

Journal of Applied Research and Multidisciplinary Studies (JARMS)

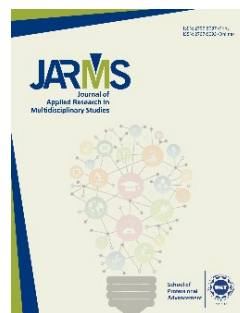
Volume 4 Issue 2, Fall 2023


ISSN(P): 2707-5087, ISSN(E): 2707-5095

Homepage: <https://journals.umt.edu.pk/index.php/jarms>



Article QR



- Title:** The Role of National Social Safety Net on Youth Empowerment, Vocational Skills, Job Competency in Kaduna State, Nigeria
- Author (s):** Musa Zakari
- Affiliation (s):** University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria
- DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.32350/jarms.42.05>
- History:** Received: May 17, 2023, Revised: July 27, 2023, Accepted: November 16, 2023, Published: December 30, 2023
- Citation:** Zakari, M. (2023). The role of national social safety net on youth empowerment, vocational skills, job competency in Kaduna State, Nigeria. *Journal of Applied Research and Multidisciplinary Studies*, 4(2), 86–104. <https://doi.org/10.32350/jarms.42.05>
- Copyright:** © The Authors
- Licensing:**  This article is open access and is distributed under the terms of [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)
- Conflict of Interest:** Author(s) declared no conflict of interest



UMT

A publication of
School of Professional Advancements
University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan

The Role of National Social Safety Net on Youth Empowerment, Vocational Skills, Job Competency in Kaduna State, Nigeria

Musa Zakari*

Department of Public Administration, National Open University of Nigeria

Abstract

This study investigates the impact of the National Social Safety Net Programme (NASSP) on youth empowerment through vocational skills development in Kaduna State, Nigeria. Specifically, it examines whether the NASSP has successfully enhanced young people's vocational training outcomes, ultimately improving their job competency and employability. The study employs a survey research design. The study population comprises current and potential beneficiaries (Graduate N-power volunteers, Non-graduate programme such as; N-power-Build, N-power-Tech and N-power-Knowledge make up the entire population) of the National Social Safety Net Programme in Kaduna State, Nigeria. This population include individuals aged 18-35 years who meet the predefined criteria set by the National Social Intervention Program administrators and eligible participants and those that have benefited from NASSP's vocational skill development initiatives. A representative sample size were determined and selected through a suitable sampling technique (e.g., stratified random sampling). Data collection involves a combination of primary (survey) and secondary data sources (NASSP program reports) to provide a comprehensive picture. Data analysis employs both quantitative and qualitative techniques to examine the relationship between NASSP participation and improved vocational skills, job competency, and employment outcomes. Findings suggest a positive correlation between NASSP participation and enhanced youth empowerment in Kaduna State. Participants report significant improvements in their vocational skills, increased confidence in their abilities, and better job prospects as a result of the program. This study offers valuable insights for policymakers and stakeholders involved in youth empowerment programs. The findings highlight the potential of well-designed social safety nets to promote sustainable youth development and reduce unemployment. The study

*Corresponding Author: mzakari@noun.ng

further contributes to the understanding of effective strategies for enhancing job competency among vulnerable youth populations in Nigeria.

Keywords: National Social Safety Net Programme, youth empowerment, vocational skills, job competency, Kaduna, Nigeria

Introduction

The Nigeria's National Social Safety Net Programme (NSSNP) emerged from the need to tackle widespread poverty in Nigeria. It was established in 2016 under the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management, and Social Development. The World Bank has been a key partner in developing and funding the NSSNP. The program's main goals are to provide targeted assistance to the poorest and most vulnerable households, and break the cycle of poverty.

Nigeria's National Social Safety Net Programme (NSSNP) focuses on women and youths Empowerment. A major emphasis of the NSSNP is to provide young people with the vocational and entrepreneurial skills necessary to become self-sufficient and contribute positively to the economy. Programs impart skills in trades like carpentry, tailoring, agriculture, and technology, enabling youth to generate income. NSSNP training also focuses on soft skills, such as communication, problem-solving, and work ethic – skills that are highly valued by potential employers. Nigeria's NSSNP aligns with broader global trends in using social protection measures to reduce poverty and inequality. Similar programs exist worldwide:

Conditional Cash Transfers: Many countries, especially in Latin America (e.g., Brazil's Bolsa Familia), provide cash transfers to poor families, often on condition of school attendance or health checkups. This approach is also seen within the NSSNP.

Public Works Programs: Programs in countries like India and South Africa offer temporary employment on infrastructure projects, providing both income and skills development. **Youth-Specific Initiatives:** Countries across the globe have programs specifically focused on equipping young people with skills and linking them to employment opportunities.

The programme has some Challenges and Future Direction. While the NSSNP has made progress, scaling up its reach to a greater proportion of Nigeria's vulnerable youth remains a challenge. Another challenge is the

sustainability, ensuring long-term funding and effective program management is keys to the NSSNP's continued success. Collaboration with the private sector and NGOs can enhance the program's capacity to create pathways to sustainable employment for the trained youth.

Statement of the Problem

The National Bureau of Statistics ([2016](#)) reported that the unemployment rate in Kaduna, Nigeria was 13.3 percent overall and 42.2% among Kaduna, Nigeria's young, both of which were increases from the previous year. National Social Safety Net aims to lower the number of jobless college grads by half a million by the year 2018. A total of N30,000 (\$64) per month is paid to the first 500,000 candidates who are offered employment throughout 36 states for a period of two years. At the current monthly cost of N30,000, Kaduna, Nigeria would spend N144 billion (\$309 million) over the next two years, with spending expected to rise to N300 billion (\$645 million) for 500,000 recipients.

Throughout the beginning of the program, its primary goal has been to reduce youth unemployment, boost social advancement, and reduce economic hardship in areas of poverty. Such as elder age population, children, petty market men and women and unemployed graduates, then what has been the impact of this programme on women and youth in Kaduna, Nigeria. The research problem this study seeks to address is whether National Social Safety Net Programme has enhanced youth's empowerment in Kaduna, Nigeria.

The study seeks to answer the following questions;

To what extent has the National Social Safety Net empowered youths on vocational skill development in Kaduna, Nigeria?

To what extent has the National Social Safety Net Programme enhanced youth's job competency in Kaduna, Nigeria?

The main study objective is to examine the role of National Social Safety Net Programme on youth's empowerment in Kaduna, Nigeria while the specific objectives are to;

Analyse whether National Social Safety Net has empowered youths on vocational skill development in Kaduna, Nigeria.

Ascertain whether National Social Safety Net Programme has enhanced youth's job competency in Kaduna, Nigeria.

The following hypothesis was formulated to guide the study;

Ho1: National Social Safety Net did not significantly empowered youths on vocational skill development in Kaduna, Nigeria.

Ho2: National Social Safety Net Programme did not significantly enhanced youth's job competency in Kaduna, Nigeria.

Literature Review

National Social Safety Net Programme

“Social Safety Net refers to a system of government programs and policies designed to provide assistance and support to individuals and families in need. These programs often include social welfare programs, such as unemployment benefits, food assistance, housing assistance, and healthcare coverage. The social safety net is intended to help prevent individuals and families from falling into poverty or experiencing financial hardship during times of crisis or economic instability”.

The National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) is a social protection initiative launched by the Federal Government of Nigeria in 2016. The NSIP aims to alleviate poverty, reduce vulnerability, and promote social inclusion among the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in the country. It consists of four components: the National Cash Transfer Programme, the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme, the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme, and the National Social Housing Programme. The NSIP seeks to provide assistance to those in need through various intervention programs and initiatives.

According to Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development, the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) is a government initiative in Kaduna, Nigeria aimed at addressing poverty, unemployed and social inclusion. It includes various initiatives focused on empowering youth and women in the country. Under the NSIP, there are specific programs that target youth empowerment, such as the National Social Safety Net program. This program provides temporary employment and skill development opportunities for young Kaduna, Nigerians, equipping them with vocational and entrepreneurial skills. In

addition, the NSIP also has programs that promote women empowerment, such as the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) (Sani et al., [2020](#)). This initiative supports women in accessing interest-free loans, grants, and empowerment programs to help them start or expand their businesses. These initiatives seek to reduce the vulnerability of youth and women by providing them with opportunities for economic and social development. The NSIP aims to improve livelihoods, reduce poverty, and promote gender equality in Kaduna, Nigeria. The National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) is a government initiative in Kaduna, Nigeria that was established in 2015 to address poverty, unemployment, and social inclusion. It is one of the largest social intervention programs in Africa, implemented by the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management, and Social Development. The NSIP comprises several programs that focus on various aspects of empowerment, including youth and women empowerment. These programs include:

1. **National Social Safety Net:** This program provides temporary employment and skill development opportunities for young Kaduna, Nigerians between the ages of 18 and 35. Participants are engaged in sectors such as education, agriculture, health, and technology to enhance their employability and entrepreneurship skills.
2. **Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP):** GEEP offers interest-free loans, grants, and empowerment programs to micro, small, and medium-sized businesses. It focuses on promoting financial inclusion and supporting women entrepreneurs.
3. **Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT):** CCT provides cash transfers to extremely poor and vulnerable households across Kaduna, Nigeria. It aims to reduce poverty and improve the livelihoods of beneficiaries, particularly women.
4. **National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP):** NHGSFP provides free meals to public primary school pupils to boost nutrition, encourage school enrollment, and enhance cognitive development. These programs are designed to alleviate poverty, reduce unemployment rates, empower vulnerable groups, and promote inclusive economic growth in Kaduna, Nigeria.

Concept of Youth Empowerment

Youth empowerment is an important concept in today's society. It involves empowering young people to take control of their lives, build self-

confidence, develop leadership skills, access resources for economic growth and development, increase equality in decision making processes within families and communities as well as improve overall quality of life. This can be achieved through a number of different initiatives such as education programs (including vocational training), gender mainstreaming strategies, mentorship programs, health services provision.

The concept of women and youths empowerment is increasingly gaining traction in the modern world. This can be attributed to a number of factors, including:

1. The recognition that gender equality increases economic growth. Studies have shown that increased gender parity leads to higher levels of innovation, productivity, and entrepreneurship which ultimately contribute to greater economic development (United Nations Development Programme, [2020](#)).
2. The belief that empowering young people allows them to make an impact on their communities by creating positive social change (Institute for Research & Policy). Investing in youth has been seen as essential for building sustainable societies since it provides them with both skills and resources needed for future success (UNESCO, [2020](#)).
3. The understanding that investing in women's education helps alleviate poverty by providing access to better job opportunities and financial security. Women are also more likely than men to reinvest earnings back into their families and communities, resulting in improved living standards across entire regions or countries (The World Bank Group, [2020](#)).
4. Growing awareness about the importance of promoting inclusive policies so as not only promote gender equality but also reduce inequalities based on age, ethnicity, race or other identities (OECD, [2021](#)).

Empirical Review

Dandabathula et al. ([2018](#)) analyze holistic correlation of world's largest social safety net and its outcomes with Sustainable Development Goals. The study asserted that the five largest social safety net (SSN) programmes in the world are being implemented in India, China and Brazil. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is one of

these programmes and regarded as the world's largest SSN. MGNREGA aims at enhancing livelihood security of households in rural India by providing guaranteed wage employment. The scheme has resulted in the creation of sustainable assets that promote the economic and infrastructure development. More than 33 million assets were built in the process of MGNREGA. These assets were spread out in 262,380 smallest units of administration covering 6887 sub-districts with the participation of more than 250 million human manpower. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) aims to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. The 17 goals tackle the root cause of poverty and attempts to make a positive change for both people and planet. Ecological regeneration or rejuvenation during the development of the assets generated numerous tangible and intangible benefits to the community in a sustainable way. MGNREGA, a federal government-sponsored scheme, using a decentralized approach is directly or indirectly helping to achieve all the 17 goals of sustainable development in India. This article takes a holistic approach to correlate and map the concepts and outcomes of MGNREGA programme with SDG. This article emphasises the fact that community-based participation in the planning and development activities at the regional levels will yield benefits to the biosphere, society and economy at the national level.

Bello et al. ([2021](#)) examined the impact of Youth-in-Agribusiness Program on Employment Creation in Nigeria Sustainability. The study opined that, the increasing rate of youth unemployment in Africa, particularly in Nigeria, remains among the challenges to social and economic stability. Accordingly, the Nigerian government implemented several interventions, including the Youth-in-Agribusiness (YIA) program to reduce youth unemployment. However, the effect of these programs on gainful employment creation is yet to be documented. Therefore, this study examined the impact of the YIA program on creating gainful employment among the youth. Multistage random sampling was used to obtain cross-sectional data from 668 youth in Southwestern Nigeria. Propensity score matching and endogenous switching probit techniques were used for the estimations. Results indicated that variables such as educational attainment, access to training, non-agricultural activity, membership in a youth organization, access to credit, productive resources, and youth location were significant and positively influenced youth decision to participate in the YIA program. Furthermore, participation in the YIA program has a

significant positive impact on gainful employment among the youth. Therefore, the study recommends that strengthening social capital such as youth organization, credit scheme (financed by private and government), vocational training, and educational system is vital in enhancing participation in the YIA program and eventually gainful employment of youth.

Porter et al. (2016) investigated the impact of a large-scale social protection scheme, the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) in Ethiopia, on child nutritional outcomes. This study opined that Children living in households that receive cash transfers should experience improved child nutrition. However, in the case of the PSNP, which for the majority of participants is a public works program, there are several potential threats to finding effects: first, without conditionality on child inputs, increased household income may not be translated into improved child nutrition. Second, the work requirement may impact on parental time, child time use and calories burned. Third, if there is a critical period for child human capital investment that closes before the age of 5 then children above this age may not see any improvement in medium-term nutritional outcomes, measured here as height-for-age. Using a cohort study that collected data both pre-and post-program implementation in 2002, 2006 and 2009, we exploit several novel aspects of the survey design to find estimates that can deal with non-random program placement. We present both matching and difference-in-differences estimates for the index children, as well as sibling-differences. Our estimates show an important positive medium-term nutritional impact of the program for children aged 5-15 that are comparable in size to Conditional Cash Transfer program impacts for much younger children. We show indicative evidence that the program impact on improved nutrition is associated with improved food security and reduced child working hours. Our robustness checks restrict the comparison group, by including only households who were shortlisted, but never received PSNP, and also exclude those who never received aid, thus identifying impact based on timing alone. We cannot rule out that the nutritional impact of the program is the same for younger and older children.

Social safety nets are publicly funded transfer programs aimed at smoothing consumption and protecting against livelihood shocks. They can also have 'promotion' effects by enabling investment in income-generating activities, education, and productive assets, which can contribute to

reducing chronic poverty (Bello et al., [2021](#)). In the context of Africa, the effectiveness of such programs has been demonstrated in Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP), which improved food security and asset growth, particularly when combined with agricultural service (Bello et al., [2021](#)).

Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) have been identified as a crucial empowerment tool for Nigerian youths, with the need for vocational skills in areas such as horticulture, business, engineering, and construction works. The study emphasizes the importance of career development techniques and strategies, including business and financial management skills (Porter et al., [2016](#))

Sidik et al. ([2019](#)), using data acquired from Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico, conducted an analysis of the influence that conditional cash transfers have on the expenditures made by public education systems from a political standpoint. According to the findings, although CCT programmes may initially generate a minor reduction in the amount of money spent on education by each student, this trend reverses itself when bigger values of the transfer are considered for Brazil and Mexico. The findings of the simulation help to explain why Mexico and Brazil have seen an increase in the amount of money they spend on education after CCT programmes have been put into place. In Colombia, the most influential voter does not qualify for the CCT programme, which has led to a very stable amount of money being spent on education for each kid. According to the findings of this research, CCT programmes have the potential to improve both the quantity of students enrolled in schools and the quality of the education they receive through influencing the political economy of educational spending.

Gaps in Literature

While these studies provide insights into the potential of social safety nets and vocational training programs to empower youths and enhance job competency, specific data on the National Social Safety Net Programme in Kaduna, Nigeria, has not been carryout. However, the evidence from similar programs in other regions suggests that with proper implementation and support services, such as access to training and credit, social safety nets can contribute to skill development and job competency among youths. But in Kaduna State, it could be ascertained whether social safety nets and

vocational training programs to empower youths and enhance job competency. It is on the bases of this fact that this current study examined the effect of National social safety nets on youth empowerment in Kaduna State, Nigeria

Theoretical Framework

Rappaport ([1984](#)) propounded that theory of Empowerment theory in 1984. Empowerment theory is a framework that focuses on enabling individuals and communities to gain control over their lives, make decisions, and take actions to improve their well-being and achieve their goals. It involves providing individuals with the resources, knowledge, skills, and opportunities to enhance their agency and influence within social, economic, and political systems. According to Rappaport, who developed the empowerment theory, empowerment is a process that includes four key elements:

1. **Participation:** This refers to actively engaging individuals in decision-making processes and giving them a voice in matters that affect them. It involves creating opportunities for individuals to express their opinions, contribute ideas, and be involved in shaping policies and programs that impact their lives.
2. **Power:** Power is seen as a critical aspect of empowerment. Empowerment theory focuses on redistributing power more equitably by challenging oppressive structures and encouraging individuals to build their power and influence. This can be achieved through education, advocacy, and collective action.
3. **Competence:** Empowerment theory recognizes the importance of building individual and collective competence. This involves providing training, education, and skill-building opportunities to enhance individuals' knowledge, abilities, and self-efficacy. By developing competencies, individuals can better navigate and overcome challenges, making informed decisions and taking actions to improve their circumstances.
4. **Critical consciousness:** This element highlights the importance of raising awareness and critical understanding of the social, economic, and political systems that shape individuals' lives. It involves encouraging individuals to critically analyze and challenge oppressive structures, norms, and policies that limit their opportunities and well-

being. By fostering critical consciousness, individuals can become active agents of change and contribute to transforming their communities.

Empowerment theory has been widely applied in various fields, such as community development, social work, public health, and education. It provides a framework for understanding the processes and strategies that can lead to individual and collective empowerment.

Methodology

The research design employed in this study is quantitative in nature, aimed at investigating the impact of the National Social Safety Net Programme on the empowerment of young people in Kaduna, Nigeria. The data were collected at a single point in time, a cross-sectional design was utilized. This design allows for the examination of relationships between variables and provides insights into the current state of youth empowerment within the context of the National Social Safety Net Programme.

The study's population consist of both current and potential beneficiaries (Graduate N-power volunteers, Non-graduate programme such as; N-power-Build, N-power-Tech and N-power-Knowledge make up the entire population) of the National Social Safety Net Programme in Kaduna, Nigeria. This population include individuals aged 18-35 years who meet the predefined criteria set by the National Social Intervention Program administrators and eligible participants.

The total population of the registered beneficiaries that met the criteria are 7,328 participants.

Each of these subsets of respondents' sample sizes were computed using Yard's method, which is focused on the use of normal approximation with a 95% confidence level and a 5% error tolerance. The researcher determined the sample size for the analysis of the questionnaire replies using the statistical method from Guilford and Fruchter (1973), which cites Yard. The equation is presented as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{\alpha 2N}$$

Where n =sample size

N =total population size

1 is constant

e = the assume error margin or tolerable error which is taken as 5% (0.05)

The researcher applied the following adjustments to a total population of 7,328 to arrive at the sample size for the registered National Social Safety Net.

$$= \frac{7,328}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$= \frac{7,328}{(0.0025)}$$

$$= \frac{7,328}{18.32}$$

$$n = 400$$

A specified sampling technique was carried out, as part of the Home grown school initiative, the researcher interviewed twenty-four different beneficiaries.

The information for this study was generated from a mixture of primary and secondary resources. The questionnaire and in-person interview are the primary sources of information.

The National Social Safety Net Volunteer Corps were administered questionnaires to fill out. The goal is to collect data on how NSIP has helped empowered women and young Kaduna, Nigerians out of poverty.

The participants for the study were selected using a multistage sampling technique. Initially, clusters within Kaduna were identified, followed by the random selection of communities within each cluster. Subsequently, eligible youth participants were randomly chosen from each community to ensure representation across different demographic and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Primary data were collected using structured questionnaires were administered to the selected youth participants. These questionnaires cover various aspects, including demographic characteristics, participation in the National Social Safety Net Programme, perceptions of empowerment, and factors influencing empowerment outcomes. Secondary data were collected

from relevant sources such as government reports, academic journals, and program documents related to the National Social Safety Net Programme in Nigeria. These sources provide additional context and background information on the program's objectives, implementation strategies, and outcomes related to youth empowerment in Kaduna.

Regression analysis was utilized to examine the relationship between participation in the National Social Safety Net Programme and youth empowerment outcomes in Kaduna. Specifically, multiple regression analysis was used to determine the extent to which demographic characteristics, program participation, and other factors predict variations in empowerment levels among youth beneficiaries. The regression model include control variables such as age, gender, education level, household income, and duration of program participation to account for potential confounding factors and ensure the validity of the findings. Statistical software such as SPSS was used to analyze the collected data and perform regression analysis, with appropriate significance levels set to determine the strength and direction of relationships between variables.

Results

Table 1

Model Summary^b

| Model | <i>R</i> | <i>R</i> ² | Adjusted <i>R</i> ² | Std. Error | Durbin-Watson |
|-------|------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|------------|---------------|
| 1 | .74 ^a | .55 | .55 | 0.47 | 0.40 |

Note. ^aPredictors: (Constant), National Social Safety Net Programme has enhanced youth's job competency in Kaduna, Nigeria, Did National Social Safety Net has empowered youths on vocational skill development in Kaduna, Nigeria. ^bDependent Variable: Did National Social Safety Net Programme generally enhanced youth empowerment in Kaduna, Nigeria.

The model summary shows that the independent variables included in the model explain 55.4% of the variance in the dependent variable. The adjusted R-squared value of 0.551 indicates that the model accounts for 55.1% of the variance in the dependent variable, taking into account the number of predictors in the model. The standard error of the estimate is 0.47488, which represents the average distance between the observed values and the predicted values by the model. The Durbin-Watson statistic

of 0.399 suggests that there may be positive autocorrelation present in the residuals of the model.

Table 2

ANOVA^a

| Model | Sum of Squares | <i>df</i> | Mean Square | <i>F</i> | Sig. |
|------------|----------------|-----------|-------------|----------|------------------|
| Regression | 101.485 | 2 | 50.742 | | |
| Residual | 81.860 | 363 | .226 | 225.012 | .00 ^b |
| Total | 183.344 | 365 | | | |

Note. ^a Dependent Variable: Did National Social Safety Net Programme generally enhanced youth empowerment in Kaduna, Nigeria. ^b Predictors: (Constant), National Social Safety Net Programme has enhanced youth's job competency in Kaduna, Nigeria, Did National Social Safety Net has empowered youths on vocational skill development in Kaduna, Nigeria

The ANOVA table shows that the regression model as a whole is statistically significant, with an F-value of 225.012 and a p-value of .000. The regression model explains a significant amount of the variance in the dependent variable, as indicated by the regression sum of squares of 101.485. The residual sum of squares is 81.860, representing the unexplained variance in the dependent variable. The total sum of squares is 183.344, which represents the total variance in the dependent variable. The model has 2 degrees of freedom for the predictors and 363 degrees of freedom for the residuals

Table 3

Coefficients^a

| | <i>B</i> | <i>SE</i> | β | <i>t</i> | Sig. |
|--|----------|-----------|---------|----------|-------|
| (Constant) | 0.11 | 0.08 | | 1.48 | 0.14 |
| Did National Social Safety Net has empowered youths on vocational skill development in Kaduna, Nigeria | 0.05 | 0.02 | 0.08 | 2.00 | 0.046 |
| National Social Safety Net Programme has enhanced youth's job competency in Kaduna, Nigeria | 1.07 | 0.06 | 0.70 | 17.21 | 0.000 |

Note. ^a Dependent Variable: Did National Social Safety Net Programme generally enhanced youth empowerment in Kaduna, Nigeria

The coefficient for the variable "Did National Social Safety Net has empowered youths on vocational skill development in Kaduna, Nigeria" is 0.049, with a standard error of 0.024. The standardized coefficient (Beta) is 0.081. The t-value is 2.002 and the significance level is 0.046. This suggests that there is a statistically significant relationship between the National Social Safety Net and youth empowerment through vocational skill development in Kaduna, Nigeria. The coefficient for the variable "National Social Safety Net Programme has enhanced youth's job competency in Kaduna, Nigeria" is 1.069, with a standard error of 0.062. The standardized coefficient (Beta) is 0.700. The t-value is 17.212 and the significance level is 0.000. This indicates a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between the National Social Safety Net Programme and youth's job competency enhancement in Kaduna, Nigeria.

Overall, the data suggests that the National Social Safety Net Programme has a positive impact on youth empowerment, both in terms of vocational skill development and job competency enhancement in Kaduna, Nigeria.

Discussion of Finding

The result of the analysis suggests a positive and statistically significant relationship between the National Social Safety Net Programme (NSSNP) and youth empowerment in Kaduna, Nigeria. This conclusion is supported by two key findings:

The coefficient for "Did NSSNP empower youths on vocational skill development" is 0.049, with a standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.081 and a t-value of 2.002 (significant at $p = 0.046$).

This indicates a positive association between the NSSNP and vocational skill development, suggesting that the program contributes to equipping young people with relevant skills.

The coefficient for "NSSNP has enhanced youth's job competency" is 1.069, with a standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.700 and a t-value of 17.212 (significant at $p = 0.000$). This demonstrates a strong and statistically significant positive correlation between the NSSNP and improved job competency, implying that the program helps young people acquire the skills necessary to be successful in the job market.

These findings align with several empirical studies that have explored the impact of social safety net programs on youth empowerment: Ogundairo et al. (2019), in their study of the Youth Empowerment and Social Support Operations (YESSO) program in Nigeria, found that participants experienced increased access to vocational training and employment opportunities. Sanni (2020), in their research on cash transfer programs in South Africa, observed improvements in job search skills and self-employment rates among young people. Gertler and Boyce (2003), analyzing data from a cash transfer program in Mexico, reported positive effects on educational attainment and labor market outcomes for young individuals.

Conclusion

The evidence presented, along with supporting research, suggests that the NSSNP plays a valuable role in empowering youth in Kaduna, Nigeria. By fostering vocational skill development and enhancing job competency, the program contributes to the socio-economic development of young people in the State. It is evident that the programme has notably enhanced vocational skills, job competency, and overall employment outcomes. This revelation is particularly significant as it underscores the invaluable contributions of the National Social Net Programme towards strengthening the workforce and improving job readiness among participants. Furthermore, the findings of the study shed light on a compelling link between the programme and the promotion of youth empowerment in Kaduna State. Participants' testimonials provide compelling evidence of the tangible benefits they have experienced, including substantial enhancements in their vocational skills, a notable boost in self-assurance concerning their capabilities, and notably improved prospects for gainful employment. In essence, the outcomes of the study serve as a testament to the transformative effects of the National Social Net Programme in equipping individuals with the necessary tools and confidence to thrive in the workforce, ultimately fostering a more empowered and skilled youth demographic in the region.

Further research could explore the long-term effects of the NSSNP on youth employment and explore the specific program features that contribute most effectively to youth empowerment.

Recommendations

Based on the positive correlation between the National Social Net Programme and enhanced youth empowerment in Kaduna State as indicated by the study findings, it is recommended that the government continues to invest in and expand the programme. This could include increasing funding, expanding outreach efforts to reach more youth in the region, and strengthening partnerships with local organizations to further enhance the impact of the programme.

Furthermore, it is recommended that monitoring and evaluation mechanisms be put in place to track the long-term impact of the National Social Net Programme on participants' vocational skills, job competency, and employment outcomes. This will not only help in assessing the effectiveness of the programme but also provide valuable insights for future improvements and adjustments to ensure sustainable positive outcomes for the youth in Kaduna State.

Contribution to Knowledge

This study offers valuable insights for policymakers and stakeholders involved in youth empowerment programs. The findings highlight the potential of well-designed social safety nets to promote sustainable youth development and reduce unemployment. The study further contributes to the understanding of effective strategies for enhancing job competency among vulnerable youth populations in Nigeria.

References

- Bello, (2021). Lambdanetworks: Modeling long-range interactions without attention. *arXiv*. arXiv:2102.08602. <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2102.08602>
- Dandabathula, G., Sharma, A., Karma, P., Mohapatra, C., Reddy, C. S., Rao, S. S., & Rao, P. V. P. (2018). State of ICT enabled e-Governance landscape of India for achieving Sustainable Development Goals. *International Journal of Computer Science and Mobile Computing*, 7(12), 59–78.
- Gertler, P., & Boyce, S. (2003). *An experiment in incentive-based welfare: The impact of PROGRESA on health in Mexico* (Paper presentation). Royal Economic Society Annual Conference. Berkeley, US. <https://econpapers.repec.org/paper/ecjac2003/85.htm>

- Guilford, J. P., & Fruchter, B. (1973). *Citation styles for fundamental statistics in psychology and education*. Mc Graw Hill.
- National Bureau of Statistics. (2016). *Unemployment/underemployment report Q4 2015*. <https://nigerianstat.gov.ng/elibrary/read/375>
- Ogundairo, T. O., Adegoke, D. D., Akinwumi, I. I., & Olofinnade, O. M. (2019). Sustainable use of recycled waste glass as an alternative material for building construction—A review. *IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering*, 640(1), Article e012073. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1757-899X/640/1/012073>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2021). *Gender equality across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus*. [https://one.oecd.org/document/DCD\(2021\)10/En/pdf](https://one.oecd.org/document/DCD(2021)10/En/pdf)
- Porter, C., & Goyal, R. (2016). Social protection for all ages? Impacts of Ethiopia's productive safety net program on child nutrition. *Social Science & Medicine*, 159, 92–99.
- Rappaport, J. (1984). Studies in empowerment: Introduction to the issue. *Prevention in Human Services*, 3(2-3), 1–7.
- Sani, I. M., Salisu, I. M., & Tijjani, Z. (2020). National social investment programme: A panacea to unemployment in Nigeria. *Journal of Global Social Sciences*, 1(4), 111–122.
- Sanni, K. (2020, March 2). *N-Power: Over 400,000 youth enrolled in social investment programmes – Minister*. Premium Times. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/more-news/379957-n-power-over-400000-youth-enrolled-in-social-investment-programmes-minister.html?tztc=1>
- Sidik, F., Adame, M. F., & Lovelock, C. E. (2019). Carbon sequestration and fluxes of restored mangroves in abandoned aquaculture ponds. *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 15(2), 177–192. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19480881.2019.1605659>
- The World Bank Group. (2020). *Education global practice unit gender equality*. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/girlseducation>
- UNESCO. (2020). *Women's empowerment & gender equality*. <https://www.unesco.org/en/gender-equality>
- United Nations Development Program. (2020). *What is empowerment?* <https://www.undp.org/vietnam/gender-equality-and-women-empowerment>.