UJJPS **University of Jos Journal of Political Science**

E-ISSN: 1595-4765 | Volume 3, Issue 3 | September 2026

Effect of N- Power Programme Implementation on Job Creation in Plateau State, Nigeria.

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Abstract

The study assessed the effect of the N-Power Programme Implementation on job creation among the beneficiaries in Plateau State. This study adopted the mixed method research design, while explanatory sequential design was used for the data analysis. However, the simple linear regression analysis was employed to test the hypothesis of the study. Out of the total number of seventeen (17) local government areas in Plateau State, only three (3) Local Government Areas, which represent three (3) Senatorial Zones were selected, namely; Jos South, Bokkos and Langtang South Local Government Areas. The study revealed that although the N-Power programme created temporary jobs, it was bedevilled with poor administrative lapses. These challenges manifested in the lack of sustainability plans, poor quality of jobs and low employability rate among the beneficiaries. Hence, majority of the youths, who participated in the scheme are still unemployed and underemployed in the State after exiting the programme, as they could neither secure employment nor engage in entrepreneurial activities for self-reliance. Thus, the study recommended among others things, that the N-Power programme strategy be reviewed to include more commitment to sustainability plans, better quality of jobs and training, as well as a participatory approach to both policy design and implementation in Plateau State, Nigeria.

Key Words: N-Power, Public Programme, Implementation, Job creation, Employability

Introduction

An effective implementation of youth empowerment programmes, such as the Nigerian N-Power programme has become a global agenda of immense discourse today, because it is expected to guarantee better quality and sustainable employment for the youths' population. Indeed, the United Nation (UN)'s Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8.3 stipulates that all nations, including Nigeria are to promote development-oriented policy programmes that would support productive activities for the youths through decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation. The nations are to encourage the formalisation and growth of micro, small and medium sized enterprises, which should include access to financial services (UNITAR, 2018). In addition, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2250 on 9th December, 2015, thereby

recognising the critical importance of employed youths in the promotion of international peace, security and socio-economic development of member countries. Consequently, it called for the engagement of youths as partners at all levels of policy-making in member countries (Damuchi, 2020).

Notwithstanding, UNITAR (2018) observed that some countries in sub-Saharan Africa, such as Nigeria, are still experiencing extraordinarily high rates of youth unemployment. In Nigeria, for instance, nearly 57.4 per cent of the economically active youths are unemployed (NBS, 2023). Young people who are not financially secured are pushed into temporary, seasonal and part-time work to meet their basic needs (ILO, 2016). Such youth are more at risk, as they are unable to secure enough work and income to climb out of poverty, on a permanent basis. The reality in Nigeria is that the worsening economic situation; from the Austerity period to the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) of the 1980s, to the post-SAP era, economic hardship has continued to threaten the collective psyche of the Nigerian youths. In addition, the increasing incidence of youth unemployment in Nigeria has been attributed to existing weaknesses in the nations' educational system, which places more emphasis on paper qualification than functional or pragmatic education. The result has been the continuous production of unemployable graduates, who are not suited for the labour market (Damuchi, 2020).

In Plateau State in particular, youths who are aged between eighteen (18) and thirty-five (35) years constitute about 60% of the state population (NBS, 2023). However, the youth unemployment figure for 2023 shows that only one quarter of the youth population are employed. Among these, 26.15% are still under-employed and are therefore not contributing maximally to the economy of the State (Ofem & Ajayi, 2022). In fact, Lalong (2023) observed that aside from being a huge waste of human capital, those caught in the web of this social menace are often susceptible to frustration and non-conforming behaviours, thereby heightening social conflicts and insecurity, with diverse devastating consequences on the State's economy. As these negative and pervasive roles continue to affect the nation, several policies were designed and implemented over the years to tackle the problem and ensure job creation. Onyekwere (2024) posits that public policy efforts geared towards job creation were entrenched in the establishment of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) Agency in the year 1989; the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), which was established in the year 2001; and the Subsidy Reinvestment and Employment Programme (SURE-P), which was established in year 2012. However, despite these efforts, only minimal successes were achieved due to some lapses in the policies' implementation (Ofem and Ajayi, 2022).

As a response, the federal government of Nigeria established the N-Power programme, as a component of its National Social Investment Programme (NSIP), through an Executive Order in the year 2016. However, the NSIP Agency ACT was established in the year 2023. The N-Power component was suspended in 2024 to allow some reforms in the

sector. Indeed, the N-Power programme was specifically targeted at Nigerian youths, aged between 18-35 years old. Among other objectives, it was established; to create jobs for the youths' population, improve livelihoods, enhance skills acquisition and ensure employability, as well as self-reliance, through capacity building, investment and direct support (NSIP, 2016).

However, despite the N-Power programme in Plateau State, youth unemployment has not abated. It has subsisted and continued to rise over the years, especially among the graduates. In addition, many youths who were employed and trained under the N-Power Graduate and Non-graduate schemes in Plateau State are still without the creative skills that can attract further post-exit employment opportunities. Most of the beneficiaries eventually fell back into the labour market, without the enhanced capabilities to become gainfully employed as enshrined in the N-Power policy objectives. Indeed, many of them lack access to post-exit funds/grants that can promote entrepreneurial activities or self-reliance. They often roam the streets hopelessly, thereby aggravating the already high rate of youth unemployment, with all its negative consequences on the economy of Plateau State. This forms the major statement of the research problem.

Therefore, this study examines the extent to which the N-Power Programme implementation promoted job creation among the beneficiaries in Plateau State. Whereas, the research hypothesis for the study is stated in null form (H0), which states: The N-Power programme implementation has not significantly promoted job creation among the beneficiaries in Plateau State. The study covers only the N-Power graduate category, from the year 2016 to 2024. In view of the alarming rate of youth unemployment in Plateau State and the magnitude of public funds invested on many failed youth empowerment programmes, this study highlights the lessons learnt from the N-Power programme implementation and advances recommendations to policymakers that are expected to promote more sustainable and effective outcomes in the future. The study contributes to knowledge because it focuses on the implementation of N-Power programme rather than its general impacts studied by most scholars. It provides context-specific evidence on the programme in Plateau State, thereby filling a geographical gap in literature.

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Concept of Public Programme Implementation

The concept of public programme implementation has evolved over the years with different perspectives. Basically, the concept refers to the process of translating planned public policies, interventions, or projects into practical actions to achieve intended policy objectives. According to Pretrus (1974), the process of implementation encompasses planning, organising and coordinating human, financial and material resources;

adherence to implementation guidelines; ensuring stakeholders' participation; promoting effective communication, supervision, monitoring and; continuous adaptation to contextual realities. Hence, effective implementation ensures that programme objectives are achieved as intended, whereas poor implementation often results in reduced effectiveness, inefficiencies, and failure to attain desired outcomes.

Indeed, May and Wildavsky (1978) describe this classical perspective as the 'top-down model' to programme implementation. From this perspective, implementation success depends on effective planning, administrative control, hierarchical communication, coordination, supervision, monitoring and compliance with the policy directives. This perspective views implementation as a linear administrative process, in which government agencies simply execute decisions made by policymakers. The strength of this model, therefore, lies in its emphasis on defined objectives, policy coherence, accountability and standardised implementation across jurisdictions. Although the 'top-down' model provides systematic explanation for implementation success, it overemphasises centralised control and assumes that implementers will faithfully execute policy directives without significant discretion (Sabatier & Mazmanian, 2016). Hence, the perspective underestimates the complexity of public organisations and neglects the realities faced by frontline implementers (Grindle, 2017). In many developing countries such as Nigeria, rigid adherence to centrally designed policies often limit the flexibility required to respond to local socioeconomic conditions, thereby reducing programme effectiveness.

Conversely, the 'bottom-up' perspective propounded by Lipsky (1980), emphasises the role of local actors, implementers, and beneficiaries in adapting programmes to local circumstances. This perspective emphasises the role of frontline public officials and local stakeholders in shaping implementation outcomes. Hence, Lipsky challenged the 'top-bottom' perspective by demonstrating that implementation often involves complex interactions among numerous organizations, actors, and decision points. He argues that implementation failures often arise despite clearly articulated policy objectives, which suggests that implementation is influenced by organisational complexity, coordination challenges, and environmental uncertainties rather than policy design alone. Frontline implementers, often referred to as 'street-level' bureaucrats, significantly influence programme outcomes, because they exercise discretion in interpreting and applying programme guidelines during service delivery (Hill & Hupe, 2022). Consequently, programme outcomes are influenced not only by formal policy designs, but also by the decisions, experiences, and judgments of implementers, who operate within resource-constrained environments.

However, the integrated perspective emerged more recently, as a response to the limitations of both the 'top-bottom' and the 'bottom-top' perspectives. Its proponents, such as Winter (2012) argues that excessive discretion, as propounded by the 'bottom-up'

model may produce inconsistencies in service delivery, weaken accountability, and create disparities in programme outcomes across different regions. Consequently, Hill and Hupe (2022) contend that successful implementation under the integrated view requires both strategic policy direction and flexibility to accommodate contextual realities.

The integrated model views programme implementation as a multi-dimensional concept and not merely a linear process. It is viewed as a dynamic interaction between programme design and contextual factors. For instance, Winter (2012), contends that implementation outcomes are shaped by organisational capacity, leadership, institutional structures, inter-agency coordination, and external environmental conditions. Hence, implementation effectiveness is expected to vary across settings, depending on the extent to which organisations possess the technical, managerial, and financial capacities necessary for programme delivery. The integrated perspective reflects the complexity of modern public governance, particularly in contexts where collaborative governance and inter-organisational partnerships are essential for effective delivery of public services.

Furthermore, Bryson (2018) argues that stakeholders' collaboration and networks tend to improve programme legitimacy, accountability, resource mobilization, and sustainability. Participatory implementation also facilitates contextual adaptation by incorporating local knowledge into the programme delivery. In addition, Fixsen et al. (2018) have demonstrated that countries with stronger governance systems, transparent institutions, capable public service, and effective accountability mechanisms generally achieve higher implementation performance even with resource constraints. The adoption of e-government platforms, integrated management information systems, digital monitoring tools, and data analytics have continued to enhance more transparency, coordination, and real-time performance monitoring in programme implementation process in those nations (Winter, 2012). Unfortunately, in most developing nations like Nigeria, digital programme implementation has remained constrained by inadequate resources, poor technological infrastructure, cybersecurity risks, digital inequality and limited technical capacity.

Concept of Job Creation

Historically, the concept of job creation was frequently operationalised narrowly as the net increase in employment opportunities within a national economy or programme context. However, such conceptualisation obscures the qualitative, temporal, and institutional dimensions that shape employment outcomes, particularly in the developing nations (Fox & Kaul, 2018). Consequently, the ILO (2020) argues that job creation should not be limited to the numerical increase in employment, but should also encompass the quality, sustainability, and inclusiveness of the jobs created. Similarly, the World Bank, (2019), also cautions against equating job creation with employment numbers alone, arguing that such an approach risk overstating programme effectiveness.

Instead, it should emphasise the concept of 'decent work', which foregrounds employment quality, earnings stability, working conditions, and opportunities for career advancement. Thus, the concept of job creation is analytically meaningful only insofar as the jobs generated contribute to improved welfare and labour market integration. This broader conceptualisation by the ILO (2020), emphasises that employment generation must translate into decent jobs, characterised by adequate income, job security, skills utilisation, and social protection

Furthermore, Islam and Islam, (2017), posits that the Keynesian perspective suggests that job creation is influenced by aggregate demand and public expenditure, particularly during periods of economic downturn. In this case, government intervention through public works, social investment programmes (such as the N-Power programme) and labour market policies are viewed as legitimate mechanism for stimulating employment, especially among the vulnerable groups such as the youth population etc. However, in nations such as Nigeria, which are characterised by structural unemployment, demographic pressure, and labour market informality, job creation cannot be assumed to occur automatically through government social investment policies alone. Rather, increased public expenditure may proceed without commensurate employment expansion, which requires the active participation of a productive private sector.

Indeed, Khan (2017), chooses to combine different perspectives in understanding the concept of job creation. For instance, the scholar views the concept as a function of effective demand in the labour market and state intervention, particularly in contexts, where the private sector labour absorption is insufficient. Thus, this perspective in countries like Nigeria, highlights public employment programmes and social investment initiatives as corrective mechanisms, aimed at addressing market failures in employment generation (Akinwale, 2018). This view is particularly relevant for policy-driven employment programmes targeting unemployed youths, whereby job creation is often an explicit programme objective, rather than a residual economic outcome.

In addition, Grindle (2017) recommends that public programmes, which are designed to either provide jobs/work experience, enhance employability or implicitly support self-employment, are to be implemented through improved Human Capital Development (HCD), which should in turn, translate into labour market participation. In this sense, job creation may occur through: direct employment (where beneficiaries are absorbed into paid work); indirect employment (which arises from multiplier effects and value-chain expansion); and self-employment (Fox & Kaul, 2018). On his part, Grindle (2017) cautions that public policy-induced job creation should be highly contingent on the implementation quality, institutional capacity, and alignment with labour market demand. Poorly designed or weakly implemented programmes may generate short-term or precarious employment, without long-term labour market integration. This explains the weaknesses being witnessed in the implementation of such interventions in the

developing nations such as Nigeria. The challenges of job creation as given by Ogunyemi, and Adeniran, (2020) as: Structural Unemployment (Skills mismatch between labour supply and industry demand); informal employment; limited access to capital and infrastructure**;** policy and institutional weaknesses**.**

N-Power Programme

The N-Power programme was established through an Executive Order of the federal government in the year 2016, as a component of the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP). However, the NSIP Agency ACT was later established in year 2023. Thereafter, the N-Power programme was suspended in 2024 to allow some reforms in the sector. The programme was established in response to the youth unemployment crisis in Nigeria (N-Power, 2024). As an empowerment scheme targeted at youths between the ages of 18 to 35, the programme involved inculcating in the beneficiaries a new sense of value, teaching them how to use their abilities to control their lives and change the society at large. The scheme was expected to imbibe the *learn-work-entrepreneurship* culture in the youths (NSIP, 2018). It focused on creating temporary jobs, improving income status, building skills and employability of Nigerian youths across all the states, which includes Plateau State. The programme's specific objectives as given by NSIP (2016) are to:

i. Intervene and directly create jobs to improve the livelihood of a critical mass of young unemployed Nigerians;

ii. Develop a qualitative system for the transfer of employability, entrepreneurial and technical skills;

iii. Create an ecosystem of solutions for ailing public services and government diversification policies;

iv. Develop and enhance Nigeria's knowledge economy, and

v. Provide opportunity for fresh graduates to become entrepreneurs of their own micro/small business outfits.

The N-Power cut across three main segments; N-Power Volunteer corps, N-Power Knowledge and N-Power Build. The N-Power Volunteer Corps was a Graduate scheme, which was dovetailed into different components and sectors such as; N-Health, N-Agro, N-Teach, as well as N-Power Tax (VAIDS). However, the N-Power Knowledge and N-Power Build are Non-Graduate schemes (NSIP 2018). The duration of operation for a volunteer was two (2) years; however, it could last for over 2 years and some months. The beneficiaries were paid thirty thousand (N30,000.00) Naira per month (N-Power, 2016).

According to N-Power (2020), the Graduate scheme was expected to be a community-sourced solution to the nation's under-developed public services sectors such as; education, agriculture, healthcare, and civic engagement. On the other hand, the government hoped to increase its technology sector through the Non-Graduate scheme, by supporting a talent pool of software developers, hardware professionals, and other tech-based skills such as animators and digital artists. However, the results have been minimal due to implementation challenges.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

This study is based on the Empowerment Theory (ET) propounded by Zimmerman (1995) and Zimmerman (2000). This theory is adopted because, it can best explain the topic under study. The theory conceptualises empowerment as a multi-dimensional and multi-level model construct, which focuses on how programmes are implemented to promote changes in individuals, organizations, and communities, thereby allowing them to gain control over their lives and their environments. It highlights empowerment as both a process and an outcome, having a feedback loop. Empowerment is viewed as dynamic and not static. It is context-driven.

The theory specifies that an empowerment programme is expected to stimulate individual empowerment process through three (3) core interrelated components which are given as; intrapersonal, interactional, and behavioural components. These collectively represent the way a programme can shape individuals to develop; critical awareness, self-efficacy and agency; understand the system affecting their lives; and develop capacity to participate effectively by taking actions to ensure expected positive results. In addition, Zimmerman (1995), states that the outcome of this process can be measured through; self-efficacy, internal locus of control, civic engagement and leadership development. This study adopts all the three (3) components of the individual empowerment process (intrapersonal, interactional, and behavioural), the outcome and the feedback loop,

The application of this theory is particularly salient within the Nigerian socio-economic context, where high youth unemployment, skill mismatch, and limited access to productive resources persist for the youths. When applied to the study, N-Power programme was expected to deliver interpersonal component, by building capacity and enhancing self-efficacy through the temporary job creation, on-the-job training, providing opportunities and enhancing post exit employability and/or self-reliance. Interactional component was expected in increased skills and access to resources (N30,000 monthly stipends), while behavioural component deals with beneficiaries' effective participation in the socio-economic environment. The outcomes are the expected positive changes in the beneficiaries lives, which aligns with the N-Power objectives of youth empowerment. However, these outcomes have been very minimal in Plateau State, Nigeria, due to the challenges in the N-Power programme implementation.

In addition, the feedback loop in the empowerment theory is very important for evaluating the effectiveness of the N-Power programme, understanding its real-world impact and engaging the system with new inputs for better results. The vital role of analysts, supervisors and monitors which were engaged by the N-Power programme authorities shows the importance of feedback in checking the success of the N-Power programme under this theory. This study is expected to serve as new input into the policy system for more effective youth empowerment programmes design and implementation in Plateau State, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This study adopted the mixed method Research Design, because it utilised both the quantitative and qualitative methods of enquiry. However, the explanatory sequential design was used for the data analysis, while the simple linear regression analysis was employed to test the hypothesis of the study. Purposive interviews were conducted on eleven (11) key informants, who were involved in the implementation of the N-Power programme in the study area. The qualitative data from interviews was analysed using thematic analysis.

The Secondary source of data was obtained from official government sources, which includes documents from the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Reduction (FMHAPR), the National Social Investment Programme Agency (NSIPA), the N-Power programme annual reports, relevant academic journal articles, published and unpublished scholarly materials.

The total population of the study was 25,164, being the total number of N-Power beneficiaries, deployed to Plateau State, from 2016 to 2023, in Batches A, B and C. The target population of the study consists of beneficiaries from the selected Local Government Areas: Jos South, Langtang South, and Bokkos respectively. These were 7,081 beneficiaries. The minimum sample size for the population of 7081 was 364 samples, as given by Krecjie and Morgan (1970) Table. The research adopted the stratified sampling, design so as to categorise the beneficiaries into their respective LGAs and the N-Power categories (N-Teach, N-Agric and N-Health).

The questionnaire was anchored on a 5 point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1). The data collected from the questionnaire was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools. This was presented, using the simple percentage, mean and standard deviation statistical tools. The mathematical representation of the simple linear regression used to test the hypothesis is:
$$\mathbf{Y=\beta 0 \quad +\beta 1 \quad X \quad +\varepsilon}$$

where:

Y = The predicted value of the dependent (response) variable (Job Creation)

X = Independent (explanatory) variable (N-Power Programme Implementation).

$\beta 0$ = Intercept (the predicted value of Y when X =0

$\beta 1$= Regression slope coefficient (expected change in Y for a one-unit change in X)

ε = the error term, assumed to be independently and identically distributed with mean zero and constant variance.

- **The Decision Rule:** If the P-value is less than the level of significance (0.05), the Null hypotheses is to be rejected, but if the P-value is greater than the level of significance (0.05), the study will fail to reject the Null hypotheses.
- **Validity and Reliability:** Three (3) experts' judgment was used for the validity of the instrument, while Cronbach's alpha reliability test was employed because it fits the simple linear regression model.

Ethical Consideration

The study adhered to established ethical principles in accordance with the ethical guidelines governing social science research. The study was designed to protect the rights, dignity, and welfare of all participants. Ethical approval and permission to conduct the study were obtained from the appropriate authorities before data collection commenced. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained after participants were adequately informed about the purpose, procedures, and benefits of the study.

PRESENTATION OF DATA AND ANALYSIS

Analysis of Questionnaire

A total of three hundred and sixty-four (364) copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents of the study. However, only 320 copies of questionnaire, representing 87.9% were returned. Seven (7) were removed, as they were unengaged. Hence only 313 questionnaires were employed for the analysis.

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Source: Field survey, 2025

Table 1 shows, that 187 (59.7) of the respondents are male, while 126 (40.3) are female.

S/N	VARIABLES	ATTRIBUTES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)	CUMULATIVE
1	Sex	Male	187	59.7	59.7
		Female	126	40.3	100.0
2.	Age	18- 35	296	94.6	94.6
		36- 45	17	5.4	100.0
3	Marital Status	Single	232	74.1	74.1
		Married	68	21.7	95.8
		Others	13	4.2	100.0
4	Category	N-Teach	203	64.9	64.9
		N-Agro	57	18.2	83.1
		N-Health	53	16.9	100.0
5	LGA Deployed	Jos- South	253	80.8	80.8
		Langtang-South	14	4.5	85.3
		Bokkos	46	14.7	100.0

This shows that there were more male N-Power beneficiaries than female beneficiaries. The data indicates that 296 respondents (94.6%) were aged between 18 and 35 years, while 17 respondents (5.4%) fall within the 36 to 45 years' age bracket. This shows that the vast majority of N-Power beneficiaries in the selected areas of Plateau State are young adults, thereby aligning with the programme's target demographic.

The results show that 232 respondents (74.1%) are single, 68 respondents (21.7%) are married, and 13 respondents (4.2%) fall under other marital statuses. This indicates that the majority of N-Power beneficiaries in the selected Local Government Areas of Plateau State are single. This infers that the programme appealed to younger, unattached individuals who are likely more available to participate in the N-Power programme activities.

Out of the total respondents, 203 (64.9%) were enrolled in N-Teach, 57 (18.2%) in N-Agro, and 53 (16.9%) in N-Health. This shows that N-Teach was the most subscribed category among the N-Power beneficiaries, in the study area, followed by N-Agro and N-Health respectively. The dominance of N-Teach reflects the greater demand for general teaching opportunities or higher accessibility in this category. The distribution across these categories suggests that the N-Power programme addressed diverse sectors, which in turn contributed to varied levels of effect on job creation in the study areas.

253 respondents (80.8%) were deployed to Jos South, 46 respondents (14.7%) to Bokkos, and 14 respondents (4.5%) to Langtang South. This shows that the majority of N-Power beneficiaries in the study were deployed to Jos South LGA. However, the inclusion of respondents from Bokkos and Langtang South ensured a diverse representation of LGAs, which supports the study's exploration of results across both the urban and rural local government areas in plateau state, thereby furthering better inclusion and enhancing the validity of the study.

SECTION B

Statistics of Questionnaire Items, Using Mean and Standard Deviation

The data is based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. According to the specified interpretation guideline: Mean responses ranging from 1.00–2.49 indicate below-average perceptions (general disagreement with the positive statements), 2.50–3.49 indicate average perceptions (neutral to mild agreement), and 3.50–5.00 indicate above-average perceptions (agreement to strong agreement).

Table 2 N-Power Programme Implementation

S/N	Questionnaire items	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	The N-Power selection and registration processes were well-organised for easy participation of beneficiaries	1.72	.547

2	There was effective communication between N-Power officials and the beneficiaries	1.76	.553
3	The N-Power programme was effectively coordinated by the N-Power programme authorities	1.63	.643
4	The N-Power programme was adequately monitored by the N-Power programme authorities	1.73	.605
5	I was effectively supervised on the job by the N-Power authorities in my place of primary assignment	1.83	.732
6	The beneficiaries often report regularly to their places of primary assignment in my assigned local government	1.62	.577

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 2 depicts the Mean and Standard Deviations on questionnaire items on N-Power implementation. All the mean scores in this table fall between 1.62 and 1.83, placing them firmly in the below-average range, thereby, reflecting strongly negative perceptions of the programme's implementation among respondents in the selected LGAs of Plateau State. The low standard deviations suggest high consensus on these unfavourable views. Generally, all the six items yielded Means between 1.62 and 1.83, categorically below average (1.00–2.49 range), demonstrating consistently negative perceptions of critical administrative and operational elements of the N-Power programme in the selected LGAs of Plateau State. The most severe criticisms (lowest means) centred on attendance/participation, coordination, and registration processes, while supervision shows slightly more variation but remains firmly negative.

In the course of the interview, most participants expressed the view that the N-Power programme was well-structured in design, but lacked consistent planning during the implementation phase, resulting into poor quality of implementation. A participant stated: “The blueprint is excellent, but there is a gap between Abuja’s planning and local execution realities. That gap affects effectiveness at the local level.” (Admin 1). On the question regarding the role played by Plateau State and other stake holders in the programme design and the selection of the N-Power programme beneficiaries, most of the respondents stated that the State did not play any significant role in the programme design or the selection of beneficiaries, although the State was the end-user. The beneficiaries were centrally engaged by the Humanitarian Ministry through its NASIM’s website and deployed to the State for primary assignments. Opinions varied regarding merit consideration in the beneficiaries’ selection process. Majority cited political interference by political actors. A participant stressed the point further: “Yes, selection was online, but some slots were influenced by politicians”. (Admin 5).

The participants generally expressed mixed reactions regarding the structure of implementation of the N-Power programme in the area under study. In the first instance, the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, which is in charge of the programme at the federal level did not have any permanent staff based in Plateau State, in the period under review. Consequently, many participants admitted to encountering issues such as poor inter-level communication and late dissemination of information between the N-Power authorities and the State's implementers.

Most of the participants mentioned the lack of effective coordination among the implementing agencies due to lapses in communication between the N-Power programme authorities in Abuja and the Focal Person's office and the implementing Agencies in Plateau State. A participant noted; "The structure looks fine on paper, but what we faced at the local level is often confusion, especially when directives from Abuja are either lacking or come too late" (Admin 1). This lapse grossly affected the effectiveness of the Focal office in coordinating the programme in the study area. In addition, majority of the participants also stated that supervision and monitoring were not consistent. They asserted that they lacked the necessary tools for effective monitoring and supervision of the beneficiaries. A participant stated; "We faced logistics issues. For instance, there was no mobility support to supervise beneficiaries, especially those in the hinterlands" (Admin 5). Without adequate monitoring, supervision and evaluation from the N-Power programme, the beneficiaries became less committed, leading to poor results.

In addition, most participants lamented that some beneficiaries had perceived the programme merely as their own share of the "National cake" and showed poor commitment. Some beneficiaries often appear from locations such as Abuja for the periodic appraisal exercises, which were made a condition for the payment of their periodic N30, 000 Naira stipends. Other beneficiaries paid corrupt supervisors to give favourable reports on them in absentia. The corrupt beneficiaries did not even bother to appear for the screening at all. Hence, corruption, the weak follow-up and poor evaluation processes in the programme implementation hampered effectiveness. Most participants observed that there was no structured Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) in the course of the programme implementation in the study area. Where reports were submitted, there was poor or no feedback to follow-through. Most participants admitted that the N-Power programme authorities did not have well-defined exit strategy for the beneficiaries in the study area. The participants questioned the programme's long-term impact on beneficiaries' capabilities due to the absence of effective strategies for sustainability.

Table 3 Job Creation

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	The N-Power programme helped to secure a temporary job for me	4.22	.541
2	The temporary employment from N-Power improved my work experience	3.37	.908
3	I was not gainfully employed on another job before the N-Power job experience	3.62	.919
4	Participation in the N-Power programme led to job opportunities that I would not have had otherwise	3.50	.934

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 3 depicts the mean and standard deviations on questionnaire items on job creation. The mean scores in this Table range from 3.37 to 4.22, with three items in the average range and one clearly above average, reflecting mixed but generally positive perceptions of the programme's impact on employment among the respondents in the study area. Generally, the Mean range from 3.37 to 4.22, with one item clearly above average (securing temporary job) and the others at the lower end of average or just entering above average. This suggests that the N-Power programme was highly effective in providing temporary jobs, but had more moderate or mixed success in enhancing work experience or creating lasting new opportunities. The strongest consensus (lowest SD) is on the provision of temporary employment, while perceptions of improved experience and new opportunities show greater variability. These findings indicate that the N-Power programme successfully addressed immediate unemployment by offering temporary positions, but its longer-term effects on skill-building, experience quality, and sustainable job prospects appear less consistent or pronounced.

In the course of the interviews, the participants showed mixed reactions on the quality of jobs created by the N-Power authorities. Many participants lamented about cases of skill-mismatch in selection and the job placements. For instance, at the ADPA, N-Power Agro category beneficiaries were only given brief general orientation and deployed to the different functional departments in the organisation, due to paucity of relevant working tools. This negated the essence of the scheme, which was purely targeted at practical fieldwork in the agricultural sector. In addition, most participants stated that the N-Power Teach category beneficiaries were merely received by the State's focal person and deployed to the LGAs' primary schools, without proper orientation on how to teach.

Similarly, the N-Health category also recorded some beneficiaries who had neither training nor experience in health matters. A participant lamented: "The N-Health beneficiaries arrived without the necessary tools to practice. What were we supposed to do? It is very unfortunate, to say the least" (Admin 11). Without adequate tools, especially for the technical categories of the programme such as the N-Agro and N-Health, the expected positive impact on practical job experience became illusive in the study area.

Most participants believed that the two (2) years duration for the programme was too short to produce a "life-long" effect for the beneficiaries. The participants admitted that the N-Power programme authorities did not have well-defined exit strategy for the beneficiaries in the study area. While the programme created temporary jobs and income for the beneficiaries, the participants questioned its long-term impact on the Plateau State economy, in the absence of an effective strategy for sustainability. A participant lamented: "It gave jobs to the young beneficiaries, yes, but, after exit, what next? Many of them have returned to the streets in search of good jobs that are not available in this country" (Admin 8). The lack of sustainability plans was the programme's greatest challenge.

Test of Hypothesis

H0: The N-Power programme implementation has not significantly promoted job creation among beneficiaries in the selected local government areas of Plateau State.

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.626[a]	.392	.390	.25435

a. Predictors: (Constant), Npower Implementation

(**Source: SPSS Output, 2025)**

The Model summary shows that the R Square is 0.392. This represents the proportion of variance in job creation explained by N-Power programme implementation. A lower value (0.25435) indicates that the model's predictions are relatively precise, with residuals tightly clustered around the regression line.

Table 5: ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	12.963	1	12.963	200.377	.000[b]
	Residual	20.119	311	.065		
	Total	33.082	312			

a. Dependent Variable: Job Creation

b. Predictors: (Constant), Npower Implementation

(**Source: SPSS Output, 2025)**

The ANOVA table assesses the overall significance of the regression model from statistical perspective. As provided by the table the F-statistic (200.377) shows that the model explains a significant portion of the variance. Additionally, the ANOVA results confirm that the regression model is statistically significant (P=0.000). Thus, the high F-value and low p-value indicate that N-Power programme implementation explains a substantial and statistically significant portion of the variance in job creation.

Table 6: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.863	.101		28.224	.000
	Npower Implementation	.342	.024	.396	14.155	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Job Creation

(**Source: SPSS Output, 2025)**

The coefficient table shows β 0.342, T=14.155, P=0.000. The P-value is 0.000 is less than the level of significance (0.05). Thus, there is adequate justification to reject the null hypotheses and conclude that N-Power programme implementation has a significant effect on job creation among the N-Power beneficiaries. Furthermore, the Beta value of 0.342 indicates that a unit increase in N-Power programme implementation increases job creation among beneficiaries by 34.2%.

Discussion on Findings

The data used for the analysis in this study derive from two (2) sources: the questionnaire responses and the interview results. However, the Simple Linear Regression model was used to test the hypothesis developed by the study. The findings were as follows:

1. The findings of this study reveal that the N-Power Programme implementation has a statistically significant effect on job creation in Plateau State. Specifically, the study shows the N-Power implementation created temporary jobs for the majority of the beneficiaries (Table 4.3). This finding shows that one of the important objectives of the N-Power programme, which is job creation for the youths was partly achieved. This also supports Zimmerman (2000) Empowerment Theory (ET), which supports job creation as a necessary tool for Intrapersonal Empowerment. The result is supported by the rejection of the Null Hypothesis (H0), which states that the N-Power programme implementation has not significantly promoted job creation in Plateau State. The finding is consistent with previous studies, which reported that the N-Power programme provided temporary jobs to unemployed youths in Nigeria (Olatunji & Ayodele, 2020; ELMA, 2022). However, the interview results reveal that the two (2) years duration for the job was too short to produce a "life-long" effect for the beneficiaries as stipulated in the N-Power objectives. The N-Power authorities did not have well-defined exit strategy for the beneficiaries, besides the poor monthly stipends of N30,000.00 paid irregularity. The N-Power jobs also lacked long-term impact. Consequently, many beneficiaries fell back into the labour market, without jobs after exiting the programme. This negates the principles of Zimmerman (2000) ET, which advocates for dynamism in the empowerment process, through the creation of decent and sustainable jobs.

2. The study results also showed moderate improvement in the beneficiaries' on-the-job work experience (Table 4.3). A better working experience would have led to more capacity building, which would have translated into enhanced post-exit employability levels and self-reliance in the study area. The interview results showed cases of skill-mismatch in the selection process and job placements in N-Teach, N-Agro and N-Health categories. This may have contributed to the moderate on-the -job experience outcomes. This fact greatly contests the quality of the jobs given by the N-Power authorities. Skill-mismatch contradicts Zimmerman (1999) Interactional Empowerment, which allows people to connect personal experiences to broader social-economic and political contexts, thus, demonstrating capacity to engage effectively in problem-solving skills and fostering the capacity to act strategically within the community.

3. The study results showed that majority of the beneficiaries were not gainfully employed on another job before the N-Power job experience in the study area (Table 4.3). This finding shows that an important objective of the N-Power programme, which is job creation for unemployed youths was partly achieved. However, the interview results revealed that a few of the beneficiaries were already engaged in sundry income generating ventures in the informal economic sector, thereby displacing the actual policy target: Unemployed youths, who have no alternative employment. This contradicts the findings by Sabatier and Mazmanian (2016), who view proper targeting as a critical aspect of effective policy implementation and goal outcomes.

4. The study results also show that the N-Power programme opened new job opportunities, beyond what the beneficiaries would have accessed independently in the study area (Table 4.3). This implies that the programme added value for many beneficiaries in aspects such as, new employment pathways, networking, access to the N30,000.00 paid monthly and improved living conditions, etc. However, the interview results revealed that some beneficiaries abandoned their assigned duties for personal engagements. Indeed, some of the beneficiaries viewed the N-Power programme as their own share of the "National Cake" and treated the stipends as free money. Hence, they were not committed to the learning opportunities provided. The missed opportunities due to absenteeism contradict the Zimmerman (2000) Behavioural Empowerment component, which promotes active participation to effect positive changes. Hence, having mere opportunities is not enough without the behaviour component that is action/outcome based.

5. The study reveals in Table 4.2, that the programme implementation suffered from challenges of poor planning/organisation, inadequate communication and coordination within the study period. The programme also witnessed beneficiaries' absenteeism, inadequate supervision, and poor monitoring/evaluation. These were collaborated by the interview results which revealed beneficiaries' poor access to relevant resources. These issues hampered effective motivation for the implementers, limited the quality of the jobs and reduced empowerment outcomes among the beneficiaries in the study area. The interview results also revealed that corruption was evident as some unscrupulous beneficiaries had to pay-off some supervisors, independent monitors and head-teachers to falsify attendance records. These lapses hampered effectiveness of the programme in the study area.

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

1. It is recommended that the Federal Government should redesign the job creation component of the N-Power Programme to move beyond temporary engagement toward long-term employment opportunities. This can be achieved by ensuring an inclusive partnership with relevant stakeholders, thereby, strengthening linkages between the N-Power authorities and the private sector employers, other state ministries, the youths themselves and local enterprises, who should be allowed to contribute to the youth empowerment policy process. Such structured partnerships would enhance the provision of market-driven skill modules for the training of the beneficiaries, improve the number of stipends paid and provide for post-exit grants/loans in order to ensure sustainability. Such partnership with the private sector would also create room for apprenticeship, job opportunities, mentorship, networking and innovation diffusion.

2. It is recommended that more attention should be given to the selection and placement processes to tackle the cases of skill-mismatch. The N-Power programme authorities should conduct skills and educational profiling during the online pre-assessment test/recruitment process, in order to match the beneficiaries with placements that actually correspond to their qualifications, professional background, and career interests. Placement should be based on transparent, skill-based matching criteria. This would translate into better post-exit employability levels and self-reliance.

3. To prevent already-employed persons from benefiting from the N-Power programme, it is recommended the government should strengthen beneficiary screening and verification by cross-checking applicants against employment and other relevant databases. Applicants should also provide verifiable declarations of employment status, with stiff penalties for false information.

4. To improve beneficiaries' participation, increase their commitment and reduce absenteeism, the N-Power authorities should improve attendance records, ensure more supervision, monitoring and credible verification. To achieve this, the implementers in the state should be adequately motivated with adequate working tools. In addition, beneficiaries who are consistently absent without valid reasons should face appropriate sanctions. There should be clear responsibilities, effective supervision, and timely payment of stipends to encourage active participation. The thirty thousand (N30,000.00) naira monthly stipends should be reviewed periodically to align with Nigeria's economic realities. This would serve to motivate the beneficiaries, improve commitment, enhance entrepreneurial development and foster more self-reliance.

5. The N-Power implementation should be improved through transparent beneficiary selection, proper effective monitoring and supervision, timely payment of

stipends, adequacy of relevant resources, adequate training and regular evaluation. The programme should also strengthen coordination among implementing agencies and ensure that beneficiaries receive relevant skills and sustainable exit opportunities. Strict sanctions should be imposed on officials and beneficiaries involved in indiscipline.

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