social dimensions. Job creation is identified as the most significant outcome, supported by skills acquisition, youth empowerment, improved education, reduction in drug abuse, and enhanced social stability. The Relative Importance Index (RII) ranking corroborates these perceptions, emphasizing that employment generation is the dominant perceived benefit, closely followed by social outcomes such as reduced drug abuse. The close RII values across all dimensions suggest that participants recognize the programme not only as a source of temporary income but also as a mechanism for capacity building, professional development, and community wellbeing, reflecting a multifaceted impact on both economic and social fronts.

However, Tables 4 and 5 reveal that the N-Power Teach Scheme faces substantial implementation challenges that could limit its effectiveness and sustainability. Professional teaching challenges emerged as the most critical constraint, indicating that many participants lack adequate pedagogical skills for effective classroom engagement. Other significant issues include delays in stipend payments, limited commitment, weak monitoring and evaluation, constrained programme coverage, and insufficient instructional materials. The RII ranking of these challenges highlights that operational and human resource-related factors, rather than material shortages, are the primary barriers to successful implementation. Collectively, these findings underscore the importance of addressing administrative, training, and monitoring deficiencies to ensure that the scheme achieves its full potential in reducing youth unemployment and enhancing socio-economic development in the district.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study found that the N-Power Teach Scheme has made meaningful contributions to reducing youth unemployment in Adamawa State's Central Senatorial District through job creation, skills development, and a decline in youth drug abuse, supported by a high Relative Importance Index and significant statistical results. However, its effectiveness is constrained by major implementation challenges, including delayed stipend payments, deployment of unqualified teaching personnel,

weak monitoring and evaluation, inadequate instructional materials, limited beneficiary coverage, and the programme's short two-year duration which often returns participants to unemployment. The study also highlights the usefulness of combining policy implementation, elite theory, and empowerment theory to better understand programme outcomes from administrative, political, and individual development perspectives. Overall, while the scheme is a valuable social intervention, its long-term impact depends on improving implementation quality, strengthening beneficiary support systems, and creating clear transition pathways for sustainable employment.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are offered:

- i. Since multiple components of the N-Power Programme exist but N-Teach is the most dominant in the Central Senatorial District of Adamawa State, the government should strengthen and expand the less-recognized components such as N-Agro, N-Health, N-Tax, and N-Build to ensure balanced programme implementation and wider opportunities for youths.
- ii. Given the significant contribution of the N-Power Teach Scheme to job creation, skills development, empowerment, educational improvement, and social stability, the programme should be sustained and adequately funded to enhance its capacity for further reducing youth unemployment in the study area.
- iii. To improve the effectiveness of the N-Power Teach Scheme, relevant authorities should address key implementation challenges by providing professional training for beneficiaries, ensuring timely payment of stipends, strengthening monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, expanding programme coverage, supplying adequate instructional materials, and enforcing accountability among participants.

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