

IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF N-POWER SCHEME ON EMPLOYMENT CREATION IN GOMBE STATE, NIGERIA (2016 - 2019)

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Abstract

Employment creation is associated with the overall world's development agenda for policy makers, social partners and civil society. It is also regarded as critical instrument used to achieve global poverty reduction and foster equitable inclusive development. This study was conducted to assess the impact of the N-Power Scheme on employment creation in Gombe State. The study utilized primary source in which questionnaires were administered. The data obtained were presented and analyzed using chi-square statistics and the hypotheses developed were tested with the aid of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. Empowerment theory was used as a framework of analysis. The findings revealed that the N-Power scheme had a positive impact on employment opportunities for the youths in Gombe State. Based on the results of this study, the following recommendation was made. The government should actively initiate more empowerment scheme and financial support at all levels of government to serve as effective platforms for massive youth's employment creation across the country with more focus on financial support.

Key Words: Employment Creation, N-Power Scheme, Poverty, Youths Empowerment, Gombe State-Nigeria

Introduction

Employment creation is regarded as a critical instrument used to achieve global poverty reduction and foster equitable inclusive development. Employment creation, therefore, is an antidote to social exclusion rights across the global economy as it is topped the overall world's development agenda for policymakers, social partners and civil society. This is because employment creation is more than a factor of production it is an essential element of any development process and the well-being of the citizens (Kasekende, 2015). Employment creation should be prioritized as a goal of development policy at both federal and state levels. Thus, employment is the main asset of people, the type of work people hold is one of the most powerful determinants of well-being, as over the lifetime, most people spend a substantial part of their time at work. Additionally, employment creation is an essential factor of production for firms of all types and sizes. Job creation could also be regarded as the provision of employment opportunities for the teeming unemployed or underemployed populace. It is an increment in the number of employment in an economy (Eze, 2019).

Employment creation is a direct cure to unemployment situation therefore, according to Africa development Bank Group report (2016) one third of Africans 420 million youth aged 15-35 are unemployed and discouraged, while another third is vulnerably employed. The unemployment situation has been blamed on slow economic growth due to low investment leading to low job creation and low economic activities, lack of strategic planning and increase population. More so, poor educational standard and curriculum contribute. Similarly, African Union estimated that 226 million youth age 15-24 live in African continent, representing 20percent of the continent population. Out of this number 60percent of them were unemployed (ADB, 2016).

Youths in Nigeria suffer high unemployment due to lack of opportunities, physical and psychological challenges resulting from poverty. Some youths respond to these challenges by engaging in criminal or violent behaviour while others suffer from despair or depression. Unemployment creates a wide range of social ills and young people are particularly susceptible to its damaging effects namely; lack of skills, low self-esteem, marginalization, impoverishment and wasting of enormous human resources. These problems associated with unemployment can be solved by empowering the youths through Social Investment Scheme (SIS) which will enable them to have opportunities for self-employment (Samiu, 2019).

To intervene in the socio-economic plights, governments at the global, national, and state level have strategic roles to play in employment generation. In light of this, the government of Nigeria, both past at the State and Federal government have striven to provide direct employment in government departments and offices at various positions and levels. The government also encouraged Non-Governmental Organizations and other private sector to invite more job applicants and create opportunities (Kasckende, 2015).

The Nigerian economy since the attainment of political independence in 1960 has undergone fundamental structural changes resulting in structural shifts which have however not resulted in significant sustainable economic growth and development to ensure adequate employment opportunities for her youths. Over the years, the role of the youth in national development has been essential as they continue to play significant roles in nation-building. The youth, by definition refers to the segment of the population, from 18-35 years, who are characteristically active, vibrant and daring, and with useful energies. Thus, in employment creation, the youths are the pillars because they constitute the largest number in the labour force. The role of the youth in national development has been indispensable as they continue to play pervasive roles in nation-building. However, the reverse is the case in Nigeria, where youths are the most vulnerable group affected by unemployment. As such, the government of Nigeria has come up with ways of empowering Nigerian youths by improving their skills and providing them with sources of income to enable them to become self-employed and even employers of labour. N-Power is one of how the federal government used to tackle this problem of inadequate employment opportunities among the youths in the country.

N-Power Scheme is an initiative of the National Social Investment Programme of the Federal Government of Nigeria aimed specifically at job creation and youth empowerment through human capital development. It aspires to provide a platform where most Nigerian youths can access skills acquisition and development. N-Power is the employability and enhancement program of the Federal Government of Nigeria, aimed at imbibing the learn-work-entrepreneurship culture in youth between the ages of 18-35. Applications are done online to create a level playing field for everyone and determine which applicants' details would enable selection and direct payment through the bank accounts and BVN submitted. The modular programs under N-Power will ensure that each participant will learn and practice most of what is necessary to find or create work (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2018).

With the introduction of the N-Power scheme in Nigeria, the Federal Government provides a structure not only for large-scale and relevant work skills acquisition and development; but also for utilizing a large volunteer workforce to fix some of the problems in public services and stimulate the larger economy. Besides, N-Power is also a tool for diversifying the economy. Particularly, N-Power Agro provides not only the means to apply knowledge and science to our farming practices, but also to gather data for effective planning. With the Non-Graduate category (N-Power Knowledge and N-Power Build), young Nigerians are trained to build a knowledge economy equipped with world-class skills and certification to become relevant in the domestic and global markets. N-Power also focuses on providing our non-graduates with relevant technical and business skills that enhance their work outlook and livelihood (FGN, 2018).

The participants of the scheme cut across youths in all 36 states of Nigeria including Gombe State where the majority of its youths are unemployed. The existence of various degree-awarding institutions exposes the State to constant youth unemployment growth and vulnerability. Therefore, this

study will assess the impact of the N-Power scheme on Youth Empowerment through job creation in the state.

Objective of the Study

- a. To assess the impact of the N-power scheme on employment creation in Gombe State from 2016 to 2019.
- b. To evaluate the extent to which N-Power scheme empowered youths in Gombe State.

Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant relationship between the N-power scheme and employment creation in Gombe State.

Literature Review

Employment Creation

Employment creation and employment generation regarded as the same thing and the same meaning, refers to a natural process of social development. It also refers to the government policies, intended to reduce the unemployment rate, by increasing the number of jobs in the economy (Anthonia, et al 2023). Employment creation for full employment of labour was recognized early in Nigeria by policymakers as an important process of aligning economic growth with the developmental needs of the country (Okafor, 2016). Creating jobs is key to any economic recovery program. Many activities can fall under the rubric of job creation, including immediate short-term opportunities that yield service or the private sector. It is important to distinguish between these different activities, recognizing that sustainability and long-term impact should be duly considered in implementing any employment generation program. Providing jobs is vital on many levels. Politically, employment opportunities give the population a stake in the peace process by providing young men and women with alternatives to violence. Economically, employment provides income to poor families, revives domestic demand for goods and services, and stimulates overall growth. Socially, employment can also promote social healing, encourage the return of the displaced, and improve social welfare in the long run.

Keng (2019) posits that jobs are created in response to some sort of event or situation. In other words, it is the proactive opposite of unemployment. Jobs are created to maintain healthy economic growth. When jobs are created, the economy also grows, and whenever people are working and can provide for themselves, the morale increases and things stabilize. So jobs create earnings, which create demand.

Stefano & Gaella (2015) posit that labour markets have been profoundly affected by global developments in the past decades. The transition of many developing countries and former centrally planned economies to market-based systems and the greater integration of countries in the global economy have changed the rules of the game within which businesses, governments, and workers interact. The opening of domestic markets has exposed previously protected firms to greater competition but also to new, more productive technologies. The scale of production has often changed from large oligopolies protected by trade barriers, to smaller, but often more technologically advanced, production units. Overall, firms are facing greater pressure to innovate to survive and expand.

The goal of all employment creation strategies is to stimulate healthy economic growth. Economists agree that annual growth between 2% - 3% is sustainable, and that usually requires adding 150,000 new jobs per month to employ new workers entering the labour force. In a free market economy, the government doesn't need to do anything when growth is healthy; capitalism encourages small businesses to compete, thereby creating better ways to meet consumers' needs. Because of this, small businesses account for 65% of all new jobs created. The proper role of government is to provide a supportive environment for growth. Even a healthy economy is subject to the bubbles and busts of the business cycle. When the economy contracts into a recession, the government must create solutions to unemployment. It may use expansive monetary policy, expansive fiscal policy, or both to stimulate job growth (Kimberly, 2019).

Tunji, (2018) also asserts that the goal of economic growth is to improve the living standard of people in the country. This goal is sustainably achieved, primarily through people's employment income. Thus, employment is seen as the main mechanism through which the goal of economic performance is reflected and achieved. In the same vein, the twin issue of employment creation and full employment are regarded as economic fundamental and the availability of good jobs is a strategic measure of the health of any economy. The verdict is that economic growth which generates new jobs and income for individuals is a sine qua non for increasing productive employment hence the call for an urgent and strategic need for the assessment of Nigeria's economic growth to ensure that it addresses the challenges of unemployment and job creation in the country. This job creation challenge in Nigeria can be effectively addressed through strict adherence to and execution of the different strategies and policy frameworks that have been put in place for the employment drive in the country. There is a need for political leaders to follow the provision of different policy documents and strategies including the National Employment Policy (NEP) of 2002, the National Action Plan on Employment Creation (NAPEC), the National Youth Policy (NYP) of 2009 as well as the National Policy on Education (NPE). It is not without reason that many are saying that all these government-sponsored job creation and poverty reduction schemes and programmes share a common destiny of publicity.

N-Power Programme

N-Power is a job creation and empowerment programme of the National Social Investment Programme of the Federal Government of Nigeria. The N-Power programme has been designed for young Nigerians between the ages of 18 and 35. It is a paid volunteering programme of two-year duration. In the specifications of the programme, graduates are required to undertake their primary tasks in identified public services within their proximate communities. All N-Power beneficiaries were entitled to computer devices that contained information necessary for their specific engagement, as well as information for their continuous training and development (N-Power Information Guide, 2017). The programme is divided into the following categories;

- a. The Graduate Category which comprised of N-Power Volunteer Corps
- b. Non-Graduate Category comprising of N-Power Knowledge and N-Power Build.

Goals of the Programme

- i. To intervene and directly improve the livelihood of a critical mass of young unemployed Nigerians.
- ii. To develop a qualitative system for the transfer of employability, entrepreneurial and technical skills.
- iii. To create an ecosystem of solutions for ailing public services and government diversification policies.
- iv. To develop and enhance Nigeria's knowledge economy.

Key Areas of N-Power

According to the N-Power Information Guide (2017), volunteers are expected to provide teaching, instructional, and advisory solutions in four (4) key areas.

N-Power Teach

This category of beneficiaries is expected to help improve basic education delivery in Nigeria. N-Power Teach Volunteers are deployed as teacher assistants in primary schools that appear to be understaffed in Nigeria. They are not expected to replace the current teachers, but to work as support teachers across the country, assisting with teaching, school management and other functions within the schools. Where possible, they are also required to assist in providing basic education to children in marginalized communities (N-Power Information Guide, 2017). N-Power Teach (STEM) is also a

component of the N-Power Teach programme. Through this programme, young graduates with the skills and interest in computer programming and other related fields are required to assist in the implementation of the Federal Government's STEM Programme for primary and secondary schools in the country (N-Power Information guide, 2017).

N-Power Health

Under this strand of the programme, N-Power Health beneficiaries are required to assist in improving and promoting preventive healthcare in their communities to vulnerable members of the society including pregnant women and children and to families and individuals. This area is reserved for those who read health and medical-related courses at certificate course and diploma levels (N-Power Information Guide, 2017).

N-Power Agro

N-Power Agro beneficiaries are intended to provide advisory services to farmers across the country. They are expected to disseminate the knowledge that has been amassed by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in the area of extension services. They are also required to gather data on Nigeria's agricultural assets. This area is meant for youth who are educated in agricultural-related courses (N-Power Information Guide, 2017).

The Voluntary Asset and Income Declaration Scheme (VAIDS)

VAIDS seeks to encourage non-compliant and partially compliant taxpayers to voluntarily declare their correct income and assets and pay the appropriate tax due to the government. The N-Power VAIDS volunteers are expected to function as community tax liaison officers and have the following key responsibilities which include tax promotion, document review, record keeping, answering online inquiries, customer management, and report writing, amongst others. This key area engaged youth with post-tertiary qualifications in computer and information science-related courses (N-Power Information Guide, 2017).

Theoretical Framework

For the success of this study empowerment theory is regarded as relevant, the theory was first popularized by Honnadle & Klaus (1979), in a book titled "International administration: implementation for development project", where they argued that the best way to induce development in any given society is to empower people to be able to handle their own development by themselves. Honnadle believes that meeting the people's needs is an essential component of development. But it goes beyond that and argue that provision of basic necessities alone does not constitute development, but to him availability of these things could facilitate development only when it leads to develop the mind, understanding and competence of the people to have more effective control over their own destiny. The theory has the following assumptions among others:

1. Development in any given society begins when people take charge of their own destiny through participation.
2. That development can only be sustainable when it builds on existing capacity; as there is no society or country that has zero capacity. By this it means provision of basic needs of life alone does not constitute development but through mind innovation, perceptive and experience development.

Honnadle further argued that the best way to induce development in all society is to empower the people to be able to handle their own development by themselves. Empowerment theory subscribe to the Chinese saying that "if you want a child who loves to eat fish, you should do him a favour by teaching on how to fish than to give him at any time he needed it". This is to enable him to have an access to fish in your absence.

In respect of this theory, the initiation of multifarious social schemes in Nigeria by different political regimes have become a source of empowerment to the citizens especially the vulnerable youths who are jobless and roaming the streets. Social schemes and packages like Graduate Internship Scheme, N-power and Conditional transfer of money to the youths have become succour and empowerment. The beneficiaries are bent on using the acquired knowledge to develop themselves and the entire society.

The justification for adopting empowerment theory for this study is the fact that, for any meaningful development to take place in every society or nation, an individual (youth) should be provided with basic requirements of life (resources) and free will to invest on their own. However, the Analysis of N-power scheme on Youth Empowerment with reference to Gombe State was geared towards making an individual's to be self-reliant through various means of utilization of the available resources provided for them. This study therefore, found this theory important and applicable for the successful implementation of the programme and the study as well.

The Strengths of Empowerment Theory

People may feel helpless in their lives for any number of reasons, but empowerment theory focuses on how oppression contributes to this experience. It centers on helping marginalized people at individual, group and community levels gain the personal, interpersonal and political power to improve their lives.

The Critiques of Empowerment Theory

The criticisms of empowerment theory focus on its lack of theoretical basis and the inherent power imbalances in empowerment approaches. For example, programs must be grounded in a clear conceptualization of empowerment, rather than assuming that programs themselves are empowering.

Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design as the most suitable for the study. The justification for adopting the survey design was its ability to allow the researchers to investigate problems and acquire firsthand information, using eliciting a response from a large number of respondents allowing them to generalize their findings. It also sheds light on the prevailing relationships and practices, values and processes that are occurring, effects that are being felt or trends that are developing objectively.

Sources of Data Collection

The source of data for this study is primary source. The primary data were collected from the selected respondents through the use of structured questionnaires.

Population of the Study

The population of this study is the beneficiaries of N-Power in Gombe State from the office of Social Investment Programme Gombe across the beneficiaries of N-Power in the eleven (11) Local Government Areas of Gombe State.

Sample Size

Taro Yamane statistical formula was used in determining the sample size of the N-Power beneficiaries as calculated below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where; n = the desired sample size to be determined N = total population e = accepted error limit (0.05) based on a 95% confidence level.

In the case of this study: $N = 9,026$ $e = 0.05$ $n =$ sample size to be determined

$l =$ constant number

Therefore:

$$n = \frac{9,026}{1+9,026 (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{9,026}{1+9,026(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{9,026}{1+22.565}$$

$$n = \frac{9,026}{23.565}$$

$n = 383$ N- Power beneficiaries

Sampling Techniques

Multi-stage and judgmental samplings were used in selecting the sample size of the beneficiaries. In applying this method, Gombe State is clustered into three Senatorial Districts. Each Senatorial District formed a cluster whereby one (1) Local Government Area was randomly selected as can be seen in the table below.

Table 1: Local Government Areas in Gombe State According to Senatorial Districts

S/No	Senatorial Districts	LGAs according to Senatorial Districts	Randomly selected Local Government
1.	Gombe North	Dukku Funakaye Gombe Kwami Nafada	Gombe
2.	Gombe Central	Akko Yamaltu Deba	Yamaltu Deba
3.	Gombe South	Balanga Billiri, Kaltungo Shongom	Balanga

Source: Field Survey, (2020)

Therefore, Gombe, Yamaltu Deba and Balanga Local Government Areas were selected. The proportion of the sample size for each of the selected Local Government Areas is calculated according to their population proportion as can be shown in the table below.

$$\text{Gombe} = \frac{3759 \times 383}{5022} = 287$$

$$\text{Y/Deba} = \frac{753 \times 383}{5022} = 57$$

$$\text{Balanga} = \frac{510 \times 383}{5022} = 39$$

Table 2: Sample Size of the Beneficiaries

S/No	LGAs	Population	Sample size
1.	Gombe	3759	287
2.	Y/Deba	753	57
3.	Balanga	510	39
	Total	5022	383

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Instrument of the Study

The instrument for data collection in this study is a questionnaire which was administered to the sampled population by the researcher. The questionnaires were structured in simple English and close-ended and gather information covering the objectives of the study. Three Hundred and Eighty-Three (383) copies of questionnaires were administered among the targeted population. However only Three Hundred and Sixty-Eight (368) have been retrieved, and Eighteen (18) copies were not returned. Below are the tables of presentation and analysis of data on the findings.

Methods of Data Analysis

The data generated were analyzed using descriptive statistics which involved the use of tables, frequencies; percentages and cross-tabulation. Furthermore, inferential statistics, chi-square and regression analysis were used in testing the validity of the hypotheses developed. The chi-square showed the existence of a significant relationship between the independent and dependent variables as demonstrated in the hypotheses. The data presentation and hypotheses testing were done with the aid of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 20.0).

Data Analysis

Section A: Personal Data of the Respondents

Table 3: Sex Distribution of Respondents

S/No	Sex	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Male	205	55.71
2.	Female	163	44.29
	Total	368	100

Source: Field Survey, (2020)

Table 3 above shows that 205 respondents, representing 55.71% are males while 163 respondents, representing 44.29% are females. Therefore, the majority of the respondents 55.71% are males.

Table 4: Age Distribution of Respondent

S/No	Age	Frequency	Percentage
1.	18-25 years	140	38.04
2.	26-30 years	126	34.24
3.	31-35 years	85	23.10
4.	36 and above	17	4.62
	Total	368	100

Source: Field Survey, (2020)

The age distribution information given in above Table 4 shows that respondents who are between 18-25 years of age represent 38.04% were given more questionnaires, while those who were between 36 and above years of age were the least that responded or filled the questionnaire representing 4.62% of the respondents, where those that are between 26-30 and 31-35 years of age were representing 34.24% and 23.10% respectively. This shows that the majority of the beneficiaries of N-power in Gombe State are within the age of 18-25 where the lowest number of the beneficiaries were those that are 36 years and above.

Table 5: Marital Status of the Respondents

S/No	Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Single	144	39.13
2.	Married	189	51.36
3.	Widowed	17	4.62
4.	Divorced	18	4.89
	Total	368	100

Source: Field Survey, (2020)

Table 5 above, shows that the N-power beneficiaries who are not married represent 39.13%, Married represent 51.36%, while widowed and divorced represent 4.62% and 4.89 respectively. This shows that those who are married are more than the others in the recruitment of N-Power in Gombe State.

Table 6: Qualification of the Respondents

S/No	Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Primary certificate	15	4.08
2.	Secondary certificate	114	30.98
3.	Diploma/NCE	156	42.40
4.	Degree and above	83	22.54
	Total	368	100

Source: Field Survey, (2020)

As shown in Table 6, 4.08% of the respondents' qualification is a primary certificate, 30.98% of the respondents' qualification is a secondary certificate, 42.40% of the respondent's qualification obtained Diploma/NCE, while 22.54% has degree certificate and above. According to the above data Diploma/NCE holders were the highest number among the beneficiaries followed by those that has secondary certificate and those of degree holders and above are the next while those that have primary certificate were the least among the beneficiaries of N-Power in Gombe State.

Table 7: Occupation of the Respondents

S/No	Options	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Employed	3	0.82
2.	Unemployed	187	50.81
3.	Self-employed	140	38.04
4.	Student	38	10.33
	Total	368	100

Source: Field Survey, (2020)

From the information given in the above table 7, the majority of the respondents are unemployed representing 50.81%, followed by self-employed with 38.04%, students representing 10.33% and employed persons with 0.82% of the respondents. The analysis above shows that unemployed people are the majority of the beneficiaries of N-Power in Gombe State in which they (unemployed) have the highest percentage of the respondents. This therefore shows that every individual can benefit from N-Power except government workers.

Section B: Impacts of N-Power on the Beneficiaries in Gombe State

Table 8: Respondents Income before their Enrollment into the N-Power

S/No	Income per month	Frequency	Percentage
1.	5000-15000	215	58.42
2.	16000-25000	85	23.10
3.	26000-35000	32	8.70
4.	36000 and above	36	9.78
	Total	368	100

Source: Field Survey, (2020)

Following the information in above table 8, it is observed that 58.42% of the respondents' income earnings were between N5000 to N15000 per month, 23.10% of the respondent's earnings were N16000 to N25000 monthly, while 8.70% of the respondent's earnings were between N26000 to N35000 and 9.78% between N36000 and above.

Table 9: Respondents Income after their Enrollment into the N-Power

S/No	Income per Month	Frequency	Percentage
1.	5000-15000	21	5.71
2.	16000-25000	26	7.07
3.	26000-35000	34	9.23
4.	36000 and above	287	77.99
	Total	368	100

Source: Field Survey, (2020)

Table 9 above shows that 5.71% of the respondents' earnings were between N5000 to N15000, 7.07% of the respondent's earnings were between N16000 to N25000, while 9.23% of the respondents' earnings were between N26000 to N35000 and 77.99% of the respondents have to earn N36000 and above monthly. This therefore shows that there is a significant impact of N-Power in improving the income of its beneficiaries in Gombe State.

Section C: The Extent to Which N-Power Created Employment in Gombe State

Table 10: Respondents' View on Whether N-Power has Created Employment in Gombe State

S/No	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	368	100
2.	No	0	0
	Total	368	100

Source: Field Survey, (2020)

Table 10 above shows that all 368 respondents, representing 100% agreed that the N-Power programme has generated employments for its beneficiaries. Therefore, N-Power as a programme has provided empowerment in Gombe State according to the above information given by the respondents in Table.

Table 11: Respondents View on the Extent to Which N-Power Scheme has Empowered Youths in Gombe State

S/No	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Very High	22	5.98
2.	High	36	9.78
3.	Low	310	84.24
	Total	368	100

Source: Field Survey, (2023)

Table 11 above shows that 22 respondents, representing 5.98% said the extent of N-power empowerment is very high while 36 respondents, representing 9.78% said high and 310 defendants, representing 84.24% thought that the empowerment generated by N-Power programme is low. Therefore, the extent of the empowerment of the N-Power programme in Gombe State is very low compared to the number of graduates and applicants without jobs.

Test of Hypotheses

Table 12: There is no significant relationship between the activities of the N-Power scheme and employment creation in Gombe State.

Variables	O	E	(O-E)	(O-E) ²	$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$
Yes	35	184	-149	22201	120.66
No	333	184	149	22201	120.66
	368			$\Sigma(O-E)^2 = 241.32$	E

Degree of Freedom (DF): (c-1) (r-1) (2-1) (2-1)
(1) (1) = 1

At 5% level of significance

$X^2_{cal} = 241.32$

$X^2_{tab} = 3.841$

Decision Rule:

After the computation of data collected, the result depicts a 0.05 level of significance and at 1 degree of freedom (DF) that is the Chi-Square calculated (X^2_{cal}) 241.32 is greater than the Chi-Square tabulated (X^2_{tab}) 3.841. That is $X^2_{cal} = 241.32 > X^2_{tab} = 3.841$. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected whereas the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted, which states that there is a significant relationship between the N-Power scheme and employment creation in Gombe State.

Discussion

The N-Power Youth Empowerment scheme has a significant and positive impact on employment opportunities for the youth in Gombe State. This government programme was designed to address the challenge of youth unemployment by providing skills training and job opportunities to young people across various sectors of the economy. It created jobs among unemployed youths in Gombe State as portrays in the Table 14 above where all the 368 respondents, representing 100% agreed that the N-Power programme has generated employments for its beneficiaries.

Additionally, the N-Power scheme has served as a means of providing young people with practical work experience. Many graduates in Nigeria often face the challenge of employers requiring experience for entry-level positions, making it difficult for them to secure jobs. Through the N-Power programme, participants are given the opportunity to gain hands-on experience, which they can later include in their resumes when applying for other job opportunities. This experience bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge acquired in educational institutions and the practical skills needed in the job market. Lastly, the hypothesis tested in the study revealed that there is significant relationship between the N-Power scheme and employment generation in Gombe State.

Recommendations

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

- a. The N-Power Youth Empowerment Scheme should further be assessed and improved to increase employment opportunities for youths in Gombe State. Immediate action is needed to develop and implement effective job creation and youth empowerment strategies. This will help prevent potential social tensions and mitigate the risk of losing an entire generation of young people to unemployment and underemployment.
- b. The governments at both Federal and State should actively initiate more empowerment scheme and skill development programmes for the youth. These programmes should receive significant attention and financial support at all levels of government (Federal, State, and Local) to serve as effective platforms for massive youth employment generation across the country.
- c. More attention should be focused on Financial Empowerment because it is important to provide financial support to the youth after they acquire new skills. This will enable them to start their own businesses and become self-reliant entrepreneurs. It can also transform them into job creators rather than merely job seekers, thereby reducing the overall youth unemployment rate.

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